The Design and Evolution of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements in Western Europe

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Note

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I map and explain the design of the instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements (PPS) in Western Europe. I define PPS as taking place within parliament and thus being institutionally guaranteed to parliamentary actors, as being visible to the public, and as and allowing for a direct and nuanced communication of parliamentary actors to the public. Based on this definition, parliamentarians can communicate PPS through the following instruments: plenary debates, the presentation and discussion of committee reports, oral and written questions, and interpellations. To explain the design of these instruments, the dissertation at hand proceeds in four steps.

In the first part of the dissertation, I set up a theoretical framework for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS. The main argument of this framework is that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. To do so, decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS on two dimensions: the centralization – decentralization dimension and the majority – minority dimension. Which parliamentary actors make up the decisive coalitions depends on the dimension of the instruments of PPS. While frontbenchers and backbenchers seek to control the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS to their respective advantage, the parliamentary party groups of the government and the opposition strive to impact how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed.

Parliamentary actors have two kinds of instruments of PPS at their disposal which can be distinguished depending on the interaction of parliamentary actors when employing them: open instruments of PPS and closed instruments. Open instruments of PPS provide a little structured interaction as is the case in plenary debates and the discussion of committee reports. Closed instruments provide a more structured interaction where the addressed actor
has to respond and only the questioner and the questioned actor are allowed to participate. Oral and written questions as well as interpellations are closed instruments of PPS.

Building on this theoretical framework, I derive hypotheses about the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. I argue that the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS depends on the accountability of parliamentarians, the workload of parliament, and the characteristics of the instruments of PPS. I also derive hypotheses about the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS from the theoretical framework. I argue that the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS depends on the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition and the workload of parliament. I qualify these hypotheses by arguing that the capabilities of the decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors determine how easy it is for them to implement their preferred design of the instruments of PPS. To explain the change of the design of the instruments of PPS, I adapt the previously derived hypotheses.

In the second part of the dissertation, I present the research design for understanding the institutional design and change of the instruments of PPS. I analyze the design of the instruments of PPS through a cross-section of all countries of Western Europe with a parliamentary system in 2010. I measure the design of the instruments of PPS of these countries through a quantitative content analysis with manual coding of the parliamentary standing orders in force on 01.01.2010. This content analysis yields a score for each instrument of PPS in each country indicating how majority- or minority-friendly it is designed and a score indicating how centralized it is designed. To understand the changes of the centralization and majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, I conduct an illustrative time-series cross-section for Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010. This analysis allows me to assess if the explanations for the design of the instruments of PPS hold over time and to catch a glimpse of the causal mechanisms underlying the design of
the instruments of PPS. To measure the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS, I proceed in the same way as I do for measuring the design of the instruments of PPS; the only difference is that I now measure the design of the instruments of PPS on all the instances on which the design changes.

In the third part of the dissertation, I map and explain the design of the instruments of PPS in 2010 for all Western European countries with a parliamentary system. When presenting the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS, I find that most instruments of PPS are predominantly centralized, that countries are overall centralized but that their degree of centralization varies and that plenary debates are by far the most centralized instruments of PPS. I show that these patterns can be explained best by the accountability of parliamentarians and by whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed. In detail, I find that if parliamentarians are accountable to their electorate indirectly through their parties, the instruments of PPS are more centralized than if they are directly accountable to voters. Moreover, open instruments of PPS are more strongly centralized than closed instruments.

The most notable patterns of the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS are that open instruments tend to be more majority-friendly than closed instruments, that about 1/3 of countries has overall minority-friendly instruments of PPS, and that there is variation in the degree of majority-friendliness both within and between countries. The analysis yields that these patterns can be explained by the incentives of decisive coalitions if they also have the capability to implement their preferred institutional design. In detail, I find that if the seat share of the government is large enough, a great ideological conflict between government and opposition leads to a majority-friendly design of the instruments of PPS and vice versa. The characteristics of the instruments of PPS also matter for their design, as open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed instruments. Further, the workload of parliament has a weak independent effect on the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. If the
workload of parliament is large, the instruments of PPS are designed to be majority-friendly and vice versa.

In the fourth part of the dissertation, I trace the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS from 1945 until 2010 for Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom to find out if the explanations for the design of the instruments of PPS can also explain the changes made to the design of the instruments of PPS and to get a better understanding of the timing and causal mechanisms of the design of the instruments of PPS. I find that the explanations for the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS uncovered in the cross-section can partially explain the changes made to the design of the instruments of PPS. This implies that the design and change of the design of the instruments of PPS is complex and explaining it requires an equally multi-layered model.

When analyzing how the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS evolves in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010, I find that the explanations uncovered in the cross-section hold rather well for the United Kingdom. Moreover, I show that in Austria and Germany governments tend to be willing to agree to minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS when they fear to lose their majority status after the following election or when they want to increase the fairness of the rules of parliament.
**Zusammenfassung**


Parlamentarische Akteure können PPS durch zwei Arten von Instrumenten kommunizieren, welche sich nach der Interaktion der Akteure unterscheiden: offene Instrumente der PPS und geschlossene Instrumente der PPS. Offene Instrumente erlauben für eine wenig strukturierte Interaktion, wie es in Plenardebatten und der Diskussion von Ausschussberichten der Fall ist. Geschlossene Instrumente bieten eine strukturiertere


besser zu verstehen. Um die Evolution des Designs der Instrumente der PPS zu messen, gehe ich genauso vor wie bei der Messung des Designs der Instrumente der PPS. Der einzige Unterschied besteht darin, dass ich das Design der Instrumente der PPS zu jedem Zeitpunkt erfasse, an dem es sich ändert.


Die auffälligsten Muster der Mehrheitsfreundlichkeit der Instrumente der PPS sind dass offene Instrumente mehrheitsfreundlicher als geschlossene Instrumente sind, dass ungefähr 1/3 aller Länder zusammengenommen minderheitsfreundliche Instrumente der PPS haben und dass die Mehrheitsfreundlichkeit der Instrumente der PPS sich sowohl zwischen als auch innerhalb von Ländern unterscheidet. Die statistischen Analysen zeigen, dass diese Muster am besten von den oben genannten Anreizen entscheidungsfähiger Koalitionen erklärt werden können, wenn diese Koalitionen gleichzeitig die notwendigen Fähigkeiten dazu haben. Im Detail finde ich heraus, dass – wenn der Sitzanteil der Regierung groß genug ist – ein großer ideologischer Konflikt zwischen Regierung und Opposition zu einem mehrheitsfreundlichen Design der Instrumente der PPS führt und umgekehrt. Außerdem sind offene Instrumente der
PPS mehrheitsfreundlicher als geschlossene Instrumente. Die Arbeitsbelastung des Parlaments hat einen schwachen Einfluss darauf, wie mehrheitsfreundlich die Instrumente der PPS gestaltet sind. Wenn die Arbeitsbelastung hoch ist, sind die Instrumente der PPS mehrheitsfreundlich gestaltet und umgekehrt.


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1. Introduction

I know not how a representative assembly can more usefully employ itself than in talk, when the subject of talk is the great public interests of the country, and every sentence of it represents the opinion either of some important body of persons in the nation, or of an individual in whom some such body have reposed their confidence.

(Mill 1861, 105)

Parliaments are not only legislative machines. They have the task to communicate with the public.

(Nonnenmacher 2011, own translation)

What parliamentarians say matters – not only for the legislative process, but also for the communication between parliamentarians and the public. It is not surprising that parliamentarians care about how they can communicate with the public, as communicating with the public is one of the main functions of parliament (Bagehot and Crossman 1964; Leston-Bandeira 2012; Manin 1997; Mill 1861; Sieberer and Müller 2014, 324-325). The quotes of Mill (1861) and Nonnenmacher (2011) show that this has not changed over the past 150 years. Nonnenmacher (2011) refers specifically to the controversial plenary debate in the German Bundestag concerning the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) which took place in 2011. During the debate, President of Parliament Dr. Norbert Lammert allowed parliamentarians who disagreed with their official party line to contribute to this debate. However, it is parliamentary practice that the leaders of the parliamentary party groups give a list of party-approved speakers to the President of Parliament who then only calls upon those members in the debate. Therefore, the party groups were furious at the President of Parliament for his breach of parliamentary convention. Conversely, the media and the public overwhelmingly welcomed his decision (Herzog 2012).

Importantly, however, Dr. Norbert Lammert had not breached the parliamentary standing orders when calling upon the ‘rogue’ parliamentarians; he had merely exercised all the rights
the standing orders equipped him with. These clearly state in §27 (1): ‘Members of the Bundestag may take the floor only if given leave to do so by the President. […] Members of the Bundestag who wish to speak on the subject under debate shall, as a rule, inform the Secretary who keeps the list of speakers. […]’ ("Rules of Procedure of the German Bundestag and Rules of Procedure of the Mediation Committee" Status: 01.01.2013). To provide the parliamentary party group leadership with greater formal power in selecting the speakers for debates, the parliamentary party group leaders subsequently considered changing the parliamentary standing orders of the Bundestag (Roßmann 2012).

This example highlights that the design of the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public actually matters for the message the public receives from parliament. The dispute between the parliamentary party group leadership and the President of the Bundestag particularly underlines that the standing orders of parliament matter for who is allowed to speak and consequently whose voice is heard by the public. While the parliamentarians speaking up against their party group’s official line had aimed to demonstrate that not everyone agreed with the plans for the EFSF, the party leadership had sought to promote a picture of a unified party group to voters. Had the standing orders granted the latter the right to determine who was allowed to speak, the communication voters would have received from parliament would have been strikingly different. For instance, voters would have gotten the impression that each party holds a unified view about the EFSF.

The debate regarding the EFSF also exemplifies that the media pick up and report on parliamentarians’ communication efforts with their electorate. I conclude that how and what parliamentary actors communicate to their electorate from within parliament is actually received by the electorate (also see e.g. Franklin 1992; Kaid 2009). This reporting is not limited to plenary debates. Parliamentary questions are also frequently reported on in the media (Rasch 2011). The topics covered by these questions are very broad and usually
concern current issues. For example, the German government was recently questioned on topics such as the export of arms (Zeit Online 2014b) and contacts between the government and the financial sector (Spiegel Online 2013). The British Prime Minister David Cameron had to answer questions about the hostage crisis caused by the terrorist organization Islamic State during Prime Minister’s Question Time (Sparrow 2014). The Austrian government answered questions concerning topics such as whether it is appropriate that the Prime Minister of Turkey Tayyip Erdogan holds a speech in Vienna (Kurier 2014) and the circumstances surrounding the sale of a work of art by Gustav Klimt (derStandard.at 2014).

Apart from reflecting the content of debates and questions, the media also discuss how well the current standing orders are able to allow for an interesting question time or – more fundamentally – how well they allow parliament to fulfill its function of communicating with the public (derStandard.at 2013; Nonnenmacher 2011; Roßmann 2012; Zeit Online 2014a). This focus on the legal framework of the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public is well warranted, as the debate about the EFSF has demonstrated that when the going (or in this case, the speaking) gets tough, formal rules trump informal rules. This assessment is also supported by Müller and Sieberer (2014).

To summarize, the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public matter for the communication between parliamentarians and the public; moreover, the design of these instruments is important for the message parliament sends to the public. Yet, the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public are understudied both theoretically and empirically. Theoretically, there exists no common framework for studying the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public because these instruments are studied separately. These studies mostly concern the use of individual instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public (for plenary debates in national parliaments see e.g. Martin and Vanberg 2008; for parliamentary questions see e.g.
Martin and Rozenberg (editors) 2011; for plenary debates in the European Parliament see e.g. Proksch and Slapin 2010; Slapin and Proksch 2010). However, there are still only just a few studies about the design of the instruments of PPS (for plenary debates see e.g. Proksch and Slapin 2012). To address these gaps, in the dissertation at hand I make a theoretical and an empirical contribution. Theoretically, I establish a framework for analyzing the design of the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public. Empirically, I map the design of the instruments Western European parliaments provide for communicating with the public and explain their design based on the hypotheses derived from the framework.

The chapter at hand provides the basis for this dissertation. Below, I first define the subject of this dissertation, i.e. the instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements. In the following section, I highlight how the dissertation contributes to the existing literature. Thereafter, I introduce the theoretical framework explaining the design of the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public. This provides for a concise roadmap to the more detailed discussion of the theoretical framework in Chapter 2. Last, I outline the plan of the dissertation and highlight its main arguments and results.

1.1. Defining Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

In this dissertation, I aim to map and explain the design of the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public. I term these instruments ‘instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements’ (PPS). To understand in detail which instruments can be used to communicate PPS and why I study exactly these instruments, below I present a definition of the instruments of PPS. This definition yields that there are five instruments which can be used to communicate PPS and hence relevant for this dissertation: plenary debates, the presentation and discussion of committee reports, oral questions, written questions, and interpellations.
Parliamentary actors can communicate with their electorate by various means. They can either employ an instrument parliament provides them with for this purpose – for instance by making a statement in a plenary debate – or rely on communication channels outside of parliament, such as participating in a political talk-show (Jarren and Donges 2006). While the study of the latter type of communication channels also provides various insights into how parliamentarians communicate with the public (for press releases see e.g. Grimmer 2010; Grimmer 2013; for new social media see e.g. Jackson and Lilleker 2011; Vergeer et al. 2013; Williamson and Fallon 2011; for political talk-shows see e.g. Jarren and Donges 2006), the dissertation at hand focuses on the instruments of parliamentary publicity.

The dissertation focuses exclusively on the instruments of parliamentary publicity because they follow a different logic than the instruments of extra-parliamentary publicity; their design should hence be explained by different factors. For example, communication of parliamentary actors and the public outside of parliament is often dominated by the discretion of editors (e.g. who is invited to a political talk-show or which politician is interviewed in a newspaper) and operates under economic pressures (e.g. viewing rates of political talk-shows or the sales volume of newspapers). Due to these restrictions, the extra-parliamentary instruments through which parliamentary actors can communicate with their electorate do not only include information directed at citizens concerning party competition in parliament but are also geared towards entertainment (Schulz 2008). As opposed to parliamentary instruments for making policy statements, instruments outside of parliament also usually do not have a legal framework (Grimmer 2010, 2013). Thus, their use is likely to be explained by other factors than the ones explaining the formal design of the instruments within parliament.

In contrast, the instruments situated within parliament are governed by the parliamentary standing orders and the constitution. Parliamentary actors are guaranteed that if they fulfill

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1 While one might argue that the media exercise considerable influence over the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public because the media report on them, these instruments are
the requirements, they have the opportunity to employ this instrument. Also, parliamentary actors can be sure that their statements receive attention by the public as they are always on public record and are usually picked up by the media. This is not guaranteed for instruments outside of parliament, such as a press release. For example, Hopmann et al. (2010, 14) argue that media coverage of parties’ press releases during the election period in Denmark depends on the characteristics of the party, such as size and government status. In the dissertation at hand I thus focus on the instruments of policy statements within parliament because they provide parliamentary actors with reliability of expectations both regarding their taking place and their attention. It follows that instruments which allow for making policy statements within parliament are very important in the political process and are thus of great concern for political actors.

Within parliament, there are many instruments which can be used for communicating with their electorate. Table 1-1 provides an overview of these instruments. Even at a cursory glance, one can see that these instruments are far from uniform. For example, debates in committee take place behind closed doors in some countries and take place publicly in others (Ismayr 2009, 36-37). Moreover, elections and votes in parliaments provide parliamentarians with defined categories for expressing their opinion while the other instruments allow for a nuanced communication. Yet, if a parliamentarian votes against the party line or a party group introduces a controversial proposal, this may send the electorate as strong a signal as speaking against the party line concerning the EFSF. Below, I elaborate on how these instruments

nevertheless guaranteed to parliamentary actors by law. For example, Pfetsch and Wehmeier (2002) highlight that the government has the guaranteed interest of the media due to the frequent opportunities for statements provided by the political system. Yet, the opportunity of the government to speak up is in this case not determined by the media but by the parliamentary standing orders. Thus, the government can always rely on this opportunity for making its statements rather than having to hope that a newspaper reporter will conduct an interview with them. Moreover, there is not a built-in preference for the government as the opposition also has many opportunities for voicing its concerns. Given the great potential for conflict generated by e.g. parliamentary questions (Russo and Wiberg 2010), it is highly plausible that they are met with at least as much attention by the press as statements by the government. Also, the media in the Western Europe are obliged to report on all viewpoints in the political spectrum ("Charta der Grundrechte der Europäischen Union" Status: 30.03.2010; Viķe-Freiberga et al. 2013).
differ from each other and argue why I focus on plenary debates, the presentation and discussion of committee reports, oral questions, written questions, and interpellations (indicated by the grey shading).

**Table 1-1: Overview of Parliamentary Instruments Which Can be Employed for Communication**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentary instruments</th>
<th>Public by default</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Direct or indirect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuanced or defined categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debates in committees</td>
<td>Not Always</td>
<td>Nuanced</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections in parliament</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Defined categories</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting in parliament</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Defined categories</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing a motion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nuanced</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing a piece of legislation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nuanced</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debates in plenary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nuanced</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of committee reports</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nuanced</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpellations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nuanced</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written and oral questions</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Nuanced</td>
<td>Direct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Own illustration, based on Ismayr (2009); Strøm (1995).

When seeking to communicate with their electorate from within parliament, it is most important to parliamentary actors that what they do and say is actually visible to the public. Thus, the relevant instruments for the dissertation at hand include only instruments which are actually employed publicly. Examples of such instruments are parliamentary debates that are printed in the parliamentary records or are even televised, but also written questions that are on the public record and frequently reported about by the media. Conversely, committee meetings take place behind closed doors in most Western European parliaments (Ismayr 2009, 36-37). Therefore, I argue that committee meetings are not relevant for parliamentary actors seeking to communicate with their electorate.

As the remaining instruments are all public and are all employed in parliament, all of them can in principle be used to make parliamentary policy statements. However, the design of some instruments is not contested – at least not for reasons of communication – while the
design of other instruments is hotly arraigned. Elections and votes in parliament are examples of the former while plenary debates and interpellations are examples of the latter. As the subject of this dissertation is how the instruments parliament provides for communicating with the public are designed, instruments whose design is contested because of communication are of greater interest for me than the other instruments. Below, I elaborate on each type of instrument in detail.

On the one hand, elections and votes in parliament provide parliamentarians with clear categories for answering (i.e. ‘yay’, ‘nay’, and ‘abstain’). These instruments can be used to generate publicity. For example, a Green parliamentarian in the opposition can make a very strong statement when he opposes his parliamentary party group and votes for the government proposal of building more nuclear power plants. However, in this case the parliamentarian does not have the option to express a more detailed opinion. Rather, the message is always uniform. Also, who may take part in votes and elections in parliament is not contested. For instance, it is difficult to imagine that a parliament could have standing orders stipulating that each member of the government may cast three votes and each member of opposition only one vote during legislative votes. The rules of elections in parliament are set up similarly. They only differ between parliaments concerning how candidates are nominated, how many candidates there are, and how large a majority the candidate needs to achieve (Sieberer 2010). In the elections themselves, all members of parliament are allowed to cast one vote each.

On the other hand, there are instruments such as plenary debates and parliamentary questions which allow for a more nuanced communication of policy statements from parliamentary actors to the public (for plenary debates see e.g. Martin and Vanberg 2008; Proksch and Slapin (2012); for parliamentary questions see e.g. Martin and Rozenberg (editors) 2011). For example, a plenary debate would have allowed the Green parliamentarian from the previous example to explain exactly why voting against the government bill is
nonsense. It is impossible that all parliamentary actors make use of instruments in which they can express their opinion in a nuanced fashion due to time restrictions (Cox 2006) and parliamentary actors have different preferences about who is allowed to participate in these instruments. For example, in the debate about the EFSF frontbenchers would have preferred to select who is allowed to speak while backbenchers wanted to express their dissenting opinions. Thus, who is allowed to employ these instruments is a point of great contention.

It follows that the design of the instruments which allow for a nuanced communication between parliamentary actors and the public impacts which parliamentary actors have an advantage in communicating with the public. Conversely, the design of the instruments which allow for uniform communication, such as votes and elections, does not impact the communication between parliamentary actors and the public as all actors are allowed to participate equally anyway. Rather, the design of these instruments impacts the outcome of the vote or election. As I am interested in studying the design of the instruments parliament provides for communication with the public, it is appropriate to focus on the instruments whose design is contested because of parliamentary actors’ desire to communicate with the public. Conversely, the design of the other instruments, e.g. elections and votes, is likely conditioned by different motivations as their design is contested for different reasons than communication. Thus, in the dissertation at hand I focus on the instruments which allow parliamentary actors to communicate policy statements to their electorate in a nuanced way.

Of these instruments, I only include those that allow for directly making a policy statement. Within parliament, parliamentary actors have both instruments at their disposal which allow for directly making a policy statement and instruments which allow for doing so indirectly. Examples of the former are a plenary debate or an oral question as these instruments allow parliamentarians to directly address their concerns to the public. Conversely, introducing a legislative proposal or a motion does not per se lead to a
communication with the electorate. Rather, the debate about this proposal is what the public notices. For example, Green-Pedersen (2010, 349) argues that parliamentary actors sometimes introduce legislative amendments which clearly will not be adopted only to debate them in parliament. In the dissertation at hand, I only take those instruments into account which can be used to directly communicate between parliamentary actors and their electorate. The reason for this is that parliamentary actors rely on these instruments for communication with the public; the other instruments merely serve as a means to gain access to them.

For these reasons, I limit my study to instruments which share the following characteristics. I term them ‘instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements (PPS)’:

1. Parliamentary policy statements take place within parliament and are thus institutionally guaranteed to parliamentary actors.
2. Parliamentary policy statements are visible to the public.
3. Parliamentary policy statements allow parliamentary actors to directly communicate nuanced messages to the public.

Based on this enumeration, I define PPS as taking place within parliament and thus being institutionally guaranteed to parliamentary actors, as being visible to the public, and as and allowing for a direct and nuanced communication of parliamentary actors to the public. This yields that the following instruments of Table 1-1 (presented on page 7) are instruments of PPS and hence relevant for the dissertation at hand: plenary debates, the presentation and discussion of committee reports, oral questions, written questions, and interpellations. All of these instruments serve the same purpose, i.e. the communication from parliamentary actors to the public.\(^2\)

\(^2\) This does not exclude the possibility that these instruments also have other purposes. For example, a plenary debate may not only be used for communication from parliament to the public, but also for convincing the members of a parliamentary party group to vote for or against a proposal. However, for the dissertation at hand, it is only important that one of these functions is communicating PPS.
1.2. Contribution of Dissertation

Even though the parliamentary standing orders in general and their provisions for making policy statements in particular, e.g. the rules concerning plenary debates or parliamentary questions, are relevant for parliamentarians’ communication with the public, there is surprisingly little research analyzing what the institutional preferences parliamentary actors in Western Europe have for their design. A notable exception is the research by Proksch and Slapin (2012) which is concerned with understanding how the rules for participating in plenary debates are designed. Moreover, the research group of the project ‘Institutional Design in European Parliaments’ at the Zukunftskolleg of the University of Konstanz (Germany) aims to map and explain changes made to the standing orders of all Western European parliaments from 1945 until 2010 (see for example Sieberer et al. 2014; Sieberer and Müller 2014; Sieberer et al. 2011). This research does not provide a comparative in-depth analysis of all instruments of PPS but is rather focused on explaining the design and change of individual instruments, e.g. plenary debates, or of the entire corpus of the standing orders. While the theoretical and methodological considerations of this research prove to be useful for this dissertation, Sieberer and Müller (2014, 325) conclude that the area is still understudied.

Conversely, there is plenty of research regarding the design of the rules of procedure of the Congress of the United States of America, most of which is focused on explaining when the rules of procedure become more majority- or minority-friendly (see for example Binder 1995, 1996, 2006; Cox and McCubbins 1997; Schickler 2000; Schickler and Rich 1997a, 1997b). However, the theory and findings of this research cannot simply be transferred to Western Europe because the political system of the United States differs markedly from the political systems of Western Europe.

It follows that there are two gaps in the literature concerning the instruments of PPS, one being theoretical and one being empirical. To understand how the instruments of PPS in
Western Europe are designed and how they have evolved over time, one first requires a solid theoretical framework. As I briefly sketched out above, such a framework exists only on a very general level concerning changes made to entire standing orders (Sieberer et al. 2014; Sieberer and Müller 2014) but is not specifically tailored to explain the design and change of the instruments of PPS. Apart from missing a theoretical framework, there is also no empirical data which allows for mapping the design of the instruments of PPS. This means that one does not know exactly how the instruments of PPS in Western Europe are designed.

This dissertation seeks to address these gaps through both a theoretical and an empirical contribution. Theoretically, I establish a novel framework which allows for analyzing the institutional design and change of all instruments of PPS. This framework extends the existing research in two regards. First, it integrates all instruments of PPS in one theoretical framework. While this may seem to not add significant value at cursory glance, I have highlighted above that the instruments of PPS are usually analyzed separately on the basis of individual countries, which may lead to biased results. Therefore, being able to analyze all instruments of PPS together adds considerable theoretical value to the existing literature.

Second, the theoretical framework allows researchers to understand what motivates parliamentary actors to change the ‘rules of the game’. Usually, parliamentary actors confront each other within the existing ‘rules of the game’, i.e. within the existing standing orders. The institutional design of the instruments of PPS is changed ‘[…] when this equilibrium is disturbed due to changes in the actor constellation or the external environment of parliament leading a sufficiently large majority of actors to expect higher payoffs with regard to their substantive goals from a specific alternative to the institutional status quo’ (Sieberer et al. 2011, 949). It follows that the theoretical framework elaborated in this dissertation allows for understanding which parliamentary actors are central for changing the rules of the game, what their goals are, and what motivates these actors to opt for a particular design of the
instruments of PPS. Moreover, I adapt the general theoretical framework of Sieberer et al. (2011) to the design of the instruments of PPS.

Empirically, I create an original dataset which provides information about the design of the instruments of PPS of all Western European countries on 01.01.2010. Moreover, I trace the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010. Through these datasets, I am able to make three contributions to existing research. First, I provide the first comparative and comprehensive overview of the institutional design of the instruments of PPS for Western European parliaments. This constitutes a value in and of itself, as the design of these instruments has so far not been mapped for all countries of Western Europe. Second, the dataset allows me to test the hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework. This means that I am able to assess which factors condition a particular design of the instruments of PPS. Moreover, the data over time provides me with the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the causal mechanisms underlying the design and change of the instruments of PPS. Through this empirical analysis, I am able to add further to our understanding of institutional design and change. Third, the information about the institutional design of the instruments of PPS can be employed to complement studies about the use of one or more instruments of PPS. Above, I highlighted that analyzing the use of one instrument of PPS without taking its design and the design of the other instruments of PPS into account leaves the risk of reaching biased conclusions. Through the data provided in this dissertation, researchers can now include information about the design of the instruments of PPS in their studies.

1.3. Theoretical Framework of Dissertation

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the theoretical framework of this dissertation which I elaborate on in greater detail in Chapter 2. The theoretical framework as visualized in Figure 1-1 can be divided into two parts. First, I argue that parliamentary actors use the
instruments of PPS to impact the chain of accountability and hence maximize their chances of re-election. Second, I argue that because the instruments of PPS matter for parliamentary actors’ chances of re-election and because parliamentary actors are able to change the design of the instruments of PPS, decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS according to their institutional preferences. This part constitutes the focus of this dissertation and is indicated by the shaded area of Figure 1-1.

I focus on the design of the instruments of PPS and not on their use because research seeking to understand the use of individual instruments of PPS encounters two issues. First, researchers commonly focus on explaining the use of an instrument of PPS in a single country, not least because there is no comparative data systematically describing the design of the instruments of PPS. Studies including multiple countries need to include such data because the use of an instrument of PPS could depend on its design (Sánchez de Dios and Wiberg 2011). For example, if the number of parliamentarians required to ask an oral question is very high, it is likely that the number of oral questions posed in this parliament is rather low and vice versa. This argument is supported by Rasch (2011, 392), who argues that ‘[p]atterns of questions reflect not just behaviour but the boundaries dictated by access rules’. Thus, it is possible that parliamentarians in one country make greater use of an instrument of PPS than in another country simply because their rules differ.
Figure 1-1: Theoretical Framework and Focus of Dissertation

Parliamentary actors
- Individual parliamentarians
- Parliamentary party groups
- Majority and minority

Delegate

Voters

Accountable to

Decentralization - centralization

Majority-friendliness - minority-friendliness

Parliamentary Policy Statements
- Open instruments
- Closed instruments

Employ

Strategically design standing orders concerning parliamentary policy statements on two dimensions

- Centralization - decentralization
- Majority-friendliness - minority-friendliness

Regulate

Focus of dissertation

Decisive coalitions

Parliamentary standing orders concerning Parliamentary Policy Statements

15
Second, the cited research treats the instruments of PPS separately, focusing either on parliamentary questions and interpellations or plenary debates. The reason for this is that scholars commonly distinguish between legislative and non-legislative activities, and only questions and interpellations clearly fall in the non-legislative category (Green-Pedersen 2010). However, it is likely that parliamentarians switch from using one instrument to using another one because of these instruments’ design. For example, if it is comparatively easy for an opposition party to speak during a plenary debate but very difficult to pose an oral question, it is possible that the opposition primarily relies on plenary debates to communicate PPS to its electorate. This means that if one does not take into account the design of the various instruments of PPS, one is at risk of missing substitution effects in the use of the instruments of PPS. To counter both of these problems, in the dissertation at hand I provide an overview of the design of all instruments of PPS and explain their design.

**Parliamentary Policy Statements and Vote Maximization**

In the theoretical framework of the dissertation at hand, I first justify why parliamentary actors care about the design of the instruments of PPS; I argue that this is the case because parliamentary actors employ the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. To make this argument, two steps are necessary. First, I identify which parliamentary actors are relevant for the design of the instruments of PPS. Second, I explain how these actors employ the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes.

Figure 1-1 shows that there are three types of parliamentary actors which communicate PPS to improve their chances of re-election and hence have differing preferences regarding their institutional design: parliamentarians, parliamentary party groups, and the government and the opposition. For example, common parliamentarians – or more precisely backbenchers – employ the instruments of PPS to highlight their achievements and further the concerns of their constituencies (see e.g. Saalfeld 2011). Conversely, party groups – or more precisely
frontbenchers – seek to provide the public with a unified image of the party when communicating PPS (see e.g. Proksch and Slapin 2012). The party groups taking part in the government use PPS to show their electorate that they have performed well in office (see e.g. Martin and Vanberg 2008) while party groups of the opposition rely on PPS to criticize the government (see e.g. Rozenberg et al. 2011). In Section 2.2, I elaborate on these actors and their relationship in more detail.

All of the parliamentary actors listed above can maximize their votes by communicating PPS to the public because this allows them to impact the chain of accountability. Strøm’s (2000) ‘chain of delegation and accountability’ posits that voters delegate certain tasks to elected officials. These officials are accountable to voters through elections. Parliamentary actors can impact the chain of accountability through employing the instruments of PPS because the instruments of PPS allow parliamentary actors to specifically address the public and their concerns and hence influence how voters perceive them. This, in turn, allows parliamentary actors to maximize their votes. As the decision of voters to punish or reward a parliamentary actor is not based on the objective performance of this actor but rather depends on the information voters have about parliamentary actors (Maravall 2006, 918-923; Persson et al. 1997; Strøm 2000, 270-275), the chain of accountability is indirect. Thus, I indicate the chain of accountability through a dashed line instead of a solid line. I elaborate on this relationship in more detail in Section 2.3.1.

Parliamentary actors have two types of instruments at their disposal to communicate PPS and hence maximize their votes: open instruments of PPS and closed instruments of PPS. These instruments differ based on the interaction of parliamentary actors. Instruments such as oral questions allow only two actors – in this case one parliamentarian and a cabinet member – to participate, the former of whom addresses the other and who then responds. Due to this restricted interaction, I term these instruments closed instruments. Conversely, parliamentary
actors may directly give information to their voters, e.g. through plenary debates. These instruments potentially allow all actors to participate and do not require one actor to target another one. Due to this open interaction, I refer to these instruments as open. I discuss these instruments in detail in Section 2.3.2.

**Deliberate Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements**

Parliamentary actors do not only employ the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes, they also design them according to their institutional preferences. Understanding how the instruments of PPS are designed requires extending the framework presented so far to include the design of the instruments of PPS. This is visualized in Figure 1 through the shaded area. In a nutshell, I argue that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to suit their institutional preferences and thus maximize their votes. Below, I address what constitutes a decisive coalition and what its central motivation is. Moreover, I introduce the two dimensions on which decisive coalitions can design the instruments of PPS according to their institutional preferences. I elaborate on these points in detail in Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6, respectively.

A coalition is considered decisive when it has the ability to design the instruments of PPS according to its institutional preferences. First and foremost, a decisive coalition needs to have enough members to design the instruments of PPS according to its preferences. The number of members required is determined by the threshold for changing the standing orders which is usually a simple majority of parliamentarians. I elaborate on this in detail in Section 2.4. I argue that the driving motivation of these coalitions when designing the instruments of PPS is to maximize their votes. Conversely, I argue that the motivations of office and policy play a subordinate role. I discuss these motivations in detail in Section 2.5.

Decisive coalitions can design the instruments of PPS to suit their institutional preferences on two dimensions: centralization – decentralization and majority – minority. On the one
hand, decisive coalitions can design the instruments of PPS to be centralized or decentralized. The more centralized the instruments of PPS are, the greater is the impact of centralized actors, such as the leadership of parliamentary party groups, on who is allowed to employ PPS. Conversely, the more decentralized the instruments of PPS are, the greater is the liberty of backbenchers to decide when they make use of the instruments of PPS. For example, if backbenchers can decide themselves to make a statement in a plenary debate, the rules of plenary debates are highly decentralized.

On the other hand, decisive coalitions can design the instruments of PPS to be majority-friendly or minority-friendly. The more majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed, the more strongly restricted is the access of the opposition to the instruments of PPS. The more minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are, the greater are the prerogatives of the opposition to use the instruments of PPS. For example, if the government wants to prevent the opposition from asking prying questions, the government can restrict the number of questions members of the opposition can ask. In this case, questions would be highly majority-friendly. I elaborate on these two dimensions in detail in Section 2.6.

1.4. Plan of Dissertation and Main Results

The dissertation is divided into four parts. Part I introduces the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) and the hypotheses derived from it concerning the design and change of the instruments of PPS (Chapter 3). In Chapter 2, I set up the theoretical framework summarized above and argue that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to suit their institutional preferences.

In Chapter 3, I derive hypotheses about the design and evolution of this design from the theoretical framework established in the previous section. I first highlight that to derive these hypotheses, Rational Choice Institutionalism is most suitable because its assumptions about the context of institutional design and change hold for my theoretical framework. Thereafter, I
argue that it is appropriate to analyze the design of the instruments of PPS through a cross-section because there is constant pressure for a particular design of PPS for at least several years. Thus, the institutional design of the instruments of PPS should mirror the institutional preferences of decisive coalitions. Moreover, since the competition in parliament and the workload of parliament is not completely stable over time, tracing how the design of PPS changes over time is also very informative.

Thereafter, I argue that the design of the instruments of PPS depends on the decisive coalitions’ incentives and capabilities. In detail, the centralization of the instruments of PPS depends on the accountability of parliamentarians, the workload of parliament, and whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed. The majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS depends on the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition, the workload of parliament, the seat share and ideological homogeneity of the government, and whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed. Last, I adapt these hypotheses to explain how the design of the instruments of PPS evolves over time.

Part II consists of Chapters 4 and 5 and presents the research design for understanding the institutional design and change of the instruments of PPS. In Chapter 4, I present the research design for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS. I argue that a large-N statistical analysis is appropriate for the dissertation at hand because I aim to provide a broad overview of the institutional design of the instruments of PPS rather than an in-depth analysis. Moreover, I introduce my case selection which includes all countries of Western Europe with a parliamentary system. Thereafter, I explain how I measure the design of the instruments of PPS. I do so through a quantitative content analysis based on manual coding of the parliamentary standing orders in force on 01.01.2010 in the respective countries. This content analysis yields a score for each instrument of PPS in each country indicating how majority- or

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3 These countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.
In Chapter 5, I outline the research design for understanding the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. I explain that I conduct an illustrative cross-section time-series for Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010 to assess if the explanations for the design of the instruments of PPS hold over time and to catch a glimpse of the causal mechanisms underlying the design of the instruments of PPS. I highlight that I measure the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS in the same way as I measured the design of the instruments of PPS.

Part III includes Chapters 6 and 7. These chapters present the design of the instruments of PPS in 2010 and the empirical evaluation of the hypotheses concerning the design of the instruments of PPS. In Chapter 6, I show that the centralization of the instruments of PPS depends chiefly on the accountability of parliamentarians and on whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed. The more directly parliamentarians are accountable to their electorate, the less centralized the instruments of PPS are designed. Conversely, the more party-centered the electoral system is, the more centralized the instruments of PPS are designed. Moreover, open instruments of PPS are overall more strongly centralized than closed instruments. Conversely, the workload of parliament does not impact how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed.

In Chapter 7, I show that decisive coalitions design the instruments of PPS to be comparatively more majority- or minority-friendly if they have both the incentives and the capabilities to do so. I find that if the seat share of the government is large enough, the greater the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition is, the more majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed and vice versa. Further, the workload of parliament has a weak independent effect on the majority-friendliness of the instruments of
PPS. The greater the workload of parliament is, the more majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed and vice versa. Again, I find that the design of open instruments differs from the design of closed instruments. Open instruments are on average more majority-friendly than closed instruments.

Part IV, which consists of Chapters 8 and 9, presents how the design of the instruments of PPS changed between 1945 and 2010 in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom and seeks to explain these changes. In Chapter 8, I assess how the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS evolved in these countries. Corroborating the findings from the cross-section, I show that the accountability of parliamentarians can explain the centralization of oral questions rather well. Conversely, the centralization of plenary debates does not seem to depend on the electoral connection. Moreover, I find that open instruments of PPS – especially plenary debates – are usually more strongly centralized than closed ones. As was the case in the cross-section, the workload of parliament is not able to directly explain changes to the centralization of the instruments of PPS. However, the cross-section time-series adds more nuance to this finding by highlighting that efficiency considerations usually are an important – albeit not the driving – consideration in parliamentary actors’ reform plans.

In Chapter 9, I analyze how the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS evolved in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010. The findings indicate that the explanation for majority- or minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS is highly complex and differs between countries. For the United Kingdom, the workload of parliament and the ideological conflict between government and opposition can explain some of the majority-friendly changes made to the instruments of PPS. Conversely, in Austria and Germany governments tend to be willing to agree to minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS when they fear to lose their majority status after
the following election or because of considerations of fairness in parliament. This finding supports that the government strategically designs the instruments of PPS to advance its own benefit. Moreover, I find that open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed instruments in the United Kingdom and Austria. Conversely, all instruments are similarly majority-friendly in Germany.

In Chapter 10, I summarize the main findings of this dissertation and highlight the contribution of this dissertation to the literature. Further, I highlight that the dissertation contributes to research about parliamentary organization, institutional design and change beyond parliament, and the understanding of parliament as a link between politicians and voters.
Part I  Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Design and Change of Parliamentary Policy Statements

2. Parliamentary Actors, Their Motivations, and the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I set up the theoretical framework for understanding the design and change of the instruments of PPS. In the following chapter, I derive the hypotheses about the change and design of the instruments of PPS from this framework. The main argument of the theoretical framework put forth in this chapter is that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. Until now, researchers focused on explaining how parliamentary actors employ individual instruments of PPS (for parliamentary questions see e.g. Martin and Rozenberg (editors) 2011; for plenary debates see e.g. Proksch and Slapin 2012). However, there is no theoretical framework which allows for analyzing all instruments of PPS together. Also, an explanation of why and how parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS in a particular way is currently lacking. To address these gaps, this chapter introduces a theoretical framework for understanding the design and change of the instruments of PPS.

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 2.2, I discuss that the parliamentary actors relevant for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS are individual parliamentarians, parliamentary party groups, the government and the opposition. In Section 2.3, I argue that these parliamentary actors take an interest in the design of the instruments of PPS because they employ these instruments to maximize their votes. Building on the framework of delegation and accountability (Strøm 2000), I put forth that parliamentary actors communicate PPS to impact the information voters receive about them and hence make
voters more likely to vote for them. I introduce that parliamentary actors can communicate PPS through two kinds of instruments: open instruments and closed instruments. I contend that due to the different opportunities for interaction, parliamentary actors rely on open instruments of PPS to communicate their policy stances to the public while they employ closed instruments for scrutiny, confrontation, and gathering information. Nonetheless, both types of instruments should be analyzed together because they serve the same purpose, i.e. communicating PPS, and are governed by the same institutional framework, i.e. parliamentary standing orders.

In Section 2.4, I argue that parliamentary actors do not only employ the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes but that decisive coalitions of those actors also design the instruments of PPS according to their institutional preferences. I highlight that the numerical size of these decisive coalitions depends on the requirement for changing the standing orders of the respective parliaments because these codify the instruments of PPS. As this requirement usually stipulates a simple majority, in most countries it is quite easy for decisive coalitions to design the instruments of PPS according to their preferences. To get a better insight into these preferences, in Section 2.5, I contrast the goals of decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors and argue that the vote-seeking motivation is the crucial one for understanding how parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS.

In Section 2.6, I argue that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors can maximize their votes by designing the instruments of PPS according to their preferences on one of their two dimensions: centralization – decentralization and majority – minority. The parliamentary actors introduced before who work together to design the instruments of PPS according to their institutional preferences vary depending on which dimension of the instruments of PPS is concerned. Frontbenchers and backbenchers maximize their votes through designing the instruments of PPS to be centralized or decentralized. Conversely, the majority- and minority-
friendliness of the instruments of PPS depends on how parliamentary party groups, the government and the opposition can best maximize their votes. In Section 2.7, I provide a summary of this chapter.

2.2. Parliamentary Actors Relevant for the Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

Individual parliamentarians, parliamentary party groups, the government and the opposition are the relevant actors for understanding how the instruments of PPS are designed. I focus exclusively on these actors, i.e. actors within parliament, and disregard actors outside of parliament because the actors within parliament are the ones actually making the decision about how the instruments of PPS are designed. For example, parliamentarians vote to approve or disapprove of a particular design of the instruments of PPS. While these parliamentarians may have been lobbied by interest groups, the interest groups are not the ones involved in the vote about the design of the instruments of PPS. It follows that only the actors within parliament are directly responsible for the design of the instruments of PPS. Thus, focusing on the actors within parliament allows me to capture the most important actors. Below, I elaborate on each one of these actors in turn.

Individual parliamentarians are the most basic organizational unit of parliament and are therefore fundamentally relevant actors when explaining the design of the instruments of PPS. They are the ones who enter parliament, they make up parliamentary party groups and they support the government or form the opposition (Strøm 2000, 284). Individual parliamentarians are the actors which most of the time actually employ the instruments of PPS, e.g. by speaking up in a debate (Proksch and Slapin 2012, 520) or by posing a question.

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4 Including actors outside of parliament, such as interest groups, in the analysis is not only unnecessary, but also not feasible. For instance, if I would trace how interest groups or representatives of the media influence the design of the instruments of PPS, I would have to both massively extend the theoretical framework and gather data on how exactly those actors outside of parliament influence the design of the instruments of PPS. This is not feasible given the diversity and dynamics of these actors.
(Martin 2011a). Most importantly, however, they formally have the right to vote independently on legislative proposals (Sieberer 2006, 150). This means that individual parliamentarians formally decide the design of the instruments of PPS. I conclude that individual parliamentarians have to be considered when explaining the institutional design and change of the instruments of PPS.

In Western European parliaments, parliamentarians are organized in parliamentary party groups (Saalfeld and Strøm 2014). There is usually a minimum number of parliamentarians required to form a party group. This requirement varies widely in Western European parliaments, ranging from 5% of parliamentarians in the German Bundestag and 3% of seats of the respective parliaments in Italy, France, and Ireland to less than 1% of seats in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Party groups usually consist of members of the same party, but this does not have to be the case (Heidar and Koole 2000).

Parliamentarians choose to form a party group because party groups allow parliamentarians to work together more efficiently (Cox and McCubbins 2007), because parliamentary party groups have greater organizational resources than individual parliamentarians (Heidar and Koole 2000), and because party groups enjoy advantages in parliament, such as being allocated a particular speaking time in plenary debates. Consequently, ‘parliamentary party groups are the relevant actors in parliamentary business’ (Sieberer 2006, 150; see also Saalfeld and Strøm 2014, 371-373) and usually vote cohesively (Carey 2007; Sieberer 2006). It follows that parliamentary party groups are the basic functional unit of parliament (Strøm and Müller 1999, 2). Thus, they have to be included when seeking to understand the design of the instruments of PPS.

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5 In the following, I use the terms ‘parliamentary party groups’, ‘parliamentary parties’ and ‘party groups’ interchangeably.
When distinguishing between individual parliamentarians and parliamentary party groups, it is important to keep in mind that party groups are structured hierarchically to allow parliamentarians to cooperate (André et al. 2014, 240-242; Cox 2006, 147-149). It follows that some of the parliamentarians in a party form its leadership, i.e. are frontbenchers, while the others have a supporting role, i.e. are backbenchers (Norton 1999; Rose 1983). Therefore, when both individual parliamentarians and parliamentary party groups are considered together for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS, one has to distinguish not between individual parliamentarians and parliamentary party groups but between front- and backbenchers to disentangle these affiliations.

Parliamentary party groups can be distinguished further into supporting the government or taking part in the opposition. In most Western European parliaments, the former is equivalent to the parliamentary majority and the latter is equivalent to the minority (Hix and Noury 2013). However, even if there is a minority government, as is frequently the case in the Nordic countries, this government still has various supporting parties in parliament which allow the government to obtain issue-based majorities. It follows that minority governments also command a parliamentary majority at all times\(^6\) (Strøm 1990, 94-108). It is likely that the government and the opposition have different institutional preferences for the design of the instruments of PPS because the government aims to communicate to voters that it performed well during its time in office while the opposition strives to convince voters that they will fare much better with electing a different government. Thus, both the government and the opposition have to be taken into account when seeking to explain the design of the instruments of PPS.

\(^6\) Building on this argument, I use the terms ‘majority’ and ‘government’ as well as ‘minority’ and ‘opposition’ interchangeably.
2.3. **Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements and Vote Maximization**

Parliamentarians, parliamentary party groups, and the government and the opposition can maximize their votes through communicating PPS because this allows them to impact the chain of delegation and accountability (Strøm 2000). As the design of the instruments of PPS matters for these actors’ chances of maximizing their votes, they have an interest in how the instruments of PPS are designed. Moreover, I introduce that there are two types of instruments of PPS which are employed for different kinds of communication: open instruments and closed instruments. For instance, a plenary debate is an open instrument and an oral question is a closed instrument. I argue that open and closed should be analyzed in the same framework because while they are used for different kinds of communication, they both serve to communicate PPS to the electorate.

2.3.1. **Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements in the Framework of Delegation and Accountability**

Parliamentary actors employ the instruments of PPS to help them maximize their votes by impacting the information the voters have about them. Strøm (2000) argues that in all parliamentary democracies, voters employ elections to delegate certain tasks to officials. This chain of delegation is complemented by a chain of accountability, which runs in the opposite direction. The chain of accountability implies that the voters can punish or reward the elected officials in the next election based on their performance while in office. However, which parliamentarians, parties or group of parties the voters vote for depends on the information the voters have about the parliamentary actors (Maravall 2006, 918-923; Persson et al. 1997; Strøm 2000, 270-275). Thus, in order to pursue their vote-seeking motive, parliamentary actors aim to provide voters with information about themselves and the other parliamentary actors through communicating PPS and give them an answer to their question of ‘What have you done for me lately?’ (Ferejohn 1986, 6). This is visualized in Figure 2-1.
It is well-established that this kind of political communication works during electoral campaigns (Kaid 2009; Schmitt-Beck 2007; Schmitt-Beck and Farrell 2003), there is also evidence that this communication has an impact on voters between elections. While Norris (2000, 255-278) notes that communication between parliament and the public may not work in-between elections if voters pay little attention to political messages, research suggests otherwise. For example, research on the effects of the media on the public’s knowledge about the daily business of parliament suggests that while televising parliamentary proceedings, e.g. plenary debates or question time, has only contributed to the public feeling better informed (Bovill et al. 1992; Hetherington and Weaver 1992; Lamb 1992; Schatz 1992), newspaper coverage of the House of Commons does indeed have an impact on voters’ factual knowledge of parliament (Tutt 1992). In Norway, spontaneous oral questions are ‘quite important from a political point of view’ because they concern issues which ‘make the front pages of newspapers and prime time news’ (Rasch 2011, 384). Furthermore, ‘[t]here is strong evidence that debates contribute to voter learning about political issues and to candidate image formulation’ (Kaid 2009, 59). As parliamentary actors’ communication with voters from within parliament impacts how voters perceive and vote for these actors, parliamentary actors employ these instruments to maximize their votes.
2.3.2. Two Types of Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

Within parliament, parliamentary actors have several options for communicating with their electorate. For instance, parliamentarians and their respective parties employ plenary debates to show their voters that they have been sticking to their policy profile even though they may have had to make policy compromises in a multi-party government (Martin and Vanberg 2008). Further, parliamentarians and their party groups contribute to plenary debates to distinguish themselves from other parties (Proksch and Slapin 2010, 2012; Slapin and Proksch 2010). Parliamentary questions are used for a number of reasons (Rozenberg et al. 2011). For example, parties in the opposition employ written parliamentary questions to scrutinize the government (Rozenberg and Martin 2011); and parties in government use questions to scrutinize each other (Martin and Vanberg 2004). Irrespective of their party label, parliamentarians use questions to show their constituents that they care about their concerns (Saalfeld 2011). Additionally, parties employ questions if they desire to highlight their attachment to a particular issue (Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011), to provoke political confrontation (Rozenberg and Martin 2011), or to be rewarded for gathering expertise (Rozenberg et al. 2011). These instruments and the other instruments of PPS introduced in Section 1.1 of the Introduction can be distinguished into open and closed instruments depending on the interaction of parliamentary actors when using them.

Due to this different set-up, parliamentary actors employ open instruments primarily for directly communicating with the electorate while they employ closed instruments mainly for scrutiny, confrontation, and information gathering. Of the instruments of PPS, plenary debates and the presentation and discussion of committee reports are open instruments. Conversely, oral and written questions as well as interpellations are closed instruments. Below, I elaborate on each type of instrument of PPS.
Open instruments of PPS have an open interaction between parliamentary actors and are open as to who is allowed to participate in them. This means that they do not have a priori restrictions on which actors are allowed to participate in them\(^7\) and do not require one actor to specifically target another. Responses by addressed actors are optional. Consequently, the focus of attention is concentrated more strongly on the actor giving the statement than on the actors that are being addressed. This is visualized in Figure 2-2.

![Figure 2-2: Interaction in Open Instruments of PPS](image)

Of the instruments of PPS introduced in Table 1-1 in the Introduction, debates in the plenary constitute an example of an open instrument of PPS. Plenary debates typically include multiple speakers with at least one participant from each parliamentary party group. Who exactly participates and in which order they participate may be more or less strongly regulated (Proksch and Slapin 2012). The purpose of plenary debates is twofold. On the one hand, such debates are used by parliamentary actors to communicate with each other (Martin and Vanberg 2004; Slapin and Proksch 2010). On the other hand, parliamentary actors employ them to communicate with their respective electorate in a more nuanced fashion than voting allows for (Martin and Vanberg 2008; Proksch and Slapin 2010, 2012; Slapin and Proksch 2010). The interaction in plenary debates thus consists of one parliamentary actor at a time addressing one or several other actors, which may be either a parliamentary actor (e.g. a parliamentarian from parliamentary party group X addressing a shortcoming of the parliamentary party group Y) or a non-parliamentary actor (e.g. a parliamentarian from

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\(^7\) While these instruments allow every actor to participate in theory, this is not possible in reality due to limited time.
parliamentary party group X addressing the electorate of his parliamentary party group). In both cases, the parliamentary actor addressing the other actors states his policy position (or that of his party group/of the majority/of the minority) and thus always communicates PPS to the respective electorate. This set-up implies that plenary debates are structured very openly regarding who participates in them, in what order participants speak and which actors participants address.

The interaction between parliamentary actors in closed instruments is regulated in a much stricter way than in open instruments. Closed instruments of PPS allow only two parliamentary actors to participate and clearly regulate how the interaction takes place. Actor A addresses actor B. The latter then has to respond to the former, which concludes their interaction. Consequently, the focus in closed instruments is on all participating actors, which makes them well-suited for confrontation, scrutiny, and information gathering. The interaction of parliamentary actors in closed instruments is visualized in Figure 2-3.

Figure 2-3: Interaction in Closed Instruments of PPS

Parliamentary questions are an example of closed instruments of PPS. They can be found in all democracies and are especially relevant for citizens’ engagement in the political process because they are relatively well-covered by the media (Martin 2011a; Penner et al. 2006). In parliamentary questions, a parliamentarian asks a member of the government a question. The member of the government then has to reply, which concludes the question. As such, parliamentary questions are employed for various purposes and their use differs among countries. Parliamentarians use these questions to publicly express their concern about an issue (Bailer 2011) and thus show their constituents that they take their problems seriously (Martin 2011b; Russo 2011; Saalfeld 2011). Moreover, parliamentary questions serve the
purpose of promoting issue-ownership (Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011) and are employed to
monitor the executive and thus increase transparency (Sánchez de Dios and Wiberg 2011;
Strøm 2000, 271-272), as well as to gather information (Bailer 2011) and promote debate
among parliamentary actors (Russo and Wiberg 2010).

Open and closed instruments of PPS should be analyzed in a common framework because
while they differ regarding the interaction of parliamentary actors, they can be explained by
the same factors. Both open and closed instruments of PPS serve the same purpose, i.e.
communicating policy statements from parliamentary actors to the public so that the
parliamentary actors can maximize their votes. For example, plenary debates and
parliamentary questions both serve the purpose of communicating PPS, with the former
providing for a more open interaction than the latter. Consequently, all empirical examples of
open and closed instruments of PPS can be regarded as situated on a continuum ranging from
‘completely open interaction’ (e.g. a plenary debate in which the number of participating
parliamentarians is not at all restricted and the sequence of events is not at all organized) to
‘completely closed interaction’ (e.g. an oral question in which only the parliamentarian posing
and another one answering the question are involved, the question is posed for exactly one
minute, the answer lasts exactly five minutes, and thereafter the question is over). Moreover,
these instruments are governed by the same institutional framework, i.e. the parliamentary
standing orders. Taken together, this evidence suggests that the design of these two kinds of
instruments can be explained by the same factors. Thus, both open and closed instruments of
PPS should be analyzed in one common framework rather than separately, as is currently the
case in the literature (see e.g. Martin and Rozenberg (editors) 2011; Proksch and Slapin
2012).
2.4. Decisive Coalitions of Parliamentary Actors

Parliamentary actors have an interest in how the instruments of PPS are designed because the design of the instruments of PPS is decisive for how well parliamentary actors can maximize their votes. For example, if asking an oral question requires the support of 25 members and a parliamentary party group in the opposition only has 20 members, this party group has almost no chance of asking an oral question. Therefore, the party group cannot show its electorate as well as other, larger party groups in the opposition that it disapproves of the policies of the government. It follows that in order to have more opportunities for asking oral questions, the parliamentary party group wants the majority requirement for employing oral questions to be lowered. This example illustrates that the design of the instruments of PPS decides how parliamentary actors can employ the instruments of PPS. As parliamentary actors have an interest in employing the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes, I conclude that they also have an interest in the design of the instruments of PPS.

Parliamentary actors are able to design the instruments of PPS according to their preferences if they can form a decisive coalition. I argue that the instruments of PPS are primarily codified in the parliamentary standing orders which can usually be changed by a simple majority. It follows that a decisive coalition consisting of as many parliamentary actors as are required to change the parliamentary standing orders can – in principle – design the instruments of PPS according to its preferences.

In Western Europe, the most important provisions for the instruments of PPS are codified in the parliamentary standing orders. These documents contain the vast majority of the ‘formal rules that govern the conduct of politics in the parliamentary arena’ (Sieberer et al. 2011, 950). The amount of rules codified by constitutions, on the other hand, differs widely between countries and regimes (Müller and Sieberer 2014, 311-312). I determined through intensive analysis of the standing orders and constitutions of the countries under investigation
that the standing orders include the bulk of the rules regarding PPS. I thus view constitutions as exogenous to the political process (Diermeier and Krehbiel 2003; Ostrom 2005) and focus exclusively on the rules of PPS entrenched in the standing orders.

Parliamentary actors can design the instruments of PPS according to their preferences if they can form a large enough coalition to reach the requirement for changing the standing orders. The standing orders usually can be changed like any ordinary law, i.e. requiring only a simple majority. The main exception to this case is Austria, where a two-thirds majority is required for changing the standing orders. Iceland, Italy, and Spain require an absolute majority to change their standing orders. These majority requirements are summarized in Table 2-1 and yield that a decisive coalition is constituted by a simple majority in all countries but Austria, Iceland, Italy, and Spain, where the greater majority requirements apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Majority required to change the standing orders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Two-thirds majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Absolute majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Absolute majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Absolute majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Simple majority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Project ‘Institutional Design of European Parliaments’ at the University of Konstanz (PD Dr. Sieberer).
To understand how these decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS, it is necessary to know what their motivations are and how they can design the instruments of PPS. I elaborate on these points in the following two sections. In Section 2.5, I contrast the goals of parliamentary actors and argue that they design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. In Section 2.6, I argue that there are two dimensions on which parliamentary actors can design the instruments of PPS: centralization – decentralization and majority – minority. Moreover, I discuss that the actors making up the decisive coalitions differ for the two dimensions.

2.5. Motivations of Parliamentary Actors to Design the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

The literature has identified three motivations of parliamentary actors: office, policy, and votes. Of these goals, maximizing votes is always seen as an instrumental goal, i.e. as being conducive only to pursuing the other goals (Budge and Laver 1986; de Swaan 1973; Downs 1957; Ferejohn 1986; Müller and Strøm 1999; Riker 1962). Conversely, the goals of office and policy may be either instrumental or intrinsic. Downs (1957), Ferejohn (1986) and Riker (1962) argue that parties pass policy only to please voters and in turn maximize their votes and secure re-election into office. De Swaan (1973) counters that parties are not primarily interested in the spoils of office but view being in office as an instrumental means to pass their preferred policies. Strøm and Müller (1999) extend on these arguments by putting forward that party groups may care intrinsically about both being in office and passing policy. This yields that parties may face a trade-off between these motivations. Moreover, parties may also face a trade-off between their intrinsic goals and maximizing their votes. For example, if a party cares intrinsically about a policy that is electorally harmful, it has to decide whether to pass this policy and lose votes, or refrain from passing this policy in favor of maximizing its votes (Strøm and Müller 1999, 10).
Of these three goals, maximizing votes is important for the design of the instruments of PPS because parliamentary actors employ PPS for this purpose and because this motivation is necessary to furnish the other goals. To assess the impact of the other goals of parliamentary actors on the design of the instruments of PPS, I elaborate on both in detail below. Maximizing votes is the main goal of parliamentary actors when designing the instruments of PPS because the design of the instruments of PPS does not concern their other goals, i.e. participation in office and the material content of policy. The office-seeking goal does not independently motivate parliamentary actors to design the instruments of PPS in a particular way because communicating PPS to the public does not maximize the spoils of office. For example, if a parliamentary party group intrinsically wants to take part in government, it should negotiate well with potential coalition partners so that it occupies as many cabinet posts as possible. However, communicating PPS does not help the party group to achieve this aim. Moreover, there is no trade-off between maximizing votes and office when designing the instruments of PPS. In fact, parliamentary actors employ the instruments of PPS precisely to avoid this trade-off. For instance, Martin and Vanberg (2008) argue that party groups of the government make speeches during plenary debates to both show their voters why they should re-elect them even though they had to make compromises in government and to not rebuff the other party groups in government through open criticism.

The policy-seeking goal is also of secondary importance for the design of the instruments of PPS because it does not impact the material content of policy but rather how this content is communicated. By definition, the instruments of PPS do not concern how legislative proposals or amendments are introduced. Therefore, parliamentary actors which care first and foremost about passing policy should concentrate their efforts on other instruments than on the instruments of PPS, namely those instruments which allow for impacting the material content of policy. For example, one could expect that a parliamentary party group of the
opposition which is intrinsically motivated to impact policy strives to make the rules for introducing a legislative proposal or an amendment to a legislative proposal more minority-friendly. I conclude that the goals of office and policy do not impact how the instruments of PPS are designed; rather, parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes.

2.6. Two Dimensions of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

Parliamentary actors can maximize their votes on two dimensions of the instruments of PPS: centralization – decentralization and majority-friendliness – minority-friendliness; for each dimension, the parliamentary actors which make up the decisive coalition differ. Frontbenchers and backbenchers maximize their votes through designing the instruments of PPS to be centralized or decentralized. Conversely, the parliamentary party groups taking part in the government or forming the opposition exert influence on the majority- or minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS to convince as many voters as possible to vote for them. Below, I introduce each dimension of the instruments of PPS in detail. Moreover, I argue which actors are relevant for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS on each one of the two dimensions.

The centralization – decentralization dimension refers to the amount of rights the instruments of PPS give to backbenchers or actors with special offices. Backbenchers have more rights if the instruments of PPS are decentralized. Conversely, if instruments of PPS are centralized, this means that frontbenchers and other centralized actors control the instruments of PPS more strongly than backbenchers. The study of the interaction between backbenchers and frontbenchers or other actors with special offices has been prevalent in the field of legislative studies for a long time. For instance, Carey (2006, 444-447) asserts that all legislatures face the problem of having only limited time available for conducting their business. Legislatures are only able to cope with this time restriction because parliamentary
party groups exercise control over their members. Furthermore, Proksch and Slapin (2012) argue that frontbenchers control the access of backbenchers to plenary debates more or less tightly depending on electoral incentives.

The relevant actors in the conflict about the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS are thus backbenchers and frontbenchers. As argued in Section 2.2, when both individual parliamentarians and parliamentary party groups are considered together, one rather has to distinguish between front- and backbenchers. Backbenchers have an interest in the degree of centralization of PPS because if the instruments of PPS are designed in a decentralized way, they can decide autonomously how to employ them. For example, this allows backbenchers to show their constituency that they take their local concerns seriously and hence maximize their chances of re-election (Saalfeld 2011). Conversely, the frontbenchers of parliamentary party groups care about the degree of decentralization of the instruments of PPS because they have a vested interest in whether backbenchers decide independently to employ an instrument of PPS or whether the parliamentary party group leadership or another centralized actor, e.g. the president of parliament, does so. For instance, if the instruments of PPS are very centralized, frontbenchers can decide about the use of the instruments of PPS and through this ensure that voters are presented with a unified party label.

The centralization of the instruments of PPS does not impact how power is distributed between party groups in parliament but rather how power is distributed between front- and backbenchers; hence, the party groups taking part in the government cannot gain an advantage over the party groups constituting the opposition if the instruments of PPS are designed in a comparatively centralized or decentralized way. Conversely, it is conceivable that the party groups of the opposition can gain an advantage from a highly decentralized design of the instruments of PPS because a highly decentralized design of the instruments of PPS allows all
parliamentarians to speak about what they want to whenever they desire to do so, which may lead to parliamentary gridlock (Cox 2006) and ultimately result in negative electoral consequences for the government.

Yet, the opposition is also not a relevant actor for explaining the centralization of the instruments of PPS for two reasons. First, an opposition so obstructive that it is willing to risk a collapse of parliamentary workings for gaining an electoral advantage rarely – if ever – still exists in Western European parliaments. For example, Keman (1994, 127) argues that only Finland, France and Italy can be classified as having a party system corresponding to Sartori’s (2005) polarized pluralism (see also Broughton and Donovan 1999). According to Dalton’s (2008, 906-908) measure of polarization, all countries of Western Europe are moderately polarized. Thus, while the opposition in Western European parliaments may be more or less ideologically close to the government, it is highly unlikely that this opposition is willing to completely obstruct all parliamentary business to maximize its votes. Second, the opposition simply does not have the majority required to change the standing orders of parliament (see Section 2.4). Therefore, the party groups taking part in the government and the opposition are not relevant actors for explaining how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS are.

The degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS is a particularly interesting case because it has both a redistributive and an efficient element; yet, its redistributive character prevails (for a more detailed elaboration on the distinction between efficient and redistributive change of institutions, see Tsebelis 1990). On the one hand, how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed indicates that either backbenchers have comparatively many rights or centralized actors have comparatively many prerogatives. On the other hand, the centralization of the instruments of PPS also has an impact on how efficiently the entire parliament works. The more centralized the instruments of PPS are designed, the more easily can centralized actors allocate time in the plenary for specific purposes or determine that time
for PPS should be limited in order to cope with a large parliamentary workload. If parliament works more efficiently, this could in turn improve the chances of re-election of both frontbenchers and backbenchers. Therefore, even though the centralization of the instruments of PPS has a redistributive character, it should hardly be controversial and consequently accepted by a broad parliamentary majority.

The second dimension on which the instruments of PPS regulate the interaction between parliamentary actors concerns whether the government or the opposition has comparatively many or few rights. I thus refer to this dimension of design as majority – minority. The interaction between the government and the opposition is central to modern parliaments, as these no longer operate under the Old Dualism but under the New Dualism (Patzelt 2003, 28). The former postulates that the government interacts with the entire parliament, i.e. that the main dividing line in parliaments is between the government and the parliament. Conversely, the latter postulates that the government emanates directly from the parliament and thus interacts with the opposition.

The parliamentary party groups of the government and the opposition are the central actors when seeking to explain how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. From the previous paragraph follows that the dimension majority-friendliness – minority-friendliness indicates how many rights the government and the opposition has to employ the instruments of PPS. For example, if the opposition has comparatively many rights to employ oral questions, it has many opportunities to ask the government uncomfortable questions and show the public that they should not vote for the government but rather for the opposition in the following election. Conversely, if the opposition uses this right in an obstructive manner, the government may fare better electorally if it designs oral questions to be comparatively more majority-friendly. It follows that both the government and the
opposition are relevant actors for understanding whether the instruments of PPS are designed more majority- or more minority-friendly.

Yet, government and opposition are not monolithic actors but are made up of parliamentary party groups which contest each other in elections. It follows that these party groups have their own interests even if they are governing together in a coalition government or constitute the opposition. For instance, parliamentary party groups in the government frequently make speeches in plenary debates to show their electorate that they are still committed to their electoral platform even though they had to make compromises to govern. The party groups do so in order to maximize their votes in the following election (Martin and Vanberg 2008). Thus, the parliamentary party groups constituting the government and the opposition also have to be taken into account to understand how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed.

The two dimensions of the instruments of PPS introduced above are independent of each other because majority and minority actors are independent of centralized and decentralized actors. The centralization – decentralization dimension concerns the interaction between backbenchers and centralized actors, while the majority – minority dimension concerns the interaction between the government and the opposition. Centralized actors can be both majority actors (e.g. the government) and minority actors (e.g. a frontbencher of parliamentary party group). Conversely, decentralized actors can only be minority actors (e.g. individual parliamentarians) but not majority actors. The same argument holds vice versa, i.e. minority actors can be both centralized (e.g. a frontbencher of parliamentary party group) and decentralized (e.g. individual parliamentarians) while majority actors can only be centralized (e.g. the government) but not decentralized. Thus, I do not expect the design of one dimension of PPS to condition the design of the other dimension, e.g. that a minority-friendly design of PPS automatically leads to more decentralized instruments of PPS. There is only one
exception to this rule. Since a decentralized actor is always by definition a minority actor, the combination of very majority-friendly and highly decentralized instruments does not exist. Table 2-2 provides an overview of all theoretically possible combinations of the two dimensions and gives examples for each case. ‘Yes’ means that the combination is theoretically possible, while ‘No’ indicates that the combination is not theoretically possible. Examples are provided in brackets.

Table 2-2: Theoretically Possible Combinations of Dimensions of Instruments of PPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very centralized</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(each party group can ask oral questions when it wants to)</td>
<td>(government and party groups have right to end plenary debate)</td>
<td>(party groups of the government have disproportionately more speaking time in plenary debate than party groups of opposition)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly centralized, partly decentralized</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(both party groups and individual parliamentarians can ask oral questions when they want to)</td>
<td>(government, party groups and individual parliamentarians have right to end plenary debate)</td>
<td>(only parliamentarians nominated by their party groups and members of the governmental majority may speak during a debate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very decentralized</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(individual parliamentarians can ask oral questions when they want to)</td>
<td>(five members of the government or ten members of opposition have right to end plenary debate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on this argument, I further assume that designing one dimension of PPS in a particular way does not place a quota on the design of the other dimension. This means that an extreme design on one dimension does not make an extreme design on the other dimension more or less likely. Table 2-2 supports this assumption, as all combinations except one are theoretically possible. For instance, if the instruments of PPS are very minority-friendly, it is possible to find a very centralized design of PPS, a highly decentralized design, or a design in
between. Therefore, I treat and analyze both dimensions of the institutional design of PPS separately.

2.7. Summary

In this chapter, I provided the theoretical foundation for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS. I argued that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. In detail, I highlighted that frontbenchers and backbenchers as well as the parliamentary party groups of the government and the opposition are the relevant actors for understanding how the instruments of PPS are designed. I then explained based on the framework of Delegation and Accountability (Strøm 2000) that parliamentary actors employ the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. From this follows that parliamentary actors also have an interest in how the instruments of PPS are designed because their design impacts how parliamentary actors can employ the instruments of PPS. The instruments of PPS can be distinguished into two types: open instruments and closed instruments. While open instruments primarily serve for communicating PPS about actors’ ideological stances from parliamentary actors to the public, closed instruments can be employed to gather information, to scrutinize the government and to provoke confrontation. I explained that both types of instruments of PPS should be analyzed within the same framework because they differ regarding the interaction between parliamentary actors but serve the same purpose of communicating PPS. Thus, the design of both open and closed instruments of PPS can be explained by the same factors.

After having introduced how the instruments of PPS work, I argued that parliamentary actors can design the instruments of PPS according to their preferences if they can form coalitions large enough to change the parliamentary standing orders. Moreover, I discussed that the goal of parliamentary actors when designing the instruments of PPS is to maximize their votes. Conversely, maximizing impact on public policy or maximizing the spoils of
office is of secondary importance for understanding how parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS. In the last section, I argued that parliamentary actors can maximize their votes by impacting the design of the instruments of PPS on one of their two dimensions: centralization – decentralization and majority-friendliness – minority-friendliness. The decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors which aim to maximize their votes on the centralization – decentralization dimension consist of frontbenchers and backbenchers. The decisive coalitions on the majority-friendliness – minority-friendliness dimension consist of parliamentary party groups as well as of the government and the opposition.

Building on these arguments, in the following section I derive hypotheses about how parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS on the centralization – decentralization dimension and on the majority-friendliness – minority-friendliness dimension. I argue that the design of the instruments of PPS differs based on the decisive coalitions’ incentives and capabilities. As parliamentary actors employ open instruments for communicating their policy positions to the electorate and use closed instruments for confrontation, scrutiny, and information gathering, it is likely that the design of the instruments of PPS differs depending on whether they are open or closed. Thus, I adapt these hypotheses to take into account whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed.

3.1. Introduction

To understand how parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes, in this chapter I derive hypotheses about the design and change of the instruments of PPS from the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter. In Section 3.2, I argue that Rational Choice Institutionalism is the most appropriate theoretical approach for deriving these hypotheses because its assumptions about actors, the design and the change of institutions fit best with the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter. The core argument of the theoretical framework is that decisive coalitions in parliaments design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. Rational Choice Institutionalism assumes that actors interact freely and rationally to maximize their exogenously given preferences, that actors choose those institutions which best maximize their preferences and that actors change the design of an institution if another design provides the actors with higher payoffs. It follows that the assumptions of Rational Choice Institutionalism hold for the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Therefore, I rely on Rational Choice Institutionalism to derive the hypotheses about the design and change of the instruments of PPS.

In Section 3.3, I discuss that the hypotheses derived from the theoretical framework are able to explain the design of the instruments of PPS even though they assume perfect adaption of the design of the instruments of PPS and there are substantial costs associated with institutional reform. The theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter suggests that decisive coalitions can design the instruments of PPS to suit their preferences. This implies that the decisive coalitions can always perfectly adapt the design of the instruments of PPS. However, such perfect adaption is unlikely because adapting a particular design of the instruments of PPS is costly. It follows that it is more likely that decisive coalitions can only
partially design the instruments of PPS according to their preferences. Yet, the instruments of PPS are situated in parliaments whose structure of political conflict is rather stable. This yields that the pressure for a particular design of the instruments of PPS is also constant during this time. Therefore, while perfect adaption of the instruments of PPS is unlikely due to the high costs of institutional reform, the hypotheses derived from theoretical framework are able to explain design of instruments of PPS because the pressure for reform is quite stable.

In Sections 3.4 and 3.5, I derive the hypotheses about design of instruments of PPS on its two dimensions, i.e. centralization – decentralization and majority – minority. I argue that the design of the instruments of PPS depends on both the incentives and the capabilities of the decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors. The incentives of decisive coalitions provide information about which design of the instruments of PPS they prefer to maximize their votes. The incentives include the accountability of parliamentarians and the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition. I also include a competing hypothesis, which postulates that the instruments of PPS should be designed in a way which makes parliament more efficient. Moreover, open and closed instruments of PPS should be designed differently because parliamentary actors employ them differently. How easy it is for decisive coalitions to implement their preferred design of the instruments of PPS depends on their capabilities. How capable decisive coalitions are to design the instruments of PPS according to their preferences is indicated by the conflict between government and opposition, the seat share of the government, and the ideological homogeneity of the government.

In Section 3.6, I adapt the hypotheses about the design of the instruments of PPS to explain the change of the instruments of PPS. Building on Rational Choice Institutionalism, I argue that the design of the instruments of PPS changes if the incentives and capabilities of decisive
coalitions change. In Section 3.7, I provide a summary of this chapter and give an outlook for the following chapters.

3.2. Competing Views of Institutional Design

Rational Choice Institutionalism is more suitable than Historical Institutionalism for explaining why parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS in a particular way because the assumptions of Rational Choice Institutionalism correspond more closely to the theoretical framework of this dissertation than the assumptions of Historical Institutionalism. Below, I provide a brief introduction to both institutionalisms and contrast the assumptions which Rational Choice Institutionalism and Historical Institutionalism make about the preferences and rationality of actors, about institutional design and about institutional change.

Rational Choice Institutionalism and Historical Institutionalism are the most prominent theoretical lenses for understanding institutional design and change (Rhodes et al. 2006). The basic premise of Historical Institutionalism is that history matters, i.e. that it is difficult to depart from a particular path once it is chosen. Therefore, institutional design and development are path-dependent and institutional change is incremental at most. However, there is one exception to this rule; institutions can change dramatically at critical junctures\(^8\) (Mahoney 2000; Pierson 2004, 2008). This means that during regular parliamentary business, i.e. most of the time, actors can make only incremental changes to adapt institutions to suit their needs. It is only at critical junctures that profound change can occur and actors can better realize their institutional preferences.

Scholars advocating Rational Choice Institutionalism focus more strongly on political actors’ agency. Shepsle (2006b, 24-27) illustrates that there are currently two main strands of

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\(^8\) An example of a critical juncture is the onset of military warfare between states, which generated the need to raise revenue for the war. While some states rely on middlemen to raise taxes, others set up a centralized bureaucracy. This juncture leads to a dramatically different evolution of states, resulting in the former states being less efficient in raising taxes than the latter. Ultimately, this leads to the capturing of the former by the latter (Pierson 2008).
research in Rational Choice Institutionalism, one taking institutions as exogenously given and one viewing them as endogenous. Scholars viewing institutions as exogenously given assume that institutions provide the ‘rules of the game’, which subsequently frame actors’ interaction. This means that institutions are outside the realm of the political process. While this approach also allows for deliberate institutional design, adapting this design is necessarily incremental rather than bold (North 1990). On the other hand, institutions can also be understood as endogenous to the political process. This means that while institutions also shape political actors’ interaction, political actors have the ability to purposefully design these institutions. As such, the current institutional design mirrors actors’ preferences and their relative strength. Consequently, institutions are conceived as constituting an equilibrium (Calvert 1995; Greif and Laitin 2004; Shepsle 2006a).

Historical Institutionalism differs from Rational Choice Institutionalism in the assumptions it makes about the preferences and rationality of actors and about institutional design and institutional change. Below, I contrast these assumptions and argue that the assumptions of Rational Choice Institutionalism are a better fit for understanding the institutional design of the instruments of PPS.

First, Historical Institutionalism and Rational Choice Institutionalism differ in their assumptions about actors. The Historical-Institutionalist view of institutional design and change is based on the following assumptions about political actors. First, Historical Institutionalism attributes political actors with limited agency (Peters et al. 2005). Moreover, their behavior is not seen as fully rational but rather as bounded rational (Hay and Wincott 1998; see also Hall and Taylor 1996; Koelble1995). Further, Historical Institutionalism postulates that actors’ preferences are impacted by institutions, i.e. that their preferences are endogenous (Koelble 1995; Thelen 1999). Finally, actors are not free to interact as they please but some have greater access to the decision-making process than others (Hall and Taylor
Conversely, Rational Choice Institutionalism is based on very different assumptions about parliamentary actors. Here, parliamentary actors are seen as fully rational actors. Their agency is not restricted in any way. Parliamentary actors have exogenously given, stable preferences. To realize these preferences, they strategically interact with each other without any restrictions. This includes that there are no asymmetries of power between parliamentary actors (Hall and Taylor 1996; Thelen 1999).

Second, the assumptions about institutional design and change are also very different for Historical Institutionalism and Rational Choice Institutionalism. Historical Institutionalism postulates that institutions are given a priori and affect individual’s behavior (Thelen 1999). They do so by providing actors with cognitive templates for action (Hall and Taylor 1996). Institutions are difficult to change because they are based on conventions which can only be changed collectively and because the institutions themselves structure the options for changing them. Therefore, institutional change is incremental and occurs through historic evolution (Hall and Taylor 1996; Thelen 1999). Conversely, Rational Choice Institutionalism assumes that actors design institutions according to their preferences (Koelble 1995; Thelen 1999). As long as institutions constitute an equilibrium, they are stable. Their design is changed if another design provides the relevant actors with more benefits, i.e. if the institution can no longer sustain an equilibrium (Hall and Taylor 1996; Thelen 1999). It follows that while institutional design is still adapted incrementally, sweeping change is also possible and not just seen as a response to a shock (Tsebelis 1990; Weingast 1996). For example, Baumgartner and Jones (2002) argue that depending on whether an institution counterbalances or reinforces the demands it encounters, its design may change either incrementally or suddenly.

The assumptions Rational Choice Institutionalism makes about actors and the design and change of institutions are better suited for deriving hypotheses about the design of the
instruments of PPS than the respective assumptions of Historical Institutionalism because they hold for the theoretical framework of this dissertation. The theoretical framework postulates that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. This means that I attribute parliamentary actors with stable, exogenously given preferences. Moreover, I argue that parliamentary actors can design the instruments of PPS to realize their preferences. Finally, in order to design the instruments of PPS according to their preferences, parliamentary actors strategically interact with each other. During this interaction, no actor enjoys any institutional advantages. With regard to institutional design and change, I put forth that the design and change of the instruments of PPS depends on the preferences of decisive coalitions, i.e. how they can best maximize their votes. Thus, Rational Choice Institutionalism is more suitable for analyzing the design and change of the instruments of PPS in the dissertation at hand than Historical Institutionalism.

To summarize, Rational Choice Institutionalism is more appropriate than Historical Institutionalism for deriving hypotheses about the design and change of the instruments of PPS because its assumptions hold for the theoretical framework of this dissertation. In particular, the following three core assumptions of Rational Choice Institutionalism make it a good fit for my theoretical framework. First, Rational Choice Institutionalism assumes that actors are rational and have exogenously given preferences which they seek to maximize through strategic interaction with other rational actors. Second, Rational Choice Institutionalism postulates that institutions are designed to maximize these actors’ preferences. Last, Rational Choice Institutionalism implies that the design of institutions is changed if another design provides the relevant actors with more benefits than the currently existing institution.

The hypotheses for the design of the instruments of PPS specified in the following sections are able to predict how the instruments of PPS are designed at a particular point in time because the structure of conflict between parliamentary actors rarely changes, as I show below. Thus, even though changing the instruments of PPS may be costly, the design of PPS mirrors the institutional preferences of decisive coalitions due to this constant pressure. Further, since the competition in parliament is not completely stable over time, tracing how the design of PPS changes over time is also very revealing. I elaborate on this in Section 3.6.

Theoretically, decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors have the ability to design the complete set of rules of the instruments of PPS as they please (Müller 2002, 274-277 & 280-281) – yet, this is not the case in reality due to the substantial costs of institutional reform. Thus, while Riker (1980) argues that institutions are endogenous to the political process and thus unstable, one observes in practice that institutions are more stable than policy decisions (Shepsle 2006a, 1037-1042). The reason for this stability is that changing institutions is costly. Sieberer and Müller (2014, 11) summarize that there are three kinds of reform costs: opportunity costs, transaction costs, and possibly unintended electoral costs. Opportunity costs refer to the costs of dedicating resources to a particular task instead of dedicating them to other projects (Corcoran 1988). Transaction costs capture the resources necessary to negotiate, pass, and implement the reform (North 1990, 92-104 & 131-140; Shepsle 2006a, 1037). For instance, a reform of the standing orders requires parliamentarians and their staff to draw up a proposal of the new version of the standing orders and to find supporters for this reform. This requires substantial resources, e.g. time. An institutional reform may also have unintended consequences, e.g. electoral costs, if the reaction of the electorate is different than expected (Pierson 2004, 115-119). For example, if a government designs the rules for debate
in a very majority-friendly way to prevent an obstructive opposition from speaking up, it could be the case that the government expects the electorate to perceive this as a necessary measure to ensure the functioning of parliament. Yet, the electorate may view this as an attempt at muzzling the opposition and may thus not support the government in the following election. Thus, parliamentary actors cannot implement any design of the instruments of PPS due to the substantial costs associated with adapting the institutional design of PPS.

For Western European parliaments, the preferences of parliamentary actors for a certain design of the instruments of PPS follow from the structure of competition between parliamentary actors; if this structure is constant for some time, so is the pressure for a particular design of the instruments of PPS. For example, it does not matter if an ideologically left or an ideologically right party is in government because both act under a similar political competition and hence have the same incentives for the design of the instruments of PPS. It follows that if the structure of competition between parliamentary actors remains constant for long stretches of time, the pressure for a particular design of the instruments of PPS is also constant for this time. In this case, the substantial costs of designing the instruments of PPS are of subordinate importance for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS because decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors do not completely adapt the instruments of PPS to suit their preferences immediately, but do so over the years. Thus, if the structure of competition between parliamentary actors has remained stable for some years, the explanations for the design of the instruments of PPS specified in this dissertation should be able to explain how the instruments of PPS are designed at a particular point in time. In the following section, I show that this is indeed the case.

The structure of competition between parliamentary actors remains largely stable in Western Europe; it follows that the theoretical framework set up so far and the respective hypotheses can explain the design of the instruments of PPS. Below, I review that while the
party systems of Western European parliaments do change, they are also stable for years at a time (Norris 1997a, 216-217). As Mair (1997, 3) argues, ‘the freezing hypothesis remains largely valid, at least up to now, with the evidence of long-term continuities in party systems far outweighing the ostensibly more striking and more immediate evidence of change’. There are a number of approaches which can be used to identify party systems, including the number of parties, the competitiveness of the opposition, the relative size of parties, the likelihood of single-party majorities, the distribution of minority party strengths, and the ideological distance between parties (for a detailed overview see e.g. Mair 1996). The most frequently employed criterion is the number of parties, and the most important one is the number of parties coupled with their ideological distance, i.e. the measure of Sartori (2005) (Mair 1996). To assess how strongly these criteria have changed for the countries under investigation, Table 3-1 presents an overview of the number of parties in parliament from 1950 until 2010 and the ideological distance between the most extreme parties in parliament.

The criteria of the party systems presented in Table 3-1 support that the party systems of Western European parliaments can be clearly distinguished from each other and that the standard deviations of all values are quite low. While the former insight is important in its own right as it corroborates the arguments of Mair (1996) and Sartori (2005), it is not central for the dissertation at hand. Hence, I focus on the latter finding. When examining the standard deviations of the mean absolute and effective number of parties, one can see that the absolute and especially the effective number of parties are relatively stable between 1950 and 2010. The effective number of parties is more appropriate than the absolute number of parties in this case because this measure captures the fragmentation of bargaining power in parliament.

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9 These measures constitute only a rough approximation of a country’s party system. However, the aim of this dissertation is not to classify the party systems of Western Europe but to understand how their instruments of PPS are designed. Therefore, it is appropriate to rely on these measures.
Table 3-1: Party Systems in Western European Parliaments, 1950-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mean absolute number of parties</th>
<th>Mean effective number of parties</th>
<th>Mean ideological distance between most extreme parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>3.727 (0.827)</td>
<td>2.690 (0.648)</td>
<td>36.639 (13.188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>9.846 (2.884)</td>
<td>5.870 (2.110)</td>
<td>41.491 (13.713)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>7.758 (1.621)</td>
<td>4.621 (0.807)</td>
<td>71.770 (20.497)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>7.787 (1.232)</td>
<td>5.131 (0.310)</td>
<td>78.004 (24.218)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5.241 (0.830)</td>
<td>3.262 (0.759)</td>
<td>56.912 (16.910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3.964 (1.138)</td>
<td>2.633 (0.759)</td>
<td>35.325 (19.096)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>4.857 (0.970)</td>
<td>3.809 (0.588)</td>
<td>56.181 (22.811)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>4.870 (1.217)</td>
<td>2.483 (0.337)</td>
<td>44.572 (28.557)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10.412 (1.813)</td>
<td>4.168 (0.957)</td>
<td>51.262 (19.238)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>5.000 (1.033)</td>
<td>3.456 (0.484)</td>
<td>39.635 (13.159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>9.880 (2.027)</td>
<td>4.808 (0.865)</td>
<td>41.463 (9.945)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>6.643 (0.951)</td>
<td>3.591 (0.653)</td>
<td>57.943 (20.092)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>5.368 (0.684)</td>
<td>3.157 (0.661)</td>
<td>46.639 (18.080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>10.181 (2.272)</td>
<td>2.635 (0.193)</td>
<td>35.830 (5.450)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5.615 (0.983)</td>
<td>3.465 (0.458)</td>
<td>76.580 (20.031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>6.217 (2.373)</td>
<td>2.170 (0.158)</td>
<td>35.429 (14.576)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard deviations in parentheses

Source: Andersson et al. (2012), own calculations.

For example, the absolute number of parties of the United Kingdom has the relatively largest standard deviation of all countries under investigation. Substantively, this indicates that between 1950 and 2010, there were between 2 and 11 parties in the British parliament. However, when taking the effective number of parties into account, one can see that about 95% of values fall between 1.854 and 2.468 (± 2σ under Gaussian approximation). This
means that the effective number of parties is highly stable for the United Kingdom. The effective number of parties is only highly variable for Belgium. Here, about 95% of the effective number of parties falls between 1.650 and 10.090. For the other countries, the effective number of parties is much more stable.

The mean ideological distance between the most extreme parties in parliament from 1945 until 2010 is less stable over time than the effective number of parties. For example, in Spain about 95% of the time is the ideological distance between the two most extreme parties in parliament between 24.070 and 46.730. The scale is that of Manifesto Party Project, which means that the ideological distance between the two most extreme parties in parliament can theoretically be between 0 (if the most extreme parties in parliament have no ideological distance at all) and 200 (if the most extreme parties are situated at the opposite ends of the ideological spectrum). Conversely, 95% of the time is the ideological distance between the most extreme parties of Ireland anywhere between 0 and 100, i.e. covering about half of the scale of the variable. The other countries are situated in between these two extreme cases.

These findings suggest that while the party systems of the Western European parliaments are largely stable over time, there are also some changes to the party systems. I conclude that there is a constant pressure for a particular design of the instruments of PPS for long stretches of time. Conversely, the standard deviations of the mean values presented in Table 3-1 also suggest that the party systems experience some changes. It follows that while it is appropriate to assess the design of the instruments of PPS through a cross-section, it is also interesting to study how the design of the instruments of PPS evolves over time.
3.4. Expected Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements –
Incentives of Decisive Coalitions to Design the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

To understand the design of the instruments of PPS, one first has to assess the incentives of decisive coalitions because these incentives motivate decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors to choose a particular design of the instruments of PPS. In this section, I argue how the incentives of decisive coalitions in parliament impact the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. I first review the research dealing with the incentives of parliamentary actors to design the instruments of PPS in a particular way. Building on this literature, I derive hypotheses regarding how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS should be, and how majority- or minority-friendly they should be. In Section 3.5, I elaborate on decisive coalitions’ capabilities for implementing their preferred institutional design and derive the respective hypotheses.

3.4.1. Existing Literature Regarding Incentives of Decisive Coalitions to Design the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

A decisive coalition needs to have an incentive to design the instruments of PPS in a particular way; otherwise, there is no reason to bear the costs of adopting a particular design of the instruments of PPS. When viewing the design of the instruments of PPS as catering to the individual goals of parliamentary actors, the literature points to two such incentives: the accountability of parliamentarians to their electorate and the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition. Conversely, if the design of the instruments of PPS should primarily serve the smooth operation of parliament, the literature names the workload a parliament faces as the most important incentive of decisive coalitions. Note that the reviewed literature concerns the entire parliamentary standing orders, i.e. chiefly instruments regarding law-making. However, I argue below that the logic underlying the design of instruments
regarding law-making is very similar to the logic underlying the design of the instruments regarding the communication of PPS. It follows that this literature review provides me with the theoretical foundations regarding design of parliamentary rules, which I then apply to the institutional design of the instruments of PPS in the following section.

The most prominent theoretical lens through which one can analyze the design of the instruments of PPS is the rationalist model of speech-making, which proposes that parliamentary actors use (Bächtiger 2014) and design (Proksch and Slapin 2012) these institutions to pursue their individual goals (individual-goals view of institutional design). Focusing on the institutional design of plenary debates, Proksch and Slapin (2012) argue that parliamentary actors design parliamentary rules in a way which allows them to advance their individual goals. They show that the more party reputation matters for re-election, the more control does the party leadership exercise over participation in plenary debates and vice versa. The reason for this is that if voters vote for parties, individual parliamentarians are accountable to voters through their parties and the parliamentary party groups have to persuade voters to re-elect them. Conversely, if parliamentarians are directly elected by the voters, they have to convince voters on their own to re-elect them. As plenary debates are among the instruments of PPS, it follows that whether parliamentarians are directly or indirectly accountable to their voters provides an incentive for frontbenchers and backbenchers to design the instruments of PPS accordingly.

The other scholars which argue that parliamentary actors design the standing orders to advance their individual goals focus on the US Congress. Schickler (2000) argues based on Rohde (1991) that the distance between the ideological positions held by the majority and minority parties matters for the institutional design of a legislature. In particular, he argues that the greater the ideological distance between the majority and minority parties is, the greater is the ideological conflict between these two parties. This in turn makes the majority
party more likely to increase its powers of agenda control to keep an obstructive minority in check. This argument applies to the instruments of PPS as well. For example, if the government and the opposition are far apart ideologically, the opposition is more likely to employ PPS to communicate messages that are critical of the government than if the government and the opposition have similar ideological stances. As shown in Section 2.2, the Congressional majority party and minority party most closely correspond to the European government and opposition. Thus, when transferring the argument of Schickler (2000) to the European context, the ideological distance between the government and the opposition gives the former an incentive to adapt the design of the instruments of PPS accordingly.

Binder (1995) argues that not only the ideological distance between the majority and the minority party matters for the ideological conflict between the majority and minority parties, but also the cohesion of the minority party. She posits that the minority behaves obstructively if it is both ideologically cohesive and far removed from the majority. The majority party seeks to inhibit this by designing the procedural rules of Congress to be more majority-friendly. When applied to the Western European case, this means that the ideological distance between the government and the opposition coupled with the homogeneity of the opposition provides the government with a stronger or weaker incentive to adapt the instruments of PPS accordingly.

The logic of divided opposition also applies to the instruments of PPS because the intensity and obstructiveness of their use varies with the ideological cohesion of the opposition. For example, if the opposition has very similar policy preferences and is ideologically far removed from the government, it is likely that the opposition employs the instruments of PPS a lot and in a highly obstructive manner. Conversely, if the opposition is ideologically far removed from the government but has ideologically diverse preferences, some party groups’ preferences are closer to those of the government while the preferences of other opposition
party groups are very far removed from the government. It is likely that the party groups whose ideological stance is closer to the government employ the instruments of PPS less frequently and in a less obstructive manner than the other party groups which are ideologically very far removed from the government. It follows that the government faces a less intense and less obstructive use of the instruments of PPS in the case of an ideologically diverse opposition than in the case of an ideologically homogenous opposition.

As opposed to the individual-goals view, the structural-functionalist view of institutional design suggests that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to ensure that parliament runs smoothly. Already Jefferson (1850, vi) argued that the design of parliamentary rules should provide for ‘accuracy in business, economy of time, order, uniformity and impartiality’. Similar arguments are made by Polsby (2004) and Kornberg and Musolf (1970). Binder (1995), Wawro and Schickler (2007), and Polsby (1968) argue that the greater the workload is that a legislature faces, the more efficiently it has to be designed to get all of its work done. This problem becomes even worse when ‘[…] members wish to use plenary time for purposes other than legislating – e.g. to publicize their positions to their constituents […]’ (Cox 2006, 144). Therefore, ‘the management of plenary time has been the crucial battleground of most of the biggest fights over legislative procedure across the democratic world’ (Cox 2006, 143). This means that workload of a legislature has an even greater impact on the design of PPS than it has on other rules, e.g. the rules regarding law-making. Consequently, parliamentary actors strive to design the instruments of PPS in a way which accommodates parliamentary workload.

3.4.2. Expected Centralization and Decentralization of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements Due to Incentives of Decisive Coalitions

On the basis of the literature on parliamentary actors’ incentives to design parliamentary standing orders, four hypotheses about the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS
can be formulated. Table 3-2 summarizes the hypotheses put forth in this section. Below, I derive each hypothesis in detail.

Table 3-2: Hypotheses About Degree of Centralization (C) of Instruments of PPS – Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability of parliamentarians</td>
<td>H1: More direct A → lower C and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of parliament</td>
<td>H2: Greater W → greater C and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and closed instruments</td>
<td>H3: C of open instruments &gt; C of closed instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H4: Effect of A on open instruments &gt; effect of A on closed instruments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the incentives reviewed above, there are two incentives which are relevant for understanding how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS are designed: the accountability of parliamentarians and the workload a parliament faces. The other incentive, i.e. the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition, concerns primarily the government and the opposition. As argued above, the government and the opposition cannot maximize their votes by centralizing or decentralizing the instruments of PPS. Consequently, the aforementioned incentive does not matter for the design of centralization and decentralization of PPS.

The conflict between front- and backbenchers is crucial for understanding how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS are designed, as outlined in detail in Section 2.4. I assume that frontbenchers seek a centralized design of the instruments of PPS to promote a unified party label. Conversely, I assume that backbenchers strive for a decentralized design of the instruments of PPS to distinguish themselves from the other parliamentarians and show their electorate that they have represented them well and should hence be re-elected. These actors’ differing goals lead to a conflict between the front- and backbenchers. The assumptions made about the institutional preferences of front- and backbenchers represent a simplification of the diverse goals of both actors; yet, it is appropriate to rely on them. For example, Proksch and Slapin (2012, 523-524) argue that frontbenchers face a trade-off
between a centralized design of plenary debates which is useful for promoting a unified party label and a decentralized design which serves to achieve public visibility. Backbenchers face the trade-off between a decentralized design of plenary debates which allows them to promote their own policy issues and a more centralized design which allows them to advance faster in office.

I rely on the assumptions postulated above for two reasons. First, if the design of the instruments of PPS is centralized, frontbenchers can still delegate speeches to backbenchers. Yet, they can select these parliamentarians more carefully than under a decentralized design of the instruments of PPS. Thus, frontbenchers should always prefer a more centralized design of the instruments of PPS than backbenchers. Second, Proksch and Slapin (2012, 523-524) stress that parliamentary actors’ motivations for office and policy may lead them to face a trade-off between the design of plenary debates they prefer. However, I argued in Section 2.5 that these motivations are secondary to these actors and that they design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes. It follows that the assumptions advanced above are more strongly in line with my assumption about the central motivation of parliamentary actors when designing the instruments of PPS, i.e. maximizing votes, than the assumptions of Proksch and Slapin (2012, 523-524).

The conflict between front- and backbenchers for the design of the instruments of PPS is differently pronounced depending on how the parliament’s electoral system regulates the accountability of parliamentarians to voters. The accountability of parliamentarians can be direct, i.e. if voters directly determine the electoral fortunes of the individual parliamentarians, indirect, i.e. if the electoral fortunes of the individual parliamentarians depend on the electoral fortunes of their respective party, or situated in between the two extremes (Carey and Shugart 1995).
In a party-centered electoral system, the conflict between front- and backbenchers is least pronounced. In such a system, e.g. proportional systems with a closed list, parliamentarians are accountable to voters indirectly through their parties. It follows that the party label is central for maximizing votes. As the role of the party is very important in a party-centered electoral system and all parliamentarians strive ‘to be reselected by his or her own party, before being re-elected by the public, before achieving party office, and before gaining any legislative or executive office’ (Hazan 2014, 213; see also Cox 2006, 147-149), this gives frontbenchers the power to keep backbenchers in check. For example, frontbenchers exercise control over backbenchers by selecting the candidates to run for the party in an election (Norris 1997b). Therefore, even though backbenchers still prefer a decentralized design of the instruments of PPS and would have the numerical power to implement their preferred design of the instruments of PPS, they do not do so because they are dependent on the frontbenchers. It follows that in this case, the conflict between front- and backbenchers is least pronounced.

Conversely, the conflict between front- and backbenchers is most pronounced in a highly candidate-centered electoral system, e.g. majoritarian systems with single-member districts. In these systems, parliamentarians are directly accountable to voters. It follows that the party label is less important in these systems than in party-centered electoral systems. As parliamentarians’ personal reputation is more important in candidate- than in party-centered electoral systems, the importance of parliamentary parties and hence the power of frontbenchers is lower in candidate- than in party-centered electoral systems. It follows that in candidate-centered electoral systems, backbenchers are able to pursue their preferred design of the instruments of PPS against the will of the frontbenchers. Yet, note that the instruments of PPS are never completely decentralized for two reasons. First, frontbenchers always have the power to control their members (André et al. 2014, 240-242; Cox 2006, 147-149; Mattson and Strøm 2004, 96), which inhibits them from designing the instruments of PPS to be
completely decentralized. Second, if the instruments of PPS were completely decentralized, this would lead to the over-use of the common resource plenary time and hence to a massive plenary bottleneck (Cox 2006). As parties exist for the very purpose of preventing this (Cox and McCubbins 1993), I conclude that the frontbenchers prevent backbenchers from doing so. From these considerations follows Hypothesis 1:\(^{10}\):

\[ H1 \text{ (design)}: \text{The more directly parliamentarians are accountable to their voters, the more decentralized are the instruments of PPS and vice versa.} \]

The structural-functionalist view of institutional design offers a competing hypothesis by suggesting that the workload of a legislature determines how efficiently a legislature needs to function (Polsby 1968; Wawro and Schickler 2007). The larger this workload becomes, the more important is a smoothly running legislature. In other words, ‘[t]o get anything done, members must regulate access to plenary time’ (Cox 2006, 141). In this case, the main incentive of parliamentarians and their party groups for designing the rules of procedure is to ensure the functioning of the legislature rather than to maximize their votes. Concerning the instruments of PPS, I conclude that parliamentarians centralize their instruments of PPS if they want to design them in a more efficient way because this takes power away from backbenchers and gives this power to centralized actors. The same logic holds vice versa. This yields Hypothesis 2:

\[ H2 \text{ (design)}: \text{The greater the workload that a parliament faces, the more centralized are its instruments of PPS and vice versa.} \]

\(^{10}\) Note that centralized instruments do not only include the parliamentary party group leadership, but also other centralized actors, such as the president of parliament or a minister. Yet, ministers are usually high party officials and can thus be assumed to hold the same preferences as the party leadership. Furthermore, in Western Europe parliamentary presidents have been national party leaders, one of the top leaders or members of the wider party leadership 97% of the time between 1971 and 1990 (Jenny and Müller 1995, 349). Thus, centralization – decentralization allows for gauging the conflict between backbenchers and frontbenchers as the holders of centralized offices have preferences which are more similar to the party leadership than to backbenchers.
Additionally, one has to take into account that the instruments of PPS are either closed or open depending on the interaction between parliamentary actors. For example, an oral question is a closed instrument of PPS and a plenary debate is an open instrument. Closed instruments of PPS always require a response from the addressed actor, so that these instruments allow parliamentarians to address a specific issue and to highlight shortcomings of the current government. Moreover, closed instruments provide the electorate only with information about the issue stances of the government and the parliamentarians or respective party group initiating the instrument. Conversely, in open instruments all party groups get a particular amount of speaking time (see Section 2.3.2 for more detail). Thus, open instruments provide the electorate with an opportunity to directly compare both parliamentarians’ and party groups’ issue stances. Also, open instruments – especially plenary debates – get more attention from the media and are thematically more open than closed instruments (Proksch and Slapin 2012, 520). This yields that the party label and hence the electoral performance of the party is more strongly at risk in open than in closed instruments of PPS. I conclude that party groups are more concerned about their members toeing the party line in open than in closed instruments. It follows Hypothesis 3:

\[ H3 \text{ (design): Open instruments of PPS are more centralized than closed instruments of PPS.} \]

The effect of parliamentarians’ accountability is greater for open than for closed instruments of PPS. Open instruments, especially plenary debates, are covered by all kinds of media (Proksch and Slapin 2012, 522). It follows that open instruments of PPS are more widely received than closed instruments of PPS. The interaction of parliamentary actors in open instruments allows voters to directly compare the issue stances of the party groups in parliament. As argued above, this is why party groups seek to protect their label more strongly in open than in closed instruments if the accountability of parliamentarians is
indirect. I conclude that if parliamentarians are directly accountable to their voters, speaking up during a debate allows them to make a bigger mark than asking a question. It follows that the design of open instruments of PPS is more critical for maximizing votes than the design of closed ones. Regarding Hypothesis 1 (design), I argued that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to accommodate the accountability of parliamentarians in order to maximize their votes. Since the design of open instruments of PPS has a greater effect on vote maximization, it follows that the effect of accountability is greater for open than for closed instruments of PPS. This yields Hypothesis 4 concerning the design of the instruments of PPS:

\[ H4 \text{(design): } \text{The effect of the accountability of parliamentarians to their voters is stronger for open than for closed instruments of PPS.}\]

3.4.3. **Expected Majority- and Minority-Friendliness of Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements Due to Incentives of Decisive Coalitions**

In this section, I explain how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed based on the incentives of the parliamentary party groups taking part in the government and constituting the opposition. The literature reviewed above points to two incentives why parliamentary actors strive to design the instruments of PPS in a more majority- or minority-friendly way: the ideological conflict between the majority and the minority (Binder 1995; Schickler 2000) and the workload of the legislature (Binder 1996). The respective hypotheses are summarized in Table 3-3. Below, I derive each hypothesis in detail.

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11 The accountability of parliamentarians is not included here because it does not concern the interaction between the government and the opposition but rather the interaction between front- and backbenchers. As I argued in detail in the previous section, this means that the accountability of parliamentarians is important for how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS are designed, but not for how majority- or minority-friendly they are designed.
Table 3-3: Hypotheses About Degree of Majority-Friendliness (Maj) of Instruments of PPS – Incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideological conflict (IC)</strong></td>
<td>H5: Greater IC → greater Maj and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workload of parliament (W)</strong></td>
<td>H6: Greater W → greater Maj and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open and closed instruments</strong></td>
<td>H7: Maj of open instruments &gt; Maj of closed instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H8: Effect of IC on open instruments &gt; effect of IC on closed instruments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When discussing below the design of the instruments of PPS resulting from decisive coalitions’ incentives, I assume for reasons of simplicity that the incentives of the parliamentary party groups in government are the same. However, I am aware that the party groups taking part in the government may have diverging incentives for the design of the instruments of PPS, e.g. because of their size or because of their ideological positions. To account for this limitation, I include the decisive coalitions’ capabilities for implementing their preferred design of the instruments of PPS in the following section.

Based on the individual-goals view of institutional design, I argue that the greater the ideological conflict is between the government and the opposition, the more majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed and vice versa. Schickler (2000) and Binder (1995) argue that if the ideological conflict between the majority and minority increases, the majority party adapts the parliamentary rules to be more majority-friendly. When applying this argument to the instruments of PPS of Western European national parliaments, one has to keep in mind that the government can always speak about anything it wants to speak about. Hence, the government designs the instruments of PPS in a majority-friendly way not to enhance its own speaking rights but to constrain the opposition. It follows that the greater the conflict between the government and the opposition is, the more does the opposition strive to show its constituents that it does not agree with the policies of the government. Since the opposition does so through PPS, it makes more extensive use of the instruments of PPS the greater its conflict with the government is.
If the opposition extensively employs the instruments of PPS, this has two consequences. First, an extensive use of PPS requires many parliamentary resources, e.g. time in the plenary and time of the minister or his staff to prepare replies to questions. Second, if the government and the opposition are in conflict, the opposition will likely behave in an obstructive way, e.g. by asking a great number of critical questions. Both of this can be electorally harmful for the government. If the opposition claims many parliamentary resources, the government has fewer resources available which it can e.g. invest in passing voters’ preferred policies or in communicating its achievements to voters. If the opposition asks many critical questions, this could tarnish the governments’ reputation with voters. I conclude that as a response to this, the government designs the instruments of PPS in a comparatively majority-friendly way.

Conversely, a low ideological conflict between the government and the opposition indicates that the government and the opposition have a lot in common ideologically. Thus, the opposition will likely use PPS in a less obstructive way than if it strongly conflicts with the government over policy. Thus, I expect the rules of PPS to be comparatively more minority-friendly in a parliament with low ideological conflict between the government and the opposition than in a parliament with high ideological conflict between the government and the opposition. This yields Hypothesis 5 concerning the design of the instruments of PPS:

\[ H5 \text{ (design): The greater the ideological conflict is between the government and the opposition, the more majority-friendly are the instruments of PPS and vice versa.} \]

The structural-functionalist view of institutional design offers a competing hypothesis by suggesting that the instruments of PPS are designed to accommodate the workload of the legislature. Binder (1996) argues that the greater the workload of a legislature is, the scarcer is the time available for the majority party. To counter-act this and secure its time in the plenary, the majority party adapts the design of the legislature to be more majority-friendly. These
incentives are diminished in a parliament with a relatively smaller workload because the
instruments of PPS do not have to be designed as efficiently. Even though the instruments of
PPS are not used for legislating, this logic also applies to them because they take up time in
the plenary. I conclude that a parliament with a relatively greater workload designs its
instruments of PPS to be more efficient and hence designs them in a more majority-friendly
way than a parliament with a comparatively smaller workload. From this follows Hypothesis
6 concerning the design of PPS:

\[ H6 \text{(design)}: \text{The greater the workload is that a parliament faces, the more majority-
friendly are its instruments of PPS and vice versa.} \]

When distinguishing the instruments of PPS into open and closed instruments, one finds
that the design of closed instruments of PPS differs from the design of open instruments;
closed instruments of PPS are more minority-friendly than open instruments. Since closed
instruments of PPS are first and foremost employed to monitor the executive and thus
increase transparency (Sánchez de Dios and Wiberg 2011; Strom 2000, 271-272), it follows
that closed instruments are more important to the opposition for communicating PPS than
open instruments. Thus, the opposition desires minority-friendly closed instruments of PPS to
maximize its votes. The government agrees with this because designing the closed
instruments of PPS in a majority-friendly way necessarily means decreasing the transparency
of parliament. I assume that this is not well-received by the public for normative reasons and
thus has negative electoral consequences for the government. Since open instruments of PPS
are geared less towards creating transparency and scrutiny, I conclude that the government
has more leeway for designing these instruments to its liking, i.e. in a more majority-friendly
way. From this follows Hypothesis 7 concerning the design of the instruments of PPS:

\[ H7 \text{(design)}: \text{Open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed
instruments of PPS.} \]
The effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition is greater for open than for closed instruments of PPS. In Hypothesis 5, I argued that the greater the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition is, the more obstructive is the opposition. This leads to a greater incentive of the government to design all instruments of PPS in a more majority-friendly way. When additionally taking the argumentation of Hypothesis 7 into account which suggests that closed instruments of PPS are employed for a more confrontational communication than open instruments, it follows that this effect should differ between open and closed instruments of PPS.

One could expect the government to focus on making closed instruments more majority-friendly the greater the conflict between the government and the opposition is since closed instruments are more confrontational than open instruments. Yet, even though closed instruments may matter for political engagement (Salmond 2014), ‘[p]articipation in legislative debates is among the most visible activities of members of parliament’ (Proksch and Slapin 2012, 520). I conclude that closed instruments of PPS are less widely received and hence less electorally valuable than open instruments. Further, closed instruments of PPS have a greater normative importance than open instruments because they allow the opposition to monitor the government and thus increase the transparency of parliament (Sánchez de Dios and Wiberg 2011; Strøm 2000, 271-272). Therefore, the design of closed instruments of PPS can be adapted less strongly due to the conflict between the government and the opposition than design of open instruments of PPS. From this follows Hypothesis 8 regarding the design of the instruments of PPS:

\[ H8 \text{ (design)}: \text{ The effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition is greater for open instruments than for closed instruments of PPS. } \]
3.5. Expected Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements – Capabilities of Decisive Coalitions to Design the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

All decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors strive to design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes; however, implementing their preferred design of the instruments of PPS may be easier for some decisive coalitions than for others due to their different capabilities. The capabilities of a decisive coalition to design the instruments of PPS according to their preferences refer to how easily the decisive coalitions can meet externally imposed constraints, e.g. the majority requirement for changing the standing orders, and to how difficult it is for the decisive coalition to gather the support of its members. The effect of the incentive workload does not depend on the capabilities of decisive coalitions because parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to meet a certain workload to make parliament more efficient rather than for redistributive considerations. The design of the instruments of PPS should be hardly controversial in this case and thus comparatively easy to implement.

3.5.1. Existing Literature Regarding Capabilities of Decisive Coalitions to Design the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

There are externally imposed constraints which impact the ability of decisive coalitions to design the instruments of the instruments of PPS as they please. The most important external constraint for the design of the instruments of PPS is the majority requirement for changing the instruments of PPS, as summarized in Table 2-1 (presented on page 36). The greater this majority requirement is, the more difficult it is for a decisive coalition to meet it. For example, implementing a particular design of PPS in Austria requires a two-thirds majority while doing so in Germany only requires a relative majority. If the government in Austria only has 64% of seats in parliament and wants to implement a certain design of the instruments of PPS, it has
to be able to convince 2% of the opposition to vote with it. Conversely, in Germany a
government with the same majority can easily implement this design on its own.

Binder (1996) focuses on the seat share of the majority party and argues that the larger the
majority party’s seat share is, the more likely it is to implement its preferred design.
Conversely, Dion (1997) stresses that the majority party is more likely to implements its
preferred institutional design the closer its seat share is to the majority requirement for
passing a particular policy. The reason for this is that the closer the majority party seat share
is to this majority requirement, the more likely it is that all majority party members will toe
the party line.

When applying these arguments to the design of the instruments of PPS in Western
European parliaments, it follows that the larger the seat share or the slimmer the winning
margin of the government is, the more capable the government is to design the instruments of
PPS according to its incentives. Yet, there are also frequently minority governments in
Western European parliaments. By definition, these have a seat share that is smaller than
50%+1 of parliamentary seats. Minority governments are able to pass legislation because they
are supported by party groups outside the government (Strøm 1990, 94-108). I conclude that
regarding Binder’s (1996) argument, this means that the greater the homogeneity and the size
of the minority government, the stronger it is and thus the more capable it is to implement its
preferred institutional design. Applying Dion’s (1997) argument to a situation of minority
government is slightly more difficult. On the one hand, the original argument still holds. The
smaller the minority government is, the more important each individual vote becomes. Thus,
the smaller the minority government, the more likely it should be to keep its members in
check. On the other hand, how close a minority government’s seat share is to the majority
requirement for implementing its preferred design of the instruments of PPS depends on the
supporting party groups. Since these supporting coalitions may be more or less stable (Strøm
1990, 94-108), it is not possible to say how close they are to a minimal winning majority. Therefore, I assume that Dion’s (1997) argument does not apply to minority governments.

A decisive coalition also needs to be able to convince its members to support a particular design of the instruments of PPS. Whether a decisive coalition is able to do so depends on whether enough members share the incentives referred to above. Cox and McCubbins (1993, 1997) and Binder (1996) argue that the ideological homogeneity of the majority party is decisive for the institutional design of the legislature. Using the example of agenda-setting rules in the US Congress, the authors stress that the majority can only implement its preferred design of these rules if it is homogenous. Conversely, the less homogenous the majority party is, the more likely it is that the agenda-setting rules mirror the preferences of the minority.

When applying this argument to the context of Western Europe, the cohesion of the majority party concerns the cohesion of the parties in government, and the cohesion of the minority party concerns the cohesion of the parties in the opposition. As opposed to US-American party groups (Carey 2007), Western European party groups vote very cohesively (Sieberer 2006). Assuming that this voting cohesion reflects homogeneity, it follows that the homogeneity of Western European party groups varies only slightly. Thus, the homogeneity of Western European party groups should have only a small impact on the capabilities of the party groups to implement their preferred institutional design. However, in Western Europe there is commonly not one majority party facing one minority party, but rather a multi-party government facing a multi-party opposition. Thus, while the individual party groups may be homogenous, this does not necessarily have to be true for the government coalition. For example, it could be the case that two parties form the government coalition. While both are homogenous within themselves, they have at least slightly different policy platforms and also compete against each other in elections. This means that the coalition government is not as cohesive as the individual parliamentary party groups are. It follows that the greater the
ideological cohesion of the government is, the easier it is for the government to implement its preferred institutional design because its members can more easily agree on an institutional design of the instruments of PPS.

For Schickler and Rich (1997a), the ideological diversity of the majority party is also crucial for whether the majority can design the rules of Congress according to its incentives. They argue that the ideological distance between the median legislator’s position and the majority party’s position impacts how capable the majority party is of designing the standing orders as it desires. The authors underscore that the greater the ideological distance between the median legislator and the majority party, the less likely it is that the majority is able to pursue its institutional preferences regarding the design of the legislature. Since there are always two large parties in the House of Representatives, one of which is in the majority and one of which is in the minority, the median legislator is by definition always included in the majority party and the median legislator may be closer to or farther from the ideological center of the majority party. When applying this to Western European parliaments, I conclude that the argument of Schickler and Rich (1997a) essentially concerns how the ideological diversity of the majority party impacts its capability to design the instruments of PPS.

3.5.2. Expected Centralization and Decentralization of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements Due to Capabilities of Decisive Coalitions

Neither of the capabilities of decisive coalitions impacts the relationship between the accountability of parliamentarians and the centralization of the instruments of PPS; rather, the ability of backbenchers to design the instruments of PPS to conform to their institutional preferences depends on how pronounced their conflict with the frontbenchers is. The seat share of the government impacts how easy it is for the government to design the instruments of PPS according to its preferences and against the preferences of the opposition. The ideological homogeneity of the government concerns how easy it is for the party groups
within government to agree on and implement a design of the instruments of PPS against the will of the opposition. As none of these capabilities impacts the conflict between frontbenchers and backbenchers, they are of subordinate importance for understanding how capable these actors are to implement their preferred design of the instruments of PPS.

Even though the capabilities listed above do not constrain how easily parliamentary actors can design the instruments of PPS to be centralized or decentralized, front- and backbenchers cannot design the instruments of PPS to be as centralized or decentralized as they want them to be. As I argued in Section 3.4.2, the conflict between front- and backbenchers impacts how well either actor can realize his preferences. In particular, I put forth that backbenchers can realize a decentralized design of the instruments of PPS against the party leadership if their dependence on the parliamentary party and hence the frontbenchers is low; otherwise, the frontbenchers can realize a centralized design of the instruments of PPS. It follows that front- and backbenchers are constrained in how centralized or decentralized they design the instruments of PPS. As this constraint is already included in Hypothesis 1, the hypothesis cannot be qualified to take into account the capabilities of parliamentary actors to realize their preferred design of the instruments of PPS.

### 3.5.3. Expected Majority- and Minority- Friendliness of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements Due to Capabilities of Decisive Coalitions

To understand how easily decisive coalitions can translate their incentives for a more or less majority-friendly design of the instruments of PPS into actual institutional design, one has to take the seat share and the homogeneity of the government into account. Table 3-4 summarizes the three corresponding hypotheses. Below, I elaborate on each hypothesis in detail.
Table 3-4: Hypotheses About Degree of Majority-Friendliness (Maj) of Instruments of PPS – Capabilities

| Seat share of governmental majority (S) | H9: Greater S → larger effect of IC (H5) on Maj and vice versa  
H10: S closer to minimal winning → larger effect of IC (H5) on Maj and vice versa |
<table>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideological homogeneity of governmental majority (IH)</td>
<td>H11: Greater IH → larger effect of IC (H5) on Maj and vice versa</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Based on Binder (1996) and Dion (1997), the seat share of the government impacts how well it is able to meet the majority requirement for changing the rules of procedure. In their arguments, the authors look at the two different sides of the same coin. According to Binder (1996), the capability of the majority party to pass its preferred design of PPS is larger if the margin of the majority party is more comfortable and the threat of dissent is less daunting. Conversely, Dion (1997) argues that the slimmer the winning margin of the majority party and thus the greater the threat of dissent, the greater the capability of the majority party to pass its preferred design of PPS. When applying this to Western European parliaments, it follows that the greater the seat share of the government or the closer the seat share of the government is to the majority requirement for changing the instruments of PPS, respectively, the more likely it is that the government is able to implement its preferred institutional design of PPS.

Put differently, I expect to find interaction effects between the seat share of the government and the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition. On the one hand, I expect that the greater the seat share of the government is, the easier it is for the government to implement its preferred institutional design. This yields that if a government is in conflict with the opposition, it designs the instruments of PPS to be more majority-friendly if it has a large seat share than if it has a small seat share. On the other hand, I expect that a government with a slim majority is able to design the instruments of PPS in a more majority-
friendly way than a government with a large majority if both face the same conflict with the opposition. The reason for this is that the former can more easily convince its members to toe the party line than the latter. From this follow the competing Hypotheses 9 and 10 concerning the design of the instruments of PPS:

\[ H9 \text{ (design): } \text{The greater the seat share of the government is, the larger is the effect specified in H5 and vice versa.} \]

\[ H10 \text{ (design): The closer the seat share of the government is to minimal winning, the larger is the effect specified in H5 and vice versa.} \]

The ideological homogeneity of the government also impacts how capable the government is to implement its preferred institutional design. I argued that if a government is very homogenous, it is more likely that the parliamentary party groups making up the government can agree on a common policy stance. Conversely, the more heterogeneous the government is, the harder it is for party groups to agree on a common policy stance. This yields that a government with similar ideological preferences should more easily be able to implement its preferred design of the instruments of PPS. For instance, a government with similar ideological preferences should design the instruments of PPS to be more majority-friendly than a government with divergent ideological preferences if both face a similar conflict with the opposition. From this follows Hypothesis 11 about the design of the instruments of PPS:

\[ H11 \text{ (design): The greater the ideological homogeneity of the government is, the stronger is the effect specified in H5 and vice versa.} \]

### 3.6. Understanding Changes to the Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

In this final section, I build on the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 and adapt the hypotheses of the two previous sections to shed light on the changes made to the institutional design of the instruments of PPS. Understanding not only the design but also the
changes made to the instruments of PPS allows me to assess whether the claims made by the hypotheses regarding the design of the instruments of PPS hold over time. Analyzing the changes made to the instruments of PPS also helps to shed light on the causal mechanisms underlying a particular design of the instruments of PPS.


Decisive coalitions do not only design the instruments of PPS to suit their institutional preferences but also change the design of the instruments of PPS if they do not conform to their institutional preferences. The argument advanced so far exclusively concerns institutional design. Above, I argue that decisive coalitions within parliament design the instruments of PPS to reflect their institutional preferences and maximize their votes. This argument builds on Rational Choice Institutionalism and the notion of institutions as equilibria, i.e. that the institutional design of PPS mirrors the institutional preferences of a decisive parliamentary coalition. It follows that a change in the instruments of PPS should come about when the current institutional design no longer constitutes an equilibrium. When the current institutional design no longer corresponds to the institutional preferences of a decisive coalition, this coalition should change the instruments of PPS to suit its needs. In the following, I explain how the incentives and capabilities regarding the design of PPS impact this equilibrium and thus may contribute to institutional change.

If the incentives of parliamentary actors for the design of the instruments of PPS change, I assume that a decisive coalition changes the instruments of PPS to better suit its new institutional preferences. For instance, if the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition increases, the government has an incentive to change the design of the instruments of PPS to be more majority-friendly. The same holds true for the capabilities of
decisive coalitions in parliament. If the capability of parliamentary actors to rally a decisive coalition increases or decreases, it becomes more or less likely, respectively, that these actors have the capability to adapt the design of PPS to suit their preferences. For example, if the ideological cohesion of the governmental majority increases, the government has a greater capability to adapt the instruments of PPS (for this argument regarding agenda setting rules in the US Congress, see Cox and Schoppa 2002; Rohde 1991). Moreover, if the seat share of the government increases, it is easier for this government to meet the majority requirement for changing the design of the instruments of PPS (for this argument regarding general rules in the US Congress, see Binder 1996), ceteris paribus.


The hypotheses concerning the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS are parallel to the hypotheses concerning the institutional design of the instruments of PPS because their logic is the same. Thus, in the interest of reader-friendliness I simply list the respective hypotheses below without further ado.\(^{12}\)

Changes Making the Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements more Centralized or Decentralized

In this section, I derive the hypotheses stipulating when I expect decisive coalitions in parliament to change the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. Table 3-5 summarizes the hypotheses.

\(^{12}\) I do not include the hypotheses differentiating the effects of the predictors for closed and open instruments of PPS because these are quite intricate. I evaluate the hypotheses put forth below through tracing the design of the instruments of PPS for three countries. This set-up is geared more strongly towards a qualitative assessment of the changes made to the instruments of PPS than towards a statistical analysis. Therefore, the effects of Hypotheses 4 and 8 will not be discussed further.
I derive three hypotheses regarding changes to the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS based on the hypotheses regarding the incentives of individual parliamentarians and parliamentary party groups to design the instruments of PPS in a more centralized or decentralized way (see section 3.4.2).

\[ H1 \text{(change): If the accountability of parliamentarians becomes more direct, the instruments of PPS become more decentralized and vice versa.} \]

\[ H2 \text{(change): If the workload that a parliament faces increases, the instruments of PPS become more centralized and vice versa.} \]

\[ H3 \text{(change): Open instruments of PPS are always more centralized than closed instruments of PPS.} \]

### Changes Making the Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements more Majority- or Minority-Friendly

In this section, I adapt the hypotheses regarding the majority- and minority-friendliness of the design of PPS derived in sections 3.4.3 and 3.5.3 to changes to the design of PPS. In particular, I derive hypotheses regarding the incentives and capabilities of the government and of parliamentary party groups to make majority- or minority-friendly changes to the design of PPS. Table 3-6 summarizes these hypotheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentives</th>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability of parliamentarians (A)</td>
<td>H1: Direct A ↑ → C ↓ and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of parliament (W)</td>
<td>H2: W ↑ → C ↑ and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and closed instruments</td>
<td>H3: C of open instruments &gt; C of closed instruments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Table 3-5: Hypotheses About Changes to the Degree of Centralization (C) of Instruments of PPS
Table 3-6: Hypotheses About Changes to the Degree of Majority-Friendliness (Maj) of Instruments of PPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentives</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideological conflict (IC)</td>
<td>H5: IC ↑ → Maj ↑ and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of parliament (W)</td>
<td>H6: W ↑ → Maj ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open and closed instruments</td>
<td>H7: Maj of open instruments &gt; Maj of closed instruments</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Capabilities</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seat share of government (S)</td>
<td>H9: S ↑ → effect of IC (H5) on Maj ↑ and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological homogeneity of government (IH)</td>
<td>H10: S closer to minimal winning → effect of IC (H5) on Maj ↑ and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H11: IH ↑ → effect of IC (H5) on Maj ↑ and vice versa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following from the hypotheses of section 3.4.3, I derive three hypotheses regarding the incentives of the government and parliamentary party groups to change the instruments of PPS in a majority-friendly or minority-friendly way.

**H5(change):** If the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition increases, the instruments of PPS become more majority-friendly and vice versa.

**H6(change):** If the workload that a parliament faces increases, the instruments of PPS become more majority-friendly.

**H7(change):** Open instruments of PPS are always more majority-friendly than closed instruments of PPS.

Finally, I derive three hypotheses regarding the capabilities of decisive coalitions to pursue these changes. The following hypotheses are based on the hypotheses derived in section 3.5.3.

**H9 (change):** If the seat share of the parliamentary majority increases, the effects specified in H5 become larger and vice versa.
H10 (change): If the seat share of the parliamentary majority becomes closer to minimal winning, the effects specified in H5 become larger and vice versa.

H11 (change): If the ideological homogeneity of the government increases, the effects specified in H5 become larger and vice versa.

3.7. Summary

In this chapter, I derived hypotheses about the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS from the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2. In Sections 3.2 and 3.3, I provided the foundation for deriving these hypotheses. I argued that Rational Choice Institutionalism is the most appropriate theoretical approach for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS because its assumptions about actors, institutional design and institutional change hold for the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Thereafter, I explained that while the theoretical framework assumes that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors can freely design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes, the costs of adopting a particular design of the instruments of PPS make a perfect adaption of their design unlikely. Nevertheless, the theoretical framework and hence the hypotheses derived from it can explain the design of the instruments of PPS because the structure of competition in Western European parliaments and hence the pressure for a particular design of the instruments of PPS is constant for long stretches of time.

In Sections 3.4 and 3.5, I derived hypotheses concerning the institutional design of the instruments of PPS. In Section 3.4, I argued that the accountability of parliamentarians and whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed give decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors an incentive to design the instruments of PPS to be more or less centralized. Conversely, the ideological conflict between government and opposition gives decisive coalitions an incentive to design the instruments of PPS to be more or less majority-friendly. I
introduced a competing hypothesis for each dimension suggesting that the instruments of PPS are designed to guarantee an efficient parliament. In Section 3.5, I argued that it is easier for some decisive coalitions than for others to implement their preferred design of the instruments of PPS due to their different capabilities. The conflict between frontbenchers and backbenchers determines this capability concerning the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. The seat share of the government and the ideological homogeneity of the government indicate how capable a decisive coalition is of designing the instruments of PPS to be more or less majority-friendly.

In Section 3.6, I adapted these hypotheses to explain the evolution of design of the instruments of PPS. Based on Rational Choice Institutionalism, I argued that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors change the design of the instruments of PPS if another design allows them to better maximize their votes.

In the following chapters, I assess the empirical validity of these hypotheses. In Part II of this dissertation, I explain how I measure the design and the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. I develop an index which allows for assessing how centralized and how majority-friendly each instrument of PPS is designed in each Western European parliament in 2010. In Part III, I present this measure in detail. I show how centralized or decentralized and how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. I then analyze statistically if these patterns can be explained by the hypotheses developed in the current chapter. In Part IV, I take a closer look at the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. Focusing on Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom, I show that electoral considerations are paramount for understanding how the design of the instruments of PPS has changed.
Part II  
Research Design for Understanding the Design and Change of Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements


4.1. Introduction

To test the hypotheses made in the previous chapter, it is first necessary to measure how the instruments of PPS are designed. As no established measures of the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS exist, I provide an original measure of their design in the dissertation at hand. In Section 4.2, I outline the research strategy for measuring the design of the instruments of PPS. I argue that a large-N analysis is more appropriate for analyzing the design of the instruments of PPS than a case study because a large-N analysis allows me to provide an overview of the little researched design of the instruments of PPS. I study the design of the instruments of PPS in all Western European countries with a parliamentary system. These countries are well suited for comparison because they allow for holding the system of the government constant, are all established democracies and share a common historic and cultural background. Conversely, they still provide for enough variation to assess the hypotheses derived in the previous section. Last, I explain that the unit of analysis is an individual instrument of PPS in a country, e.g. written questions in Germany. This unit of analysis is appropriate because it allows for testing all hypotheses postulated in the previous chapter.

In Section 4.3, I explain in detail how I construct the indices denoting the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. To extract the information about the design of the instruments of PPS from the parliamentary standing orders, I employ a theory-driven content analysis with manual coding. I choose this type of
content analysis because the dissertation at hand is highly theory-driven and because there exists little information about the design of the instruments of PPS. I conduct the content analysis through coding the relevant sub-paragraphs of the parliamentary standing orders in three steps. First, I code which of the five instruments of PPS a sub-paragraph concerns. These five instruments are plenary debates, the presentation and discussion of committee reports, oral questions, written questions, and interpellations. Second, I code which feature of the instruments of PPS a sub-paragraph concerns; the features include access, organization, time frame, closure, documentation, and publicity. Last, I code which actor is advantaged by this sub-paragraph, e.g. a majority or a minority actor, and a centralized or a decentralized actor. Figure 4-1 visualizes this procedure. I then aggregate this information in two steps to end up with an index of the degree of centralization and an index of the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS.

In Section 4.4, I argue that a linear single-level regression model is appropriate for analyzing the design of the instruments of PPS. I discuss that I employ a linear regression model because the index of the design of the instruments of PPS is quasi-continuous. A single-level model is better suited to model the design of the instruments of PPS than a multi-level model because it is sufficient to answer the theoretical questions posed by the dissertation at hand and because it fits the data at least as well if not slightly better than a multi-level model. In Section 4.5, I summarize the main arguments of this chapter and provide an outlook for the following chapters.

In this section, I outline the research strategy I adopt for measuring the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. I explain why
I opt for a large-N analysis, I argue why the Western European countries with a parliamentary system are best suited for my analysis, and I discuss why the instruments of PPS are my unit of analysis.

The merits and drawbacks of both large-N analyses and case studies have been discussed intensively in the literature (Bäck and Dumont 2007; Gerring 2004; King et al. 1994). While for example King et al. (1994) are skeptical about case studies and prefer statistical analyses with more cases, Gerring (2004, 2007) argues that both strategies have their strengths and weaknesses. Thus, they should be seen as complementary rather than as antagonistic. Bäck and Dumont (2007, 467-472) summarize that large-N statistical analyses are superior to case studies for measuring and isolating effects and giving generalizable accounts. Conversely, case studies perform better than large-N studies concerning accounts of time and order, identifying causal mechanisms, identifying new variables, and maximizing validity.

A large-N study is more appropriate for the dissertation at hand than a case study because I aim to provide an overview of and explain the design of all instruments of PPS instead of giving a highly detailed account of the design of one instrument of PPS or the design of the instruments of PPS in only one country. It follows from the discussion above that there is not one research strategy that is inherently superior to the other. Rather, the choice of a research strategy depends on one’s objective. As the design of the instruments of PPS is an understudied topic in the field of legislative research, in the dissertation at hand I aim to provide a broad overview of how centralized and decentralized and how majority- and minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. By studying one or two countries or instruments of PPS in depth, I would risk to focus on outlying cases without being aware of this. Relying on a larger number of cases allows me to avoid this pitfall. A large-N study is also better suited for explaining the design of the instruments of PPS than a case study because it lends itself more easily towards making generalizable statements and the
hypotheses postulated in Chapter 3 are general rather than country-specific. Last, I seek to explain the design of the instruments of PPS rather than to generate new hypotheses or unearth new variables. Hereby, my focus is directed more strongly at detecting causal effects than at tracing causal mechanisms. As reviewed above, a large-N study is better suited for this aim than a case study. To furnish these goals, studies including many cases are more adequate than studies including only very few cases. Therefore, I opt for a (relatively) large-N statistical analysis. However, I do not completely dismiss case studies. When explaining the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS, I focus on three countries – Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom – and trace the design of their instruments of PPS over time. I elaborate on the respective research design in Section 4.5.

I include all Western European countries which have a parliamentary system\textsuperscript{13} in my analysis. These countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Selecting these countries is sensible because of their comparability and variation. Concerning comparability, selecting only parliamentary democracies allows me to hold the relationship between the government and the legislature constant. Moreover, the countries of Western Europe are all established democracies, which entails that differences between countries and instruments are not due to the phase of democratization the countries are in, but rather due to factors such as the competition between parliamentary actors. These countries also share a common historic and cultural background. After World War II, all of these countries except Finland and Spain were integrated into the West rather than the East through the Marshall-Plan. This means that these countries established or revitalized a

\textsuperscript{13} Please note that I classify a democracy as a parliamentary democracy if the government is accountable to the legislature. This means that contrary to Clark et al. (2009, 395-402) who distinguish between parliamentary, presidential, and mixed democracies, I only distinguish between parliamentary and presidential democracies.
capitalist market economy (Loth 1991, 48-68) and promoted liberal and democratic ideals\textsuperscript{14}. Regarding variation, the selected countries differ on the independent variables of the hypotheses put forth in the previous chapter. This allows for testing these hypotheses.

I measure the design of the instruments of PPS of these countries on 01.01.2010. I opt for a cross-section instead of a cross-section time-series because the cross-section is sufficient for testing the hypotheses derived from the theoretical model and because a cross-section time-series would not have been feasible given my resources. Theoretically, I do not expect perfect adaption of the instruments of PPS to parliamentary actors’ preferences. However, the rules of PPS in force on January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2010 should still closely mirror the preferences of the decisive majorities within parliament because the structure of competition in parliament and hence the pressure for a particular design of the instruments of PPS remains constant for long stretches of time (see Section 3.3). Therefore, a cross-section is adequate for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS.

Practically, extending this cross-section to be a cross-section time-series is hardly possible due to my resources. While the parliamentary standing orders – which codify the instruments of PPS – are available in English, German or French for all countries in 2010, they are available only in the official languages of the respective countries for the entire period from 1945 until 2010. This means that I am able to code the standing orders of all countries for 2010 because I speak German, English, and French, but am unable to do so for all countries from 1945 until 2010 because I do not speak any other languages. For example, to include Sweden in a cross-section I would have to code the standing orders from 1945 until 2010 in Swedish. This is not feasible given my language skills and resources.

After having decided in favor of a large-N cross-section including all instruments of PPS of all countries of Western Europe with a parliamentary system on 01.01.2010, the last step in

\textsuperscript{14} As opposed to the other Western European countries, which established or returned to their democratic systems directly after 1945, Portugal and Spain became democratic in 1974 and 1978, respectively.
elaborating the general research strategy is to explain that my unit of analysis is an instrument which one of the parliaments of the aforementioned countries provides for communicating PPS, e.g. plenary debates in Spain. I choose this unit of analysis for two reasons. First, this unit of analysis allows me to understand if different instruments of PPS exhibit different levels of centralization and majority-friendliness. Second, this unit of analysis allows me to assess whether the effects of country-level predictors differ between open and closed instruments of PPS.

The alternative to this unit of analysis would have been to calculate one common score for all instruments of PPS of one country, e.g. one overall score for Germany, one overall score for France, and so on. While this unit of analysis would also allow me to assess the impact of country-level predictors on the design of all of the instruments of PPS, it would not provide me with an opportunity to understand if the design of open and closed instruments of PPS differs. For example, I would not be able to analyze if open instruments of PPS are designed more majority-friendly than closed instruments of PPS (Hypothesis 7). Moreover, I would not be able to assess if the effect of country-level predictors varies between instruments, e.g. if the effect of parliamentarians’ accountability is greater for open than for closed instruments of PPS (Hypothesis 4). Therefore, choosing each instrument of PPS of each country in my sample as my unit of analysis is appropriate.

Building on these considerations, the next step in mapping and explaining the design of the instruments of PPS for the Western European countries on January 1st, 2010 is to measure how centralized or decentralized and how majority- or minority-friendly these instruments are designed. As no established measure of the design of the instruments of PPS exists, I construct this measure myself. I do so by establishing an index of the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of each instrument of PPS of each country. I explain how I constructed this index in the following section.
4.3. Constructing an Index of the Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

To assess the design of the instruments of PPS, I construct an index of the degree of centralization and an index of the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS based on the parliamentary rules of procedure. The parliamentary rules of procedure, also called ‘standing orders’, contain the vast majority of the ‘formal rules that govern the conduct of politics in the parliamentary arena, including parliament’s relation with other bodies’ (Sieberer et al. 2011, 950). The amount of rules regulated by constitutions, on the other hand, differs widely between countries and regimes (Müller and Sieberer 2014, 311-312). I determined through intensive analysis of the standing orders and constitutions of the respective countries that the standing orders include the bulk of the rules regarding PPS. I thus view constitutions as exogenous to the political process (Diermeier and Krehbiel 2003; Ostrom 2005) and focus exclusively on the rules of PPS entrenched in the standing orders.

Parliamentary standing orders exist in every country and are available on the parliamentary websites. As these documents sometimes exist only in the native language, I relied on official English or French translations to code the respective documents in their original language. These translations were made available by the project ‘Institutional Design in European Parliaments’ at the Zukunftskolleg, University of Konstanz. If the standing orders were not available online for January 1st, 2010, I relied on the database of the aforementioned project.

Assessing the design of the instruments of PPS through the parliamentary standing orders poses two challenges, which I address below: not taking the informal rules of PPS into account and having to deal with documents of different legal traditions in different languages. The informal rules of parliamentary procedure are by no means irrelevant. North (1990, 36) argues that while formal rules may provide the framework for informal rules, the formal rules ‘[…] are seldom the obvious and immediate source of choice in daily interactions’. Helmke
and Levitsky (2004, 726) go even further and argue that ‘political actors respond to a mix of formal and informal incentives, and in some instances, informal incentives trump formal ones’. Müller and Sieberer (2014, 311) acknowledge that ‘in the absence of formal rules […] informal rules, the author] may provide crucial guidance, and indeed many formal rules relate back to earlier conventions that were formalized at some point in time’. However, informal institutions are also ‘not binding for actors’ and ‘the precise contents of conventions may be difficult to grasp for both novices among the actors and outside observers and may gradually change over time, sometimes even unnoticed’ (Müller and Sieberer 2014, 311). Müller and Sieberer (2014, 311) thus conclude that ‘in most institutionalized settings such as parliaments the truly important rules are usually formalized’. Therefore, I focus exclusively on the formal rules of the instruments of PPS in the dissertation at hand. Not including the informal rules of PPS also has a practical reason. To fully grasp the informal rules of a parliament, in-depth research – often including expert interviews – is necessary. Given my resources, it is not feasible to include the informal institutions of all countries of Western Europe with a parliamentary system in this dissertation.

The second challenge posed by relying on the parliamentary standing orders is that they come from different legal traditions; when constructing the index of the design of the instruments of PPS in the following, I pay particular attention to meeting this challenge. For example, the parliamentary standing orders vary greatly in length. The standing orders of Iceland and Finland have close to 8000 words, whereas the standing orders of the United Kingdom contain about 40000 words. The number of words necessary to express a given content also varies between languages. Therefore, when constructing the index for the design of the instruments of PPS it is particularly important that the index is independent of the different lengths of the standing orders and of the differing number of words a language requires to express the same content.
4.3.1. Content Analysis as a Method for Analyzing the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure

As the design of the instruments of PPS is not directly observable, I assess how the instruments of PPS are designed through constructing an index of how majority- or minority-friendly and how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS are designed. To extract the relevant information from the parliamentary standing orders, I conduct a content analysis. This is ‘a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts [...] to the contexts of their use’ (Krippendorff 2004, 18). Below, I argue why I choose a content analysis to extract this information from the standing orders, present the different types of content analysis and argue why a theory-driven content analysis based on manual coding is appropriate for the dissertation at hand.

I assess the design of the instruments of PPS through a content analysis of the respective parliamentary standing orders because content analysis is efficient and flexible. Content analysis allows me to analyze only those parts of the standing orders which are relevant for the design of the instruments of PPS. Hence, content analysis provides me with an efficient means to assess the design of the instruments of PPS. Content analysis is also very flexible. It allows me to code the content of the standing orders according to a coding scheme specifically tailored to the instruments of PPS. Therefore, a content analysis is appropriate for gauging the design of the instruments of PPS because it allows me to ‘extract meaningful content from an entire corpus of text in a systematic way’ (Slapin and Proksch 2014, 127).

For my purposes, content analysis can be distinguished along two dimensions: whether the content analysis is explorative or theory-driven, and whether coding is done automatically or manually. Below, I introduce and contrast these different types of content analysis and justify why I employ a theory-driven rather than an explorative content analysis with manual coding instead of automated coding. A content analysis can either be explorative or theory-driven. In
an explorative content analysis, the codebook with which the texts are coded is not defined a priori but is established inductively during coding. Conversely, in a theory-driven content analysis the codebook is established based on theoretical considerations before the coding process. The material is then coded based on this codebook, and the codebook remains unchanged (Krippendorff 2004; Mayring 2000; Schreier 2012). While an explorative content analysis allows for greater flexibility, a theory-driven content analysis provides the researcher with the opportunity to extract the theoretically relevant information from the text.

I rely on a theory-driven content analysis rather than on an explorative content analysis because the dissertation at hand is strongly theory-driven. I established theoretically which instruments are relevant for communicating PPS and how they relate to each other, i.e. whether they are open or closed. In addition to providing an overview of how the instruments of PPS are designed, I seek to explain their design through the hypotheses derived from an original theoretical framework established in Chapter 2. To meet these objectives, a theory-driven content analysis is more appropriate than an explorative content analysis.

A content analysis can further be distinguished according to whether coding is done automatically or manually. Automated coding means that the actual coding is done independently by a computer. To conduct this coding, the computer requires additional information, e.g. a dictionary or a reference text. Conversely, manual coding is done by human coders who decide how to code the material based on detailed coding instructions (Grimmer and Stewart 2013; Slapin and Proksch 2008). Automated coding is superior to manual coding concerning efficiency and avoiding human error. Conversely, manual coding approaches do not require existing dictionaries or reference texts and allow human coders to make decisions based on their training in coding the texts.

I code the standing orders manually rather than automatically because little is known about the design of the instruments of PPS and efficiency considerations are not a prime concern.
The design of the instruments of PPS is the subject of this dissertation because there is only little existing information about it. Therefore, it is important to choose a coding procedure that does not rely on existing information but rather on the intelligence and knowledge of human coders. This is achieved through manual rather than through automated coding. Another advantage of automated coding is that it is more efficient than manual coding. However, efficiency considerations are of subordinate importance for the dissertation at hand because I am coding 16 standing orders of manageable length and not thousands.

Using the example of the Comparative Manifestos Project (Budge et al. 2001), Slapin and Proksch (2008, 706-707) point out that a theory-driven content analysis based on manual coding may be problematic due to the codebook used, the lack of measures of uncertainty, and the high costs and level of difficulty of replicating such a study (see also Slapin and Proksch 2014, 135-138). To counter these problems, the codebook has a solid theoretical foundation which I discuss in detail in the following section. Further, while replicating my study is time-intensive, this is manageable due to the codebook provided in Appendix 1.

4.3.2. Coding the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure

To gauge the design of the instruments of PPS through content analysis, I code all relevant sub-paragraphs of the parliamentary standing orders in force on January 1st, 2010, in each country in my sample. In other words, all parts of the standing orders which pertain to both or one of the two dimensions centralization – decentralization and majority – minority of the instruments of PPS are my sampling units. This sampling unit is appropriate because my theoretical interest lies in explaining how centralized or decentralized and how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. Conversely, I am not interested in understanding who is allowed to stay seated when speaking during a plenary debate and who has to speak from a podium.
To code the information of these sampling units, I could code them in their entirety, code paragraphs, code sub-paragraphs, or code individual sentences. Coding all parts of the standing orders pertaining to one or both of the dimensions of the instruments of PPS together is not appropriate because this would not allow for distinguishing between the different instruments of PPS. Through intensive reading of the standing orders, I have found that paragraphs often subsume a large number of regulations and are hence too broad for precisely coding the content of the parliamentary standing orders. Sentences are also not appropriate coding units because the standing orders are complex and one single sentence can only rarely be understood by itself. Conversely, sub-paragraphs are appropriate coding units. ‘A subparagraph is any syntactic unit under a legal paragraph (§) or article that is marked off by an own numbering, e.g. ‘a’ or ‘(1)’. Such subparagraphs can still consist of more than one sentence’ (Sieberer et al. 2011, 970). I have found that sub-paragraphs form a unit regarding content. Thus, they are better suited than sentences for coding the design of the instruments of PPS. At the same time, they are smaller than entire paragraphs, i.e. allowing for a more detailed coding than paragraphs would allow for. The relevant sub-paragraphs of the standing orders are listed in Appendix 2.

Following Sieberer et al. (2011, 956), I code each sub-paragraph entirely and exclusively with a specific code. For example, this means that a sub-paragraph can either be majority- or minority-friendly, but not both. If a sub-paragraph concerns both centralized and decentralized or majority and minority actors equally or concerns a neutral actor, I code this sub-paragraph as neutral. This approach is appropriate because it allows me to capture the greatest possible variation within the instruments of PPS while at the same time allowing the content of each sub-paragraph to be clearly and exclusively identified.

I proceed in three steps to assess whether the rules of PPS are centralized or decentralized and majority- or minority-friendly. Table 4-1 shows that I code each relevant sub-paragraph
regarding which instrument of PPS it concerns, which feature of the instrument it concerns, and which actor it advantages. Below, I elaborate on each step in detail.

### Table 4-1: Three Steps of Coding the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Coding of sub-paragraphs regarding</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Instrument of PPS</td>
<td>A sub-paragraph concerns plenary debates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plenary debates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation of committee reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpellations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Feature of instrument of PPS</td>
<td>A sub-paragraph concerns how plenary debates are ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Advantaged actor</td>
<td>A sub-paragraph advantages the majority in ending plenary debates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Majority actors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both majority and minority actors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority actors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Centralized actors</td>
<td>A sub-paragraph advantages a centralized actor in ending plenary debates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both centralized and decentralized actors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decentralized actors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Step 1: Coding the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

In Step 1, I code all relevant sub-paragraphs of the parliamentary standing orders regarding which of the five instruments of PPS they concern. As argued in the Introduction, the five instruments in parliament which are relevant for communicating PPS are written questions, oral questions, interpellations, debates in the plenary, and the presentation of committee reports. Below, I elaborate on each one of these instruments and classify them as open or closed. Please note that I only classify the instruments of PPS as open or closed for informative purposes and do not explicitly code if an instrument of PPS is open or closed.

While a written question is defined as being posed and answered in writing only, an oral question may be asked either in written or oral form but has to be answered orally in parliament (Wiberg 1995, 184-186). Both types of questions have in common that they are targeted at and answered by a specific actor, i.e. the government. Their interaction is highly
structured: first the question is posed and then the answer is provided. Therefore, I classify written and oral questions as closed instruments.

An interpellation is the third form of parliamentary question: it concerns a substantially important topic of general interest and is introduced to bring this topic on the agenda. Its aim is to force the government to provide information or to justify its position concerning this topic (Wiberg 1995, 184-195). Interpellations may – but do not have to – result in a debate (Green-Pedersen 2010). Since such a debate is just one possible result of an interpellation, I also classify interpellations as closed instruments of PPS.

Instruments of parliamentary scrutiny can be analyzed in the same framework as plenary debates and the presentation and discussion of committee reports. While they have been analyzed separately so far, it is straightforward to integrate them in one common framework when focusing on how parliamentary actors interact when employing these instruments. What mainly distinguishes plenary debates from parliamentary questions is that in debates, participation is only restricted by time limits and statements in plenary debates do not require a clear recipient. Even if an actor is addressed, they do not have to respond. Moreover, statements in plenary debates do not have to be directed at a specific actor and the addressed actors do not have to respond. For these reasons, I classify plenary debates as an open instrument of PPS. It follows that when conceptualizing plenary debates as open instruments and oral questions, written questions, and interpellations as closed instruments of PPS, all of these instruments of PPS can be analyzed in one common framework.

After discussion in committee, committees present their work to parliament. This report is then discussed in the plenary. Thus, the report to the plenary allows the committee to inform parliament of their recommendations and allows the members of the committee to voice their concerns (Ismayr 2008, 31-34). The presentation of reports allows the committee to address the entire plenary without directly addressing any one actor in particular. Multiple actors can
respond but it is not required that a particular actor responds. Consequently, I classify the presentation of committee reports as an open instrument.

**Step 2: Coding the Features of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements**

To understand each instrument of PPS in more detail, I also code which of the six features of an instrument the sub-paragraph concerns. In the literature on parliamentary questions, one finds a range of features according to which these can be described. While these feature sets vary by author, they can be summarized into five main features described below. First, in order to access questions, certain requirements have to be met. There is also a certain time frame for these questions. Questions are organized in a certain way, and there may be different rules for the closure of a question in different countries. Last, the results of questions are documented. Table 4-2 provides an overview of these features.

These features can be applied to plenary debates and the presentation and discussion of committee reports because they differ from questions and interpellations in how they structure the interaction between parliamentary actors, but not in their basic structure. This means that open instruments of PPS are also accessed by parliamentary actors, have a certain time frame and organization, can be closed by parliamentary actors (or end automatically), and are documented. For example, a plenary debate may be requested only by the government (access), last for 30 or 60 minutes depending on the decision of the President of Parliament (time frame), allow one parliamentarian per party group to speak (organization), be closed if at least 1/3 of parliamentarians request this (closure) and be summarized in the official records of parliament after all parliamentarians have approved of it (documentation). Hence, these features are appropriate for analyzing and contrasting the design of both open and closed instruments of PPS. Additionally, there may be provisions for excluding the public from an instrument of PPS. Consequently, I add publicity as a sixth feature. While this is mainly relevant for open instruments, e.g. plenary debates which are held without the public,
publicity also matters for closed instruments of PPS because it is for example possible that an
interpellation which is highly sensitive for national security is held without the public.

Table 4-2: Distinguishing Features of Closed Instruments of PPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Conditions for asking questions</td>
<td>Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Admissibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Time Limits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Restrictions on number of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restrictions</td>
<td></td>
<td>tabled written questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closure</strong></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documentation</strong></td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 3: Coding the Two Dimensions of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy

Statements

In Step 3, I code whether centralized or decentralized actors and the majority or the
minority has an advantage in a feature of an instrument of PPS. In the theoretical section, I
argued that there are two different dimensions on which parliamentary actors can have an
advantage in communicating PPS. First, the design of the instruments of PPS may advantage
either backbenchers or centralized actors. Second, the instruments of PPS may be designed in
a way which makes it easier for the majority or the minority to communicate PPS. Because
these dimensions are independent of each other, I code the centralization – decentralization
dimension separately from the majority – minority dimension.

I code the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS as follows. If the instruments
of PPS give prerogatives to actors with special offices, such as the president of parliament or
the leaders of parliamentary party groups, I code this sub-paragraph as centralizing power in parliament. Conversely, when the rules give rights to individual parliamentarians, I code these sub-paragraphs as decentralizing power. If a sub-paragraph gives rights to both kinds of actors, I assign a neutral code. Last, when a sub-paragraph concerns neither actor, I do not assign it any code.

I code a sub-paragraph as advantaging the majority if the sub-paragraph ascribes rights to a parliamentary majority or an actor elected by majority rule, such as a committee chairman. Conversely, if a sub-paragraph gives prerogatives to a parliamentary minority, e.g. ¼ of parliamentarians, I code the respective sub-paragraph as minority-friendly. If a sub-paragraph awards both the parliamentary majority and the parliamentary minority with equal rights, I code the sub-paragraph as neutral. If the sub-paragraph does not concern either the parliamentary majority or the parliamentary minority, I do not assign it any code.

I assign no code to a sub-paragraph which advantages neither actor instead of assigning these sub-paragraphs a neutral code because in the coding scheme presented above, a neutral code has a substantively different meaning from a nonexistent code. Figure 4-2 visualizes this difference.

Figure 4-2: Neutral Code Compared to No Assigned Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minority-friendly sub-paragraph</th>
<th>Maj. – Min. neutral sub-paragraph</th>
<th>Majority-friendly sub-paragraph</th>
<th>Sub-paragraph without code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Figure 4-2, a neutral code signifies that a sub-paragraph advantages both actors equally. An example is the following sub-paragraph: ‘Plenary debates can be ended by 15 parliamentarians or by a member of the government.’ In this sub-paragraph, no actor is advantaged more strongly than the other one. By assigning it a neutral code, I place it in the
middle between the two extreme codes. When thinking of these codes as situated on a number ray, the code ‘minority-friendly’ would be situated at -1, the code ‘majority – minority neutral’ would be situated at 0, and the code ‘majority-friendly’ would be situated at +1. Conversely, there are also sub-paragraphs which do not concern how either actor is advantaged, i.e. ‘Each member of parliament making a contribution to a plenary debate must speak from the podium.’ This statement is different from the previous one in that it does not concern the majority – minority dimension at all. Therefore, it would be conceptually wrong to place this statement between the two extreme codes ‘minority-friendly’ and ‘majority-friendly’. The same reasoning applies to the centralization – decentralization dimension.

4.3.3. Constructing the Index

I then aggregate the information of the coded parliamentary standing orders into an index to gauge the centralization and decentralization and the majority- and minority-friendliness of each instrument of PPS in each country. To do so, I proceed in two steps. First, I aggregate the data at the level of the features of an instrument. Then, I aggregate this data further to the level of instruments. Table 4-3 illustrates these steps in detail.

I first aggregate the data to the level of the features of an instrument and then to the level of instruments instead of directly to the level of instruments because the features are of equal theoretical importance but the number of words associated with each feature may differ. Thus, first assessing how the rules regarding each feature impact the conflict between parliamentary actors and then aggregating these scores to the level of instruments allows me to reflect this theoretical equivalence.
Table 4-3: Two Steps of Constructing the Index of the Design of the Instruments of PPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Feature of instrument of PPS</td>
<td>Counting the number of words of each combination of codes (instrument – feature – advantaged actor, e.g. oral questions – organization – majority-friendly: 20 words; oral questions – organization – neutral: 10 words; oral questions – organization – minority-friendly: 20 words) Calculating the share of words of each feature advantaging centralized actors, decentralized actors or both actors equally; calculating the share of words advantaging the majority, the minority, or both actors equally (e.g. oral questions – organization – majority-friendly: 40% of words; oral questions – organization – neutral: 20% of words; oral questions – organization – minority-friendly: 40% of words) Deducting the share of words advantaging the decentralized actors from the share of words advantaging centralized actors to determine the score of the feature; deducting the share of words advantaging the minority from the share of words advantaging the majority to determine the score of the feature (e.g. oral questions – organization: 0.4 (pro maj.) - 0.4 (pro min.) = 0.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Instrument of PPS</td>
<td>Adding the scores of all features of an instrument to determine the score of the instrument (e.g. oral questions: access 0.2, organization 0.0, time frame 0.1, closure 0.3, documentation 0.1, publicity 0.2: 0.2 + 0.0 + 0.1 + 0.3 + 0.1 + 0.2 = 0.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 1: Aggregation to the Features of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

To assess the impact each feature has on the design of each instrument of PPS, I first count the words of each combination of codes. For example, I count that for the organization of oral questions in Germany, there are 20 words advantaging the majority, 30 words advantaging the minority, and 10 words which are neutral. I rely on the number of words which belong to each code and not on the number of sub-paragraphs because even through sub-paragraphs are units regarding content and are thus suitable as coding units, they differ considerably regarding their length. If I would rely on the number of sub-paragraphs to assess the design of the instruments of PPS, this would assume that all sub-paragraphs are of equal importance no matter their length. However, Huber and Shipan (2002) argue that the number of words used to describe a content gives an indication of how tight the respective law is. For my purposes,
this implies that longer sub-paragraphs should have a greater impact on the measure of the
design of the instruments of PPS than shorter sub-paragraphs.

I then calculate the share of words of each feature which advantages a certain actor. For example, assume that there are 100 words concerning the time frame of oral questions, 25 of which advantage the minority actor, 50 of which advantage a majority actor, and 25 of which advantage both actors equally. I then calculate that regarding the time frame of oral questions, the share of words is 0.25 for minority actors, 0.50 for majority actors and 0.25 neutral. I use the relative rather than the absolute number of words advantaging a particular actor to gauge how great the advantage of this actor is for two reasons. First, the share of words allows for assessing the comparative advantage of an actor. For instance, in this paragraph one can see that the share of words advantaging majority actors accounts for half the words regarding the time frame of oral questions. Conversely, knowing that there are 50 words advantaging majority actors does not give us any indication about the comparative advantage of the majority actors. Second, relying on the share of the number of words instead of on absolute counts of the number of words is advantageous because it renders texts of different languages and legal traditions easily comparable.

I gauge the score of each feature of each instrument through deducting the share of words advantaging decentralized actors from the share of words advantaging centralized actors and by deducting the share of words advantaging minority actors from the share of words advantaging majority actors. It follows that a score of +1 indicates that a feature completely advantages centralized actors or the majority, respectively, a score of -1 indicates that a feature completely advantages decentralized actors or the minority, respectively, and a score of 0 indicates no advantage for a particular actor. I add the share of words because I do not have an a priori assumption about a greater impact of some actors on the overall score of the feature.
I conducted two robustness checks to assess the robustness of these composite indicators. First, in a good composite indicator all features it consists of should contribute to the score of the instrument. It follows that the composite indicator is robust if the scores of the instruments remain similar when one feature at a time is excluded. The correlations between the scores of the instruments when one feature was excluded at a time are above 0.93 for the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS and are above 0.96 for the majority- and minority-friendliness of PPS. Moreover, all instruments of PPS should contribute equally to the overall score of a country. I tested the robustness of the indicator through excluding one instrument at a time. If the ranking of the countries remains very similar when the instruments are excluded, I can conclude that the instruments are robust. Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient for the country scores including different sets of instruments is above 0.88 for the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS and is above 0.90 for the majority- and minority-friendliness of PPS. This suggests that no instrument in particular drives the score of a country. Based on these results, I conclude that the indicators for the centralization and decentralization and for the majority- and minority-friendliness of PPS are robust.

**Step 2: Aggregation to the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements**

To determine the overall score of each instrument, I add the scores of its features. There are at most six features per instrument, which yields that the index has a theoretical range of -6 (extreme decentralization/extreme minority-friendliness) to +6 (extreme centralization/extreme majority-friendliness), with a score of 0 identifying an equal balance between centralized and decentralized as well as between majority and minority actors. I choose a linear aggregation rule because this allows for compensability between the individual features (Miller 2007, 95-96; OECD and Commission 2008, 31-34). I did not
employ weights because there is no strong theoretical motivation to do so. This means that each feature contributes equally to the overall score of the instrument.

It is important to note that the values of this index do not carry any substantive meaning by themselves because their scale is arbitrary. Thus, the scores are well-suited for comparing how centralized or decentralized and how majority-friendly or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. For example, it is safe to say that oral questions with a score of -5 are more minority-friendly than oral questions with a score of -2. However, the scores of -5 and -2 do not carry any meaning except that oral questions with a score of -5 are more minority-friendly than oral questions with a score of -2.

To summarize, I have so far explained how I built an index to measure the centralization and decentralization as well as the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. This measurement involves first coding the sub-paragraphs of the standing orders of the respective countries regarding which instrument they concern (‘This sub-paragraph concerns oral questions.’), which feature of an instrument they concern (‘This sub-paragraph concerns the organization of oral questions.’), and which actor they advantage (‘This sub-paragraph concerns the organization of oral questions and advantages the parliamentary majority.’). Thereafter, I ultimately aggregate this information to the level of instruments (‘Oral questions in the Netherlands are more majority-friendly than those in Germany.’).


I choose a linear single-level model to analyze the centralization/decentralization and majority-/minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. Below, I first explain why a linear model is appropriate to analyze the design of the instruments of PPS. Thereafter, I discuss that while a linear multi-level model seems most appropriate at first glance, I opt for a linear
single-level model to explain the centralization and decentralization as well as the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS for both theoretical and empirical reasons.

To choose an appropriate model to explain the centralization and decentralization as well as the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, it is first necessary to assess whether these variables are limited or continuous. When referring to Section 4.3 about the measurement of the institutional design of the instruments of PPS, one can see that the variables aggregated to the level of instruments range from -6 to +6. In between these values, the variables can theoretically assume any value. Furthermore, the aggregation rule I employed to aggregate the data into the index is linear. This means that I assume the values of the index to be equidistant from each other. For example, I assume that the distance from +1 to +3 to be the same as the distance from -1 to +1. It follows that both variables are quasi-continuous. This requires a linear regression model.

The variables indicating the centralization or decentralization and the majority- or minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS are structured hierarchically: there are 16 countries within which at most five instruments of PPS are nested. For the centralization and decentralization as well as the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS this yields 16 cases at the upper level and 74 cases at the lower level. This hints that a multilevel model may be appropriate, as the centralization and decentralization as well as the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS within the same country may not be independent of each other (Goldstein 2011, 1-14). Below, I explain why a single-level model is nonetheless sufficient to analyze this data.

To choose whether to employ a single-level or a multi-level model, it is first necessary to understand which model best helps me to answer my theoretical questions; I find that a single-level model is sufficient for this purpose. My theoretical interest is twofold. First, I am interested in the average differences between open and closed instruments to assess for
instance whether on average, closed instruments of PPS are more centralized than open instruments of PPS. Second, I am concerned about the average effects of country-level predictors to understand for example whether parliaments with more workload have more majority-friendly instruments of PPS than parliaments with less workload. Conversely, I do not have any theoretical questions which require taking into account country-specific intercepts. It follows that answering my theoretical questions requires only a single-level model.

Empirically, fitting a multi-level model to the data does not yield more information than fitting a single-level model. To conclude that a multi-level model does not provide a better fit to the data than a single-level model, I first discuss that the number of upper-level cases is on the low end for estimating a multi-level model. Thereafter, I examine the within-country dependence of the instruments of PPS both graphically and statistically and discuss that this dependence is not large enough for neither the centralization and decentralization nor the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS to require a multi-level model.

To estimate a multi-level model, a relatively large number of upper-level units is necessary. Since the dissertation at hand includes only 16 upper-level units, the information provided by the upper level units may be too sparse to gain any further insights from estimating a multi-level model. There are no clear rules of thumb for how many upper-level units there should be to estimate a multi-level model, with recommended numbers ranging from about 10 to at least 100 (Kreft and De Leeuw 1998; Maas and Hox 2005; Paccagnella 2011; Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008). Stegmüller (2013) shows through extensive Markov Chain Monte Carlo simulation studies that if there are fewer than 15 to 20 upper-level cases, confidence intervals are likely too narrow when relying on Maximum Likelihood estimation. Thus, with fewer than 15 upper-level cases one is likely to find significant effects where there are none when relying on Maximum Likelihood estimation. Conversely, the Credible
Intervals obtained through Bayesian estimation are more conservative than the confidence intervals obtained through Maximum Likelihood as they tend to be too large. The Credible Intervals are only biased when there are fewer than 10 upper-level units. Even in this scenario, the bias of the Credible Intervals amounts only to about 5%, whereas the bias of the confidence intervals are biased up to 10% or 15%. Elff and Shikano (2014, 45) object that ‘frequentist estimators of coefficients in normal linear multilevel modes are unbiased irrespective of the number of higher-level units’ and ‘confidence intervals, if appropriately constructed, do not exhibit any serious undercoverage’. It follows that while most research suggests that the number of upper-level units of the data at hand is on the low end for estimating a multi-level model, it is still being debated how problematic this really is.

To gain further insight into whether a single-level or a multi-level model is more appropriate for the data at hand, I graphically examine the within-country dependence of the design of the instruments of PPS; I find that a single-level model is the better option. If the within-country dependence of the instruments of PPS is large, this means that the scores of the instruments of PPS within a country are similar to one another. In this case, a multi-level model is appropriate to model this data. Conversely, if there is little within-country dependence of the instruments of PPS, one can conclude that the scores of the instruments of PPS do not cluster within the countries. In this case, a single-level model is more appropriate than a multi-level model to analyze the design of the instruments of PPS.

Figure 4-3 shows the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS by country. One can see that they do not appear to be located closer together within countries than between countries. Thus, there does not appear to be much within-country dependence for the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS.
This suspicion resulting from eyeballing the within-country dependence of the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS is confirmed when examining the estimated parameters of the variance-components model. A variance-components model indicates statistically how much within-country dependence and how much between-country heterogeneity there is. For the centralization of the instruments of PPS, the estimate of between-country standard deviation of the random intercepts is 0. Consequently, the intraclass correlation $\rho$ is also 0\(^1\)\(^5\) (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008, 73-121). Substantially, this means that including the level of countries in the model does not add any further information to the model. Thus, a single-level model suffices not only theoretically but also empirically to model the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS.

Figure 4-4 shows that the within-country dependence of the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS is a bit more clustered by countries than was the case

\(^{15}\) The intraclass correlation rho is calculated as follows: $\rho = \frac{\sigma_d^2}{\sigma_d^2 + \sigma_f^2}$. Thus, if $\sigma_d^2 = 0$, $\rho = 0$. 

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for the centralization and decentralization of these instruments. This means that there seems to be some within-country dependence of the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. Yet, the within-country dependence is still not overwhelmingly large.

*Figure 4-4: Within-Country Dependence of Degree of Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS*

![Figure 4-4: Within-Country Dependence of Degree of Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS](image)

Again, this first impression is confirmed when examining the estimated parameters of the variance-components model. For the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, the estimate of the between-country standard deviation of the random intercepts is 0.552 and the estimate of the within-country standard deviation is 1.463. This results in an intraclass correlation of $\rho \approx 0.124$ (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008, 73-121). Substantially, this means that about 12% of the total variance of the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS is due to variation between countries. Thus, grouping the data by countries conveys little additional information.

To investigate further whether a multi-level model conveys more information than a single-level model, I estimated both a Bayesian single-level model and a Bayesian multi-level model and compared the estimates and the Deviance Information Criterion (DIC). Since the
low number of cases at the individual level (74 instruments) and the group level (16 countries) provides only very little information for a multi-level model, it is unlikely that the multi-level model differs from the single-level model. As I have not yet discussed the operationalization of the respective independent variables, I do not present the models in this section. Rather, I limit the discussion to the substantive findings because these do not depend on the operationalization of the independent variables. I include the models in the appendix to this chapter.

For the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS, I estimated a Bayesian single-level model and a Bayesian multi-level model\(^\text{16}\) corresponding to the full model (Model 3) of the empirical analysis in Chapter 6. As the variance components model yielded \(\rho = 0\) for the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS, I expect the multi-level model and the single-level model to correspond very closely. However, I do not expect perfect correspondence between the two due to the Markov Chain Monte Carlo estimation and the different model specification. When comparing the models, it becomes clear that the estimates of the multi-level model are very similar to those of the single-level model. In particular, the 95% Credible Intervals of the point estimates of the single-level model always include the point estimates of the multi-level model and vice versa. It follows that the point estimates are virtually identical for the single- and the multi-level model.

This assessment is corroborated by the Deviance Information Criterion (DIC) of the models. The DIC allows for comparing the model fit of models estimated in the Bayesian framework. The DIC of both models are very similar; the slightly lower DIC of the single-level model indicates that the single-level model fits the data a little better than the multi-level model (Spiegelhalter et al. 2002). Therefore, a single-level model suffices for understanding

\(^{16}\) For the single-level model, I ran the three Markov Chains for 5000 iterations each. I then discarded the first 3000 iterations per Markov Chain. For the multi-level model, I ran three Markov Chains for 10000 iterations each. I then discarded the first 8000 iterations per Markov Chain. For all models the Gelman-Rubin statistic indicated a very good model fit.
the centralization and decentralization of the instruments of PPS. Since the high similarity of the multi- and the single-level models implies that the country-specific covariates are enough to absorb a group-structure of the stochastic component, I do not correct the standard errors of the single-level model for clustering\textsuperscript{17}.

For the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, I estimated a Bayesian single-level model and a Bayesian multi-level model\textsuperscript{18} corresponding to the full model of the empirical analysis (Model 1) in Chapter 7. As the variance components model yielded $\rho > 0$ for the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, I do not expect the multi-level model and the single-level model to correspond perfectly. However, since the intraclass correlation is rather low, I expect there to be only little difference between the two models. As expected, the estimates of the single-level model closely mirror those of the multi-level model. The 95\% Credible Intervals of the point estimates of the single-level model always include the point estimates of the multi-level model and vice versa. Thus, the point estimates are very similar for both models.

The DIC of both models are also very similar. The DIC of the single-level model is slightly lower than the DIC of the multi-level model, which suggests that the single-level model fits the data slightly better than the multi-level model. Together, these results indicate that a single-level model is able to explain the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS just as well as the multi-level model is and even has a slightly better model fit.

\textsuperscript{17} When estimating the models with clustered standard errors, I found that the standard errors are slightly smaller than in the models without clustered standard errors. There are two possible explanations for this. On the one hand, it could be that the intra-cluster correlations are negative, which could indicate that the residuals are correlated with the independent variables (Sribney 2013). However, the close correspondence between the multi- and single-level models suggests that this is likely not the case. On the other hand, as the robust unclustered standard errors are just a little bit smaller than the standard errors of the standard model, it could be that one just observes random variation (Sribney 2013). Therefore, I rely on the more conservative results and estimate the models without corrected standard errors.

\textsuperscript{18} For the single-level model, I ran the three Markov Chains for 5000 iterations each. I then discarded the first 3000 iterations per Markov Chain. For the multi-level model, I ran three Markov Chains for 10000 iterations each. I then discarded the first 8000 iterations per Markov Chain. For all models the Gelman-Rubin statistic indicated a very good model fit.
Therefore, I opt for parsimony and fit a single-level model to the data instead of a multi-level model. I do not correct the standard errors of the single-level model for clustering because the close correspondence of the multi- and single-level model suggests that the country-specific covariates are sufficient to absorb a group-structure of the stochastic component.

4.5. Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the research design for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS. In Section 4.2, I outlined the general research strategy of this dissertation. I argued that a large-N study is more appropriate than a case study because little is known about how the instruments of PPS are designed and I aim to provide an overview of their design rather than an in-depth analysis of only a few cases. I explained that I seek to map and explain the design of the instruments of PPS for all Western European countries with a parliamentary system because these countries are similar enough to hold several important confounding factors constant, yet provide enough variation to assess the empirical validity of the hypotheses put forth in the previous chapter. Last, I introduced that my unit of analysis is one instrument of PPS in a particular country, e.g. oral questions in France.

In Section 4.3, I explained how I construct the indices to measure how the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. I argued that I employ a theory-driven quantitative content analysis which relies on manual coding. This coding proceeds in three steps. In the first step, I code which instrument of PPS a relevant sub-paragraph of the parliamentary standing orders concerns. In the second step, I code which feature of the instrument of PPS the sub-paragraph concerns. In the last step, I code whether

19 When estimating the models with clustered standard errors, I found that the standard errors are slightly smaller than in the models without clustered standard errors. There are two possible explanations for this. On the one hand, it could be that the intra-cluster correlations are negative, which could indicate that the residuals are correlated with the independent variables (Sribney 2013). However, the close correspondence between the multi- and single-level models suggests that this is likely not the case. On the other hand, as the robust unclustered standard errors are just a little bit smaller than the standard errors of the standard model, it could be that one just observes random variation (Sribney 2013). Therefore, I rely on the more conservative results and estimate the models without corrected standard errors.
this sub-paragraph advantages centralized, decentralized, or both actors, and whether it advantages a majority, a minority, or both actors. I then aggregate this information in two steps to an index indicating how centralized or decentralized and how majority- and minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed.

In Section 4.4, I argued that a linear single-level model is more appropriate than a linear multi-level model to analyze how the instruments of PPS are designed. A linear model is suitable to analyze the design of the instruments of PPS because the measure of the design of the instruments of PPS is quasi-continuous. A single-level model is more appropriate than a multi-level model for both theoretical and empirical reasons. Theoretically, assessing the empirical validity of the hypotheses put forth in the previous chapter does not require a multi-level model. Empirically, a multi-level model does not convey additional information. For reasons of parsimony, a linear single-level model is more appropriate than a linear multi-level model to analyze the design of the instruments of PPS.

In Chapter 5, I explain that I also rely on this index to trace the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. More precisely, I construct the index of the design of the instruments of PPS as described in this chapter for each instance on which the design of the instruments of PPS changes. In Chapters 6 and 7, I showcase the indices developed in the present chapter and explain in detail how the instruments of PPS are designed. In Chapter 6, I focus on the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. I show that most instruments of PPS are centralized; yet, there is variation between instruments and between countries. This pattern can be best explained by the accountability of parliamentarians – the more directly parliamentarians are accountable to voters, the greater is their freedom for employing the instruments of PPS. Conversely, if voters vote for parties instead of individual candidates, the instruments of PPS are designed in a centralized way. Moreover, I find that open instruments of PPS are more strongly centralized than closed instruments of PPS.
In Chapter 7, I highlight and explain the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. I show that there is great variation between instruments and between countries: about 1/3 of countries has overall minority-friendly instruments of PPS and the rest has overall majority-friendly instruments of PPS, and open instruments of PPS tend to be more majority-friendly than closed instruments. The statistical analyses yield that this pattern can be best explained by a combination of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition and the seat share of the government. Further, the analysis confirms that open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed instruments.
Appendix Chapter 4: Bayesian Estimation of Single- and Multi-Level Models

Please note that I have only included the fixed effects of the multi-level models in the tables as these are the estimates which are substantially interesting for the dissertation at hand. In other words, these are the estimates for which it is important to determine whether a multi-level model provides me with more and more accurate information than the single-level model.

Table A-1: Bayesian Estimation of Degree of Centralization of Instruments of PPS Through Single- and Multi-Level Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single-Level Model</th>
<th>Multi-Level Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalization of Electoral System</td>
<td>-0.250 (0.131) [-0.505; 0.002]</td>
<td>-0.243 (0.153) [-0.537; 0.073]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Size (log)</td>
<td>0.070 (0.104) [-0.131; 0.268]</td>
<td>0.061 (0.123) [-0.179; 0.310]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Instruments (Dummy)</td>
<td>-0.814 (0.299) [-1.414; -0.235]</td>
<td>-0.820 (0.307) [-1.423; -0.224]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralization of Parties Nationwide</td>
<td>0.557 (0.500) [-0.421; 1.566]</td>
<td>0.522 (0.561) [-0.587; 1.673]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIC</td>
<td>250.054</td>
<td>252.517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in round brackets, 95% Credible Intervals in square brackets
Table A-2: Bayesian Estimation of Degree of Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS Through Single- and Multi-Level Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single-Level Model</th>
<th>Multi-Level Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideological distance government - opposition</td>
<td>0.031 (0.023) [-0.013; 0.075]</td>
<td>0.030 (0.027) [-0.025; 0.083]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of population (log)</td>
<td>0.185 (0.108) [-0.032; 0.396]</td>
<td>0.180 (0.130) [-0.071; 0.437]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed instruments of PPS (Dummy)</td>
<td>-1.457 (0.296) [-2.038; -0.879]</td>
<td>-1.501 (0.299) [-2.092; -0.916]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral volatility of government</td>
<td>-0.034 (0.033) [-0.099; 0.031]</td>
<td>-0.033 (0.042) [-0.120; 0.046]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority required to change Standing Orders</td>
<td>-0.314 (0.278) [-0.859; 0.227]</td>
<td>-0.304 (0.351) [-0.976; 0.382]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra-parliamentary veto points</td>
<td>-1.329 (0.299) [-1.909; -0.724]</td>
<td>-1.301 (0.368) [-2.050; -0.561]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIC</td>
<td>247.612</td>
<td>249.785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in round brackets, 95% Credible Intervals in square brackets
5. Research Design for Understanding the Change of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

5.1. Introduction

To assess if the hypotheses put forth in Chapter 3 can predict the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS, in the following I present the research design for understanding the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. I first outline the general research strategy, in which I argue that analyzing how the design of the instruments of PPS evolves over time for a few countries enriches the findings of the cross-section. Specifically, the cross-section time-series is useful for understand the timing of the changes made to the design of the instruments of PPS, for increasing the validity of the findings of the cross-section and for getting an impression of the causal mechanisms underlying the design of the instruments of PPS. I then explain that Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom are appropriate cases for the cross-section time series because they vary on the central independent variables identified by the cross-section and because I am able to speak their language and hence analyze their parliamentary standing orders over time. Last, I argue that the time frame of 1945 until 2010 is adequate because 1945 marks the end of World War II and hence a major historical break for all three countries, and 2010 is the date for which I analyzed the design of all instruments of PPS of all Western European countries.

After having elaborated on the general research strategy, I present that I measure the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS through the same index I constructed for gauging the design of the instruments of PPS. The only difference is that while I constructed the latter index for one point in time, I now construct this index for every version of the standing orders of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom. This allows me to trace the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS from 1945 until 2010.

While the cross-section constitutes the theoretical and analytical core of this dissertation, the cross-section time-series serves as a useful complement. In Section 4.2, I argued that a cross-section comprising many countries is most appropriate to assess the design of the instruments of PPS because little is known about their design and I aim to provide a broad overview of how centralized or decentralized and how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. Yet, I also highlighted that more in-depth case studies allow for a more accurate account of time and order, for a better understanding of causal mechanisms, for unearthing new variables, and for maximizing validity.

By tracing how the design of the instruments of PPS evolves for selected countries, I aim to include some of these strengths in the dissertation at hand. Analyzing how the design of the instruments of PPS changes over time allows me to gain a better understanding of the timing of changes made to the design of the instruments of PPS. The cross-section time-series also provides a further check of the conclusions drawn from the cross-section. This increases the validity of the results of the cross-section. Last, assessing the changes made to the design of the instruments of PPS in detail enables me to receive an impression of the causal mechanisms underlying the design of the instruments of PPS.

While the cross-section time-series yields valuable insights into the design of the instruments of PPS, it must be stressed that its purpose is first and foremost illustrative. It follows that the findings of the cross-section time-series must be treated with caution and must not be interpreted in an overconfident way. Rather, the findings complement the analysis of the cross-section by adding more nuances to the findings of the cross-section and by highlighting the complexities of the design of the instruments of PPS and its evolution.
I selected Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom as cases for the cross-section time-series for empirical and practical reasons. Empirically, I selected Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom because these countries exhibit great variance on the independent variables shown to be important by the statistical analyses of the cross-section (see Chapters 6 and 7). Table 5-1 provides an overview of this. One can see in Table 5-1 that the variables which tend to be stable within countries, i.e. the personalization of the electoral system and the majority requirement to change the standing orders, vary between the three countries selected for analysis. The variables which are expected to vary both between and within countries cover a broad range of the values these variables take on 01.01.2010, i.e. vary between countries. Moreover, these variables also vary over time which means that they provide for variance within countries.

Table 5-1: Variance of Selected Countries on Relevant Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Relevant for Dimension</th>
<th>Values of Variables on 01.01.2010</th>
<th>Values of Variables 1945-2010 (min-max (mean))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalization of electoral system</td>
<td>Centralization – decentralization</td>
<td>Range for W.E.: 1-5</td>
<td>Aut: constant&lt;sup&gt;20&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload of parliament (Mio. inhabitants)</td>
<td>Centralization – decentralization</td>
<td>Range for W.E.: 0.30-82.00</td>
<td>Aut: 6.90-8.38 (7.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority requirement to change standing orders</td>
<td>Majority-friendliness – minority-friendliness</td>
<td>Range for W.E.: 1-3</td>
<td>Aut: constant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: W.E. stands for Western European countries

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<sup>20</sup> While the reform of the Austrian electoral system of 1992 renders the Austrian electoral system more personalized (Müller 2006, 282-289), the reform is not comprehensive enough to change the score of the personalization of the electoral system. However, I discuss this reform in detail in Chapter 8.
Practically, my choice of countries was limited to those whose official language I am able to understand. The reason for this is that the standing orders of all countries are available for 01.01.2010 in a language which I am able to understand, the standing orders covering the entire period from 1945 or the respective date of democratization until 2010 are only available in the native languages of the respective countries. This limits the countries which I am able to analyze. I select Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom as cases for the cross-section time-series because I am not only able to understand their languages but there is also variance on all relevant independent variables within and between those countries.

For these countries, I measure the design of the instruments of PPS from 1945 until 2010. I choose 01.01.1945 as my starting date because this year marks the end of World War II and hence constitutes a historical break for all countries included in my study. For example, 1945 marked the profound regime change from dictatorship to democracy in Germany (*Deutsche Geschichte. Vom Kaiserreich bis heute.* 2008). In Austria, the occupation by Germany ended and democracy was reinstated (Vocelka 2009). While The United Kingdom did not experience such severe changes, the end of World War II is nevertheless important because it allowed Westminster to return to normal business (Schröder 2010). Yet, please note that this does not mean that all countries adopted brand new standing orders after World War II. While Austria and the United Kingdom continued to use their standing orders from before the war (for Austria see Auracher-Jäger 1997; for the United Kingdom see Kelso 2009), Germany changed its standing orders dating back to the Weimar Republic profoundly in 1952. I trace the design of the instruments of PPS until 01.01.2010 because this marks the date for which I assessed the design of the instruments of PPS for all Western European countries. Thus, I am able to reconstruct how the design of all instruments of PPS for Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom evolved from 1945 until 2010 and understand how the design of the instruments of PPS in 2010 came to be.
5.3. Constructing an Index of the Evolution of the Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

I measure the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS through the same index I constructed to measure the design of the instruments of PPS. Recall that for the cross-section, I constructed an index to gauge the design of the instruments of PPS for each country for the standing orders in force on 01.01.2010. The cross-section time-series differs from the cross-section in that I am assessing not only the design of the instruments of PPS at one particular point in time but rather all different designs of the instruments of PPS from 1945 until 2010. It follows that while there is one version of the standing orders in the cross-section, there are multiple ones in the cross-section time-series. Thus, I can gauge the design of the instruments of PPS for each one of these versions in the same way that I gauged the design of the instruments of PPS on 01.01.2010. This allows me to trace the design of the instruments from 1945 until 2010.

This index provides me with a score for the degree of centralization and a score for the degree of majority- friendliness for each instrument of PPS of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom for each version of these countries’ standing orders. There exist 14 versions of Austrian standing orders between 1945 and 2010 which yields that there are 14 scores for how centralized or decentralized and how majority- or minority-friendly each instrument of PPS is designed, respectively. For Germany, there are 39 versions of the standing orders for this time period; for the United Kingdom, there are 146 versions of the standing orders. This means that there are 39 scores for how centralized or decentralized and how majority- or minority-friendly each instrument of PPS is designed in Germany, respectively and 146 scores for the instruments of PPS of the United Kingdom.

I rely on an R-based applet to code the standing orders instead of separately coding each version of the standing orders to gauge the design of the instruments of PPS. This applet has
been developed by Peter Meißner for the IDEP project (Sieberer et al. forthcoming). The coding of the standing orders through this applet works as follows. I first code one version of the standing orders. This is relatively simple, as I already have the coded versions of 01.01.2010 for all three countries and can just transfer these codes to the R-based applet. The code of each sub-paragraph is then transferred to the earlier versions as long as the sub-paragraph remains unchanged. If the sub-paragraph is changed – which is what I am interested in analyzing in the cross-section time-series – I code the respective sub-paragraph according to the coding instructions discussed in Section 4.3. Based on this coding, I can then construct the index of the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness for each instrument of PPS for each version of the standing orders in the same way that I constructed the index for the cross-section as discussed in Section 4.3.

5.4. Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the research design for testing the hypotheses about the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. I proceeded in two steps: I first presented the general research strategy and then discussed how I measured the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. I argued that for the cross-section time-series, I rely on descriptive case studies for theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, complementing the large-N statistical analysis of the cross-section with case studies allows me to better understand the timing of changes made to the design of the instruments of PPS and to increase the validity of the conclusions drawn from the cross-section. Moreover, analyzing the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS in detail provides me with an insight to the causal mechanisms underlying the design of the instruments of PPS. Yet, the cross-section time-series should be viewed as illustrative and not as having the same status as the cross-section. Last, I explained that I analyzed Austria, Germany, and United Kingdom in the cross-section time-series for empirical and practical reasons. Empirically, these three countries provide
variance on the independent variables identified as central by the cross-section. Practically, my language skills allow me to analyze the standing orders of all of these countries.

In the second step, I elaborated on how I measure the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. I explained that I measure the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS through the same index I constructed to measure the design of the instruments of PPS for each version of the standing orders. It follows that the index provides me with a score for the centralization – decentralization dimension and a score for the majority – minority dimension for each instrument of PPS of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom for each version of these countries’ standing orders.

In Chapters 8 and 9, I present in detail how the design of the instruments of PPS has evolved for Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010. Moreover, I discuss in how far these patterns support the hypotheses put forth in Chapter 3 and in how far they corroborate the findings of the cross-section. I show that these patterns indicate some support for the findings of the cross-section; however, they also show that the reforms of the design of the instruments of PPS are complex and hence require an equally complex explanation. For example, I find that the accountability of parliamentarians is a good predictor of the level of centralization of oral questions for the three countries under investigation. Conversely, the level of centralization of plenary debates can hardly be explained by the accountability of parliamentarians. Moreover, the case studies add more nuance to the findings of the cross-section. For example, I am able to show that the governments of Austria and Germany are willing to change the design of the instruments of PPS to be more minority-friendly if the governments fear to lose their majority status after the following election or if they want to improve the fairness of the entire parliament.
Part III Empirically Understanding the Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

6. Centralization and Decentralization of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements in Western Europe in 2010

6.1. Introduction

The degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS is crucial for understanding the conflict between frontbenchers and backbenchers. The two competing explanations for how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed are based on the individual-goals view and the structural-functionalist view of institutional design, respectively. The individual-goals view postulates that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to advance their personal goals, i.e. to maximize their votes. Conversely, the structural-functionalist view asserts that the instruments of PPS are designed to ensure that parliament functions efficiently, i.e. that the instruments of PPS are designed in a more or less centralized way to accommodate parliamentary workload. In this chapter, I discuss the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS in Western European parliaments in 2010 and show that the electoral connection can explain this design better than the workload of parliament.

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 6.2, I present and discuss the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS in my sample. The overview shows that while individual instruments of PPS may be decentralized in some countries, overall both instruments and countries are centralized. In Section 6.3, I operationalize the independent variables specified in the theoretical part of this dissertation. In Section 6.4, I explain the pattern of centralization of the instruments of PPS through the hypotheses developed in the theoretical section. The analysis yields that parliamentary actors centralize the instruments of PPS depending on the electoral connection between parliamentarians and their electorate. The
more direct this connection is, the more decentralized the instruments of PPS are designed and vice versa to allow parliamentary actors to maximize their votes. In addition to the characteristics of the respective countries, the characteristics of the instruments of PPS themselves also matter for how centralized or decentralized they are designed. In accordance with my theoretical expectations, I find that open instruments of PPS are more strongly centralized than closed instruments. I summarize the findings of this chapter in Section 6.5 and provide an outlook for how the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS evolves over time.

6.2. **Description of the Centralization and Decentralization of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements in Western Europe in 2010**

The degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS in Western European parliaments is so far an under-researched topic. To explain the centralization of the instruments of PPS, it is first necessary to understand how the instruments of PPS are designed and which patterns of centralization emerge. In this section, I first present how centralized each instruments of PPS in each country is. Thereafter, I assess the mean centralization of each instrument of PPS separately. Last, I discuss how centralized the instruments of PPS are when aggregated by country. I find that overall, most instruments of PPS are centralized, that countries are overall centralized but that their degree of centralization varies and that plenary debates are by far the most centralized instrument of PPS.

Figure 6-1 shows the degree of centralization of the individual instruments of PPS in the different countries of Western Europe with a parliamentary system in 2010. Note that Ireland and Portugal only have a score for oral questions and not for written questions. However, this does not mean that Ireland and Portugal do not have written questions but is due to the fact that I code sub-paragraphs which concern both oral and written questions as concerning oral questions. As the Irish and Portuguese standing orders treat oral and written questions in the
same sub-paragraphs, both countries only have scores for oral questions. This coding decision is based on the fact that oral questions get more public attention than written ones (Rasch 2011, 384-387) and are thus more important for parliamentary actors’ communication with their electorate.

One can see in Figure 6-1 that the most centralized instruments of PPS are plenary debates in Spain (score of 4.14 on a scale from -6 to +6) and Sweden (4.12), followed by the presentation of committee reports in Spain (3.74). Conversely, the most decentralized instruments are written questions in Belgium (-1.00) and Denmark (-1.00) and interpellations in the Netherlands (-1.61). This brief overview indicates that the instruments of PPS differ in their degree of centralization. Empirically, the high degree of centralization of plenary debates in Spain is for example due to the fact that the closure of plenary debates can be requested only by parliamentary party groups and the President of Parliament (§76). This means that this feature of plenary debates is highly centralized, as both parliamentary party groups and the President of Parliament are centralized actors. Conversely, written questions in the United Kingdom are highly decentralized. One reason for this is that parliamentarians asking a written question have the right to indicate a specific date until which the question has to be answered (§22, 4). This means that the organization of written questions – at least concerning this sub-paragraph – is decentralized.

When seeking to discern patterns of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS, one can see that plenary debates are almost always the most centralized instrument of PPS. Apart from this, it is difficult to find a pattern of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. To gain a better understanding of their design, below I examine the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS aggregated by instrument and aggregated by country.
Figure 6-1: Centralization of Instruments of PPS by Country and Instrument

NB: If a sub-paragraph concerns both oral and written questions, it is coded as concerning oral questions. For this reason, Ireland and Portugal only have data for oral questions.
To gain deeper insight into the design of the instruments of PPS, Figure 6-2 shows the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS aggregated by instrument. One can see that the design of the individual instruments of PPS can be distinguished clearly from each other. Plenary debates are by far the most centralized instrument of PPS (median score of 2.75 on a scale from -6 to +6). The second most centralized instrument is oral questions (median score of 1.34), followed by the presentation of committee reports (median score of 0.70) and interpellations (median score of 0.60). The least centralized instrument is written questions (median score of 0.39). This pattern suggests that the instruments of PPS are distinct from each other, i.e. that it is appropriate to analyze them separately instead of aggregated by country. Moreover, the spread of the centralization of the instruments indicates that their degree of centralization varies between countries and may hence depend not only on characteristics of the instruments but also on factors specific to the parliaments and countries.

Figure 6-2: Centralization of Instruments of PPS by Instrument

The average positive score of all instruments of PPS indicates that backbenchers can never decide completely on their own how to employ the instruments of PPS. This is not surprising
because all modern parliaments face time constraints which are especially pressing concerning things other than passing legislation\(^{21}\) (Cox 2006). Therefore, it is simply not feasible for modern parliaments to have highly decentralized rules of procedure (see e.g. Wawro and Schickler 2007). Yet, it must also be noted that none of the instruments of PPS is very strongly centralized overall. This indicates that backbenchers always have some say regarding the instruments of PPS. One can also see that the instruments which require much time in the plenary, e.g. parliamentary debates (Proksch and Slapin 2012), are more centralized than those that require no time in the plenary, i.e. written questions (Rozenberg and Martin 2011) or those instruments which are employed less frequently, i.e. interpellations. This provides some preliminary evidence that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS purposefully based on whether they are open or closed.

Figure 6-3 shows that when aggregating the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS by country, the set of instruments of PPS of each parliament taken together is overall centralized. While these aggregate scores should be treated with caution because not all countries have the same number of instruments of PPS, they are nonetheless appropriate because I do not use them to compare the countries with each other but rather to assess the overall degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS for each country\(^{22}\).

\(^{21}\) This also applies to written questions even though they do not require time in the plenary because answering written questions also requires resources, for instance staff and time. Thus, while theoretically an infinite number of written questions could be posed, they will be backlogged already when much smaller numbers are posed.

\(^{22}\) For example, Germany has five instruments while Ireland and Portugal only have three. It follows that the scores Germany can achieve range between -30 and +30, while the scores Ireland and Portugal can achieve range between -18 and +18. Relying on these scores is appropriate because I do not use them to compare the countries with each other but rather to assess the overall degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS for each country. Moreover, as I assume that all instruments of PPS are similarly important and I do not know how the nonexistent instruments of PPS would be designed, employing another aggregation rule would not be appropriate. For example, if I would assess the overall score of each country by calculating the percentage the actual score captures of the maximum score possible for that country, the fewer instruments of PPS a country would have, the greater would be the impact of these instruments on the percentage. For example, each instrument of PPS of Ireland would account for 1/3 of the percentage, while each instrument of PPS of Germany would account for 1/5 of the percentage.
It is not surprising that all instruments of PPS of a parliament taken together are overall centralized because all parliaments under investigation face time constraints, especially for making PPS (Cox 2006). Substantially, this pattern could indicate that parliamentary actors do not only design the instruments of PPS on an individual basis but also decide about the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS as a whole. This would mean that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS purposefully based on both the characteristics of the individual instruments and based on the characteristics of their respective countries and parliaments. In the following sections, I analyze these patterns in detail and find that indeed, both country-level factors and the characteristics of the instruments of PPS matter for their degree of centralization.

The relatively low score of the instruments of PPS in the United Kingdom may appear unusual at first, as for example Cox and McCubbins (2007, 135) argue that the party leaders of British party groups are very powerful; yet, this finding is not a cause for alarm but rather due to the aggregation of the scores of the instruments of PPS by country. When seeking to
understand how the composite score of the centralization of the instruments of PPS of the United Kingdom comes to be, one can see in Figure 6-1 that plenary debates are highly centralized in the United Kingdom (score of 3.05, highest score is 4.14). The presentation and discussion of committee reports is centralized at a mean level. Conversely, written questions are highly decentralized (score of -0.69, lowest score is -1.61) and oral questions are predominantly decentralized (score of -0.07). It follows that the relatively low overall score of the instruments of PPS of the United Kingdom does not indicate that frontbenchers do not have a say in how the instruments of PPS are employed. Rather, they have many rights in plenary debates, which are highly important for the party label. Contrarily, the instruments of PPS which are particularly important for constituency service, i.e. oral and written questions (Saalfeld 2011), are decentralized. Thus, both findings are in accordance with theoretical expectations while the counter-intuitive score of the centralization of the instruments of PPS for the United Kingdom is solely due to the aggregation of the scores of all instruments by country.

When examining the findings of Figure 6-1, Figure 6-2, and Figure 6-3 together, one can see that if one would rely solely on the aggregate scores of centralization at the country level (as displayed in Figure 6-3) for the analyses, one may miss the within-country variation. An example of how important it is to take this variation into account is the pattern of centralization of the instruments of PPS of the United Kingdom discussed in the previous paragraph. Conversely, if one relies on aggregate scores of centralization the instruments at the instrument level (as displayed in Figure 6-2), one would miss the within-instrument variation. Thus, analyzing the centralization of the individual instruments of PPS by country does not only make sense methodologically, but also substantively.
6.3. Independent Variables

To explain the patterns of centralization of the instruments of PPS presented above, I discuss in this section how I operationalized the respective independent variables. There are four independent variables which I operationalize below: the electoral connection, i.e. the accountability of parliamentarians, the workload of parliament, whether an instrument of PPS is open or closed, and a control variable. A descriptive overview of these independent variables can be found in Appendix 3.

Hypothesis 1 states that the more directly parliamentarians are accountable to their electorate, the more decentralized are the instruments of PPS designed and vice versa. I operationalize the accountability of parliamentarians through the personalization of a country’s electoral system. First, I consider each country’s electoral formula. I argue that parliamentarians are less directly accountable to their electorate in a proportional system than in a majoritarian system. This is because in a proportional system, a parliamentarian always has the chance to enter parliament on the party ticket. In a majoritarian system with single-member districts (SMD) however, individual parliamentarians can only enter parliament if they are elected directly by the electorate. Hence, the latter electoral system is more personalized than the former one. As there is considerable variation within proportional systems, I distinguish these systems further by taking their ballot structure into account. Based on this information, I coded the electoral systems as follows, ranging from least to most personalized: proportional with a closed list, proportional with a semi-open list, proportional with a open list.

23 In contrast to my argument, Carey and Shugart (1995, 421) argue that majoritarian electoral systems with SMD are very party-centered. Yet, parliamentarians which strive to maximize their votes in a majoritarian system with SMD have strong incentives to be very responsive to their constituency as their only chance of entering parliament is to win their district. In the United Kingdom, constituency casework ‘is seen by the incumbent MP and the challengers as an uncontroversial means of securing a resalable base of local support’ (Marsh 1985, 69). Therefore, majoritarian systems with SMD are highly personalized because parliamentarians strive to show their constituency why they and their party are highly beneficial for them.
proportional with an open list, mixed\textsuperscript{24}, and majoritarian with a closed list. The data on countries’ electoral formulas and ballot structure stems from the official websites of the national parliaments (see Appendix 4).

In Hypothesis 2, I argued that the greater the workload of parliament is, the more centralized is the design of the instruments of PPS and vice versa. In order to operationalize the workload of parliament, I rely on Wawro and Schickler (2007) who argue that the U.S. Senate’s workload increased as new states entered the Union. The rationale behind this is that more people living in a country goes hand in hand with more diverse demands of society. Based on this, I reason that the workload of a parliament can be measured through the number of people living in a country. As this variable is strongly skewed to the right, i.e. there are a few countries which have a much larger population than the other countries, I include its logarithm in the models. The data regarding how many people live in a country on January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2010 stems from the European Commission (Commission 2013).

As the workload of parliament is difficult to operationalize, I provide three additional operationalizations which serve as robustness checks and discuss their limitations. First, the workload of parliament can also be operationalized through the size of parliament, as it may be the case that a larger parliament can handle a given workload better than a smaller parliament. The size of parliament is measured through the number of seats of the respective parliaments (Andersson et al. 2012). Since this variable is strongly skewed to the right, i.e. there are a few parliaments with much more seats than the other parliaments, I include its logarithm in the models. Yet, one has to keep in mind that the size of parliament is highly correlated to the number of inhabitants of a country (Taagepera and Recchia 2002). This

\textsuperscript{24} I treat mixed electoral systems as a distinct system (Massicotte and Blais 1999). I place mixed electoral systems between proportional and majoritarian systems because I expect there to be a contamination effect between the two electoral formulae employed in mixed systems (Cox 2007; Cox and Schoppa 2002; Herron and Nishikawa 2001). I conclude that electoral systems with mixed formulae are overall more strongly personalized systems with a proportional formula but less strongly personalized than systems with a majoritarian electoral formula.
operationalization may thus not provide much different information than the operationalization of workload through the number of inhabitants of a country.

Second, one can operationalize the workload of parliament through the size of the public sector, as a larger public sector could indicate a greater activity of parliament and hence a greater workload (Cooper and Brady 1981). The size of the public sector is measured as the share of the gross domestic product which parliament has allocated in 2010 (OECD 2013). The size of a public sector may be a debatable operationalization because how large a country’s gross domestic product is may have implications of its own for the workload of parliament. For example, if two otherwise identical countries have differently sized gross domestic products but spend the same share of this gross domestic product, their workload would be seen as similar. However, the country with the lower gross domestic product may face additional challenges such as unemployment because of the low gross domestic product. Yet, this is not picked up by this variable.

Third, I operationalize the workload of parliament through the average number of government bills per sitting day as a larger number of bills per sitting day may indicate a greater workload of parliament. The variable is calculated as the average number of government bills per sitting day for the past 10-15 years (Mickler 2014). The number of bills per sitting day may be a problematic operationalization because it hinges on the assumption that the substance of bills is comparable across countries. Yet, it is more likely that some countries pass many bills which are little substantial and other countries pass only a few bills which are very substantial (Döring 1995, 597). Thus, it may be the case that this operationalization only picks up country particularities in law-making instead of the workload of parliament.
In Hypothesis 3 I argue that open instruments of PPS should be more strongly centralized than closed ones. I introduce a dummy variable taking on the value 1 for closed instruments and 0 for open instruments to assess whether these differences are also empirically valid.

It is important to control for the centralization of parties’ national organizations when seeking to understand the centralization of power in parliament. In Section 2.2, I argued that the conflict between front- and backbenchers constrains how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS are designed. This constraint is already included in Hypothesis 1 and hence does not impact the effect of the accountability of parliamentarians on the design of the instruments of PPS. Yet, I include it as a control variable in this analysis to understand if the conflict between front- and backbenchers has an independent impact on how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS are designed. For example, if parties are very centralized, it could be the case that these parties also seek to exert strong control over their members inside parliament and hence design the instruments of PPS to be comparatively centralized. I operationalize this variable through the item ‘section of party having most influence over the formation of party policy’ found in the expert survey of Laver and Hunt (1992). More current data is unfortunately not available. If the activists had most impact on the formation of party policy, I coded the party score as 1. If the legislators had this right, I coded the party score as 2; and if it was the party leadership that determined party policy, I coded the party score as 3. To aggregate this score to the country level, I calculated the average of the party scores weighted by their seat share in parliament as of January 1st, 2010. The data regarding party seat shares stems from the official websites of the national parliaments (see Appendix 5). To link the parties of 1992 to those of 2010, I relied on the party codebook of the European Representative Democracy Project (Andersson et al. 2012).

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25 This assessment is also supported empirically. When including an interaction term between the centralization of parties’ national organizations and parliamentarians’ accountability, the interaction term fails to reach statistical significance.
I do not include a control variable for the majority requirement to change the standing orders in the models because formal barriers for designing the instruments of PPS are of little importance for understanding how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed. The reason for this is that formal barriers, i.e. the majority requirement for changing the standing orders of a country, only matter if a majority wants to pursue its objectives against an unwilling minority. This is not the case for the centralization of the instruments of PPS because this design does not concern the conflict between the government and the opposition. This argument is supported empirically, as including the majority requirement to change the parliamentary standing orders in the models yields that this variable fails to reach statistical significance\textsuperscript{26}.

6.4. Analyses and Results

To understand why the instruments of PPS exhibit the patterns of centralization presented in Section 6.2, in this section I test the hypotheses put forth in the theoretical chapter. The main results of the analyses are that the centralization of the instruments of PPS can best be explained by the electoral connection and by whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed. If the electoral connection is direct, i.e. if the electoral system of a country is personalized, the instruments of PPS are comparatively less centralized than if a country’s electoral system is party-centered. Moreover, closed instruments of PPS on average are less centralized than open instruments.

\textsuperscript{26} I operationalize the majority requirement as an ordinal variable taking the value 1 for a simple majority, 2 for an absolute majority, and 3 for qualified majorities. This variable was coded based on the information provided in the standing orders or the respective constitution.
Table 6-1: Degree of Centralization of Instruments of PPS – Results from the OLS Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exp. Effect</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
<th>Model 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalization</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.225</td>
<td>-0.248</td>
<td>-0.204</td>
<td>-0.255</td>
<td>-0.216</td>
<td>-0.215</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electoral System</td>
<td>(0.126)</td>
<td>(0.129)</td>
<td>(0.188)</td>
<td>(0.132)</td>
<td>(0.124)</td>
<td>(0.128)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Population Size (log)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td>0.071</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.099)</td>
<td>(0.100)</td>
<td>(0.101)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parliament Size (log)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.167</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.232)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Size of Public Sector</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.034)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Bills/Sitting Days</td>
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<td>-0.000</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.021)</td>
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<td>Closed Instruments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.816***</td>
<td>-0.621</td>
<td>-0.816***</td>
<td>-0.810***</td>
<td>-0.810***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.293)</td>
<td>(0.676)</td>
<td>(0.293)</td>
<td>(0.294)</td>
<td>(0.295)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centralization of Parties’ National Organizations</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>0.478</td>
<td>0.618</td>
<td>0.620</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.493)</td>
<td>(0.496)</td>
<td>(0.523)</td>
<td>(0.488)</td>
<td>(0.490)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction Pers. Electoral System – Closed Instruments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.078</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.243)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.819***</td>
<td>1.035</td>
<td>-0.264</td>
<td>-0.373</td>
<td>0.199</td>
<td>0.579</td>
<td>0.634</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.349)</td>
<td>(1.610)</td>
<td>(1.852)</td>
<td>(1.895)</td>
<td>(1.476)</td>
<td>(2.076)</td>
<td>(1.353)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>0.164</td>
<td>0.163</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>0.157</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.115</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td>0.108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

To evaluate the hypotheses postulated in the theoretical section, I estimated seven models\textsuperscript{27} which are summarized in Table 6-1. Model 1 includes only the accountability of parliamentarians, i.e. how personalized the electoral system is. Model 2 comprises solely the workload of parliament operationalized as the logarithm of the number of inhabitants a country has. Model 3 includes both independent variables of the previous models and thus allows for comparatively evaluating the individual-goals view and structural-functionalist

\textsuperscript{27} I performed standard diagnostic tests for all models. I corrected the skewness of independent variables. If I detected influential cases, I ran the regressions without these cases. The estimates remained similar or even increased in significance for all models. Furthermore, the errors of all models are normally distributed and have a constant variance. Finally, nonlinearity does not pose a problem in any model.
view of institutional design. Model 3 also includes the dummy variable indicating closed instruments of PPS and the control variable for the centralization of the parties’ national organizations. All following models are based on Model 3. Model 4 additionally contains an interaction effect between the personalization of a country’s electoral system and the dummy variable indicating closed instruments of PPS. Models 5 through 7 contain the competing operationalizations of workload serving as robustness checks of the operationalization of workload employed in Models 2 through 4. Below, I elaborate on each model in detail.

Model 1 shows that the personalization of a parliament’s electoral system has a negative effect on the centralization of the instruments of PPS. In Hypothesis 1, I argued based on the individual-goals view of institutional design that if a parliament’s electoral system is personalized, its instruments of PPS should be less centralized than if its electoral system is party-centered. It follows that Model 1 provides support for the individual-goals view of institutional design and for Hypothesis 1. The effect of accountability is significant at the 90% confidence level. While the 95% confidence level is usually the standard level below which results are viewed as only slightly significant or even non-significant, the regression models presented in Table 6-1 include only 74 cases. Since such a low number of cases makes it difficult to detect statistically significant effects (Cohen 1988, 1-18), I also interpret effects which reach only the 90% confidence level as being substantially meaningful. However, I am aware of this limitation and am cautious not to make claims which are too bold.

The effect of the personalization of a parliament’s electoral system remains significant at the 90% level throughout all following models except for Model 4. This is not at odds with the fact that the main effect of accountability is significant in the other models and will be discussed in detail in Model 4. The effect of accountability amounts to about -0.2 for all

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Note that I do not estimate a model including fixed effects for the countries because the data does not contain enough information to estimate separate slopes for each country. Practically, this means that when estimating a model including fixed effects, some of the country dummies are dropped due to collinearity. Substantively, this indicates that the independent variables at the country level are sufficient to explain the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS.
models, which indicates that if a parliament’s electoral system becomes one unit more personalized, the centralization of the instruments of PPS decreases by about 0.2 units on a scale from -6 to +6. Substantively, this means that if one moves from one kind of electoral system to the next, the instruments of PPS are about 0.2 points more decentralized. For example, if there are two otherwise identical countries with country A having a PR system with closed lists (coded as 1) and country B having a majoritarian system with SMD (coded as 5), the instruments of PPS of country B should be about 0.8 points (4 * 0.2 = 0.8) less centralized than the instruments of PPS of country A. As each feature of each instrument of PPS contributes between -1 and +1 points to the score of the instruments of PPS, such a difference could for example mean that in country A, the access to each instrument of PPS is dominated by parliamentary party groups (coded as centralized, i.e. +1) while in country B both front- and backbenchers can access the instruments of PPS equally (coded as neutral, i.e. 0), while all other features are coded exactly alike.

While the coefficients in ordinary least squares regression naturally lend themselves to being interpreted in this way, one has to be careful with placing too much confidence in such a detailed interpretation because the values of the personalization of the electoral system may not be equidistant from each other. For instance, parliamentarians and their party groups could perceive the difference between a mixed electoral system and a majoritarian electoral system with single-member districts to be greater than the difference between PR systems with closed and semi-open lists. Since there is no theoretical guidance as to how the differences between these systems relate to each other, coding them as equidistant by default is appropriate. Yet, one has to be careful in placing too much confidence in interpreting them as such.

Model 2 shows that the effect of a parliament’s workload has the expected positive sign but is statistically non-significant. In Hypothesis 2, which is based on the structural-functionalist view of institutional design, I argued that when faced with a large workload,
parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS in a more efficient and hence centralized way to ensure that parliament runs smoothly and vice versa. While the positive effect of the size of a country’s population corroborates this argument, the effect does not reach statistical significance. It follows that Model 2 does not yield support for the structural-functionalist view of institutional design and for Hypothesis 2. The effect remains positive and non-significant in the following models. Substantively, this indicates that efficiency considerations seem to play a subordinate role when parliamentary actors decide about how to design the instruments of PPS.

Model 3 – the full model – corroborates the findings of Models 1 and 2 by indicating that the accountability of parliamentarians and hence the individual-goals view of institutional design can explain the design of the instruments of PPS better than the workload of parliament. The comparative evaluation of the effects of parliamentarians’ accountability and parliamentary workload shows that the former has the expected negative sign and is significant at the 90% level while the latter fails to reach statistical significance. This suggests that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS according to the electoral connection so that they can maximize their votes rather than to make parliament more efficient. These findings provide support for Hypothesis 1 and no support for Hypothesis 2.

Model 3 also shows that the parameter estimate indicating closed instruments of PPS has the expected negative sign and is highly significant. This provides support for Hypothesis 3, where I argued that closed instruments of PPS should be less centralized than open instruments because they are less crucial for the party label. This effect remains negative and highly significant for all following models except Model 4. It is not worrisome that the effect for closed instruments is not significant in Model 4 as the indicator for closed instruments is included in an interaction in this model. I discuss this finding in detail in Model 4. The negative and significant effect of the indicator variable shows that open and closed
instruments of PPS differ from each other not only theoretically but also empirically. Substantively, the effect of closed instruments indicates that when holding the other predictors constant, closed instruments of PPS are about 0.8 points less centralized than open instruments. In real terms, this difference could for instance mean that while plenary debates and the presentation of committee reports are organized by both front- and backbenchers (coded as neutral, i.e. 0), backbenchers alone dominate the organization of parliamentary questions and interpellations (coded as decentralized, i.e. -1), while all other features of the instruments of PPS are coded exactly alike. The finding supports that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS differently depending on how electorally ‘dangerous’ they can be and hence how worried parliamentary party groups are about their members toeing the party line.

The control variable measuring how centralized national parties are organized has the expected positive sign but does not reach statistical significance in any of the models. This indicates that the conflict between frontbenchers and backbenchers does not have an independent effect on the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. Rather, the conflict may indeed be picked up by parliamentarians’ accountability. Moreover, the effect highlights that parliamentary actors do not design the instruments of PPS to mirror the internal structure of the national parties.

Model 4 yields that the effect of accountability is similar for open and closed instruments of PPS. This does not lend support to Hypothesis 4, in which I argued that the effect of accountability should be greater for open instruments of PPS than for closed instruments of PPS because the former are potentially more electorally harmful than the latter. In detail, the interaction effect between the personalization of the electoral system and closed instruments of PPS has the expected negative sign but is not statistically significant. To get an impression of the effect of accountability on the centralization of PPS for open and closed instruments,
Figure 6-4 visualizes the regression slopes for closed instruments of PPS (grey line) and open instruments of PPS (black line) for the different values of the personalization of an electoral system. One can see that the slope indicating the effect of accountability for open instruments of PPS is above the slope indicating the effect of accountability for closed instruments of PPS. However, the steepness of both slopes is very similar. Substantively, this means that while open instruments of PPS are more centralized than closed instruments (see Model 3), the design of both open and closed instruments of PPS is similarly important for maximizing votes.

There are two effects in Model 4 which seem unusual at first glance but have a logical explanation: the negative but statistically non-significant main effect of the personalization of the electoral system and the negative but non-significant main effect of the indicator variable of closed instruments. The non-significant main effect of parliamentarians’ accountability means that for open instruments of PPS, the personalization of the electoral system does not impact the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. The marginal effects of
accountability displayed in Table 6-2 reveal that the effect of accountability is significant for closed instruments.

Table 6-2: Marginal Effects of Accountability on Degree of Centralization of Instruments of PPS for Open and Closed Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Marginal Effect</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open instruments</td>
<td>-0.204</td>
<td>(0.188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed instruments</td>
<td>-0.282*</td>
<td>(0.168)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6-2 shows that while the marginal effects of accountability differ in significance, their effect sizes are similar. There are relatively few observations overall, which include 42 closed instruments and 32 open instruments of PPS. The smaller number of observations of open instruments of PS could cause the effect of accountability to lose statistical significance for open instruments of PPS (Brambor et al. 2006, 73). When comparing the size of the effects of accountability for open and closed instruments and their respective standard errors, one can see that the 95% confidence interval of the coefficient of open instruments easily includes the coefficient of closed instruments and vice versa. This means that the effect sizes of open and closed instruments are not significantly different from each other. Therefore, one cannot conclude that the effect of accountability is only present for closed instruments and not for open instruments. Moreover, this also explains why the main effect of accountability is significant in the other models. The reason for this is that the main effect is ‘the weighted average of the conditional marginal effects in the interaction model’ (Brambor et al. 2006, 73). Put differently, the main effect of accountability in Models 1 – 3 and Models 5 – 7 depends more strongly on closed than on open instruments of PPS.

The second surprising finding is that the main effect of closed instruments of PPS is non-significant; yet, as this effect is included in an interaction this only indicates that the effect of closed instruments on the centralization of the instruments of PPS is non-significant if the
The personalization of an electoral system is zero. This is never the case, as the variable indicating the personalization of an electoral system takes only values between 1 and 5. To assess the differences in level between open and closed instruments of PPS for the actually occurring values of the personalization of the electoral system, Figure 6-5 shows the average marginal effects for open and closed instruments of PPS for each value.

Figure 6-5: Average Marginal Effect of Accountability on Degree of Centralization of Instruments of PPS for Open and Closed Instruments

Figure 6-5 shows that the difference in centralization between open and closed instruments of PPS is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level if the personalization of a parliament’s electoral system takes the values 2, 3, or 4. If the electoral system takes the extreme values 1 or 5, one cannot detect a difference between open and closed instruments of PPS. This finding can be explained both empirically and theoretically. Empirically, the extreme categories are sparsely populated. For the value 1, there are three countries with a total of 13 instruments. For the value 5, there are two countries with a total of 9 instruments. This could make it more difficult to detect statistically significant differences between the
open and closed instruments of PPS. Theoretically, it could be the case that the difference between open and closed instruments is less important in extreme systems because in these systems, the electoral connection and hence the electoral strategies of parliamentary actors are very clear-cut. Thus, parliamentary actors could design both kinds of instruments of PPS to be equally centralized or decentralized to maximize their votes.

Models 5 through 7 present the alternative operationalizations of parliamentary workload, which corroborate that the centralization of instruments of PPS does not depend on the workload of parliament. It follows that the findings of the previous models are robust. In all three models, none of the effects of workload is significant. The effects of the size of parliament and the size of the public sector have the expected positive sign, whereas the effect of the number of bills per sitting day has a negative sign. However, the substantive size of the effect of the number of bills per sitting day is virtually zero. Hence, the negative sign is not worrisome. Substantively, these findings confirm that the individual-goals view rather than the structural-functionalist view of institutional design best explains the design of the instruments of PPS.

6.5. Summary

In this chapter, I presented and explained the patterns of centralization of the instruments of PPS in Western European parliaments. I discussed that the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS varies between the instruments of PPS. The most prominent finding is that plenary debates tend to be the most strongly centralized instrument of PPS. Further, I highlighted that when aggregating the centralization of the instruments of PPS by country, all countries are overall centralized. Yet, the example of the United Kingdom shows that these aggregate scores by country may be misleading. It follows that analyzing the degree of centralization of each instrument of PPS separately is more appropriate than analyzing how centralized the instruments of PPS of a particular country are together.
The analyses yielded that these patterns can be explained rather well by the accountability of parliamentarians and by whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed. This indicates that the individual-goals view of institutional design is a better predictor of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS than structural-functionalist view. In detail, the individual-goals view of institutional design supposes that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS in a way which allows them to maximize their votes under different electoral systems. The analysis showed that if parliamentarians are directly accountable to their electorate, i.e. if maximizing votes depends on parliamentarians establishing a personal reputation with their electorate, the instruments of PPS are designed in a decentralized way and vice versa. Conversely, the structural-functionalist view of institutional design is based on the premise that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to ensure the functioning of parliament. I found that the workload of parliament does not impact how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed. It follows that efficiency considerations do not – at least not directly – provide decisive coalitions of front- and backbenchers with an incentive to design the instruments of PPS in a more or less centralized way.

I found that the design of the instruments of PPS also depends on the characteristics of the instruments themselves. The analysis yielded that open instruments of PPS are on average more centralized than closed instruments. The reason for this is that parliamentary party groups are more worried about their members toeing the party line in open than in closed instruments of PPS because the former are more electorally ‘dangerous’ than the latter. Moreover, the analysis showed that the effect of parliamentarians’ accountability is not greater for open instruments of PPS than for closed instruments. It follows that even though open instruments of PPS matter more strongly to frontbenchers, both types of instruments of PPS are similarly important for maximizing votes.
To assess whether the accountability of parliamentarians and the characteristics of the instruments of PPS can also explain the changes made to the centralization of the instruments of PPS, in Chapter 8 I trace the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS for Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010. The cross-section time-series suggests that the accountability of parliamentarians is a good predictor of the centralization of oral questions but less so of plenary debates. Moreover, open instruments of PPS tend to be more strongly centralized than closed instruments. Analyzing the evolution of the centralization of the instruments of PPS also adds more nuance to the findings of this section. In particular, I show that while the workload of parliament does not provide the direct impetus for how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed, efficiency considerations are one of the factors relevant for their degree of centralization.
7. Majority- and Minority-Friendliness of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements in Western Europe in 2010

7.1. Introduction

The degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS is of great importance for understanding how parliamentary actors can communicate with their electorate because it regulates how many rights the government and the opposition have to present their standpoints to voters and hence maximize their votes. In this chapter, I present and discuss the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS in Western European parliaments. The most notable patterns are that open instruments of PPS tend to be more majority-friendly than closed instruments, that about 1/3 of countries have overall minority-friendly instruments of PPS, and that there is variation in the degree of centralization both within the instruments of PPS and between countries.

Thereafter, I show that these patterns can best be explained by a combination of decisive coalitions’ incentives and capabilities. The analyses yield that both the individual-goals view of institutional design and the structural-functionalist view of institutional design can explain how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. The workload of parliament weakly increases how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. Yet, this finding is substantively small and not very robust. The ideological conflict between government and opposition – corresponding to the individual-goals view of institutional design – does not have an independent effect on how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. When also taking into account how easy it is for parliamentary actors to implement their preferred institutional design, I find that if the seat share of the government is large, the ideological conflict between government and opposition leads to a more majority-friendly design of the instruments of PPS than if the seat share of the government is small. The design
of the instruments of PPS also differs based on their individual characteristics. Closed instruments are generally more minority-friendly than open instruments.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In Section 7.2, I present and discuss how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed in Western European parliaments. In Section 7.3, I present the operationalization of the independent variables. In Section 7.4, I showcase and discuss how well these patterns can be explained by the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3. In Section 7.5, I summarize the findings of this chapter and provide an outlook for how the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS evolves over time.

7.2. Description of the Majority- and Minority-Friendliness of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements in Western Europe in 2010

When assessing how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed, one finds that open instruments of PPS can be clearly distinguished from closed ones. Further, about 1/3 of countries have overall minority-friendly instruments of PPS and roughly 2/3 of countries have overall majority-friendly instruments of PPS. Last, there is variation in the design of the instruments of PPS both between and within countries. Below, I elaborate on these patterns in detail.

Figure 7-1 summarizes the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS by country and instrument of PPS. One can see that Ireland and Portugal only have a score for oral questions and not for written questions. As discussed in detail in Section 6.2, this does not mean that Ireland and Portugal do not have written questions only. Rather, the Irish and Portuguese standing orders treat oral and written questions in the same sub-paragraph and I code sub-paragraphs concerning both oral and written questions as concerning oral questions.
Figure 7-1: Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS by Country and Instrument

NB: If a sub-paragraph concerns both oral and written questions, it is coded as concerning oral questions. For this reason, Ireland and Portugal only have data for oral questions.
Figure 7-1 shows that there is great variation between the instruments of PPS. The most majority-friendly instruments are debates about committee reports in the UK (score of 3.53 on a scale from -6 to +6) and in France (3.50), as well as plenary debates in Finland (2.79). The instruments of PPS giving most rights to the opposition are written questions in Austria (-3.75), plenary debates in Germany (-3.31), and written questions in Germany (-3.00).

Overall, closed instruments of PPS tend to be minority-friendly. While there are 31 closed instruments which are minority-friendly, there are only 11 closed instruments which are majority-friendly. An example of a majority-friendly closed instrument of PPS is written questions in Sweden. The Swedish written questions are majority-friendly e.g. because the plenary has the right to decide about accepting a written question that the president of parliament does not want to admit (6.kap §4). This sub-paragraph is coded as advantaging the majority in accessing written questions because the plenary decides about this by majority. Conversely, oral questions in Germany are highly minority-friendly. This is partly due to the fact that parliamentarians can force the government to orally answer a written question if the government fails to answer the written question within the deadline (Anlage 4, §IV 15). The sub-paragraph is coded as advantaging the minority in accessing oral questions because a parliamentarian, i.e. a minority actor, has the right to turn a written question into an oral one and force the government to answer it.

As opposed to closed instruments of PPS, open instruments of PPS tend to give comparatively many rights to the government. There are 25 open instruments which are majority-friendly and only 7 instruments which are minority-friendly. An example of a minority-friendly open instrument of PPS is plenary debates in Germany. This is inter alia due to the fact that a parliamentary party group or 5% of parliamentarians can request the closure of a debate (§25, 2). Both of these actors are minority actors, which indicates that this sub-paragraph advantages the minority. Conversely, plenary debates in France are as expected
majority-friendly. One reason for this is that parliament decides about whether the minutes of a plenary debate held in secret are published or not (§51, 3). This sub-paragraph advantages the majority in documenting plenary debates because parliament decides by majority if the opinions expressed during a secret plenary debate are made publicly accessible or not.

A striking finding of Figure 7-1 is that the instruments of PPS of the Nordic countries are more majority-friendly than one would intuitively expect. However, this finding is not surprising at a second glance because the frequent occurrence of minority governments in the Nordic countries does not automatically entail minority-friendly institutions. For instance, Arter (2006) argues that all Nordic countries are majoritarian democracies. When consulting Tsebelis’ (1999, 104) measure of governmental agenda control, one finds that only Sweden is more than one standard deviation below the mean, which indicates that the government has little control of the legislative agenda. Norway is very close to the mean, and Denmark and Finland are less than one standard deviation below the mean. A similar pattern emerges for Lijphart’s (1999, 313) index of executive dominance. Here, only Finland is more than one standard deviation below the mean of executive dominance. Norway and Sweden are very close to the mean, and Denmark is less than one standard deviation below the mean. This indicates that the executive is not particularly weak in most Nordic countries. These assessments suggest that the Nordic countries are more majority-friendly than expected.

Figure 7-2 shows that open instruments of PPS are on average majority-friendly and closed instruments are on average minority-friendly. It follows that the distinction between open and closed instruments seems to be valid not only theoretically but also empirically. When assessing the instruments of PPS individually, one can see that plenary debates are the most

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29 Painting a more nuanced picture, Strom and Bergman (2011, 28-29) argue that ‘[w]hereas Finland has shifted in the direction of classical Westminster democracy [, thus maximizing the power of a winning coalition of parliamentarians, the author], Norway and Sweden have moved notably toward a more Madisonian model [, i.e. a system of checks and balances, the author]. Denmark has moved more modestly in this direction, while the Icelandic party system is more unstable than ever and basic parliamentary ground rules have come under challenge’.
majority-friendly instrument of PPS with a median score of 1.44 and that written questions are the most minority-friendly instrument of PPS with a median score of -1.00. The presentation and discussion of committee reports is overall majority-friendly (median score of 0.65) with the exception of Germany (score of -2.00). Interpellations and oral questions are as expected overall more minority- than majority-friendly, albeit less strongly than is the case for written questions (interpellations: median score of -0.25; oral questions: median score of -0.40). These findings are intuitively plausible, as all closed instruments, i.e. oral questions, written questions, and interpellations, are traditionally instruments of the parliamentary opposition (for an overview, see Rozenberg and Martin 2011). Therefore, it is not surprising that the opposition also has many rights to employ these instruments.

Figure 7-2: Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS by Instrument

When examining the box plots of Figure 7-2 more closely, one can see that debates in plenary exhibit the largest spread, while oral questions have the lowest spread. This suggests that the majority-friendliness of plenary debates differs the most between countries. Conversely, oral questions have the most similar scores of all instruments of PPS. However,
even the majority-friendliness of oral questions in not uniform, as the box of the boxplot, i.e. the 75th percentile to the 25th percentile of scores, includes scores from 0.35 to -1.01. It follows that while there is an overall tendency of open instruments of PPS to be more majority-friendly than closed instruments, there is also variation in exactly how majority- or minority-friendly each individual instruments of PPS is designed.

Figure 7-3 shows that when aggregating how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed in the countries of Western Europe, one finds that about 1/3 of these countries have overall more minority-friendly instruments of PPS. While these aggregate scores should be treated with caution because not all countries have the same number of instruments of PPS, they are nonetheless appropriate because I do not use them to compare the countries with each other but rather to assess the overall degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS for each country.

In detail, one can see that Germany, Austria, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Iceland have overall minority-friendly instruments of PPS. The other countries are overall more strongly majority-friendly. These countries are Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands. The large variation of majority-friendliness is not surprising as Figure 7-1 has shown that the design of the instruments of PPS varies not only within countries but also between countries.

For example, Germany has five instruments while Ireland and Portugal only have three. It follows that the scores Germany can achieve range between -30 and +30, while the scores Ireland and Portugal can achieve range between -18 and +18. Relying on these scores is appropriate because I do not use them to compare the countries with each other but rather to assess the overall degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS for each country. Moreover, as I assume that all instruments of PPS are similarly important and I do not know how the nonexistent instruments of PPS would be designed, employing another aggregation rule would not be appropriate. For example, if I would assess the overall score of each country by calculating the percentage the actual score captures of the maximum score possible for that country, the fewer instruments of PPS a country would have, the greater would be the impact of these instruments on the percentage. For example, each instrument of PPS of Ireland would account for 1/3 of the percentage, while each instrument of PPS of Germany would account for 1/5 of the percentage.
Across all countries, the mean majority- and minority-friendliness of all instruments is 0.09 with a standard deviation of 1.58. This implies that on average, instruments of PPS are neither very majority- nor very minority-friendly but are designed in a rather balanced way. However, the discussion above has shown that these aggregate scores do not reveal too much about the design of each instrument of PPS as there are interesting differences within instruments and within countries. To appropriately represent and analyze these differences, in the following I explain the majority- and minority-friendliness of the individual instruments of PPS of each country rather than aggregate scores by instrument or by country.

7.3. Independent Variables

In this section, I operationalize the independent variables of the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3. There are three variables which indicate the incentives of parliamentary actors to design the instruments of PPS in a majority- or minority-friendly way: the ideological conflict between government and opposition, the workload of parliament, and whether an instrument of PPS is open or closed. How easy it is for parliamentary actors to implement these
incentives depends on their capabilities. These are indicated by the seat share of the
government and the ideological homogeneity of the government. Moreover, I introduce three
control variables: how certain the government is to retain its majority after the following
election, the majority requirement to change the standing orders, and the number of extra-
parliamentary veto points. Below, I introduce the operationalization of each variable. A
descriptive overview of these independent variables can be found in Appendix 3.

In Hypothesis 5, I argued that if the ideological conflict between government and
opposition is large, the instruments of PPS should be more majority-friendly than if the
ideological conflict is low. The reason for this is that if the ideological conflict is large, the
opposition is likely to employ the instruments of PPS in an obstructive manner. To inhibit this
and hence improve its chances of vote-maximization, the government restricts the minority’s
access to the instruments of PPS. As highlighted in the discussion preceding Hypothesis 5, the
conflict between the government and the opposition can be operationalized in two different
ways: through the ideological distance between the government and the opposition, or
through the ideological distance between the government and the opposition coupled with the
ideological cohesion of the opposition. To gauge the former, I proceed in two steps. First, the
government’s ideal point is calculated as the average policy position of all parties in
government weighted by their respective seat shares. Second, the sum of the distances of each
opposition party to this ideal point weighted by the party’s respective seat share is calculated.
The data on parties’ policy position stems from the left-right scale presented in the Manifesto
Project (Volkens et al. 2013). The data on government participation and seat share of the
individual parties stem from the ParlGov Project (Döring and Manow 2012). The ideological
cohesion of the opposition is measured as follows. The polarization of the opposition is
calculated based on the left-right positions of the individual parties as presented in Warwick
(1998, based on Dodd (1976, 105-106)). The data on ideological positions and seat shares is
based on the Manifesto and the ParlGov projects. As this measure returns the polarization of the opposition, it is multiplied with -1 to have a measure of ideological cohesion.

Hypothesis 6 is a competing hypothesis to Hypothesis 5 and posits that if the workload of a parliament is high, its instruments of PPS should be designed more majority-friendly than if its workload is low. The reason for this is that a high workload requires parliament to work very efficiently; this can be accomplished through designing the instruments of PPS to be majority-friendly. I operationalize the workload of parliament through the log of the number of inhabitants of the respective country. Similar to my tests of Hypothesis 2, I use three alternative operationalizations as robustness checks: the log of the respective parliament’s size, the size of a country’s public sector, and the average number of bills passed by parliament per sitting day. For a detailed discussion of the operationalization of this variable as well as the competing operationalizations serving as robustness checks, see Section 6.3.

In Hypothesis 7, I argue that open instruments of PPS should be more majority-friendly than closed instruments because open instruments of PPS offer voters clearly comparable policy stances and are hence more important to the government and also because the government has more leeway for designing the latter instruments to its liking. In Hypothesis 8, I argue that the effect of the ideological conflict between government and opposition should be larger for open than for closed instruments of PPS. This is because open instruments of PPS are more electorally valuable for the government and because closed instruments of PPS have a greater normative importance which constrains a majority-friendly design. I introduce a dummy variable which indicates closed instruments of PPS to assess whether these differences are valid not only theoretically but also empirically.

In Hypothesis 9, I argue that a larger seat share of the government leads to a greater effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition on the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS and vice versa. This is because it is easier for the
government to reach the majority requirement for changing the standing orders if its seat share is large than if it is small. In Hypothesis 10, I argue that the same is true the closer the seat share of the government is to the majority required for changing the standing orders because a slim winning margin makes it more likely that the decisive coalition can keep all of its members in check. Based on the ParlGov project, I calculated both the seat share of the government (H9) and how close this seat share is to the number of votes required to change the parliamentary standing orders (H10). The number of votes required to change the standing orders was taken from the respective standing orders or constitutions. Since I argued that Hypothesis 10 does not apply to minority governments, I code these cases as missing (Denmark, Portugal, and Spain). It should be noted that in this case, any government which fails to reach the majority necessary for changing the parliamentary standing orders is counted as a minority government. Therefore, I also code the Austrian case as missing because the seat share of the Austrian government on 01.01.2010 is below the 2/3 majority required for changing the standing orders of the Austrian parliament.

In Hypothesis 11, I argue that a greater ideological homogeneity of the government leads to a greater effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition on how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed and vice versa. The reason for this is that an ideologically homogenous government can more easily agree on a common policy stance and hence on a design of the instruments of PPS than an ideologically heterogeneous government. I measure the ideological homogeneity of the government through first calculating the ideological polarization of the government in the same way as calculating the polarization of the opposition and then multiplying this variable with -1 to transform it into a measure of the government homogeneity. The data on government participation and policy positions of the individual parties is taken from the Manifesto and ParlGov projects.
I include three control variables in the model: how uncertain the government is that it will remain in office after the following election, the majority requirement for changing the standing orders, and the number of extra-parliamentary veto points. First, I control for how uncertain the current majority is that it will stay in office after the following election and will thus be able to enjoy the benefits of the majority-friendly design of PPS it instituted (Marschall 1999; Thaysen 1972). I assume that the more certain the majority is that it will be able to reap the benefits of a majority-friendly design of PPS, the more majority-friendly should the rules of PPS be designed and vice versa. I operationalize this through the electoral volatility of the cabinet. The data for this variable stems from the European Representative Data Archive (Andersson et al. 2012).

Second, I control for the majority requirement for changing the standing orders, as this is the second-order institution directly relevant for implementing a preferred design of PPS. As such, the majority requirement for changing the standing orders provides the formal barrier a decisive coalition of parliamentary actors has to pass to implement a design of the instruments of PPS. I operationalize the majority requirement as an ordinal variable taking the value 1 for a simple majority, 2 for an absolute majority, and 3 for qualified majorities. This variable was coded based on the information provided in the standing orders or the respective constitution.

Third, I include the number of extra-parliamentary veto points because it taps into how consensual the political culture is within a particular country. The more veto points there are, the more consensual is the political culture of this country and thus the less majority-friendly should the rules of PPS be designed. The number of extra-parliamentary veto points is operationalized through Ganghof’s veto point index which includes the power of second chambers, constitutional courts, direct democracy, and supermajority requirements to constrain the cabinet in policy-making on the national level (Ganghof 2005; values based on Schmidt 2008, 332-334 and for France on Sieberer et al. (2013)).
7.4. Analyses and Results

In the following, I explain the patterns of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS presented in Section 7.2. The analyses show that the greater the workload of parliament is and – if the seat share of the government is large enough – the greater the ideological conflict between government and opposition is, the more majority-friendly are the instruments of PPS designed and vice versa. Furthermore, open instruments of PPS are designed in a more majority-friendly way than closed instruments. To evaluate the hypotheses postulated in the theoretical section in detail, I estimated nine models.\footnote{I performed standard diagnostic tests for all models. I corrected the skewness of independent variables. If I detected influential cases, I ran the regressions without these cases. The estimates remained similar or even increased in significance for all models. Furthermore, the errors of all models are normally distributed and have a constant variance. Finally, nonlinearity does not pose a problem in any model.}

In Models 1 and 2 I assess only the effect of the incentives of parliamentary actors to design the instruments of PPS in a majority- or minority-friendly way. Model 3 includes an interaction effect which allows for testing if the effect of the ideological conflict between government and opposition is greater for open instruments of PPS than for closed instruments. Models 4 through 6 each include an interaction effect which allows for assessing how the various capabilities of decisive coalitions impact the effect of the ideological conflict between government and opposition on the design of the instruments of PPS. Models 7 through 9 contain the competing operationalizations of the workload of parliament. These models serve as robustness checks of the operationalization of workload through the size of a country’s population. All models comprise the control variables specified in the previous section. Table 7-1 summarizes these models.\footnote{Note that I do not estimate a model including fixed effects for the countries because the data does not contain enough information to estimate separate slopes for each country. Practically, this means that when estimating a model including fixed effects, some of the country dummies are dropped due to collinearity. Substantively, this indicates that the independent variables at the country level are sufficient to explain the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS.} In the following, I elaborate on each model in turn.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7-1: Degree of Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS – Results from the OLS-Regression</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exp. Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Distance Gov. – Opp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Homogeneity Opp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Size (log)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament Size (log)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Bills/ Sitting Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Volatility of Gov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority to Change Standing Orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Extra-Parliament. Veto Pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dist. Gov.-Opp. – Closed Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seat Share of Gov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dist. Gov.-Opp. – Seat Share of Gov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity of Gov. Seat Share to Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological Homogeneity Gov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard errors in parentheses

* p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01
Model 1 includes the incentives of decisive coalitions to design the instruments of PPS in a majority- or minority-friendly way, the dummy variable indicating closed instruments of PPS, as well as the control variables. This model is the full model on which all other models are based. One can see that the effect for the ideological distance between the government and the opposition has the expected positive sign but is not statistically significant. The effect remains non-significant in all following models. This does not provide support for Hypothesis 5, in which I argue that the instruments of PPS should be designed in a majority-friendly way if the conflict between the government and the opposition is great to prevent the opposition from employing the instruments of PPS in an obstructive manner. Thus, there is no support for an independent effect of the individual-goals view of institutional design.

The workload of parliament has the expected positive sign and is significant at the 90% confidence level in Models 1 through 4; in Models 5 and 6 it almost reaches statistical significance (confidence level at 88%). It follows that there is weak support for Hypothesis 6, in which I argue that parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to be majority-friendly if the workload of parliament is large and vice versa to maximize efficiency of parliament. Thus, there is some support for the competing structural-functionalist view of institutional design.

When taking a closer look at the effect size of workload, one finds that the effect is substantially very small. For example, if the population of one country is 25% larger than the population of another country, the instruments of PPS of the former country are about 0.04 points more majority-friendly (on a scale from -6 to +6) than the instruments of PPS of the latter country. This difference in the number of inhabitants of a country for example corresponds to the difference between Italy (~60Mio inhabitants) and Spain (~46Mio inhabitants) or Germany (~82Mio inhabitants) and France (~65Mio inhabitants). The size of this effect corresponds to a difference of less than 1% in majority-friendliness of the
instruments of PPS between the countries listed above. It follows that the effect of workload on how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed is not only weak but also substantively very small. Therefore, one should not overestimate the support for the structural-functionalist view of institutional design.

The difference between open and closed instruments of PPS is again highly significant: closed instruments of PPS are on average about 1.5 points more minority-friendly than open ones on a scale from -6 to +6. As each feature of each instrument of PPS contributes between -1 and +1 points to the score of the instrument, such a score could for example mean that if all other features of the instruments of PPS are coded exactly identically, the access to oral questions, written questions, and interpellations is possible for every parliamentarian (coded as -1 because individual parliamentarians are minority actors) and access to plenary debates and the discussion of committee reports is controlled a little more strongly by the government than by the opposition (coded as +0.5). This effect remains negative and significant at the 99% confidence level for all subsequent models. It follows that there is strong support for Hypothesis 7, which postulates that open instruments of PPS should be more majority-friendly than closed instruments because the former are electorally more important to the government and because the government has more freedom to design them in a majority-friendly way. Conversely, closed instruments of PPS are important for providing transparency in parliament and should thus be comparatively minority-friendly. Substantively, this finding indicates that the design of the instruments of PPS depends not only on the characteristics of parliament but also on the characteristics of the instruments themselves.

The effects of all three control variables have the expected negative signs; however, only the effect of the number of extra-parliamentary veto points reaches statistical significance for all models. The effect of the electoral volatility of the government has the expected negative sign but is statistically non-significant in all models except in Model 8, where it is significant
at the 90% confidence level. I conclude that the chances of remaining in office are not a crucial concern for parliamentary actors when deciding about how majority- or minority-friendly to design the instruments of PPS.

The majority required for changing standing orders has the expected negative sign but does not reach statistical significance in any model. This indicates that the second-order institutions governing the design of the instruments of PPS are of inferior relevance for understanding the actual design of the instruments of PPS. A reason for this finding could be that the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS is not pushed through by the government against an unwilling opposition but is rather a package deal supported by broad coalitions. In this case, the majority requirement for changing the standing orders is easily reached and thus does not pose a concern for parliamentary actors. The effect of the number of extra-parliamentary veto points is both negative and highly significant for all models. This finding shows that a country’s political culture is also reflected in the design of the instruments of PPS. In particular, the more consensual the political culture of a country is, the more minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are and vice versa.

Model 2 extends Model 1 by qualifying that the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition does not only depend on the ideological distance between the government and the opposition but also on the ideological homogeneity of the opposition. However, Model 2 does not provide support for this argument. The interaction effect between the ideological distance between the government and the opposition and the ideological homogeneity of the government has the expected sign but is clearly not statistically significant. Figure 7-4 visualizes this interaction effect. It shows that the effect of the ideological distance between government and opposition is stronger if the homogeneity of the opposition is high (grey line) than if it is low (black line). This is as expected. However, one can also see that both slopes are rather flat. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that none of
the slopes are significant. The non-significant interaction shows that the ideological distance between the government and the opposition suffices as a measure of their ideological conflict because the qualification by the ideological cohesion of the opposition does not add new information. Therefore, in the following models I rely on the ideological distance between the government and the opposition as a measure of their ideological conflict.

**Figure 7-4: Regression Slopes for High and Low Levels of Homogeneity of Opposition Depending on the Ideological Distance Between Government and Opposition**

The findings of Model 1 and Model 2 indicate that there is no support for Hypothesis 5, which postulates that the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition alone impacts how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. It follows that when taking into account only the incentives of parliamentary actors, the individual-goals view of institutional design cannot explain how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed.

Returning to the statistical models, Model 3 shows that the effect of the ideological conflict between government and opposition is significant and positive for closed instruments of PPS but non-significant for open instruments. This is contrary to Hypothesis 8, where I argued that
the effect of the ideological conflict between government and opposition should be greater for open than for closed instruments of PPS. The reason for this is that open instruments are more electorally valuable to the government than closed instruments and the government should hence concentrate its efforts to design the instruments of PPS to be majority-friendly due to a conflict with the opposition more strongly on open than on closed instruments of PPS.

Figure 7-5 visualizes the interaction between the indicator variable for closed instruments and the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition. One can easily see that the effect of ideological conflict between the government and the opposition for open instruments (black line) is almost zero (coefficient of 0.000 with a standard error of 0.030). Conversely, it is apparent that the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition for closed instruments of PPS (grey line) is positive and steeper (coefficient of 0.056 with a standard error of 0.027). The magnitude of the coefficients is substantially different from each other because the 95% confidence interval of the coefficient of closed instruments of PPS does not include the coefficient of open instruments of PPS. This could be due to there being fewer open than closed instruments of PPS (Brambor et al. 2006, 73).

When viewing the effects as substantively different from each other, one could explain this as follows. Open instruments of PPS are always designed in a majority-friendly way so that the government can control how it is perceived by voters. If the government would design the open instruments of PPS to be even more majority-friendly, this would be very difficult to justify normatively to the public and could be perceived as muzzling the opposition. Conversely, closed instruments of PPS are usually very minority-friendly. Thus, the government has more leeway for designing the closed instruments of PPS in a minority-friendly way if it faces an obstructive opposition. While the government still cannot design the closed instruments of PPS to be highly majority-friendly, it can more easily design them
in a more majority-friendly way than the already highly majority-friendly instruments of PPS. It follows that one would expect to find closed instruments of PPS to be more majority-friendly the greater the conflict between the government and the opposition is. However, the design of the open instruments of PPS remains constant because the government cannot justify designing them to be even more majority-friendly.

**Figure 7-5: Regression Slopes for Open and Closed Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements Depending on the Ideological Distance Between Government and Opposition**

Models 4 through 6 show that the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition becomes larger the greater the seat share of the government is and becomes smaller the lower the ideological homogeneity of the government is. Models 1 and 2 show that if one takes only the incentives of parliamentary actors to design the instruments of PPS in a more or less majority-friendly way into account, there is weak support for the structural-functionalist view of institutional design and no support for the individual-goals view of institutional design. Yet, the design of the instruments of PPS may not only depend on the incentives of parliamentary actors but also on their capabilities to implement their preferred
institutional design. To assess whether this is the case, I include the capabilities of parliamentary actors to implement their preferred institutional design in Models 4 through 6.

In Model 4, one can see that the interaction effect between the seat share of the government and the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition has the expected positive sign and is overall significant at the 90% confidence level. Substantively, this implies that the government is more likely to implement a majority-friendly design of the instruments of PPS due to its conflict with the opposition if it has a large seat share than if it has a small seat share in parliament. To gain a better understanding of the interaction effect, Figure 7-6 visualizes it for a low (40%, black line) and a high (65%, grey line) seat share of the government.

Figure 7-6: Regression Slopes for High and Low Levels of Government Seat Share Depending on the Ideological Distance Between Government and Opposition

![Graph showing regression slopes](image)

It is striking that the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition is negative for a low and positive for a high seat share of the government. The average marginal effects yield that if the seat share of the government is below 50%, i.e. if there is a minority government, the greater the ideological conflict is between the government
and the opposition is, the more minority-friendly are the instruments of PPS designed. This effect becomes smaller the larger the seat share of the minority government is. An explanation for this effect could be that minority governments work differently than majority governments as minority governments always depend on the support of opposition parties. It could be that the farther a minority government is removed ideologically from its supporting opposition parties, the more concessions it has to make concerning the design of the instruments of PPS to retain the support of the opposition to pass legislation. However, this effect is non-significant for all minority governments. This could be due to the fact that the hypothesis only applies to majority governments or because the number of minority governments in my sample is very low (three countries, 13 instruments).

If the seat share of the government is larger than 50%, one finds that a greater seat share of the government leads to a greater impact of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition on the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. This effect is significant if the seat share of the government is larger than 55%. The finding is as expected and provides support for Hypothesis 9, which postulates that a greater seat share of the government makes it easier for the government to implement a majority-friendly design of the instruments of PPS if it is in conflict with the opposition.

Substantively, this effect indicates that if the government holds 56% of seats in parliament, a one-unit increase in the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition yields a 0.04 points more majority-friendly design of the instruments of PPS. This effect is significant at the 90% confidence level, but is still substantively very small, as it corresponds to an increase in majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS that amounts to less than 1%. If the government holds 65% of seats, a one-unit increase in the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition yields a 0.10 points more majority-friendly design of the instruments of PPS. The effect is significant at the 95% confidence level.
As the conflict between the government and the opposition is rather abstract, I provide an example of what this means. The governments of Austria and France have very similar seat shares on 01.01.2010, as the former holds 59% of seats and the latter 58%. The average marginal effects of the interaction yield that for this seat share, the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition amounts to about 0.05 points and is significant at 95% confidence level. The ideological conflict between government and opposition is 4.43 for Austria and 11.36 for France. The difference in ideological conflict between those countries amounts to about 7 points, which is roughly equal to about one standard deviation of the entire variable. Based on this information, the instruments of PPS should be on average about 0.35 points more majority-friendly in France than in Austria. This effect is substantively important because the majority-friendliness of instruments of PPS is measured on a scale from -6 to +6, i.e. an instrument of PPS which is more majority-friendly than another one by 0.35 points is about 3% more majority-friendly.

In Model 5, one finds that the interaction between how close the seat share of the government is to the minimal winning requirement and ideological distance between the government and the opposition has a negative sign and is overall non-significant. This finding indicates no support for Hypothesis 10. In this hypothesis, I argued that the effect of the ideological conflict between government and opposition on the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS should be greater if the seat share of the government is closer to the requirement for changing the standing orders of parliament because this makes it easier for government to keep its members in check. The finding is not surprising because Hypothesis 10 supposes the opposite effect of Hypothesis 9, and Hypothesis 9 has been supported empirically in the previous model.

33 In reality, the instruments of PPS of France are also more majority-friendly than those of Austria, albeit more majority-friendly than predicted by this variable. On average, the instruments of PPS have a score of -1.19 for Austria and a score of 0.46 for France.
Figure 7-7: Regression Slopes for High and Low Levels of Government Seat Share Depending on the Ideological Distance Between Government and Opposition

Figure 7-7 visualizes the interaction effect in detail and corroborates the findings of Model 4. As was the case in Model 4, the interaction effect is partially significant. If the seat share of the government is larger than 57%, the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition is positive and becomes larger the greater the seat share of the government is. This effect is at least significant at the 90% confidence level. The results of Models 4 and 5 are only similar and not exactly the same because the sample of the models differs. While Model 4 includes all instruments of PPS of all 16 Western European countries in this study, Model 5 includes only those countries which have a government that is larger than the majority required for changing the standing orders. The reason for this is that the argument about how close the governmental seat share is to minimal winning does not apply to minority governments and is thus coded missing for those cases; for a more detailed version of this argument, see Section 3.5.3.

Model 6 shows that the lower the level of governmental homogeneity is, the larger is the effect of the conflict between the government and the opposition on how majority-friendly the
instruments of PPS are designed. This interaction effect is significant only for low levels of governmental homogeneity; otherwise, the interaction effect is non-significant. Figure 7-8 visualizes this effect. One can see that the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition is positive for low, medium and high levels of ideological homogeneity of the government. The effect is strongest for a very low level of ideological homogeneity of the government (black line), medium for a medium level of homogeneity (light grey line) and weakest for a very high level of homogeneity (dark grey line). However, the slopes are not statistically significant if the ideological homogeneity of the government is higher than its mean value and are significant at the 90% confidence level if the ideological homogeneity of the government is lower than its mean value. It follows that the effect should be interpreted cautiously. At the lowest level of ideological homogeneity where the effect of the conflict between the government and the opposition is the strongest, the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition is 0.13 and significant at the 90% confidence level.

As was the case in Model 4, an effect of this magnitude does have a substantial impact on how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed and must thus not simply be omitted. A possible ad-hoc explanation for this finding is that governments which are ideologically diverse and do not have a clear, common policy stance do not have a unified communication strategy against an obstructive opposition. It follows that an ideological conflict with the opposition impacts these governments more strongly than governments which are ideologically cohesive. As a response to this, ideologically diverse and thus vulnerable governments design the instruments of PPS to be comparatively more majority-friendly if they face an obstructive opposition.
Models 7 through 9 include the competing operationalizations for workload and support that the effect of workload is not very robust. Model 7 includes the size of parliament as a measure of its workload. This effect has the expected positive sign and is ‘significant’ at the 89% confidence level. While this does not constitute a conventionally accepted confidence level, it still matters here because the effect of workload measured through the population of a country is only weakly significant at the 90% confidence level. The finding thus corroborates that the operationalization of a parliament’s workload through the size of a country’s population is appropriate and that the effect of workload is substantively small. Model 8 operationalizes a country’s workload through the size of its public sector. The effect has the expected positive sign and is significant at the 95% confidence level. It follows that Model 8 corroborates the effect of workload operationalized through a country’s population found in the previous models. In Model 9, one finds that the effect of workload measured as number of bills per sitting day has a negative sign and is highly non-significant. The negative effect is not worrisome because of its very small substantive size. This finding does not corroborate
the effect of workload found in the other models. It follows that overall, the operationalization of the effect of workload appears to be mildly robust. Yet, the substantive size of the effect is still very small and is only significant at the 90% confidence level. Hence, one should treat this finding with caution.

7.5. Summary

This analysis has shown that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to be more or less majority-friendly depending on both their incentives and their capabilities. Of the incentives, only the workload of parliament has an independent effect on how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. The analyses show that the greater the workload of parliament is, the more majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed and vice versa. However, this effect is substantively small and also rather weak. Thus, one should not overestimate the resulting support for the structural-functionalist view of institutional design.

When considering incentives and capabilities of decisive coalitions together, the analysis yields that if the seat share of the government is great, the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition on how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed is also large and vice versa. This effect is significant if the seat share of the government is larger than 55% and implies that governments with a large majority can more easily design the instruments of PPS in a majority-friendly way if they are in conflict with the opposition than governments with a slim majority.

The analysis further shows that if the ideological homogeneity of the government is low, the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition on how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed is large and vice versa. The effect is significant only for low levels of ideological cohesion of the government and implies that the more ideologically diverse the government is, the more majority-friendly does this
government design the instruments of PPS if it is faced with an obstructive opposition. These findings support that the individual-goals view of institutional design can explain how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed if taking both parliamentary actors’ incentives and capabilities into account.

The analysis also suggests that the characteristics of the individual instruments of PPS have an impact on how the instruments of PPS are designed. In particular, I find that open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed instruments. This is theoretically plausible because a confrontation with the opposition is likely to be more electorally harmful in open than in closed instruments and closed instruments of PPS are more important than open ones for providing transparency in parliament. Thus, it is normatively more difficult for the government to design closed instruments in a majority-friendly way than open instruments.

To analyze if these trends can also be observed when assessing the evolution of the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, in Chapter 9 I analyze how the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS changes for Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010. I find that the majority- and minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS cannot be explained by the same factors for all countries. In particular, the workload of parliament and the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition serve as good predictors of most majority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS of the United Kingdom. Conversely, in Austria and Germany governments tend to agree to minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS for electoral considerations and to improve the fairness in parliament. Moreover, the distinction between open and closed instruments of PPS is clearly visible in Austria and the United Kingdom. Here, the open instruments of PPS are (almost) always more majority-friendly than the closed instruments of PPS. Conversely, both open and closed instruments of PPS are similarly majority-friendly in
Germany. This finding supports that the distinction between open and closed instruments seems to be able to explain – at least partially – how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed.
Part IV Empirically Understanding the Evolution of the Design of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

8. Centralization and Decentralization of the Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010

8.1. Introduction

The degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS provides information about the conflict between frontbenchers and backbenchers. A centralized design of the instruments of PPS indicates that frontbenchers or other centralized actors have more rights than backbenchers to communicate PPS to the public and vice versa. This divide is of central interest for the study of Western European parliaments (André et al. 2014, 240-242; Norton 1999; Rose 1983), yet so far I have only addressed the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS for one point in time. In this chapter, I therefore discuss how the centralization of the instruments of PPS evolves over time. I use Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom as exemplary cases and show that the explanations for the design of the instruments of PPS can also partially explain the patterns of centralization of the instruments of PPS found over time. However, most of these explanations concern the level of centralization of the instruments of PPS and understanding the changes to the instruments of PPS is only possible by consulting secondary literature.

In Chapter 6, I found that the accountability of individual parliamentarians and whether an instrument of PPS is open or closed can best explain the centralization of the instruments of PPS in 2010. Conversely, I ascertained that the workload of parliament is not decisive for how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed. To assess whether these findings also apply to the changes of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS over time, I
analyze the evolution of the centralization of the instruments of PPS of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 (or the first date for which the standing orders are available) until 2010. As argued in detail in Chapter 5, I chose these countries because they vary on the independent variables identified by the cross-section as crucial for explaining the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS and because I am able to understand the language in which their standing orders are written in.

The cross-section time-series in this chapter serves as a valuable empirical illustration and cross-validation of the findings uncovered in Chapter 6 even though it comprises fewer countries than the cross-sectional analyses in previous chapters and the analysis of the evolution of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS is descriptive. In particular, the analysis of this chapter suggests that while the accountability of parliamentarians only has a limited scope for explaining how centralized plenary debates are in the three countries under investigation, it does serve as an acceptable predictor for the level of centralization of oral questions. Furthermore, I find that the distinction between open and closed instruments of PPS – especially between plenary debates and the closed instruments of PPS – is clearly visible over time. As expected, open instruments are more centralized than closed ones. Once again, I find only very limited support for a direct impact of the workload on the centralization of the instruments of PPS. However, I am able to add more nuance to this finding by showing that efficiency considerations do play a role – albeit not a decisive one – for changes making the instruments of PPS more or less centralized.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, I provide an overview of the major reforms to the centralization of the instruments of PPS in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom and discuss if parliamentary workload can explain these changes. Second, I compare how centralized plenary debates and oral questions are in the three countries under investigation to assess the impact of the accountability of parliamentarians on the centralization of the
instruments of PPS. Last, I summarize the findings of this chapter and compare them to the findings of the cross-section.

8.2. Overview and Workload of Parliaments

Over the last 60 years, parliamentary workload has increased continuously in the three countries under investigation. In this chapter, I analyze if this increase in workload can explain the changes made to the centralization of the instruments of PPS and find that while the workload of parliament is not the decisive factor for a reform of the centralization of the instruments of PPS, it does play a role for changes rendering the instruments of PPS more centralized. To get an overview of the changes made to the centralization of the instruments of PPS in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom, Figure 8-1 shows how the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom has evolved from 1945 or the first date for which the parliamentary standing orders were available until 2010. Moreover, Figure 8-1 shows how the workload of the respective parliaments has changed. As was the case in the cross-section, the workload of parliament is operationalized through the number of a country’s inhabitants. To make these numbers easily comparable, Figure 8-1 shows the percentage increase in population since 1945.

Overview – Austria

For Austria, one can see that the centralization of the instruments of PPS is rather stable over time with some interesting differences between the instruments. Plenary debates (solid black line) increase in centralization until the mid-1990s. Even though there is a slight decrease in centralization afterwards, the centralization of plenary debates has increased overall since 1945 by 1.12 points. As opposed to the pattern for plenary debates, the presentation and discussion of committee reports (dashed black line) exhibits an overall

\[34\] These dates are 1945 for Austria, 1949 for Germany, and 1951 for the United Kingdom.
decrease in centralization by 0.76 points. This decrease is rather slight. The oral questions (dash-dot grey line) of the Nationalrat show a pattern that is less clear. While they increase in centralization overall by 1.33 points, one can see that the degree of centralization fluctuates over time. Written questions (dashed grey line) are very stable; they increase in centralization by 0.15 points from 1945 until 2010. Conversely, interpellations (dotted grey line) consistently increase in centralization by 2.17 points. There were four major reforms which impacted the degree of the centralization of the instruments of PPS in Austria. These took place on 01.10.1975, on 01.10.1989, on 15.09.1993, and on 15.10.1996. While all reforms comprised both changes centralizing and decentralizing the instruments of PPS, the reforms overall – except for the one in 1975 – increased the centralization of the instruments of PPS.

Figure 8-1: Workload of Parliament – Centralization of Instruments of PPS
To illustrate the reform of 1975 which decreased the centralization of the presentation and discussion of committee reports and oral questions and increased the centralization of plenary debates and interpellations, I present some empirical examples below. The presentation and discussion of committee reports decreased in centralization by 0.51 points because, among other changes, the President of Parliament no longer had the right to nominate a rapporteur for the committee report if the committee is not able to present the report orally. One of the changes decreasing the centralization of oral questions by 1.75 points is that individual parliamentarians gained the right to withdraw their questions. Conversely, plenary debates increased in centralization by 1.10 points because, among other changes, parliamentary party groups gained the right to nominate one person to speak after the closure of debates has been decided. The centralization of interpellations increased by 0.89 points because the President of Parliament received more rights to schedule interpellations as he deems appropriate.

The reform of 1989 notably increased the centralization of plenary debates by 1.04 points. In particular, the time frame of plenary debates was modified so that the President of Parliament was vested with more rights to determine how long a parliamentarian is allowed to speak. Moreover, short debates were introduced during this reform. These made plenary debates more centralized because the nomination of speakers and other parameters of the debate are decided by frontbenchers. The reform of 1993 added to the President of Parliament even more powers as he was from then on allowed to modify the time frame of oral questions. This and other changes yielded that the oral questions became 1.57 points more centralized.

The reform of 1996 increased the centralization of both written questions and interpellations by 0.35 and 1.19 points, respectively. Concerning written questions, it was introduced that parliamentary party groups (and hence frontbenchers) were allowed to introduce questions. Concerning interpellations, the standing orders were modified so that the number of interpellations was limited by parliamentary party group whereas before any
parliamentarian could request an interpellation. Moreover, it was introduced that parliamentary party groups could request interpellations. All of these changes yielded that the power of frontbenchers vis-à-vis the backbenchers increased, both by giving more rights to frontbenchers and by making backbenchers more dependent on frontbenchers.

**Overview – Germany**

In the German Bundestag, the centralization of almost all instruments of PPS consistently increased. While the centralization of plenary debates increased overall by 1.04 points, there are also instances on which their centralization decreased. For example, centralization decreased on 22.05.1970 and on 01.12.1990. Yet, the changes were very small both times as they decreased the centralization of plenary debates by 0.17 and 0.30 points, respectively.

Scores for the presentation and discussion of committee reports remained highly stable throughout – they increased by 1.00 points on 01.01.1952 and did not change thereafter. Furthermore, all closed instruments of PPS witnessed changes. The centralization of oral questions increased markedly over time by 1.60 points. Interpellations also became more centralized over time, although not as much as oral questions (1.36 points). Changes to written questions exhibit a less uniform picture. They decreased in centralization on 22.05.1970 by 1.00 points and increased again by 1.00 points on 01.10.1980.

There were four major reforms which took place on 01.01.1952, on 01.10.1969, on 22.05.1970, and on 01.10.1980. The reform of 1952 likely followed a different logic than the other changes because it marks the first original standing orders of the Bundestag. Between the end of World War II and these standing orders, the Bundestag relied on the standing orders of the Reichstag of the Weimar Republic. Thus, the Bundestag eventually had to depart from these standing orders and institute new regulations shortly after it was constituted following the war. The reform of 1969 increased the centralization of plenary debates by 0.34
points. This assessment corroborates that by Scholz (1981), who argues that overall, the reform of 1969 increased the efficiency of the Bundestag.

The reform of 1970 led to more strongly centralized oral questions (increase of 1.76 points), but rendered written questions less centralized (decrease of 1.00 points). For example, the centralization of oral questions increased because the rules regarding oral questions were made more precise. Among other things, it was introduced that while individual parliamentarians can introduce oral questions, the President of Parliament ultimately decides about their admissibility. The President of Parliament also gained the rights of rejecting oral questions with obvious local concerns and the right of deciding about the order in which oral questions are asked during question hour. Conversely, backbenchers gained more rights regarding written questions by being allowed to request that questions which were not answered in time by the government to be answered orally.

For the 1980 reform, one can clearly see that all changes increased the centralization of the respective instruments of PPS. These findings corroborate those of Gralher (1981, 203-204), who argues that individual parliamentarians’ rights decreased through the reform of 1980. For example, one of the changes that increased the centralization of plenary debates in 1980 by 0.90 points concerns the rules of topical hours. Their rules were changed to allow more centralized than decentralized actors to request topical hours. Written questions became more centralized (1.00 points) because the President of Parliament received the right to extend the deadline for answering written questions to over 14 days with the consent of the parliamentarian posing the question. Interpellations increased in centralization by 0.64 points as parliamentary party groups gained the right to request interpellations to be put on the agenda.

When examining Figure 8-1 in detail, one can see that there were also some incremental changes to the centralization of the instruments of PPS in the German Bundestag. This finding
corroborates Oberreuter and Stern (2009), who argue that most reforms of the standing orders of the Bundestag were incremental. They argue that this is the case because there is little demand for far-reaching reforms and because comprehensive reforms are difficult to accomplish. Maier et al. (1979, 51-59) add that until 1961, this lack of reform was due to a lack of demand for reform caused by a very homogenous parliament and little fluctuation in political offices.

**Overview – United Kingdom**

In the United Kingdom, the level of centralization of the instruments of PPS does not vary strongly over time. For example, George and Evans (1983, 70) argue that ‘[w]hilst over the last twenty years [1960-1980, the author] we have seen changes in almost every walk of life, in governmental institutional and politics in Britain the structure and procedures of Parliament have remained largely intact’. Judge (1983, 27) even goes as far as to suggest that ‘parliamentary reform in this [the 20th, the author] century has been minor, hesitant and inward looking’. Kelso (2009) corroborates their assessment.

The centralization of plenary debates exhibits most changes over time. The largest of these changes took place on 04.06.1998 and increased the centralization of plenary debates by 1.08 points. Through this reform, the Speaker of the House for example gained the right of deciding whether or not to count the time taken by interventions towards the total speaking time allocated for a plenary debate. The work of Kelso (2009) corroborates this finding; she argues that the Labour government (1997-2001) focused its reform efforts on the legislative process, which also included plenary debates. Overall, the centralization of plenary debates decreased slightly (0.08 points). The presentation and discussion of committee reports increased only weakly in centralization by 0.51 points overall. Oral questions do not exhibit a clear pattern and remained fairly stable over time. Overall, they decreased in centralization by
0.08 points. Conversely, the centralization of written questions decreased overall by 0.69 points.

**Workload**

The population of Austria and the United Kingdom has been increasing steadily whereas the population of Germany under the jurisdiction of the German Bundestag increased sharply through re-unification (refer to the top of the graphs presented in Figure 8-1). There is a steady population increase in Austria from 7.0 million inhabitants in 1946 to 8.4 million inhabitants in 2010, which equals an increase of about 20%. The United Kingdom witnesses a similar trend, with its population steadily rising from 51 million in 1950 to 63 million in 2010. This marks an increase of about 25%. Conversely, the workload of the German Bundestag increased rapidly in 1990 through the re-unification\(^{35}\). The German re-unification increased the size of the population under the jurisdiction of the Bundestag by 17 million people. This is a one-time increase of about 30%. However, the number of the members of the Bundestag also increased with the first election after re-unification from 519 to 662 (Bundeswahlleiter 2014). This could have diminished the effect of the increased workload through re-unification, as more parliamentarians were available to shoulder it. Overall, the population relevant for the workload of the Bundestag increased from 51 million people to 82 million people in 2010, or by about 60%.

The pattern of centralization of the instruments of PPS displayed in Figure 8-1 does not lend strong support to the structural-functionalist view of institutional design for any country. If the effect of workload only becomes visible over time within each country, one should see a sharp increase in the centralization of the instruments of PPS of the Bundestag around 1990 and one should witness an overall increase in centralization of all instruments of PPS in all

\(^{35}\) The population of East Germany is added from 02.12.1990 onwards, i.e. the date of the first federal election after German re-unification on 03.10.1990.
countries. Figure 8-1 does not show a marked increase in centralization for the instruments of PPS of the German parliament after 1990. However, when looking at the overall patterns of the centralization of the instruments of PPS described in detail above, one can see that most instruments of PPS show at least a slight increase in centralization. For Austria and the United Kingdom, Figure 8-1 shows that the centralization of the instruments of PPS did not increase overall even though the workload of these countries’ parliaments consistently increased. Hence, there is only very limited support for Hypothesis 2 concerning the change of the instruments of PPS which postulates that the greater the workload is which a parliament faces, the more centralized the instruments of PPS should be.

Yet, one should not be so quick to discard the importance of workload for the design of the instruments of PPS. The literature analyzing the reforms of the standing orders of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom shows that the structural-functional view of institutional design might be able to contribute to the explanation of how the centralization of the instruments of PPS evolves over time. Auracher-Jäger (1997) and Neisser (1981) argue that most reforms of the standing orders of the Austrian Nationalrat served to make parliament more capable of dealing with its challenges. For Germany, Oberreuter and Stern (2009, 47) argue that one impetus for any reform of the Bundestag is to increase its ability to perform its tasks well. Kelso (2009) agrees with this assessment for the United Kingdom. She adds that the Labour government (during the period from 1997 to 2007) among others aimed to make the legislative process more efficient. Based on these assessments, I conclude that while the workload of parliament may not provide the direct impetus for changing the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS, designing the instruments of PPS in an efficient way does play a role for those changes. It follows that there is still no strong support for Hypothesis 2 concerning the changes made to the centralization of the instruments of PPS.
Yet, the analysis has shown that the structural-functionalist view of institutional design complements the individual-goals view of institutional design.

As an alternate measure of parliamentary workload, I assess the impact of a country entering the European Union (EU) on the centralization of its instruments of PPS; it becomes evident that against expectations, the centralization of the instruments does not increase when a country joins the EU. The date on which each country entered the EU is visualized by the dashed vertical line in Figure 8-1. I expect a country’s workload to increase when it enters the EU because the EU requires national parliaments to adopt its legislation, the community acquis. This means that when a country joins the EU, the respective parliament has to process both its own bills and the bills relating to the EU. This increases their workload. Based on Hypothesis 2, I expect the centralization of the instruments of PPS to increase around the time a country enters the EU.

Figure 8-1 shows that Austria joined the EU in 1995, Germany has been a founding member since 1952, and Great Britain entered the EU in 1973. For Austria and Great Britain, one sees virtually no change to the instruments of PPS after they join the EU. Yet, for Austria one can see that the centralization of oral questions increased shortly before Austria’s accession. Auracher-Jäger (1997) argues that this change is due to Austria joining the EU. For Germany, one does see a change to all instruments of PPS in the year it joins the EU. Yet, 1952 was also the year in which Germany adopted an entirely new set of rules governing its legislature after World War II. Hence, I am hesitant to place too much confidence in these changes. To summarize, when a country joins the EU, there does not seem to be an increase in the centralization of its instruments of PPS. This supports the previous finding, i.e. that the workload of parliament is not immediately responsible for how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed.
8.3. Accountability of Parliamentarians and Open and Closed Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

The accountability of parliamentarians proved to be a reliable predictor of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS in 2010. In this section, I show that the accountability of parliamentarians serves as a good predictor of the degree of centralization of oral questions over time; conversely, I find that the accountability of parliamentarians is a poor predictor for the degree of centralization of plenary debates. As the accountability of parliamentarians is operationalized through a country’s electoral system (see Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion) and the electoral system of a country changes very rarely, I expect that the accountability of parliamentarians is able to predict the level of centralization of the instruments of PPS but not the changes made to the centralization of the instruments of PPS. The only exception to this rule for the countries in my sample is the reform to the electoral system of Austria in 1992. I discuss this reform below. Yet, assessing if the accountability of parliamentarians can predict the level of the centralization of the instruments of PPS over time is nevertheless useful to assess if the findings of the cross-section (see Chapter 6) hold over time. Based on Hypothesis 1 regarding the change of the instruments of PPS, the centralization of the instruments of PPS should be greater over time in those countries with a party-centered electoral system and smaller in those countries with a candidate-centered electoral system.

Of the three countries under investigation, Austria has the most party-centered electoral system and the United Kingdom has the most personalized one, with the mixed electoral system of Germany being located between those two. The United Kingdom did not change its electoral system in a major way for the entire period under investigation (Massicotte and Blais 1999), and Germany’s electoral system has been virtually unchanged since 1956\textsuperscript{36} (Woyke

\textsuperscript{36} The reform of 1953 introduced the 5% hurdle for parties to enter parliament and the two-vote ballot (see e.g. Bawn 1993). The reform of 1956 introduced that three direct mandates instead of one direct mandate were necessary for avoiding the 5% hurdle and that the second vote was apportioned at the level of the Bund instead of the level of the Länder (Korte 2009).
Austria’s reform of the electoral system of 1992 which was used for the first time in the 1994 election to the Nationalrat resulted in a marked decrease in the number of preference votes needed to gain a seat in parliament (Müller 2006, 282-289). It follows that the centralization of the instruments of PPS should have decreased around 1994 in Austria. Moreover, I expect to find that the instruments of PPS of Austria were more centralized than those of Germany, and the instruments of PPS of Germany were more centralized than those of Britain. I focus on plenary debates and oral questions because these two instruments get most attention by the media (Proksch and Slapin 2012; Rasch 2011) and should thus be the most important to parliamentary actors.

Figure 8-2 shows that the accountability of parliamentarians does not seem to have been the driving force behind how centralized plenary debates were designed. This yields no support for Hypothesis 1 concerning plenary debates. In detail, Figure 8-2 shows that plenary debates in the United Kingdom (black solid line) were almost always the most centralized instrument of PPS. The plenary debates in Germany (black dashed line) were always least centralized, and the plenary debates in Austria (black dotted line) were mostly medium-level centralized. This finding is at odds with the theoretical expectations and the findings of the cross-section. A possible explanation for the outlier status of the United Kingdom is that it constitutes the archetype of the Westminster System and is thus known for its strong parties and centralized procedures (Strøm and Bergman 2011, 10-14). Therefore, it is not surprising to find the plenary debates of the United Kingdom to be highly centralized.

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37 The finding is also surprising because Proksch and Slapin (2012) argue that the rules of plenary debate are more strongly centralized in Germany than in the United Kingdom. The reason for this discrepancy is twofold. First, I focus exclusively on the standing orders of parliament for understanding the design of the instruments of PPS. Proksch and Slapin (2012) also take the rules written directly by the parliamentary party groups into account to understand how centralized or decentralized plenary debates are designed. Second, Proksch and Slapin (2012) define centralization and decentralization differently than I do. While Proksch and Slapin (2012) are interested solely in the frontbencher – backbencher divide, I am interested in the centralized actors – backbenchers divide. For example, Proksch and Slapin (2012) do not code the Speaker of the House of Commons as centralized, while I do.
The only electoral system change in this sample and hence the only change in centralization that could be explained by the accountability of parliamentarians took place in 1992 in Austria and was effectuated for the first time in the 1994 election to the Nationalrat. When looking at the centralization of the plenary debates of Austria, one finds that they became slightly more decentralized in 1993 (0.19 points on a scale from -6 to +6) and 1996 (0.45 points). Both of these changes are in accordance with theoretical expectations, as the lower number of preference votes needed to obtain a seat in parliament makes it more attractive for backbenchers to cultivate a personal vote. This means that backbenchers are more likely to incur the confrontation with frontbenchers to change the design of plenary debates to be less centralized. Yet, as I explain in detail below, the reform of the standing orders of 1993 may have been due to Austria’s accession to the European Economic Area.
Figure 8-2 mostly supports Hypothesis 1 for oral questions. In detail, the centralization of oral questions follows the expected pattern from 1993 on: the oral questions of Austria were the most centralized instrument of PPS, and the oral questions of the United Kingdom were the least centralized instrument. Between 1975 and 1993, the oral questions of the United Kingdom were most centralized and the oral questions of Austria were least centralized. Before 1975, the oral questions were most centralized in Austria, medium-level centralized in the United Kingdom, and least centralized in Germany. Thus, the pattern presented in Figure 8-2 strongly supports Hypothesis 1 for the past 17 years and provides limited support for the first 25 years the instruments of PPS were in place. Yet, for the 18 years between 1975 and 1993, the pattern does not support Hypothesis 1.

When taking a closer look at why the oral questions of Austria became strongly decentralized in 1975 and even more decentralized in 1993, one finds that the reform of 1975 had the aim of increasing minority rights and improving the workings of parliament overall (Auracher-Jäger 1997; Neisser 1981, 108-112). This also included giving backbenchers more rights. In 1993, the standing orders, including the oral questions, were reformed again due to Austria’s accession to the European Economic Area (Auracher-Jäger 1997). It follows that the changes to the centralization of the oral questions of Austria of 1975 and 1993 were not due to electoral considerations but due to considerations about how well parliament could perform its tasks. However, the theoretical considerations concerning workload lead one to expect the opposite, i.e. an increase in centralization.

The finding suggests that while accountability mostly serves as a reliable explanation for the level of centralization of oral questions, there are other explanatory factors which also have to be taken into account. While the accountability of parliamentarians is one of the predictors of how centralized the instruments of PPS are over time, it is clearly not the only one. The centralization of the plenary debates of the United Kingdom suggests that especially
for the most visible instrument of PPS (Proksch and Slapin 2012, 520), other considerations – such as a country’s heritage of strong parties – may matter for how centralized the plenary debates are designed over time. Moreover, only one change made to the instruments of PPS could seemingly be explained by the accountability of parliamentarians, i.e. the decrease in centralization of the plenary debates of Austria shortly before and after the electoral system reform. However, the secondary literature suggests that this reform may have been due to Austria’s accession to the European Economic Area rather than due to electoral considerations.

**Open and Closed Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements**

Figure 8-2 supports that plenary debates (indicated by the black lines) are always more centralized than oral questions (indicated by the grey lines). This is in line with Hypothesis 3 concerning the change of the centralization of the instruments of PPS, which states that open instruments of PPS should be more centralized than closed ones. When taking into account all instruments of PPS as displayed in Figure 8-1, one can see that plenary debates were always more strongly centralized than all closed instruments of PPS. The presentation and discussion of committee reports is also more strongly centralized than all closed instruments in Great Britain, but is about as centralized as the closed instruments in Austria and Germany.

An explanation for this finding could be that parliamentary party groups make a greater effort to centralize plenary debates than the presentation and discussion of committee reports because plenary debates receive greater attention from the media and take up more plenary time (Ismayr 2008, 31-37). It follows that the presentation of committee reports poses a smaller risk to a party’s reputation than plenary debates. Thus, it could be the case that the decentralization of the former is a concession of frontbenchers to backbenchers. To summarize, these findings lend support to Hypothesis 3 and the theoretical consideration that
the centralization of the instruments of PPS also depends on the characteristics of the instruments of PPS.

8.4. Summary

This chapter has shown that the individual-goals view of institutional design is partially able to explain the changes made to the centralization of the instruments of PPS. Moreover, while the structural-functionalist view may not be able to directly explain the changes made to the centralization of the instruments of PPS, it is an important component of understanding these changes. Also, this chapter has emphasized that the characteristics of the instruments of PPS serve as a good predictor of their degree of centralization.

The time-series cross-section showed that the accountability of parliamentarians can only very weakly explain the degree of centralization of plenary debates over time whereas the hypothesized effect can be found for most of the period of investigation for oral questions. I find that over time, oral questions were usually more strongly centralized if parliamentarians were accountable to voters through their parties than if they were directly accountable to voters. Conversely, the degree of centralization of plenary debates over time does not seem to depend on how directly parliamentarians were accountable to their voters.

The finding corroborates the cross-section mainly for closed but not for open instruments of PPS. Yet, the findings presented here are based on even fewer cases than the findings of the cross section, and the effect of accountability was only significant at the 90% confidence level in the models presented in Section 6.4. Therefore, it could be that while frontbenchers and backbenchers design the instruments of PPS in a way which allows them to maximize their votes, i.e. according to parliamentarians’ accountability, there are also other factors impacting how centralized or decentralized the instruments of PPS are designed. It is not surprising that this applies more strongly to plenary debates than to oral questions, as they are among the most visible instruments of PPS (Proksch and Slapin 2012). Hence, they are not only one of
the most electorally crucial instruments of PPS but also one that is most highly contested by front- and backbenchers. Thus, it is to be expected that parliamentarians and their party groups change the design of these instruments for a combination of reasons rather than just one reason.

I found that the workload of a parliament does not directly impact how centralized its instruments of PPS are. However, the available case-study literature suggests that one should not disregard the structural-functionalist view of institutional design. For every reform, one of the considerations of parliamentary actors is to change the parliamentary rules of procedure to be more efficient. This means that the workload of parliament matters for the changes made to the centralization of the instruments of PPS; yet, it is only one of many factors and never the crucial one. These findings partially support the results of the cross-section presented in Chapter 6 and add more nuance to its findings. Parliamentary workload neither directly impacts how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed in 2010 nor how the centralization of the instruments of PPS evolves between 1945 and 2010. Yet, the time-series cross-section qualifies this finding by suggesting that while the workload of parliament may not have an independent effect on how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed, efficiency considerations do play an important role in parliamentary actors’ reform plans.

When differentiating the instruments of PPS into open and closed instruments, I found that plenary debates are always more centralized than all closed instruments of PPS. Conversely, the centralization of the presentation and discussion of committee reports does usually not differ from the centralization of closed instruments of PPS. A reason for this finding could be that plenary debates gather more media attention and take up more time in the plenary than committee reports. Thus, frontbenchers may be more lenient about the degree of centralization of the latter than about the degree of centralization of the former. This suggests that parliamentary actors do not only design the instruments of PPS to be more or less
centralized depending on factors influencing the entire parliament, but also depending on the characteristics of the individual instruments.

An important caveat must be added to this discussion. While the effect of accountability corroborates the findings of the cross-section for closed instruments and the effect of the characteristics of the instruments of PPS is also visible over time, both of these factors predict differences in levels of centralization over time, not changes. While the time-series cross-section is nonetheless valuable to assess if the trends of the cross-section persist over time, which they mostly do, the changes in centralization must be explained by other factors. The only factor included in this dissertation which could be useful in this regard is the workload of parliament. However, I have shown above that efficiency considerations do not provide the impetus for reform, even though they do matter. Therefore, the changes of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS cannot directly be accounted for by the explanations presented in the dissertation at hand.

Nonetheless, the findings of this section are helpful for addressing the changes of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS in two ways. First, it would be interesting to study how the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS evolves in countries with multiple and major electoral system reforms. It could be the case that the changed accountability of parliamentarians does play a role in these cases. Second, it could be revealing to further investigate the role efficiency considerations play for reforms of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. It may be true that there are primary and secondary considerations for each reform, and elaborating on them in detail might be useful for better understanding the reforms of the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS.

9.1. Introduction

The majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS impacts the conflict between government and opposition. As this is a central conflict in Western European parliaments (Hix and Noury 2013), I discuss the changes of the degree of majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS between 1945 and 2010 for Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom. I show that the explanations for the design of the instruments of PPS can also partially explain the changes made to the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. Further, I elaborate on how understanding these changes provides for a more in-depth grasp of the motivations of decisive coalitions to agree to minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS.

In Chapter 7, I found that the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS in 2010 can best be explained by a combination of incentives and capabilities of parliamentary actors. Moreover, the analyses showed that the workload of parliament has only a weak independent impact on how majority- or minority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. Finally, I found that open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed instruments of PPS. To assess whether these findings also hold over time, I analyze how the majority- and minority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS changes over time for the instruments of PPS of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

This chapter partially supports the findings of the cross-section. I find that open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed instruments of PPS in Austria and the United Kingdom. Moreover, the workload of the British House of Commons serves as an
acceptable predictor for the majority-friendly changes of its instruments of PPS. Also, the conflict between the government and the opposition can explain some of those changes. Conversely, I find that the changes to the instruments of PPS in Austria and Germany can be better explained by the electoral considerations of the government and concerns for fairness in parliament than by the conflict between the government and the opposition. Additionally, I show that the majority requirement for changing the parliamentary standing orders is a good predictor for the number and scope of changes of the instruments of PPS in Austria and the United Kingdom.

The chapter is structured as follows. In Section 9.2, I provide an overview of the major reforms of the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. I also discuss the impact of the majority requirement for changing the standing orders on the frequency and scope of these reforms. In Section 9.3, I analyze the effect of workload on majority- and minority-friendly reforms of the instruments of PPS. In Section 9.4, I assess the impact of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition coupled with the seat share of the government on changes made to the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. In Section 9.5, I gauge the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition coupled with the ideological homogeneity of the government on majority- and minority-friendly reforms of the instruments of PPS. In Section 9.6, I summarize the findings of this chapter and compare them to the findings of the cross-section.

9.2. Overview, Stabilizing Second-Order Institutions, and Open and Closed Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

This section shows that the majority requirement for changing the standing orders can partially explain the scope and number of majority- and minority-friendly reforms and that open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed ones in Austria and the United Kingdom. In Figure 9-1, I provide an overview of how majority- or minority-friendly
the instruments of PPS are designed in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom over time. Above each graph, Figure 9-1 includes information about the seat share of cabinet. This allows one to assess how easy it is for the government to reach the majority necessary for changing the design of the instruments of PPS.

The second-order institution ‘majority requirement to change the standing orders’ should cause the changes to the instruments of PPS to be comparatively more or less frequent and comprehensive as they determine the size of decisive coalitions. If the majority requirement for changing the standing orders is high, it is comparatively difficult to form a coalition supporting a reform of the instruments of PPS as a larger supporting coalition is needed. Thus, parliamentary actors should aim to incur the costs associated with these changes as seldom as possible. Furthermore, these changes should be comprehensive because they need to include the preferences of more actors and because demand of reform should increase if reforms occur only rarely. To sum up, I expect the changes to occur more rarely and to be more extensive if the majority requirement for changing the instruments of PPS is high. The same argument holds vice versa, i.e. I expect changes regarding the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS to be more frequent and more gradual if their rules are comparatively easy to change. Additionally, these changes should take place under governments which command the necessary majority to change the design of the instruments of PPS. The reason for this is that it is easier for those governments to change the instruments of PPS than if they do not have the necessary majority and therefore have to make a deal with the opposition.
Figure 9-1: Stabilizing Factors – Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS

Austria

Debates in Plenary  Committee Reports
Oral Questions  Written Questions  Interpellations
Austria

For Austria, there is a clear trend: all instruments of PPS become more minority-friendly over time; there are only very few majority-friendly changes. More precisely, it becomes visible that plenary debates (solid black line) become considerably more minority-friendly over time (2.56 points overall). Conversely, the presentation and discussion of committee reports (dashed black line) becomes only slightly more minority-friendly (0.56 points overall) and witnesses some majority-friendly changes. Both oral (dash-dot grey line) and written questions (dashed grey line) become clearly more minority-friendly between 1945 and 2010 by 2.53 and 1.00 points, respectively. Interpellations (dotted grey line) experience both majority- and minority-friendly changes, but are slightly more minority-friendly in 2010 than in 1945 (0.28 points).

As one can see in Figure 9-1, there were three major reforms to the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. The first one took place on 01.09.1961 and was minority-friendly for almost all instruments of PPS in Austria. For example, oral questions became about 2.0 points more minority-friendly because short oral questions were introduced. These allowed the opposition to better monitor the government. Written questions became about 1.0 point more minority-friendly. One of the reasons for this is that the government from then on had to justify in writing why it does not answer a written question. This made it less attractive for the government to refrain from answering written questions.

The second major reform took place on 01.10.1975 and was also overall minority-friendly. During this reform, it was for example introduced that a minority of parliamentarians has the right to request an interpellation to be held regarding a written question submitted in the same sitting of parliament. The third comprehensive reform took place on 01.01.1989. It was clearly minority-friendly and concerned only open instruments of PPS. The reform made plenary debates 1.46 points more minority-friendly, for example through giving more
speaking time to parliamentary party groups if a member of the government speaks longer than his allocated time. Committee reports became 0.83 points more minority-friendly, for instance because the reform granted parliamentarians the right to make a statement in a committee report if their opinion diverged from the majority opinion.

This pattern largely conforms to the theoretical expectations about the stabilizing impact of second-order institutions. As the standing orders of the Austrian Nationalrat require a 2/3 majority to be changed, I expect to find few but very comprehensive reforms. This is exactly what one can observe. Thus, the low number and large scope of the reforms of the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS fits well with the theoretical expectations about the number and scope of reforms. Concerning the timing of reforms, I expect the reforms to take place under governments with large enough majorities to independently change the instruments of PPS. Figure 9-1 shows that this is the case for the reforms of 1961 and 1989, which both took place during grand coalitions comprising more than 2/3 of seats.

Whether the government has a large enough majority to change the standing orders on its own was of subordinate importance for the reform of 1975 because the reform was passed unanimously. The single-party government of the ÖVP (1966 to 1970) meant that a noteworthy opposition in terms of size existed for the first time since 1945. This allowed for uncovering the flaws in the standing orders regarding minority and control rights. From then on, a comprehensive reform of the standing orders was prepared which was aimed at increasing the power of parliament, the prerogatives of minorities, and the rights of the opposition. This reform marked a ‘consensus of all parties in a changed political landscape’ Auracher-Jäger (1997, 184 (own translation)).

Yet, this still raises the question of why a government commanding a majority of seats in parliament would agree to such a minority-friendly change, as this clearly puts the government at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the opposition. The reason why the government
agreed to these changes in 1975 is that it was afraid of losing its majority and ending up in the opposition after the following election (Auracher-Jäger 1997, 110). Thus, the government supported a minority-friendly change of the instruments of PPS because of its prospective electoral considerations rather than because of its current status.

**Germany**

Figure 9-1 shows that the instruments of PPS of Germany experienced mostly minority-friendly changes. One can see that both plenary debates and the presentation and discussion of committee reports became more minority-friendly over time by 4.61 and 3.00 points, respectively. Written questions also became clearly more minority-friendly between 1949 and 2010 by 3.00 points. Conversely, interpellations witnessed barely any changes (0.09 points pro majority) and were constantly on a slightly minority-friendly level. Apart from the reform of 1952, oral questions only witnessed one large change which took place in 1970. Through this change, oral questions became 0.91 points more majority-friendly. In this reform, the rules governing oral questions were stated more precisely and for example limited the number of supplementary questions the questioner was allowed to ask to two, while the questioner formerly was allowed to ask all supplementary questions which were deemed necessary. Overall, oral questions became 0.68 points more majority-friendly.

Four major reforms impacted the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS in Germany. All of these reforms were overall minority-friendly. This finding corroborates Oberreuter and Stern (2009), who argue that one of the main reasons for changing the standing orders of the Bundestag is to make parliament more independent from government by strengthening minority rights. The first major reform took place on 01.01.1952. As I explained in detail in the previous chapter, this reform is likely to follow a different logic than the other reforms because it marked the departure from the standing orders of the Weimar Republic and the genesis of the original standing orders of the Federal Republic of Germany.
The other large reforms took place on 01.10.1969 and 22.05.1970, as well as on 01.10.1980. In 1969, plenary debates became 0.62 points more minority friendly because it was for example introduced that a representative of the opposition should be allowed to speak after each contribution of a government member. One of the changes that made written questions 1.00 points more minority-friendly in 1970 was that the parliamentarian posing the question got the right to request an oral answer to this question if the government did not answer written questions in time or the answer did not satisfy the questioner. The large increase in minority-friendliness of plenary debates in 1980 was for instance due a minority of parliamentarians getting the right to request a topical hour and being allowed to request an extension of the time awarded for the topical hour.

The pattern of reforms of the majority-friendliness of the German instruments of PPS partially meets theoretical expectations about the impact of second-order institutions. As the German standing orders can be changed by a simple majority, I expected there to be fewer comprehensive changes and more small changes in Germany than in Austria. While one can observe a slightly greater number of small changes in Germany than in Austria, the number of comprehensive changes is similar. This finding is supported by Oberreuter and Stern (2009), who argue that reforms in the Bundestag are both few and incremental because comprehensive reforms are difficult to enforce.

It is also interesting that there are no changes to the instruments of PPS during any of the two grand coalitions (1966-1969 and 2005-2009). This finding is plausible as it is more difficult for grand coalitions to reach policy compromises than for minimal winning coalitions (see e.g. Riker 1962), and minimal winning coalitions have the ability to change the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS in Germany. Conversely, changes to the instruments of PPS in Austria are more likely to occur during grand coalitions because only those coalitions are large enough to change the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS on their own.
United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, one finds that plenary debates (0.14 points pro majority), the presentation of committee reports (1.88 points pro majority), and oral questions (0.44 points pro majority) became more majority-friendly over time, while written questions exhibited a mixed picture. Overall, they increase in majority-friendliness by 0.74 points, but they experienced both majority- and minority-friendly changes. The changes to these instruments did not occur during a few comprehensive reforms, but rather occurred through many small reforms. A consequence of this is that none of the largest changes made to each instrument of PPS took place on the same date.

Plenary debates were changed most strongly on 19.11.2007 by 0.68 points in favor of the minority, while most other changes of plenary debates were in favor of the parliamentary majority. Among other things, the reform of 2007 introduced minority-friendly topical hours. While topical hours are requested by a member of the government, the two largest opposition party groups have the right to speak immediately after the government during the debate and their combined speaking time is larger than that of the government. The majority-friendliness of the presentation and discussion of committee reports increased most strongly – by 1.00 points each time – during the reforms on 24.10.1968 and on 11.03.1982. For example, the reform of 1982 introduced that the Liaison Committee, which is an actor deciding by majority rule, should report its recommendations to the House of Commons. The rules governing oral questions changed most intensely on 24.10.1990 by 0.49 points in favor of the majority because members not present when their questions were read out no longer had the opportunity to postpone the question. Written questions experienced their greatest change on 01.01.2003 when they became 1.40 points more majority-friendly. This reform for example limited the number of written questions a parliamentarian was allowed to ask to five per day.
The pattern of changes made to the instruments of PPS in the United Kingdom conforms to theoretical expectations. In the United Kingdom, one-party majority governments are the norm and the instruments of PPS can be changed by a simple majority in parliament. It follows that the government of the United Kingdom usually disposes of the required seat share to change the standing orders of PPS as it pleases, and it does not have to negotiate with a coalition partner. It follows that one should expect to find many small changes to the instruments of PPS rather than a few comprehensive ones. The pattern of changes of the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS displayed in Figure 9-1 supports these theoretical considerations as there are many small changes to the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS.

This assessment corroborates the argument of Norton (1985, 142-145), who suggests that a reform in the House of Commons always requires the backing of the government. Conversely, Donnelly (1997) argues that successful reforms of the standing orders should be backed by all parliamentarians rather than the government alone and that reforms need to be a package balancing the interests of as many factions of the House of Commons as possible. Yet, the party constituting the majority may itself consist of many factions and only a few members of this party are actually in government. It follows that the reform package Donnelly (1997) is referring to could concern an agreement between parliamentarians in the majority party rather than an agreement between all parties in parliament.

Open and Closed Instruments of Parliamentary Policy Statements

Figure 9-1 shows that open instruments of PPS (black lines) were consistently more majority-friendly than closed instruments (grey lines) in Austria and the United Kingdom, while they were similarly majority-friendly in Germany. In Austria, plenary debates were always more majority-friendly than all closed instruments of PPS. The presentation and discussion of committee reports was similarly majority-friendly as oral questions until the
1960s. From then on, committee reports were also more majority-friendly than the closed instruments of PPS. In the United Kingdom, open instruments of PPS were constantly more majority-friendly than the closed ones. Conversely, in Germany open instruments were only more majority-friendly than closed instruments before 1970. After 1970, the majority-friendliness of these instruments was very similar. Beginning with the reform of 01.10.1980, plenary debates were even the most minority-friendly instrument in the Bundestag.

These findings suggest that the distinction between open and closed instruments of PPS is a reliable predictor of these instruments’ majority- or minority-friendliness in Austria and the United Kingdom. This yields support for Hypothesis 7 concerning the change of the instruments of PPS, which states that open instruments of PPS should be more majority-friendly than closed instruments over time. The majority-friendliness of open and closed instruments of PPS in Germany is an interesting finding, which cannot be explained by the distinction between open and closed instruments. One can see in Figure 9-1 that the instruments of PPS of Germany all changed at the same time; moreover, all of these changes were overall clearly minority-friendly. This could indicate that the instruments of PPS are viewed as a bundle rather than as either open or closed instruments of PPS. Moreover, if the instruments of PPS are seen as one body of instruments, this would explain why their level of majority-friendliness is relatively similar and cannot be distinguished according to whether the instruments of PPS are open or closed.

9.3. Workload of Parliament

Figure 9-2 juxtaposes the workload of parliament measured as the percentage increase in the number of inhabitants of a particular country (top graph) and the date of a country’s accession to the EU (vertical dashed grey line) with the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS (bottom graph). I described the increase in the number of inhabitants of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom in detail in Section 8.2. Thus, I limit myself to a
short description here. The population of Austria and the United Kingdom increased steadily from 1945 until 2010 by 20% and 25%, respectively. The population under the jurisdiction of the German Bundestag increased by about 30% in 1990 through re-unification. Overall, the population relevant for the workload of the German Bundestag increased by about 60% from 1945 until 2010. Hypothesis 6 puts forth that an increase in the workload of parliament should be met by an increase in the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS. Hence, there should have been an overall steady increase in the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS in all countries and a sharp increase in Germany around 1990.

**Figure 9-2: Workload of Parliament – Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS**

![Graph showing workload and majority-friendliness of instruments in Austria from 1940 to 2010.](image-url)
For Austria, Figure 9-2 shows that the workload of parliament is not the best predictor for the changes to the instruments of PPS. Even though the number of inhabitants and thus the workload of parliament increased steadily, the instruments of PPS became more minority-friendly instead of more majority-friendly. Furthermore, I expect the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS to increase after Austria joined the EU in 1995 as joining the EU entails a heightened workload (for a more detailed description of this argument, see Section 8.2). One can see that interpellations became markedly more majority-friendly after Austria joined the EU (0.80 points), plenary debates and presentation of committee reports became slightly more majority-friendly (0.15 points and 0.34 points, respectively), and written questions became slightly more minority-friendly (0.25 points). The majority-friendliness of oral questions barely changed (0.04 points pro minority). The increase in majority-friendliness of interpellations, plenary debates and presentation of committee reports is as expected, while the increase in minority-friendliness of written questions is not. However, Auracher-Jäger (1997) argues that minority rights were curbed in 1996 not because of Austria’s accession to the EU but rather because they had been used extensively. It follows that the majority-friendly reform of 1996 can be explained by efficiency considerations after all as the strong use of the instruments of PPS led to a legislative bottleneck. The government then combated this gridlock by making interpellations, plenary debates, and the presentation and discussion of committee reports more majority-friendly.

The majority- and minority-friendly changes of the German instruments of PPS can hardly be explained by the workload the Bundestag faces. The instruments of PPS should have become more majority-friendly overall with a sharp increase around the German re-unification in 1990. Yet, this was clearly not the case. An explanation for the missing increase in centralization around 1990 could be that the number of parliamentarians was increased in the first Bundestag after the re-unification, i.e. there were more parliamentarians available to
shoulder the increased workload. However, even when disregarding the effect of re-unification, there was still an overall increase in workload over time which should have been met with an increased degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS.

All instruments except oral questions became markedly more minority-friendly overall; oral questions increased in majority-friendliness by about 0.68 points. After the re-unification in 1990, one can see that the presentation of committee reports became even more minority-friendly (1.00 points) and the other instruments retained their level of majority-friendliness. Unfortunately, the date on which Germany entered the EU is not well suited for understanding the changes to the instruments of PPS as this date coincides with the reform of the standing orders in which the Bundestag established its own rules. Thus, the reform of 1952 is likely to be driven by many factors, only one of which may be the accession to the EU. It follows that in Germany, there is no support for Hypothesis 6 as this hypothesis postulates that the instruments of PPS should experience majority-friendly changes if the workload of the Bundestag increases and vice versa.

As opposed to the Austrian Nationalrat and the German Bundestag, the workload of the British House of Commons accounts rather well for the majority-friendliness of its instruments of PPS. Like the Austrian Nationalrat, the British House of Commons faced a steadily growing workload. As I discussed in detail regarding Figure 9-1, plenary debates, the presentation of committee reports, and oral questions also steadily increased in their majority-friendliness. Solely the written questions became more minority-friendly in the 1970s and only increased again in majority-friendliness in the early 2000s. Downs (1985), Kelso (2009) and Norton (1983) also argue that the increase in majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS was due to parliamentary workload. They argue that the reforms of the 1960s and 1970s took place because parliamentary actors were dissatisfied with parliament’s performance in the face of growing demands.
However, Russell (2011) proposes that the majority-friendly changes of the House of Commons could have a different origin. He argues that the reason for these changes of the standing orders was that the government is traditionally very strong in the United Kingdom. This makes reforms restricting the power of the government unlikely. It follows that it is difficult to entangle whether the individual-goals view or the structural-functionalist view is better able to explain the reforms made to the House of Commons. Yet, I do not expect reforms of the instruments of PPS to be so simple that they can be explained by one factor and the workload of parliament seems to be one factor contributing to the reforms of the instruments of PPS in the United Kingdom.

One can also see in Figure 9-2 that the United Kingdom’s EU accession did not seem to have an impact on how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. The instruments of PPS remained as majority-friendly as they were before the EU accession or even decreased in majority-friendliness after the United Kingdom joined the EU in 1973. Yet, the date of EU accession indicates the added demand towards parliament on one date, whereas the workload of parliament measured as the number of inhabitants taps into the constant demands towards parliament and hence the constant pressure for reform.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the structural-functionalist view of institutional design may be better able to explain the direction of reforms and not their timing, especially in Austria and Germany. In the United Kingdom, the pattern of changes of the instruments of PPS fits well with the structural-functionalist view. Yet, the literature supports that the individual-goals view may also matter for majority- and minority-friendly changes to the instruments of PPS. These findings show that there is cautious support for Hypothesis 6, which postulates that there should be majority-friendly changes to the instruments of PPS if the workload of parliament increases and vice versa.
9.4. Ideological Conflict between Government and Opposition and Seat Share of Government

Figure 9-3 shows that the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition (top graph, solid line) coupled with the seat share of the government (top graph, dashed line) can explain the majority- and minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS in the United Kingdom rather well. Conversely, this measure has only limited explanatory power for the changes of the degree of majority-friendlyness of the instruments of PPS in Germany and Austria. To recapitulate, in Hypothesis 5 I stated that I expect to find majority-friendly changes to the instruments of PPS if the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition increases, and minority-friendly changes if the conflict decreases. In Hypotheses 9 and 10, I argued that the effect of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition should increase the greater the seat share of the government is or the closer the seat share of the government is to minimal winning, respectively. The findings of this section yield support for Hypothesis 5 for the United Kingdom, but do not clearly support either Hypothesis 9 or Hypothesis 10 for the majority- and minority-friendly changes of the British instruments of PPS.

Austria

In Austria, the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition coupled with the seat share of the government cannot explain the three major reforms of the instruments of PPS. The first major reform to the instruments of PPS took place on 01.09.1961 and is overall minority-friendly. This reform was implemented after the conflict between the government and the opposition had slightly decreased. However, over the previous 10 years the conflict between the government and the opposition had more than doubled. Thus, it is highly unlikely that the slight decrease in ideological conflict is strong enough to cause such a massive minority-friendly reform. Moreover, at this time, the seat
share of the government was large enough for the government to change the instruments of PPS to their liking. Yet, the government did not take advantage of this opportunity. Neisser (1981) explains that the reform of 1961 mainly served to adapt the Austrian standing orders to the current situation of parliament in which the conflict between government and parliament had been replaced by the conflict between government and opposition. To accommodate these new circumstances, the instruments of PPS were changed to be more minority-friendly.

Figure 9-3: Ideological Conflict Between Government and Opposition and Seat Share of the Government – Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS
The minority-friendly change of the instruments of PPS of 1975 can be explained partially by the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition and the seat share of the government. Figure 9-3 shows that this reform took place in a parliament in which the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition had decreased markedly. This makes the government more likely to agree to a minority-friendly reform of the instruments of PPS. When additionally considering the seat share of the government, one finds that the government did not have the capability to change the instruments of PPS to its liking. Yet, I assume that the opposition would readily agree to a minority-friendly reform of the instruments of PPS.

Alternatively, it could have been the case that the one-party majority government of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) under Chancellor Bruno Kreisky was not sure that it would retain its majority after the following election. Even though electoral volatility was very low in 1975 (Plasser et al. 2007, 166-168), the majority of the SPÖ after the following election was only 51%. Hence, it is likely that the SPÖ did not know before the election that it would retain its absolute majority or at least not end up in the opposition. The government itself stated this concern as its prime motivation for introducing minority-friendly changes to the standing orders (Auracher-Jäger 1997, 110). It follows that the minority-friendly reform of the Austrian instruments of PPS of 1975 can not only be explained by the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition but also by the electoral considerations of the government. As reforms of the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS are complex, it is plausible that both factors had an impact on the reform.

The last major reform of the majority- and minority-friendliness of the Austrian instruments of PPS can again not be explained by the change in conflict between the government and the opposition coupled with the seat share of the government. The minority-friendly reform of 1989 of the open instruments of PPS took place after the conflict between
the government and opposition had been steadily increasing for the past 10 years. Thus, one would expect a majority-friendly reform of the instruments of PPS and not a minority-friendly one. This finding is even more surprising when taking into account that the government did have the majority necessary to change the instruments of PPS on its own. Moreover, the reform took place about 1.5 years before the next general election. Hence, one can rule out that the government changed the open instruments of PPS to be more minority-friendly because they were taking precautions in case they would end up in the opposition after the next election.

Auracher-Jäger (1997) argues that the causes for the reform of 1989 were that the grand coalition between the SPÖ and the ÖVP resulted in a numerically small opposition and that the Green party entered parliament for the first time in 1986. Together, these two developments highlighted the lack of opposition rights. To counteract this problem, the instruments of PPS were changed in a minority-friendly way. It follows that the reform of 1989 was not effectuated because of the conflict between the government and the opposition but rather because of considerations of fairness.

To summarize, only one of the reforms of the instruments of PPS of the Austrian Nationalrat can be explained by the ideological conflict between government and the opposition; and even here, it is likely that the government’s fear of losing its majority status after the following election was also important for the reform. It follows that there is limited support for Hypothesis 5 and no support for Hypothesis 9 and Hypothesis 10. However, I have also highlighted that electoral considerations – in particular the government’s fear of losing its majority status after the following election – as well as considerations of fairness in parliament may play an important role for changing the instruments of PPS to be more minority-friendly.
Germany

The ideological conflict between government and opposition coupled with the seat share of the government is not a good predictor for the four minority-friendly reforms of the German instruments of PPS. As argued in detail in Section 8.2, the reform of 1952 likely follows a different logic than the other reforms. Therefore, I do not take this reform into account for seeking to understand what causes majority- or minority-friendly reforms in Germany – there are simply too many confounding factors in this case.

The reform of 1969 took place in a parliament in which the conflict between the government and the opposition had just slightly increased. During this time, the government’s seat share was exceptionally large as Germany was governed by a grand coalition during this time. Rausch (1981, 145-146) argues that this large majority allowed for a large reform of the standing orders. The reform of 1970 was effectuated in a parliament which had also witnessed a slight increase in conflict between the government and the opposition. As opposed to the reform of 1969, the seat share of the government was only slightly above the minimal winning requirement. Thus, these two reforms lend themselves nicely to a comparison.

During the reform of 1969, the rules for plenary debates and the presentation and discussion of committee reports were changed to be more minority-friendly. During the reform of 1970, the rules for oral questions became more majority-friendly while the rules for written questions became more minority-friendly. If Hypothesis 5 is correct, one would to expect to find majority-friendly changes in both instances. This is not the case as both reforms are overall minority-friendly. If Hypothesis 9 is correct, one should find the reform of 1969 to be more majority-friendly than the reform of 1970; if Hypothesis 10 is correct, one should find the opposite to be true. While the reform of 1970 could be conceived as slightly more majority-friendly than the reform of 1969 due to the majority-friendly change of the oral
questions, there was still a strongly minority-friendly element in this reform. Thus, there is no support for either hypothesis.

Another explanation for why the reform of 1969 was highly minority-friendly is that it took place during politically turbulent times in Germany which called for an extension of minority rights. The opposition was very weak because the grand coalition took up about 90% of seats in parliament and the ‘Außerparlamentarische Opposition’ (extra-parliamentary opposition) examined the political system very critically with a special focus on the lack of opportunity for dissenting opinions to be heard. Parliamentarians were aware of this critique and agreed that parliament had to change in order to be seen again as the central place for political debate rather than as an institution for window-dressing (Thaysen 1972). Oberreuter and Stern (2009, 61) and Thaysen (1972) argue that the government agreed to such a minority-friendly reform because it was afraid of losing its majority after the following election. Thus, as was the case in Austria in 1975, electoral considerations of the government mattered for this minority-friendly reform. Conversely, electoral considerations cannot explain the reform of 1970 because this reform took place more than two years before the following general election.

The reform of 1980 was introduced in a parliament which had witnessed a steep increase in ideological conflict between the government and the opposition and in which the government possessed a slim majority of about 51% of seats. In this case, one would expect to find a majority-friendly change of the instruments of PPS (Hypothesis 5) which is more or less comprehensive, depending on whether the capability of the government to implement its preferred design of the instruments of PPS increases with a larger (Hypothesis 9) or a slimmer majority of seats (Hypothesis 10). Yet, the reform is in fact highly minority-friendly. This finding does not support Hypotheses 5, 9, and 10.
The timing of the reform of 1980 indicates that electoral considerations may have played a role as the reform took place before an election which did produce a partially different governing coalition. Therefore, it could have again been the case that the governmental parties were not sure if they would be in the opposition after the following election and changed the instruments of PPS to be more minority-friendly for this reason. However, Bücker (1981) argues that the reform had been implemented for different reasons. On the one hand, the reform should enable the majority to always be able to fulfill its functions properly. On the other hand, the reform should award the minority with extensive rights to control the government. I conclude that majority- and minority-friendly reforms of the instruments of PPS could be less conflictual than assumed. It could be the case that these reforms are not – or at least not only – the result of the government striving to gain a maximum advantage from the design of the instruments of PPS, but rather that the instruments of PPS are changed in a way which allows both the government and the opposition to fulfill their functions.

To summarize, the major reforms of 1969, 1970, and 1980 all took place after an increase in the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition; while one would expect to find majority-friendly reforms of the instruments of PPS in this case, the reforms were in fact minority-friendly. Thus, it seems that the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition cannot explain why the German instruments of PPS were changed in a minority-friendly way. This yields that there is no support for Hypothesis 5. Furthermore, the seat share of the government cannot explain when the government would be more likely to act on its incentives. The reform of 1969 took place under a government with an exceptionally large majority while the other two reforms took place under governments with slimmer winning margins. Yet, all of the reforms were minority- instead of majority-friendly. It follows that neither a large nor a slim majority made the government more likely to transform its incentives for more majority-friendly instruments of PPS into an actual
Thus, there is neither support for Hypothesis 9 nor for Hypothesis 10. However, I found that electoral considerations mattered for the minority-friendly change of 1969 and could have played a role in the reform of 1980. Moreover, considerations of fairness in parliament may also matter for minority-friendly reforms of the instruments of PPS.

**United Kingdom**

The reforms of the instruments of PPS of the British House of Commons can be explained well by the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition as postulated in Hypothesis 5. One can see that an increase in the ideological conflict between the opposition and government is usually followed by a majority-friendly change of the instruments of PPS and vice versa. For example, the presentation of committee reports became more majority-friendly on 24.10.1968 and on 03.11.1982 after the conflict between the government and opposition had increased. Written questions became more minority-friendly on 18.12.1972 and on 24.10.1990 after the conflict between the government and opposition had decreased, and more majority-friendly on 29.03.2007 after the conflict had increased again. However, there are also some exceptions to this finding. Plenary debates and the presentation of committee reports became slightly more majority-friendly on 08.03.1971 after the conflict between the government and opposition had slightly decreased. Written questions became more majority-friendly on 01.01.2003 even though the conflict between the government and opposition had just decreased.

Concerning the seat share of the government, one finds that it adds only little information to the previous finding. The party with the majority of seats in the House of Commons has at least 48% of seats and at most 63% of seats. The changes to the instruments of PPS presented in Figure 9-3 took place both during governments with large majorities and during government with slim majorities. Therefore, the changes of the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS do not lend empirical support to either Hypothesis 9 or Hypothesis 10.
9.5. Ideological Conflict between Government and Opposition and Ideological Homogeneity of Government

The ideological conflict between the government and the opposition coupled with the ideological homogeneity of the government should impact when the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS is changed. Yet, I show in this section that the ideological conflict between government and opposition coupled with the ideological homogeneity of the government cannot explain when the instruments of PPS are changed to be more majority- or minority-friendly. Based on Hypothesis 11, I expect that the greater the ideological homogeneity of the government is, the easier it is for the government to pursue its incentives regarding majority- or minority-friendly reforms of the instruments of PPS. It follows that if a government consists of only one party or ideologically very close parties, this government should be better able to change the instruments of PPS in a majority-friendly way if it faces an increased ideological conflict with the opposition than if the government consists of ideologically far removed parties. Figure 9-4 provides an overview of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition (top graphs, solid line) and the ideological homogeneity of the government (top graphs, dashed line).

The conflict between the government and the opposition coupled with the ideological homogeneity of the government cannot explain the reforms of the instruments of PPS in Austria. There are two instances in Austria in which increased ideological conflict between the government and the opposition coincided with spikes in ideological homogeneity: in the early 1970s and in the early 2000s. If Hypothesis 11 has empirical validity, one would expect to find strong majority-friendly changes during these periods. However, neither in the early 1970s nor in the early 2000s did a reform of the instruments of PPS occur. It follows that there is no support for Hypothesis 11 concerning the reforms of the instruments of PPS in Austria.
The combination of the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition and the ideological homogeneity of the government also fails to explain why the instruments of PPS of the German Bundestag changed in a majority- or minority-friendly way. In the early 1960s and the late 1970s until the early 1980s, one finds that both the ideological conflict between the government and the opposition had increased and the level of ideological homogeneity of the government was high. In these cases, one expects to find majority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS with a large scope. Yet, there were no changes in early 1960s and even minority-friendly changes in 1969 and 1970. Thus, the pattern of majority- and minority-friendly changes of the German instruments of PPS does not support Hypothesis 11.

Figure 9-4: Ideological Conflict Between Government and Opposition and Homogeneity of the Government – Majority-Friendliness of Instruments of PPS
The majority- and minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS of the United Kingdom do also not support Hypothesis 11. In the United Kingdom, one-party governments are the norm. This means that for my entire period of observation, the ideological homogeneity of the government was always at its maximum. It follows that the government should always have been able to pursue its incentives. Indeed, I do find more majority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS in the United Kingdom than in Austria and Germany. Moreover, the changes of the instruments of PPS of the House of Commons were mostly majority-friendly changes. Yet, because there was no variance in the ideological homogeneity of the government, the ideological homogeneity of the government in the United Kingdom can only explain why more majority-friendly changes occurred in the United Kingdom than in Austria and Germany and why these were less extensive in the United Kingdom than in the other countries. It cannot explain the timing of the changes to the instruments of PPS.

9.6. Summary

Changing the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS makes it easier or harder for the government to communicate to its voters that they should re-elect the government and for the opposition to voice its concerns about the government. In this chapter, I showed that the majority- and minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS can partially be explained by the factors which explained how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed; I also was able to better understand the causal mechanisms underlying these changes. In detail, I found that the workload of parliament is a good predictor for the changes made to the instruments of PPS of the British House of Commons. In the United Kingdom, the workload of parliament increased steadily and so did the majority-friendliness

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38 Even though there was a brief hung parliament in 1974 when the government under Prime Minister Edward Heath lost its majority (UK Parliament Website), this episode is not included in the datasets used in this dissertation (see e.g. ERD dataset Andersson et al. 2012; ParlGov dataset Döring and Manow 2012).
of most of the instruments of PPS. Conversely, even though the workload of parliament also increased in Austria and Germany, the instruments of PPS of these countries became on average more minority-friendly.

The analysis further yielded that the distinction between open and closed instruments of PPS is very helpful for understanding how the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS evolves over time in Austria and the United Kingdom. In both countries, open instruments of PPS were almost consistently more majority-friendly than closed instruments of PPS. Conversely, in Germany both open and closed instruments were similarly majority-friendly over time. A reason for this could be that in Germany the instruments of PPS are viewed as a bundle rather than as being either open or closed.

Further, I found that the ideological conflict between government and opposition coupled with the seat share of the government can explain most of the majority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS in the United Kingdom. Yet, the changes of the instruments of PPS in Germany and Austria seem to be driven by different considerations. The ideological conflict between government and opposition coupled with the level of ideological homogeneity of the government also does not serve as a good predictor of when the instruments of PPS are changed to be more or less majority-friendly.

In addition, the analysis of the evolution of the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS over time was useful for understanding the causal mechanisms behind these changes a little better. I found that the changes to the instruments of PPS in Austria and Germany could be explained better by the electoral considerations of the government and concerns for fairness in parliament than by the conflict between government and opposition. In particular, if government is afraid of losing its majority after the following election, it is disposed to agree to minority-friendly reforms of the instruments of PPS. This finding suggests that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors do not only take their current but also their
prospective electoral concerns into account when designing the instruments of PPS. It also could be the case that those concerns are especially important in Austria and Germany because it is difficult for parties to predict if they will be in the government even if they are fairly certain about the outcome of an election. The reason for this is that participation in government is usually a result of negotiation in these countries. Conversely, in the United Kingdom one-party majority governments are the norm. Thus, if a party is fairly certain about the outcome of an election, it can also be fairly confident about its chances of forming the government.

I also analyzed the effect of the majority requirement for changing the standing orders on the number and scope of reforms. While this variable proved to be insignificant in the cross-section, the more detailed assessment of this chapter yielded that it is a good predictor for the number and scope of majority- and minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS in Austria and the United Kingdom. As expected, there are relatively few and comprehensive reforms in Austria and relatively many and small reforms in the United Kingdom. Conversely, I would have expected the number of reforms of Germany to be greater and the scope of reforms more limited. A reason for this finding could be that it is comparatively difficult for German governments to negotiate reforms of the instruments of PPS because coalition governments are the norm in Germany and there are hence at least two parties involved in the bargaining process. On the other hand, the government of the United Kingdom is usually a single-party government, which does not face those bargaining costs.

Substantially, these findings qualify the cross-section by indicating that the impact of the various factors on majority- or minority-friendly changes of the instruments of PPS is not clear-cut. Rather, each factor has some impact, and this impact may be different from country to country. For example, efficiency considerations seem to play a bigger role in the United Kingdom than in Austria and Germany. Moreover, the ideological conflict between the
government and the opposition seems to be relevant for most changes in the United Kingdom but not for all of them. Further, the workload of parliament seems to be a consideration for most reforms but never provides the direct impetus for reform.

The findings also extend the cross-section by pointing to the importance of prospective electoral considerations of the government, to the concern for fairness in parliament and to the prominence of the majority requirement for changing the instruments of PPS. Based on these results, I conclude that a combination of the individual-goals view and structural-functionalist view of institutional design is appropriate for analyzing the majority- and minority-friendly changes made to the instruments of PPS. While the former view seems to play a greater role for understanding the immediate demand for reform, the latter seems to indicate the latent demand for reform of the instruments of PPS.
10. Conclusion

In the dissertation at hand, I studied both theoretically and empirically how parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS. I defined the instruments of PPS as taking place within parliament and thus being institutionally guaranteed to parliamentary actors, as being visible to the public, and as and allowing for a direct and nuanced communication of parliamentary actors to the public. Based on this definition, the following instruments can be used for communicating PPS: plenary debates, the presentation and discussion of committee reports, oral and written questions, and interpellations.

In the theoretical section, I established an original theoretical framework from which I derived hypotheses about the conditions under which decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS concerning their degree of centralization and their degree of majority-friendliness. In the empirical sections, I introduced the research design for evaluating these hypotheses and tested them quantitatively. A qualitative study complemented the statistical analyses. For this purpose, I created two original datasets – one including the design of the instruments of PPS of all Western European countries with a parliamentary system in 2010, and the other one including the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom from 1945 until 2010. In this chapter, I summarize the main arguments and findings of this study. Thereafter, I highlight the broader contribution of this dissertation to the established literature.

10.1. Main Arguments and Findings

In this dissertation, I argued that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS – defined as taking place within parliament and thus being institutionally guaranteed to parliamentary actors, as being visible to the public, and as and allowing for a direct and nuanced communication of parliamentary actors to the public – to conform to their institutional preferences. While studies about the use and design of individual instruments of
PPS have become more frequent in recent years (see e.g. Martin and Rozenberg (editors) 2011; Proksch and Slapin 2012), a comprehensive framework and analysis including the design of all instruments of PPS is currently lacking.

10.1.1. Part I – Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

To address the lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework, in the first part of this dissertation I developed an original theoretical framework which suggests that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes (individual-goals view of institutional design). Which parliamentary actors form a decisive coalition to impact the design of the instruments of PPS varies depending on the dimension of the instruments of PPS they seek to design, i.e. centralization – decentralization or majority – minority. To understand the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS, frontbenchers and backbenchers have to be taken into account. Conversely, parliamentary party groups of the government and of the opposition are relevant for explaining the degree of majority- and minority-friendliness.

Moreover, I introduced that when designing the instruments of PPS, these decisive coalitions distinguish between two types of instruments which differ depending on the interaction of parliamentary actors. In open instruments of PPS, such as plenary debates and the discussion and presentation of committee reports, the interaction of parliamentary actors is little structured. For example, in plenary debates it is possible that one actor addresses another one, and the addressed actor decides freely on whether to respond. Conversely, closed instruments of PPS, such as oral questions, written questions, and interpellations, provide for a more structured interaction. For instance, in an oral question, a parliamentarian asks a member of the government a question and this member then has to respond. As open and closed instruments of PPS are employed for different purposes, decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors should design them differently.
Building on this theoretical framework, I derived hypotheses about when one should expect to find more centralized or decentralized and more majority- or minority-friendly instruments of PPS. I argued that design of the instruments of PPS depends on the incentives and capabilities of decisive coalitions. After having derived these hypotheses, I adapted them to explain the evolution of the instruments of PPS. I argued that the design of the instruments of PPS should change when the incentives of the decisive coalitions for a particular design of the instruments of PPS change. Therefore, I restated the hypotheses to include a change in incentives. For example, I hypothesized that if parliamentarians’ accountability to voters becomes more direct, the design of the instruments of PPS should become more decentralized.

10.1.2. Part II – Research Design

In the second part of this dissertation, I introduced the research design for this dissertation. I argued that to understand the design of the instruments of PPS, a large-N study is more appropriate than a case-study because little is known about the design of the instruments of PPS and I thus aimed to provide an overview of their design. The cases included in this study are all Western European countries with a parliamentary system. This case selection is appropriate because the countries are similar enough to control for several important confounding factors while still providing enough variation to test the hypotheses put forth in the theoretical section. The unit of analysis is one instrument of PPS in one of these countries, e.g. oral questions in Germany or plenary debates in Norway.

To gauge the design of each instrument of PPS in each Western European country, I constructed an index describing the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of each instrument of PPS. To construct this index, I employed a theory-driven quantitative content analysis to the parliamentary standing orders in force on 01.01.2010 of the respective countries. I manually coded each sub-paragraph of the standing orders which is relevant for the degree of centralization or the degree of majority-friendliness of the
instruments of PPS. Coding took place in three steps: which instrument of PPS the sub-paragraph concerns (plenary debates, presentation of committee reports, oral questions, written questions, interpellations), which feature of the instrument the sub-paragraph concerns (access, organization, time frame, closure, documentation, publicity), and which actor is advantaged by the feature of this instrument (centralized/neutral/decentralized, majority/neutral/minority). I then aggregated this information in two steps to obtain an index for the design of the instruments of PPS.

To analyze the degree of centralization and the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, I chose linear single-level models. The linear models were suitable for analyzing this data as the indices, i.e. the dependent variables, could take any value between the most extreme values. This indicated that the dependent variable is quasi-continuous. The single-level models were appropriate because evaluating the hypotheses put forth in the theoretical section did not require a multi-level model and because the results showed that the multi-level models did not convey more information than the single-level models.

In addition to explaining the design of the instruments of PPS, I also sought to understand the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS. I did so by analyzing in detail the changes made to the design of the instruments of PPS between 1945 and 2010 in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom. I relied on descriptive case studies to complement the large-N study because this allowed me to gain a better understanding of the timing of changes made to the design of the instruments of PPS, to increase the validity of the findings of the cross-section, and to receive an impression of the causal mechanisms underlying the design of the instruments of PPS.

I traced the evolution of the design of the instruments of PPS in the same way that I measured the design of the instruments of PPS. The only difference was that in the cross-section, I only assessed the design of the instruments of PPS for one point in time whereas in
the cross-section time-series, I measured this design for each time there was a change to the design of the instruments of PPS.

10.1.3. Part III – Cross-Section

In the third part of this dissertation, I presented the patterns of design of the instruments of PPS in Western Europe in 2010 and showed that these patterns can best be explained by the individual-goals view of institutional design and by the characteristics of the instruments of PPS.

For the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS, I showed that while most instruments of PPS are predominantly centralized there is considerable variation between instruments. Most notable was that plenary debates are almost always the most centralized instrument of PPS. Moreover, I found that when aggregating the instruments of PPS by country, all countries were overall centralized and their degree of centralization varied. This is not surprising as all modern parliaments face time constraints (Cox 2006) and it would hence be impossible to allow each and every parliamentarian to decide on his own when to communicate PPS to the electorate.

The statistical analyses showed that the accountability of parliamentarians and whether an instrument of PPS is open or closed could explain the patterns of centralization and decentralization rather well. The analyses supported the hypothesis that a direct accountability of parliamentarians to their voters leads to a decentralized design of the instruments of PPS and vice versa. Conversely, the parliamentary workload did not have an impact on the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. This supported that the individual-goals view of institutional design, i.e. the view that decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to maximize their votes, is better able to explain the centralization of the instruments of PPS than the structural-functionalist view of institutional design, i.e. the view that the instruments of PPS are designed in a way which maximizes parliamentary efficiency.
Additionally, I found that open instruments of PPS are more centralized than closed instruments. This is in accordance with theoretical considerations.

Concerning the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, I found that the majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS varied both between and within countries. It was striking that open instruments of PPS tended to be more majority-friendly than closed instruments. Moreover, the instruments of PPS for the Nordic countries were more majority-friendly than one would have expected. I highlighted that this finding was actually not counterintuitive as the Nordic countries are in reality more majority-friendly than one would expect. I argued that a reason for this divergence could be that one tends to think of the Nordic countries as minority-friendly because minority governments are frequent in these countries.

When seeking to explain these patterns, the statistical analyses showed that both the individual-goals view and the structural-functionalist view of institutional design had some explanatory power. However, the effect of the workload of parliament, which corresponds to the structural-functionalist view of institutional design, was substantively small and also rather weak. Further, the analyses supported that how majority-friendly decisive coalitions design the instruments of PPS depends on both their incentives and capabilities. Moreover, I found that open instruments of PPS are more majority-friendly than closed instruments. I concluded that while efficiency considerations also do play a role for the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS, decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors primarily design the instruments of PPS in a way which allows them to maximize their votes.

10.1.4. Part IV – Time-Series Cross-Section

In the final part of this dissertation, I assessed how the design of the instruments of PPS of Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom changed over time. The patterns partially supported the findings of the cross-section and added more depth to them.
Concerning the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS, I found that the individual-goals view of institutional design, i.e. the accountability of parliamentarians, is partially able to explain how centralized the instruments of PPS are over time. Moreover, I was able to show that the structural-functional view of institutional design, i.e. the workload of parliament, does provide an incentive – albeit not the decisive one – for a more or less centralized design of the instruments of PPS. The distinction between open and closed instruments of PPS served as a good predictor of their degree of centralization over time.

These findings extended the cross-section in three ways. First, they showed that there are both direct and indirect factors influencing the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. Second, the findings qualified the impact of the accountability of parliamentarians. While these findings already were not highly significant in the cross-section, the time-series cross-section has shown that there is more than just this one factor impacting the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS. Last, the time-series cross-section corroborated that the characteristics of the instruments of PPS serve as a valuable predictor of their design.

I found that the changes to the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS could be explained by different factors in the three countries. The changes of the instruments of PPS of the British House of Commons could be explained well by the workload of parliament and the ideological conflict between government and opposition. Conversely, the changes of the instruments of PPS of the German Bundestag and the Austrian Nationalrat could best be explained by electoral considerations of the government and concerns for fairness in parliament. Additionally, the majority requirement for changing the standing orders proved to be a good predictor for the number and scope of majority- and minority-friendly changes in Austria and the United Kingdom. Finally, the respective characteristics of an instrument of PPS were helpful for understanding its level of majority-friendliness over time in Austria and the United Kingdom.
These findings contributed to the cross-section in three ways. First, they highlighted that explaining the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS and of the respective changes is difficult; some explanations could be more appropriate for some countries than others, and many factors need to be taken into account. However, this is not surprising as one can expect the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS to be normatively controversial. For instance, a very majority-friendly design or very majority-friendly changes of the design of the instruments of PPS could be perceived as limiting parliament’s transparency and capability for scrutiny. Hence, it could be the case that governments tend to shy away from making majority-friendly changes to the instruments of PPS because this could have negative electoral consequences for them. The time-series cross-section corroborated this by hinting that other factors, such as fairness considerations, may be important for this. Second, I found that the time horizon of the government is a factor for changes to the instruments of PPS. Taken together with the previous finding, it could be the case that governments design the instruments of PPS primarily based on their own prospects rather than based on the present conflicts. Last, the findings supported that the characteristics of an instrument of PPS has to be taken into account for explaining its specific design.

10.2. Contribution to the Literature

The contribution of this dissertation to the literature is not limited to providing a comprehensive explanation for the institutional design and change of the instruments of PPS as outlined in the introduction; it also contributes more generally to three strands of existing research. These three areas of research are concerned with how parliament is organized, with institutional design and change beyond parliament, and with communication between parliaments and citizens. Below, I elaborate on each strand of research in detail and highlight how this dissertation contributes to them.
10.2.1. Parliamentary Organization

How parliaments are organized has for a long time been of interest for scholars. Cox (2006) summarizes that the central problem of legislative organization is that time is scarce and states that the solution to this problem is to create non-egalitarian legislatures. Such institutional arrangements can for example include special agenda setting powers (see e.g. Cox and McCubbins 2005). Party groups determine which legislators get offices with more or less agenda powers and more generally structure legislators’ interaction (André et al. 2014, 240-242; Cox 2006, 147-149). As these party groups strive to maximize their votes, they have an interest in designing the rules creating the inequality in the legislature to their advantage. For example, if the power to set the legislative agenda rests with the government (Tsebelis 2002, 91-115), party groups taking part in government should aim to increase their influence on the legislative agenda while party groups of the opposition should aim for more minority rights.

As the dissertation at hand is concerned with one area of legislative organization, it can contribute to this strand of research in three ways. First, this dissertation contributes to the research about legislative organization by showing how the previously unexplored instruments used for communicating with the public are designed and how this design comes to be. By including these instruments in their research, scholars can for example analyze if the design of the instruments of PPS can be explained by the same factors as the design of instruments of agenda setting.

Second, this dissertation contributes to the literature about legislative organization by highlighting that there are two dimensions to those institutions: centralization – decentralization and majority – minority. In the dissertation at hand, I evaluated the design of the instruments of PPS on both of their dimensions, i.e. centralization – decentralization and majority – minority. As these dimensions are independent of each other, one cannot
understand the degree of centralization of the instruments of PPS through the factors that predict the degree of majority-friendliness of the instruments of PPS and vice versa. The findings of Chapters 6 and 7 support this claim. Moreover, the dissertation has shown that both dimensions are relevant for getting a nuanced understanding of the design of the instruments of PPS. When applying these arguments to legislative organization in general, it follows that the institutions of a legislature should be analyzed both concerning their degree of centralization and their degree of majority-friendliness if one seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of their design.

Third, the dissertation contributes to the research concerning legislative organization by elaborating on which parliamentary actors are relevant for understanding how an instrument provided by parliament is designed concerning its degree of centralization and its degree of majority-friendliness. In Part I of this dissertation, I have argued that the conflict between frontbenchers and backbenchers is pivotal for understanding how centralized the instruments of PPS are designed. Conversely, the conflict between the party groups taking part in government and the party groups of the opposition is central for understanding how majority-friendly the instruments of PPS are designed. If the institutions of a legislature are analyzed concerning both the centralization – decentralization dimension and the majority – minority dimension, these conflicts are most likely also central for understanding the design of the respective institution. For example, when analyzing the degree of centralization of the agenda setting powers in Western European parliaments, the conflict between frontbenchers and backbenchers should be crucial for their design.

10.2.2. Institutional Design and Change beyond Parliament

Studies of institutional design and change need not be limited to parliaments. In fact, there is a large body of research situated in rational choice institutionalism which is concerned with the design and change of institutions outside of parliament. For example, scholars study the
institutional framework of economies. North (1990) argues in his seminal work ‘Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance’ that institutional design affects the economic performance of a country by reducing uncertainty. If entrepreneurs believe that they can do better under differently designed institutions, they change the institutions at the margins. Wren (2006, 653) summarizes that political actors can impact the institutional framework of economies through legislation, albeit being constrained by ‘the existing socioeconomic institutional configuration of the state’. Taking a more general approach, Shepsle (2006a) recapitulates that institutional choice takes place under uncertainty about e.g. other actors’ preferences, about one’s own future preferences. This results in institutions being imperfect and impossible to maintain forever. If unforeseen events arise, e.g. actors’ preferences change, institutions are changed.

The dissertation at hand can contribute to the research about institutional design and change outside of parliament in three ways. First, the theoretical framework of this dissertation connects parliamentary actors’ use of an institution with their desire to design this institution. In detail, the theoretical framework states that parliamentary actors use the instruments of PPS to impact the chain of accountability and thereby maximize their votes. As the rules for these instruments are endogenous, decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors design the instruments of PPS to conform to their institutional preferences. When applying this logic to institutions outside of parliament, it follows that parliamentary actors should design the institutions on which they rely to maximize their votes to conform to their institutional preferences. An example of such an institution is a country’s exchange rate. Broz and Frieden (2006, 591-596) summarize that a country’s exchange rate is highly important for a national economy. They argue that because of these electoral implications, parliamentary actors are willing to influence it to maximize their votes. The theoretical framework developed in the dissertation at hand would suggest that parliamentary actors do not only
strive to manipulate the exchange rate to maximize their votes, but that they also aim to
design the institutions relevant for manipulating the exchange rate in a way which allows
them to maximize their votes.

Second, this dissertation can contribute to the literature about the design and change of
institutions outside of parliament through its findings concerning the individual-goals view of
institutional design and the structural-functionalist view of institutional design. The results of
Chapters 6 and 7 suggest that parliamentary actors primarily design the instruments of PPS to
advance their own goals; however, efficiency and fairness may also contribute to a particular
design of the instruments of PPS. When applying these insights to the literature concerning
the design and change of institutions outside of parliament, it follows that this literature could
also benefit from taking both views into account.

Last, the dissertation at hand has introduced the distinction between incentives and
capabilities of decisive coalitions of parliamentary actors to design the instruments of PPS in
a particular way; this distinction travels well to all studies of institutional design and change.
In the theoretical part of this dissertation, I argued that decisive coalitions of parliamentary
actors have certain incentives which lead them to pursue a particular design of the instruments
of PPS. How easy it is for these decisive coalitions to implement their preferred institutional
design depends on their capabilities. It follows that while the effects of the incentives are also
interesting by themselves, the effects of the capabilities are only interesting in an interaction
with the incentives. The analyses have yielded that the institutional design of the instruments
of PPS indeed depends both on decisive coalitions’ incentives and their capabilities. As
incentives and capabilities are very general concepts, they travel easily from understanding
the institutional design and change of the instruments of PPS to understanding the design and
change of all institutions. Thus, taking both incentives and capabilities of decisive coalitions
for a particular design of an institution into account could provide interesting and maybe even new findings.

10.2.3. Parliaments as Link between Politicians and Voters

In parliamentary systems, communication between parliamentarians and the public is an important topic; however, it is unclear which role parliament plays in this context. Strøm (2000, 282-285) sums up the main problem of parliamentarians in this regard. He argues that while parliamentarians simultaneously make ever greater efforts to please voters to maximize their chances for re-election, it is still difficult for voters to know how parliamentarians perform in office. To counter this problem, parliaments seek to establish closer links with the public. For example, Coleman (2004) shows that the British House of Commons has introduced online consultations with citizens to establish a closer communication with them (for communication with the public via the internet see also e.g. Coleman et al. 1999; Korte 2009; UK Parliament Website; Woyke 2002). The introduction of televised proceedings of parliaments serves the same objective (see e.g. Bawn 1993; Bundeswahlleiter 2014; Marschall 2001). Conversely, parliamentarians also rely on communication channels outside of parliament to communicate with voters. For example, they make use of press releases (see e.g. Grimmer 2010, 2013; Hopmann et al. 2010) and new social media (see e.g. Jackson and Lilleker 2011; Vergeer et al. 2013; Williamson and Fallon 2011).

In the dissertation at hand, I took a first step towards better understanding the communication between parliamentary actors and the public through parliamentary channels by mapping and explaining the institutional design of the instruments parliament provides for the purpose of communication. Specifically, I argued that parliamentary actors rely on the instruments of PPS to communicate with the electorate and let them know about their performance; it follows that parliamentary actors design these instruments in a way that allows them to maximize their votes. Even though the focus of the dissertation was not
exploring the communication between parliamentarians and their voters but rather mapping
and explaining the design and evolution of the instruments used for this end, its theoretical
framework and empirical findings nonetheless contribute to research about communication
between parliamentarians and the public in two regards.

First, the theoretical framework presented in this dissertation could be extended to include
the use of the instruments of PPS in greater detail. So far, the theoretical framework only
comprises a very stylized argument about the use of the instruments of PPS as its focus is on
the design of the instruments of PPS. However, the use of the instruments of PPS can easily
be incorporated into this framework. This extension would for example allow for theoretically
understanding under which conditions parliamentarians employ which instrument of PPS to
communicate with the public.

Second, the dissertation at hand provides the foundation for understanding how the use of
the instruments of PPS compares to the use of instruments outside of parliament. The
dissertation at hand has provided the – to my knowledge – first systematic comparative
overview of the design of the instruments parliaments provide for communicating with the
public. Based on this data and the extension of the theoretical framework sketched out in the
previous paragraph, it is possible to comparatively explain how parliamentarians employ the
instruments of PPS for maximizing their votes. The next step is then to map and explain how
the use of the instruments parliaments provide for communicating with the public compares to
the use of instruments outside of parliament, such as press releases and new social media.
Appendix 1: Coding Instructions

There are five instruments for communicating PPS
- Open instruments
  o Parliamentary debates
  o Presentation and discussion of committee reports
- Closed instruments
  o Oral questions
  o Written questions
  o Interpellations

These instruments are composed of the following six features
- Accessibility
- Organization
- Time frame
- Closure
- Documentation
- Publicity

The instruments of PPS have two dimensions
- Centralization of power within parliament
  o Centralized: +1
  o Decentralized: -1
  o Neutral: 0
  o No coding: no actor is concerned
- Majority-friendly/minority-friendly
  o Majority-friendly: +1
  o Minority-friendly: -1
  o Neutral: 0
  o No coding: no actor is concerned

Coding takes place on the basis of individual sub-paragraphs of the standing orders
A subparagraph is any syntactic unit under a legal paragraph (§) or article that is marked off by an own numbering, e.g. ‘a’ or ‘(1)’. Such subparagraphs can still consist of more than one sentence’ (Sieberer et al. 2011, 970).

The sub-paragraphs of the standing orders which concern the centralization – decentralization and/or majority – minority dimension are coded in three steps:
1. Identification of the instruments of PPS the sub-paragraph refers to (e.g. sub-paragraph refers to written questions)
2. Identification of the feature of the instrument of PPS the sub-paragraph refers to (e.g. sub-paragraph refers to the accessibility of written questions)
3. Identification of how the sub-paragraph impacts the conflict between parliamentary actors (e.g. sub-paragraph refers to the accessibility of written questions, is majority-friendly and gives many prerogatives to centralized actors)
Steps for coding the sub-paragraphs in detail

1) Identification of which instrument of PPS a sub-paragraph refers to
   - Plenary Debates
     o Allow parliamentary actors to express their views and publicly discuss both legislative and non-legislative content
     o Include explanation so of vote, short interjections, comments, and so on
   - Committee Reports
     o After discussion in committee, committees present their work to parliament; this report is then discussed in the plenary
     o Report to the plenary allows the committee to inform parliament of their recommendations and allows the members of the committee to voice their concerns
     o Only reports from the committee which are then presented in the plenary are coded, reports which are sent from committee to committee are not relevant
   - Oral Questions
     o A question asked by a parliamentarian, usually directed at a member of the government, either in written or oral form but has to be answered orally in parliament
     o If sub-paragraphs concern both oral and written questions, these sub-paragraphs are coded as concerning oral questions
     o If sub-paragraphs concern the content of parliamentary questions (e.g. what an actor is allowed to ask in a questions), this is coded as ‘accessibility’ and not ‘organization’ because it concerns the standards a question has to meet to become eligible for being posed, i.e. without meeting these criteria there is no access to the instrument
   - Written Questions
     o A question asked by a parliamentarian, usually directed at a member of the government, posed and answered in writing only
   - Interpellations
     o Concerns a substantially important topic of general interest
     o Aim is to force the government to provide information or to justify its position concerning this topic
     o May, but do not have to, result in a debate
2) Identification of the features of the respective instruments of PPS

- General remarks
  - Only the active actor is coded, e.g. when the parliament has the right to make a member of the government speak in a debate, this is coded as ‘parliamentary debate – organization’ and not as ‘parliamentary debate – accessibility’
  - Only national parliamentary actors are relevant, e.g. if members of the EP have the right to participate in parliamentary debates, this is not relevant and hence not coded

- Accessibility
  - Concerns how an actor can gain access to an instrument of PPS
  - Also concerns scheduling of interpellations, debates, oral questions
  - Note for committee reports
    - The right of the committees to decide the content of their reports or whether the report is made at all is coded as ‘accessibility’ and not as ‘organization’; ‘organization’ refers to how the report is debated in the plenary
    - The same is true when committees have the right to file an independent motion about which they then compose a report
  - Note for plenary debates and committee reports: if a parliamentary actor has the right to make an amendment which is then debated during a regular plenary debate or the presentation of a committee report, only those passages are relevant which explicitly refer to how this amendment allows parliamentarians to speak (example of relevant passage: when introducing an amendment, a parliamentarian is allowed to speak about it; example of irrelevant passage: every member is allowed to introduce an amendment which concerns the legislation in question)

- Organization
  - Concerns how an instrument of PPS is organized
  - If a sub-paragraph concerns organization and another feature, this sub-paragraph is coded as concerning the feature organization
  - Note on how to distinguish accessibility from organization: accessibility describes how actors gain access to an instrument of PPS, organization refers to how this instrument is employed once actors have gained access to it
    - Organization: order of speakers or questioners, number of times a parliamentarian may speak
    - Accessibility: ways for parliamentarians to become speakers in a debate

- Time frame
  - Concerns time restrictions for the entire instrument of PPS and the individual participants

- Closure
  - Concerns how an instrument of PPS is ended

- Documentation
  - Concerns how an instrument of PPS is documented, e.g. how a debate is documented in the parliamentary records

- Publicity
  - Concerns how and instrument of PPS can be made non-public
  - Sub-paragraphs referring to the broadcasting of debates are coded as publicity of debates
3) Coding of how the pairs of instruments and their respective features impact the conflict between parliamentary actors

General remark: if in doubt, code conservatively and assume neutrality

Centralization – decentralization dimension
- Centralized: instruments of PPS give prerogatives to actors with special offices, such as the President of Parliament or the leaders of parliamentary party groups
- Decentralized: instruments of PPS give rights to individual parliamentarians or groups of individual parliamentarians, e.g. 10 parliamentarians
- Centralization/decentralization neutral
  o Both a centralized and a decentralized actor have the right to do something
  o An actor with a special office (e.g. president of parliament) has certain prerogatives but these can be challenged by an individual parliamentarian
- Not applicable: no code (e.g. when the parliament decides something)

Majority – minority dimension
- Majority-friendly: the parliamentary majority or an actor elected by majority rule has the right to decide or to do something
  o President of Parliament is a special case: It is difficult to decide whether a president is really a majority-friendly actor based solely on how he is elected. For example, the Speaker of the British House of Commons is elected by majority but is clearly a neutral actor. Consequently, the President of Parliament is only coded as a majority actor if he/she acts as a party actor (if he scores higher than 6 on the ‘Index of Partisanship’) and if the president is from a governmental party more than 75% of the time. The source of the data is Müller/Jenny 1995. While this is an imprecise approach, it is also conservative because the President of Parliament is by default coded as a neutral actor.
  o If no decision rule is explicitly referenced (e.g. parliament decides that XY will be done), majority rule is assumed
- Minority-friendly: a parliamentary minority has the right to decide or to do something, e.g. an individual parliamentarian or 1/3 of all parliamentarians have the right to do something
- Majority/minority neutral
  o Both the majority and the minority have the right to do something
  o Special case: when a body is constituted proportionally to the seat share of parties in parliament but it make its decisions consensually, e.g. the Ältestenrat in Germany
- Majority-/minority not applicable: no code
  o Neither actor is concerned
  o Examples
    ▪ Each speaker is allowed to speak for a set number of minutes
    ▪ A parliamentary party group has exhausted its speaking time and thus its members will no longer be called upon to speak
Special Cases

- Neutral vs. non-neutral statements
  o If there are two neutral statements in a sub-paragraph and one non-neutral statement, the sub-paragraph is coded according to the latter (example: Regarding the content of a report, the President of Parliament (majority-minority neutral actor in this case) and a minister (majority actor) are heard → entire sub-paragraph coded as majority-friendly)
  o If there are two opposed non-neutral statements in a sub-paragraph, the sub-paragraph is coded as neutral (example: Regarding the content of a report, individual parliamentarians (decentralized actor) and the President of Parliament (centralized actor) are heard → entire sub-paragraph coded as centralization-neutral)
  o If two non-neutral actors are involved in an instrument of PPS, the active/decisive actor is crucial for coding (example: 10 parliamentarians (minority actor) can propose an interpellation but parliament (majority actor) has to decide about whether the interpellation really takes place → overall coding is pro majority)

- If a sub-paragraph references another sub-paragraph, the former is coded like the latter (example: sub-paragraph states that ‘The interpellation referred to in this rule shall be dealt with in accordance with Rule 138.’ and rule 138 is majority-friendly → sub-paragraph is coded as majority-friendly)

- A sub-paragraph is only coded as majority- or minority-friendly if the action actually advantages the majority or the minority (e.g. not applicable to the majority – minority dimension if parliament (majority actor) decides where the microphones used during plenary debates should stand)

- Answers to parliamentary questions
  o Minority-friendly: the government has to answer the question; if it does not answer it has to explain this in writing
  o Majority-friendly: the government does not have to answer the question; it does not have to explain in writing why it does not answer the question
Appendix 2: Articles of the Parliamentary Standing Orders Relevant for the Centralization and Decentralization and/or the Majority- and Minority-Friendliness of the Instruments of PPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Plenary debates</td>
<td>§19, §28b (2, 3, 5), §33 (2), §43 (3), §46 (6, 7), §47 (2-4), §51 (2, 5, 6), §52 (2), §53 (1, 6-8), §56, §57, §57a (1, 2), §58 (1, 3-5), §59 (2, 3), §60 (1, 3, 5-8), §63, §74 (3), §74b (3), §75 (3), §76 (2), §78 (2), §80 (2), §81, §97a (1, 2, 5, 6), §100c (4), §101, §102, §103, §104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation and Discussion of Committee Reports</td>
<td>§31d (5), §42 (4, 5), §54, Appendix ‘Verfahrensordnung für Parlamentarische Untersuchungsausschüsse’ §26 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Questions</td>
<td>§94, §95 (2-4), §96 (1, 3), §97 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written Questions</td>
<td>§89, §90, §91a, §92, §93 (1, 2), §97 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpellations</td>
<td>§57b (2-4), §74a (1-5), §93 (3-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Plenary debates</td>
<td>§18, §43 (1, 2, 4, 7), §44 (1-5, 7), §46, §47, §48 (1, 2, 5, 6), §49, §50, §53, §54, §55, §56, §62, §63 (1, 3-6), §64, §66, §72 (1, 4), §75 (5, 6), §93 (1), §98 (5), §116, §160, §160bis, §166 (2), §177, §178, §179</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation and Discussion of Committee Reports</td>
<td>§20, §27, §28 (3), §44 (6), §76, §78 (1, 4, 6, 7), §81, §103 (1, 3), §114, §143 (3, 4), §144</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oral Questions</td>
<td>§48 (4), §122, §124, §125, §126</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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Appendix 3: Description of Independent Variables

Centralization – Decentralization Dimension

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<td>0.302</td>
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<td>Number of Bills/Sitting Days</td>
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<td>6.632</td>
<td>27.100</td>
<td>7.592</td>
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<td>Parliament Size</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>298.905</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>203.851</td>
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<td>Personalization Electoral System</td>
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<td>2.50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.219</td>
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<td>Population Size</td>
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<td>27500000</td>
<td>82000000</td>
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<td>Size of Public Sector</td>
<td>42.170</td>
<td>4.412</td>
<td>58.420</td>
<td>51.193</td>
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Majority – Minority Dimension

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<td>Electoral Volatility of Government</td>
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<td>7.664</td>
<td>21.07</td>
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<td>Ideological Homogeneity of Government</td>
<td>-19.528</td>
<td>-5.084</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Ideological Homogeneity of Opposition</td>
<td>-68.131</td>
<td>-27.445</td>
<td>-4.825</td>
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<td>Majority Required to Change Standing Orders</td>
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<td>1.324</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Number of Bills/Sitting Days</td>
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<td>6.632</td>
<td>27.100</td>
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<td>Number of Extra-Parliamentary Veto Points</td>
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<td>Parliament Size</td>
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<td>Population Size</td>
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<td>27500000</td>
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<td>27000000</td>
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<td>Proximity of Seat Share of Government to Required Majority for Changing the Standing Orders</td>
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<td>Seat Share of Government</td>
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<td>67.333</td>
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<td>Size of Public Sector</td>
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## Appendix 4: Sources for the Electoral System of a Country

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<td>Denmark</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thedanishparliament.dk/Democracy/~media/Pdf_materiale/Pdf_publikationer/English/The%20Parliamentary%20Electoral%20System%20in%20Denmark_samlet%20pdf.pdf">http://www.thedanishparliament.dk/Democracy/~media/Pdf_materiale/Pdf_publikationer/English/The%20Parliamentary%20Electoral%20System%20in%20Denmark_samlet%20pdf.pdf</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/wahlen/index.html">http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/wahlen/index.html</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://eng.innanrikisraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/nr/6713">http://eng.innanrikisraduneyti.is/laws-and-regulations/nr/6713</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/elections-and-voting/general/">http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/elections-and-voting/general/</a></td>
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## Appendix 5: Sources for the Seat Shares of Parties in Parliament on 01.01.2010

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<td><a href="http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/plenum/sitzverteilung.html">http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/plenum/sitzverteilung.html</a></td>
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## Appendix 6: Scores of Centralization and Majority-Friendliness of each Country

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Literature


