

Parties as Disciplinarians: The Electoral Strategies of Centrist Parties*

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Abstract

We develop a theoretical framework to study how parties can use promotion of members to senior positions to develop a programmatic party brand. Our framework incorporates the well-known collective action problem arising from party members' inability to internalize the full benefits of cultivating a party brand, and combines it with a less-studied commitment problem faced by party leaders. To build a stable brand, a party must credibly commit to advancing the careers of faithful politicians ahead of their more charismatic—and electorally more attractive—but potentially less faithful colleagues. We demonstrate that ideological extremism and electoral volatility affect parties' ability to solve these strategic problems. Centrist parties are less likely to adopt programmatic platforms and more likely to promote charismatic candidates as electoral volatility increases. Extremist parties, by contrast, are not affected by electoral volatility. An empirical analysis of more than seventy countries supports our theoretical expectations.

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Introduction

Schattschneider (1942) famously wrote that “modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties” (page 1). Taken as a theoretical proposition, this claim remains unproven; there is no commonly shared explanation of the necessity of parties. Taken as an empirical proposition, however, its truth is indisputable: political parties exist in just about all democratic sovereign states in the world. Not only do democracy and parties co-occur, their fates seem to be closely linked. Weak and volatile party systems are frequent in nations struggling with democratic consolidation, and party system collapse is often accompanied by authoritarian regression.

In light of these patterns, most empirical and theoretical scholars of positive democratic theory see political parties as the fundamental mechanism linking citizens to government in representative democracies (see, e.g., Lawson, 1980; Dalton, Farrell and McAllister, 2011; Mainwaring and Scully, 1995; Roberts, 2012; Stokes, 1999; Aldrich, 2011). Parties structure electoral competition across multiple levels of office, recruiting candidates and providing them with valuable resources to mobilize the electorate. They offer voters information about candidates and policies. They aggregate and organize social interests, and facilitate the translation of citizens’ preferences into policy choices (Dalton, Farrell and McAllister, 2011; Roberts, 2012). Parties are also fundamental vehicles for electoral accountability (Aldrich, 2011; Klačnja and Titiunik, 2017).

These ideal roles, however, stand in contrast to the actual functioning of parties in many consolidating democracies, where parties have shallow roots in society, are often ideologically incoherent, and are frequently subordinated to the personalistic aspirations of individual leaders (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995). If stable political parties are fundamental for effective democratic representation, and consolidating democracies are plagued by erratic and weakly institutionalized party systems, it is imperative to understand the main determinants of parties’ ability to effectively institutionalize and develop stable patterns of programmatic competition. This is our goal here. We develop a general framework to study the factors that lead parties to develop a collective brand rather than to engage in more particularistic electoral strategies. Our underlying premises, shared by much of the literature and discussed further below, is that party-based political competition is normatively preferable to politics based on more particularistic exchanges, and that party-centric campaigns are a precondition for programmatic competition (Keefer

and Khemani, 2009; Keefer and Vlaicu, 2008).¹

Building on the seminal contribution of Cox and McCubbins (2007) on the workings of the U.S. Congress, we develop a formal model where a party's control over candidates' career paths may incentivize them to work toward collective goals that benefit the party as a whole, and contribute to the stability of the party system. The premise of Cox and McCubbins (2007) is that a candidate's chance of reelection depends not only on their personal characteristics, but also on their party's record, understood as the summary of beliefs, actions, and outcomes commonly associated with that party. Rooted in the theory of the firm, this account conceptualizes the party's record as a public good that benefits all candidates. The public nature of this good leads to the underprovision of legislation that brings collective benefits and strengthens the party, because individual candidates are unable to fully capture its rewards. Cox and McCubbins's key insight is that legislative parties have a powerful mechanism that can help alleviate this collective action problem: by making access to desirable leadership positions in the legislature (committee assignments, speakership, etc.) contingent on the provision of collective legislative goods, they can induce candidates to internalize the benefits—and costs—of the party's record and thus provide more collective effort.²

We take these two key arguments—(i) the party's record as a public good, and (ii) the control of candidates' career concerns as a mechanism to solve the public good problem—and extend them in both contextual and conceptual ways. First, we expand the focus beyond legislatures. In a legislative setting, the party's legislators must coordinate to pass laws and assign leadership positions, both of which are affected by the party's majority or minority status. For Cox and McCubbins (2007), it is this post-election legislative coordination, combined with the desirability of majority status, that the party uses to incentivize its candidates. We go beyond legislative contexts to include parties' candidates who do not meet in a common space and thus may face few common policy and leadership choices. That is, we focus more generally on parties' decisions to promote members to higher rungs in the party and public sector hierarchy, such as nominations for higher office. Thus, we conceptualize a party's control of candidates' career concerns through its broad ability to gatekeep access to more senior positions.

¹Particularistic politics is more prevalent in conditions of high inequality, low economic productivity, and persistent social hierarchies (e.g. Chubb, 1982; Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007; Robinson and Verdier, 2013); it often goes hand in hand with corruption (e.g. Stokes et al., 2013), and it tends to intensify distributive conflicts (Skowronek, 1982).

²The idea that externalities give rise to organizational hierarchies is attributable to Williamson (1981). Carty (2004) is an important application of this logic to political parties.

Our focus beyond legislative settings leads us naturally to explore a conceptually more general (i.e. less institution-specific) collective action problem faced by parties. We focus on parties' branding and campaign strategies, rather than legislative strategies per se. The collective action problem now arises because campaigns centered on a party's programmatic record—its past accomplishments and future policy plans—create externalities, as candidates do not enjoy the full benefits they generate through effort to further the programmatic party brand. By contrast, particularistic strategies—such as narrower and often non-programmatic focus on constituency service and the provision of club goods—generate fewer externalities, as candidates enjoy greater returns on their efforts. The collective action problem thus arises when politicians prefer particularistic to party-centered campaigning, potentially leading to the underprovision of the party brand 'public good.'

We also introduce an additional conceptual dimension to the problem of party-candidate interactions. Parties' effectiveness in solving the described collective action problem may depend on a related—and less-studied—commitment problem. If a party is to instill programmatic discipline via promises of future promotion, it must be able to credibly commit to advancing the careers of its candidates based primarily on their past efforts toward advancing or consolidating the party brand, rather than on their charisma or other personal characteristics that may contribute to their electoral success. Since more charismatic politicians are, all else equal, more likely to be elected (and potentially more likely to campaign on a particularistic strategy), this disciplining strategy usually entails some sacrifice for the party. Namely, the party must credibly promise to promote the sometimes dull but faithful politicians ahead of their more charismatic, and likely more electorally successful, colleagues.

This issue of credible commitment highlights the need to consider the time horizons of parties and politicians. Parties are usually longer-lived than individual members. We integrate this feature into our framework via an overlapping generations model, where parties have infinite time horizons, but politicians can only serve for a finite period of time. This mismatch in time horizons leads to one of the central insights of our theory: volatile party systems, where parties' futures are more uncertain and their time horizons thus shorter, hinder the party's ability to discipline legislators via credible commitment. In volatile contexts, parties have a greater incentive to cater to their short-term interest in promoting the most electable politicians possible, rather than their longer-term interest in cultivating the party-brand.

In addition to the implications of party-system volatility, we also examine how the candidate-party relationship is structured by a party's ideological extremism. When a party's candidates are sufficiently

motivated by ideology (or by negative partisanship toward competing parties), both the commitment problem and the public good problem are solved—no special career inducements by the party are necessary for candidates to exert party-centered efforts. Thus, ideologically more extremist parties, which are populated by such candidates, should be characterized by party-centered campaign strategies—in any context, volatile or not.

By contrast, the electoral strategies of ideologically more moderate parties vary by volatility. When electoral competition is stable—volatility is low—parties’ longer time horizons help mitigate the commitment problem by affording parties the room to incur some short-term losses from promoting candidates toeing the party line over their less loyal but more charismatic counterparts, in order to reap the longer-term benefits of a successfully-built party brand. On the other hand, high electoral volatility affords no such luxury, as shorter time horizons disincentivize centrist parties from credibly committing to party brand building.

We make an effort to evaluate these theoretical predictions empirically. First, we present two brief case studies: Austria’s 2017 elections (in the second section below), where increased volatility was coupled with a charisma-centered campaign by the center-right Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP); and Spain’s Socialist Workers’ Party (PSOE) during 1977-1982 (in the Supplementary Appendix), which moved from a charisma-based strategy to a more programmatic (and centrist) brand during a period of decreasing electoral volatility. Both cases are consistent with the broad patterns arising in our model.

Second, we conduct a cross-country study of 75 democracies. As predicted by our theoretical framework, we find that moderate parties are more likely to rely on charisma-based strategies when volatility is high, and on programmatic strategies when volatility is low. In contrast, the level of party-system volatility is not associated with the electoral strategies of extremist parties. These correlations are robust to a number of alternative operationalizations of key concepts and alternative model specifications.

Model

We consider the interaction between a party P and N politicians. This interaction takes place over an infinite number of discrete periods $t \in \{1, 2, \dots, \infty\}$. N_L politicians are born in each period t , during which they all compete in N_L distinct campaigns. There exist N_H senior-level posts to which the party might nominate politicians in period $t + 1$, where $N_H < N_L$ and $N_H + N_L = N$. P is infinitely-lived.

Each politician i survives for, at most, two periods. All actors have a common discount factor $\delta \in (0, 1)$. This overlapping generations structure borrows from a similar approach to modeling party dynamics by Alesina and Spear (1988).

Politicians vary in their level of charismatic electoral appeal—their valence—personal characteristics of each politician which are known to all actors. Denote a politician i 's valence as $\nu_i \in \{0, \bar{\nu}\}$ where $\bar{\nu} > 0$. In each period, a fraction ω of newly-born politicians has a valence of $\nu_i = \bar{\nu}$ and a fraction $1 - \omega$ has a valence of zero, where $\omega N_L < N_H$.³

In each period during which a politician is nominated to compete in a campaign, she must choose whether to exert effort at advancing the party's platform $e_{i,t} \in \{0, 1\}$. Should she not exert effort by campaigning for a party platform, she instead devotes effort $1 - e_{i,t}$ toward cultivating a particularistic vote, which we understand as a campaign strategy that instead of emphasizing the party's record or policies, emphasizes the candidate's ability to deliver services of particular value to her constituents.

Remark 1 (Particularism vs. Personalism). We conceptualize particularism as a campaigning style emphasizing the individual ability of a candidate to deliver for her constituents. Often, this style emphasizes constituency service and the provision of club goods (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1984). An extreme form of particularism occurs in purely clientelistic exchanges, where the particular benefits are distributed only to those who offer electoral support. Personalism refers to candidate valence, which relates to characteristics—most notably charisma—that voters may find desirable. In principle, charismatic candidates may use their high valence to further either a particularistic vote or a party program (but, see Remark 4). Our notion of particularism is broadly analogous to the concept of personal vote in the American politics literature (e.g. Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart, 2000). However, we avoid using the word “personal” to describe particularistic exchanges, because we reserve the term “personalistic” to describe campaign strategies that emphasize candidates' charisma and other valence qualities, seeking to attract votes based on “citizens likes and dislikes of grand gestures and personal styles” (Kitschelt, 2000, p. 845). As ar-

³In the appendix, we demonstrate that the comparative statics of the model are qualitatively unchanged if $\omega N_L \geq N_H$, this assumption only governs whether high or low-valence candidates compete for posts in an uncommitted equilibrium (as defined in Proposition 2, below).

gued by Kitschelt (2000), particularistic/clientelistic linkages need not be personalistic, as some particularistic exchanges are highly impersonal and institutionalized.

In each period, each candidate i wins her election with a probability $\gamma x_{i,t} \in [0, 1]$ where $x_{i,t} \equiv \frac{\lambda \sum_i e_{i,t}}{N} + 1 - e_{i,t} + \nu_i$. λ denotes the productivity of collective party-based appeals and $\gamma \in (0, 1)$ is simply a scaling factor to ensure that the winning probability lies in the unit interval. We assume that each candidate's probability of electoral success reflects the effort of *all* candidates ($\frac{\lambda \sum_i e_{i,t}}{N}$), such that there are externalities generated in running under a common party platform. By contrast, adopting a particularistic electoral strategy vote generates benefits for a given candidate, but not for any other member of the party.⁴

We assume that $\lambda \in (1, N)$. $\lambda < N$ ensures that candidates maximize their individual chance of electoral victory by pursuing a particularistic campaign strategy. $\lambda > 1$ ensures that each candidate would stand a greater chance of electoral triumph if *all* candidates in the party adopted a party-centered strategy. This well-understood conflict between the individually rational incentives of politicians and their collective self-interest, which is at the center of Cox and McCubbins's (2007) framework, is also the key trade-off in our model and motivates all that follows. Were λ to fall outside of this range of values, the collective and individual interests of the candidates would be perfectly aligned, and there would be no need for party discipline.

Remark 2 (Underlying Voter Preferences). While we do not explicitly model voter choices for reasons of tractability, the preferences of candidates over $e_{i,t}$ can be seen as induced by these choices. Voter preferences, for instance, may be given by a weighted combination of policy concerns and the delivery of club goods or transfers (as in probabilistic voting models, see Dixit and Londregan, 1995; Lindbeck and Weibull, 1987). Policy concerns are satisfied by party-based effort, whereas club goods or transfers are secured by particularistic strategies (as defined in Remark 1). Candidates have finite resources of time and political capital, and so cannot fully satisfy both sets of voter demands. We simplify by assuming a dichotomy: politicians exert either party-based or particularistic effort. More-

⁴This assumption may somewhat overstate the individualized nature of a particularistic strategy—particularistic appeals by one politician may benefit down-ballot candidates in her constituency or other politicians on the party list. However, such strategies are unlikely to yield as wide electoral benefits as party-based platforms.

over, the policy returns voters enjoy are a function of the efforts of a political party as a whole, not just of individual legislators. Voters in a given constituency would prefer that all other legislators in their preferred party exert party-centered effort, advancing their preferred policies, even as their representative focuses her activities on constituency service. The collective action problem described above then arises. (This posits that the weight on policy preferences exceeds that for club goods, which is necessary for $\lambda > 1$.)

In each period, the party chooses which lower-level politicians to nominate to run for senior office. Let $p_i \in [0, 1]$ denote the probability with which a given lower-level politician i is promoted. Politicians who are not promoted cannot run for office in time $t + 1$.

Politicians are assumed to be, in part, office-seeking. They derive a utility normalized to 1 from winning a lower-level office and of zero if they lose. They receive a utility of $b > 1$ from winning a senior-level office. However, they are also assumed to care about the fate of their co-partisans. They receive a utility of $\alpha > 0$ for each co-partisan elected to office (or, equivalently, a disutility of $-\alpha$ from seeing these posts won by an opposing party). Candidates receive this ‘partisan’ payoff regardless of whether they win their election or are nominated for a senior post.

We interpret α as a measure of the extent to which a given political party is ideologically extreme. To implement their preferred ideological agenda, candidates require party, rather than individual, electoral success. The election of rival parties, contrastingly, may block their ideological agenda or may lead to the imposition of policies they find anathema.⁵

Remark 3 (Operationalization of Partisan Payoff). The claim that α rises with party ideological extremism (relative to the mean of all other parties) follows from a unidimensional spatial framework. Given strictly quasi-concave preferences over a unidimensional ideological space, politicians whose ideal points are toward the poles of the political spectrum suffer a greater cost from the electoral success of opponents than those who are located in the middle of the spectrum. This is because parties on the poles are more ideologically distant, on average, from their opponents than those that are relatively centrist. Empirically,

⁵For simplicity, we define candidate utilities as a linear function of the number of seats secured by co-partisans. Results would be substantively unchanged by alternatives, so long as candidate utilities rise monotonically in the success of their fellow party members.

we thus conceptualize of α as an ideological distance from other parties' ideal points (their spatial position) in a given polity. This interpretation of α is in line with staple measures of candidate and party spatial ideal points based on legislative roll-call voting (e.g. Hix, Noury and Roland, 2006; Poole and Rosenthal, 2000). We note, however, that the central results of our model, which link high volatility to an increase in personalistic strategies, would continue to hold even if this partisan payoff term were set to zero and candidates cared only about their own reelection.

Each politician's expected utility in period t may thus be denoted:

$$EU_i(e_{i,t}, e_{i,t+1}; p_i) = \gamma[x_{i,t} + p_i \delta b x_{i,t+1}] + \alpha \gamma \left[\sum_{j \neq i} x_{j,t} + \delta \sum_{j \neq i} x_{j,t+1} \right]$$

$$\text{where } x_{i,t} = \frac{\lambda \sum_i e_{i,t}}{N} + 1 - e_{i,t} + \nu_i. \quad (1)$$

The party is assumed to be strictly office-seeking. It receives a payoff of 1 from each lower-level seat captured by one of its members, and a payoff of $B > 1$ from each senior-level seat.

The order of play is as follows:

1. All politicians make their effort decision $e_{i,t} \in \{0, 1\}$. ($e_{i,t}$ is fixed and equal to zero for all politicians who are not running for office in a given period of play.)
2. Election outcomes are determined according to the probabilities described above.
3. All politicians in their second period of life 'die.' P selects politicians entering their second period of life to run for senior office. N_L lower-level politicians are born.
4. Currently living politicians make their effort decision.
5. The game repeats.

Party-Centered vs. Programmatic Effort

Before characterizing the equilibria in our model, we discuss the interpretation of $e_{i,t}$, the politician's party-centered effort. We have generically defined it as the effort devoted to structuring a politician's campaign around her party's platform or brand, rather than around particularistic issues (e.g. constituency service).

Formally, campaign efforts that emphasize the party line may or may not involve an emphasis on programmatic issues. One can imagine a party acquiring a positive reputation as an effective deliverer, unrelated to policy programs. Thus, strictly considered, our framework offers a model of how parties can induce candidates, via promotion to higher office, to rely less on particularistic strategies (a private good) and more on party strategies (a public good), without necessarily distinguishing between party strategies centered around policy (programmaticness) and those centered around non-policy issues. The same conceptual ambiguity occurs in Cox and McCubbins's notion of the party's record.

Acknowledging this, we nonetheless favor an interpretation of party-centered effort as programmatic effort. Programmatic linkages occur when politicians seek policy programs that extend benefits and costs to all citizens, regardless of the latter's electoral or political support (Kitschelt, 2000). The implications are two-fold. First, if programmatic strategies are centered on widely-distributed policy programs, a party-centered strategy is a necessary condition for programmaticness. That is, in order to articulate a universal policy program, candidates will have to emphasize the party's policy positions, and the party's ability to implement such policies. Second, in contrast to programmatic strategies thus defined, particularistic goods are bound to create smaller (if any) party-wide externalities, consistent with our characterization of candidates' particularistic efforts ($1 - e_{i,t}$) in the model.

For these reasons, in the sections that follow we interpret party-centered effort as programmatic effort. However, we note that our theoretical results are immune to this interpretation; readers who remain unconvinced may substitute "party-centered effort" every time they see "programmatic effort."⁶ Some of our empirical results—those based on a programmaticness measure—do depend crucially on this interpretation. However, one of our central empirical results—the relationship between charismatic strategies and volatility—does not require interpreting $e_{i,t}$ as necessarily programmatic.

Equilibria

We consider symmetric pure-strategy subgame perfect equilibria, which consist of a profile of strategies for all i and for P such that each actor is adopting a best response to all other actors in all subgames of the interaction. A strategy for each politician i is a mapping from her type ν_i and her promotion probability

⁶This interpretation limits our model to polities where some programmatic competition exists, which we believe includes most democracies. It does not apply to authoritarian or semi-authoritarian polities, some of which may have well-disciplined but non-programmatic parties (e.g. PRI in pre-democratized Mexico).

p_i into her level of effort $e_i : \{0, \bar{\nu}\} \times [0, 1] \rightarrow \{0, 1\}$. A strategy for P will consist of a vector of promotion probabilities for each junior politician p_i , which is a mapping from that politician's effort level e_i and type ν_i , $p_i : \{0, \bar{\nu}\} \times \{0, 1\} \rightarrow [0, 1]$.

Different configurations of parameter values will give rise to distinct subgame perfect equilibria. Specifically, we will focus on three subgame perfect equilibria, which we term the *Extremist* equilibrium, the *Committed* equilibrium and the *Uncommitted* equilibrium. Which equilibrium holds will be dictated by thresholds in two parameters: in α , the extent to which a given party is ideologically extreme; and in δ , the discount factor. As discussed in more detail below, we interpret δ as a measure of the extent of party-system volatility.

We begin by characterizing a relevant threshold in $\alpha \equiv \bar{\alpha}$, the degree to which the party is ideologically extreme.

Definition 1. Define $\bar{\alpha} \equiv \frac{N-\lambda}{\lambda N-\lambda}$.

Proposition 1. (Extremist Equilibrium) If $\alpha \geq \bar{\alpha}$, then there exists a unique subgame perfect equilibrium in which $e_{i,1} = 1$ for all i and $p_i(e_i, \nu_i) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \nu_i = \bar{\nu} \\ \frac{N_H - \omega N_L}{(1-\omega)N_L} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$. $e_{i,2} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } \alpha > b\bar{\alpha} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$ for all i .

If $\alpha \geq \bar{\alpha}$, then the marginal return to programmatic effort for junior politicians exceeds the marginal return of pursuing a particularistic vote. That is, when the ideological stakes for politicians are sufficiently high, the public goods problem that otherwise may characterize programmatic (party-based) politics disappears.

Given this strategy by politicians, the party always serves its self-interest by nominating high-valence (charismatic) candidates for senior posts, maximizing its chance of winning these elections. Once the pool of high-valence candidates is exhausted, the party randomly allocates the remaining posts among low-valence politicians.

We refer to this equilibrium as the 'Extremist Equilibrium,' since in our interpretation a party characterized by a high α is ideologically distant from its competitors. Such parties are anticipated to: (1) run programmatic campaigns, and (2) promote candidates for higher office primarily based on charisma. From the perspective of the party, this implies it is enjoying the best of both worlds: improvements to the party brand generated by programmatic campaigning, even as it is able to select its most charismatic

campaigners for prominent contests.

Things become more complicated for more moderate parties, for whom $\alpha < \bar{\alpha}$. Here, the public goods problem in programmatic politics is ever-present. Nonetheless, the party may be able to induce junior candidates to exert programmatic effort by manipulating their career concerns. However, to do so, it must overcome its own incentive to simply always nominate high-valence types for senior posts.

In a single-shot interaction, P would always prefer to nominate high-valence types; they stand a greater chance of winning the senior contest, and given that all politicians die after two periods, candidates of all types adopt the same strategy of setting $e_{i,t+1} = 0$ in their second period of life whenever $\alpha < b\bar{\alpha}$.

P is only able to commit to a disciplined promotion strategy by virtue of its desire to maintain its reputation for discipline *among its politicians*. Put differently, the party will only adopt a committed strategy for promotion due to folk theorem results, and this Committed Equilibrium will co-exist with an Uncommitted Equilibrium in which the party always promotes high-valence types. The latter will exist for all parameter values, whereas the former survives only for a restricted portion of the parameter space.

Before we can characterize either equilibrium, however, some preliminary definitions are in order:

Definition 2. Define two thresholds in p , denoted p_L and p_H as follows:

$$p_L = \frac{N - \lambda - \alpha(N - 1)\lambda}{\delta b(N_L \lambda + N)}$$

$$p_H = \frac{N - \lambda - \alpha(N - 1)\lambda}{\delta b[N_L \lambda + N(1 + \bar{\nu})]}$$

Notice that $\alpha < \bar{\alpha} \Rightarrow p_L, p_H > 0$ and $p_L, p_H < 1$ by definition. When $\alpha < \bar{\alpha}$, these thresholds define the incentive compatibility constraints for low- and high-valence junior politicians, respectively. They are the minimal probability with which junior politicians must be promoted to induce these politicians to run party-based programmatic campaigns, given that resorting to particularism leads to a certainty of non-promotion.

We can now characterize the Uncommitted Equilibrium, in which the party promotes high-valence types with certainty:

Proposition 2. (Uncommitted Equilibrium) If $\alpha < \bar{\alpha}$, there exists a symmetric subgame perfect Nash equilibrium in which $p(\cdot, \bar{\nu}) = 1$ and $e_{i,t} = 0$ for all $v_i = \bar{\nu}$. If $\frac{N - \lambda - \alpha\lambda(N - 1)}{\delta b[N + (1 - \omega)N_L \lambda]} \leq \frac{N_H - \omega N_L}{(1 - \omega)N_L}$, then there

exists an uncommitted equilibrium in which $p(e_i, 0) = \begin{cases} \frac{N_H - \omega N_L}{(1-\omega)N_L} & \text{if } e_i = 1 \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$ and $e_{i,t} = 1$ for $\nu_i = 0$. For all values, there exists an uncommitted equilibrium in which $p(\cdot, 0) = \frac{N_H - \omega N_L}{(1-\omega)N_L}$ and $e_{i,t} = 0$ for $\nu_i = 0$. $e_{i,t+1} = 0$ for all i .

In this equilibrium, the party always promotes high-valence types, regardless of their decision to exert programmatic effort. Given this strategy by the party, all high-types set $e_{i,t} = 0$. So long as there are enough senior posts to go around, setting aside those assigned to high-valence candidates, the party may be able to induce programmatic effort by low-types. That is, the party may commit to nominating for any senior posts not offered to high-valence types only those low-valence candidates who exert programmatic effort.⁷ However, if there are relatively few senior posts or a large number of high-valence candidates to promote, the (slim) possibility of attaining one of the remaining higher seats is insufficient to induce even the low-valence candidates to exert effort at promoting the party brand.

In contrast to the Uncommitted Equilibrium, in the 'Committed Equilibrium' the party conditions the candidates' promotion probabilities on programmatic effort decisions for *both low- and high-valence candidates*. In other words, the party commits to overlook a politician's valence and rather focus on her party-advancing actions in deciding whom to nominate for future elections.

This commitment can only be sustained by a threat—should the party fail to promote in this manner, in all future elections candidates will regard it as non-credible, and the game will revert back to the Uncommitted Equilibrium, in which the party is strictly worse off.⁸ Since the threat of lost credibility only affects the party in the future, the Committed equilibrium is only sustainable for a subset of values of the discount factor δ , as characterized below. We can ensure that δ is interior to the unit interval so long as the benefits of charisma $\bar{\nu}$ are not too high—i.e., $\bar{\nu}$ falls below some threshold $\hat{\nu}$. Recall that the short-term benefits the party enjoys from deviating from the Committed Equilibrium arise because it is able to advance its most charismatic candidates for high office. Hence, the party is better able to commit when the advantages of charisma are not too high.

Definition 3. Define $\hat{\nu} \equiv \frac{\omega[(N_L + BN_H)\frac{N_L\lambda}{N} - N_L]}{BN_L(\omega + p_L - \omega p_L) - BN_H}$.

⁷This equilibrium coexists with one in which all low-valence candidates refuse to exert party-centric effort, and the party is forced to randomly choose among them to fill senior posts.

⁸This is a rough analog to a Grimm trigger strategy. Since the punishment phase following a defection by P is infinite, this strategy enables commitment for the largest possible range of parameter values. Alternative punishment strategies are also feasible as subgame perfect equilibria, with a higher threshold $\hat{\delta}$, as characterized below.

So long as P 's temptation to defect, and promote high-valence types regardless of their electoral strategies, is not too high—i.e., so long as $\bar{\nu} < \hat{\nu}$ —there exist configurations of parameter values that sustain a Committed Equilibrium. Specifically, for $\bar{\nu} < \hat{\nu}$, there always exists a threshold in δ above which a Committed Equilibrium might be sustained.

Lemma 1. *For values of $\bar{\nu} \in (0, \hat{\nu})$, there exists a corresponding threshold in $\delta \equiv \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$ such that commitment is possible for all values of $\delta \geq \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$ and impossible for all values $\delta < \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$.*

Proposition 3. (Committed Equilibrium) *If $\alpha < \bar{\alpha}$ and $\delta \geq \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$ there exists a symmetric subgame perfect Nash equilibrium such that*

$$p(e_i, \nu_i) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } e_{i,t} = 0 \\ \min\left\{\frac{N_H - p_L(1-\omega)N_L}{\omega N_L}, 1\right\} & \text{if } e_{i,t} = 1, \nu_i = \bar{\nu} \\ \max\left\{\frac{N_H - \omega N_L}{(1-\omega)N_L}, p_L\right\} & \text{if } e_{i,t} = 1, \nu_i = 0 \end{cases}$$

so long as $p(1, \bar{\nu}) \geq p_H$.

On the equilibrium path $e_{i,t} = 1$ and $e_{i,t+1} = 0$ for all i . Actors adopt trigger strategies such that, should P ever deviate from the above, all actors revert to the strategies described in Proposition 2 for the remainder of the game.

In the Committed Equilibrium, P promotes low-valence junior politicians with the minimal probability that satisfies their incentive compatibility constraint and that ensures there are candidates for all senior posts. It promotes high-valence types with the highest possible probability consistent with also satisfying the constraint for low types. So, if the participation constraint for low types is such that $p_L \leq \frac{N_H - \omega N_L}{(1-\omega)N_L}$, P is free to promote high-types with probability 1 if they exert effort, and probability zero otherwise. It can then randomly allot the remaining senior constituencies among those low-types that set $e_i = 1$ in time t . Contrastingly, if $p_L > \frac{N_H - \omega N_L}{(1-\omega)N_L}$, in order to satisfy the incentive compatibility constraint of low-type politicians, the party must pass over some high-types for promotion. Commitment thus entails a willingness by the party to emphasize programmatic effort over valence in the selection of candidates for senior office.

Trivially, the Committed Equilibrium dominates the uncommitted on welfare grounds—both for the party and for individual candidates. We therefore assume that, where the Committed Equilibrium co-exists with the Uncommitted, the Committed Equilibrium is selected.

Figure 1 summarizes the range of values (in $\alpha - \delta$ space) for which the equilibria characterized above exist. For values of $\alpha \geq \bar{\alpha}$, the Extremist Equilibrium prevails, regardless of the value of δ . Here candidates adopt programmatic, party-based electoral strategies regardless of the party's strategy over promotion, and the party offers guaranteed advancement to high-valence types. For low values of both α and δ , $\alpha < \bar{\alpha}$, $\delta < \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$, the Uncommitted Equilibrium uniquely exists. Here all candidates adopt particularistic electoral strategies while the party again offers guaranteed advancement for high-valence types. For $\alpha < \bar{\alpha}$, but $\delta > \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$, the Committed Equilibrium exists. Here, candidates seeking senior offices conduct programmatic campaigns, as the party conditions promotion strategies on the past efforts at advancing the party's brand/program.

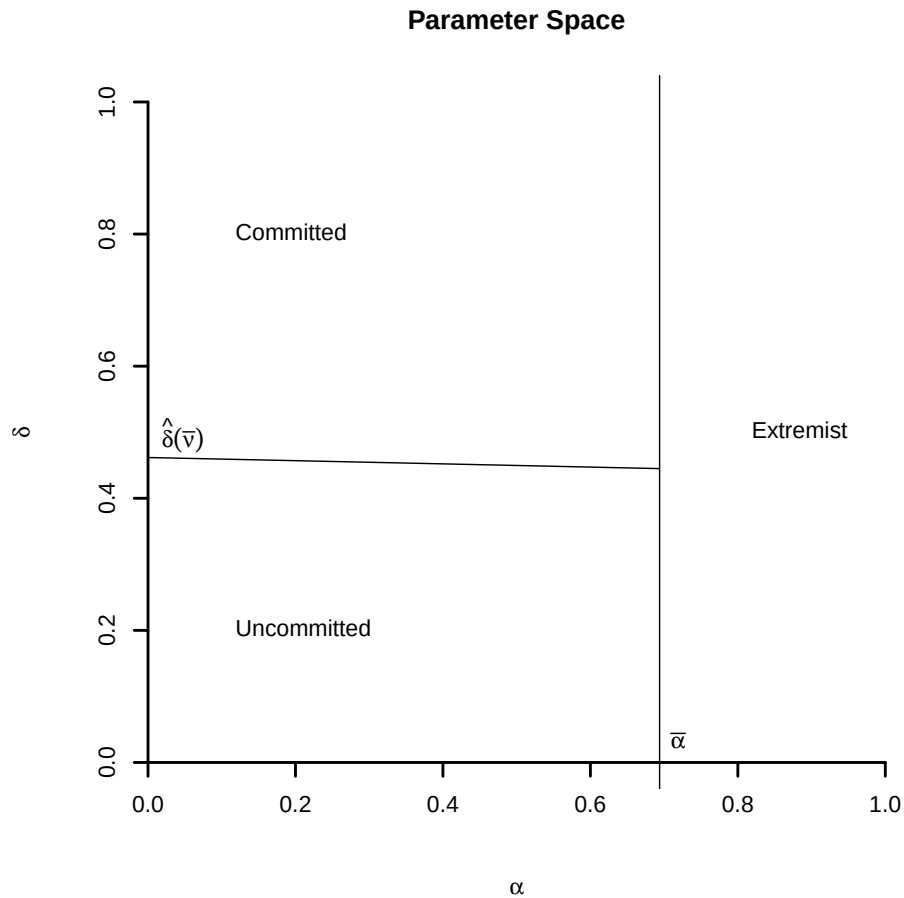


Figure 1: Equilibria Existence in $\alpha - \delta$ Space

Comparative Statics

If we treat the discount factor δ as a function of party system volatility, and hence a feature of a given polity rather than a given party, Figure 1 suggests two possible dimensions of comparison across political parties. One could compare across ideologically centrist and extreme parties within a given polity. Alternatively, one can compare centrist parties across different polities.

Proposition 4. *If $\alpha < \bar{\alpha}$, the total amount of programmatic effort exerted by a given party $\sum_i e_{i,t}$ is rising in δ (falling in party system volatility). If $\alpha > \bar{\alpha}$, the extent of programmatic effort is invariant in δ .*

In taking our theory to the data from a cross-section of parties across multiple political systems, we interpret Proposition 4 as follows: the extent to which a party adopts programmatic tactics is a function of its ideological extremism, of the volatility of the party system, and of their interaction. Extremist parties will tend to adopt programmatic campaigns regardless of party system volatility. Centrist parties, however, vary in their electoral strategy. In highly volatile party systems, centrist parties tend to adopt more particularistic politics and campaigns. As party systems grow more stable, however, centrist parties grow more programmatic and less particularistic. Their electoral campaigns will begin to more closely resemble those of extremist parties.

Proposition 5. *If $\alpha < \bar{\alpha}$, the probability with which a low-valence candidate is advanced to contest a senior election is (weakly) higher, and the probability with which a high-valence candidate is similarly advanced is (weakly) lower, when $\delta > \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$ than when $\delta \leq \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$. If $\alpha \geq \bar{\alpha}$, the probability with which low- and high-valence types are promoted to run for senior office is invariant in δ .*

The logic underpinning Proposition 5 is evident in Figure 1. Extremist parties, for which $\alpha > \bar{\alpha}$ find themselves in the same equilibrium regardless of the level of party system volatility. The ideological attachments of their candidates drive them to internalize the externalities of programmatic, party-centered campaigning, regardless of the promotion strategy adopted by the party. Consequently, the party always promotes the maximum number of charismatic candidates, and a minimal number of their lower-valence counterparts, to contest senior elections. Here candidate charisma is turned toward programmatic ends.

By contrast, centrist parties may find themselves in one of two equilibria, depending on $\delta \gtrless \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$. If party system volatility is high ($\delta \leq \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$), centrist parties will be driven into the Uncommitted Equilibrium. In this case, like extremist parties, they maximize the probability that candidates for senior office are

highly charismatic. Contrastingly, if party system volatility is low ($\delta > \hat{\delta}(\bar{\nu})$), centrist parties will find themselves in a Committed Equilibrium. Low-valence candidates may contest elections for senior office—and may even be promoted above high-valence candidates—so long as they have a history of toeing the party line.

Remark 4 (Personalism vs. Particularism Under High Volatility for Centrist Parties). Although campaigns built around particularistic—as opposed to party-based or programmatic—issues are conceptually separate from personalism and charismatic linkages (see Remark 1), the combination of Propositions 4 and 5 suggests that, for centrist parties, volatility will be associated with campaigns that are both particularistic and centered around personal charisma/valence of candidates. We therefore expect candidates to emphasize not only the particularistic/club good aspect of their platform, but also their valuable personal qualities—which presumably will make the delivery of particularistic policies more credible and appealing.

Rising Volatility and Personalism: The Case of Austria

We now present a brief case study to illustrate the mechanics of our model, examining the responses of a centrist political party to changes in electoral volatility. We focus on the center-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) in Austria's 2017 elections. Consistent with our theoretical predictions, we observe that the increasing volatility in Austria's parliamentary elections—largely due to the increasing importance of extremist political parties—led the ÖVP to run a personalistic campaign on the coattails of its young party leader, Sebastian Kurz. In the Supplementary Appendix, we present an alternative case study—of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) in late-1970s and early-1980s—which involves a reduction in volatility and ideological movement to the center (i.e. a movement from the Extremist to Committed Equilibrium, rather than from the Committed to Uncommitted Equilibrium as in Austria). Our cases are intended for illustrative purposes only, to elucidate the outcomes we anticipate to change as a result of our comparative statics in Propositions 4 and 5; we do not argue that the mechanics of our model were the only factors driving the outcomes we describe.

Over the last two decades, Austria has witnessed rising electoral volatility from traditionally exceptionally low levels. This trend was particularly marked in terms of what Powell and Tucker (2014) term ‘Type A’ volatility, arising from the entry and exit of new parties.⁹ Driving this trend was the fracturing of the center. Historically, political competition centered on two centrist political parties (the center-left SPÖ and center-right ÖVP) that often ruled jointly in coalition. However, voters increasingly gravitated toward new and ideologically extreme parties, such that the 2016 run-off presidential election was contested by candidates of the far-right FPÖ and the leftist Greens.¹⁰

Based on our model, this increase in electoral volatility corresponds to a downward shift in the value of δ , which could push centrist parties from the Committed to Uncommitted Equilibrium. Promotions within the party ranks should focus less on programmatic, party-based effort and more on charisma (Proposition 5), which in turn could lead candidates to run increasingly particularistic (and personalistic) campaigns for office (Proposition 4).

In Austria’s 2017 parliamentary election, the ÖVP did exhibit just such a shift, notably through the behavior of its 31 year-old leader, Sebastian Kurz. Kurz’s rise to power was meteoric; he was promoted from the ÖVP youth league to become Austria’s youngest ever foreign minister at age 27, and from there to the position of ÖVP leader.¹¹ With the rise of this charismatic new leader, the ÖVP immediately began to shift its campaign style toward an emphasis on charisma and personal appeals. An early advertisement featured Kurz and other young ÖVP members, in short sleeves and jeans, seated on a black Hummer in front of a night club, with the caption “Black [the then-color of the ÖVP] is hot.”¹² By the time of the 2017 campaign, Kurz would change the party color from black to turquoise. Party merchandise was branded with his name. And the ÖVP name (the People’s Party) was replaced on the ballot by the Sebastian Kurz New People’s Party.¹³ This shift in campaign styles is consistent with our Proposition 4.¹⁴

⁹According to Powell and Tucker (2014), overall volatility increased from about 4 in 1994-1995 to around 20 by 2006 (on a 0-100 scale). ‘Type A’ volatility increased from zero over six in that period.

¹⁰“Vexed in Vienna,” *The Economist*, May 21, 2016. <https://www.economist.com/news/europe/21699145-one-europes-most-steadfastly-dull-countries-has-suddenly-turned-interesting-vexed-vienna>, last accessed April 16, 2018.

¹¹Eddy, Melissa. “For Sebastian Kurz, Austria’s 31-Year Old New Leader, a Swift Rise.” *New York Times*, October 16, 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/world/europe/sebastian-kurz-austria.html, last accessed April 16, 2018.

¹²Friedman, Vanessa. “How to Dress to Win an Election: The Sebastian Kurz Primer.” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/10/19/style/sebastian-kurz-austria-branding-style.html, last accessed April 16, 2018.

¹³Oltermann, Philip. “Sebastian Kurz’s Audacious Gamble to Lead Austria Pays Off.” *The Guardian*, October 15, 2017. www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/15/sebastian-kurz-could-31-year-olds-audacious-bid-to-lead-austria-pay-off, last accessed April 16, 2018.

¹⁴Kurz also shifted the party to the right on one programmatic issue—immigration.

Importantly for our story, the ÖVP also changed the method for formulating its party-list as part of the campaign. It granted Kurz the right to name 100 ‘experts’ to the federal party-list. None of these candidates had previously stood for the ÖVP at the federal level. Moreover, the list skewed notably young (with an average age of 46), and included such figures as a prominent radio presenter, an opera-ball organizer, and former international pole vaulter.¹⁵ The promotion of charismatic outsiders to such prominent party positions is consistent with our Proposition 5.

Empirical Analysis

We now test some empirical implications of Propositions 4 and 5. Both propositions contend that extremist parties adopt similar electoral and promotion strategies across polities with varying levels of volatility. Centrist parties, by contrast, are more likely to adopt programmatic (party-centered) platforms and less likely to promote politicians according to their valence as the party system grows more stable.

Outcomes: Personalistic and Programmatic Campaign Strategies

Our theoretical claims pertain to parties’ campaign strategies, and to measure them, we turn to a comprehensive source of data on party behavior: the Democratic Accountability and Linkages Project (DALP, Kitschelt, 2013). This expert survey, conducted in 2009, contains a wealth of data on campaign platforms, policy positions, and organization of parties in 88 countries with multi-party elections. We use three survey items in the dataset to construct outcome variables reflecting parties’ electoral strategies. All three variables are coded on a 4-point scale, from 1, denoting that a party does “not at all” rely on a particular electoral strategy, to 4, denoting that a party “very strongly” relies on that strategy. The outcomes are:

- **Personalism:** based on the survey question: “*To what extent do parties seek to mobilize electoral support by featuring a party leader’s charismatic personality?*” (Variable e1).
- **Programmaticness:** based on the average of two survey questions: “*Please indicate the extent to which parties seek to mobilize electoral support by emphasizing the attractiveness of the party’s positions on policy issues,*” and “*Please indicate the extent to which parties draw on and appeal to*

¹⁵“100 ‘Experten auf der Bundesliste von Sebastian Kurz.” *Die Presse*, August 28, 2017. <https://diepresse.com/home/innenpolitik/nationalratswahl/5275456/100-Experten-auf-der-Bundesliste-von-Sebastian-Kurz>, last accessed April 16, 2018.

voters' long-term partisan loyalty (party identification). Parties may invoke their historical origins or the achievements of historical leaders. They may feature party symbols and rituals to reinvigorate party identification." (Variables *e2* and *e4*).¹⁶

Our two outcomes of interest, Personalism and Programmaticness, relate differently to the degree of party extremism and party system stability. Proposition 4 indicates that Programmaticness—an emphasis on party's policies—should decline with the degree of electoral volatility for centrist parties, and should be invariant and high for ideologically extreme parties. Proposition 5 implies that as volatility increases centrist parties will promote candidates increasingly based on charisma rather than on party-centered efforts. As explained in Remark 4, this will likely translate into a non-programmatic campaign strategy that emphasizes the candidate's high charisma. Thus, we expect the Personalism measure to rise with the degree of electoral volatility for centrist parties, and to be invariant in volatility and low for extremist parties.

We note that the Personalism measure is an imperfect reflection of our theoretical claims. First, the survey question in DALP refers to the party leader, rather than that the party's candidates more generally, and in particular junior candidates nominated for senior posts. Despite this mismatch, we expect a positive correlation between a party's tendency to highlight a party leader's charisma and its propensity to promote other members based on the same qualities. Second, whereas the survey question focuses on the parties' emphasis on charisma in a campaign, our theory conceptualizes valence or charisma as candidates' intrinsic characteristics and does not directly speak to how these characteristics are emphasized in elections (see Remark 4). This ambiguity may particularly affect the analysis of extremist parties. Proposition 5 tells us that irrespective of the degree of electoral volatility, extremist parties reward charisma while their candidates also adopt programmatic platforms regardless of party promotion decisions. It is unclear as to how expert respondents in DALP might have coded such a party's campaign strategy in terms of Personalism.¹⁷ Extremist parties' charisma scores should be invariant in volatility—and high. However, depending on expert respondents' interpretation of the survey question, these scores might be either high or low. These concerns are secondary, however, as we are primarily concerned with

¹⁶In Table A3 in the Supplementary Appendix, we show that our results are substantively very similar if we use only item *e2* to measure Programmaticness.

¹⁷For example, should the Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn campaigns be coded as emphasizing the respective leaders' charisma, or left-wing programmatic policies? To what extent was UKIP's campaign based on emphasizing Nigel Farage's charisma, or on anti-EU programmatic policies?

the association between Personalism and volatility among centrist parties and the absence of any such association among ideologically extreme parties. The difference in the average level of Personalism between centrist and extremist parties is not the subject of our theoretical focus.

Key Predictors: Ideological Extremism and Electoral Volatility

Proposition 4 indicates that the extent to which parties rely on a programmatic campaign strategy depends on the interaction of two parameters: α , and (the inverse of) δ . As discussed above, α denotes each party member's utility of having a fellow party member elected to office, and we understand this parameter as a party's ideological extremism.

To operationalize this notion, we calculate the absolute distance of each party's ideological placement on a common ideological dimension from the average placement of all the parties (i.e. that party system's ideological center). To maximize country coverage, we once again rely on DALP, and use the survey question: *"Party is best located at the 'left/right' of the national political spectrum based upon its overall policy positions and ideological framework"* (variable *dw*). Parties most to the left are given a value of one.¹⁸ When calculating the distance measure, we use the weighted average of all the parties' left-right positions, with weights corresponding to each party's size (the average vote share in the previous two legislative elections, available in DALP), to minimize the skew that would arise if there are multiple—and small—extremist parties on one side of the ideological spectrum.

In our theoretical model, the parameter δ is the discount factor, denoting how much a party trades off the future for the present. We argue that this time horizon can be operationalized by the degree of electoral volatility. When the party system is stable and volatility is low, time horizons should be longer, and δ is higher. When electoral volatility is high, concerns about the present are more pressing, and δ is low. There is therefore an inverse relationship between δ and electoral volatility.

Electoral volatility is most commonly measured by the Pedersen Index (Pedersen, 1979), which summarizes the change in the percentage of seats or votes across all the parties in a pair of elections. We use this classic measure of volatility to operationalize δ . Rather than calculate the volatility index anew, we assemble the data from several existing sources. Our main source, with the most comprehensive

¹⁸The policy space may not be reducible to a single left-right dimension. We discuss in the Robustness section and show in Table A6 in the Supplementary Appendix that our results are unchanged when using two- or three-dimensional measures of party extremism instead of a one-dimensional measure.

country coverage is Mainwaring, Gervasoni and España-Najera (2016). We complement this source with data from Powell and Tucker (2014) for Eastern and Western Europe, and Weghorst and Bernhard (2014) and Ferree (2010) for Africa.¹⁹ To synchronize the volatility scores with the variables from DALP, we calculate the average of volatility scores for the latest four election pairs before 2009 (or as many election pairs as possible, if fewer than four are available). The source of volatility data for each country in our sample is given in Table A1 in the Supplementary Appendix.

Empirical Results

According to Proposition 5, when volatility is low centrist parties should deemphasize valence as a factor driving nomination and promotion; hence, the emphasis on charisma in campaigns should be lower than when volatility is high. Extremist parties, by contrast, should be less variable in their focus on charisma across volatility levels. Proposition 4 offers an analogous prediction for Programmaticness: centrist parties should be more programmatic as volatility decreases, but Programmaticness should be unrelated to volatility for extremist parties.

We first present the simplest, unadjusted empirical correlations between: (i) volatility and Personalism, and (ii) volatility and Programmaticness, both interacted with a dichotomous indicator of ideological extremism (equal to one if our extremism measure is greater than or equal to 3, roughly its 85th percentile). The results are shown in Figures 2 and 3, where we report both the raw party-level data (dots) and unadjusted local and quadratic fits. Both figures show that the correlation in the unadjusted data are broadly consistent with our theoretical expectations. Figure 2 suggests that for more moderate parties, the Personalism measure tends to increase with volatility, while the association appears flat for extremist parties. An analogous (but somewhat weaker) pattern is seen for Programmaticness in Figure 3: higher volatility appears to be associated with lower Programmaticness among moderate but not among extremist parties.

We also conduct a more formal empirical analysis, fitting the following simple OLS model:

$$\text{Outcome}_{i,p} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Extremism}_{i,p} + \beta_2 \text{Volatility}_i + \beta_3 \text{Extremism}_{i,p} \times \text{Volatility}_i + \gamma_j \mathbf{X}_{i,p} + \theta_k \mathbf{Z}_i + \epsilon,$$

where i denotes a country and p a party; $\mathbf{X}_{i,p}$ is the vector of j party-level covariates, and $\mathbf{Z}_i$ is the

¹⁹To maximize the country overlap with DALP, we also rely on Olivares-Concha (2014) for Paraguay and Thailand, and Croissant and Völkel (2012) for Indonesia. When multiple sources provide data for the same country, we use the source with more recent data available.

Figure 2: Personalism and Volatility: Raw Correlation

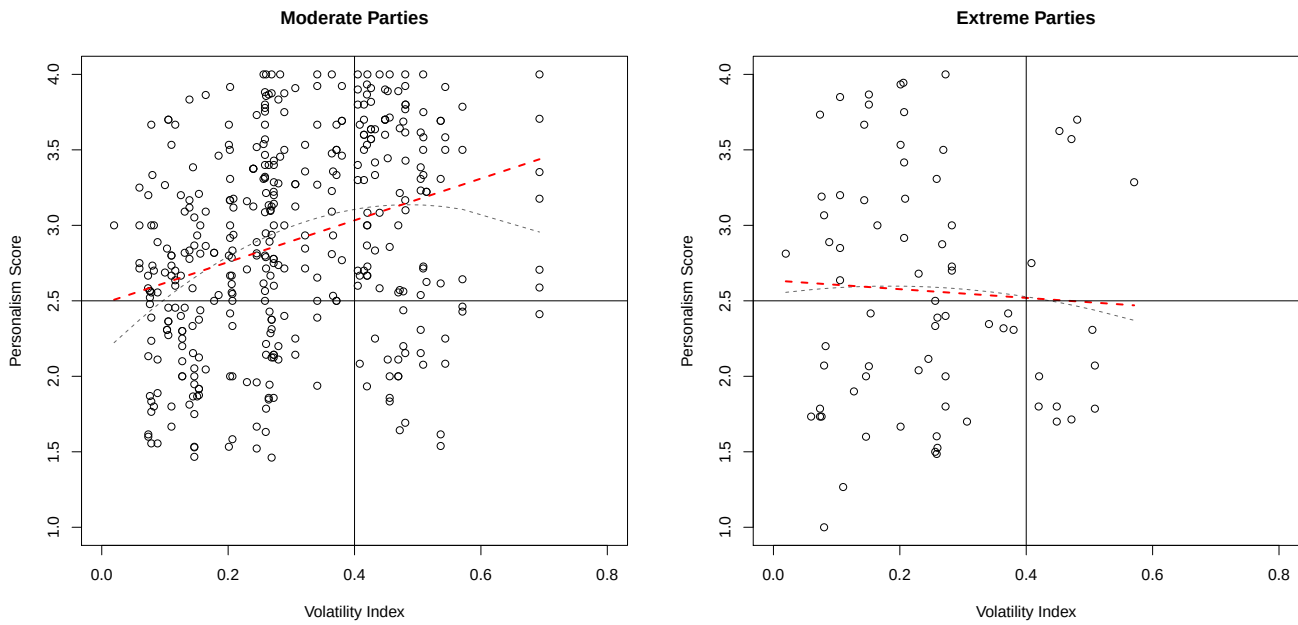
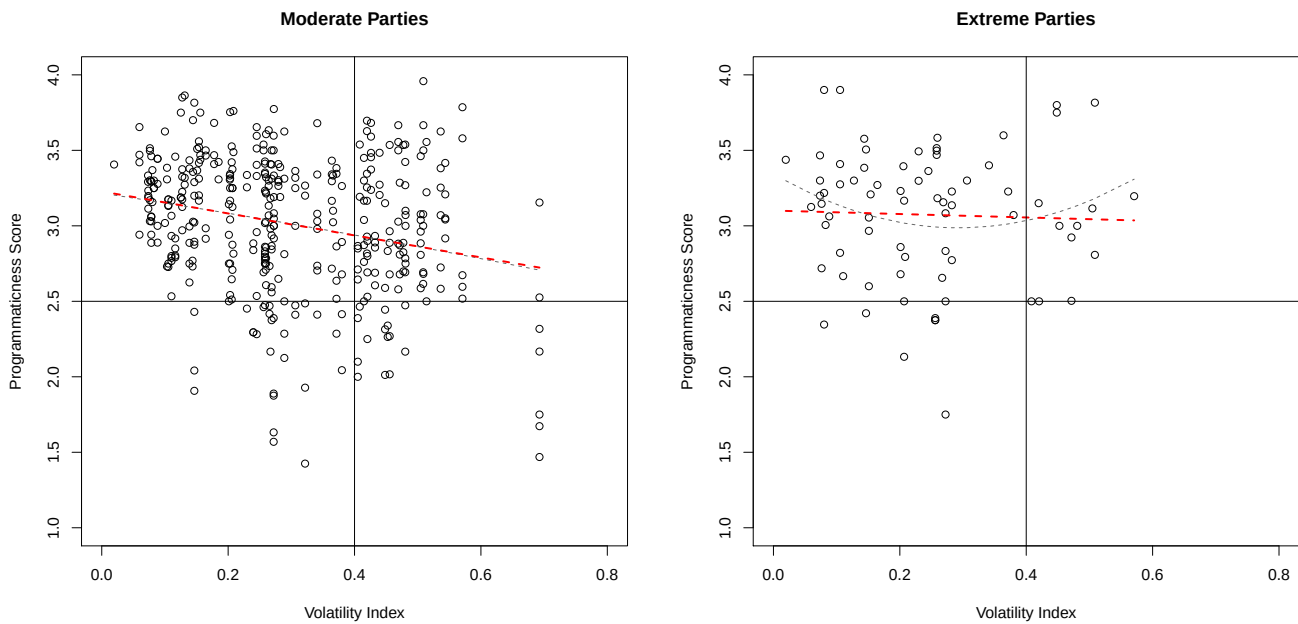


Figure 3: Programmaticness and Volatility: Raw Correlation



vector of k electoral-system, political-system, and other country-level covariates. The unit of analysis is party-country. We cluster the standard errors by country to account for likely correlation across parties within each country. Proposition 5 implies that β_2 should be positive, β_3 should be negative (where Personalism is the outcome variable). Proposition 4 indicates that β_2 should be negative and β_3 positive (where the Programmaticness is the outcome variable).

Naturally, our simple cross-sectional design allows us only to capture correlations between variables and not necessarily causal relationships. However, to isolate as best as possible the associations based on our theory-driven expectations, our preferred OLS specification includes a number of covariates whose importance has been suggested by previous studies (details on all the variables in our various model specifications are shown in Table A2 in the Supplementary Appendix; relevant references guiding our choice of controls are given in Section 3.1 in the Supplementary Appendix).

At the party level, we control for party size (average vote share in the previous two elections before the DALP survey), as smaller parties' electoral strategies and ideology may differ from those of larger parties. From DALP, we also use experts' ratings on how closely the parties are connected to unions, businesses, and religious organizations, to capture further nuances in parties' linkage strategies and membership pools.

Scholars have shown that parties' electoral strategies—particularly reliance on particularism—are influenced by electoral rules, such as plurality vs. proportional representation, and further aspects like district magnitude and ballot structure (open vs. closed lists). Drawing on the Database of Political Institutions (Cruz, Keefer and Scartascini, 2015) and the Democratic Electoral System dataset (Bormann and Golder, 2013), we include a series of indicator variables denoting plurality vs. PR, closed vs. open lists, and the average district magnitude.²⁰

At the political-system level, democratic representation is further correlated with the divisions of powers between the executive and the legislature, the length of tenure of a particular regime type, and the openness and competitiveness of the political system. We use data from the DPI to measure the type of the political system (presidential vs. parliamentary vs. mixed) and the length of democracy. We use the Polity score from the Polity IV project (Marshall, Jaggers and Gurr, 2002) to proxy for a country's degree of political openness and democratic contestation.

²⁰Other nuances in rules have also been argued to matter. We show in Table A9 in the Supplementary Appendix that our results are robust to the inclusion of variables capturing electoral rules in more detail.

Finally, electoral strategies, particularly personalism (and clientelism), have been shown to correlate with a country's level of economic development and the extent of economic inequality, as well as the presence of cleavages, such as ethnic divisions, that may accentuate the attractiveness of candidates' personal characteristics. To capture these dimensions, we draw on the Quality of Government database (Teorell et al., 2017) to add data on GDP per capita, the Gini index, and the index of ethnic fractionalization.

Our preferred specification includes all these covariates. However, we discuss in the Robustness Section and show in the Supplementary Appendix (Tables A9, A10, A13, A11, and A12) that our results are robust to various specifications with subgroups of controls and additional covariates.

Table 1 shows the coefficient estimates. The coefficients on our key variables, Volatility and Volatility $\times$ Extremism are exactly in accordance with the expectations derived from Propositions 4 and 5, and statistically significant at conventional levels. The coefficient on Volatility (β_2) is positive for the Personalism outcome (column 1 in Table 1), and negative for the Programmaticness outcome (column 2); the interaction term with party extremism (β_3) is of the opposite sign in each case. For the Personalism outcome, this suggests that while electoral volatility is generally associated with an increase in parties' reliance on personalistic/charismatic strategies, it mainly is so for ideologically moderate parties—hence the negative sign on β_3 . Similarly, greater electoral volatility reduces parties' reliance on programmatic appeals, but primarily among centrist parties, as greater ideological extremism is associated with greater reliance on programmatic platforms under higher volatility.

To better illustrate the substance of our results, we examine the predicted values for several stylized scenarios. We compare the predicted importance of each strategy (on the original 1-4 scale) for a centrist party (at the mean of an average country's parties' positions), and for an extremist party (at the 90th percentile in terms of the weighted absolute distance from a country's mean), between a low-volatility party system (at the 10th percentile in the sample) and a high-volatility environment (at the 90th percentile). To reiterate, we should see that ideologically moderate parties are significantly more reliant on personalistic strategies in highly volatile systems compared to low-volatility contexts; however, volatility should not affect extremist parties' strategies significantly.

This is exactly what we find in Table 2, which contains two panels, one for each outcome variable. The cells in the first two columns of each panel show the predicted values for each scenario on a 1-4 scale, with 1 being that parties do not “at all” rely on a particular strategy. The cells in the third column

Table 1: Full results – electoral strategies, party extremism, and electoral volatility

	Personalism		Programmaticness	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
Key variables				
Party extremism	0.11	0.07	-0.04	0.03
Electoral volatility	1.94***	0.46	-1.09***	0.31
Extremism $\times$ volatility	-0.50**	0.22	0.39***	0.12
Party-level covariates				
Party size (vote share in prev. elec.)	1.36***	0.23	1.14***	0.17
Links w/ unions	-0.08	0.10	0.29***	0.06
Links w/ business	0.20*	0.12	-0.11**	0.05
Links w/ religious orgs.	0.12	0.11	0.30***	0.07
Electoral system covariates				
Plurality	0.33***	0.12	0.28***	0.09
Proportional representation	0.07	0.08	0.16**	0.06
Closed list	0.47***	0.12	0.26***	0.09
Open list	0.23**	0.12	0.22**	0.08
Average district magnitude (lower house)	-0.00	0.03	0.02	0.02
Political system covariates				
Presidential system	0.02	0.14	-0.31***	0.09
Parliamentary system	0.16	0.14	-0.13*	0.08
System tenure	-0.00	0.05	0.00	0.03
Polity score	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02
Other country-level covariates				
GDP per capita, PPP (logged)	-0.16***	0.04	-0.02	0.04
Gini index	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ethnic fractionalization	0.08	0.20	0.14	0.09
Constant	2.84***	0.49	2.72***	0.46
Observations	430		430	
Countries	75		75	

Notes: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$. Standard errors are clustered by country.

Table 2: Electoral strategies, party extremism, and electoral volatility

	Personalism			Programmaticness		
	Volatility		Difference (High – low)	Volatility		Difference (High – low)
	Low	High		Low	High	
Moderate party	2.48 (0.11)	3.28 (0.13)	0.81*** (0.19)	3.12 (0.07)	2.67 (0.08)	-0.45*** (0.13)
Extremist party	2.73 (0.11)	2.80 (0.13)	0.07 (0.19)	3.10 (0.06)	3.22 (0.07)	0.12 (0.10)

Notes: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$. Standard errors are clustered by country.

show the difference between the predicted values for high and low volatility (columns 2 and 1 in each panel, respectively). The first row shows the results for the stylized moderate party, the third row for the

stylized extremist party.

In line with our expectations, the moderate party's strategy is statistically significantly different in high vs. low volatility contexts for both outcomes, whereas the extremist party's strategy is not significantly different. DALP's experts on average rate centrist parties in highly volatile systems .81 points higher on Personalism (on a 1-4 scale), than similar parties in low-volatility systems, but they do not rate extremist parties statistically differently in the two types of electoral environment. Similarly, moderate parties are perceived as less programmatic in highly volatile party systems than in low-volatility systems, whereas extremist parties are not.

Robustness

The results in Tables 1 and 2 are strongly consistent with our theoretical expectations. We now discuss that these findings are also quite robust to alternative definitions of key concepts, extend to a related concept of party strategy, and are insensitive to important data concerns and a number of alternative specifications of our empirical model.

With respect to our outcome variables, we defined Programmaticness as the average of two survey items (items *e2* and *e4* in DALP) that plausibly tap into parties' emphasis on programmatic appeals. Arguably, item *e2* captures this notion better than item *e4* (the text of both questions is replicated above). In Table A3, we show that our results are substantively identical when we use a variable defined only based on item *e2*.

Another prominent electoral strategy, related to but distinct from both Personalism and Programmaticness as examined here, is clientelism—the exchange of material benefits for votes or turnout (Stokes, 2005). By its nature, clientelism is an example of non-programmatic campaign efforts. As discussed in Remark 1, clientelism does not necessarily imply personalism, so Proposition 5 is mute with respect to this outcome. However, understanding clientelism as a particular case of a non-programmatic particularistic strategy, Proposition 4, which predicts that non-programmatic/particularistic efforts should increase with volatility for centrist parties, can be used to derive empirical predictions for clientelism as well. To check for this possibility, we use another item (*e3*) in DALP to construct the Clientelism measure.²¹ In-

²¹The survey question asked: "Please indicate the extent to which parties seek to mobilize electoral support by emphasizing the capacity of the party to deliver targeted material benefits to its electoral supporters." The variable is on the same 1-4 scale as the Personalism and Programmaticness measures.

deed, Tables A4 and A5 in the Supplementary Appendix, which replicate Tables 1 and 2 above, show that Clientelism behaves in the opposite manner to Programmaticness. This suggests once again that electoral volatility and ideological extremism are broadly associated with parties' electoral strategies.

To conserve space, in Section 3.1 of the Supplemental Appendix we report additional empirical analyses that evaluate the robustness of our results to: (i) multi-dimensional measures of extremism; (ii) a measure of volatility that focuses on party entry and exit as opposed to voter switching between parties that compete in consecutive elections; (iii) additional electoral rules controls; (iv) fixed-effects by geographical region; and (v) reanalysis after dropping countries with highest concern about endogeneity. As discussed in detail in the Supplemental Appendix, the main patterns of association that we report in this section remain broadly unchanged across these various specifications.

Conclusion

We have provided a framework that emphasizes how parties may use promotion strategies to induce candidates to build the party brand, drawing on the idea that the party's record creates externalities that cannot be fully internalized by a single candidate. To this collective action problem, our framework adds the commitment problem that the party may face in enforcing these promotion strategies when some of its candidates are highly charismatic and bring electoral rewards to the party even while deviating from the party's programmatic message. The theoretical results that follow from our framework contribute to understanding the conditions that affect the party's ability to solve these collective action and commitment problems. Electoral volatility diminishes a party's credibility, leading candidates to exert less effort at furthering the party brand and the party to promote more based on charisma than on its members' programmatic efforts. Moreover, ideological extremism helps solve the collective action problem, and by extension, the party's commitment problem. We also show that volatility and (the lack of) ideological extremism interact.

One of the broader goals of our contribution is to conceptually distinguish parties from politicians, and highlight the connection and possible conflict between the career paths of individual politicians and the consolidation of the party brand. As we see it, the main next step is to explore how this potential conflict between party and candidates, which directly affects the party's brand, translates into characteristics of the party system. As we consider broader, party-system issues, a key question is whether we can sustain

our assumption that volatility is exogenous. Parties that lack the ability to discipline and incentivize their candidates will build a less programmatic, more charisma-driven brand; this may, in turn, create a weaker and more volatile party system, which would further erode the party's ability to incentivize candidates, creating a vicious cycle. As it stands, our framework has not made volatility endogenous in the model; but we believe this is a fruitful future path of inquiry.

Finally, we note that our emphasis on the party's commitment problem also leads to connections with other contributions on party systems, specially those that emphasize the role of electoral rules and institutions. For example, Samuels and Shugart (2010) argue that, compared to parliamentary systems, presidential systems tend to produce political parties that are ideologically broader and more diffuse. One of the main reasons they cite for this distinction is that presidential candidates must compete in a nation-wide election, and as such must have broad electoral appeal. This, they argue, makes it less likely for party insiders to be nominated for executive office in presidential systems, as they are less likely to be appealing on a national stage. In the context of our model, this can be interpreted as an intensified commitment problem for the party. In presidential systems where candidates for executive office are directly elected in nation-wide elections, the value of valence increases relative to parliamentary systems; this, in turn, makes the commitment problem facing the party much more extreme, as it may be not credible for the party to deny the nomination to a high-valence candidate over a more loyal but less charismatic party candidate who is less likely to win the election. This example illustrates how the strategic dynamics that we highlighted may interact with electoral rules and institutions, and suggests that a fruitful avenue of future research is the further integration of electoral rules with the inherent conflict in strategic party-candidate interactions.

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