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The Timing of Cabinet Reshuffles in Five Westminster Parliamentary Systems

Despite their political prominence, cabinet reshuffles have not attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. We provide a theory of cabinet reshuffles that emphasizes both systematic and time-varying causes. In particular, we argue that prime ministers employ cabinet reshuffles to retain power in the face of both intraparty and electoral challenges to their leadership. We use repeated-events duration models to examine the timing of cabinet reshuffles in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom in the period 1960–2001, and find support for several of our hypotheses.

Introduction

A cabinet reshuffle involves the promotion (or demotion) of ministers or a reallocation of portfolios by the prime minister during the parliamentary term. Reshuffles are prominent political events, but, relative to coalition formation, portfolio allocation, and cabinet survival, they are little studied.[1] This oversight is curious given that journalists cover reshuffles intensively (for example, *The Economist* 1998a, 1998b, and 1999) and academics frequently complain of reshuffles undermining the cabinet's managerial capacity (see, for example, Franks 1987, 248; Heady 1974; and Rose 1987). This state of affairs is also theoretically unsatisfying: it is not immediately obvious, for example, why prime ministers would ever reshuffle their cabinets if the only effect were to undercut the cabinet's administrative capacity. It may be that reshuffles are simply matters of routine or tradition—parliamentary standard operating procedures, as it were—conducted without much thought as to the likely costs and benefits. Such an explanation must be viewed skeptically, however. It runs against a good deal of scholarly research

demonstrating that parliamentary politics are manifestly strategic in nature (for instance, Cox 1987, Huber 1996, Lupia and Strøm 1995, and Müller and Strøm 1999), and it sits uneasily alongside journalistic and historical accounts of reshuffles, which tend to connect reshuffles to cabinet battles, policy changes, and electoral tactics.

Indeed, the political and strategic character of cabinet reshuffles is clearly visible in Harold Macmillan's dismissal of Selwyn Lloyd and six other British cabinet ministers in 1963. From late 1961 onward, Lloyd, the Chancellor, exhibited coolness toward the expansionist policies that Macmillan (1963, 67–68, 86) and—in Macmillan's estimation—the Conservative party favored. Macmillan worried that without a clearly expansionist policy, the party would lose direction (69) and dissent would fester (46), leading to, "an attack on the Leadership of the Party" (58). Angered by Lloyd's indifference to this political imperative and worried that "the enemies of the Leadership, already numerous [had] undoubtedly been strengthened" (59) by the government's inaction and unpopularity, Macmillan concluded that "we [his cabinet] should require not only new measures but new men" (72). Lloyd was therefore dismissed along with six other ministers on June 13, 1962. There is a clear link in Macmillan's account between a recalcitrant minister, internal tension in the parliamentary party, the government's unpopularity among voters, and Macmillan's decision to reshuffle his cabinet.

We find such historical accounts to be both instructive and convincing, prompting us to consider reshuffles as strategic devices that prime ministers (PMs) use to fend off intraparty rivals and to win elections rather than as standard operating procedures or purely meritocratic mechanisms designed to recruit talent and competence into cabinet. Hence, we propose a framework in which cabinet reshuffles are contingent on the PM's position within the governing party (or coalition) and in the electorate: The more vulnerable the PM to either an internal leadership challenge or electoral defeat, the greater the PM's incentive will be to reshuffle. The PM's vulnerability is, we argue, a function of institutional rules and prevailing political circumstances. To the extent that party rules governing leadership selection and cabinet management lower the overhead costs to rivals of confronting the PM and limit the PM's authority over ministers, these rules expose PMs to leadership challenges and so invite cabinet reshuffles. Insofar as political circumstances are concerned, the PM's position can be seen to grow weaker or stronger in relation to his or her electoral and parliamentary popularity. We therefore expect PMs to reshuffle their cabinets whenever the PMs become less popular with voters or backbench members of the governing coalition.

Our model generates a series of hypotheses about the timing of cabinet reshuffles in parliamentary systems. We test these hypotheses against data on the timing of cabinet shuffles in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom in the period 1960–2001. We analyze these data with duration-modeling techniques similar to those that have been used to study cabinet survival, although we modify the techniques to take account of the fact that reshuffles, unlike cabinet failures, are repeatable events. Our chief finding is that reshuffles are more likely during periods when the PM's personal approval ratings among voters lag behind the party's or coalition's popularity ratings. This result nicely connects our intraparty and electoral explanations of reshuffles as it suggests that PMs reshuffle their cabinets whenever they themselves appear as political liabilities, a condition that invites both internal challenges and electoral defeat.

The article follows in five sections. Section 1 describes how we define and count cabinet reshuffles. Although we might have deferred this matter to the methods section of the article, we feel it is better to define the article's central concept very clearly at the outset, given the novelty of our topic. Section 2 outlines our theoretical framework and hypotheses. Section 3 describes our data and methods. Section 4 presents and elaborates upon the statistical results. The fifth and final section offers our conclusions.

1. Defining Cabinet Shuffles

The Extent of Cabinet Change

We follow White (2000) and define reshuffles as any change in ministerial personnel or responsibilities that affects more than two officeholders and at least two portfolios. Isolated personnel moves, such as a retiring cabinet minister being replaced by the portfolio's junior minister, are ruled out by this definition. This classification is a good one for three reasons. First, to the extent that changes in the status of any single minister are due to idiosyncratic causes (for example, ill health, scandal, and the like), they are resistant to causal analysis. Second, contemporaneous changes in ministers' ranks or portfolios are probably not independent events, providing all the more reason to consider the reshuffle, that is, the set of ministerial moves, as the unit of analysis. An excerpt from a recent interview with a Canadian minister drives home the point.[2]

> **Q:** Why does the PM not simply change one underperformer at a time rather than making these broader midterm changes? There is organizational stability to think about, after all.
>
> **A:** Well, let me give you an example. In our first Parliament, David Collenette gets into trouble—he called a judge or something about a case—and our tradition here is that when something like that happens, the minister resigns, and David did. Now, at the time, he held the defense portfolio, a major portfolio. So, now this creates two problems. First, do you pull a rookie up from the backbench and put them into a major portfolio? Or do you move a veteran into the defense portfolio and give the rookie a minor portfolio? And don't forget that the PM has to deal with all sorts of restrictions: he has to make sure that all provinces have a minister, and then there's the relative importance of a particular portfolio to certain regions.

A variety of constraints make it difficult, then, for PMs to respond to the loss of an individual minister in a limited and perfunctory fashion. Instead—and this leads to the third and final reason for employing White's definition—we frequently observe PMs choosing (or being compelled) to set into motion a chain of promotions and lateral moves that reverberate throughout the ministry and the party. At a minimum, the fact that PMs make more expansive personnel moves than strictly necessary reveals that they are willing to trade off organizational stability to satisfy other objectives.

The Temporal Dimension

Alt (1975) adds a temporal dimension to reshuffles, arguing that the personnel moves and organizational changes involved in the reshuffle need not occur simultaneously. Clearly, if the PM sacked three cabinet members one day and named replacements a week later, one would still say the activity constituted a single reshuffle. Alt suggests allowing reshuffles to take place over a two-month time span. This period is too expansive for our purposes as our sample includes Australia and New Zealand (which have only three-year constitutional interelection periods [CIEPs]); we use a one-month window instead.

The Organizational Level

The titles of the various ministerial offices vary by country, but it is almost always possible to distinguish clearly between cabinet ministers proper, senior ministers—who sit outside cabinet but still exercise some independent authority and may occasionally attend cabinet meetings—and junior ministers, who are mere delegates of their respective cabinet ministers.[3] Alt and White restrict their attention to the movement of cabinet ministers. Recent research indicates, however, that the allocation and movement of noncabinet ministers within the government is a significant element of parliamentary politics (Mershon 1999; Thies 2001). Accordingly, we also take account of movements of senior noncabinet ministers. Under our rule, the movement of a single cabinet minister and two senior ministers outside cabinet would count as a reshuffle—provided that these ministers straddled at least two portfolios and all three moves occurred within one month.[4]

It is worth emphasizing that we take reshuffles (however extensive they might be) to involve the reorganization of an *existing* cabinet, not the wholesale installation of a new cabinet. This assumption is tacitly acknowledged in the literature—students of cabinet survival, for example, do not count reshuffles as terminations—but it needs to be made explicit here. We deemed a new cabinet to have come into existence after elections or changes in the partisan composition of the cabinet. Thus cabinet changes between elections that did not alter the cabinet's partisan composition were classified as reshuffles (providing these changes met the aforementioned criteria). We are sensitive to the fact that a number of arguments can be raised regarding this classification scheme.[5] That said, the manner in which we classify new and existing cabinets comports with how coalition theorists have dealt with the matter (for example, King et al. 1990, 856; Laver and Schofield 1990, 145; and Warwick 1994, 27–28). The one area in which we have departed from coalition theorists is in the continuity of the premiership. Whereas many coalition theorists take a change in the premiership to be indicative of a new government, we do not—unless the new PM is from a different party. Thus Callaghan's takeover from Wilson in 1977 and Major's takeover from Thatcher in 1990 are counted as reshuffles of existing cabinets, because these takeovers were also accompanied by wider changes to the cabinet. Again, we realize that there is room for debate, not simply on these specific coding decisions, but also on the broader question of how analytically separate reshuffles are (or should be) from the wholesale formation and termination of governments. This is a debate best left for future research, however, and one best taken up after a broader base of knowledge about reshuffles has been established.

2. The Causes of Cabinet Reshuffles

Cabinet Ministers, PMs, and Reshuffles

Underpinning our model of reshuffles are two assumptions about the nature of parliamentary politics. The first assumption is that PMs are primarily concerned with maintaining power, an assumption made in the coalition literature by Leubberts (1986). To maintain power, PMs must: a) win elections, and b) fend off intraparty rivals to their leadership. The second assumption is that cabinet ministers have inherently mixed motives with respect to the PM and the party (or their respective parties, should a coalition be in power). On one hand, ministers' fortunes are tied to their party for the simple reason that to become a cabinet minister one must belong to an electorally successful party. On the other hand, cabinet ministers harbor private desires, perhaps for a more important cabinet post (such as finance or foreign affairs) or even the premiership itself. Thus, cabinet members, the PM included, are at once colleagues and rivals, a situation that makes it difficult for the PM to maintain collective responsibility and ensure that the ministers remain faithful to the PM and the government's declared platform.

As a consequence, PMs confront adverse selection and moral hazard problems. The adverse selection problem arises at the cabinet-building stage. The most ambitious and politically talented party members are attractive ministerial candidates—yet it is precisely those qualities that make these members the most willing and best equipped to challenge the PM. From the PM's perspective, then, the problem is selecting cabinet members who will remain loyal to him or her and to the party once placed in charge of a portfolio. The attendant difficulty is that the PM must make these selections without full information because the minister's loyalty and ambition (that is, the minister's type) has only been imperfectly observed, if at all. Once the cabinet is constructed, the moral hazard problem emerges. In parliamentary government, PMs delegate policy portfolios to cabinet ministers, who in turn develop and implement policy within their portfolios (Laver and Shepsle 1996). Cabinet ministers, however, have incentives to use their departments to serve their own ambitions. So, for example, ministers may initiate unauthorized projects to gain the favor of a pivotal section of the parliamentary party or electorate, or they may surreptitiously slow down projects in their portfolio that are closely associated with the PM, and so on.[6] Nevertheless, once a minister is installed in a particular portfolio, the PM is limited in his or her ability to monitor and control the minister's actions directly, hence the moral hazard problem.

PMs can use reshuffles to address these problems.[7] Quite obviously, reshuffles provide the PM with the opportunity to sack or demote wayward ministers. Reshuffles can also be used to hand rivals "poisoned chalices," that is, to place them in controversial or unappealing portfolios. At a somewhat more theoretical level, reshuffles allow the PM to address the adverse selection problem: as the PM updates on ministers' types, he or she can reshuffle undesirable types out of powerful positions into weaker ones from which they are unlikely to be able to challenge the PM's authority. What is perhaps less obvious is that if ministers are affected by their colleagues' actions and if, in addition, their scope of action in a portfolio depends to a degree on their predecessor's behavior, then reshuffles lead ministers to curb their self-interested behavior (Indriðason and Kam 2003).[8] That is, reshuffles—even if they consist only of ministers switching chairs at the cabinet table—combat the moral hazard problem. Reshuffles can thus serve as cheap substitutes for more costly direct monitoring of ministers by the PM.

It is because reshuffles have these corrective effects (from the PM's perspective) that we draw connections between a parliamentary system's institutional features and the frequency of cabinet reshuffles in that system. Two types of institutional features are relevant: those that influence the cabinet ministers' incentives to challenge the PM, and those that directly limit the PM's scope of action. Institutional rules that make it easier for ministers to mount challenges to the PM's authority effectively increase the extent of the moral hazard problem that the PM faces, and so require the PM to be more vigilant. With reshuffles serving as cheap and effective means of reducing the PM's agency loss to ministers, we expect the PM's increased vigilance to take the form of frequent reshuffles. Institutional rules that limit the PM's scope of action will also lead to frequent reshuffling. A PM can pursue various strategies to fend off challenges, but when the set of strategies available to a PM is constrained in some manner, we expect the PM to rely more heavily on those strategies that remain available. We consider each of these institutional features and their relation to cabinet reshuffles in turn.

The Relationship between Leadership Selection Rules and Reshuffles

The institutional factors that induce ministers to engage in self-interested behavior influence the PM's propensity for reshuffling the cabinet. Of particular relevance in this regard are the party's rules on

leadership selection.[9] Rules governing leadership selection influence ministers' opportunities to advance their careers, some rules encouraging ministers to front direct challenges to the PM, others forcing them to seek advancement patiently under the tutelage of the PM. Generally speaking, the more vulnerable the PM under a given set of leadership selection rules, the greater the ministers' incentives will be to use their portfolios in a self-interested fashion, and the greater the benefit the PM will receive from reshuffling the cabinet.

Historically, party leaders, of cadre parties in particular, were selected by informal processes. Senior party figures acting as *informateurs* would sound out various elements of the party and then consensually select a leader. This was, for example, the situation in the British Conservative party until 1964. Mass and populist parties, in contrast, have always sought to democratize leadership selection (Katz and Mair 1995). The two main ways of doing this are to a) allow the members of the parliamentary party to vote on the leadership, or b) place leadership selection in the hands of broad conventions of members of Parliament, extraparliamentary representatives, and affiliated groups (for instance, unions). The limiting case of this second method is a one-member-one-vote (OMOV) system in which all registered party members can vote in the leadership election. Each of these systems leaves a PM more or less vulnerable to internal challenges, with the PM's vulnerability decreasing as the size of the leadership "selectorate" expands (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2002).

The explanation for the relationship lies in Michel's Iron Law of Oligarchy: As an institution expands its membership and democratizes its procedures, there is a tendency for power to become increasingly concentrated in a small oligarchy at the institution's apex. Thus a PM at the head of a convention-based or OMOV party is in a secure situation (Weller 1994), beholden to a large but poorly organized group of people who, for logistical reasons, come together perhaps only annually or biennially. In addition, the PM is one of the few people in the party who has the resources (patronage, a large political staff, partywide contacts, and so forth) required to manage the party's infrastructure and membership. The security afforded to the PM by these arrangements removes one of the main incentives for cabinet reshuffles.

Arrangements that leave leadership selection in the hands of the parliamentary party or a small circle of party insiders are altogether more dangerous from the PM's perspective. First, the parliamentary party is not a large group, perhaps 50 to 350 members; it can easily be organized by an internal rival and, given the regularity and frequency of caucus meetings, this organization could be accomplished at short notice.

Moreover, many backbench members will not have the PM's interests at heart: some will see the government's policies as a threat to their reelection hopes; others will resent the fact that they have been left out of the cabinet. These motives are always present, of course, no matter what the leadership selection rules are. When an informal or caucus-based system is in place, however, members of the parliamentary party not only have the motive to challenge the PM, but also the opportunity and the capacity to do so. In sum, PMs selected by caucus-based or informal systems will frequently find their authority challenged by internal rivals (likely their cabinet ministers), and hence have strong incentives to engage in repeated reshuffles.[10]

Cabinet Management Rules, Coalition Government, and the Adverse Selection Problem

Rules on leadership selection primarily affect the moral hazard problem of cabinet government. The adverse selection problem is affected by other types of rules, in particular, rules limiting the PM's management of the cabinet. Consider the counterfactual scenario in which the PM has the ability to pick perfectly loyal and capable ministers. In such circumstances, there is no reason, save random scandal, for the PM to reshuffle the cabinet. Of course, ministers are not perfectly loyal and capable, and, under these more realistic conditions, PMs can be expected to use reshuffles to get rid of some of the bad apples and recruit into cabinet more-loyal (and perhaps more-competent) ministers.

Not all parties allow PMs to do this, however. Labor parties in Australia and New Zealand, for example, elect and present to their PMs a slate of cabinet ministers, leaving the PM only the role of assigning portfolios among the ministers. Such rules limit a PM's ability to deal with the adverse selection problem: even if the PM knew a minister to be overly ambitious and threatening or ideologically uncongenial, the party's rules on cabinet management would prevent the PM from refusing that minister a place in cabinet or unilaterally removing that minister from the cabinet. Moreover, whereas PMs can always be expected to consider past loyalty when selecting their ministers, it is unlikely that the parliamentary party—composed as it is of members intent on advancing their own careers—will place as great a weight on a minister's personal loyalty to the PM. Thus one would expect ministers in parties employing these sorts of rules to be relatively more ambitious and threatening than ministers in cabinets selected solely by the PM. At any given point in time, then, PMs who are constrained in managing their cabinets have much stronger incentives for reshuffling their cabinets

than do PMs who have complete authority over the composition of their cabinets. Of course, under these restrictive rules, reshuffles are dominated by lateral moves, with sitting ministers being reassigned to new portfolios rather than being sacked and replaced by backbenchers.

The effect of limiting the PM's ability to manage the cabinet is contingent on the leadership selection system in place. If the prime minister cannot refuse overly ambitious ministers a place in the cabinet, and if, in addition, he or she cannot unilaterally sack them from the cabinet, then the ministers are subject to greater moral hazard. Add to this situation an informal or caucus-based leadership selection system and one furnishes these overly ambitious ministers with easy means to challenge the PM. This scenario exacerbates the moral hazard problem still further and creates even stronger incentives for the PM to reshuffle the cabinet. In contrast, a convention-based or OMOV leadership selection system presents even the most ambitious ministers with significant organizational obstacles to moving against the PM. Thus, although the adverse selection problem still persists under a convention-based leadership selection system, the extent of the moral hazard problem and the concomitant need for reshuffles is somewhat reduced.

It is not always the PM's party that limits his or her ability to select or drop cabinet ministers. PMs of coalition governments may also be constrained by coalition partners' political demands or by the formal—or, more often, informal (Strøm and Müller 2000, 268)—stipulations of a coalition agreement. Coalition partners commonly insist on controlling a particular set of portfolios and may even request that other coalition parties refrain from placing specific individuals in certain portfolios.[11] In theory, these types of constraints exacerbate the adverse selection problem that the PM faces, just as ideological and strategic differences between coalition partners may magnify the moral hazard problem. The PM may not, however, have a free hand to reshuffle; coalition partners may veto certain ministerial moves, and the coalition agreement may place the management of a set of portfolios beyond the PM's authority. At any point in time, then, coalition cabinets are less likely to be reshuffled than single-party cabinets, if only because coalition partners may wield a veto over reshuffles.

These arguments are structural or institutional in nature; they connect PMs' propensity to reshuffle their cabinets to fixed institutional characteristics. This line of reasoning allows us to construct hypotheses about the probability of a reshuffle occurring at any given time in certain institutional environments. We offer four such hypotheses, each prefaced by an obligatory "At any given point in time":

Hypothesis 1: Reshuffles are more likely if the PM is selected informally or by the parliamentary party than if the PM is selected in a convention or by one-member-one-vote (OMOV).

Hypothesis 2: Reshuffles are more likely if the PM's ability to manage the cabinet is limited.

Hypothesis 3: The effects of cabinet management and leadership selection rules are interactive. Therefore, reshuffles are most likely if institutional rules both a) limit the PM's ability to select and drop ministers, and b) empower the parliamentary party to select leaders.

Hypothesis 4: Reshuffles are less likely if the cabinet is a coalition cabinet.

Changing Political Conditions and Reshuffles

So far we have connected the PM's propensity to reshuffle to a set of fixed institutional rules. These time-invariant institutional hypotheses are important insofar as they provide us with ex ante forecasts of the timing of cabinet reshuffles. The political environment is not invariant, however, and PMs may undertake reshuffles in response to or in anticipation of changes in the political environment. This type of logic is prominent in the cabinet survival literature (see, for example, Alt and King 1994, Lupia and Strøm 1995, Martin 2000, and Warwick 1994), and one might think of reshuffles analogously, that is, as responses to changes in the political environment. Adopting a time-varying approach to cabinet reshuffles does not entail abandoning the theoretical framework that we have outlined. On the contrary, the assumption that PMs are motivated primarily by a desire to maintain power remains central to our argument. We see PMs using reshuffles to manage electoral politics and respond to parliamentary crises that threaten their leadership.

Reshuffles, Electoral Cycles, and Political Popularity

PMs in the countries studied here (and, indeed, in several other parliamentary systems) are empowered to dissolve Parliament and initiate elections. Research indicates that PMs use this authority strategically, calling elections when the PM is well positioned to win them (for exmaple, Lupia and Strøm 1995 and Strøm and Swindle

2002). It is reasonable to hypothesize (as journalists often do) that PMs use reshuffles similarly, reshuffling their cabinets in the run-up to an election in order to put a new gloss on their governments.[12] Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald, for example, reshuffled his cabinet to try to distance ministers from the unpopular policies they had been forced to implement in their erstwhile portfolios (FitzGerald 1991, 621). Comments from a senior Canadian cabinet minister echo this point:

> **Q:** You mentioned that there's anticipation [of a reshuffle]. Do you have a sense of when a shuffle is about to occur?
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> **A:** About two to three years in, by about the midpoint of the term, there will be a substantial shuffle. Before then, of course, they'll be a few ministers who have to be moved because there's trouble in their portfolios.
>
> **Q:** Now somebody told me that these mid- to late-term shuffles are not made for overtly electoral reasons, but rather because the PMO [the Prime Minister's Office] will sound out ministers to see who might be retiring, and then shuffle to ease the transition. Is that accurate?
>
> **A:** Well, they're wrong. Political parties are in the business of communication, and they have to make sure that they've got people in place that can defend the government's record and who can lead the charge on new issues.

This cabinet minister suggests that reshuffles are part of an electoral program and that they become more likely as the parliamentary term wears on.

Of course, public opinion and political events do not always coincide with this electoral timetable—scandals break out, economies stall, and unpopular policies are sometimes implemented. As citizens become aware of the effects of these events, they attribute them (correctly or not) to some subset of political actors and then translate these attributions into vote intentions (Gomez and Wilson 2001). Declining political popularity signals that the public has reached the attribution stage of this process, that it has blamed the government for prevailing conditions and is now poised to vote against it. Low levels of popularity portend electoral defeat and make the parliamentary party nervous and receptive to leadership rivals. Reshuffles are one means that PMs have of responding to these conditions. If, for example, the decline in

political popularity is due to scandalous ministerial behavior, then the offending ministers can be sacked to create an image of probity and responsibility. If, in contrast, the decline in popularity is due to an unpopular policy, then the responsible minister can be reassigned to a less public, less controversial portfolio while a minister who is a "safe pair of hands" assumes the task of selling or quietly scrapping the policy. A former Canadian minister described the political thinking and dynamics behind these sorts of moves:

> I had the PM's trust, and so I was very much the PM's "hit man" on crisis management. He'd say to me, "You go and run that department." So, for example, in 1976 when we had a separatist government come to power in Quebec, he created a ministry of federal-provincial affairs and put me in charge because we needed a strategy to counter separatism directly, to deal with the issues, and develop policy. Then . . . let's see, in '72 I had Health and Welfare because social policy was a priority because we needed the NDP's [New Democratic Party] support. In '78, '79, I had federal-provincial relations because of the separatist and constitutional issues. Moving to Justice was largely continuing these constitutional things. Later I went to EMR [Energy, Mines, and Resources] because we had an energy crisis, and then in 1982 I went to Finance because of stagflation. Allan McEachan had been there, and he had the PM's confidence, but he had trouble with the 1981 budget. He was facing a very difficult environment, and the PM felt that he needed a new face in the area, that he needed to create a new political environment. You see a shuffle is not like a change in government, you have the same PM, the same policies . . . it is more having to do with implementation. That and a sense among the public that the government is tired and unpopular. You need to change faces, or more often change chairs.

Do PMs reshuffle in response to declining levels of party popularity or declining levels of personal popularity? The two quantities are not at all the same thing: the party can always find a new PM to replace an unpopular incumbent; a PM cannot find a new party. Consequently, a drop in the PM's personal popularity has both electoral and intraparty implications. Declines in the PM's personal popularity not only threaten the party's chances at reelection (Clarke, Ho, and Stewart 2000), they also invite leadership challenges. We expect, then, that while reshuffles are generally more likely when the governing party's (or coalition's) popularity declines, they are especially likely when the PM's personal popularity declines. The second part of this hypothesis is perhaps more precisely stated in a conditional form: at any given level of party popularity (that is, when we control for party popularity), reshuffles become more likely as the PM becomes more personally unpopular.

Reshuffles and Coalition Politics

The relationship between coalition partners occurs at the intersection of electoral and parliamentary politics. Research (Lupia and Strøm 1995; Martin 2000) shows that coalition governments are more likely to collapse when opinion polls show that one of the incumbent coalition partners stands to gain more ministerial portfolios from new elections or a new round of coalition bargaining. Reshuffles provide an opportunity for coalition partners to strike new deals (that is, to attain a redistribution of portfolios) without having to terminate their government. Naturally, one expects PMs to turn shifts in popularity between coalition partners to their advantage, although what is to their advantage is not immediately obvious. If, for example, the junior coalition partner makes popularity gains, then the PM may reshuffle in a fashion that recognizes the junior partner's improved position and that, in consequence, secures the government's continuation and maintains the PM in office. If, on the other hand, it is the PM's party (almost certainly the senior coalition partner) that rises in the polls, then the PM may reshuffle the cabinet to his or her own party's advantage. Whatever the case, we would expect the likelihood of a reshuffle to rise whenever there are shifts in popularity between coalition partners.

Reshuffles and Parliamentary Politics

Parliamentary events may also induce PMs to reshuffle their cabinets. Dissent and defections, for example, indicate that backbench members of the governing coalition are dissatisfied with the cabinet's policies. Overt breakdowns in party discipline also open the door to leadership challenges, the rebels representing, in effect, a fifth column within the party or coalition that challengers can use to their advantage. Insofar as reshuffles move unpopular ministers out of cabinet or out of controversial portfolios, and insofar as they undercut rivals' efforts to organize discontent against the PM, we expect reshuffles to occur more frequently when levels of dissent within the PM's party are high.[13]

This time-varying account of cabinet reshuffles provides five additional hypotheses about the risk of cabinet reshuffles:

> *Hypothesis 5:* Reshuffles become more likely as the parliamentary term progresses and the election nears.
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> *Hypothesis 6:* Reshuffles become more likely as the governing party's (or parties') popularity declines.

Hypothesis 7: Reshuffles become more likely as the PM's personal popularity declines.

Hypothesis 8: Reshuffles become more likely whenever there are changes in the relative popularity of coalition partners.

Hypothesis 9: Reshuffles become more likely as parliamentary dissent within the PM's party increases.

The Cost of Reshuffles

Our argument is not intended to give the impression that reshuffles are costless or that PMs do not encounter diminishing marginal returns from constant reshuffling. On the contrary, too much reshuffling is likely to generate negative returns of two sorts. First, it may lead to a loss of control over the bureaucracy because ministers are never in place long enough to develop the administrative and policy expertise needed to adequately oversee their departments. This is the classic academic diagnosis of cabinet reshuffles. Second, constant reshuffling may create an impression of governmental instability among observers, including party members, foreign investors, and voters, and this impression may damage the PM and the government. We operate on the premise that these costs are roughly constant across countries and parties, whereas the benefits of reshuffling vary with the relevant institutional rules and political circumstances. In other words, under some conditions (described previously), more frequent reshuffles are optimal given the fixed costs involved.

3. Data and Methods

Data

Our data come from five countries: Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The data begin in 1958, end in 2002, and encompass 2,647 cabinet months broken into 246 spells (periods between reshuffles). Of these 246 spells, 172 end in a reshuffle and the remainder are censored.[14] The decision to limit our sample to these five countries reflects a conscious choice on our part to avoid conceptual stretching. These Westminster-style parliamentary systems operate on similar (and comparatively rigid) constitutional assumptions about collective and individual ministerial responsibility. Given the difficulty in coding what are often implicit constitutional conventions, we opted to tackle the problem by limiting our analysis to these similar systems. The study's

concentrated scope is also reflective of the fact that we tried to improve the quality of our data before increasing the quantity. For example, we started our time series in each country with the first government of the 1960s because these governments tend to be the first for which public opinion statistics are available on a consistent basis. The dataset also contains information on many hard-to-get variables, such as prime ministerial approval ratings and the number of rolls calls on which governing parties experienced internal dissent. As a result, we were able to do a fairly good job of testing the alternative hypotheses for reshuffles that we outlined—at least up to the point that multicollinearity set in. We do not claim that our choices on these matters are perfectly correct or beyond reproach, but we do feel they are defensible.

Insofar as party rules are concerned, the data contain a good deal of variance. Canadian parties select and remove their leaders in large conventions that take place every several years. Australian and New Zealand parties, in contrast, employ very flexible selection rules: at any meeting of the parliamentary parties, a member may introduce a motion of nonconfidence in the leader; a simple majority secures or deposes the leadership. The two British parties have revamped their rules several times over the past 40 years. In 1981, Labour altered its rules so that a party conference of members of Parliament, unions, and extraparliamentary members rather than the parliamentary party alone selected the leader (Butler and Butler 1994). Under Blair, the party has moved even closer to an OMOV system. The British Conservatives have also widened their leadership selectorate over time. In 1965, the old, informal system of leadership selection gave way to a formal balloting of the parliamentary party, and this system has, in turn, recently given way to a conference-OMOV hybrid that is similar to Labour's system. The two main Irish parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, have also seen their leadership selection rules evolve over time, from informal systems to caucus-based systems very similar to those employed by Australian and New Zealand parties. Finally, the Australian and New Zealand Labour parties impose formal limitations on the PM's management of the cabinet. In these two parties, the PM's power over the cabinet is limited to distributing portfolios among a group of ministers chosen by the parliamentary party.[15]

Methods

We tested our hypotheses with a variant of the Cox regression, or proportional-hazards, model. Our dependent variable is, therefore, the hazard rate of a cabinet reshuffle, that is, the rate at which cabinets are

reshuffled at a given instant in time, conditional on not yet having been reshuffled. The hazard rate of cabinet reshuffles is a latent variable; what we observe (hence what we often talk of) is a cabinet's survival time, that is, the time until cabinets of a given type are reshuffled. Proportional-hazards models are familiar statistical tools in the analysis of cabinet survival (for example, King et al. 1990 and Warwick 1994), but their application to cabinet reshuffles is not straightforward because reshuffles, unlike cabinet failures, are repeatable events: a cabinet can collapse only once, but it can be reshuffled several times. The repetition of events pushed us to analyze our data with a conditional-risks model.[16] A conditional-risks model makes three modifications to the standard proportional-hazards model. First, the risk set is constructed (and likelihoods calculated) on the assumption that later events are encountered only after earlier events have occurred.[17] Hence, a cabinet is at risk of a second reshuffle only after having been reshuffled once already. Second, standard errors and baseline hazards are adjusted to account for event dependence in the data.[18] In our application, this adjustment involves clustering the standard errors by government and stratifying the model so that different baseline hazard functions (but identical coefficients) are estimated for initial and subsequent reshuffles. Third, time is measured as inter-event time. In other words, time returns to 0 after each reshuffle. This is not the only way to delineate analysis time in a conditional-risks model, but doing so not only results in statistically well-behaved models, it better accords with the assumptions we have made about the costs of reshuffling; if reshuffles involve a fixed cost to the PM, then the PM's decision to reshuffle should reflect how long it as been since the last reshuffle.

4. Results

Table 1 presents our results. In addition to country dummies, the models contain the following control variables: the number of ministers in the government, the cabinet's majority status, the time in months until the end of the country's CIEP, a January dummy, and the number of prior reshuffles. If we assume that ministers run roughly equal risks of succumbing to ill health, scandal, and so on, then the more ministers there are in the ministry, the more vacancies should open up in a given period of time. In consequence, PMs will have to reshuffle larger ministries more frequently than smaller ministries, if only to offset the effects of attrition. Work on cabinet failure (see Warwick 1994) shows that majority cabinets are more stable than minority cabinets. The majority status dummy controls for the possibility that this stability extends

to reshuffles. The time until the end of the CIEP controls for the fact that Australia and New Zealand have 36-month CIEPs, whereas the other countries have 60-month CIEPs. The January dummy controls for seasonal cycles in the data as PMs (purportedly) tend to schedule major reshuffles during breaks (for example, over Christmas) in the parliamentary calendar.[19] The number of prior reshuffles is an additional means to control for event dependence in the data.[20]

As for variables of substantive interest, we included dummy variables identifying parties that use informal and caucus-based leadership selection systems and those that impose limits on cabinet management. With all Canadian cases using convention-based leadership selection systems and with the theoretical distinction that we are drawing between selection systems controlled by a few people and those controlled by many, it makes sense to use this category as the baseline. Note that the Australian and New Zealand Labour parties, the parties that impose limits on the PM's management of the cabinet, also employ caucus-based leadership systems. Thus the dummy variable denoting limited prime ministerial control of the cabinet also denotes caucus-based leadership selection (that is, it is the interaction of limits and caucus leadership). This pattern of covariation prevents us from estimating the effect of limits on cabinet management free from caucus-based leadership. This is a weakness in our dataset, but as we have not yet come across a party that places limits on cabinet management without using caucus-based leadership selection, we do not see how this problem can be rectified. We also included a dummy for coalition cabinets. The results are presented as hazard ratios rather than coefficients, thus they show the hazard rate proportional to the baseline category (convention-based leadership selection systems).

Institutional Determinants of Reshuffles

Models 1 and 2 test our institutional hypotheses. There is little evidence in Model 1 that party rules governing leadership selection and cabinet management affect the timing of reshuffles. Only the control variables are significant. Model 2 offers a more flexible specification, allowing the coefficients for caucus-based leadership selection and limited cabinet management to vary according to whether the reshuffle is an initial or subsequent reshuffle.[21] Once this is done, we begin to see institutional effects. The basic pattern is of caucus-based leadership selection increasing the hazard of an initial reshuffle but suppressing the hazard of a subsequent reshuffle. Limitations on the PM's cabinet management ability work against this trend, lowering the hazard of

TABLE 1
Conditional-Risks Models of Cabinet Reshuffles

Covariates	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Majority Status	.66	.72	.61*	.87	.74	.38*
	(−1.52)	(−1.12)	(−1.94)	(−.34)	(−.84)	(−1.72)
Coalition Government	.99	1.06	1.18	.75	1.61	1.45
	(−.04)	(.19)	(.43)	(−.79)	(.68)	(.79)
Caucus Leadership	1.09	2.17*	1.50	2.78	2.50	.15
	(.26)	(1.74)	(.78)	(1.45)	(1.31)	(−1.44)
Caucus Leadership	—	.32***	.26***	.39*	.46	.70
× Subsequent Reshuffle		(−2.88)	(−3.34)	(−1.78)	(−1.40)	(−.38)
Limited Control & Caucus Leadership	1.32	.76	.84	1.43	2.89	1.29
	(.75)	(−.64)	(−.34)	(.54)	(1.21)	(.43)
Limited Control & Caucus Leadership	—	2.67**	2.73**	1.87	1.35	2.96
× Subsequent Reshuffle		(2.16)	(1.99)	(.96)	(.44)	(1.50)
Informal Leadership Selection	.83	.75	.32	—	—	—
	(−.34)	(−.56)	(−1.65)			
Party Popularity$_{t-1}$	—	—	.98	1.04*	1.06**	1.09**
			(−1.57)	(1.69)	(2.55)	(2.27)
PM's Approval Rating$_{t-1}$	—	—	—	.96***	.94***	.91***
				(−2.61)	(−3.07)	(−4.09)
Senior Partner Popularity	—	—	—	—	.95**	—
− Junior Partner Popularity$_{t-1}$					(−2.01)	
$\sum_{t_0}^{t-1}$ By-election Losses	—	—	.87*	.98	.98	.70***
			(−1.94)	(−.36)	(−.30)	(−3.36)
$\sum_{t_0}^{t-1}$ Dissenting Divisions	—	—	—	—	—	1.02***
						(3.72)

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1
(continued)

Covariates	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
N Cabinet & Senior Noncabinet Ministers	1.03* (1.91)	1.03 (1.60)	1.01 (.57)	1.06** (2.33)	1.07** (2.51)	1.07** (2.44)
Months Left in CIEP	1.00 (–.37)	1.00 (–.24)	.98* (–1.74)	.99 (–.81)	1.00 (–.31)	1.02 (.64)
N Prior Reshuffles	.88* (–1.69)	.88 (–1.47)	.88 (–1.33)	.87 (–1.23)	.90 (–1.01)	.70*** (–3.10)
January Dummy	1.56* (1.83)	1.57* (1.87)	1.58* (1.75)	1.77** (2.29)	1.81** (2.22)	2.40*** (3.13)
United Kingdom	.77 (–.49)	.91 (–.18)	2.49 (1.33)	.42 (–1.11)	.38 (–1.31)	1.80 (.64)
Australia	.88 (–.28)	.87 (–.31)	1.12 (.18)	.38 (–1.11)	.24 (–1.48)	20.31* (1.90)
New Zealand	.77 (–.69)	.77 (–.70)	.88 (–.23)	.79 (–.26)	1.46 (.42)	7.69 (1.13)
Ireland	.50* (–1.82)	.42** (–2.18)	.53 (–1.22)	.76 (–.37)	1.10 (.14)	—
Log Likelihood	–630.2	–625.3	–478.5	–242.3	–225.6	–137.1
N Units (Spells)	237	237	188	120	115	73
N Failures (Reshuffles)	164	164	135	83	79	54
N Observations (Months)	2,596	2,596	1,838	1,027	978	602
Schoenfield Test of PH (χ)	7.21	15.36	8.54	6.67	4.10	8.06

Note: Cell entries are hazard ratios computed using the Efron method of resolving ties. Figures in parentheses are z-statistics based on robust standard errors clustered by government. $^{*}p < .10$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$.

initial reshuffles and increasing the hazard of later reshuffles. But once we calculate the net effects of the interactions, it is clear that cabinet management limitations do not entirely offset the effects of caucus-based leadership selection. The hazard ratio for initial reshuffles of cabinets in which caucus-based leadership systems are used is 2.17 and declines to .70 (that is, to 70% of the ratio for convention-based systems) for subsequent reshuffles. When cabinet management limitations are also in effect, the hazard ratio for initial reshuffles remains high at 1.65 and declines only to 1.43 for subsequent reshuffles. The overall effects come through in Figures 1A and 1B, which graph the time until a single-party majority cabinet is reshuffled, contingent on the leadership selection and cabinet management rules in effect. When the cabinet is headed by a convention-selected PM, the median time until an initial reshuffle is 17 months, with another 8 months until a subsequent reshuffle. For cabinets headed by PMs selected by the parliamentary party, these median times are 11 and 12 months for initial and subsequent reshuffles, respectively. When, in addition, these PMs have limitations placed on their management of the cabinet, these median times become 12 and 6 months, respectively. What stands out in these results, then, is how limitations on the PM's ability to manage the cabinet greatly reduce the time between reshuffles.

Time-Varying Determinants of Reshuffles

Models 3 through 6 test our time-varying hypotheses. We began by introducing two measures of government popularity to the model (Model 3): the governing coalition's share of polled vote intentions, which we term "popularity," and the number of by-election losses that that government had suffered to date. Both variables were lagged to avoid endogeneity. The popularity measure is straightforward enough, but the calculation of the by-election variable requires a brief explanation. By-elections are an opportunity for voters to offer midterm judgments on the government's performance (Mughan 1988). By-elections tend to be called in batches, the government expecting to lose some (because they are in opposition strongholds) and win others. To avoid overstating the government's unpopularity, we counted only by-election losses in seats previously held by the government, that is, in seats that the government could have been expected to win. Our variable tracks the sum of these losses over the course of the parliamentary term in a manner that proxies a coalition of minorities dynamic (Mueller 1970).

FIGURE 1A
The Impact of Leadership Selection and Cabinet Management Rules on the Timing of Initial Cabinet Reshuffles

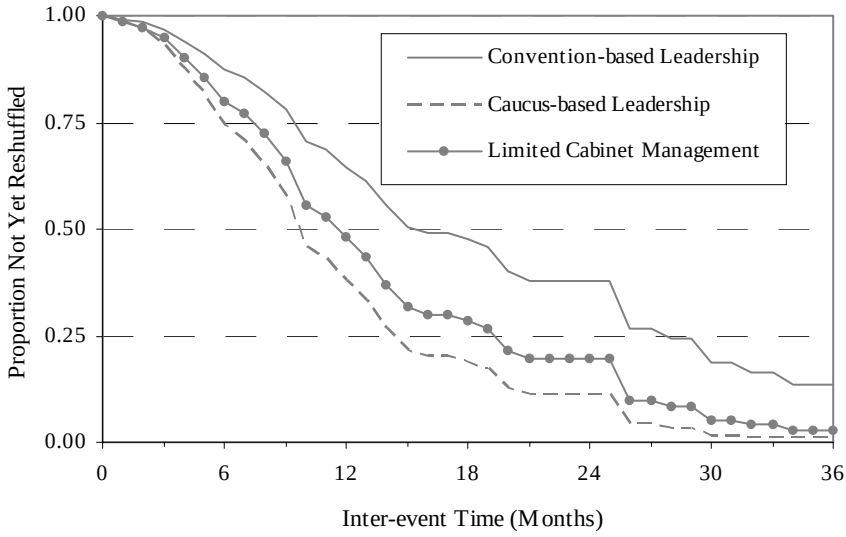
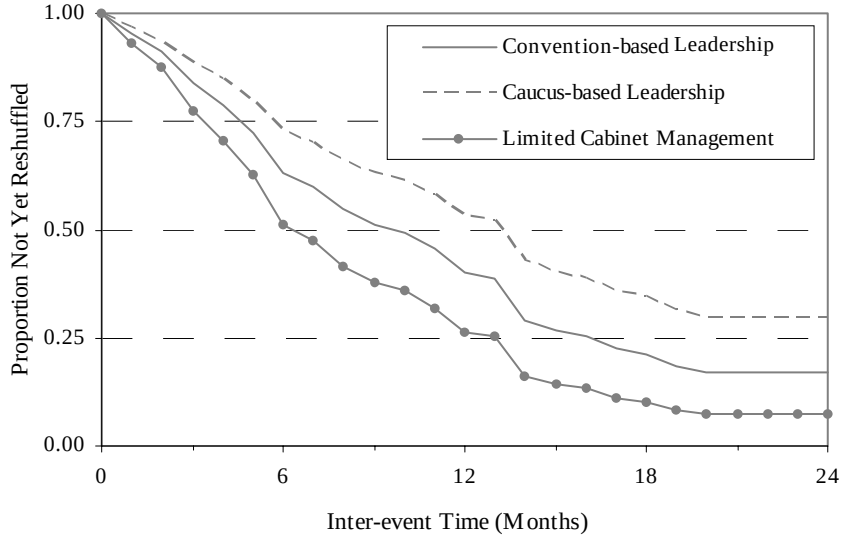


FIGURE 1B
The Impact of Leadership Selection and Cabinet Management Rules on the Timing of Subsequent Cabinet Reshuffles



The initial results do not provide strong support for the hypothesis that reshuffles become more likely as the governing party's (or parties') popularity declines. The hazard of a cabinet reshuffle does appear to rise as government popularity declines, but the effect is (marginally) statistically insignificant. As for by-elections, we expected mounting by-election losses to induce reshuffling. Our statistics suggest the opposite, however: reshuffles become less likely (that is, the hazard ratio declines) as by-election losses rise (although the substantive effect is not large because governments in this sample tend to lose only one seat per term on average). One might explain these weak and counterintuitive findings in a number of ways, but the broader message of these results is that the connection between the overall popularity of the government and reshuffles is not straightforward.[22] This finding points to an avenue for future research.

Model 4 adds the PM's (lagged) personal approval rating. (We dropped the informal leadership selection dummy because prime ministerial approval tends not to be available until the late 1970s, by which time all parties had adopted formal leadership selection rules.) Prime ministerial approval combines with the government's popularity in an interesting way. Government popularity is positively related to the hazard of a reshuffle (the hazard ratio is greater than 1), but prime ministerial approval is negatively related to the hazard of a reshuffle (the hazard ratio is less than 1). This result appears to suggest that popular cabinets are more likely to be reshuffled than unpopular cabinets, a counterintuitive finding because it is unclear why a PM would alter an ostensibly successful cabinet. A more coherent interpretation emerges if the marginal effects of government popularity and prime ministerial approval are considered in tandem, namely, if we hypothesize that, at any given level of government popularity, reshuffles become more likely as the PM's approval declines. (Supporting this interpretation is the fact that when prime ministerial approval is not in the model—as in Model 3 and in other specifications not shown here—government popularity operates in the hypothesized direction, with declining popularity sparking reshuffles.) In other words, when PMs become electoral liabilities, that is, when their personal popularity begins to lag behind their government's, reshuffles become more likely.

The substantive effects of this relationship are very strong and are illustrated in Figures 2A and 2B. The figures show the survival time (time until reshuffle) of a single-party majority cabinet with convention-based leadership selection (the Canadian and British norm) given varying levels of prime ministerial popularity. Party popularity is fixed at 40% in these graphs (the sample mean), while prime ministerial popularity varies

FIGURE 2A
Prime Ministerial Popularity
and the Timing of Initial Cabinet Reshuffles

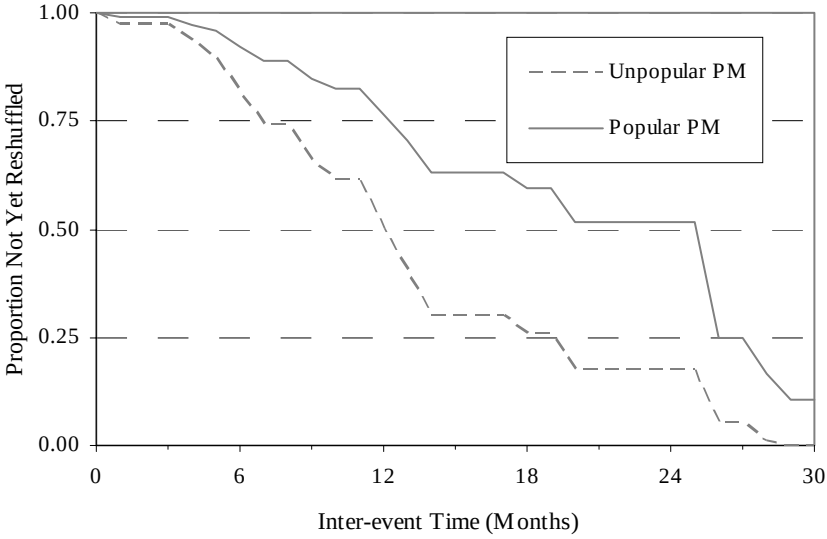
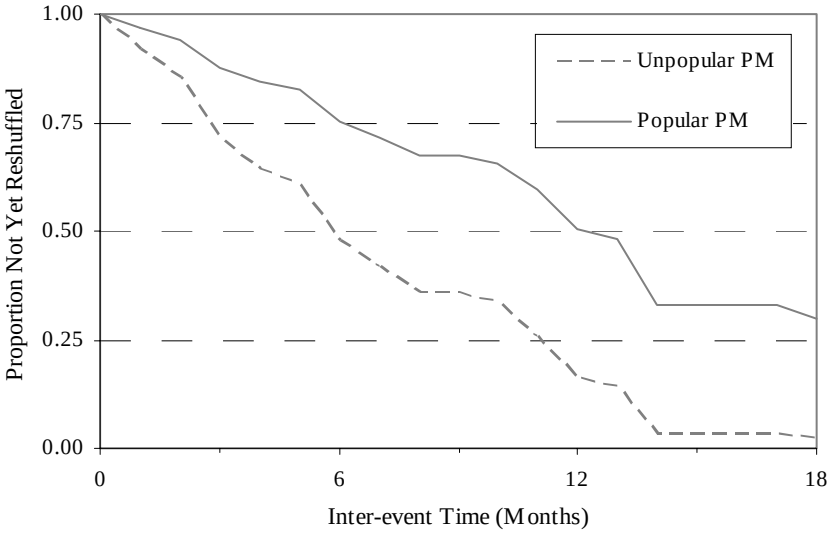


FIGURE 2B
Prime Ministerial Popularity
and the Timing of Subsequent Cabinet Reshuffles



from 47.5% ("popular PM") to 32.5% ("unpopular PM"). This 15% decline in prime ministerial approval reduces the median survival time to an initial reshuffle from 21 to 14 months, and the median survival time to a subsequent reshuffle from 12 to 6 months. This is a robust pattern that persists in every subsequent specification that includes both governmental popularity and prime ministerial approval.

We added a fourth popularity variable, the popularity gap between senior and (largest) junior coalition partners, to Model 5.[23] Our prior expectations regarding this variable were not strong—we merely expected that changes in it would be associated with changes in the risk of a reshuffle. The results indicate a fairly strong negative relationship between the popularity gap between the senior coalition partner and largest junior partner and the hazard of a reshuffle. The marginal effects are illustrated in Figures 3A and 3B. Both figures depict the time until a majority coalition cabinet (with caucus-based leadership selection) is reshuffled as the popularity gap between partners shrinks from 30% to 20%.[24] This 10% shift in popularity between coalition partners reduces the median time to an initial reshuffle from 19 to 13 months, and the median time to a subsequent reshuffle from approximately 16 months to 12 months (granting that the plateau in the survival curve limits precision). Any such shift in the relative popularity of senior and junior coalition partners is due either to the senior party becoming less popular or the junior partner becoming more popular (or both). As PMs are almost always members of the senior coalition partner (in our dataset they always are), what we observe is that PMs tend to reshuffle as their intracoalition position becomes weaker. To our knowledge, this is the first demonstration of an idea hinted at by Laver and Shepsle, namely, that PMs might reshuffle the cabinet to "impound . . . the public opinion shock while avoiding the necessity of an early election" (Laver and Shepsle 1998, 39, n. 12). Whether PMs use these reshuffles to shore up their party's position within the coalition or to acknowledge the junior partner's newfound status cannot be discerned from our aggregate data, but it remains an interesting question for future research.

The final variable we added to the model was the running (lagged) sum of dissenting divisions, that is, divisions in which the governing party (or coalition) failed to maintain perfect cohesion. (We do not have these data for Ireland and so Model 6 excludes Ireland.) Backbench dissent on the parliamentary floor is one barometer of the parliamentary party's satisfaction with the cabinet's policies. The hypothesis is that the risk of a PM reshuffling the cabinet is positively related to intraparty dissent, but naturally we do not see reshuffles being sparked by an isolated rebellion. Instead, we see rising levels of parliamentary dissent

FIGURE 3A
The Relative Popularity of Coalition Partners
and the Timing of Initial Cabinet Reshuffles

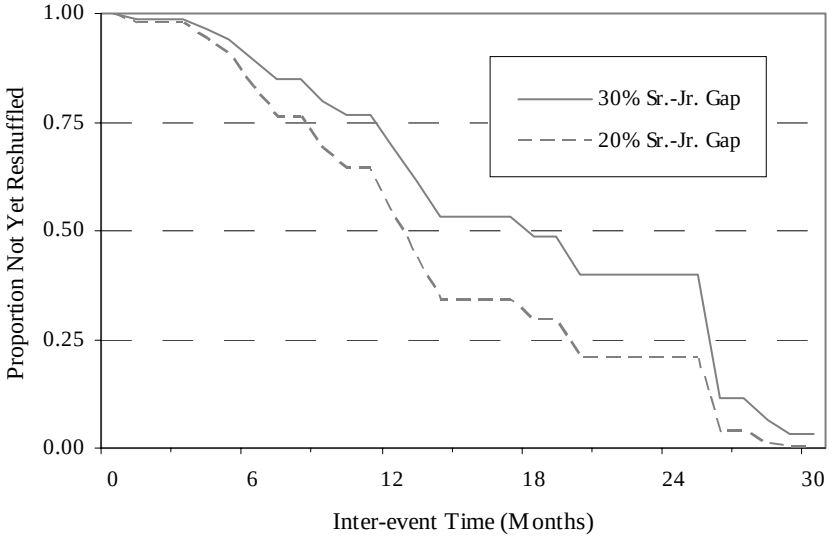
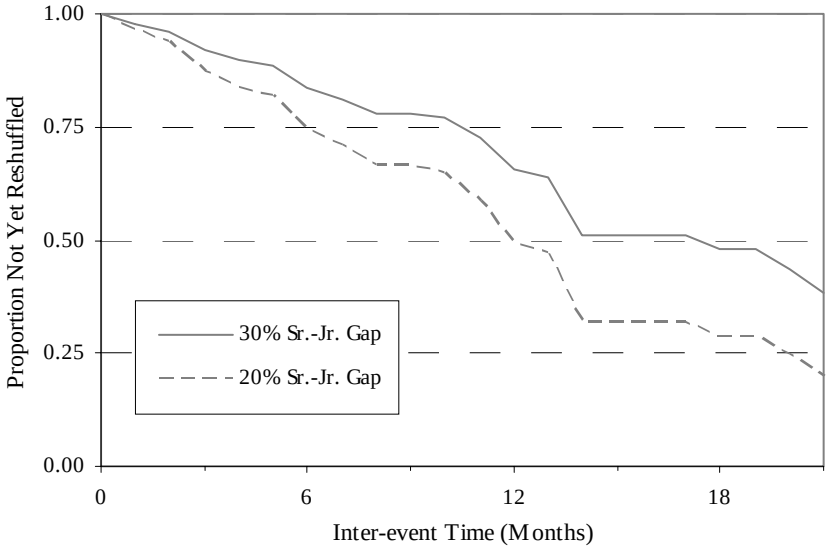


FIGURE 3B
The Relative Popularity of Coalition Partners
and the Timing of Subsequent Cabinet Reshuffles



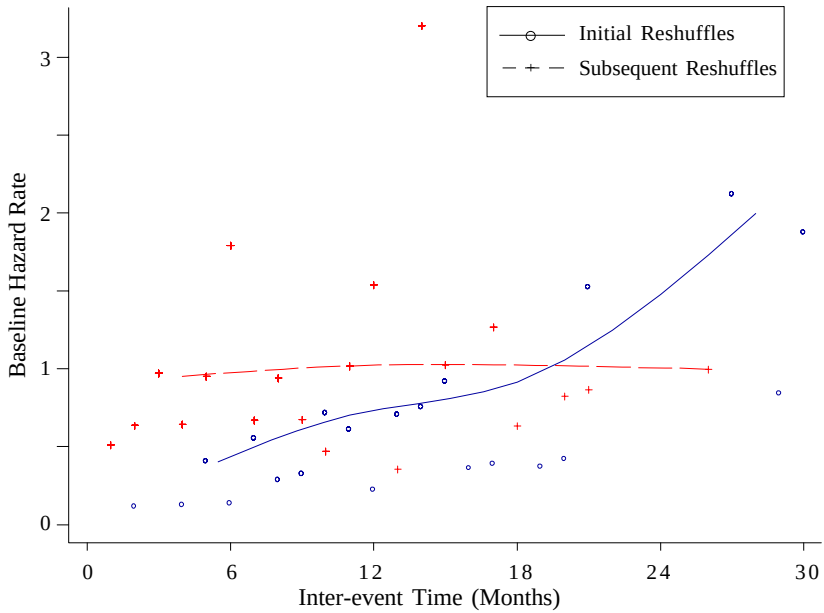
indicating that an ever-growing proportion of the parliamentary party opposes the PM. The variable's running sum construction helps to capture this dynamic. The results vindicate our hypothesis: the hazard of a reshuffle increases by approximately 1% for every additional dissenting division. The substantive effect is large for British governments, which endure 97 dissenting divisions per term on average, but much smaller for Australian and New Zealand governments, which exhibit virtually perfect cohesion, suffering fewer than 5 dissenting divisions per term on average.

Determining whether or not reshuffles become more likely as the parliamentary term progresses is not as simple a matter as estimating and interpreting the marginal effects of the other variables in the model. True, there is rarely a statistically significant connection between the hazard of a reshuffle and the number of months left in the CIEP, but this lack of a trend tells us only that the *mean* level of the hazard does not shift up or down over the course of the parliamentary term. The hazard rate itself might still rise (or fall) over the course of the term, a possibility best assessed by graphing the baseline hazard rate over time.

Figure 4 presents the (smoothed) hazard rates for initial and subsequent reshuffles generated from Model 3. The baseline hazard of initial reshuffles rises noticeably over time whereas that of subsequent reshuffles is fairly flat. Rising hazards signal a systematic decay of cabinet stability over time, whereas constant (flat) hazards are commonly interpreted as evidence that failure is due to random events rather than systematic processes (Alt and King 1994; Warwick 1994, 7–9).[25] The steadily rising hazard of initial reshuffles indicates, then, that reshuffles (initial ones, at least) become ever more likely as the election nears, a pattern that is consonant with the argument that reshuffles are elements of an electoral strategy. The flat hazard of subsequent reshuffles suggests that later reshuffles are not part of any such electoral cycle. It would be in keeping with coalition theorists' interpretation of constant hazards to speculate that the flat hazard rate of subsequent reshuffles is evidence that they are sparked or undertaken in response to randomly occurring political events (for example, leadership challenges, serious scandals, and so on). Keep in mind, however, that every reshuffle reduces the hazard of a subsequent reshuffle by 10 to 20% (depending on the model). Thus, although the picture is clear for initial reshuffles, which become more likely as time passes, it is less so for subsequent reshuffles.

Fully exploring the substantive meaning of the baseline hazards is a matter for another article, however. At this stage, it is most important to note that neither of the baseline hazards is declining, a signal that unobserved heterogeneity is not an issue here. Our models also conform

FIGURE 4
Hazard Rates of Initial and Subsequent Reshuffles



to the proportional-hazards assumption (the assumption that the baseline hazards are proportional in the covariates), although this is not true when time is measured in elapsed time. The coefficients are nevertheless remarkably robust to this sort of change.

5. Conclusion

The central assumption of our theoretical model is that PMs are driven by a desire to maintain power. Consequently, we see reshuffles as tools that PMs use to help them attain this end, by undercutting the activities of internal rivals for power (chiefly their ministers, but also their coalition partners), and by improving their odds of winning reelection. This framework leads us to predict that PMs will reshuffle their cabinets as their intraparty, coalitional, and electoral positions become more precarious.

Three main statistical results of our work bear out this prediction. First, the hazard of a reshuffle is highest in cabinets where institutional rules both limit the PM's management of the cabinet and place leader-

ship selection under the control of the parliamentary party. This finding demonstrates that reshuffles are most likely in situations where the PM's agency loss to cabinet ministers is theoretically greatest. Second, the hazard of a reshuffle rises whenever parliamentary and electoral popularity decline. Specifically, we show that PMs reshuffle as intraparty dissent increases and the prime minister's own approval ratings begin to lag behind the government's popularity. Third, we show that the hazard of a reshuffle rises whenever the popularity gap between the PM's party and the junior coalition partner narrows. The common theme here is that PMs reshuffle their cabinets whenever their intraparty, parliamentary, or electoral positions deteriorate and the PMs become identifiable to party members, coalition partners, and voters as political liabilities. These conditions invite leadership challenges, threats of coalition termination, and electoral defeat, and, in turn, they appear to elicit cabinet reshuffles. Taken together, these results comport more closely with the strategic interpretation of reshuffles that we have put forward than with the argument that reshuffles are standard parliamentary operating procedures or technocratic devices used to recruit political talent into cabinet.

What do these results mean for the broader study of parliamentary politics? Robert Menzies, Australia's longest-serving prime minister, is reputed to have remarked to his ministers that his cabinet's central policy was to maintain Menzies, himself, as prime minister. Certainly, the theory and results we have laid out here underscore the central position of prime ministers—and prime ministerial survival—in parliamentary politics. This is not to say that we espouse a presidential view of parliamentary politics or automatically assume that parliamentary government has given way to prime ministerial government (as per Foley 2000 or Savoie 1999, for example). On the contrary, our model does not place PMs above parliamentary politics but in their midst, where PMs struggle to maintain control of their cabinets, their parties, and their coalition partners, as well as their reelection fortunes.

Our results, moreover, should not be reduced to the epigram that "weak PMs reshuffle, strong PMs don't." We do not take PMs to be intrinsically weak or strong. Instead, we have argued that the nature of parliamentary government is such that there is tension between PMs and cabinet ministers and coalition partners. Some institutional configurations and circumstances—constraints on the PM's ability to manage the cabinet or the PM's personal unpopularity, for example—exacerbate this tension and invite challenges to the PM's authority. The more frequent and severe these challenges, the stronger the incentive will be for the PM to reshuffle the cabinet. It is the incentive to reshuffle that is stronger or weaker, not the PM.

Our article also serves to open up a research agenda on cabinet reshuffles. A large number of issues remain to be explored. Several of these strike us as particularly provocative. First, the link between government popularity and reshuffles is not straightforward. It is not yet evident, for example, whether the effects of changing levels of government popularity on reshuffles are institutionally or temporally contingent. These sorts of relationships are important to investigate because they have the potential to shed light on a second question, to wit, do reshuffles make a difference? The historical anecdotes and interview excerpts that we have presented highlight the fact that PMs use reshuffles to try to achieve some end: a desired policy, a resurgence of political popularity, the sidelining of a rival, and the like. Our statistical evidence comports with this view but does not speak to whether or not reshuffling works as PMs intend. This efficacy is not an easy matter to establish, yet it is a vital one because demonstrating that reshuffles alter electoral outcomes or policies further justifies cabinet reshuffles as a topic worthy of attention. The nature and place of cabinet reshuffles in coalition governments is also worth following up. We have shown that reshuffles become more likely as the senior party's position in the coalition weakens. It is not clear, however, whether these reshuffles are "defensive," designed to appease an increasingly popular junior partner, or "offensive," intended to prevent the junior partner from translating growing political popularity into cabinet power. This is an especially important question because it promises to link the nascent work on reshuffles to the far more established literature on coalition formation and termination.

To fully explore these, and other related, issues demands a larger and more refined dataset that is, for now, beyond our reach. That said, our work indicates how important it is to think about how institutional rules and political conditions affect the strength of the PM's position within the governing coalition. This emphasis on intraparty politics and on the pivotal role of the prime minister stands in contrast to much of the existing work on coalition politics. Thus, although there are parallels (especially methodological ones) between the work we have presented here and the existing literature on cabinet survival (for example, Alt and King 1994, Diermeier and Stevenson 1999, Lupia and Strøm 1995, and Warwick 1994), there are enough differences to suggest that the way forward requires careful thinking about the similarities and differences between reshuffles and other forms of cabinet instability.

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NOTES

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1. There is a small literature on ministers' tenure (e.g., Headey 1974 and Rose 1987). A few works examine reshuffles directly (e.g., Alt 1975, Dewan and Dowding 2002, Herman 1975, Huber and Martinez-Gallardo 2001, and White 2000), and Sayers and Moon (1999) investigate the reorganization of Australian ministerial portfolios over time. In contrast, Grofman and van Roozendaal (1997) cite dozens of works on portfolio allocation and cabinet survival.

2. Kam interviewed 10 Canadian parliamentarians, including 1 minister and 3 former ministers, on the subject of cabinet reshuffles. The interviews took place in Ottawa, May 14–26, 2003. All subsequent interview excerpts come from these conversations.

3. Take Britain as an example. In Britain, there are two grades of ministers outside the cabinet, Ministers of State and Under-Secretaries of State. Ministers of State are considered senior ministers in their own right and are actually quite powerful: they are often charged with implementing and administering policy, and may have some power to set policy in narrow areas. Under-Secretaries, in contrast, have no power independent of their cabinet minister.

4. This was our minimum criterion for a reshuffle, and it rarely resulted in ambiguity because most reshuffles involved far more extensive changes.

5. For example, one might argue that changes made to the incumbent cabinet following a successful reelection bid should be considered reshuffles, not installations of wholly new cabinets.

6. A number of historical examples underscore the fact that PMs cannot count on ministers to follow orders dutifully. Selwyn Lloyd, as we have seen, refused to implement the expansionist fiscal policy that Macmillan desired. Rex Connor, Minister of Minerals and Energy in Gough Whitlam's Australian Labor government, engaged in a covert scheme to raise capital to fund Australian mining efforts, even after Whitlam and the cabinet forbade Connor from doing so (Bolton 1996, 239; Edwards 1996, 119–20)! As Minister of Finance in Jack Lynch's Fianna Fail government, Charles Haughey conspired with several other ministers to fund and transport arms to Northern Ireland (Collins 2000). Haughey's clandestine actions ran directly against Lynch's nonconfrontational approach to the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland (and verged on

being illegal, although Haughey was acquitted) but were nevertheless popular with the extraparliamentary party. Michael Heseltine, Margaret Thatcher herself argues, pushed his own line on a European takeover of Britain's Westland helicopter company, making concerted efforts to precommit the cabinet to his, not Thatcher's, preferred outcome (Thatcher 1993, 423–32). Roger Douglas, Peter Lange's Finance Minister in the New Zealand Labour governments of the 1980s, refused to water down his staunch neoconservative policies, eventually forcing a showdown with Lange that resulted in both men leaving the cabinet (Boston and Holland 1987). In Canada, Paul Martin, Chrétien's Finance Minister and chief rival, used his influence in the party to push for a formal review of Chrétien's leadership, an opening gambit in a bid to force Chrétien from the premiership. In sum, whether because ministers are incompetent, ideologically opposed to the PM, willfully intent on unseating the PM, or have become departmental ciphers, PMs frequently struggle to maintain control of their ministers.

7. The claim here is simply that reshuffles are one (important) means of eliminating the agency loss associated with cabinet government. There are other ways of doing this, of course. Vanberg and Martin (2004), for example, argue that legislative mechanisms are used to monitor ministers' actions and address the moral hazard present in ministerial delegation.

8. The first condition is more intuitive than the second; it merely posits that the cabinet's political fortunes are shared to some extent. For example, if a minister is caught in a scandal, then the assumption is that the negative effects of the scandal partly adhere to his or her cabinet colleagues. As an example of the second condition, consider a minister whose overspending in his or her portfolio enables successors to overspend to an even greater extent, as would be the case if budgeting were incremental. Alternatively, one might imagine that a minister who gets away with overtly criticizing the PM creates a precedent for his or her successors. Thus, the second assumption is that "bad" ministerial behavior in the present enables even worse ministerial behavior in the future.

9. We are concerned here only with the leadership selection rules in the prime minister's party because even if a coalition government is in place, only one party controls the premiership. Of course, the existence of a coalition may complicate matters, but we deal with these issues later in the article.

10. The list of PMs removed by their parties is longer than one might think: In the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher; in Australia, John Gorton and Bob Hawke; in New Zealand, Peter Lange, Geoffrey Palmer, and James Bolger. (One might arguably place Ireland's Albert Reynolds in this group because his resignation was clearly due to the fact that he had lost the confidence of the Fianna Fail parliamentary party.) A number of other PMs were formally challenged for the leadership by one of their ministers, including Malcolm Fraser, Charles Haughey, and John Major. Tellingly, all of these PMs were pushed out or challenged by parties in which the parliamentary party alone voted on the leadership. In Canada, where leadership selection is in the hands of a partywide convention, only Chrétien can be said to have faced a formal (but aborted) challenge. Of the 46 PMs in our sample, then, 11 (24%) were formally challenged by an internal rival and 6 (13%) were removed from the premiership as a result.

11. In Australia, for example, the National party vetoed the Liberal party's selection of William McMahon as Harold Holt's successor, allowing John Gorton to emerge as a compromise choice for the premiership (Davis 1998).

12. Indeed, Alt (1975) and White (2000) have investigated this hypothesis using British and Canadian data, respectively. In both cases, the conclusion was the same: if there is a cyclical component to reshuffles, it is weak. Alt notes, for example, a recent (1950–70) tendency for shuffles to occur earlier in the parliamentary term than in the past, but no more than that. One should not be put off by these weak results; PMs may use reshuffles both as responses to random events and as part of a systematic reelection program. Until one controls for the impact of random events (and neither Alt nor White did this), any systematic pattern in the timing of reshuffles is likely to remain obscure.

13. Parliamentary dissent, that is, backbenchers voting against their own parties, is a more frequent occurrence than one might think. Philip Norton (1975, 1980) and Philip Cowley (2002) have documented a surge of dissent in the British Parliament from the early 1970s onward. The percentage of divisions witnessing intraparty dissent on the government side rose from a 1945–70 average of 5% to a post-1970 average of 15%. Government defeats increased in lockstep with this surge of dissent. British governments suffered 65 defeats between 1970 and 1979 (many due to internal rebellion); the previous 25 years had witnessed only five (Norton 1985, 27). Dissent has never been as threatening to the government in Canada as in Britain, but it has been nearly as frequent (Wearing 1998). The 1993–97 Chrétien government, for example, saw its backbenchers vote against it on 16% of divisions. Dissent has been much less frequent in New Zealand, Australia, and Ireland, but work by Lucy (1985), Hobby (1987), Mitchell (1999), and Kam (2002) indicates that it has not been absent. Our point, in any case, is not that PMs cannot get their legislative programs through Parliament (they can), but rather that high levels of dissent signal that the policy content of the PM's programs is disliked. This disapproval is significant because PMs are not presidents; their political success and survival depend on maintaining the active support of both their ministers and their backbenchers.

14. The 74 censored spells reflect the fact that there are 74 governments in our sample, each of which was censored when it gave way to a new government (as per the discussion in Section 1). Planned elections, those for which the government ostensibly controlled the timing of dissolution, were responsible for most instances of censoring (57 of 74 cases). Another 11 cases were censored because early elections were called by or forced on minority governments. Of the remaining 6 cases of censoring, 3 were due to coalition failure (i.e., a coalition partner leaving the coalition), 1 to a minority government being displaced by a newly formed coalition during the term (the short-lived Reynolds government in Ireland, which was pushed out by the Rainbow coalition of Fine Gael, Labour, and Progressive Democrats), 1 to the dismissal of the government by the Head of State (the 1975 Whitlam government in Australia), and 1 to a caretaker government calling elections (the Fraser government, which assumed power on Gough Whitlam's dismissal).

15. We were careful to code exceptions to this rule. For example, the Australian Labor Party was so thrilled by Paul Keating's 1995 election victory that the party departed from its usual practice and allowed Keating a free hand in selecting his ministers.

16. This section is heavily influenced by Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2002.

17. Practically speaking, this method means that there are as many records per unit as time periods (months, in this case) under study, but records for the *n*th reshuffle enter the risk set only after the unit (i.e., the government in question) has undergone its *n*th–1 reshuffle.

18. Clearly, monthly observations of the same government are not independent; this is why the standard errors are clustered by government. (Standard errors might also be clustered by prime minister, but this possibility makes little difference to the results.) What is perhaps less obvious is that the occurrence of earlier events may alter the hazard of later events. The best way of dealing with event dependence is to stratify the model by event order so as to allow the estimation of wholly separate hazards for each stratum. Event-by-covariate interactions can then be used to avoid the restriction of identical coefficients across strata. Of course, adopting this approach means that some grouping of higher-order events is required because the risk set shrinks with every reshuffle. The most obvious and logical distinction to make in this application is between initial and subsequent reshuffles: there can only be one initial reshuffle of a cabinet, but possibly many subsequent reshuffles. (Stratification of the first, second, third, and fourth and higher reshuffles returned substantially similar results.)

19. July and August dummies (for the summer break) had no statistically significant effects.

20. The inclusion of a prior-event-count variable allows the hazard function to shift up or down (as the case may be) with every additional reshuffle. This is a very rough means of dealing with event dependence that should not be used in place of stratification (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2002, 1086). When used alongside stratification, however, a prior-event-count variable can help to discern differences in the hazards of higher-order events that have been grouped together, in this instance, of second and higher-order reshuffles.

21. We ran models in which all institutional variables were interacted by event order, but only the coefficients for caucus-based leadership systems and cabinet management limitations showed any statistical significance.

22. The popularity hypothesis can be operationalized in a number of ways. For example, one might use monthly changes in popularity and examine the propensity of PMs to reshuffle given drops in popularity. A more elaborate hypothesis is that PMs are more likely to reshuffle when the party experiences a large drop in popularity while at a low level of popularity than when the party experiences a small drop at a high level of popularity. Similarly, one might combine our electoral cycle and popularity hypotheses and argue that late-term shifts in popularity have a greater impact on the risks of a reshuffle than do early-term shifts, which are so distant from the election that they are of little concern to the PM. We explored these hypotheses and some of them do have traction. For simplicity, however, we have focused on the relative power of institutional rules and changing political conditions in sparking reshuffles. We ran additional models that explored the relationship between reshuffles and changing economic conditions (e.g., unemployment, inflation, exchange rate volatility, and strike activity), but these results were so weak that we did not think it efficient to include them here.

23. For coalitions comprising three or more parties, we measured this popularity gap variable as the difference between the senior (or major) party's popularity and the most popular (minor or junior) coalition partner's popularity. In our dataset, the most popular junior coalition partner was always the second-largest party in the coalition (after the senior partner). This need not always be the case, of course, and future researchers working with broader datasets will have to decide whether the popularity gap should be measured as the difference in popularity between the two *largest* coalition parties or as the difference in popularity between the two most *popular* coalition parties.

24. The mean popularity gap for coalition governments in our sample is 26.5% with an interquartile range of 12.3%. Of the 74 governments in our sample, 20 are coalitions.

25. We note that this is an *interpretation* of constant hazards. Strictly speaking, a constant hazard indicates only that the hazard is independent of time.

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