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The Cross-National Determinants of Legislative Party Switching

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THE CROSS-NATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF LEGISLATIVE PARTY SWITCHING

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Abstract

Why do legislators switch parties? What accounts for variation in party switching across different countries? How do electoral rules impact legislative party switching behavior and how is this behavior impacted by changes to these rules? The first chapter of this study builds on the existing body of research on the determinants of legislative party switching. More specifically, I build on the extant theories which have identified vote-, office-, and policy-seeking as motivations of legislator behavior. I examine the strategic decision making of legislators in various institutional contexts and argue that such contexts create or modify incentives and constraints that condition the decision to switch parties. Moving beyond the single country and cross-national party level analyses prevalent in the literature, this study attempts to approach party switching with a cross-national battery of variables from an original individual-level dataset. This dataset includes observations from Canada, Italy, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom from 1990-2001. I find support for vote- and policy-seeking hypotheses as well as district and system level institutional variables. In order to investigate how electoral rules impact party switching behavior, the second section of this study focuses on New Zealand and the evolution of its electoral system. These changes include a transition from a pure single-member district (SMD) electoral system to a mixed-member (MM), compensatory proportional representation system in 1996. Preliminary evidence suggests that the change to a MM electoral system is associated with a rise in the frequency of legislative party switching in New Zealand's House of Representatives. Additionally, there is evidence that party switching legislators are motivated by vote-seeking concerns over reelection.

1 Introduction

Why do legislators switch parties? What accounts for variation in party switching across different countries? This study builds on the existing body of research on the determinants of legislative party switching. More specifically, I build on the extant theories which have identified vote-, office-, and policy-seeking as motivations of legislator behavior. I examine the strategic decision making of legislators in various institutional contexts and argue that such contexts create or modify incentives and constraints that condition the decision to switch parties.

Party switching is normatively problematic for a number of reasons related to democratic representation, regime legitimacy, and political corruption. Numerous scholars have analyzed party systems and have revealed the harms of unstable party systems for they can decrease the stability and sustainability of democracy (Ames, 2001; Bowler, Farrell and Katz, 1999; Carey and Shugart, 1995). The growing body of research on party switching is also clear on the detrimental effect party switching can have on party systems. Desposato (2006) argues party switching violates one of the core pacts of democracy in that it makes it increasingly difficult for voters to identify the optimal candidate that corresponds with their preferences. Over time, this can decrease party legitimacy and transform party labels into meaningless initials (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995; Tavits, 2009). Fluid party systems have been linked to an increase in party switching as a method used by legislators to escape accountability (Zielinski, Slomczynski and Shabad, 2005).

I utilize both a cross-national approach and a case study of New Zealand to investigate the factors that increase party switching. This dataset includes observations from Canada, Italy, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom from 1990-2008. I find support for vote- and policy-seeking hypotheses as well as district and system level institutional variables such as seat and ballot type as well as the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP).

How do electoral rules impact legislative party switching behavior and how is this behavior impacted by changes to these rules? Changes in a country's electoral system are

rare occurrences. I attempt to determine how electoral rules influence a legislator's decision to switch parties through the evolution of New Zealand's electoral system during the 1990s and beyond. The country's changes include a transition from a pure single-member district (SMD) electoral system to a mixed-member (MM), compensatory proportional representation system in 1996. Evidence suggests that the change to a MM electoral system is associated with a rise in the frequency of legislative party switching in New Zealand's House of Representatives. Additionally, there is evidence that party switching legislators are motivated by vote-seeking concerns over reelection and there are distinguishable differences between MPs of different electorates — or seat type— as well as on what ballots an MP appeared.

This study is divided into two components; the first, which begins in the following section, is the cross-national analysis and the second is a case study of New Zealand and appears after the conclusion of the first.

2 Cross-National Analysis of Party Switching

Why do legislators switch parties? What accounts for variation in party switching across different countries? In a fifty year span, from 1947 to 1997, only 20 members of the U.S. Congress, from either chamber, switched political parties (Nokken, 2000). Yet, in the five years of Italy's thirteenth parliament (1996-2001), nearly 25% of the 630 member Chamber of Deputies changed party affiliation. Party switching is a relatively understudied phenomenon (O'Brien and Shomer, 2013). As a result, scholars of legislatures and political parties do not have a firm grasp of its prevalence. Information accumulated through the execution of dozens of single-country case studies serves as the bedrock of this body of literature.[1] Outside these case studies of countries with high occurrences of party switching, it is believed that party switching is a rarity (Desposato, 2006; Heller and Mershon, 2008). However, a recent study shows that party switching occurs more frequently and more broadly than the literature suggests. O'Brien and Shomer (2013) have found that among 239 political parties, nearly one-third have experienced party switching behavior and fourteen of the twenty countries analyzed witnessed some degree of switching.

One thing that scholars of legislatures have agreed upon is that party switching is normatively problematic for a number of reasons related to democratic representation, regime legitimacy, and political corruption. The literature has come to a consensus that unstable party systems decrease the stability and sustainability of democracy (Ames, 2001; Bowler, Farrell and Katz, 1999; Carey and Shugart, 1995). The growing body of research on party switching is also clear on the detrimental effect party switching can have on party systems. Desposato (2006) argues party switching violates one of the core pacts of democracy in that it makes it increasingly difficult for voters to identify the optimal candidate that corresponds

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[1]Some of the more notable case studies conducted include those on the countries of Brazil (Mainwaring and Perez-Linan, 1997; Desposato, 2006, 2009), Taiwan (Fell, 2014), Mexico (Barrow, 2007; Kerevel, 2014), Italy (Heller and Mershon, 2008; Mershon and Shvetsova, 2008; Virgilio, Giannetti and Pinto, 2012), Russia (Mershon and Shvetsova, 2008), Poland (McMenamin and Gwiazda, 2011; Zielinski, Slomczynski and Shabad, 2005), Japan (Desposato and Scheiner, 2008), South Africa (McLaughlin, 2011), and Ecuador (Mejia-Acosta, 2004), to name a few.

with their preferences. Over time, this can decrease party legitimacy and transform party labels into meaningless initials (Mainwaring and Scully, 1995; Tavits, 2009). Fluid party systems have been linked to an increase in party switching as a method used by legislators to escape accountability (Zielinski, Slomczynski and Shabad, 2005). Heller and Mershon (2008) observe that countries whose parties are known for high levels of cohesion, such as Italy, also suffer from extreme levels of party switching within their legislative bodies. This is juxtaposed with legislative systems with low party cohesion and exceptionally rare occurrences of party switching as in the United States.

Yet, legislative scholars interested in party unity typically ignore party switching behavior in their research. It is often dismissed as simply an indicator of weak party discipline or weakly institutionalized parties. However, there is a lack of consensus among empirical studies that this is the case. Party switching is a risky endeavor from the perspective of legislators and their decision to do so can provide profitable insight into the preferences of politicians. In this paper, I build upon the extant theories which have identified vote-, office-, and policy-seeking as motivations of legislator behavior (Fenno, 1973). I examine the strategic decision making of legislators in various institutional contexts and argue that such contexts create or modify incentives and constraints that condition the decision to switch parties. This paper seeks to address how institutional differences can lead to divergent outcomes cross-nationally in levels of party switching as well as to determine the motivations behind a legislator's decision to change party affiliation. Additionally, I attempt to discern the distinct effects of district and national level measures as well as how they interact in predicting the probability of a legislator switching parties.

Case studies have left us without the empirical leverage to investigate the role of various institutions given that they cannot be adequately studied without cross-national analysis. It is here I attempt to situate my contribution.[2] Given the integral role of institutions

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[2]Thus far, only one study has been conducted on the cross-national determinants of party switching. O'Brien and Shomer (2013) attempt to determine the impact of the behavioral trichotomy of vote-, office-, and policy-seeking motivations as well as the impact of several institutional variables on the occurrence of

in shaping behavior, it is vital they are included in any analysis that seeks to determine why legislators switch parties and why this behavior is more frequent in some countries but not others. By conducting a cross-national analysis on individual level data, I am in a unique position to include both district level and national level variables that may explain the occurrence of party switching. Furthermore, my analysis will enable the strength of the institutional indicators to be evaluated alongside legislative motivations.

Through the use of an original data set, I demonstrate support for the motivational hypotheses of legislative party switching and for institutional explanations for its occurrence. Specifically, I find that both an MP's district vote share and her party's national vote share are negatively associated with party switching which substantiates the notion that legislators use party switching as a strategy to improve electoral support. In support of theories that suggest policy-seeking motivations for party switching, I find ideological extremity is positively related with the probability that a legislator switches party. Additionally, small district magnitudes and a high number of political parties are substantial predictors of party switching. The next section of the paper provides a brief overview of what is known about party switching as well as my theoretical expectations regarding legislative motivations, institutions, and party switching. The third section identifies my data and measurement of the variables included in my statistical analysis. In the fourth section, I discuss the results followed by a concluding section which includes a summary of findings and avenues for future research.

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party switching. While this study has done much to advance the research agenda, it is limited in that the analysis was conducted at the party level.

3 Party Switching: Motivations and Institutions

Like much of the extant literature, I begin with the assumption that legislators are rational, utility-maximizing individuals with preferences (Laver and Benoit, 2003). Their decisions, including whether to remain in their party or cross the floor, are based on cost-benefit analyses. As research has shown, legislative party membership is associated with both costs and payoffs that are taken into account while a legislator continuously reviews the decision to switch parties during a legislative term (Cox, 1987).

Most scholarship on legislative decision-making focuses on the motivations that influence politicians. Drawing from the literature on American legislative politics, one can assume legislators desire a number of things. Most of this literature is built on the scholarly work of Mayhew (1974) in his seminal study of the electoral connection which conceives of legislators in the U.S. House as "single-minded seekers of reelection." However, studies of the electoral connection beyond the context of the United States has determined that not all legislators are single-minded seekers of reelection. For instance, David Samuels (2003) demonstrates that federalism in Brazil discourages members of the Chamber of Deputies from seeking reelection and incentivizes them to seek subnational offices. Jones and colleagues (2002) find a similar relationship in Argentina. Richard Fenno (1973) characterizes legislators as individuals that seek to maximize their electoral support, increase prestige and power within the legislature or advance to a higher office, and affect public policy. These vote-, office-, and policy-seeking goals, respectively, factor into the calculus of legislators' decision-making and have been utilized to explain legislative behavior around the world (Giannetti and Laver, 2001; Heller and Mershon, 2005, 2008; Mershon and Shvetsova, 2008; Shomer, 2009).

In subsequent research, scholars have demonstrated how the political party is a vehicle for legislators to achieve these goals (Aldrich, 2011; Aldrich and Bianco, 1992; Müller and Strom, 1999; Nokken, 2000; Thames, 2007). Some of the benefits of party membership include financial and human resources during a campaign, access to government funds and power over its distribution, and the ability to engage in the policy-making process. One can

assume that if legislators utilize parties to obtain their self-interested goals, they can also use party switching behavior as a strategy to the same end. A burgeoning body of work within legislative studies relaxes the assumption that parties are unitary actors whose legislative membership bases are permanent from election to election. Recent scholarship emphasizes the role of legislators within political parties as individuals who engage in strategic interaction to achieve their own ambitions and preferences (Desposato, 2006; Heller and Mershon, 2008).

Indeed, Heller and Mershon argue party switching is a "natural consequence of political ambition" and a reaction to party discipline (2008, p. 910). If party discipline is an obstacle to a politician's preferred outcome, whether it be pursuing a certain policy or vote maximization to increase chances of reelection, the politician has an incentive to switch parties. Numerous case studies find support for these expectations.[3] Furthermore, recent scholarship has shown a relationship between the type of behavior that is exhibited by a legislator and the temporal placement within a legislative cycle. Mershon and Shvetsova (2013) have demonstrated that as elections draw nearer, legislators are deterred from party switching, especially in candidate-centered electoral systems. Another study shows subnational elections serve as signals of a party's electoral strength during a legislative term and temporally coincides with party switching activity (Heller and Mershon, 2005). All of these studies indicate legislators often engage in strategic behavior with political parties in order to maximize their chances of obtaining their goals.

Much of what is known about party switching has reinforced the idea that parties exert vast amounts of influence over the future career of a member legislator (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1984; Gaines and Garrett, 1993; Taylor, 1992). The extant literature centers around the motives behind an MP's decision to switch parties or not.

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[3]See Desposato (2006); Mershon and Shvetsova (2008); Reed and Scheiner (2003).

3.1 Party Switching and Legislator Motivations

If politicians utilize parties in order to achieve a preferred outcome, it follows that party switching is a strategy they can use to pursue their goals.[4] Operating under the assumption that legislative party switching is legal within a country, the literature presents three plausible explanations for why a legislator might change party affiliations: to maximize votes (vote-seeking), obtain political advancement or power (office-seeking), or to affect policy change (policy-seeking).[5] Political parties may prioritize and weigh these goals differently and the range of these differences increases when examining individual candidates' preferences (Lott, 1987). It should be noted these motivations are not easily distinguishable from one another. Office- and policy-seeking legislators must also maintain their seats and must engage in vote-seeking behaviors in order to obtain their primary goals. In similar fashion, policy-oriented MPs must typically be a member of a party in the government in order to pursue their policy goals. While the separation of these behaviors simplifies matters for observational research, they are not as straightforward in reality.

A number of studies support the notion that legislators are vote-seekers that are chiefly concerned with shoring up enough electoral support to guarantee reelection (Aldrich and Bianco, 1992; Herron, 2002). Several countries have laws that do not allow legislators to be reelected to consecutive terms such as Costa Rica and Mexico. However, legislators in these countries often times seek election in a different legislative chamber or a subnational office where party affiliation, and party leaders themselves, can impact the outcome (Kerevel, 2014; Taylor, 1992). In these situations, there is still an incentive for legislators to engage in vote-seeking behavior to improve the strength of the party label (Pekkanen, Nyblade and Krauss, 2006). Therefore, a politician that is primarily concerned with winning an election

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[4]The caveat here is that there cannot be any institutional restrictions against party switching during a legislative term, such as laws that have been on the books in countries such as Belize, South Africa, and New Zealand (during the early 2000s). See Janda (2009).

[5]See Aldrich (2011); Desposato (2006); Fenno (1973); Müller and Strom (1999); Nokken (2000); Reed and Scheiner (2003).

may switch parties if she perceives her chances of being elected with her current party affiliation as unlikely. With few exceptions, legislators are elected by voters in electoral districts. Depending on the particular arrangement of a country's electoral rules, legislators depend on subsequent votes from this district to retain their seats during a future legislative term. If reelection is a primary concern of legislators, one would expect them to engage in vote-seeking behavior. For some legislators, this entails remaining in their current party and switching is preferable only to those legislators whose party fails to sufficiently increase the legislator's chances of winning reelection from her perspective.

In addition to district electoral performance, legislators are interested in maintaining a strong party label for reelection purposes (Cox and McCubbins, 1993; Pekkanen, Nyblade and Krauss, 2006). Conversely, legislators in nationally popular parties that perform poorly regarding district votes face incentives to switch to a party that can better guarantee them the district votes that will send them back to parliament. While the overall impact of a party's national electoral performance is expected to be negatively associated with party switching, the precise effect is believed to be conditional on district electoral performance. Not all legislators in nationally less popular parties switch parties. For example, politicians with high district support who are members of parties that fail to achieve a satisfactory portion of the overall votes cast in a country may not feel the need to engage in vote-seeking behavior since they are in a safe district. Some studies have shown that a portion of a party's legislators devote their time and resources to legislative matters that are more salient to party constituencies that are not geographically bounded (Blais and Massicotte, 1996; Pekkanen, Nyblade and Krauss, 2006; Stratmann and Baur, 2002). Parties delegate these responsibilities to ensure the maintenance of the party's national appeal and reputation for its provision is a collective good for all party members. The party's reputation forces legislators to consider the national performance of their party in tandem with their district performance. This leads to the formation of the first hypothesis:

H_1: Legislators who perform poorly in their district or are members of a party who performed poorly nationally are more likely to change parties than legislators (or legislators in a party) who perform well electorally in their district (or nationally).

The effect of party performance on party switching may be contingent upon the amount of electoral support an MP receives within her district. For example, an MP in a safe district may discount her party's national performance to a greater degree than an MP in a more competitive district.

While maintaining office is a vital concern to a majority of legislators, vote maximization is the precursor to other legislative goals that politicians pursue. A legislator has no hope of acquiring a more powerful position in the legislature or shape policies if she cannot win reelection. Legislators' office-seeking objectives are fueled by progressive ambition (Aldrich and Bianco, 1992; Black, 1972; Riker, 1962; Rohde, 1979; Schlesinger, 1966). In a study of party switching in Mexico, Kerevel (2014) finds that most of the country's party switching activity can be explained by the office-seeking motives of ambitious politicians. In such cases, legislators may change party affiliations when their current party cannot provide them with an attractive legislative post, such as a leadership position or membership on a certain influential committee. Additionally, legislators may abandon their party if there are a lack of advancement opportunities and instead switch to a party where their membership is of more consequence or prestige (Kam, 2009). Parties that form the government usually have more resources available to its members and also have control over more leadership and committee positions to distribute to satisfy its members' progressive ambition (Taylor, 1992). Conversely, parties of the opposition lack these advantages. More broadly, parties in government possess desirable agenda-setting power (Cox and McCubbins, 2005). One would expect a legislator exhibiting office-seeking behavior to switch parties from an opposition party to a party that forms the government. This leads to the following hypothesis:

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H_2: *Legislators of governing parties are less likely to switch than members of opposition parties.*

In addition to electoral support and prestigious positions, legislators depend on political parties for the enactment of policies they or their constituents support. Scholars have shown that when legislators of the same party share ideological goals there are fewer occurrences of defection (Desposato, 2006; Heller and Mershon, 2009). The more ideologically divergent a legislator is from her party, the more frequently she will have to vote against her preferences in order to walk the party line. Studies have demonstrated that in instances where a legislator's ideal point is further from her party's policy preferences, the more likely the legislator will be to defect from the party through the casting of a conflicting vote or changing of party affiliation (Herron, 2002; Mainwaring and Perez-Linan, 1997; Reed and Scheiner, 2003). Additionally, party unity is linked to a party's ability to affect policy outcomes (Bowler, Farrell and Katz, 1999; Carey, 2007). Therefore, a legislator whose party is ideologically divergent or too different from herself may motivate the legislator to change parties in order to increase her capability of affecting her preferred policy goals. Extreme parties may not provide ample opportunity for policy-seeking legislators because of the dearth of ideologically proximate actors in the legislature to assist in pursuing policy goals. This leads to the formation of a third hypothesis which is presented below:

H_3: *Legislators who are members of more ideologically extreme parties are more likely to switch parties than legislators who are members of less ideologically extreme parties.*

This expectation rests on a specific conceptualization of policy-seeking. Here, this term is used to indicate that a legislator with a policy preference acts on behalf of a second preference to *shape* policy rather than the notion that the legislator simply has policy preferences (Heller and Mershon, 2008). I am not arguing that extreme parties are not policy-oriented for this clearly is not the case. MPs of these parties can advocate policies but are not considered

policy-seekers unless they engage in activity to influence policy. The distinction here is that legislators in extreme parties that aim to affect policy must caucus with enough colleagues to constitute a majority; MPs from ideologically extreme parties have fewer potential partners due to the lack of ideologically proximate MPs. This may increase the likelihood that legislators from extreme parties will switch parties in an attempt to be more successful in their policy-seeking endeavors.

3.2 Party Switching and Institutions

There is a large and growing body of research that contends that institutional arrangements impact legislative decision-making (Ames, 1995; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1984; Heitshusen, Young and Wood, 2005; Micozzi, 2012). Much of this literature shows that institutions affect legislative behavior by influencing incentives and constraining actions. As with vote-seeking, both district and national level institutional features may prove to be useful indicators for explaining the occurrence of party switching.

Because the success of a legislator achieving her vote-, office-, and policy-seeking goals depends on her seat retention, the probability of being awarded a seat in parliament factors heavily into a legislator's decision-making calculus. Election to the legislature depends on the number of access points, or number of seats, available to candidates. The number of seats available in each electoral district in PR and mixed-member systems varies from district to district. In multi-member districts, politicians/parties can typically win seats with smaller vote shares than in SMDs. A greater number of seats increases the chances of a legislator winning a seat and has been shown to increase party loyalty (Hix, 2004). This combination of increased party loyalty and greater chances of winning a seat should reduce the occurrence of party switching in districts with greater magnitudes.

An additional reason why legislators from districts with greater magnitudes should be less likely to switch parties than their low district magnitude counterparts stems from the degree to which candidate-centered, SMD (and open-list PR) systems encourage the cultivation

of the personal vote compared to party-centered, PR systems (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1984; Crisp, 2007; Crisp, Jensen and Shomer, 2007). This emphasis on personal reputation comes at the cost of the importance of the party label which would allow legislators leeway to switch parties. Thames and Castelberg (2006) show that in mixed-member systems, legislators elected through SMD rules were more likely to switch than those elected via party list PR. Furthermore, one may expect legislators in multimember districts to engage in less personal vote cultivation activity than their single member district counterparts because credit claiming is more difficult when responsibilities are shared with other legislators in a district. The possibility of sharing credit with other legislators who may or may not have contributed the cause, and quite possibly with legislators of an opposing party, reduces the incentives for MPs in multimember districts to engage in personal vote cultivation (Heitshusen, Young and Wood, 2005; Klein, 2016). If this is the case, lower district magnitudes should reinforce personal vote cultivation while greater district magnitudes should undermine it which leads to the following hypothesis:

H_4: *Legislators elected in districts with fewer seats are more likely to switch parties than legislators elected in districts with more seats.*

In their analysis of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Heller and Mershon (2005) suggest an opposing argument. They posit PR legislators are more likely to switch than their SMD counterparts contingent upon the clear party labels. However, several studies have not encountered this finding (Kerevel, 2014; O'Brien and Shomer, 2013). I contend MPs from districts with fewer seats, particularly SMDs, should be associated with more switching than PR legislators. Candidate selection methods in SMDs and MMDs (multimember districts) are oftentimes quite different. MMDs typically have a more centralized candidate selection process with greater party control that includes party lists where seniority and loyalty are rewarded with better list positions. In this environment, party leaders may be reluctant to take a risk on a disloyal or seemingly fickle politician. On the other hand, SMDs usually have a decentralized candidate selection process which reinforces personal vote cultivation and

undermines party service and loyalty. Legislators in these districts can avoid the influence and power held by party leaders in MMDs and win their reelection through other means than party approval.

Turning to the national level, having more parties provides more alternatives to politicians in pursuit of preferential outcomes (Mershon and Shvetsova, 2013). Many studies have demonstrated that party competition dynamics fluctuate over time according to the number of parties within a system (Powell, 2000; Schofield and Sened, 2006). More alternatives improves the chances that something besides the status quo is optimal which could make a politician more likely to switch parties as the number of alternatives increases. Mershon and Shvetsova (2013) provide evidence that the effective number of parliamentary parties at the beginning of a legislative term increases the amount of party switching. One would expect legislators in party systems with a greater number of parties to be more likely to change affiliations than legislators in party systems with fewer parties.

>*H_5: Legislators in systems with more political parties are more likely to switch than legislators in systems with fewer political parties.*

The previous two hypotheses may seem to be at odds with Duverger's Law and its proponents (Duverger, 1954). However, as Cox (1997) notes, Duverger developed his theory at the district level whereas I am concerned with the number of parties at the national level. Cox argues Duverger's Law may hold across all SMDs within a country yet produce a multiparty system at the national level because some political parties are only competitive in certain regions. Therefore, district magnitude does not always correlate with ENPP and the two electoral features can exert different influences on legislative behavior.

4   Cross-National Data and Measurement

In order to test the above stated hypotheses, I use an original dataset of 2,062 individual-level observations of legislators in the lower chamber (or only chamber) of the legislature.[6] These data were gathered from government archival websites from four countries across seven legislative terms.[7] The countries included in this analysis are Canada, Italy, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom between the years 1990-2008.[8] These four countries and this time period were chosen for three reasons. First, each of these countries has experience with democracy that dates back numerous decades. Second, there is some degree of institutional variety and occurrence of party switching among them which the selection of legislative terms maximizes. Lastly, while the UK and Canada's institutional arrangements have remained fairly consistent over time, both New Zealand and Italy experienced changes to their electoral systems during the 1990s. Descriptive statistics for all variables can be found in the appendix.

4.1   Party Switching

Heller and Mershon (2009) have developed a typology for the classification of different types of party switching that captures the consolidation and stabilization of a party system as well as the fragmentation and weakening of it. Party switches are first categorized as either an inswitch, where a legislator changes from one party affiliation to another, or an outswitch which occurs when a legislator abandons a party label without selecting a replacement affiliation. Furthermore, these scholars classify a party switch as switching across already existing parties, a fusion where two or more parties merge to formulate a new party, a fission where one party is split into two or more smaller parties, or a start-up if the receiving party

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[6]The number of observations that appear in the empirical analysis decreases to 1,991 because I exclude legislators that were elected to parliament in a by-election. Additionally, the Comparative Manifesto Project does not have left-right ideological placement measures for all parties in the dataset. A few legislators from minor parties who were non-party switchers are excluded for this reason.

[7]Data for New Zealand was supplemented by John M. Carey's Legislative Voting Project (Carey, 2016).

[8]The legislative terms included in the dataset are Canada (1997-2000) Italy (1996-2001), New Zealand (1990-1993, 1993-1996, 1996-1999, and 2005-2008), and the United Kingdom (1997-2001).

is a new party. All of these scenarios are empirically observable across the population of party systems with start-ups being the most prevalent in post-communist Europe and re-democratized Latin America (Zielinski, Slomczynski and Shabad, 2005). The dataset used in this paper includes inswitches, outswitches, fusions, fissions, and start-ups.

A party switch is defined as "any recorded change in party affiliation on the part of a politician holding or competing for elective office" (Heller and Mershon, 2009, p. 8). For the purposes of this study, there are a couple of clarifications to be made. First, only legislators who switch parties during the legislative term are considered. Laver and Benoit (2003) explore the evolution of party systems between elections and illuminate potential causal mechanisms that differ between those expected to operate behind inter-party movement during a legislative term.[9] Second, legislators who were members of a party that was dissolved and whose member base was absorbed by another party are not considered party switchers by default. If a party merged with another, only legislators that did not follow the party into the merge are coded as switchers. This means that if a legislator was in party A which was merged into party B, the legislator is not coded as a party switcher if her affiliation changed to party B. However, if she switched to party C, she is coded as a party switcher. Because this paper partly seeks to parse out which motivational factors are most influential on the decision to party switch (and thereby attempting to answer the question of why a legislator changed parties), party dissolution is a known, identifiable reason and is not considered a puzzle. Likewise, members who are expelled from their parties for scandal-related reasons are also not considered party switchers in this paper.

With these considerations in mind, party switching is coded as 1 if the legislator changed party affiliation at any time during the legislative term and 0 otherwise.[10] If a legislator changed party and subsequently returned to the original party, she is coded as a party

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[9]The authors demonstrate that multi-party systems have a greater potential to evolve between elections, and office-seeking politicians gravitate toward large, dominant parties.

[10]A similar coding strategy is employed by O'Brien and Shomer (2013) in their dichotomous coding of legislative parties that contained party switchers.
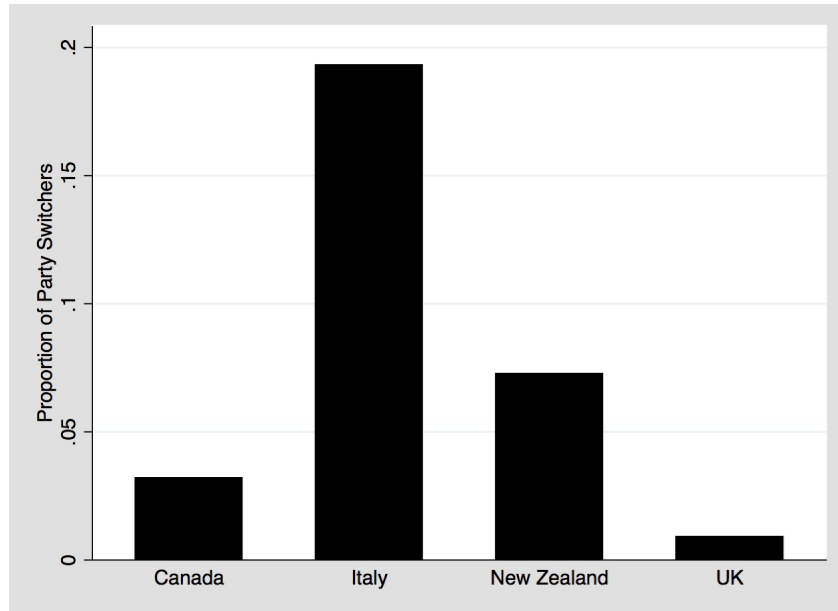
Figure 1. Proportion of party-switching legislators by country

switcher. If a legislator dropped affiliation and remained a legislator as an independent, she is also coded as a party switcher. In this dataset, 174 legislators (or 8.44% of the observations) are party switchers. Figure 1 shows the distribution of switchers across the four countries in this analysis. Approximately three percent of Canadian MPs and one percent of UK MPs switched parties. The bulk of the switching occurred in New Zealand and Italy where about eight and twenty percent of legislators switched parties, respectively.

4.2   Explanatory Variables

Vote-seeking is conceptualized as behavior exhibited by a legislator when she changes political party affiliation because of doubts of winning reelection (or election, if seeking a different elected position) with her current party affiliation. Because vote shares determine which legislative candidates are awarded a parliamentary seat, it is reasonable to assume that this percentage serves as a signal of electoral strength to a candidate. There are two measures used for vote-seeking. The first measure is the legislator's district level vote share. Holding all else constant, legislators with low district level vote shares that switch parties can be described as exhibiting vote-seeking behavior. In keeping with $H1$, there should be a negative

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association between this continuous variable and party switching. The second measure is the national vote share of the legislator's party.[11] Similarly to the district level measure, legislators of parties with low national vote shares that switch parties are characterized as vote-seekers. Data for these variables were obtained through Adam Carr's Election Archive (2016), the New Zealand Election Study, and Italy's Ministry of Internal Affairs website.

A legislator is office-seeking when decisions are made on the basis of acquiring more prestigious or powerful positions within the legislature, such as a leadership position or membership on certain politically lucrative committees. Because parties that control a legislative chamber have more resources and control over such positions, office-seeking party switchers are expected to change from a less politically influential party within the legislature to a party with more benefits. Office-seeking measurement is based on whether or not a legislator is a member of a government party. Considering all countries in this analysis are parliamentary, this variable is coded as 1 if the legislator's affiliated party, at the time of the election, formed part of the governing coalition formed immediately after the election and 0 otherwise. One would expect legislators who are members of the opposition, coded 0, to be more likely to switch parties because those legislators already members of parties in charge face little to no office-seeking incentives. Therefore, for $H2$ to be supported, there must be a negative association between this dichotomous variable and party switching. Data were acquired from the Parliament and Government Composition Database.

Party switching due to policy-seeking occurs when a legislator changes affiliation in the pursuit of affecting a certain policy that is of particular importance to the legislator or her constituents. Parties are vehicles through which policies are shaped in the legislature. I use the ideological extremity of a legislator's party in order to proxy the legislator's capacity to affect policy outcomes. More extreme parties, by definition, have less in common with the remainder of the governing body and their members' interests are less likely to overlap with

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[11]For Italian legislators, the coding of party national vote share is determined by whether the MP was elected via SMD or PR since there are two aggregate measures for the two ballots Italian voters cast in elections.

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those that harness agenda-setting power. This reduces the ability of MPs in extreme parties to impact or successfully pursue policy goals. To measure ideological extremity, I employ the Manifesto Project Database's right-left positioning of political parties on a scale of -100 (leftist) to 100 (rightist). I averaged the scores of each MP's party and then calculated the difference between each party's CMP score and the average. The extremity variable is the absolute value of this indicator so that higher values are associated with extremely leftist or rightist parties and values closer to zero are associated with more centrist parties within the contexts of each country's ideological context. $H3$ suggests that there should be a positive relationship between ideological extremity and party switching.

In addition to these motivational concerns, certain institutional features, both district and system level, have been argued to have an effect on party switching. First, I use an indicator for an MP's seat type where SMD is coded 1 and PR is 0.[12] Second, the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPP) of each country is included in the analysis (Gallagher, 1991; Gallagher and Mitchell, 2008). This is preferential to the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP) because I am focusing on party switching that occurs *during* a legislative term. Another possible measure is to calculate the ENPP of each MP's district. While this is certainly a plausible measure and potentially superior, to avoid complications with proportional tiers in mixed-member systems. The national ENPP remains a useful measure for this analysis because it provides information on the competitiveness and composition of the national legislature where the party switching is observed. This continuous variable measures the number of effective parties at the legislative level. $H4$ posits that there should be a positive relationship between having an SMD seat and party switching while $H5$ supposes a positive relationship between the number of parliamentary parties and party switching.

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[12]As an alternative, I employ district magnitude in a few models found in the appendix. These data were also acquired through Carr (2016) and are log transformed (Amorim Neto and Cox, 1997; Benoit, 2001).

5 Cross-National Analysis

A binary logistic regression was conducted with robust standard errors clustered by country-term.[13] Table 1 displays the results. Model 1 includes only the vote-, office-, and policy-seeking variables. Model 2 also includes the national vote share of the legislator's party, seat type (SMD), and ENPP. The interaction term between district and party level vote shares posited by $H1$ is included in Model 3. A discussion of each model's results follows.

Table 1. Logistic regression results with robust standard errors clustered by legislative term.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
District vote %	−0.041***	−0.048***	−0.086***
(vote-seeking)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.023)
Party national vote %	–	−0.029***	−0.097***
		(0.010)	(0.038)
District % × Party %	–	–	0.002*
			(0.001)
In government	0.136	0.463*	0.395
(office-seeking)	(0.235)	(0.238)	(0.268)
Party ideological extremity	0.022**	0.016*	0.018*
(policy-seeking)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.010)
SMD	–	1.484***	1.998***
		(0.431)	(0.621)
ENPP	–	0.495***	0.506***
		(0.124)	(0.132)
Constant	−1.082***	−3.351***	−2.332***
	(0.184)	(0.853)	(0.674)
AIC	1056	962	953
Log Likelihood	-524	-475	-470
N observations	1992	1991	1991

Notes: * $= p \leq 0.1$, ** $= p \leq 0.05$, and *** $= p \leq 0.01$.

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[13]The appendix contains models with alternative measures, results with each country removed from a model, in addition to multilevel and rare events logit models.

Model 1 provides strong statistical support for both $H1$ and $H3$. Higher district level vote shares are associated with a decrease in the likelihood of a legislator switching parties. Also, legislators in more ideologically extreme parties are more likely to change affiliations. Office-seeking does not receive support from this model.

With party vote shares, the SMD indicator, and ENPP added, Model 2 demonstrates that the support found for $H1$ and $H3$ persists. Furthermore, party vote shares are highly statistically significant and negative, as expected. MP's with SMD seats are significantly and positively associated with party switching, lending support to $H4$. ENPP has a significant and positive relationship with party switching. Office-seeking achieves statistical significance but in an unexpected direction which does not support the idea that legislators in government are more likely to switch than governing MPs.

Of the three models, the third, which includes an interaction between district and party vote shares, fits the data the best. It provides the strongest support for both the motivational and institutional hypotheses. Multimember districts, membership of less extreme parties, and lower ENPP are all associated with a lower likelihood of party switching. Overall, all hypotheses but $H2$ receive support across all models. The interaction and party ideological extremity closely miss the 0.05 level of significance. One possible reason why office-seeking fails to obtain statistical significance and the expected sign is the fact that Italy's governing coalition fell midway through the legislative term so that some legislators coded as in an opposition party were part of the government in the second half of the term.

Figures 2 and 3 display the interaction between district and party vote shares for legislators elected via vote shares characteristic of MMDs and SMDs, respectively.[14] This allows for the interpretation of the interaction with vote shares for both seat types found in the dataset. For example, the average district level vote share for a PR legislator is 19.3% compared to 50.2% for SMD legislators. Likewise, the average party vote share for PR legislators is 18.6% and 34.4% for SMD legislators. Because of these large differences, I thought it appropriate

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[14]All figures generated using Model 3 in Table 1.

to separate legislators for the purposes of the visualization of the interaction so that suitable

vote shares could be used in each example (10 and 30% for PR and 30 and 60% for SMD).[15]

This allows for a more representative depiction of the data used in this analysis.
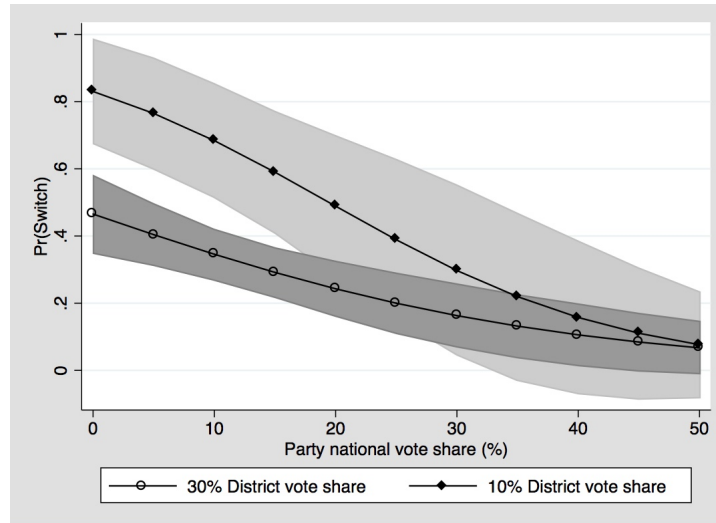
Figure 2. Predicted probability legislators switching parties by district vote share over party vote share

Note: ENPP set to 5.1 — the average ENPP among MPs with PR seats. All other variables held at their means. 95% confidence intervals shown. Average marginal effects of party vote share with 30% district vote share: -0.050, 0.016 S.E. Average marginal effects of party vote share with 10% district vote share: -0.082, 0.030 S.E.

Figure 2 shows that, at low levels of a party's national vote share (up until around 15%) there are statistically distinguishable differences between PR legislators that received 10% and 30% of the district vote share.[16] Those legislators with the smallest district vote shares are more likely to switch parties than those with greater district vote shares. A legislator with 10% of the district vote share and whose party obtained 10% of the votes cast on the PR ballot at the national level, with all other variables held at their means (party in government and a ±13 contextualized party platform), has about a 0.7 predicted probability of switching parties. Under the same conditions, a legislator with 30% of the district vote has about a

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[15]These percentages reflect the average district vote shares for PR and SMD legislators and approximately a standard deviation above and below the mean (or two standard deviations below for in the case of SMD).

[16]This apparent 15% threshold applies to Italian PR MPs from the RI, CCD-CDU, PSPUP, RC, and LN parties or party alliances included in this analysis that all received seats in the Italian Chamber of Deputies on party lists while their party acquired less than 15% of the vote share in their districts. This also applies to New Zealand's ACT, Alliance, NZF, United, and Green parties in the 1996 and 1005 elections.

0.37 probability of party switching. A decrease from 30% to 10% of the district vote share under these circumstances sees nearly a doubling of the probability of switching, going from more likely to not switch to more likely to switch.

Figure 3. Predicted probability of legislators switching parties by district vote share over party vote share
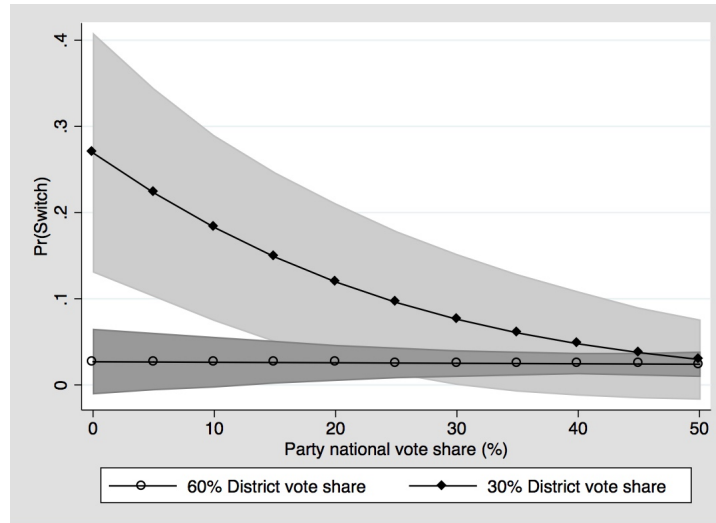
Note: ENPP set to 3.4 — the average ENPP among MPs with SMD seats. All other variables held at their means. 95% confidence intervals shown. Average marginal effects of party vote share with 60% district vote share: -0.002, 0.017 S.E. Average marginal effects of party vote share with 30% district vote share: -0.050, 0.016 S.E.

Turning to SMD legislators, Figure 3 displays a similar relationship shown in Figure 2. While the confidence intervals overlap to a greater degree in Figure 3, there remains a distinguishable difference between SMD legislators that received 30% and 60% of the district vote share at fairly low levels of a party's national vote share (around 15% in this case as well).[17] SMD legislators with lower district vote shares are more likely to switch than those with greater vote shares. This makes intuitive sense because the margin of victory for those legislators with 60% of the district vote share in SMDs is much greater than those legislators who managed to win a seat with 30% and would be less likely to switch due to vote-seeking motives. Overall, the figures portray the negative relationship between both district and party vote shares and party switching.

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[17]This applies to SMD legislators elected in Italy's RC, LN, and Comunista parties, New Zealand's NLP, NZF, and ACT and the UK's DUP, SF, PC, SDLP, UUP, UKU, UKIP, and SNP.
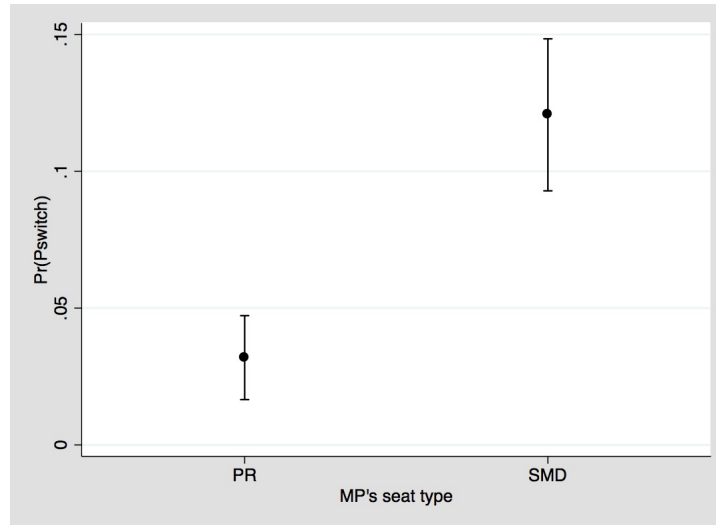
Figure 4. Predicted probability and margins of party switching by seat type

Note: 95% confidence intervals shown.

To better illustrate the differences between legislators elected in SMDs and MMDs, Figure 4 shows SMD MPs are significantly much more likely to switch parties than PR legislators. SMD legislators are approximately twice as likely or more to switch than PR legislators. This suggests legislators in electoral systems more candidate-centered with decentralized candidate selection procedures and greater incentives for personal vote cultivation and easier credit claiming are also more likely to engage in party switching. Likewise, in systems where party leaders possess a great deal of influence over the political futures of MPs, legislators are less likely to switch since such risky behavior may not viewed positively by the receiving party of a switcher.

Lastly, Figure 5 displays the effect of ENPP on party switching. There is a clear positive relationship between the two variables. With all other variables held at their means, a legislator in a party system with six effective parliamentary parties is over twice as likely to switch parties than an MP in a party system with only two parliamentary parties. This supports the notion that more parties in a party system provide more options and alternatives for legislators to consider when choosing to maintain or change their party affiliation. The findings of these last two figures should not be viewed as contradictory. Two of the countries
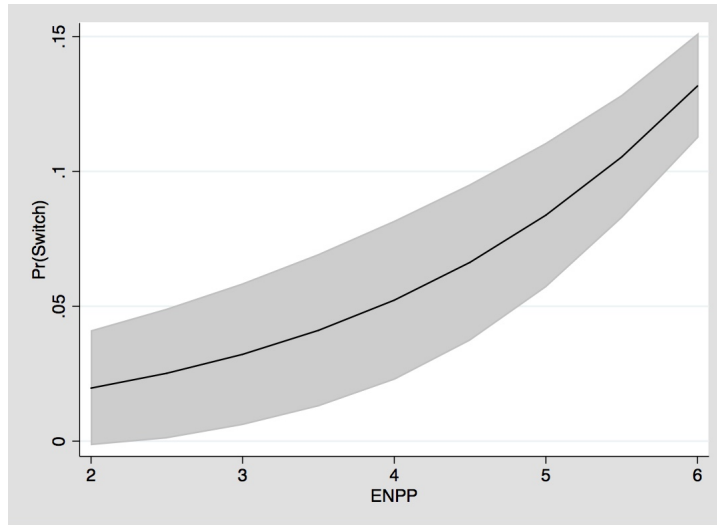
Figure 5. Predicted probability of party switching over ENPP

Note: All other variables held at their means. 95% confidence intervals shown.

included in this analysis are mixed-member systems — Italy and New Zealand.[18] While this may be viewed as a limitation of this study, research on or including mixed-member systems are becoming increasingly relevant as this type of political system has been adopted in more countries over the past few decades.

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[18]One model included in the appendix includes a control for mixed-member systems.

6   Discussion

The analysis in this paper provides support for the vote-seeking and policy-seeking motivational hypotheses of legislative party switching. These results hold with the inclusion/exclusion of country fixed effects and institutional variables. Both district and party vote shares are negatively associated with party switching. Legislators who are members of ideologically extreme parties are more likely to change parties than legislators of more centrist parties. The analysis failed to find support for office-seeking motivations. Perhaps legislators from minor parties that form the government switch to the dominating party in the coalition which could be argued to also represent office-seeking behavior. Alternatively, the particular sample used may have a higher than average rate of new party formation.

The institutional variables of seat type and ENPP have been shown to be not only significantly but substantively important for explaining party switching. Both SMD seats and ENPP are positively related to party switching. Furthermore, the results show that institutional features are worth exploring if one is attempting to explain legislative party switching at the individual level.

Research on legislative party switching conducted thus far has been dominated by case studies. While their contributions are inarguable, cross-national analyses allow the testing of the relationship between this phenomena and institutional variables as well as how they may interact with the conventional motivational hypotheses. As one of the few cross-national papers on party switching, and the only to do so with a dataset containing individual-level legislator observations, the findings presented herein have broadened the questions that can be answered and has introduced new questions to be considered in future research. Perhaps certain institutional arrangements enhance or diminish the vote-, office-, and policy-seeking goals of politicians and therefore more interactive effects should be explored. One interesting avenue to further investigate and perhaps reveal the precise causal mechanism behind seat type and party switching is to consider the role of ballot type and partly list position and

whether it may interact with seat type. Both case studies and a cross-national approach can be useful in the attempt to discern these potential relationships.

Research on the negative externalities of party switching would assist in the elucidation of a legislator's calculus of party affiliation. Considering the decision to change parties certainly comes with its share of costs and uncertainty, more research should focus on the pay-offs of such a risky political move. If party-switchers are indeed vote- and policy-seekers, does switching parties actually assist them in achieving their goals? Scholars have begun to address the degree to which party-switching impacts a legislator's chances of reelection and/or increasing vote shares. Thus far, the evidence is mixed. More research using a diverse set of methodological tools is needed to reveal the nature of this relationship. A key actor frequently left out of scholars' reach and therefore their analyses is the leader of a party receiving a defector of another party. In this study, it is merely assumed party leaders would view party switchers behavior as a risky investment. Both the electoral and the bureaucratic costs of party switching should be analyzed in future research.

7 New Zealand Case Study

How do electoral rules impact legislative party switching behavior and how is this behavior impacted by changes to these rules? Party switching is a relatively understudied phenomenon. As a result, scholars of legislatures and political parties do not have a firm grasp of its prevalence. Information accumulated through the execution of dozens of single-country case studies undergird this body of literature.[19] Outside these case studies of countries with high occurrences of party switching, it is believed that party switching is a rarity (Desposato, 2006; Heller and Mershon, 2008). However, a recent study shows that party switching occurs more frequently and more broadly than the literature suggests. O'Brien and Shomer (2013) have found that among the 239 political parties they examined, nearly one-third have experienced party switching behavior and fourteen of the twenty countries analyzed witnessed some degree of switching.

One of the main reasons party switching has been understudied is that it is often dismissed as simply an indicator of weak party discipline or that political parties are inconsequential in countries where switching is not an abnormality. However, changes in politicians' party affiliations are important for a number of reasons, first of which is that it clearly demonstrates political parties do matter (Desposato, 2006). Legislators would not risk the costs of party switching if parties did not offer some form of benefit. Additionally, party switching offers insight into the preferences and incentives politicians have for belonging to certain parties, such as the financial and human resources they provide during a campaign, access to government funds and power over its distribution, as well as how parties facilitate the enactment of policies. Scholars show that parties exert vast amounts of influence over the future career of a member legislator (Cain, Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1984; Gaines and Garrett,

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[19]Some of the more notable case studies conducted include those on the countries of Brazil (Mainwaring and Perez-Linan, 1997; Desposato, 2006, 2009), Ecuador (Mejia-Acosta, 2004), Italy (Heller and Mershon, 2008; Mershon and Shvetsova, 2008; Virgilio, Giannetti and Pinto, 2012), Japan (Desposato and Scheiner, 2008), Mexico (Barrow, 2007; Kerevel, 2014), Poland (McMenamin and Gwiazda, 2011; Zielinski, Slomczynski and Shabad, 2005), Russia (Mershon and Shvetsova, 2008), South Africa (McLaughlin, 2011), and Taiwan (Fell, 2014), to name a few.

1993; Taylor, 1992). Furthermore, a candidate's party affiliation sends informational signals to voters. Legislators who switch parties during a legislative term introduce a normative concern over the functioning of democracy.

Missing from previous scholarship is an investigation of party switching behavior over a series of terms with different electoral rules within the context of the same country. New Zealand provides a unique opportunity not afforded by other case studies in that significant changes to its electoral system were enacted. The country offers a timeline where legislative behavior can be examined in a variety of environments: a term when MPs were elected through the longstanding SMD rules, one when MPs knew the details of the rule change and date of implementation but were still elected via SMD, a term with mixed member (MM) electoral rules, and a term under the same MM rules immediately after a ban on party switching expired. This is significant because other studies on electoral rules and/or their changes and party switching often examine only one term (Heller and Mershon, 2005). This may be problematic for if the explanation of why party switching increases immediately following changes in rules includes uncertainty or the electoral rules themselves, it is difficult to formulate a compelling test that does not incorporate subsequent terms. An analysis of New Zealand may provide the leverage needed to determine whether the new rules lead to party switching or if uncertainty initiated by the *change* in rules creates a period of instability of legislative party labels.

This study utilizes New Zealand's institutional changes in order to investigate the research question at hand. The next section of the paper provides background on New Zealand and a review of the literature on party switching. I also develop a theory and testable hypotheses of how electoral rules impact party switching. The second section provides a brief description of the data and methods to be used in the analysis. The third section includes preliminary results and the final section concludes. Evidence suggests that the change to a MM electoral system is associated with a rise in the frequency of legislative party switching in New Zealand's House of Representatives. Additionally, the results of

this study provide evidence that party switching legislators are motivated by vote-seeking concerns over reelection.

8   Party Switching and Electoral Rules

8.1   Why New Zealand?

New Zealand has had a parliamentary government consisting of democratic representation since the mid-19th century and gained its independence from the British Crown in 1947. Its upper house was abolished in 1951 and consequently operated under a unicameral legislature. While party discipline has not always been a feature of New Zealand's House of Representatives, it became the norm for a majority of the 20th century (Malone, 2008). This norm is due in part to the small number of seats in the legislature. The governing party usually held such a small majority of seats that there was no allowance for intra-party disagreements and defection. Additionally, the chamber's small size enabled leaders to have frequent intimate meetings with its members in order to promote voting unity and party cohesion. Party switching was essentially non-existent.

Since the 1930s, New Zealand's two major parties, Labour and National, alternated control of the legislature and prime ministership much like the U.S. Congress changes from Democratic to Republican control (Karp et al., 2002; Karp, 2009). In 1989, New Zealand witnessed its first party switcher in recorded history after Labour MP James Anderton voted against a bill supported by his party. He was expelled from the caucus and decided to form his own party, New Labour. During the 1980s, New Zealand faced multiple crises in the forms of stagflation, balance of payments deficits, and foreign debt. Because of the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral rules, governments consisted of a single party. New Zealand's weak separation of powers combined with one-party rule gave a disproportionate amount of power to the cabinet. Parliament had very little power to override the cabinet's agenda which proved to be contentious during the economic difficulties of the 1980s and early 1990s (Boston et al., 1996; Denemark, 2001). The Labour party governed from 1984-1990 and the National party resumed control thereafter. Both parties implemented their own

neo-liberal agendas to the dismay of the populace and fellow MPs who had little sway over policy (Malone, 2008).

The origins of New Zealand's mixed member proportional (MMP) system dates back to 1986 when a government commission on the electoral system published a report that endorsed a MMP. The National party pledged to conduct a referendum on the electoral system if it was voted into power in parliament (Boston et al., 1996). After their electoral victory, the party leaders had no choice but to deliver on their campaign promise and passed the Electoral Referendum Act 1991 (Denemark, 2001). The results of this two item referendum was that 84.7% of voters were in favor of abandoning the FPTP rules. The second question identified MMP as the preferential electoral system with 70.5% of the vote. In the general election of 1993, a binding referendum was held with much greater turnout. Although the results were the same, the margin between supporters and opponents of MMP was significantly closer (53.9% in favor and 46.1% opposed) (Malone, 2008). The new electoral rules were set to go into effect in the 1996 general election. Table 2 summarizes the timeline of New Zealand's change to pure SMD to MMP electoral rules.

Table 2. Summary of the evolution of New Zealand's electoral rules

Legislative term	Electoral rules
1990-1993	FPTP rules
1993-1996	FPTP rules with incoming change to MMP in the next election
1996-1999	MMP rules, districts redrawn, and 20 more seats added
1999-2002	MMP rules, switching banned in 2001
2002-2005	MMP rules, switching ban in effect
2005-2008	MMP rules, switching ban expired

New Zealand is ideal for studying how legislators utilize or do not utilize party switching in the face of institutional changes. In the legislative behavior literature, party switching has been dismissed as being a symptom of fluid party systems and weakly institutionalized parties. However, given New Zealand's history with democracy and entrenched parties, this particular case selection could provide better insight into alternative contexts where party switching may arise. Furthermore, this case allows for the exploration of business as usual

under pure SMD/FPTP rules, the investigation of party switching during a term where all legislators knew the change to MMP was to be implemented in the next election, and a term after the change to MMP rules. Legislative party switching in New Zealand's House of Representatives was banned in 2001 because of its excessive frequency. This ban was allowed to expire in 2005. In fact, party switching during the 1990s became so prevalent that the phenomenon was colloquially termed by New Zealanders as "waka-jumping" where the Maori word "waka" roughly translates into "ship." Table 3 shows the election results for each party from 1987 until 2005. It also displays the effective number of electoral and parliamentary parties during this time period.[20] The increases and fluctuations in these two measures are the result of the electoral rules changes (Barker et al., 2001; Boston et al., 1996).

8.2   Legislative Party Switching in New Zealand

In keeping with previous scholarship on legislative behavior, I assume that legislators are rational, utility-maximizing individuals with preferences (Laver and Benoit, 2003). Their decisions are based on cost-benefit analyses, including decisions regarding party affiliation. Legislative party membership is associated with both costs and payoffs that are taken into account while a legislator continuously reviews the decision to switch parties during a legislative term (Cox, 1987).

Most studies on legislative decision-making focus on the motivations that influence politicians. Drawing from the literature on American legislative politics, one can assume that legislators desire a number of things. Most of this literature is built on the scholarly work of Mayhew (1974) in his seminal book on the electoral connection which conceives of legislators in the U.S. House as "single-minded seekers of reelection." However, studies of the electoral connection beyond the context of the United States has determined that this is not necessarily a cross-national characteristic of legislators. Samuels (2003) demonstrates that

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[20]These data were obtained from Gallagher (2015).

Table 3. New Zealand general election results: 1987-2005

Party	1987	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005
Labour	48.0	35.1	34.7	28.2	38.7	41.3	41.1
National	44.0	47.8	35.1	33.8	30.5	20.9	39.1
New Zealand First	–	–	8.4	13.4	4.3	10.4	5.7
Green	–	6.8*	†	0.1*	6.1	7.0	5.3
ACT	–	–	–	6.2	7.0	7.1	1.5
Alliance	–	–	18.2	10.1	7.7	1.3*	0.1*
United	–	–	–	0.9	0.5	–	–
United Future	–	–	–	–	–	6.7	2.7
Democrat	5.7*	1.7*	†	†	†	‡	0.1*
Mana Motuhake	0.5*	0.6*	†	†	–	–	–
New Zealand	0.3*	–	–	–	–	–	–
New Labour	–	5.2	†	†	†	–	–
Jim Anderton's Progressives	–	–	–	–	–	1.7	1.2
Maori	–	–	–	–	–	–	2.1
Others	1.5	2.8	3.6	7.3	5.2	3.6	1.1
ENEP	2.34	2.77	3.52	4.27	3.86	4.17	3.04
ENPP	1.94	1.74	2.16	3.76	3.45	3.76	2.98

Notes: Percentages shown. For elections in 1996 and thereafter, results are from the party list ballot. Asterisks (*) indicate party received no seats in the legislature. † denotes the party was included in a coalition with the Alliance and ‡ denotes a coalition with Jim Anderton's Progressives.

federalism in Brazil discourages members of the Chamber of Deputies from seeking reelection and incentivizes them to seek subnational offices. Jones and colleagues (2002) find a similar relationship in Argentina. Fenno (1973) characterizes legislators as individuals that seek to maximize their electoral support, increase prestige and power within the legislature or advance to a higher office, and affect public policy. These vote-, office-, and policy-seeking goals, respectively, factor into the calculus of legislators' decision-making and have been utilized to explain legislative behavior around the world (Giannetti and Laver, 2001; Heller and Mershon, 2005, 2008; Mershon and Shvetsova, 2008; Shomer, 2009).

In order to pursue their vote-, office-, and policy-seeking goals, legislators utilize parties for their resources. Scholars have demonstrated how the political party is a vehicle for legislators to achieve these goals (Aldrich, 2011; Aldrich and Bianco, 1992; Müller and Strom,

1999; Nokken, 2000; Thames, 2007). One can assume that if legislators utilize parties to obtain their goals, they can also use party switching behavior as a strategy to the same end. A new and growing body of work within legislative studies relaxes the assumption that parties are unitary actors whose legislative membership bases are permanent from election to election. Recent scholarship emphasizes the role of legislators within political parties as individuals who engage in strategic interaction to achieve their own ambitions and preferences (Desposato, 2006; Heller and Mershon, 2008).

Heller and Mershon argue that party switching is a "natural consequence of political ambition" and a reaction to party discipline (2008, p. 910). If party discipline is an obstacle to a politician's preferential outcome, whether it be pursuing a certain policy or vote maximization to increase reelection certainty, the politician has an incentive to switch parties. Numerous case studies find support for these expectations.[21] One study has shown a relationship between the type of behavior that is exhibited by a legislator and the temporal placement within a legislative cycle. Mershon and Shvetsova (2013) have demonstrated that as elections draw nearer, legislators are deterred from party switching, especially in candidate-centered electoral systems. Another study shows that subnational elections serve as signals of a party's electoral strength during a legislative term and temporally coincides with party switching activity (Heller and Mershon, 2005). All of these studies indicate legislators often engage in strategic behavior with political parties in order to maximize their chances of obtaining their goals. Table 4 contains a list of each party switcher in New Zealand from 1987-1999 and 2005-2008. The list includes their party affiliation at the time of their election and the party they switched to during the legislative term.

If politicians utilize parties in order to achieve a preferred outcome, it follows that party switching is a strategy they can use to pursue their goals provided there is no ban on the activity within the legislature.[22] Operating under the assumption that legislative party

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[21]See Desposato (2006); Mershon and Shvetsova (2008); Reed and Scheiner (2003).

[22]See Janda (2009).

Table 4. List of party switchers by term

Term	MP	Elected Party	Party Switched To
1987-1990	*James Anderton*	Labour	New Labour
1990-1993	*James Anderton*	New Labour	Alliance
	Hamish MacIntyre	National	Alliance
	Gilbert Myles	National	New Zealand First
	Winston Peters	National	New Zealand First
	Cameron Campion	National	Independent
1993-1996	Clive Matthewson	Labour	United
	Jack Elder	Labour	New Zealand First
	Peter Dunne	Labour	United
	Margaret Austin	Labour	United
	Peter Hilt	National	United
	Michael Laws	National	New Zealand First
	Peter McCardle	National	New Zealand First
	Alan Meurant	National	Conservative
	Trevor Rodgers	National	Conservative
	Graeme Lee	National	Christian Democrats
	Bruce Cliffe	National	United
	John Robertson	National	United
	Pauline Gardiner	National	United
1996-1999	Rod Donald	Alliance	Green
	Jeanette Fitzsimons	Alliance	Green
	Frank Grover	Alliance	Christian Heritage
	Alemein Kopu	Alliance	Mana Wahine
	Rana Waitai	New Zealand First	Mauri Pacific
	Tuku Morgan	New Zealand First	Mauri Pacific
	John Delamere	New Zealand First	Mauri Pacific
	Tau Henare	New Zealand First	Mauri Pacific
	Ann Batten	New Zealand First	Mauri Pacific
	Jack Elder	New Zealand First	Mauri Pacific
	Peter McCardle	New Zealand First	Mauri Pacific
	Deborah Morris	New Zealand First	Independent
2005-2008	Taito Phillip Field	Labour	Pacific
	Gordon Copeland	United	Kiwi

Notes: Italics denote repeat switchers. **Bold** text indicates MP acquired a seat in a by-election and is excluded from the statistical analysis in this paper.

switching is legal within a country, the literature presents three plausible explanations for why a legislator might change party affiliations: to maximize votes (vote-seeking), obtain political advancement or power (office-seeking), or to affect policy change (policy-seeking).[23] While it is safe to assume all legislators have one or more of these goals, these goals are hierarchical in nature. If a legislator desires to affect policy, she must be in a position of power to do so. Furthermore, if a legislator desires this powerful position to affect policy or just the position in its own right, one must maintain her seat in parliament. If this is the case, legislators should exhibit vote-seeking behavior if they so choose to use party switching as a strategy. This leads to the formation of the following hypothesis:

> H_1: *Legislators from parties that perform well electorally are less likely to switch parties.*

For party switching specifically in New Zealand with the change in its electoral rules, it is reasonable to assume it likely that reelection concerns are prioritized over office-seeking and policy-seeking goals. If $H1$ is supported, one would expect that the changes in rules would have an impact on party-switching behavior. This is so because before the change, New Zealand's parliament consisted of 99 members elected in SMD.[24] After the changes, the parliament was expanded to a standard 120 members with 65 elected via SMD and 55 through compensatory PR (Malone, 2008). The increase in the number of seats and the compensatory nature of the PR portion likely increased election prospects for some legislators. However, this means that district lines had to be redrawn, with numerous districts merged together, and many MPs became increasingly uncertain of their reelection chances. One would expect those MPs that were confident to maintain their party affiliation while others may switch parties or form new parties to increase their probability of reelection.

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[23]See Aldrich (2011); Desposato (2006); Fenno (1973); Nokken (2000); Reed and Scheiner (2003).

[24]The exact number of seats in New Zealand's House of Representatives before the electoral reform varies over time.

With the arrival of the MMP electoral system, candidates could simultaneously run for election in a district and on the party list. In the first MMP election in 1996, 50 of the 120 successful candidates were on both SMD and party list ballots. This number increased to 61 in the 2005 election results. Candidates who win via SMD ballot do not owe their electoral success to their party to the same degree as their party list colleagues. These candidates are in a better position to engage in constituency services and credit claim for funding in their district and the passage of popular bills than PR legislators. PR legislators are selected at the national compensatory tier where the district "border" is the entire country and the "district magnitude" is 55. Since many of these PR legislators ran for election in an SMD and lost, chances are they must look to their party for electoral support in the next election. For these reasons, I expect legislators who hold an SMD seat are more likely to switch parties than their PR counterparts.

H_2: *Legislators elected via party list are less likely to switch parties.*

Research has shown that systems with candidate centered rules, such as FPTP and SMD, encourage personal vote cultivation and intra-party competition. This leads to less party unity. Conversely, party-centered rules, such as closed-list PR, increase the importance of party loyalty and leads to party cohesion (Carey, 2007). However, the change from pure SMD to MMP is associated with a drastic increase in the amount of party switching (Heller and Mershon, 2008). Various studies note that some countries have party systems that are fluid and weakly institutionalized (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Bowler, Farrell and Katz, 1999; Ames, 2001). With few or no incentives for party loyalty, one might expect party switching to be more prevalent in these countries.[25] Yet New Zealand is a long established democracy that has been historically dominated by two highly institutionalized parties. Party switching increased from before the electoral rules referendum and after the implementation of

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[25]However, the extant literature does not provide a clear consensus on the impact party cohesion and discipline may have on party switching (Desposato, 2006; Heller and Mershon, 2005; O'Brien and Shomer, 2013).

MMP (Barker et al., 2001). This leads me to suspect that *changes* in electoral rules creates uncertainty surrounding legislators' reelection prospects and may contribute to more party switching.[26] Because legislators require time to learn and adjust to new or altered rules, I posit that uncertainty can account for an increase in party switching.

H_3: *The number of legislative party switchers will be higher after the transition to MMP electoral rules compared to pure SMD rules.*

Other scholars have argued that party switching is most prevalent under circumstances of heightened uncertainty (Aldrich and Bianco, 1992). In their analysis of party switching in Italy from 1996-2001, Heller and Mershon (2005) note the extreme levels of uncertainty surrounding politics during the 1990s produced from numerous sources: corruption and scandals, increased voter volatility, and changes in electoral laws, to name a few. This uncertainty blurred party labels to the point where legislators experienced uncertainty about parties' preferred policies which made it increasingly difficult for MPs to align with both their party and their voting constituents. However, this finding in Italy is somewhat at tension with a study conducted on the timing of party switches using data from the same legislative term. Mershon and Shvetsova (2008) demonstrate that Italian MPs switched parties at times that coincided with subnational elections that served as indication of party performance. MPs can use these elections to gauge party popularity and their own reelection chances. One could argue that these elections reduce uncertainty. Compared to Italy, the source of New Zealand's changes and societal fluctuations are limited to the changes in the country's electoral rules. Therefore, it is much easier to isolate the uncertainty the changes caused in New Zealand than the electoral reforms undertaken in Italy. It is possible both the changes in the rules as well as the new rules themselves contribute to more party switching simultaneously.

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[26]This rests on the assumption that legislators are vote-seekers which will be tested within the context of $H1$.

9 New Zealand Data and Measurement

In order to test the above stated hypotheses, I use an original dataset of 439 individual-level observations of legislators in New Zealand's House of Representatives for four terms: 1990-1993, 1993-1996, 1996-1999, and 2005-2008.[27] These data were gathered from government archival websites, New Zealand's official elections results, and the New Zealand Election Study (NZES). This was supplemented by John M. Carey's Legislative Voting Project (Carey, 2016). I provide results of logistic regression models with robust standard errors clustered by legislative term as well as some descriptive data to begin testing $H3$.[28]

9.1 Dependent Variable: Party Switching

A party switch is defined as "any recorded change in party affiliation on the part of a politician holding or competing for elective office" (Heller and Mershon, 2009, p. 8). For the purposes of this paper, party switching is coded as 1 if the legislator changed party affiliation at any time during the legislative term and 0 otherwise.[29] If a legislator changed party and subsequently returned to the original party or dropped affiliation and remained in parliament as an independent, she is coded as a party switcher. In the dataset used in this manuscript, 32 of the 439 legislators (or 7.29% of the observations) are party switchers.

9.2 Explanatory Variable: Vote-Seeking

Vote-seeking is conceptualized as behavior exhibited by a legislator when she changes political party affiliation because of doubts of winning reelection with her current party affiliation. Because vote shares determine which legislative candidates are awarded a parliamentary

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[27]Previous terms have been excluded because party switching did not occur. The ban on party switching was in effect during the 1999-2002 and 2002-2005 terms and were not included for the same reason as earlier terms.

[28]Additional tests using rare events and multilevel models are in the appendix. Descriptive statistics are located in the appendix as well.

[29](O'Brien and Shomer, 2013) utilize a similar coding strategy in their dichotomous coding of legislative parties that contained party switchers.

seat, it is reasonable to assume that this percentage serves as a signal of electoral strength to a candidate. For this analysis, I use a district-level measure of electoral strength. In the 1990-1993 and 1993-1996 terms, where all members are elected in SMD, each value is the vote share the MP received in his or her district. In the 1996-1999 and 2005-2008 terms, voters cast two ballots: one for their district candidate and another for the party list. Many MPs with PR seats also ran unsuccessfully in a district. In this case, their district vote share is the percentage of votes they received in the district in which they contested. For those MPs on the party list only, their district vote share takes on the value of the vote share their party received on the national party list ballot since their "district" is the entire country. Depending on which method is responsible for an MPs seat, I use the party's vote share from the respective ballot vote totals. In keeping with $H1$, there should be a negative association between this continuous variable and party switching.

In addition to this measure, I also include a party-level measure of vote share in one model. Depending on which method is responsible for an MPs seat, I use the party's vote share from the respective ballot vote totals. For example, all members of party A with an SMD seat have the same value which matches the share of the vote all of party A's candidates in SMDs received. All legislators with PR seats in party A have the vote share party A received on the party list ballot.

9.3   Control Variables

In this analysis, I control for several characteristics. I use a dichotomous measure for whether or not the legislator's party formed the government or was part of the governing coalition immediately after the election. This takes the value of 1 if it did and 0 otherwise. This is a common proxy for office-seeking in the party-switching legislature. Data for this indicator were obtained from ParlGov.

Another behavior often included in analyses is policy-seeking. Party switching due to policy-seeking occurs when a legislator changes affiliation in the pursuit of affecting a certain

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policy that is of particular importance to the legislator or her constituents. Parties are vehicles through which policies are shaped in the legislature. I use the ideological extremity of a legislator's party in order to proxy the legislator's capacity to affect policy outcomes. More extreme parties, by definition, have less in common with the remainder of the governing body and their members' interests are less likely to overlap with those that harness agenda-setting power. Because bills require a majority of the vote, it is less likely that extreme parties can garner the support needed to enact their policy agenda. This reduces the ability of MPs in extreme parties to impact or successfully pursue policy goals. To measure ideological extremity, I employ the Manifesto Project Database's right-left positioning of political parties on a scale of -100 (leftist) to 100 (rightist). I use the absolute value of this indicator so that higher values are associated with extremely leftist or rightist parties and values closer to zero are associated with more centrist parties. This is a departure from the literature on party switching in that a measure of party cohesion, such as party Rice scores, is often used as a proxy for policy-seeking (O'Brien and Shomer, 2013). However, due to the lack of a clear link between party cohesion and discipline with party switching, I utilize an alternative measure that can capture policy-seeking aims.

Lastly, I use a categorical variable for ballot type where 1 indicates an MP only appeared on an SMD ballot in a district, 2 indicates an MP only appeared on the party list, and 3 indicates a legislator appeared on both an SMD ballot and on the party list. In keeping with $H2$, those legislators who only appeared on the SMD ballot should be the most likely to switch and those only on the party list should be the least likely to switch.

10   New Zealand Analysis

The results presented in Table 9 show five models. The samples of the first two are separated based on the term analyzed: Model 4 includes the 1990-1993 and 1993-1996 legislative terms — the portion of the data set with MPs from before the implementation of MMP rules— and Model 5 includes the 1996-1999 and 2005-2008 terms under MMP.[30]

Table 5. Logistic regression results on legislative party switching in New Zealand with robust standard errors clustered by legislative term.

	1990-1993 1993-1996	1996-1999 2005-2008	Pooled (Model 6)	Pooled (Model 7)	Pooled (Model 8)
District vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−0.102*** (0.019)	−0.109*** (0.015)	−0.089*** (0.015)	−0.069*** (0.011)	−0.029 (0.228)
Party vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−	−	−	−	−0.087** (0.039)
In government	0.305 (0.479)	2.974* (1.777)	2.022** (1.002)	1.776** (0.697)	2.391*** (0.800)
Party ideological extremity	−0.103 (0.110)	0.086 (0.076)	0.062 (0.038)	0.035 (0.023)	0.035* (0.018)
SMD	−	1.741*** (0.397)	1.262*** (0.366)	−	−
Ballot type † Party list only	−	−	−	−2.624*** (0.404)	−3.093*** (0.166)
Both SMD and Party list	−	−	−	−1.444*** (0.437)	−2.070*** (0.122)
Constant	2.976* (1.722)	−4.200 (3.670)	−1.960 (1.416)	−0.831 (1.308)	0.163 (0.525)
AIC	106.6	85.3	195.7	204.3	192.4
Log Likelihood	-52.3	-41.6	-94.9	-99.2	-93.2
N observations	197	240	437	437	437

Notes: $^* = p \leq 0.1$, $^{**} = p \leq 0.05$, and $^{***} = p \leq 0.01$.

† = excluded category is SMD electorate ballot only and ‡ = excluded category is Pre-referendum.

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[30]Due to a reduced number of observations and collinearity, the 1990-1993 and 1993-1996 legislative terms could not be separated for statistical analysis. See the appendix for these models with omitted variables.

In the model 4, there is a negative and statistically significant relationship between the district vote shares of a legislator and the likelihood of a legislator switching parties. After the transition to MMP, as shown in Model 5, this relationship holds and statistically significant positive relationships emerge between a legislator being a member of a party in government or holding an SMD seat and party switching. Both of these models support $H1$ in that greater district vote shares reduces the likelihood an MP will change party affiliation. While being in government is significant in the second model, it is in the opposite direction the literature suggests it should be. This is probably due to the fracturing of the established party system and the formation of numerous smaller parties during the transition to MMP. Lastly, SMD legislators appear to be more likely to switch than PR legislators which supports $H2$.

The following three models pool each of the terms and include robust standard errors clustered by legislative term. Model 6 simply replicates model 5 with the full sample. In this model, the vote-seeking hypothesis is support with a highly significant and negative association between party switching and district vote shares. Legislators that received more votes are less likely to change party affiliations. Once again, MPs from parties in government are more likely to switch parties than those legislators that are members of the opposition. This is both substantively and statistically significant and opposes the expectation of office-seeking as predicated on the literature. The SMD indicator remains strong and highly significant, indicating support for $H2$.

Model 7 removes the SMD indicator and adds the ballot type categorical variable with the SMD only category as the omitted reference category. This model continues to support $H1$. Ballot type appears to be an important indicator of party switching. Appearing only on the party list or on both party list and an SMD ballot significantly reduces the likelihood a legislator will switch parties compared to those MPs who run for election only in an SMD electorate. Model 8 simply adds the party-level vote share to the model. Interestingly, with both the district-level and the party-level included in the same model, only the party-level

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vote share is significant which suggests party electoral performance is more important in legislators' decision-making calculus to switch parties or keep their party affiliation. Additionally, this is the only model in which the policy-seeking measure of ideological extremity achieve statistical significance and in the expected direction. The results from Models 7 and 8 support the expectation that legislators elected via PR, party-centered rules are less likely to switch than their SMD counterparts. In model 8, dual-listed MPs are statistically distinguishable from one another meaning SMD only MPs are the most likely to switch and party list only MPs are the least likely to switch with those legislators on both ballots occupying some likelihood in between the two.

Across all five models, vote shares are negatively associated with party switching which lends a fair amount of support to the vote-seeking hypothesis. Additionally, this is the only motivational hypothesis advanced in the literature that obtains significance across all models.
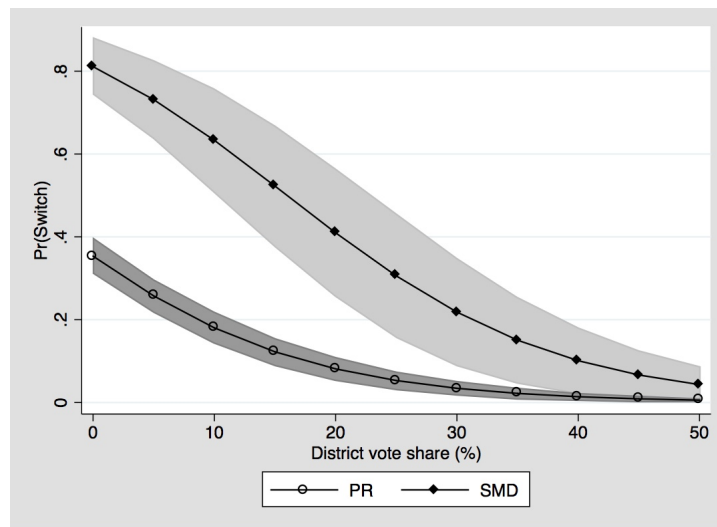
Figure 6. Predicted probability of party switching by ballot type over vote shares

Note: All other variables held at their means. 95% confidence intervals shown. Generated using Model 6.

Figure 6 shows the negative relationship between district vote shares and party switching for a legislator with an SMD seat and with a PR seat. Regardless of electoral rules, legislators with higher district vote shares are less likely to switch parties than those with lower vote shares. An MP elected from a district is substantially more likely to switch than a PR
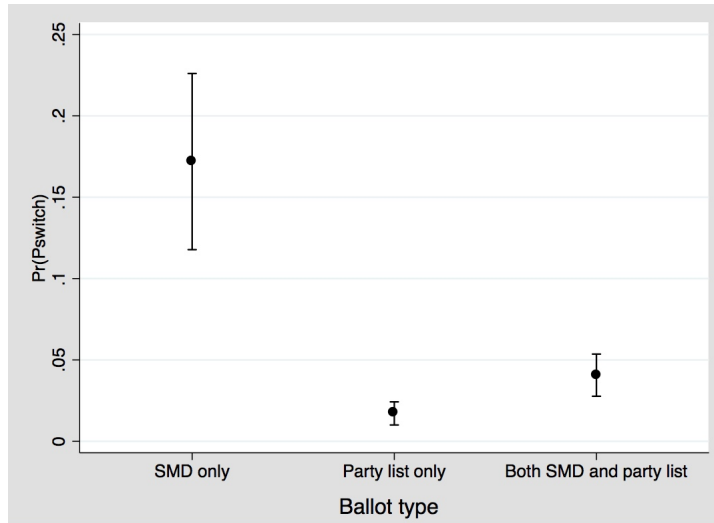
Figure 7. Predicted probability of party switching by ballot type over vote shares

Note: 95% confidence intervals shown. Generated using Model 8.

legislator, although the difference between the two groups becomes indistinguishable from zero once district vote shares exceed roughly 47%. However, it should be noted that there are very few empirical examples from the dataset that would be plotted in this area. An SMD legislator is predicted to transition from being more likely to switch to less likely to switch when she acquires around 20% of the district's vote.

Figure 7 portrays the probability of switching associated with each ballot type along with their confidence intervals. The graph shows the difference between the predicted probabilities in party switching of an MP who was exclusively on a district ballot compared to an MP exclusively on the party list ballot. Legislators that were only on SMD ballots are substantially more likely to switch parties than those MPs that were only on the party list. While it is difficult to determine in the figure, party list only MPs and MPs who appeared on both ballots are distinguishable from one another with party list only having the lowest of the probabilities as expected. This can be interpreted as further support for $H2$.

For a rudimentary evaluation of $H2$, Table 6 shows the breakdown of party switching activity across six legislative terms. The overall trend is that party switching never or only rarely occurred before 1990 and surged in the terms immediately following the binding refer-

endum. Following the first referendum in 1991, the 1990-1993 term witnessed five switchers. This number jumped to 13 during the 1993-1996 term after the binding referendum where MMP rules were selected in the 1993 general election. The first term — 1996-1999— under the new rules retained a high number of switchers. Six years later and after the prohibition of party switching expired, the number of party switching returned to lower levels. This serves as a preliminary test that demonstrates some support for the expectation that the change in electoral rules would be associated with a change in party switching behavior perhaps due to uncertainty.

Table 6. Party switchers by term

	Non-Switchers	Switchers	Total MPs
1984-1987	95 (100%)	0 (0%)	95
1987-1990	96 (99.0%)	1 (1.0%)	97
1990-1993	93 (94.9%)	5 (5.1%)	98
1993-1996	87 (87%)	13 (13%)	100
1996-1999	108 (90%)	12 (10%)	120
1999-2002	117 (97.5%)	3 (2.5%)	120
2002-2005	118 (98.3%)	2 (1.7%)	120
2005-2008	119 (98.3%)	2 (1.7%)	121
2008-2011	121 (99.2%)	1 (0.8%)	122
2011-2014	119 (98.3%)	2 (1.7%)	121

Row percentages shown.
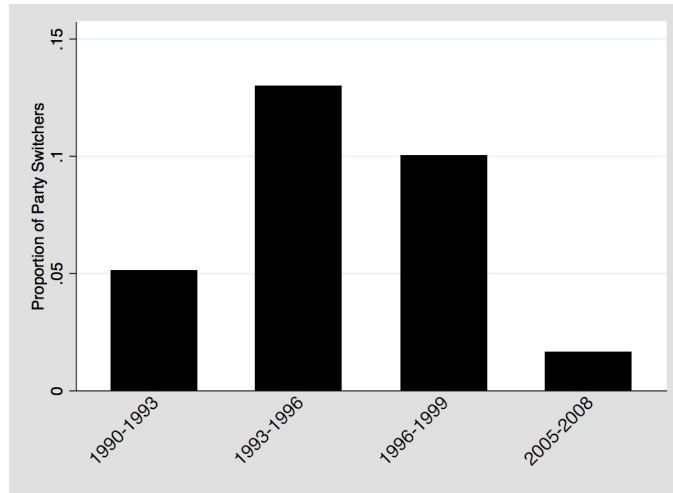
Figure 8. Proportion of party switchers in New Zealand by legislative term

To better visualize the occurrence of party switching during the terms included in the dataset, Figure 8 shows party switching was at its highest rate during the 1993-1996 legislative term which is before any actual change to the electoral rules went into effect. This increase in party switching from the previous term may be attributable to legislators preparing for the impending rules changes by splintering from the two major parties, the National Party and the Labour Party, and forming new parties such as the New Zealand First and Alliance parties. This activity continued during the following legislative term once the rules changes went into effect. The 1996 election saw several parties receive their first seat in parliament including the United, Conservative, and Christian Democrat parties.

As Table 6 shows, this behavior drastically reduced during the 1999-2002 term. The Electoral Integrity Act of 2001 banned party switching in the legislature. Any MP who changed parties would immediately be forced to contest their seat in a by-election unless they simply left a party to become an unaffiliated independent legislator, a tactic used several of the switchers in the table during this time period. This ban expired in 2005 yet party switching has not returned to the levels of the mid-1990s. However, the levels have not returned to the levels of the 1980s and earlier either.

11   Conclusion

In this paper, I have provided evidence in support of the vote-seeking hypothesis in New Zealand. Legislators with greater vote shares are less likely to switch parties than MPs that received smaller vote shares. Additionally, legislators elected under SMD rules are much more likely to change party affiliations. However, in keeping with the literature, it is appropriate to note that SMD and PR legislators in an MMP system should not be expected to behave in similar fashion as their pure SMD and PR counterparts (Crisp, 2007). In a model that includes the ballot listings of an MP, there still remains a large significant difference between legislators that were only on a district ballot and legislators that were only on the party list with the former more likely to switch than the latter with those on both ballots having an intermediate probability of party switching. Future research should try to uncover why party switching increased with the introduction of PR into the electoral rules under MMP but PR-elected legislators and MPs that were only on the party list ballot are *less* likely to switch parties.

Another finding of this paper is that the increase in party switching is associated with the electoral rules changes implemented in 1996. This rather obvious finding can be better understood by research that investigates the degree of uncertainty that surrounded MPs during the 1990s. This could be accomplished by comparing district maps to see how districts were redrawn and the partisanship of the areas absorbed by some districts for this could explain why party switching was used as a strategy to improve reelection chances.

Some components of the party switching literature at large should work to improve are the incorporation of other explanations other than vote-, office-, and policy-seeking and to develop better measures of these concepts. This paper would benefit from the inclusion of vote-seeking indicators such as margin of victory and vote trajectories based on pass performances, office-seeking data on committee chairmanship and leadership positions, and policy-seeking variables such as ideal points and Rice scores. All of these legislative indicators could be buttressed with comparing dates of party changes with coalition formations or

bill passage and with newspaper accounts in order to determine the precise reasons why legislators decide to switch parties.

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Appendix 1: Cross-National Analysis Data

Descriptive statistics

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables included in statistical analysis.

Variables	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Party switching	2,062	0.084	0.278	0	1
District vote %	2,021	46.616	13.705	1.8	92
Party national vote %	2,042	32.264	12.664	0.1	48.8
In government	2,058	0.525	0.499	0	1
Party ideological extremity	2,034	13.152	14.082	0.052	48.432
SMD	2,061	0.868	0.339	0	1
ENPP	2,062	3.638	1.732	1.74	6.09
District magnitude (logged)	2,048	0.351	0.996	0	4.007
Mixed-member indicator	2,062	0.433	0.496	0	1

Table 2. Logistic regression results with robust standard errors clustered by legislative term. Replication of main models with the addition of country dummies.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
District vote % *(vote-seeking)*	−0.024*** (0.003)	−0.047*** (0.010)	−0.083*** (0.025)
Party national vote %	–	−0.035*** (0.008)	−0.102*** (0.029)
District % × Party %	–	–	0.002** (0.001)
In government *(office-seeking)*	0.009 (0.231)	0.479** (0.207)	0.425* (0.238)
Party ideological extremity *(policy-seeking)*	0.008 (0.010)	0.017* (0.009)	0.018** (0.010)
SMD	–	1.644*** (0.382)	2.123*** (0.573)
ENPP	–	0.265 (0.279)	−0.232 (0.350)
Country †			
Italy	1.705*** (0.049)	2.931*** (0.887)	−2.813** (1.112)
New Zealand	0.707* (0.409)	1.126*** (0.365)	1.084** (0.435)
UK	−1.138*** (0.038)	−0.969*** (0.249)	−1.036*** (0.296)
Constant	−2.371*** (0.279)	−1.637** (0.831)	−0.702 (1.057)
AIC	959.2	935.8	926.8
Log Likelihood	-475.6	-461.9	-457.4
N observations	1992	1991	1991

Notes: * = $p \leq 0.1$, ** = $p \leq 0.05$, and *** = $p \leq 0.01$. † = excluded country is Canada.

Logistic Regression Models

Table 3. Logistic regression results with robust standard errors clustered by legislative term.

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
District vote % *(vote-seeking)*	−0.050** (0.024)	−0.084*** (0.022)	−0.086*** (0.023)
Party national vote %	−0.070* (0.038)	−0.094** (0.037)	−0.097*** (0.038)
District % × Party %	0.001 (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)
In government *(office-seeking)*	0.295 (0.259)	0.413 (0.259)	0.393 (0.268)
Party ideological extremity *(policy-seeking)*	0.016 (0.011)	0.018* (0.010)	0.018* (0.010)
SMD	–	2.843*** (0.576)	2.003*** (0.587)
ENPP	0.459*** (0.134)	0.533*** (0.140)	0.492*** (0.183)
District magnitude (logged)	−0.312 (0.343)	0.375 (0.279)	–
Mixed-member	–	–	0.061 (0.707)
Constant	−1.878 (0.171)	−3.341*** (1.218)	−2.317*** (0.669)
AIC	1968	949	953
Log Likelihood	-478	-468	-470
N observations	1990	199	1991

Notes: $^* = p \leq 0.1$, $^{**} = p \leq 0.05$, and $^{***} = p \leq 0.01$.

Table 4. Logistic regression results with robust standard errors clustered by legislative term.

	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
District vote %	−0.090***	−0.015	−0.104***	−0.086***
(vote-seeking)	(0.022)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.022)
Party national vote %	−0.098**	−0.015	−0.137***	−0.100***
	(0.039)	(0.055)	(0.006)	(0.035)
District % × Party %	0.002*	−0.001	0.002***	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
In government	0.604***	0.859	0.093	0.354
(office-seeking)	(0.229)	(0.687)	(0.391)	(0.251)
Party ideological extremity	0.022***	−0.031	0.023***	0.016
(policy-seeking)	(0.008)	(0.020)	(0.008)	(0.011)
SMD	2.164***	0.082	2.429***	1.963***
	(0.161)	(0.541)	(0.199)	(0.628)
ENPP	0.464***	0.085	0.709***	0.397**
	(0.161)	(0.708)	(0.026)	(0.156)
Constant	−2.178**	−1.287	−3.202***	−1.666**
	(0.881)	(2.293)	(0.231)	(0.800)
AIC	862	378	706	871
Log Likelihood	-426	-184	-351	-430
N observations	1682	1369	1581	1341

Notes: $^{*} = p \leq 0.1$, $^{**} = p \leq 0.05$, and $^{***} = p \leq 0.01$.

Model 7 is without Canada, 8 is without Italy, 9 is without New Zealand, and 10 is without the UK.

Rare Events Logit Models

Table 5. Rare events logistic regression results.

	Model 11	**Model 12**	**Model 13**	**Model 14**	**Model 15**
District vote % *(vote-seeking)*	−0.084*** (0.017)	−0.088*** (0.018)	−0.012 (0.030)	−0.100*** (0.020)	−0.084*** (0.017)
Party national vote %	−0.096*** (0.024)	−0.096*** (0.025)	−0.013 (0.042)	−0.134*** (0.029)	−0.098*** (0.025)
District % × Party %	0.002*** (0.001)	0.002*** (0.001)	−0.001 (0.001)	0.002*** (0.001)	0.002*** (0.001)
In government *(office-seeking)*	0.387 (0.245)	0.593** (0.253)	0.850* (0.508)	0.085 (0.283)	0.345 (0.243)
Party ideological extremity *(policy-seeking)*	0.017*** (0.006)	0.022*** (0.007)	−0.028 (0.018)	0.023*** (0.007)	0.016** (0.006)
SMD	1.950*** (0.477)	2.111*** (0.491)	−0.042 (0.803)	2.362*** (0.548)	1.193*** (0.468)
ENPP	0.502*** (0.056)	0.459*** (0.059)	0.090 (0.336)	0.699*** (0.082)	0.392*** (0.275)
Constant	−2.326*** (0.515)	−2.170*** (0.526)	−1.290 (1.260)	−3.173** (0.686)	−1.656*** (0.540)
AIC	896	807	115	659	816
Penalized Log Likelihood	-440	-396	-160	-322	-400
N observations	1991	1682	1369	1581	1341

Notes: $^{*} = p \leq 0.1$, $^{**} = p \leq 0.05$, and $^{***} = p \leq 0.01$.

Model 12 is without Canada, 13 is without Italy, 14 is without New Zealand, and 15 is without the UK. Estimates generated using Firth's logit. Standard errors reported in parentheses.

Multilevel Logit Models: Legislative Term

Table 6. Multilevel logistic regression results with individual legislators nested within legislative terms.

	Model 16	Model 17	Model 18	Model 19	Model 20
District vote % *(vote-seeking)*	-0.089^{***} (0.018)	-0.092^{***} (0.019)	-0.250 (0.033)	-0.103^{***} (0.020)	-0.088^{***} (0.018)
Party national vote %	-0.120^{***} (0.026)	-0.122^{***} (0.027)	-0.074 (0.050)	-0.137^{***} (0.030)	-0.121^{***} (0.027)
District % $\times$ Party %	0.002^{***} (0.001)	0.002^{***} (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	0.002^{***} (0.001)	0.002^{***} (0.001)
In government *(office-seeking)*	0.415^{*} (0.246)	0.597^{**} (0.255)	0.828^{*} (0.464)	0.093 (0.286)	0.443^{*} (0.249)
Party ideological extremity *(policy-seeking)*	0.022^{***} (0.007)	0.026^{***} (0.007)	-0.018 (0.018)	0.023^{***} (0.007)	0.022^{***} (0.007)
SMD	2.033^{***} (0.487)	2.093^{***} (0.509)	-0.241 (0.925)	2.429^{***} (0.555)	2.086^{***} (0.493)
ENPP	0.380 (0.267)	0.361 (0.281)	-0.249 (0.651)	0.709^{***} (0.083)	0.260 (0.275)
Constant	-1.687 (1.038)	-1.577 (1.106)	-3.202^{***} (2.080)	-1.656^{**} (0.695)	-1.062 (1.037)
Intercept variance	0.853 (0.561)	-0.950 (0.676)	0.001 (0.587)	-1.656^{**} (0.001)	0.675 (0.510)
X^2	63.66	59.04	22.48	139.53	61.68
Log Likelihood	-460	-415	-175	-351	-423
N observations	1991	1682	1369	1581	1341
N legislative terms	7	6	6	3	6

Notes: $^{*} = p \leq 0.1$, $^{**} = p \leq 0.05$, and $^{***} = p \leq 0.01$.

Model 17 is without Canada, 18 is without Italy, 19 is without New Zealand, and 20 is without the UK. Standard errors reported in parentheses.

Appendix 2: New Zealand Analysis Data

Descriptive statistics

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of variables included in statistical analysis.

Variables	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Party switching	439	0.073	0.260	0	1
District vote %	439	42.989	14.698	1.51	74.5
In government	439	0.526	0.500	0	1
Party ideological extremity	437	19.873	15.689	1.124	49.18
SMD	439	0.756	0.430	0	1
Ballot type	439	1.932	0.967	1	3
Party national vote %	439	33.732	12.144	1.51	48.8

Logistic Regression Models

Table 8. Logistic regression results on legislative party switching in New Zealand with robust standard errors clustered by legislative term.

	Model 21	Model 22	Model 23	Model 24
District vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−0.060*** (0.019)	−0.066*** (0.023)	−0.029 (0.021)	−0.026 (0.022)
Party vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−0.054* (0.029)	−0.065 (0.080)	−0.087** (0.039)	−0.080 (0.086)
District % × Party %	−	0.001 (0.001)	−	0.001 (0.001)
In government	1.923*** (0.715)	1.959*** (0.904)	2.391*** (0.800)	1.371*** (0.914)
Party ideological extremity	0.021 (0.027)	0.022 (0.076)	0.035* (0.018)	0.034* (0.020)
SMD	2.109*** (0.557)	2.201*** (0.257)	−	−
Ballot type †				
Party list only	−	−	−3.093*** (0.166)	−3.076*** (0.146)
Both SMD and Party list	−	−	−2.070*** (0.122)	−2.052*** (0.194)
Constant	−1.653** (0.654)	−1.532 (0.233)	0.163 (0.525)	0.064 (0.436)
AIC	200.5	200.5	192.4	192.3
Log Likelihood	-97.3	-97.3	-93.2	-93.2
N observations	437	437	437	437

Notes: * $= p \leq 0.1$, ** $= p \leq 0.05$, and *** $= p \leq 0.01$.

† = excluded category is SMD electorate ballot only.

Logistic Regression Models

Table 9. Logistic regression results on legislative party switching in New Zealand with robust standard errors clustered by legislative term.

	1990-1993 (Pre-referendum)	1993-1996 (Impending change)	Pooled (Model 27)	Pooled (Model 28)
District vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−0.095 (0.071)	−0.073 (0.051)	−0.023 (0.025)	−0.069*** (0.008)
Party vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−	−	−0.097* (0.050)	−0.103** (0.045)
In government	−	0.638 (0.959)	2.610** (1.002)	2.623** (0.045)
Party ideological extremity	−	−0.026 (0.137)	0.065** (0.029)	0.065** (0.033)
Ballot type †				
Party list only	−	−	11.872***	13.141*** (0.867)
Both SMD and Party list	−	−	12.864*** (0.815)	14.022*** (0.842)
Period ‡				
Impending change	−	−	0.171 (0.437)	−0.094 (0.632)
Post-change	−	−	−15.686*** (1.769)	−19.562*** (2.509)
District % × Period				
Impending change	−	−	−	−0.002 (0.009)
Post-change	−	−	−	0.056*** (0.019)
Constant	2.078 (3.525)	1.146 (2.691)	−0.014 (0.453)	2.485** (0.990)
AIC	32.5	80.9	184.5	184.9
Log Likelihood	-14.3	-36.5	-88.3	-87.4
N observations	68	100	437	437

Notes: $^{*} = p \leq 0.1$, $^{**} = p \leq 0.05$, and $^{***} = p \leq 0.01$.

† = excluded category is SMD electorate ballot only and ‡ = excluded category is Pre-referendum.

Rare Events Logit Models

Table 10. Rare events logistic regression results.

	Model 29	Model 30	Model 31	Model 32	Model 33
District vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−0.096*** (0.037)	−0.099*** (0.030)	−0.087*** (0.023)	−0.067*** (0.016)	−0.026 (0.017)
Party vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	–	–	–	–	−0.085*** (0.023)
In government	0.366 (1.196)	2.619*** (0.845)	1.587*** (0.498)	1.677*** (0.505)	2.258*** (0.528)
Party ideological extremity	−0.069 (0.157)	0.074** (0.029)	0.025 (0.016)	0.033* (0.018)	0.033* (0.017)
SMD	–	1.494 (1.043)	1.914** (0.814)	–	–
Ballot type †					
Party list only	–	–	–	−2.195** (1.021)	−2.631** (1.096)
Both SMD and Party list	–	–	–	−1.359** (0.572)	−1.937*** (0.616)
Constant	−2.516 (2.561)	−3.629*** (1.286)	−1.902*** (0.644)	−0.777 (0.765)	0.152 (0.845)
AIC	98.1	74.7	187.6	189.0	171.6
Penalized log Likelihood	-45.1	-32.4	-88.8	-87.5	-77.8
N observations	197	240	437	437	437

Notes: $^{*} = p \leq 0.1$, $^{**} = p \leq 0.05$, and $^{***} = p \leq 0.01$.

† = excluded category is SMD electorate ballot only. Models 29-33 replicate models 4-8 in the text of the New Zealand analysis but with a rare events logit (Firth's logit) instead of a basic logistic regression. Model 29 includes the 1990-1993 and 1993-1996 terms and model 30 includes the 1996-1999 and 2005-2008 terms. Models 31-33 are pooled models including all four terms. Standard errors reported in parentheses.

Multilevel Logit Models: Legislative Term

Table 11. Multilevel logistic regression results with individual legislators nested within legislative terms.

	Model 34	Model 35	Model 36	Model 37	Model 38
District vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−0.102*** (0.038)	−0.109*** (0.033)	−0.078*** (0.027)	−0.058*** (0.019)	−0.029* (0.017)
Party vote share (%) (vote-seeking)	−	−	−	−	−0.087*** (0.024)
In government	0.305 (1.083)	2.974*** (0.936)	1.856*** (0.575)	1.777*** (0.554)	2.391*** (0.551)
Party ideological extremity	−0.103 (0.137)	0.086*** (0.033)	0.049** (0.029)	0.041* (0.023)	0.035** (0.018)
SMD	−	1.741 (1.139)	1.401 (0.929)	−	−
Ballot type †					
Party list only	−	−	−	−2.080 (1.399)	−3.093** (1.250)
Both SMD and Party list	−	−	−	−0.831 (0.960)	−2.070*** (0.641)
Constant	2.976 (2.435)	−4.200*** (1.482)	−2.699** (1.133)	−1.795 (1.399)	0.163 (0.876)
Intercept variance	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.607 (0.738)	−0.370 (0.653)	0.001 (0.001)
X^2	9.20	19.96	18.18	18.89	30.78
Log Likelihood	-52.3	-41.6	-98.6	-98.6	-93.2
N observations	197	240	437	437	1341
N legislative terms	2	2	4	4	4

Notes: $^* = p \leq 0.1$, $^{**} = p \leq 0.05$, and $^{***} = p \leq 0.01$.

† = excluded category is SMD electorate ballot only. Models 34-38 replicate models 4-8 in the text of the New Zealand analysis but with a rare events logit (Firth's logit) instead of a basic logistic regression. Model 34 includes the 1990-1993 and 1993-1996 terms and model 35 includes the 1996-1999 and 2005-2008 terms. Models 36-38 are pooled models including all four terms. Standard errors reported in parentheses.

Vita

Cassie Millet Knott, a native of Sorrento, Louisiana, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Southeastern Louisiana University in 2012. She expects to graduate in the summer of 2017. Cassie will continue her studies in pursuit of her doctorate at Rice University in Houston, Texas starting in the fall semester of 2017. She specializes in comparative politics and her interests lie at the intersection of legislative and electoral politics.