

Bureaucrats in the Headlights

Question Times and Delegation to Bureaucrats

Rob Salmond*

Paper prepared for presentation at the ECPR Conference on Parliamentary Questions,

Science Po, Paris, March 12-14, 2009.

* * * * *

An elected politician's decision to delegate authority to unelected bureaucrats is an inherently risky one. On the one hand, politicians who successfully delegate receive the benefit of bureaucrats' expertise on often complicated policy matters, with the result that the finally implemented policy is of a higher quality than if it had been solely designed by the politicians. This is good for the citizens and also good for the delegating politician – voters show their appreciation for good policy by re-electing politicians, not by increasing bureaucrats' salaries.

Conversely, however, delegated authority can work against the delegating politician, either if the bureaucrats have preferences distinct from those of the delegating politician, or

* Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Michigan. Email rsalmond@umich.edu

in instances of bureaucratic error or misjudgment. In these cases, costs can be conferred on the responsible politician – either if the politician becomes the owner of a policy (s)he doesn't actually support, or if the politician is forced to assume public responsibility for an error made by another actor. Voters punish politicians for government action that grabs their attention and they do not like, regardless of who or what really caused the problem (Achen and Bartels 2004, Bartels 2005). Voters do not have anybody else they can fire.

There is a strong tradition in political science exploring the nature and logic of delegation in democracies (Kiewit and McCubbins 1991, Bawn 1995, Epstein and O'Halloran 1999, Thies 2001, Huber and Shipan 2002). This literature seeks to understand, among other things, under what conditions will a politician choose to accept the risks of delegation in pursuit of its rewards. Answers proposed often focus on the expected policy gains from delegation, the transaction costs inherent in the process of delegation, and the risk of agent ministers or bureaucrats implementing policy that the delegating government didn't intend. Importantly, the literature has mainly focused on the *policy* risks and rewards of delegation.

But what of the potential *reputational* costs of delegation? There is no ideological policy content in reputational costs, but a politician's reputation (on the valence dimension of competence, for example) is important to her/his electoral prospects nonetheless (Ansolabehere and Snyder 2000, Groseclose 2001). I attempt to consider these costs in this paper. Specifically, I consider what happens to the reputation of delegating politicians when bureaucrats make errors. These reputational costs are important to politicians because a politician's reputation as competent managers affects their vote share, but are largely unexplored in the literature on delegation.

I propose and test an argument suggesting that politicians will delegate less authority to bureaucrats when the reputational risks to the politician increase. Reputational risks, I argue, increase as parliamentary question times (QTs) become more spontaneous or quick-fire. When QT institutions allow opposition politicians to force government ministers to account for bureaucratic failure, to be the public face of misadministration decisions, and to defend such failure without advance warning or preparation, Ministers suffer. In countries with these spontaneous, quick-fire “open QTs,” opposition politicians can force government Ministers to take public responsibility for bureaucratic error; in countries without open QT institutions, they cannot.

A Minister asked a simple, direct off-the-cuff question about a bureaucratic decision at QT without cannot help but to make some form of public comment on the decision, and therefore to some extent become the public face of the decision. Having been surprised by an off-the-cuff question, the Minister is also at serious risk of giving a less-than-perfect answer to the question, thus hurting her/his reputation publicly. If a Minister is given a long, multi-faceted question about the bureaucracy, on the other hand, the QT rules in all countries allow for an answer about the general tenor of a question without addressing each point of a question in detail. This provides procedural cover for Ministerial obfuscation. And in a QT environment where a Minister has advance notice of all questions, the risk of a damaging answer decreases markedly.

The paper proceeds as follows. In section 1 I describe how differing question time (QT) institutions perform better or worse at transmitting information from politicians to the public. In section 2 I theorize about the impact that these differing QT institutions might have on the degree of linkage between the actual competence of bureaucrats and the

perceived competence of politicians. Section 3 contains an empirical test of this argument. Section 4 concludes.

1. Question Times and Information Transmission

Certain rules and practices at QT are more successful at transmitting information from politicians that citizens are likely to both encounter and comprehend (Salmond 2004, 2007).

The types of QT institutions most likely to lead to the successful transmission of information from elites to the mass public are those featuring spontaneous, quick-fire exchanges of information. These elements are conducive to elite-mass information transmission because:

1. The quick-fire exchange of information forces politicians to make broad, simple, un-nuanced points, which are the kinds of points that are easy for journalists to turn into news stories, and easy for the viewers, listeners, and readers of those news stories to comprehend with little effort;
2. Spontaneous exchanges lead to increases in slips-of-the-tongue, surprised exclamations, and raucous behavior from the audience in the parliamentary chamber, and other elements lending the debate an air of spectacle. Information presented in a spectacular fashion has been shown to induce increased attention and learning across multiple contexts, both in political and non-political spheres (McGerr 1986, Schudson 1998, Ames 1992, Turner 1995).

Through these mechanisms, QT institutions that contain spontaneous and quick-fire information provide the parliamentary opposition with both the means (through surprise questioning) and the opportunity (through raucous debate) to tie government politicians'

reputations to acts of bureaucratic incompetence, malfeasance, or error. The motive to do this, of course, is endemic among opposition politicians.

[Table 1 about here]

Table 1 provides information about QT institutions across 22 advanced democracies on these two dimensions. Information about rules around spontaneous debate in columns two through five (operationalized in column five as an indicator variable for the opportunity for an opposition politician to ask questions without any notice and expect a immediate Ministerial response) was drawn largely from Wiberg (1994), supplemented with primary research for non-European cases. Information about the average speech time in QT debates (transformed into both linear and logged speeches per hour variable), which is my measure for the “quick fire nature” of the debates across multiple languages, was taken from webcasts of QT debates observed in 2004. For more details on the coding schema, see Salmond 2007.

The table shows that there is considerable variation in both the spontaneity of QT debates, and also in the amount of time that politicians take to make their arguments. While British politicians can expect surprise questioning and have less than a minute to make their points, Swiss politicians get many days notice of all questions they will face, and have over three times as long to give their replies. In the US, of course, Ministers do not face any regular questioning from the legislature.

This diversity in QT rules and practices has predictable consequences for public engagement with the political process. The “open” QT institutions that lead to increased transmission of information to the citizenry are associated with increased population-level knowledge about politics, increased levels of partisan attachment, and increased electoral turnout (Salmond 2007), all forms of participation that are thought to covary with levels of political information.

As part of the information that citizens glean from increased and more engaging coverage of open QT debates, do they receive QT-sourced information about politicians' competence? Certainly this appears plausible. In the next section, I sketch an argument linking the form of the institutional levers available to opposition politicians at QT with the decisions by government Ministers about how much delegated authority to hand to bureaucrats. This argument operates through the mechanism of Ministers' understandable vanity about their reputations as competent managers of the country's affairs.

2. How open QT increases the risks of delegation

The extant literature on delegation is vast, and I do not attempt a rigorous review here – for a helpful summary see Huber, Shipan, and Pfahler 2001. It is useful to note, however, that previous research has generally expressed the optimization problem for principals in terms of policy alone, taking into account the material, informational and opportunity costs of delegating authority and monitoring agent action (Epstein and O'Halloran 1999). For Bawn (1995), Congress attempts to minimize the distance between its ideal policy and the policy as finally implemented. The problem of agency loss, in which opportunistic agents use the informational advantages to foist their own preferred policy on an unwilling, unwitting principal, is only a problem in politics when the legislators and the bureaucracy disagree over policy outcomes (Kiewiet and McCubbins, p. 5). Thies (2001) and Martin and Vanberg (2004) discuss ways in which coalition and parliamentary institutions overcome the central problem of delegation within coalitions, the problem being possible policy differences between the coalition as a whole and the particular minister delegated responsibility in an area. Again, the delegation problem is a policy problem.

Many of the gains from delegation that accrue to principals, however, have very little to do with policy positioning. The potential gain to principals is often on the valence issue of competence, and a strong argument is made that politicians seeking re-election should care about valence issues in addition to policy issues, because valence issues affect the nature of party competition (Stokes 1963, Enelow and Hinich 1982, Ansolabehere and Snyder 2000, Groseclose 2001). In delegating authority to bureaucrats, principals request that their agents enact the principal's preferred policy in a more competent way than the principal could on her/his own. There is no *policy* gain from delegation, as the principals could legislate for their policy ideal point without delegation – even the least technically proficient politician can legislate to make the defense budget \$1, double welfare payments, or eliminate income tax. What politicians cannot be at all sure of in those cases is that the policy would be implemented without undue or embarrassing incident.

[Figure 1 about here]

The top two panels of Figure 1 illustrate the situations commonly contemplated in the delegation literature to date. The two dimensions in the figure represent a horizontal policy direction and a vertical valence dimension of “competence.” In the top panel, the delegating political principal and their bureaucratic agent share the same policy preferences, and all the action in the delegation decision lies in the gains to the politician along the valence dimension. In this situation there is no risk to the politician in delegating authority, and the level of delegated authority should be high. In the second panel, the issue of agency loss (bureaucratic preferences that differ from the politician's preferences) introduces risk into the equation along the policy dimension, but not along the valence dimension. The politician is then forced to weigh up unambiguous gains on the valence dimension against possible losses on the policy dimension.

Is it the case, therefore, that the main rewards from delegation are on valence dimensions, while all the risks to principals occur along policy dimensions? I argue that such a bifurcation is too simplistic, and that principals face risks on valence dimensions also. Further, I argue that the extent of these valence risks varies from one institutional structure to another, with the nature of QT playing a critical role.

Unelected bureaucrats can make their political masters appear competent by using their expertise to improve the quality of policy implementation, perhaps by implementing a highly efficient way to deliver the principal's preferred services to citizens, or by using their superior information to avert a possible crisis. Bureaucrats can also, however, make their principals appear incompetent if they make implementation decisions that may be technically correct but are politically unwise.

Bureaucrats may have superior expertise and information to their political principals, but nowhere is it suggested that they systematically have superior political instincts. Such decisions might include accepting the technically best bid for a government contract from a foreign contractor in a time of high local unemployment, or refusing to fund a marginal case for publicly funded medical treatment even though the person is a past national sporting icon. This situation is depicted in the bottom panel of Figure 1, which shows a situation in which, even if the politician and the bureaucrats share the same policy preferences, the politician can make a net loss from a decision to delegate. As the likelihood of this situation occurring rises, politicians are likely to become more wary of entrusting both their policies and their popularity to the bureaucracy.

The degree to which those bureaucratic errors reflect on the delegating politicians, I argue, depends partly on the ability of those principals to avoid making public comment on the issue. If a delegating Minister can avoid all comment on such bureaucratic bungling and

privately direct the bureaucracy to fix the problem and further direct them to take public responsibility for it, then the Minister can, to a certain extent, avoid being publicly associated with the error. If, however, a Minister is forced to repeatedly account in a highly public forum for the actions of her/his agents even in adverse circumstances, then that Minister will be publicly linked to bureaucratic errors.

The first situation I describe, where Ministers can simply skirt these issues, can occur in countries that do not have an open QT institution. In countries without any QT at all, Ministers or Cabinet Secretaries can simply refuse to take questions on a particular issue until the problem has been solved (at which point the politically astute minister who has read David Mayhew's *The Electoral Connection* (1974) would call an immediate press conference to take credit for solving the problem). In the case of a country that has a QT institution with restrictive rules around asking no-notice questions, Ministers have an opportunity, ranging from a few hours in France to a few days in Switzerland to (in practice) up to two months in Portugal, to force the bureaucratic agent to publicly take responsibility for any error and to undertake to fix it, thus drawing attention away from the principal and on to the agent.

The alternative situation, in which principals are *forced* to account for the actions of their agents, is likely to occur in open QT countries. In those countries, opposition MPs can force Ministers to answer repeated questions on cases of bureaucratic incompetence without any advance warning, in a highly public forum under the eye of the political media. In this way the delegating politician becomes the de facto "public face" of the error, seen and heard discussing the problem on TV and radio. Thus in these situations, antagonistic politicians can comparatively easily turn a bureaucratic error into a slight on the competence of the delegating Minister or government. In open QT countries, therefore, the valence risks to delegating politicians rise.

To see how this process can work in an open QT setting, consider this 1995 transcript from New Zealand:

Hon. ANNETTE KING (Miramar) to the Minister of Social Welfare: What was the country of origin and cost per metre of wall coverings used in any renovation of the Tritec office at Upper Hutt?

Hon. PETER GRESHAM (Minister of Social Welfare): The country of origin of commercial grade fabric wall coverings used in recent renovations of the Tritec office was Belgium, and the cost was \$83 per linear metre. The vinyl wall covering also used during the renovations was a Swedish product and cost \$35 per linear metre. Both papers were chosen from samples provided by a local tradesman who carried out the work.

Hon. Annette King: Given that the imported fabric wallpaper cost \$2,362 a roll and the vinyl wallpaper cost \$1,750 a roll, is the Minister aware that top of the line New Zealand - made vinyl of equivalent size can be purchased for around \$315 a roll, and, if so, what justification is there for a backroom Government service to refurbish its office at prices normally reserved for 5-star hotels?

Hon. PETER GRESHAM: The member should be aware that the Tritec operation is carried out in a converted warehouse. I am informed that the standard of the walls in that building is such that in order to use conventional wallpapers on those walls it would be necessary to put expensive cladding underneath the paper, which would make the total cost greater than the present operation.

...

Hon. Annette King: Can the Minister confirm that funding for Parents Centre---a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week telephone line assisting dysfunctional families and families where sexual and emotional abuse have occurred---has been cut by \$5,000 this financial year, threatening its continued existence, and that, for the price of two rolls of wallpaper at Upper Hutt, this service could be continued?

Hon. PETER GRESHAM: I cannot confirm the precise question. If the member wishes to address that to me, I will find the answer for her from the department. However, what I can tell her is that funding in that area has not been reduced. An additional \$10 million has been allocated to the Children and Young Persons Service and is largely directed towards that area, and the Government pays very close attention to priorities as to who is funded out of it. (New Zealand Parliamentary Debates 1995)

In this case, the Minister of Social Welfare became the unwitting defender of bureaucrats' politically dubious interior decorating decisions! As a result of this QT exchange, the costly wallpaper scandal received front-page coverage in many New Zealand newspapers. *The Dominion*, the morning daily in New Zealand's capital, said:

"Social Welfare Minister Peter Gresham, questioned about the spending in Parliament, said, if the expensive Belgian fabric wallpaper had not been used, the walls of the former warehouse would have required cladding. This would have cost more. However, he offered no justification for using Swedish vinyl commercial-grade paper, costing \$ 1750 a roll, instead of a local product in the renovation of the Tritec premises." (*The Dominion*, 11 August 1995, page 1)

This newspaper article, and others like it, further linked Minister Gresham with these wallpapering decisions of which he had no knowledge when they were made. This issue was still the subject of parliamentary debate six days later.

Had such an issue emerged in a non-open QT or non-QT setting, the responsible Minister would have had a number of days to prepare her/his answer, to find the relevant information, to prime the media, and to force the responsible bureaucrat to publicly take responsibility for the decision, all before having to attend QT. And if the QT rules did not allow follow up questions, such as the case in France, pre-2000 Japan, or Switzerland, the Minister would additionally not be held to account by MPs for any answer that (s)he does give to the parliament.

The parliamentary opposition in countries without an open QT does not appear to have the same ability as an open QT opposition to successfully link a politician's reputation with bureaucratic decision-making. Thus the cost of bureaucratic ineptitude to politicians is higher in New Zealand and similar countries than it is in Switzerland and like countries.

I expect, therefore, that politicians in countries with open QT institutions will provide less discretion to bureaucrats than do politicians in other countries, because delegation carries more potential reputational costs to the politician in the open QT context.

H1 The level of legislative delegation to bureaucrats is lower in countries with open QT institutions than in countries without.

3. An Empirical Test

I test my hypothesis by extending Huber and Shipan's comparative analysis from chapter seven of their 2002 book *Deliberate Discretion?*. In this book Huber and Shipan argue that prescribing bureaucratic action through detailed legislation is costly, and that the more costly

is the detailed legislation, the less likely it will be passed. Factors that increase the relative cost of passing detailed legislation include the presence of a low-capacity, non-professional legislature; the difficulty of legislative bargaining (including the number of veto players in the political system – see Tsebelis 1995, 1999, 2002); and increases in the other means available to politicians for ex-post control of bureaucrats.

Huber and Shipan test their argument in a number of contexts, from healthcare legislation in Michigan to legislation across the US states to legislation across advanced parliamentary democracies. Here I concentrate only on their last test – looking at patterns of lawmaking across national boundaries – because it is only in this context that we can observe variation in QT institutions.

Huber and Shipan seek to understand the amount of delegation in various parliamentary systems by measuring the length of laws. All else constant, they argue, longer laws contain more detailed instructions to the bureaucracy than do shorter laws, and hence contain less delegation. This is intuitively appealing. Holding “all else constant,” however, is not easy. First, there is the issue of comparing like laws. Huber and Shipan select a sample of 4,102 labor laws from 19 democracies, categorized into 13 issue categories by the International Labor Organization. Next, there is the problem of measuring length. Huber and Shipan operationalize this in terms of the number of pages in a law, providing a “formatting-standardized page length” by comparing the amount of information you can fit on one page of properly formatted law in each of the 19 countries’ official journals. Third, there is the problem of comparing across languages. Huber and Shipan solve this problem in an ingenious way, using EU laws (which are, in substantive terms, identical in all of their various translations) to create a “verbosity index” for different European languages, which they then applied as a multiplier to the formatting-standardized page lengths. At the end of these

processes, Huber and Shipan have a dependent variable that measures delegation in thirteen narrow areas of labor law using measured of legislative length standardized for language and formatting.

Huber and Shipan then propose and test arguments linking policy conflict among parliamentary actors, government capacity, and legal and social structure with levels of delegation. Their tests use cross-section time-series techniques with random effects estimators and dummy variables for the thirteen policy areas in addition to their independent variables. They find that less delegation occurs (i.e. legislation in longer) when a minority or coalition government is in office, in common law contexts, and in federal contexts, while conditions of corporatism or high cabinet turnover lead to higher levels of delegation. For more details see Huber and Shipan's chapter seven.

I replicate the Huber and Shipan findings, using their dataset and methods, but adding one of the three QT variables from Table 1 to each regression. Longer legislation, they argue, indicates less discretion to bureaucrats. Thus I expect that increasingly open QT institutions should be associated with longer legislation (i.e. less delegation of decision-making to bureaucrats) due to increased reputational costs to politicians if the bureaucrats perform poorly, and therefore that my QT variables should be positive and significant.

Table 2 reports results from my re-examination of the Huber and Shipan dataset. I initially report results from their baseline model (from Huber and Shipan table 7.4, column 1). There is general support for my hypothesis that more open QT institutions lead to decreased delegation to bureaucrats. All three QT variables have the expected sign (positive), one reaches significance at the 0.05 level (two-tailed), and another reaches significance at the 0.10 level (also two tailed). The variable that does not reach statistical significance is the QT openness variable. Huber and Shipan's particular sample of countries renders a particularly

harsh test of this variable, given that Japan, Switzerland, and the US are all excluded from the dataset. Thus only France and Portugal remain in the non-open QT category, while all other countries in the dataset have open QTs. Thus there is little variation on the independent variable of interest, and the small number of countries in a category leads to increased risk that observed effects are due to single country idiosyncrasies rather than consistent institutional effects. Substantively the effects are large – on the QT speeches scale a move from a Swiss to a British-style QT has approximately the same impact as moving from a single-party to a coalition government.

Huber and Shipan's other independent variables are largely unaffected by the addition of a QT variable to the regression. Huber and Shipan find that cabinet turnover, minority and coalition government status, the level of corporatism, and federalism are all significant predictors of delegation, and Table 2 confirms those results. The only result on which there is some minimal difference relates to a nation's legal system. Huber and Shipan argue that politicians in common law legal systems will be likely to write more detailed, less delegatory legislation in order to avoid the possibility of activist judges legislating from the bench, and they find strong support for this idea in the data. Once I add the QT variables, the evidence in favor of this proposition is marginally weaker, with the common law dummy variable only gaining statistical significance at the 0.05 level in one regression. In my view, not much should be made of this change, given the p-values in the other two regressions (0.069 and 0.125 respectively), the colinearity between the common law variable and the QT variables, (rho ranges from 0.22 to 0.54 at the country level) and the increased number of country-level variables in a regression system with few countries to observe. This last issue is discussed further below. Overall the results of these replications provide strong confirmation of Huber and Shipan's hypotheses.

In Table 3 I also report the robustness of these results against the inclusion of additional independent variables to the regression, replicating Huber and Shipan's Table 7.4 (columns 2-3) and Table 7.5 (columns 1-5)¹. This table shows the p-values for each of the three QT variables against the inclusion of seven alternative explanatory variables. For details on why these variables might influence delegation, see Huber and Shipan pp 200-206. All QT variables have the expected positive sign in all cases. The QT speeches variable is significant at the 0.05 level in six of the seven regressions, falling to a p-value of 0.056 in the seventh. The logged QT speeches variable is significant at the 0.05 level in three of the seven regressions, significant at the 0.10 level in a further three regressions, and falls to $p=0.107$ in the other robustness check. The QT openness variable, as before, performs more poorly than either of the other two variables. It is significant at the 0.05 level once and at the 0.10 level once, and in the remaining regressions its associated p-value hovers around 0.15 or 0.2.

What should we make of this pattern of results? In short, the evidence in favor of my hypothesis is encouraging, persuasive even, but not overwhelming. I have already discussed a possible reason for the non-performance of the QT openness variable – it varies very little within Huber and Shipan's sample of countries. The two speeches variables perform better, but neither is entirely robust. Part of this may be due to the presence of five (sometimes six) other country-level variables. The overall N in the regressions may be up to 3,975 laws, but at the country level the regression has an N of 16 to 18, with five or six variables that cannot vary at all within country and a further two variables (coalition government and minority government) that can conceivably vary within country but which often do not. Additionally, many of these variables are substantially collinear, causing further

¹ I do not replicate Huber and Shipan's Table 7.4 columns 3-6 because they include interaction terms without including all constitutive terms, thus falling short of the persuasive prescription for using conditional variables offered in Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2003).

instability in the regression systems. Given these restrictions, I take the performance of the QT speeches and logged QT speeches to be encouraging, but not overwhelming, support for my hypothesis. Of course, the threshold for “encouragement” across a number of regressions is a personal one, not based on a strict scientific standard.

4. Discussion

In this paper I have shown that open QT institutions lead to less delegation from elected government principals to unelected bureaucratic agents. I hypothesize that this relationship is due to the increase reputational risk to delegating governments in open QT environments, *vis a vis* non-open QT or non-QT institutional settings. The empirical results are encouraging and persuasive without being overwhelming.

Through this simple hypothesis and result, I illustrate a number of points. First, I suggest through these results that the political elite is aware of the impact of certain national-level QT institutions on citizen engagement with politics, as mentioned in section 1, and that they adapt their legislative strategy to account for this effect. In institutional settings where bureaucratic error can easily hurt politicians in the court of public opinion, the politicians give the bureaucrats less freedom to make judgments and, potentially, errors. In contexts where politicians can more easily isolate their own reputations from those of errant bureaucrats, they delegate bureaucrats more authority. Politicians are more likely to give bureaucrats rope when it cannot be used to hang the politician.

Second, the findings suggest a small but important theoretical extension to the literature on delegation. The delegation literature has concentrated on the policy costs and benefits associated with the decision to delegate, but this chapter has shown that politicians also react to different reputational risks associated with the same decision. A helpful

extension of this line of thinking would be to re-examine some models of delegation, adding a new valence dimension to the existing policy dimension.

Third, I expose important differences between different institutional mechanisms for monitoring policy implementation. Some earlier students of delegation have suggested that delegation is more likely in the presence of ex-post monitoring institutions, because principals can undo many of the potential costs of delegation during the monitoring process (CITE). The findings here, however, show that not all ex-post monitoring mechanisms are alike with respect to delegation. Open QT institutions are an opportunity for opposition politicians to impose costs on delegating Ministers, whereas many other monitoring institutions – such as reporting requirements or select committee hearings – are opportunities for the delegating government to impose costs or extract benefits from agent bureaucrats. This flip in the status of the delegating government from the monitor to the monitored reverses the impact of an effective monitoring institution on the decision to delegate. There are other such institutions, which could provide helpful further tests of the delegation hypothesis. Frequent interpellation debates, for example, may be a sign of high levels of parliamentary scrutiny of delegating governments, as could a strong culture of classically-defined Ministerial responsibility or of frequent Ministerial media availabilities.

References

- Achen, Christopher H. and Larry M. Bartels. 2004. "Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Drought, Flu, and Shark Attacks". MS., Princeton University.
- Ames, Carole. 1992. "Classrooms: Goals, structures and student motivation" in *Journal of Educational Psychology* (84:3), pp 261-271.
- Ansolabehere, Stephen and James M Snyder, Jr. 2000. "Valence Politics and Equilibrium in Spatial Election Models." *Public Choice* (103:3-4), pp 327-336.
- Bartels, Larry M. 2005. "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind" in *PS: Perspectives on Politics* (3:1), pp 15-31.
- Bawn, Kathleen. 1995. "Political Control versus Expertise: Congressional Choice About Administration Procedures" in *American Political Science Review* (89:1), pp. 62-73.
- Brambor, Thomas, William R. Clark and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses" in *Political Analysis* (14:1), pp 63-82.
- Enelow, James and Melvin J. Hinich. 1981. "A New Approach to Voter Uncertainty in the Downsian Spatial Model" in *American Journal of Political Science* (25:3), pp 483-493.
- Epstein, David and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1999. *Delegating Powers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Groseclose, Tim. 2001. "A Model of Candidate Location When One Candidate Has a Valence Advantage" in *American Journal of Political Science* (45:4), pp. 862-886.
- Huber, John D. and Charles R. Shipan. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion? The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Huber, John D., Charles R. Shipan, and Madeline Pfahler. 2001. "Legislatures and Statutory Control of the Bureaucracy." *American Journal of political Science* (45:2), pp 330-346.
- Kiewiet, D. Roderick and Mathew D. McCubbins. 1991. *The Logic of Delegation: Congressional Parties and the Appropriations Process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Martin, Lanny W. and Georg Vanberg. 2004. "Policing the Bargain: Coalition Government and Parliamentary Scrutiny" in *American Journal of Political Science* (48:1), pp. 13-27
- Mayhew, David. 1974. *The Electoral Connection*.
- McGerr, Michael. 1986. *The Decline of Popular Politics* New York: Oxford University Press.
- New Zealand Parliament. 1995. *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (10 August). New Zealand Government Print: Wellington.

- Salmond, Rob. 2004. "Grabbing the Government by the Throat: Question Time and Leadership in New Zealand's Parliamentary Opposition" in *Political Science* (56:2), pp 75-90.
- Salmond, Rob. 2007. *Parliamentary Question Times: How Legislative Accountability Mechanisms Affects Politics and Policy*. UCLA PhD Dissertation.
- Schudson, Michael. 1998. *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Thies, Michael F. 2001. "Keeping Tabs on Partners: The Logic of Delegation in Coalition Governments" in *American Journal of Political Science* (45:3), pp. 580-598.
- Tsebelis, George. 1995. "Decision-Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism, and Multipartism" in *British Journal of Political Science* (25:3), pp. 289-325.
- Tsebelis, George. 1999. "Veto Players and Law Productions in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis" in *American Political Science Review* (93:3), pp. 591-608.
- Tsebelis, George. 2002. *Veto Players: How Political Institutions Work*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Turner, Julianne C. 1995. "The Influence of Classroom Contexts on Young Children's Motivation for Literacy," in *Reading Research Quarterly* (30:3), pp 410-441.
- Wiberg, Matti. 1995. "Parliamentary Questioning: Control by Communication?" in Doring, H (ed) *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe*, New York: St Martin's Press

Table 1: Patterns of Parliamentary Questioning in 22 Advanced Democracies.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Country	No-notice Questions Allowed?	Follow-up Questions Allowed?	Notice Period (if no Surprise Questions or Follow-ups)	Open QT	Speeches / Hour	Log (Speeches / Hour)
Australia	Yes	Yes	-	1	44.3	3.79
Austria	Yes	Yes	-	1	-	-
Belgium	Yes	No*	-	1	30.2	3.41
Canada	Yes	Yes	-	1	108.9	4.69
Denmark	Yes	Yes	-	1	73.0	4.29
Finland	Yes	Yes	-	1	67.8	4.22
France	Yes	No	-	0	26.0	3.26
Germany	Yes	Yes	-	1	70.3	4.25
Iceland	Yes	Yes	-	1	45.4	3.82
Ireland	No	Yes	-	1	35.9	3.58
Israel	No	No	2 days	0	-	-
Italy	Yes	Yes	-	1	-	-
Japan (pre-2000)	No**	No	**	0	1.5	0.41
Japan (post-2000)	Yes	Yes	-	1	28.5	3.35
Netherlands	Yes	Yes	-	1	43.5	3.77
New Zealand	Yes	Yes	-	1	109.3	4.69
Norway	Yes	Yes	-	1	51.1	3.97
Portugal	Yes	Yes	-	0	18.3	2.91
Spain	Yes	Yes	-	1	36.5	4.01
Sweden	Yes	Yes	-	1	55.4	4.01
Switzerland	No	No	3 days	0	34.9	3.55
UK	No	Yes	-	1	97.1	4.58
USA	-	-	N/A	0	0	0***

* The questioner in Belgium is able to make a follow-up comment, but the minister is under no obligation to respond to it.

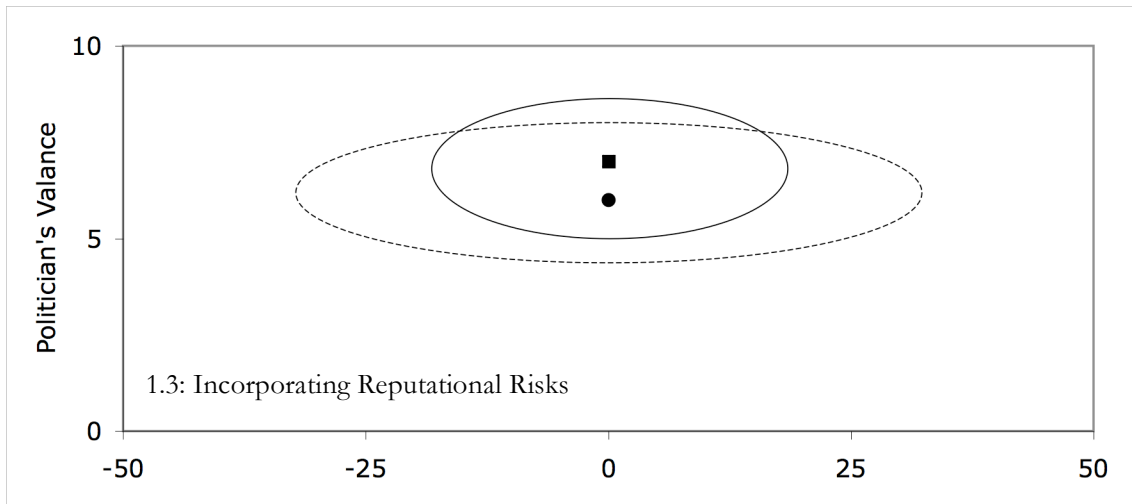
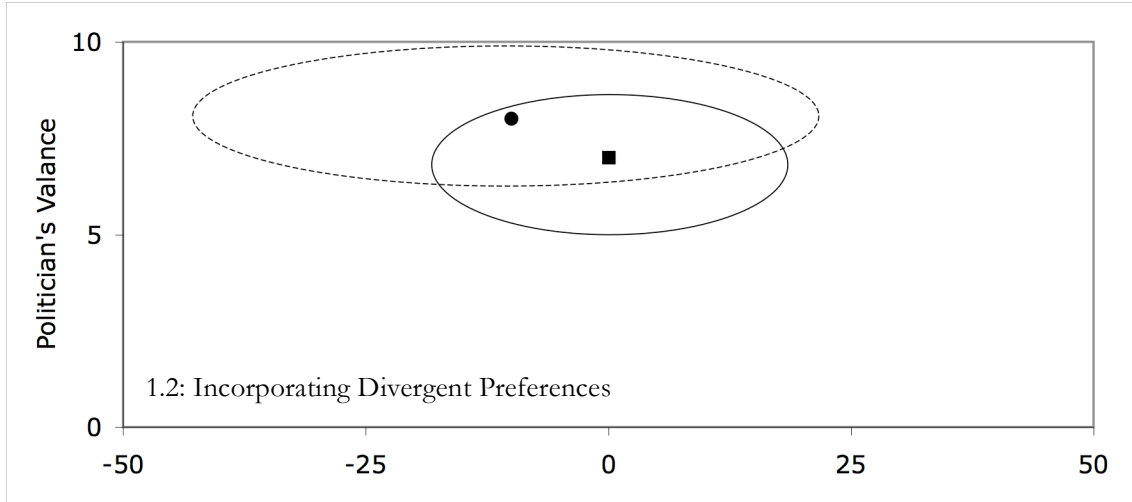
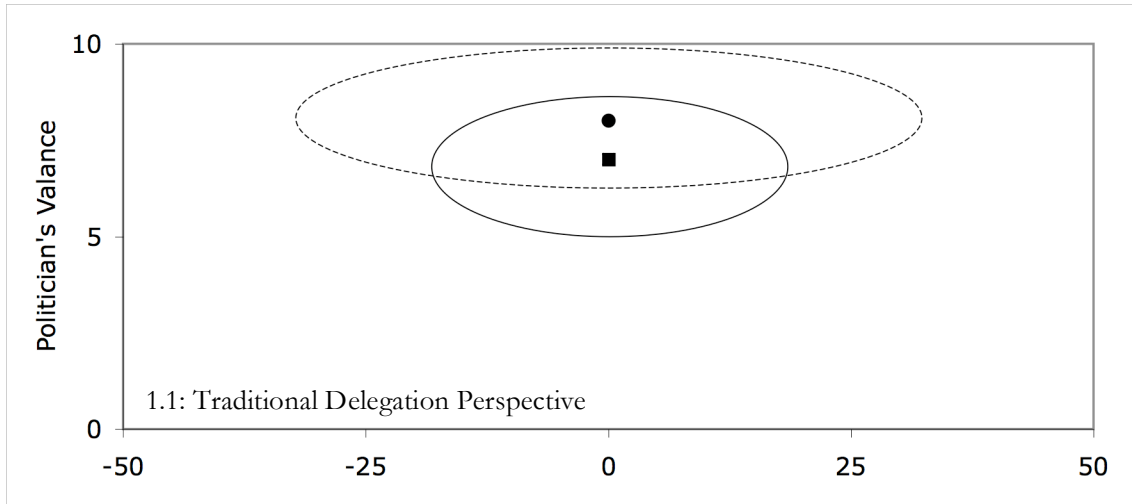
** In pre-2000 Japan “question time” actually refers (in the period before 2000 at least) to a rare, set-piece speech-swapping occasion, so while the possibility of surprise questions and notice periods are hard issues to assess, it is clear that there is not an “open question period” as discussed in the text.

*** The logged US value was arbitrarily increased to zero. The technically correct value (negative infinity) obviously cannot be included in regressions.

Data for columns 6 and 7 were not collected for Austria or Italy because those countries either do not have a parliamentary webcast, or the webcast was inoperative. Similar data were not collected for Israel because questions and answers are not read to the Knesset on the same day, and hence there is no unitary ‘Question Time’ to observe.

Israeli CSES and QT data is limited to the extent that it could only be included in column one of Table 3 below. It is excluded from that regression for consistency, but the result is robust to its inclusion.

Figure 1: Risks and Opportunities in Delegating Authority



Policy (expressed as difference from the Principal's ideal point)

Note: Square points and solid lines represent expected values and average risks in a low delegation situations;
circular points and dotted lines represent expected values and average risks in high delegation situations.

Table 2: Question Times and Bureaucratic Delegation

	Dependent Variable: Standardized Page Length		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Constant	67.142** (0.000)	75.540** (0.000)	13.808 (0.711)
Cabinet Turnover	-1.748** (0.009)	-3.189** (0.000)	-3.040** (0.000)
Elapsed Time	0.003 (0.174)	0.004 (0.143)	0.004 (0.140)
Minority government	26.744** (0.000)	30.109** (0.000)	29.687** (0.000)
Coalition government	13.757* (0.023)	23.051** (0.000)	23.058** (0.000)
Corporatism	-49.535** (0.001)	-52.065** (0.000)	-55.143** (0.000)
Common Law	22.901 (0.125)	30.702* (0.040)	29.580 (0.069)
Federalism	18.329 (0.061)	22.444* (0.018)	22.249* (0.022)
QT Openness	21.809 (0.197)		
QT Speeches		0.420* (0.035)	
Logged QT Speeches			21.788 (0.061)
Policy-specific dummy variables	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (laws)	3975	3605	3605
N (countries)	18	16	16
Log-likelihood	-22,097.265	-20105.519	-20105.938

NOTES: * denotes $p < 0.05$, ** denotes $p < 0.01$, two-tailed tests.

Models re-estimate Huber and Shipan's Table 7.4, model (1).

Table 3: Additional Tests of the Delegation Hypothesis

Huber and Shipan Test	Additional Variable	Dependent Variable: Standardized Page Length		
		QT Openness	QT Speeches	Logged QT Speeches
		(1)	(2)	(3)
Table 7.4 (2)	Opposition Influence	23.266 (0.165)	0.368* (0.027)	22.988* (0.012)
Table 7.4 (3)	Salary Premium	29.263 (0.064)	0.391 (0.056)	20.096 (0.107)
Table 7.5 (1)	Government Ideology	14.234 (0.388)	0.458* (0.024)	24.067* (0.043)
Table 7.5 (2)	Change in Gov't Ideology	21.615 (0.201)	0.421* (0.035)	21.860 (0.061)
Table 7.5 (3)	Change in Unionization	65.336* (0.002)	0.403* (0.041)	20.531 (0.090)
Table 7.5 (4)	Total No. of Laws adopted	20.895 (0.219)	0.422* (0.033)	0.427* (0.053)
Table 7.5 (5)	Scandinavia dummy	21.550 (0.159)	0.427* (0.018)	23.446* (0.026)

NOTES:

* denotes $p < 0.05$, two-tailed test. P-values appear in parentheses.

Regressions also include all other independent variables from Table 9.1

For details of the additional variables, see Huber and Shipan (2002)