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## Strategic Voting

What is Strategic Voting?

What is the behavioral difference between sincere and strategic voting?

Is strategic voting really insincere?

Strategic Voting: Voting for a party whose manifesto is not closest to the voter's preferences.

Why would voters vote 'non-sincerely'?

'balancing'

potential influence on coalition formation

institutional factors such as a 5 percent hurdle

else?

Institutions that allow 'Simple Balancing'?

Presidentialism

Bicameralism/ Federalism

Multiparty Government/ Coalitions

## ***Balancing in the American System***

### Split Ticket Voting

President and House of Representatives (Senate)

Two separate ballots for presidential elections and house of representative elections

Accordingly, voters can vote for different candidates/parties in both elections.

### Midterm Elections

Rule: Parties that hold the 'White House' lose in the midterm elections (relative to the vote share in the previous 'main' election).

## ***More Complicated Balancing in the German System***

Federalism Bundestag and Bundesrat

Bundestag. Country-Level

Bundesrat. State-Level

Bundestag

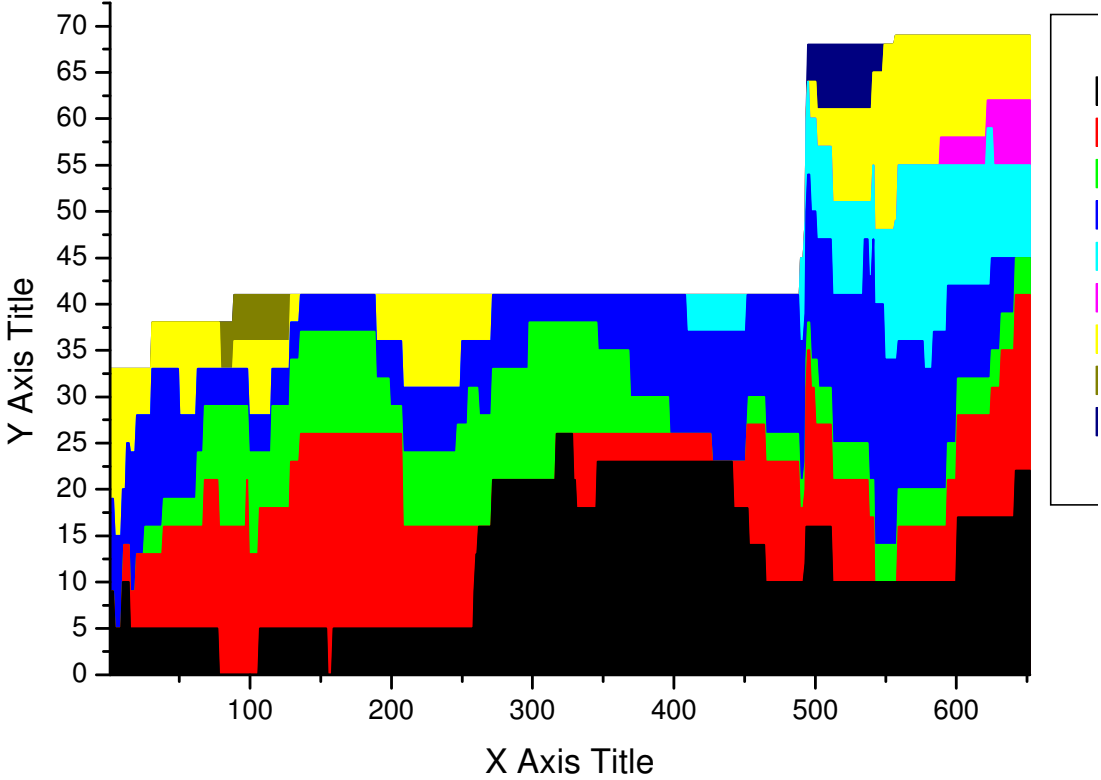
Mixed-system of proportional and majoritarian voting  
(dominantly representational)

Bundesrat

State governments send representative based on  
government in the state and the number of votes of  
that state

State	current gov.	Votes	population
Baden-Württemberg	CDU/FDP	6	10.7
Bayern	CSU	6	12.5
Berlin	SPD/PDS	4	3.4
Brandenburg	SPD/ CDU	4	2.6
Bremen	SPD/ CDU	3	0.7
Hamburg	CDU	3	1.7
Hessen	CDU	5	6.1
Mecklenburg	SPD/ PDS	3	1.7
Niedersachsen	CDU/ FDP	6	8.0
Nordrhein-Westfalen	CDU/ FDP	6	18.1
Rheinland-Pfalz	SPD/ FDP	4	4.1
Saarland	CDU	3	1.1
Sachsen	CDU/ SPD	4	4.3
Sachsen-Anhalt	CDU/ FDP	4	2.8
Thüringen	CDU	4	2.4

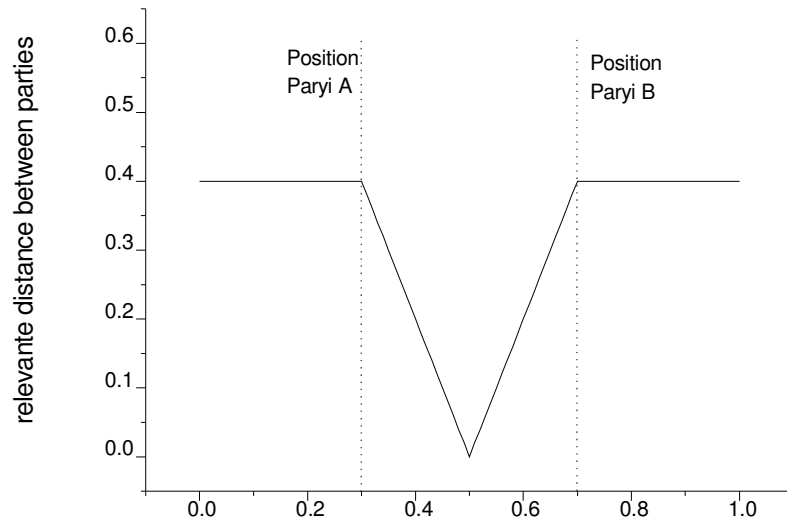
# Bundesrat Majorities



# ***Electoral Cycles in the German State Elections***

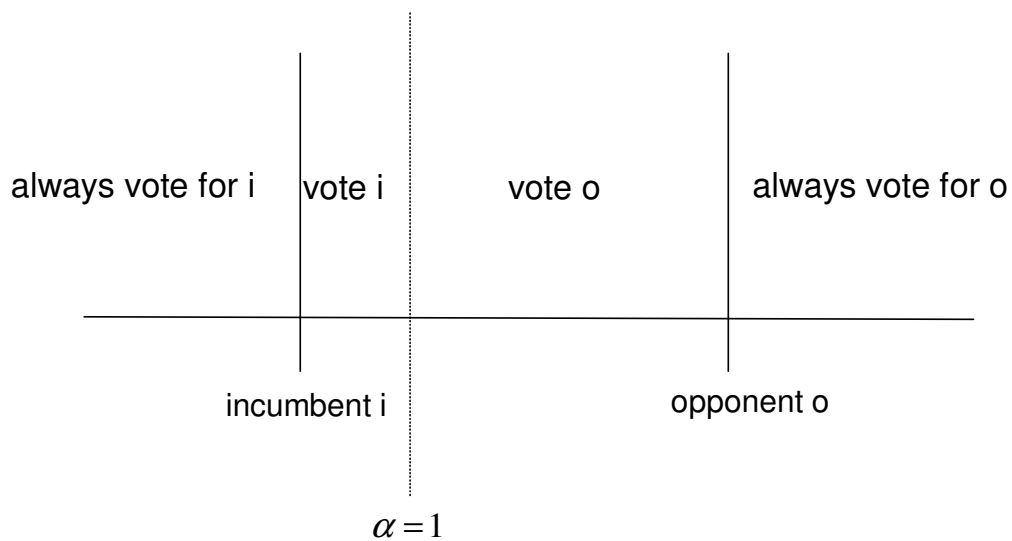
Kern/ Hainmüller 2005

# Theory of Strategic Voting



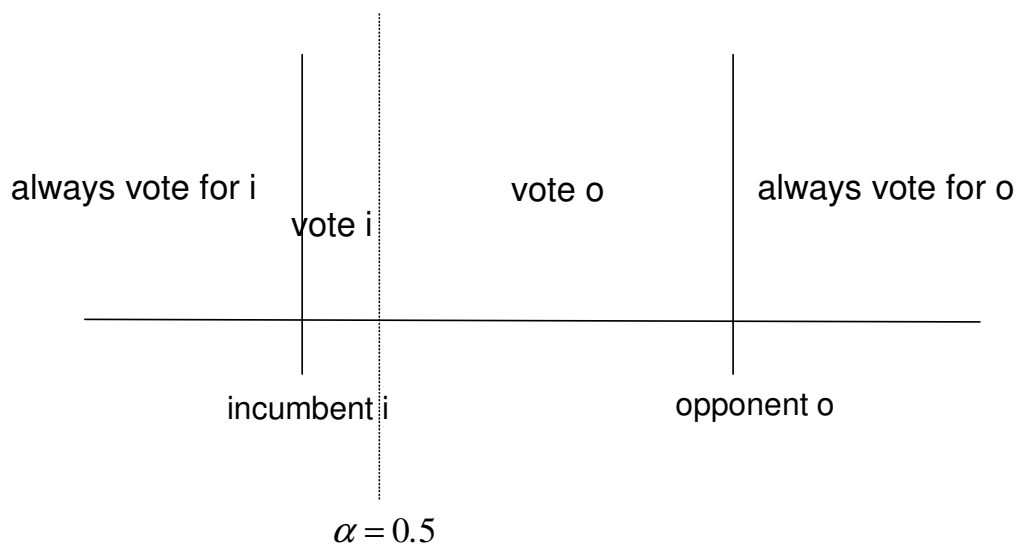
## The Logic of Policy Moderation

$$q = p_1 + \alpha(p_2 - p_1)$$



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Accordingly, the smaller the influence of the opposition party (dominating, say, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chamber) on policies, the higher the incentive to vote strategically!

Plausible?

## ***Rethinking Strategic Voting***

The notion of strategic voting depends on the assumption of spatial electoral models – i.e. that voters vote for the party closest to their policy preferences.

But seen from the perspective of strategic voting, this assumption does not make much sense.

Rather, voters vote for one party as to maximize their utility.

To maximize utility, voters have to vote for

relatively small parties (to strengthen their bargaining position in coalition negotiations),

parties in opposition (to increase their influence on policy outcomes)

or to vote against

governing parties (to moderate their influence on policy outcomes)