Coalitions

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A Guide for
Political Parties

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By The National Democratic Institute & The Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights

First Edition

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The National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights.

Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen democratic institutions and practices by strengthening political parties, civic organizations and parliaments, safeguarding elections, and promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

With staff members and volunteer political practitioners from more than 100 nations, NDI brings together individuals and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and expertise. Partners receive broad exposure to best practices in international democratic development that can be adapted to the needs of their own countries. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies.

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The Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights was established in 2006 by former Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik and Einar Steensnæs, former member of the Norwegian Parliament and Cabinet. Their objective was to create a new platform in Norway for international peace and human rights efforts, where – together with staff members and partners – they could put to good use their experience and competence and the networks they had acquired through many years in domestic and international politics.

Since its establishment in 2006, the Oslo Center has developed into an independent, professional and politically relevant democracy assistance center and a meeting place for experts, change agents and political actors. The Oslo Center provides comparative knowledge and shares practical experiences, and creates meeting places for conflict prevention, dialogue and strengthening of responsible leadership. The overall mission is to assist fragile states and vulnerable democracies in strengthening democratic political institutions and processes. For more information about the Oslo Center, please visit www.oslocenter.no.

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Overview

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In established and emerging democracies alike, ruling and opposition parties have formed coalitions to: increase their electoral competitiveness; advocate for democratic reforms; improve their influence in policy formulation; use their limited resources more effectively; and reach agreement on programs for government. In Chile, the coalition that won the 1988 referendum included more than a dozen political parties encompassing former bitter rivals from socialist and Christian democrat backgrounds. However, through united action they were able to stop General Pinochet's efforts to extend his rule and subsequently won repeated multiparty elections. In other cases, governments of national unity have helped usher countries through political crises and secure peace, providing the basis for agreement on broad-ranging reforms to improve inclusive, accountable government. While coalitions have helped advance democratic competition and governance, parties have also formed partnerships to enjoy the spoils of office without regard for policies to improve socioeconomic outcomes for the broadest possible range of citizens.

Even when they are well-intentioned, coalitions inherently pose a number of challenges for member parties as they attempt to: maintain a distinct party identity while respecting their obligations to coalition partners; develop mechanisms for coordinating with coalition partners; and communicate coalition goals and accomplishments to members and the general public. For instance, especially in contexts with a history of political polarization or conflict, party members may see cross-party collaboration as a sign of weakness or a betrayal of core party beliefs. Moreover, while individual parties have emerged from coalitions with expanded support, others – often the smaller or "junior" partners in the coalition – have found themselves with a fraction of their previous vote share and a damaged brand. In countries such as Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway, coalitions are a common feature of the political landscape and parties have almost honed them to an art form. In other places, increased political fragmentation has made coalitions more common than in the past. But in countries already fragile from conflict and decades of authoritarian rule, the failure to establish successful coalitions has weakened democratic reform efforts and contributed to political uncertainty.

In dozens of countries around the world, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights (OC) have provided technical assistance to political parties as they: decide whether coalition-building is advantageous; work to identify potential coalition partners; negotiate viable agreements; and develop practical systems for managing these partnerships. The

purpose of this guide is to provide political parties in emerging democracies – and groups who seek to assist them – with practical tips and lessons learned in coalition-building. NDI and OC anticipate that assistance providers will draw upon the guide to identify various practical tips and experiences that they can use to respond to requests from parties in emerging democracies. In addition, midlevel party officials may refer to the guide as part of their own preparations for coalition-building. It adds to previous NDI/OC materials by: outlining a coalition cycle; providing guidance on each step in the cycle; highlighting tips from politicians with experience working in coalitions; and sharing three case studies, written by individuals who played senior roles in coalitions in Chile, Ireland and Norway. As such, it is more comprehensive than previous NDI and OC materials on coalitions. Following is a brief overview of its contents.

The Introduction provides an overview of different types of coalitions. Tips and Tools for Coalition-Building begins with an overview of four key concepts:
- Coalitions have advantages as well as disadvantages that political parties should plan for;
- Context influences the types of coalitions that parties form and how they structure them;
- Coalition processes need to be built around communication, consultation, consensus and compromise; and
- Coalition-building can be broken down into a five-step cycle:
  - Developing a party strategy;
  - Negotiating a coalition;
  - Getting started;
  - Working in coalition; and
  - Drawing lessons learned.

Next, the publication provides a more detailed description of issues that parties should address at each of the five steps.

 Step 1: Developing a Party Strategy includes steps, tools and tips that parties can use to prepare for possible coalition-building. This includes clarifying the regulatory frameworks and internal party process to be followed, establishing a team to research partners and strategy, and preparing arguments for the negotiation.

 Step 2: Negotiating a Coalition describes some of the administrative arrangements that may be needed to support the negotiation process; it includes examples of how negotiations have been structured and different approaches that parties have used to reach compromises.

 Step 3: Getting Started highlights the importance of coalition agreements and the process that parties should follow in finalizing the coalition deal and communicating its contents to party structures and the broader public.

Step 4: Working in Coalition outlines some of the structures and systems that parties have used to manage relationships and information-sharing while in coalition.

Step 5: Drawing Lessons Learned describes some of the common reasons for dissolving coalitions and outlines some options that parties can use to review coalition accomplishments and lessons learned, including the impact coalition-building has had on their own party. Such review processes should make it possible to get different perspectives on the impact of the coalition on the party and any lessons learned that can inform future coalition-building efforts.

The Introduction and Tips and Tools for Coalition-Building include different icons that are explained below.

This icon marks illustrative examples drawn from desk research on different coalitions around the world.

Politicians from Argentina, Belgium, Colombia, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania and the United Kingdom responded to NDI/OC questionnaires on best practices and lessons learned from their experiences working in coalitions in their respective countries. This icon marks direct quotes and extracts from responses to these questionnaires.

Tips and Tools for Coalition-Building concludes with a series of worksheets/checklists that can be used at different steps in the coalition cycle. This icon marks each worksheet and checklist. A total of nine such worksheets/checklists are included. Worksheet 1 summarizes the tips for each step in the coalition-building cycle.

The final section of the publication includes case studies from three individuals who have served in senior positions in coalitions: Kjell Magne Bondevik, former prime minister of Norway; Sergio Bitar, a former minister from Chile; and John Bruton, former prime minister of Ireland. The submissions highlight lessons learned from their respective experiences.

Introduction

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In democratic systems, political parties compete for support, mobilizing support behind distinct sets of policy proposals and political values. When in power, they seek to implement their vision. In opposition, they critique or present alternatives to ruling party proposals, helping to hold the government accountable by contributing to oversight of the executive. This competition of ideas encourages each party to refine its own proposals and seek common ground with others; it can also result in better outcomes for the public. Thus political pluralism and competition are necessary for democracy to function.

In vibrant democratic systems, parties embrace civil competition but are also capable of providing the debate, dialogue and compromise required for democracy to function.[1] Basic levels of interparty trust, dialogue and cooperation are necessary to reach consensus on: the fundamental rules and structures regulating political competition and governance; arrangements for peace and security; and the policies where a high degree of stability is desirable. For instance, traditionally, political consensus has characterized management of proceeds from Norway's oil resources. As one politician recently noted, "From our point of view it's important to have a consensus on these issues. With so much oil money, it's important not to make politics out of this."[2]

In addition, particular parties may find it necessary or advantageous to partner with others to accomplish particular goals. A coalition is usually a temporary pact or partnership between two or more political parties, for the purpose of gaining more influence or power than the individual groups or parties can hope to achieve on their own. By focusing on their common objectives and pooling resources – policy expertise, funding, geographic strengths, support – coalition members can build on each other's strengths and gain advantage on issues of common interest. With a particular objective in mind – winning an election or referendum, passing a specific piece of legislation, or forming a government – coalitions have a limited life span until the objectives are achieved.[3] (In a merger, however, two or more political

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1 National Democratic Institute, *Political Party Programming Guide* (Washington, D.C.: National Democratic Institute, 2014), 2.

2 Jan Tore Sanner, deputy leader and finance spokesman for the Conservatives, quoted in "Debate heralds change for Norway's oil fund," *Financial Times*, June 30, 2013, http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/8466bd90-e007-11e2-9de6-00144feab7de.html#axzz3cTpCycXW.

3 J. Brian O'Day, "Joining Forces: A Guide to Forming, Joining and Building Coalitions," (Washington, D.C.: National Democratic Institute, 2004), 2.

parties agree to create a permanent unified structure and cease to exist as separate organizations. Parties planning a merger may initially form a coalition as an intermediate step to a permanent union.) For purposes of this publication, coalitions are defined to include: electoral alliances; majority/minority coalition governments; grand coalitions; governments of national unity; and legislative coalitions. The following section provides a brief overview of different types of coalitions.

Types of Coalitions

Electoral Alliances. The main purpose of an electoral alliance is to combine the resources of two or more parties to improve electoral outcomes for the members of the alliance. This may involve uniting behind common candidates or, in plurality-majority systems, agreeing not to compete against each other in particular electoral districts. Often, the ultimate goal is to achieve the vote share required to win an election, achieve majority in the legislature and to form the next government. For instance, the National Rainbow Coalition, described below, contested and won Kenya's 2002 elections. In proportional-representation systems, coalitions may be created to meet the thresholds required for representation in parliament. For instance, an electoral alliance helped Sweden's Christian Democratic Party (*Kristdemokraterna*, KD) secure its first seats in parliament in 1985. As the Indonesia example below illustrates, coalition-building may also be necessary to meet legal criteria for fielding candidates. Despite their initial focus on electoral victory, electoral alliance coalitions should also plan for how they will govern if successful. The failure to develop such plans has fueled internal rifts, hampering the performance – and sometimes even leading to the collapse – of electoral alliances that have found themselves in government.

Electoral Alliances in Indonesia, Kenya and Sweden

Examples

Indonesia. Under Indonesia's electoral laws, only parties that control at least 20 percent of the seats in the People's Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat,* DPR) or that win 25 percent of the national votes in the previous elections to the DPR can field candidates in presidential elections. In 2014, no party met that threshold so the country's political parties coalesced around two candidates: the Great Indonesia Movement Party's (*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya,* Gerindra) Prabowo Subianto; and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle's (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan*) Joko Widodo. Six parties, representing 63 percent of the 550 seats and 59 percent of the national vote, united behind Subianto, while four parties supported Widodo. Ultimately, Widodo won the election, garnering 53 percent of the votes.[4]

4 Sara Schonhardt, "Indonesia's Political Parties Hurrying to Build Coalitions," *Wall Street Journal,* May 12, 2014, http://blogs.wsj.com/searealtime/2014/05/12/indonesias-political-parties-hurrying-to-build-coalitions/; and Wikipedia contributors, "Indonesian presidential election, 2014," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, accessed February 12, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesian_presidential_election,_2014.

Kenya. Daniel Arap Moi won Kenya's 1992 and 1997 presidential elections with 36.8 percent and 40.51 percent of the vote, respectively. Combined, the opposition garnered far more votes than the eventual winner. However, by splitting the vote, they failed to secure the presidency and gain a majority in parliament. In the lead-up to the 2002 polls, opposition leaders began informal consultations about combining efforts to defeat the Kenya African National Union (KANU). One group of 14 parties coalesced into the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK) and would eventually reach agreement to form a coalition with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), resulting in an even bigger coalition: the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC).

NARC agreed to: present a joint candidate for president; pool votes for parliamentary seats by not competing against each other; and evenly split cabinet portfolios among the NAK and the LDP/Rainbow Alliance officials. The member parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing their agreement. Nevertheless, the coalition began experiencing problems shortly after winning the 2002 elections. While some members accused President Kibaki of favoring his own party and violating the terms of the MOU in allocating ministries, others accused the LDP/Rainbow Alliance of rigging the candidate selection process to benefit its aspirants. Eventually, NARC members would take opposing sides in the campaign for the 2005 constitutional referendum. President Kibaki dissolved the cabinet, removing the LDP ministers and allocating ministries to the KANU, the party that NARC had united against. In the 2007 elections, Raila Odinga, formerly of the LDP/Rainbow Alliance, ran against President Kibaki, formerly of the NAK/Democratic Party.[5]

Sweden. During parliamentary elections in the 1960s and 1970s, Sweden's KD won less than 2 percent of the votes, falling short of the 4 percent threshold for parliamentary representation. In 1985 the KD formed an electoral alliance with the Center Party (*Centerpartiet*). This allowed the KD to secure its first parliamentary seats. The party has served in parliament ever since, including as part of several governing coalitions.

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Coalition Governments. Coalition governments usually occur when no single political party wins a clear majority in the parliament. In parliamentary systems, typically, the largest party in the parliament reaches agreement with like-minded parties to form a cabinet, a legislative majority and a basis for government. Based on the policy agreements for the coalition, the cabinet includes representatives from the different member parties, and its legislative proposals are typically supported by members of parliament (MPs) from member parties. Minority coalition governments have sufficient support to

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5 Denis Kadima and Felix Owuor, "The National Rainbow Coalition: Achievements and Challenges of Building and Sustaining a Broad-based Political Party Coalition in Kenya," in *The Politics of Party Coalitions in Africa*, ed. Denis Kadima (Johannesburg: Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa, 2006); and Shem J. Ochuodho, *Dawn of Rainbow: The Untold Intrigues of Kenya's First Coalition Government* (Nairobi: Adage Publishing and Information Services, 2012), 91-134 and 221-229.

form the executive in parliamentary systems, but lack a clear majority in the parliament. As a result, the executive has to constantly negotiate support to secure passage of its legislative proposals. In presidential systems, when the president's party lacks a majority in the parliament, coalition-building may be required to reach agreement on a legislative agenda that a majority of parliamentarians can support.

Examples

Coalition Governments in India and Norway

India. India's two major national political parties – The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC) – have long dominated India's national political scene; however, a shift in the balance of power over the last 20 years from the national government to state governments has empowered smaller, regional parties. As national parties weakened, regional authority strengthened and regional parties gained influence. Because of this, national government party coalitions have become more commonplace in Indian politics. Two coalitions – the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by the INC and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP – have governed India for much of the last 30 years. In the 2014 elections for the lower house of parliament (*Lok Sabha*), the BJP won 282 out of 543 seats and members of its electoral alliance won an additional 54 seats.[6] Although BJP had enough seats in the parliament to form a government on its own, a limited number of ministers hailed from the BJP's electoral alliance partners.

Norway. In the aftermath of Norway's 2013 parliamentary elections, four former opposition parties – the Conservative Party (*Høyre*), the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet,* FrP*)*, the Christian Democratic Party (*Kristelig Folkeparti*, KrF) and the Liberal Party (*Venstre*) – sat down to outline a common vision and to negotiate a coalition. Høyre, which won 48 seats, and the FrP, which won 29 seats, reached an agreement to form a coalition government. The KrF and Venstre could not reach sufficient agreement with Høyre and the FrP to join the coalition government. However, they agreed to a list of policy issues that they would be willing to discuss supporting the government's position.[7]

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6 Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Regionalization of Indian Politics and the Challenge of Coalition-building," *The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, November 8, 2012, http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/11/08/regionalization-of-indian-politics-and-challenge-of-coalition-building/eaq5; Ellen Barry, "Coalition-Building Season in India," *New York Times*, April 12, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/13/world/asia/coalition-building-season-in-india.html?_r=0; and
Ankit Panda, "BJP, Modi Win Landslide Victory in Indian Elections," *The Diplomat*, May 16, 2014, http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/bjp-modi-win-landslide-victory-in-indian-elections/.

7 Joachim Dagenborg, "Norway's Conservatives Clinch Coalition Deal," Reuters, October 7, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/07/us-norway-government-coalition-idUSBRE9960OK20131007; and Lars Bevanger, "Norway Election: Conservative Emma Solberg Triumphs," *BBC*, September 10, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24014551.

Grand Coalitions. Grand coalitions occur when a country's main political parties – those that are typically the main competitors for control of the government – unite in a coalition government. Coalition-building between these natural competitors can be especially difficult given the traditional rivalry between them. Grand coalitions may be formed during moments of national political crisis because no other configurations are possible or to limit the influence of one or more fringe parties. Germany has experienced a number of grand coalitions where the Christian Democratic Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) and the Social Democrats (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) – usually natural opponents – have come together to form a government. Similarly, in Austria, Israel and Italy, the main political parties that usually oppose each other have formed grand coalitions.

Grand Coalitions in Germany

Germany has a long history of coalitions. Most of them have formed along ideological lines, bringing together either the CDU or the SPD and other partners. However, since World War II, there have been three coalition governments at the federal level that have included both the CDU and the SPD – traditional rivals – as well as other parties.

The 1966-1969 grand coalition included the Social Democrats as well as the Christian Democrats (both the CDU and their Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union in Bavaria [*Christlich-Soziale Union* in Bayern, CSU]), representing 95 percent of the seats in the parliament. More recently, Chancellor Angela Merkel formed two grand coalition governments with the SPD: the first was from 2005-2009 and the second in the aftermath of the 2013 elections.[8]

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Governments of National Unity. Governments of national unity are usually formed when countries face national political crises. They often have responsibility for overseeing the development of a new constitution and other fundamental reforms. The allocation of seats and responsibilities may be negotiated without the benefit of a democratic election or agreement on the outcome of a vote. For instance, disagreement over the outcome elections led to governments of national unity in Kenya in 2008 and in Zimbabwe in 2010. Even when elections indicate a clear outcome, governments of national unity may be formed given the need for consensus around fundamental reforms. For example, South Africa's Interim Constitution included a clause allowing any party with more than 20 seats in the National Assembly to claim one or more cabinet positions and enter government. As a result, despite the African National Congress' (ANC) clear victory in the 1994 elections, the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party served in government alongside the ANC from 1994-1997.

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8   Wikipedia contributors, "Grand coalition (Germany)," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, accessed February 12, 2015, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_coalition_(Germany).

Legislative Coalitions. These typically involve an agreement to pursue specific legislative goals without a division of cabinet/executive responsibilities. These are most common among, but not exclusive to, opposition parties. After Kenya's 2013 election, the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy, initially an electoral alliance, transformed itself into a legislative postelection coalition to perform the role of opposition. In addition, during the early 1990s, Morocco's *Koutla* was particularly effective as an opposition coalition, pushing for reforms such as an independent electoral commission and a directly elected parliament. In presidential systems, an executive who lacks a majority in the parliament may negotiate a coalition around a legislative agenda without a division of cabinet roles.

Examples

Pact for Mexico

Since 1994, none of Mexico's three largest parties have succeeded in obtaining 50 percent or more of the vote in national elections. The resulting partisan congressional gridlock has plagued the country, often paralyzing the government and frustrating the electorate. Hoping to prevent similar problems from affecting his administration, in 2012, then President-elect Enrique Peña Nieto from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, PRI) reached out to the National Action Party (*Partido Acción Nacional*, PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*, PRD) to seek a common legislative agenda. The agreement would become known as the Pact for Mexico (*Pacto por México*, Pacto). Although it did not translate into a coalition government in the executive branch, all three parties valued the benefits of acting together to solve some of Mexico's biggest challenges and to achieve partial political victories.[9]

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As implied in the descriptions of types of coalitions above, political parties have a wide range of reasons for coalition-building. The next section of this publication outlines key concepts, tips and tools that can be used to improve coalition-building efforts.

9 "Pacto Por Mexico," November 29, 2012, http://pactopormexico.org/como/; Andres Sada, "Explainer: What Is the Pacto por México?" *Americas Society-Council of the Americas*, March 11, 2013, http://www.as-coa.org/articles/explainer-what-pacto-por-m%C3%A9xico; Duncan Wood, "A Look at Mexico's Political Reform-The Expert Take," *The Wilson Center*, October 16, 2013, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/look-mexico%E2%80%99s-political-re-form-the-expert-take; and "Choose Pemex over the pact," *The Economist*, July 13, 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21581730-successful-cross-party-pact-has-broken-congressional-gridlock-it-must-not-become-obstacle.

Tips and Tools for Coalition-Building

Key Concepts

This section provides brief overviews of four overarching concepts in coalition-building. First, coalitions have advantages as well as disadvantages and political parties need to take steps to maximize the potential benefits and mitigate the risks involved. Second, context matters: it shapes parties' options for coalition-building and influences how coalitions behave. Third, throughout the coalition-building process, parties need tools and mechanisms for communication, consultation, consensus and compromise. These four "Cs" are a requirement for success. Fourth, coalition-building can be divided into five main steps: developing a party strategy; negotiating a coalition; getting started; working in coalition; and drawing lessons learned. Each of these steps involve specific tasks and provide opportunities to enhance prospects for successful coalition-building. Additional information on each of these concepts follows.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Coalition-Building

As indicated in the previous section, political parties have a wide range of reasons for coalition-building. Despite the potential benefits, coalitions often pose various challenges for the member parties. Some of the most common advantages and disadvantages are summarized in Figure 1.

Political parties need to take steps to maximize the potential benefits and to mitigate the risks throughout the coalition-building process.

Context Matters

Political Context. A variety of context-specific factors influence why and how coalitions are formed and perceived in a given country. They include such formal rules and systems as the structure of government (federal or unitary, presidential or parliamentary), the electoral system and the extent to which coalitions are regulated. Informal rules and structures include: existing – if any – coalition-building traditions and how interparty relations are managed by the parties themselves; and public perceptions of cross-party collaboration. For instance, as indicated above, in countries like Belgium,

Figure 1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Coalition-Building[10]

Advantages/Opportunities	Disadvantages/Risks
• By combining forces and resources with others, parties can increase their influence and accomplish goals they could not achieve on their own.	• To find common ground with partners, each party must compromise on its priorities and principles, and cede some control.
• Parties can broaden their appeal and increase their vote share by combining forces with others. This may create opportunities to secure legislative seats, form a government and achieve other specific political goals.	• Parties lose some control over messaging and decision-making, and may find it difficult to maintain a distinct profile that distinguishes them from their coalition partners. (Junior coalition partners often emerge from coalitions weaker.)
• They can provide opportunities to manage cleavages (e.g., ethnic, religious) and broaden participation in government.	• The public may feel that party leaders have abandoned their principles to enjoy the spoils of power.
• By sharing resources – e.g., money, people – parties can mitigate each other's weaknesses and benefit from partner strengths.	• The public may associate individual parties with controversial/unpopular coalition policies, thus weakening party support in subsequent elections.
• The public may see coalition-building as an admirable effort to consider other points of view and seek compromise.	• The need to consult and reach agreement among coalition partners can make government decision-making more complex and/or slower.
• Coalition members can learn from each other and thus strengthen their individual organizations based on those experiences.	• Poor communication within individual parties on coalition goals, objectives and benefits can fuel intraparty tensions/divisions.
• The public may associate individual parties with coalition successes, helping to increase support.	• Grand coalitions or coalitions with an overwhelming majority can weaken or marginalize democratic opposition groups.
• ons may provide a basis for consensus or compromise. This may be especially valuable for issues where policy stability/predictability is highly desirable (e.g., constitutional reforms, management of proceeds from extractive industries).	• For dominant parties that face no real prospect of losing, coalition-building can be a way to co-opt, weaken or eliminate groups before they develop into competitive threats over the long-term.

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10 O'Day, *Joining Forces*, 4-7.

Germany, the Netherlands and Norway, coalitions are a common feature of the political landscape and parties have almost honed them to an art form. But the context for a government of national unity created under a peace agreement is obviously very different. In countries characterized by conflict or extreme polarization, party supporters may view cross-party collaboration as a sign of weakness or a betrayal of party values. In addition, it may be more difficult to establish a basic level of trust among the coalition partners at the leadership level, especially if there is any lingering threat of a return to violence. More generally, coalitions are not just mechanical or technical agreements, they are a political tool. As noted in the Chile case study included in this publication, political parties who may be struggling to work in coalition will face extra incentives to overcome their differences as long as they face a significant external challenge. When that threat weakens, the costs of working together may begin to outweigh the benefits.

Time. Ideally, political parties have some indication – based on polling data, political sources and previous electoral results – some time before they actually enter into negotiations that coalitions may be required. For instance, in anticipation of a hung parliament, parties may begin preparations for potential coalition-building months before election day. Similarly, based on previous election results and other information, parties may begin planning for the possibility of an electoral alliance several months before the campaign starts. In other cases, a coalition may need to be formed at relatively short notice. Time constraints can significantly affect how well-prepared parties are for negotiations, especially when their previous experience with coalitions is limited. For instance, in some countries, if a government has not been formed within a specific number of days, new elections are called. Under Turkey's constitution, that window is 45 days. In Sweden, parliament (the *Riskdag*) traditionally meets to cast a vote of confidence on new governments approximately three weeks after elections. As a result, political parties must resolve issues within this period such as who will lead the government, how to set up a program for government and how to determine ministerial portfolios.[11] Parties should take advantage of any early knowledge of coalition-building opportunities and invest that time in developing a party strategy. The better prepared political parties are for coalition-building, the more likely they are to negotiate a good deal.

Type of Coalition. As indicated in the previous section, coalitions can take many forms. For instance, electoral alliances are often negotiated under very different conditions than coalitions to form a government. For the former, parties may have more flexibility in determining how the negotiations will unfold. When negotiating to form a government, there may be formal or informal time pressures, and a greater need to keep the public informed of key benchmarks even before a final deal has been reached. While this guide attempts to describe some broad good practices and tips in coalition-building, some steps may be more important than others, depending on the type of coalition under discussion.

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11 Olof Ruin, "Managing Coalition Governments: The Swedish Experience," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 53 (2000): 713. doi: 10.1093/pa/53.4.710.

The Four Cs: Communication, Consultation, Consensus and Compromise

A basic level of trust is usually a basic precondition to meaningful coalition-building. However, trust is never static and can peak and ebb over the course of a coalition. Coalition partners need to believe that their counterparts are being open and forthright in their dealings with each other. Suspicion – even if unfounded – that one or more of the partners is not living up to their commitments can damage relationships. Establishing various systems and procedures that foster communication, consultation, consensus and compromise can help sustain a coalition even – or especially – at those times when relationships among coalition partners are less then optimal. These four elements (or four Cs) need to be part of the arrangements that coalition partners discuss and agree upon.

Communication. As Figure 2 illustrates, partners need clear and workable lines of communication for party-specific purposes, among coalition partners, and for the coalition's public outreach.

Figure 2: Coalition Communications
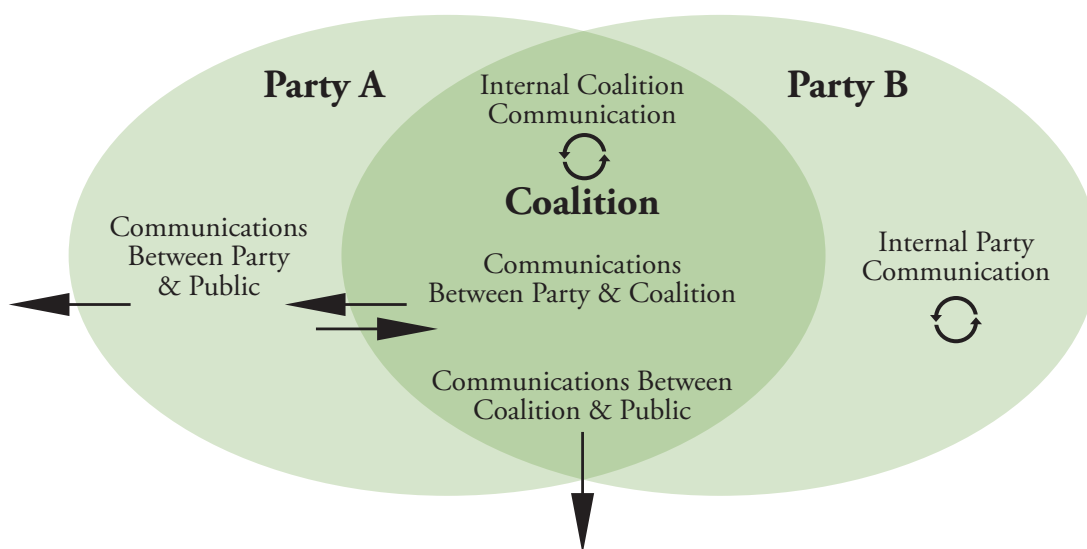
- *Party-Specific Communications.* Throughout the five steps in the coalition-building cycle, party-specific communications are required for two purposes. First, party leaders must engage in two-way communication with their members and supporters to share information about the objectives, accomplishments and challenges of the coalition. Leaders who regularly monitor how the coalition is affecting and is being perceived by their supporters will be better placed to take any remedial actions that may be needed to address discontent and to keep party structures vibrant. Party-specific external outreach is also required to ensure that the party is maintaining its own identity, even as it meets its commitments to its coalition partners.

- *Communication Among Coalition Partners.* Information is power. People who control information or have greater access to it are often better placed to take advantage of opportunities and pre-empt challenges in ways that are inconceivable to the less informed. As a result, imbalances in information-sharing among coalition partners can fuel misunderstanding and tension. As much as possible, communications among coalition partners should be based on honesty. Hidden agendas and dishonesty have been the downfall of many a coalition. In addition, coalition partners need to have a sense that all the members are doing their fair share of the work and that any benefits are fairly shared among the partners. Partners should have a clear agreement on and understanding of how decisions in the coalition will be made, how information will be shared, and which partners will perform which roles and responsibilities.

- *Public Outreach on Behalf of the Coalition.* Most coalitions require some form of public outreach even if there are aspects of the negotiation and inner workings of the partnership that are – often understandably – kept out of the public's view. Depending on the type of coalition, a coordinated public outreach strategy may be necessary for the campaign. These can highlight legislative strategy, or communicate a government's plans and accomplishments. In most cases, the purpose of these communications is to highlight the goals and accomplishments that the coalition has in common by presenting a united front to the public.

Consultation. Successful coalition-building requires partners to make a good faith effort to seek and understand each other's points of view. This can help set the stage for consensus and compromise. Even when consensus and compromise are not possible, having a clear idea of each partner's priorities, opinions and interests can be helpful in managing the expectations of all the partners involved in a coalition. In advance of any potential problems, partners also need to reach agreement on and establish a clear and accepted method for resolving conflicts within the coalition.

Consensus. Consensus-building involves finding common ground among interested parties. When consensus has been reached, all partners are comfortable with and see their views reflected in the final outcome. The more areas of consensus that coalition partners can find, the stronger their partnership will be. However, consensus-building often requires significant time and effort. Moreover, it may not be possible for coalition partners to reach consensus on every single issue: in the absence of consensus among coalition partners, compromises will be required.

Compromise. Ultimately the goal of compromise should be to create win-win scenarios among the various partners. Decisions reached by the group should involve concessions as well as wins for each individual partner. For instance, if one partner secures a lot of concessions from another on a specific issue, it must be willing to cede significant ground to its partner on a different issue.

The Five Steps

This guide outlines a five-step process to coalition-building. Each step requires its own structures and procedures, and builds on the previous step(s). Thus, downplaying the importance of, or even skipping selected steps in the cycle can make coalition-building – a process that is naturally difficult – even more challenging than necessary. In some cases, it may even contribute to the failure to form a coalition or to the early collapse of a coalition. Each step in the coalition cycle also presents opportunities to maximize the opportunities and mitigate the risks associated with coalition-building.

Step 1: Developing a Party Strategy. The first step in coalition-building involves developing a party strategy that will lay the ground for successful negotiation. The more effort parties place on this step, the more likely they are to identify strategic partners, negotiate a good deal and avoid some of the common pitfalls associated with coalition-building.

Step 2: Negotiating a Coalition. Based on the strategy that each party has prepared, in Step 2 the parties come together to negotiate and hopefully reach agreement on the terms for the coalition. Depending on the context and objectives of the coalition, these negotiations may be completely secret or partially public. While some issues may be agreed on with relative ease, others may be more contentious and require different approaches to reach compromise.

Step 3: Getting Started. As negotiation begins to wrap-up, the agreement between political parties needs to be formally sealed. This includes finalizing a written agreement, securing formal approval of the deal from the relevant structures of the coalition's member parties and announcing the coalition details to the general public.

Step 4: Working in a Coalition. As the coalition partners begin working to implement their agreement, they will need to maintain good relations by continuing efforts to increase or sustain trust and communication among the member parties. Each party will also need to strike a balance between respecting its obligations to the coalition and maintaining its individual identity.

Step 5: Drawing Lessons Learned. Regardless of whether it plans to move forward alone or in another coalition, it is important for each party to review and document lessons learned from each coalition-building experience. This will make it possible to get a clearer picture of the positive and negative impacts of coalition-building on the party, and to identify lessons learned that can inform any future coalition-building efforts.

The next five sections of this guide provide additional information on each of these steps as well as tips and tools that parties can use along the way.

Step 1: Developing a Party Strategy

The internal preparations made by individual political parties can have a significant impact on prospects for successful coalition-building. However, parties often underestimate – and may even completely overlook – the importance of this first step in the coalition-building process. The process provides opportunities to:

- Determine the objective(s) of the coalition;
- Check the legal framework;
- Clarify the rules (internal and external) that need to be followed;
- Consult appropriate party officials and involve them in coalition-building processes;
- Determine various means of achieving coalition-building goals;
- Identify potential coalition partners; and
- Lay the groundwork for successful coalition negotiations.

The more effort parties place on this first step, the more likely they are to identify strategic partners and negotiate a good deal.

Determine the objective(s) of the coalition.

In most cases, the primary objective of coalition-building will be obvious but may be relatively broad: winning elections, meeting the threshold for parliamentary representation or forming government. Ultimately, however, these objectives are often just a means to an end. Parties should want to form government to implement particular policy proposals that will benefit the broadest possible sections of the population. Similarly, gaining seats in parliament for the first time is likely to be just one step in a broader strategy to build and expand a party's profile, and to support and achieve its policy goals.

Check the legal framework.

In most countries, coalitions are primarily an agreement between partners that is political and not legally binding. However, a few countries – including Kenya and Mexico – regulate various aspects of coalition-building. Where coalitions are regulated, legislation may cover the definition of a coalition, requirements for registration and timelines for submitting the necessary documents to the relevant authorities. Worksheet 2 outlines some questions that parties may want to consider in reviewing the legal framework.

Regulation of Coalitions in Kenya and Mexico

Examples

Definition of a coalition: Regulations defining a coalition generally distinguish them from other types of partnerships between parties. Parties need to clarify whether there is a legal definition of coalitions, what that definition covers and what procedures they will need to follow based on the legal definition. For instance, Mexico's electoral code distinguishes between different types of coalitions and outlines separate legal requirements for each.

Registration processes & timelines: Coalitions may need to officially register with an election management or political party regulatory body within a specified time frame. For instance, in Mexico, coalitions (electoral alliances) must submit their agreement documents to the election management body at least 30 days before the pre-election period. In Kenya, coalitions formed before an election must deposit their agreements with the Political Parties Registrar at least three months before that election. Coalitions formed after an election must submit their agreement documents within 21 days of signing the deal.

Contents of coalition agreements: Regulations may also require that agreement documents address specific issues. For instance, Kenya's Political Parties Act outlines more than 16 issues that coalition agreements must address.

- *Intra-coalition distribution of party subsidies:* Parties in many countries receive public subsidies in the form of money and airtime on state-owned media. As they do in Kenya, regulations may require parties to detail how public subsidies will be distributed between coalition members.
- *Candidate selection & allocation of responsibilities:* How parties plan to allocate positions within the coalition – including selecting candidates – may vary, but outlining the procedure is often required for coalition agreements, as they are in both Kenya and Mexico.[12]

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Check the internal party rules.

The first step involves checking to see what procedures are outlined in existing party rules. Every political party should have clear internal rules and procedures for coalition-building that have been developed through a consultative process, formally approved by the appropriate party structures, communicated to and understood by party members. These rules and procedures should be anchored in the party constitution and further developed in a separate document. The documents should clearly state:

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12 Kenya, The Political Parties Act, 2011, http://www.cickenya.org/index.php/legislation/acts/item/219-political-parties-act#.VbZPSvlVhBc; Mexico, Ley General de Los Partidos Politicos, 2014, http://www.ine.mx/archivos2/CDD/Reforma_Electoral2014/descargas/normatividad/LEY%20GENERAL%20DE%20PARTIDOS.htm; and Mexico, Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales, 2008, http://norma.ife.org.mx/documents/27912/276760/2008_COFIPE.pdf/56e9c54e-2481-48f9-9122-a8231dc3806b, Articles 93 – 99.

- Who has the authority to initiate or explore coalition-building (e.g., by contacting potential partners or entering into negotiations);
- Who has the authority to approve the initiation of formal negotiations;
- The procedures for internal party consultations about coalition-building; and
- Which party structure (e.g., leadership committee, delegates' conference or full membership vote) has the authority to approve a coalition agreement. (Figure 3 outlines the advantages and disadvantages of different options for approving coalition deals.)

Since existing party documents may only cover partial aspects of the process, parties should review what the current provisions cover and identify any additional details that need clarification. It may also be necessary to spell out additional details based on the context in which a coalition is being considered.

Figure 3: Options for Approving Coalition Deals

	Strengths	Challenges
Leader	• Relatively quick. • Makes it easier to maintain confidentiality.	• Limited buy-in from party members/structures outside this circle can eventually fuel disunity.
Party Executive Committee	• More inclusive than a decision by the leader. • Relatively easy and quick to organize. • Ensures that the most experienced/senior officials have an opportunity to weigh in on the coalition.	• Limited buy-in from party members/structures outside this circle can eventually fuel disunity.
Delegates Conference	• More inclusive than leadership committee, assuming delegates are selected through participatory processes.	• Can take time to organize.
Membership Vote	• Ensures that a wide range of member voices are heard during the debate and in the final vote. • Can be used to secure concessions/ compromises (see Morocco example).	• Can take time to organize. • Can introduce an element of unpredictability to coalition negotiations.

Clarify and communicate any additional internal party rules and procedures that may be needed.

Party officials should discuss and reach agreement with appropriate party leaderships and structures on additional provisions that:

- Cover gaps in the existing provisions;
- Are consistent with the party's culture; and
- Are realistic given the context, including time constraints and any political sensitivities or considerations.

The final details should be communicated to party officials and structures so that everyone knows what to expect.

Examples

Clarifying the Internal Party Process in Morocco

In May 2013, the Independence Party (*Istiqlal*) withdrew from Morocco's coalition government. With its ruling coalition now reduced to three parties and faced with the possibility of early elections, the Justice and Development Party (*Parti de la Justice et du Développement,* PJD) approached the National Rally of Independents (*Rassemblement National des Indépendants*, RNI) about joining the government. In the aftermath of the 2011 elections, RNI had announced that it would not join a coalition led by PJD. In 2013, the party used a formal consultative process to determine whether to consider the request from PJD.

The party's 33-member executive bureau met twice: first, to give the party's president formal approval to lead preliminary discussions with the prime minister; and subsequently, to discuss the outcomes from the preliminary discussions. The executive bureau also decided that the possibility of joining government should be referred to the party's national council, a larger group comprising 800 party representatives. The national council – which includes the heads of regional branches, members of parliament and other party officials – is responsible for electing members of the executive bureau and adopting strategic decisions that the bureau implements. This council held an extraordinary session to consider the possibility of joining the coalition government. After discussing the advantages and disadvantages of joining the government and some of the conditions that RNI should secure as part of a coalition agreement, the council voted to approve continued negotiations.

This process of discussion and formal votes gave the negotiation team significant legitimacy to reach an agreement with PJD, and RNI joined the government later that year. Based on the feedback from various RNI party officials, the negotiation team secured key ministerial

portfolios – instead of simply taking over those vacated by the Independence Party – and also nominated two women ministers.[13]

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Establish a team to develop a party strategy.

Parties should establish a team that will be responsible for developing the party's strategy for coalition-building. (In some cases, this team eventually becomes the negotiation team. If the negotiation team will be separate from the strategy team, clarify the roles and responsibilities of each.) The team should have a clear mandate issued by the party's decision-making structures that outlines its objectives, major tasks and decision-making powers (including any limits on the team's authority). This should also include guidelines on how the team will communicate with party leadership.

This team should:

- Map the party's strengths and weaknesses as a potential coalition partner;
- Identify the strengths or weaknesses of possible coalition partners;
- Prioritize the policy proposals that the party should focus on during coalition negotiations, among other demands such as ministerial or candidate slots;
- Develop a negotiation strategy;
- Draft proposals for how the negotiation process – and ultimately the coalition – should be structured and operate; and
- Consider whether a "convener" or a formal chair is necessary.

These different items should be incorporated into one or more internal party strategy documents.

Figure 4: How Long Does It Take to Develop a Party Strategy?

Developing a party strategy could take anywhere from a few days to one month and will depend on a variety of factors:

How much time is available?
Perhaps the most significant factor is how far in advance a party prepares its strategy. For instance, political parties that believe there is a possibility of a coalition government in the aftermath of elections should consider mapping out their strategy even before a single ballot has been cast: they will have more time for a well-thought-out process and a good strategy.

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13 "Maroc - Gouvernement: le RNI prend son temps," *AfricaTime*, July 29, 2013, http://fr.africatime.com/soudan/articles/maroc-gouvernement-le-rni-prend-son-temps; and "Après l'approbation par le conseil national du principe d'intégrer la majorité: Le RNI est d'accord pour participer au gouvernement Benkirane," *Devanture*, August 8, 2013, http://www.devanture.net/news.php?id=19092#.

For instance, as indicated later in this section, the Liberal Democrats in the United Kingdom began working on a strategy six months prior to the 2010 elections. Parties who do not have a strategy by the time the election results are clear still need to develop one but will have less time available for the process.

Which activities are most critical?
Depending on when the party strategy is developed, the type of coalition envisaged and how much time is available, it may be possible for political parties to prioritize specific aspects of the process for developing a party strategy.

How will the strategy team's work be structured?
Based on the time available but also party preferences, the strategy team's work can be conducted in a concentrated manner with participants focusing on nothing else over a handful of days. Alternatively, it can be spread over time, with participants engaging in other activities in between the strategy team's working sessions.

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Review your party's strengths and weaknesses.

Start with an analysis of your own party. Be honest with yourself so that you can more easily identify strategies for successful coalition-building. A matrix visualizing a party's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats can be used to facilitate this process. An example is included in Worksheet 3.

Do as much research as possible on potential partners.

Review the strengths and weaknesses of each possible partner. (In some cases, it will be obvious who the potential partners are and whom the strategy team should focus on.) Later in the process, this will inform the recommendations for which potential partners to prioritize and the negotiation strategy for each. This should include research on the policy positions of potential partners, drawing upon documents that the parties have published, as well as positions and votes they have taken in the parliament.

Like-minded parties may seem like the obvious first choice when identifying potential coalition partners. However, coalition-building is also about numbers: the threshold required to secure representation in parliament (if applicable), the number of votes required to win an election or the number of parliamentary votes required to form government. Parties often find themselves trying to balance the need for a particular number with the search for like-minded partners.

Political advisors can conduct further research into each of the issues to be negotiated, based on any information – public or confidential – that they can find. In this way, they can take on the role of potential coalition partners to help the negotiation team test effective strategies.

Prioritize the party's policies, clarifying first and second preferences as well as any "redlines".

Parties should review their policies and prioritize them based on the ones that:

- The party feels most strongly about; and
- Most distinguish the party from others.

For each policy area, the party's most preferred option should be identified. The party's position may already be clear in the party platform or other documents. If not, clarify what the party's first preferred option is. Then, for each area, a next-best alternative or backup option should be identified. This exercise is also an opportunity to identify "redlines": the limits of the party's willingness to compromise on specific issues. This will clarify how much ground the party is willing to cede on different policy issues. Eventually, this will help inform a negotiation strategy.

In addition, find out as much as you can about each of the issues that may be part of the negotiation based on any information – both public and confidential – that can be found. Compare your party's policy positions with those of potential coalition partners and identify areas of agreement, similarity and disagreement.

Worksheets 4 and 5 outline frameworks that can be used to prioritize and compare policy positions, and to map the interests of coalition partners. Worksheet 6 includes a table that can be used to assess the advantages and disadvantages of negotiating a coalition.

Developing a Party Strategy

Personal experiences

Belgium

Parties should have clear policy priorities agreed upon...A strong negotiating team and an active communications strategy are also important. Parties ill-prepared for the negotiation process can be pushed over by other parties and end up with an agreement that is bad for them.

The Netherlands

All parties, whether they intend to form a coalition or not, should develop a manifesto or party program that includes:

- an analysis of the current situation of the country;
- the policy of the ruling government; and
- short-, mid- and long-term measures to change this policy.

The details will depend on the ideology of the party and the policy/ideology of the ruling government. The bigger the policy/ideology gap between a party and the government (ruling party or coalition), the more "change" the party will advocate for. Based on this document, the party should have internal discussions on which specific policies should be reflected in the coalition program (minimum conditions) and which policies can be conceded during coalition negotiations.

Ireland

Key preparations before entering a coalition:

- The party leaders must provide the overall framework including the timeline, negotiating process and teams, as well as the policy priorities.
- The process is critical – having an agreed negotiating mechanism; identified teams; research resources to be used; third parties who might be introduced to support the process; and having clarity about the role of party leaders who ideally should be protected from the "heat" of day-to-day negotiation and brought in only when the teams reach an impasse.
- A realistic time limit should be set.
- There must be agreement about media management.

Potential risks…:

- Souring of interparty relations before the sensitive business of government has even begun;
- Triggering new elections with reputations damaged and options narrowed; and
- Weak negotiating, leading to internal resentment.

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Figure 5: The Mutual Gains Approach to Negotiation

Negotiation refers to the process by which two or more groups or individuals, with both conflicting and compatible goals, seek to reach agreement on a decision. Defined this way, negotiation is a part of everyday life and takes place in the home, in the workplace, in business settings and as part of international affairs. It is also an important element of politics and a key aspect of coalition-building.[14] Often, negotiation is perceived as a process that involves:

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14 The Consensus Building Institute's website, www.cbuilding.org.

- Each side haggling or bargaining for gains based on exaggerated and unrealistic starting points;
- Hidden agendas and posturing that make it difficult to determine what each side really wants or needs; and
- Various tactics to gain psychological advantages over the other side.

This approach to negotiation is based on the assumption that:

- Negotiation is zero-sum: each side's gain is the other's loss;
- Being open about one's interests and priorities shows weakness and is disadvantageous; and
- The toughest, smartest and/or most manipulative side wins.

There are various problems with this approach. The dishonesty, hidden agendas and posturing involved erodes trust and harms relationships. As a result, agreements can become less stable over time. Thus, while the approach described above might be acceptable for negotiations between groups or individuals who are unlikely to interact again, a different approach is required when groups or individuals seek to maintain relationships that will help them achieve common political goals. For instance, parties who negotiate a coalition must continue to work together over the course of their partnership and are likely to continue interacting with each other over the long term, even after the coalition has been dissolved.

The mutual gains approach[15] outlines an alternative process that focuses on collaboration and consensus-building. If properly applied, it can cause less damage to relations than hard position bargaining. Instead of focusing on bottom line positions, it involves assessing your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA) and exploring ways to create value for the different sides in the negotiation. Rather than focusing on a zero-sum agreement, it emphasizes distributing value (i.e., mutual gains) as part of the negotiation so that the outcome is more satisfactory for all involved and relationships can more easily survive the negotiation process. In a coalition-building context, a BATNA outlines what a political party will do if it cannot reach agreement with other sides in the negotiation. It is an important part of the mutual gains process because it helps political parties identify alternatives to coalition-building that can actually help them define better negotiation strategies and resist deals that are disadvantageous.

Focusing on positions rather than interests can limit options for negotiation. Parties should explore not just their own positions and those of other sides in the negotiation, but delve deeper to examine the interests underpinning those positions. One way to achieve this is to focus on the "why" underpinning each position. This can lead to new insights for meeting the interests of each side in the coalition and for identifying ways to create or add value. As part of the mutual gains approach, parties should creatively brainstorm and prepare to suggest options that are mutually beneficial.

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15 "The Mutual Gains Approach to Negotiation," Consensus Building Institute, accessed September 21, 2015, http://www.cbuilding.org/cbis-mutual-gains-approach-negotiation

Finally, as much as possible, parties should develop and use objective criteria to strengthen their arguments. This includes discussing and reaching agreement on objective standards or criteria that can be used to allocate candidate slots, ministerial portfolios or other "goods" among the different sides. This can help build trust in the process. Worksheet 7 outlines questions that can be used to identify a BATNA and potential mutual gains for coalition-building.

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Prioritize other coalition-building demands (e.g., particular ministerial portfolios, candidate slots, staffing arrangements, etc.), clarifying first and second preferences as well as any "redlines".

Political parties must also be prepared to discuss their preferences and demands in terms of ministerial portfolios, candidate slots or staffing arrangements. As in the process used to prioritize policy areas, the party should identify its first preferences for specific roles within the coalition. For each position, a next-best alternative should be identified along with any "redlines".

Draft proposals for how the eventual coalition will be structured and issues that the agreement document should address (e.g., roles and responsibilities, dispute resolution procedures, etc.).

Proposals for coalition structures will depend on the type of coalition envisaged. For instance, for a pre-election coalition, it may be important to draft proposals for candidate selection and a coordinated campaign structure. (Figure 6 outlines some options for candidate selection for electoral alliances.) In addition, parties should consider policy issues and other arrangements that may be required if the coalition ends up in government. For a postelection coalition, proposals may focus on structuring government and relations between parliamentary groups.

How should roles and responsibilities be defined and allocated?

The party structures and individuals directly involved in coalition structures will vary depending on whether it is an electoral alliance, or a ruling or legislative coalition. For instance, electoral alliance management structures are more likely to heavily involve party officials (typically outside the parliament) in candidate selection, campaign management and fundraising. Ruling and legislative coalition structures are likely to draw more heavily on officials serving in the executive branch, the legislature and their own staff.

Regardless of the type of coalition, each unit and position within the overall structure for the coalition should have clear roles and responsibilities. This should be part of the eventual coalition agreement to ensure that everyone is on the same page about the various roles and responsibilities of different actors. This can limit misunderstandings and duplication while promoting transparency and accountability.

Much of the negotiation will likely revolve around the formula to be used in allocating positions in the coalition (e.g., ministerial positions for ruling coalitions or candidate slots for electoral

alliances, as well as particular portfolios or candidate slots that are a priority for particular parties). Most coalitions apply general rules of proportionality in allocating positions but often assign the "junior" partner(s) a bonus that leaves them with more than strict proportionality would permit. For instance, during the negotiations to form Norway's government in 2011, a political party that had only two MPs was allocated three ministerial positions. Officials from some of the larger parties contended that this allocation would give each coalition member party a critical mass of people within government who could discuss the implications of coalition government policies from a party-specific viewpoint. They also pointed out that each member of the government should have some allies who could support their positions in cabinet meetings, making it easier to defend any compromises to their respective party officials and members.

Figure 6: Candidate Selection for Electoral Alliances

For electoral alliances, parties may need to negotiate the formula for allocating candidate slots among the coalition partners. Usually, the formula reflects the relative strength of each coalition partner. The factors used to determine each party's strength will vary depending on the specific context and data available but could include:

- Previous election results;
- The historic strongholds of each party (as defined by geography, ethnicity or other demographic factors);
- The size of each party's membership;
- Independent polling results; or
- Financial strength/fundraising potential.

In some cases, electoral alliances have chosen to allocate a number of slots to candidates outside their own formal membership (for instance, in the Netherlands, one coalition allocated a number of candidate slots to candidates from a trade union, a women's empowerment group and an environmental activist organization). If this is the case, the parties need to agree on the number of slots to be set aside, as well as the criteria and process to be used in selecting these candidates. Depending on the electoral system and any regulations on coalition-building, options for candidate selection in coalitions include the following.

Plurality-Majority Systems

Option 1: Coordinated Candidates. Members of the alliance agree that they will field only one candidate in each electoral district and that all alliance members will encourage their supporters to vote for these individuals, irrespective of party. The various districts are allocated among the

member parties depending on the strengths of each party and its potential candidates. Each party uses its own process to select the candidates for each electoral district that falls within its share. This practice is common in India, where the BJP and the Congress Party typically reach agreement to "share" candidate slots/electoral districts with their respective coalition partners. For the 2014 elections to the Lok Sabha for instance, the BJP fielded candidates for 426 of the country's 543 seats while its allies fielded candidates in the remaining 117.

Option 2: Unified Selection. Alternatively, in each electoral district, alliance members can use a unified process to select candidates among aspirants from the various parties. Under this option, it is vital that the members of the electoral alliance reach agreement on the method and rules well in advance of candidate selection. This should be part of the signed agreement among the members of the electoral alliance.

Option 3: Runoff. In systems that provide for a runoff, members may choose to field individual candidates in the first round and agree to throw their combined support behind the highest vote-getter in the event of a runoff.

Proportional-Representation List Systems

Option 1: Separate Candidate Selection. Each party selects its own candidates and a combined list is created, based on a formula for allocation of candidate slots and positions among the parties in the electoral alliance.

Option 2: Unified Candidate Selection. All members of the alliance participate in a unified candidate selection system to create a combined list. For instance, South Africa's African National Congress contests elections in alliance with the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and also uses a unified process to select candidates.

Regardless of the approach used, political parties need to be prepared to outline their own demands – as well as fallback positions – and make the case for them.

How will disputes be resolved?

Sooner or later, every coalition experiences disputes. Structures for dispute and conflict resolution need to be agreed upon and established before any disagreements arise. As part of the preparations, each party should draft proposals for how this body should be structured. For instance, as indicated under Step 4 in this publication, in Germany, meetings between the principals from each member party are typically used to resolve programs or conflicts that cannot be settled during regular talks between the teams that negotiated the coalition agreement. In the United Kingdom, the 2010 agreement between the Liberal Democrats and

the Conservative Party provided for a Coalition Committee comprising the two most senior government officials from each party (otherwise known as the Quad) that would be responsible for handling any issues that a Cabinet Committee could not resolve. Ultimately, however, this committee rarely met.[16]

Personal experiences

Allocating Ministerial Positions in a Coalition

Romania

While it is true that formal and informal leaders within parties often make a grab for the field or position that most appeals to them, it is imperative to maintain a balance between partners. There may be a certain dynamic to this balance, depending on the public atmosphere and the political realities within parties, but this overarching sense of balance must be accepted by all the partners.

Argentina

It all depends on the size and strategic position of the various parties. The general rule is to promote the greatest representation possible, avoiding a situation where the largest party takes everything (and the smaller parties get nothing). Thus, the allocation of positions should reflect the relative strength of each party, so that each party obtains resources and positions proportional to its electoral support (votes) as well as its public policy contribution. In line with this principle, a small party can be relatively overrepresented in the coalition (in terms of government posts, if it is a governing coalition) based on the quality of its contributions to public policy in certain areas. In other words, it is important to consider the electoral strength of each member as well as its level of expertise and other capacities.

Colombia

Establish the relative importance of the issues for each member in the coalition; the relative importance of each issue to the different parties and the negotiating power/skill of each party will determine how roles are assigned in the governing coalition. In addition, the division of labor should be outlined in the written agreement.

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16 Nick Harvey, "After the rose garden: Harsh lessons for the smaller coalition party about how to be seen and heard in government," *The Institute for Government,* February 2, 2015, 7, http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/After%20the%20rose%20garden_0.pdf.

What additional documents may need to be developed in subsequent phases of coalition-building?

Each party should also consider what documents may need to be developed in subsequent phases of coalition-building. This may include:

- Principles governing how coalition members will relate to one other; and
- How to address any unanticipated policy issues that may arise after the coalition is finalized and launched.

Draft proposals for the negotiation process.

The strategy team should also draft proposals for the negotiation process. Issues to consider include:

How many people should be on each party's negotiation team?

It is important to keep the negotiation team small but representative. To limit the possibility of a stalemate within the team, it is best to have an odd number of people, three or five for instance. Generally, each negotiation team is the same size regardless of the size of each party. Ultimately, these issues will be negotiated and agreed upon in the very early stages of the coalition negotiations, but it is important that political parties prepare their proposals for these discussions.

Depending on the time available and the range of issues to be negotiated, the negotiation can be structured to include multiple layers. For instance, in Germany, negotiation structures for coalition governments include three levels:

- Working groups of subject matter experts organized around specific policy issues negotiate the bulk of the program for government;
- A steering committee organizes the negotiation documents and drafts the agreement document; and
- The chief negotiators serve as the final decision-making authority.

For additional information on this structure, see the description included in Step 2.

What administrative arrangements may be needed?

The administrative arrangements will depend on the complexity of the negotiation structure. With relatively small teams and a simple structure, a secretariat may not be necessary and one or two people can be assigned to take minutes. Alternatively, each party can bring one person. For more complex negotiation structures, however, a secretariat may be necessary. Regardless, it is important that all sides in the negotiation accept the person/team so that meeting minutes or other documents are not called into question. Generally, the person(s) taking minutes should not serve as negotiators.

Strategy and Negotiation Teams in the U.K.

The Liberal Democrats

Six months prior to the 2010 elections, the Liberal Democrats established a team of four MPs to outline how and on what basis the party could negotiate a coalition. This team operated alongside the party's manifesto and election preparation teams, and the personnel overlapped across these three teams.[17] The following were the four team members:

<u>Danny Alexander, MP</u> led the manifesto group and sat on the team for electoral preparations.

<u>Andrew Stunnell, MP</u> had a reputation for having a good understanding of party activists, had previous experience with negotiations for local government and sat on the electoral preparations team.

<u>Chris Huhne, MP</u> had a reputation as one of the party's best negotiators based on his experience in Europe and in the private sector.

<u>David Laws, MP</u> also had a reputation for strong negotiation skills based on his experience as the party's policy director and his work with the Scottish Liberal Democrats during interparty negotiations in 1999.

These individuals would go on to constitute the negotiation team and to assume senior positions in the coalition government.

The Conservative Party

<u>William Hague, MP</u> previously served as leader of the Conservative Party, held a cabinet position and served in the leadership of the party's parliamentary group in the lead-up to the election.

<u>George Osborne, MP</u> previously served on the teams that prepared Conservative Prime Ministers for parliamentary Question Time, held senior positions in the Shadow Cabinet (including Shadow Chancellor) and managed David Cameron's campaign for the leadership of the Conservative Party.

<u>Oliver Letwin, MP</u> held several positions in the Shadow Cabinet and played a major role in Conservative policy development in the lead up to the elections.

<u>Edward Llewellyn, MP</u> served as chief of staff for a number of high-level political figures, including David Cameron when the negotiations occurred.

17 Ruth Fox, "Five Days in May: A New Political Order Emerges," *Parliamentary Affairs*, 63 (2010): 607, doi: 10.1093/pa/gsq030.

How should external communications – including confidentiality and contact with the press – be handled?

There are two main options for external communications during negotiations. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, and the choice will largely depend on the political context. (Figure 7 provides a brief overview.)

There must be clear agreement on how, when and by whom any external communication is to be conducted. Within each negotiation team, one person should be assigned as the spokesperson. Most often, the leader of the negotiations serves as the spokesperson. Alternatively, a team comprising the leader of each party jointly briefs the media. This individual should be identified and agreed upon at the earliest possible stage in the process. Special efforts should be made to avoid any leaks to the press before the spokesperson makes any announcements as this will undermine efforts to build trust among coalition partners.

If there are to be any communications while negotiations are underway, the coalition's first public announcement should be on an important issue that will attract significant and positive coverage.

Consider whether a "convener" or a formal chair is necessary.

In parliamentary systems, the presumptive prime minister often chairs the negotiations and it is not necessary to appoint one. For instance, in many European countries, after the elections, the head of state or the newly elected parliament appoints an individual – known as the *formateur* – to initiate negotiations to form a ruling coalition. In some countries, this is usually the leader of the party with the highest share of the votes or the largest number of seats in the new parliament: usually the presumptive prime minister. In other cases, it is a senior individual who is not a candidate for prime minister. In the Netherlands, the parliament appoints a "scout" who investigates the possibilities for coalition-building and identifies the most feasible agreement. Once identified, a formateur team (one individual from each potential coalition party) is established to lead the negotiations. Nonpartisan civil servants may play a role in supporting the formateur's work.

In other cases – especially for electoral alliances, legislative coalitions and governments of national unity, for instance – parties may have the flexibility to agree upon a particular individual to chair the negotiation. This may be a trusted, nonpartisan "convener" who can offer a neutral meeting space for party leaders or a senior official in one of the parties involved in the negotiation. For instance, as indicated under Step 2, a former governor from the PRI chaired the negotiations over Mexico's Pacto in 2012.

Figure 7: Options for External Communications During Coalition Negotiations

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Total confidentiality is maintained until an agreement is reached.	● Avoids media attention until the parties are certain of a deal.	● Leaves parties with limited control over any press coverage in the event of leaks.
An initial announcement is made that coalition-building is being explored. The public is updated at key points in the process.	● Keeps the public informed of progress (may be important in times of political or economic uncertainty). ● Can give political parties greater control over how the negotiation efforts are covered in the press.	● Draws attention to coalition-building efforts that could ultimately fail.

Identify a small negotiation team – if different from the party strategy team – that has party backing and confidence, and that will be respected by the other side.

The negotiation team should include individuals who:

● Have the seniority required to:
  • Speak for the party on complex and/or sensitive issues;
  • Wield significant influence within their own party, including with other senior officials;
  • Be respected by potential coalition partners; and
  • Make decisions on behalf of the party.
● Are familiar with their own party's positions on various issues and any counterarguments the potential coalition partners are likely to present;
● Have strong negotiation skills and previous experience brokering deals;
● Reflect different viewpoints within the party;
● Get along well together; and
● Can be trusted to follow guidelines regarding the team's mandate, confidentiality and other issues.

Party experts often recommend that the most senior party leaders are not included in negotiations. This will make it easier to maintain relationships at the most senior levels. In addition, these senior leaders can eventually be called upon for intractable issues that the negotiations are unable to resolve.

Even when parties have clearly defined decision-making structures, different opinions – including some that are contrary to the views of party leadership – will exist within a party. The strategy/

negotiation team should reflect the main different sectors/viewpoints within the party so that internal party divisions do not derail the process. While the team should be diverse, the members should be able to work well together, understand each other's points of view and compromise with one another.

To help ensure that the negotiation process is representative of a variety of party views and interests, some parties establish a negotiation reference group of five to nine members. This group can be constituted to represent different aspects of the party: for instance, representatives of traditionally marginalized groups (including women and youth) or individuals with expertise in a particular area that will be significant during the negotiations. Once negotiations are underway, the negotiation team regularly briefs this reference group, using them as a sounding board of sorts to flag issues that are coming up during the negotiations, to test the waters for what others in the party might accept or reject, and to seek their input on technical issues.

Personal experiences

Putting Together a Negotiation Team

Ireland

Circumstances will dictate how the teams are composed. A basic template would be a team of five comprising two senior elected political figures (one of whom will act as team leader) with the appropriate expertise and experience, two policy experts, and a senior party official with a broad range of political skills/sensitivity. A cross-party secretariat is crucial.

Romania

First, the negotiation team should include [senior officials]…because their words must carry weight inside their respective parties and because it is sometimes necessary to make important decisions on the spot, without the need to appeal to other, more cumbersome forms of decision-making within parties, such as a bureau or a congress.

Second, the people tasked with the negotiations should have a very clear picture of the statutes governing the parties, so as to avoid any non-statutory decisions. Also, it is important for them to have a deep and intimate knowledge of the realities in the field, in every territorial branch, to ensure that collaboration is made possible at all necessary levels.

Third, it is important for the team to include people with various levels of negotiating ability and style: not only diplomatic and accommodating people, but also hard-liners and inflexible people, because it is at this stage of the negotiations that possible problems are best identified and dealt with.

Norway

In general the negotiation team from each party includes three representatives, but this group closely collaborates with a reference group. The reference group consists of five to six key people in the party, including the leader of the women's wing, youth wing and other groups that are important to the party and its voters. During negotiations, the negotiation group meets with the reference group several times a week to discuss issues that are or will be negotiated. These groups are only active during the negotiations and dissolve after the coalition platform is final. Sometimes during the negotiation process the negotiation teams also consult with the board and parliamentary groups of the party. These are important internal mechanisms to seek understanding of the party's agreement in the issue and to anchor decisions made around the negotiation table.

Colombia

The types of individuals will be determined by who you are negotiating with: seniority and experience are important if they create a climate of trust and confidence that agreements will be fulfilled; [team members']…knowledge and skills should be oriented to the negotiation process, including how firm they are to be in establishing limits or boundaries for the agreements.

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Test the waters with potential partners: remember that coalitions with like-minded parties are more likely to be successful.

Before formal negotiations begin, there is usually some rather informal contact between parties to gauge interest in coalition-building. This may include discussions that allow the parties to find out more about each other and to reach agreement on how a negotiation might be structured. If time permits, political parties can explore cooperation with potential coalition partners around specific policy issues or other activities before formal negotiations begin.

Step 2: Negotiating a Coalition

Negotiate the negotiation: clarify the rules and procedures governing the negotiation process.

Before any formal negotiations on a coalition can start, the potential partners need to reach an agreement on how the negotiations will be conducted. Based on the strategy each party has prepared and the political context, the conversations around negotiation procedures may cover:

- Whether the negotiations should be handled in one session that may take several days or in multiple phases with breaks built into the process;
- The size of the negotiation teams;
- Whether a particular individual should be appointed to chair the negotiations and who that person should be;
- The location for the negotiations;
- The agenda for the negotiations, including the order in which different items should be discussed;
- Agreements on confidentiality;
- External communications (if any) about the negotiations (including policies on the use of social media by members of the negotiation team or support staff);
- Any administrative arrangements (including rapporteurs and seating arrangements); and
- A timeline for the negotiation process that takes into account the deadline by which an agreement must be concluded (if relevant) and time for each negotiation team to consult with its party.

The political parties may choose to sign a written document outlining the rules and procedures for the negotiation process.

Personal experiences

Negotiation: Finding the Right Chairperson

The Netherlands

- Agree on an independent person to chair the negotiations. (This individual should be independent in the sense that s/he is not a candidate for a particular position.) While the individual may be a member of the biggest coalition partner, s/he must be someone who all the other parties can accept as the chair. The role of the chair is very important and deserves special attention. The individual should:
    - Be able to propose compromises;
    - Pay personal attention to negotiators;

> - • Have a firm grip on good meeting procedures; and
> - • Have a good sense of humor.
> - ● To build mutual trust, start with the easiest items.
> - ● Establish a clear road map and timeline.
> - ● Build in some time for the different teams to communicate and reach decisions with their party structures.
> - ● Delegate difficult or technical issues to sub-teams/working groups.
> - ● Include a social activity so that the negotiators get to know each other (e.g., a dinner, movie or party).
>
> ●●●

Negotiate the easy items first: this will help build trust and create a positive environment.

Starting with the easy items can help build trust and create a good environment during the initial stages of the negotiation. Difficult issues can be handled once some successes have been achieved and the general mood is positive.[18]

But apply the "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" principle.

The purpose of this principle is to ensure that the agreement reached is satisfactory to all. It can help guard against situations in which particular parties only focus on issues that are of interest to themselves and are less engaged when it comes to the priorities of others. While there is a risk that items that have already been agreed upon in principle will be tabled for discussion again, this approach can also encourage negotiators to explore creative options.

Document the proceedings.

Documenting the proceedings will help limit misunderstandings and make it easier to develop an agreement document. It is often helpful to have the minutes or protocol signed every evening or after every phase of the negotiation. The first order of business each time the negotiations reconvene (for instance, each morning) should be to review and adopt the minutes from the previous session.

If necessary, delegate difficult or technical issues to working groups.

In Germany, many of the details for coalition agreements are discussed by working groups that are organized around policy issues. The senior leadership of the various parties focus on resolving issues that prove difficult to resolve at the committee level. For negotiations that involve a simpler structure than what is used in Germany, a smaller number of working groups could be established to handle difficult or technical issues.

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18 Rainer Adam and Sebastian Braum, *Coalitions and Coalition Management: an Introduction to the Art of Coalition Government* (Potsdam: Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2013), 88.

Examples

Negotiation of Germany's 2009 Coalition[19]

On the first day of discussions, the parties – the CDU, the CSU and the Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei*, FDP) – agreed: on a formal structure for negotiations; who the participants were at different levels; who would work out details; who would put agreements in written form; and who wielded ultimate authority in final decision-making. The structure agreed upon included the following:

The Great Coalition Committee (GCC): This committee served as the highest authority and final decision-maker for issues that could not be resolved in other coalition negotiation structures. It included nine chief negotiators from each of the three parties and was led by the leaders of the three parties. An editorial team took minutes. (The editorial team included a representative from each party and from the chancellor's office.)

The Steering Committee: Comprising the director of the chancellor's office and the secretaries-general of the three parties, this structure managed the GCC's agenda, organized negotiation documents and worked with the editorial team, whose minutes would inform the draft coalition agreement. The steering committee also compiled the outcomes from the working group discussions (described below) and transmitted them to the GCC.

The Working Groups: Ten working groups, structured around specific policy areas and comprising subject matter experts from the three parties, discussed and resolved most of the issues. Throughout the negotiation process, these working groups met almost daily. Each group had two chairs – one from the CDU/CSU and a second from the FDP. Often, chairmanship of these working groups served as a stepping-stone to ministerial office. In the event of intractable issues, the party leaders would meet directly with the relevant chairmen off the record and behind closed doors to try to resolve the issue at hand.

Negotiating Mexico's Pacto[20]

In the aftermath of elections in 2012, Mexico's three largest parties met to negotiate a legislative agenda. During the first few days of discussions, a negotiation team of six individuals (two from each party) agreed to nine rules for the negotiation process, including:

- Putting all items on the agenda from the start;
- Identifying all areas of agreement – whether significant or minimal – among the three parties;
- Starting with relatively simple issues before moving on to more difficult ones as a way of building confidence in the process;

19 Adam and Braum, *Coalitions,* 85-87.

20 "Pacto Por Mexico"; Sada, "Explainer"; Wood, "A Look at Mexico's Political Reform"; "Choose Pemex over the pact," *The Economist.*

- A commitment to continue talks regardless of developments with regard to the elections;
- Keeping the talks secret; and
- That no single element of the negotiations would be considered final until the entire package had been agreed upon.

José Murat, a former governor of Oaxaca and a member of PRI, facilitated the talks. Once a list of policy areas had been identified for negotiation, a technical team comprising one representative from each party as well as Murat was created. This team drafted documents on each policy issue. These were later discussed and modified, as appropriate, by the six-person negotiation team. While these efforts continued, the six-member team was also working to build support within their respective parties for the agreement.

The final agreement was made public and signed on December 2, 2012, the day after Nieto's inauguration. The parties committed to addressing 95 initiatives in five areas: democratic governance; transparency, accountability and combating corruption; rights and liberties; security and justice; and economic growth, employment and competitiveness. A governing council – made up of an executive coordinator and six members from each of the three main political parties – was created to structure the more detailed reform agenda, oversee further negotiations, create working groups and draft legislation for submission to Congress.

The Ecological Green Party of Mexico (*Partido Verde Ecologista de México*) joined the Pacto in January 2013.

The Pacto resulted in the passage of an education reform bill, a legal reform to strip public officials of immunity from criminal prosecution and a telecom reform bill. However, disagreements between the parties emerged. For example, in November 2013, the PRD left the Pacto, given disagreements with the PRI and the PAN over energy reform. While the PRD continued to cooperate with the PRI and the PAN on an *ad hoc* basis, its exit has made it more difficult for the Pacto to accomplish its goals.

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Use different approaches to find compromise.

As former Norwegian Prime Minister Bondevik highlights in his submission in the case studies section of this publication, there are different ways of structuring negotiations to facilitate compromise. They include but are not limited to the following.

Find the middle ground: Parties compare policy positions and reach agreement on an approach that represents the median position. Figure 8 portrays an example of the middle ground or median approach.

Figure 8: Options for Compromise: The Median Approach

Compromise:
20 Million

Party A:
40 Million

Party B:
20 Million
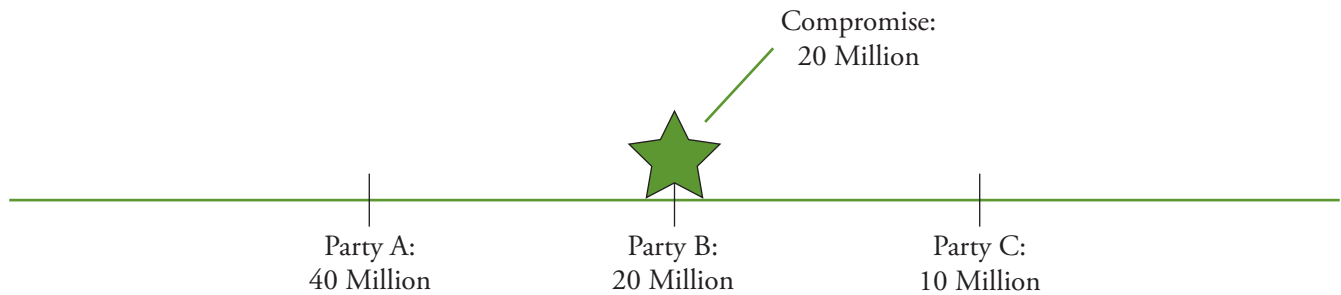
Party C:
10 Million

Allow each party to keep its priorities: The coalition adopts the top-priority policy proposal(s) that each individual party identified. This allows each party to maintain its signature policy issue even as it cedes grounds on other policies to form a coalition. This can make coalition-building more appealing to party members/supporters.

Negotiate items in packages rather than by single issue: Two or more issues are bundled together and each party gets its prime position in at least one of them. As a result, for each package, each party makes significant concessions in some areas but also secures its preferences in other areas. By the end of the process, each party will have made major concessions but will also have significant successes to report.

Figure 9: Options for Compromise: Negotiating in Bundles/Packages

Norwegian parties often negotiate policy positions in groups. This "bundle/package" approach creates scenarios where each party secures major policy wins (portrayed by the larger circles in the diagram below) but also makes significant concessions (illustrated by smaller circles).
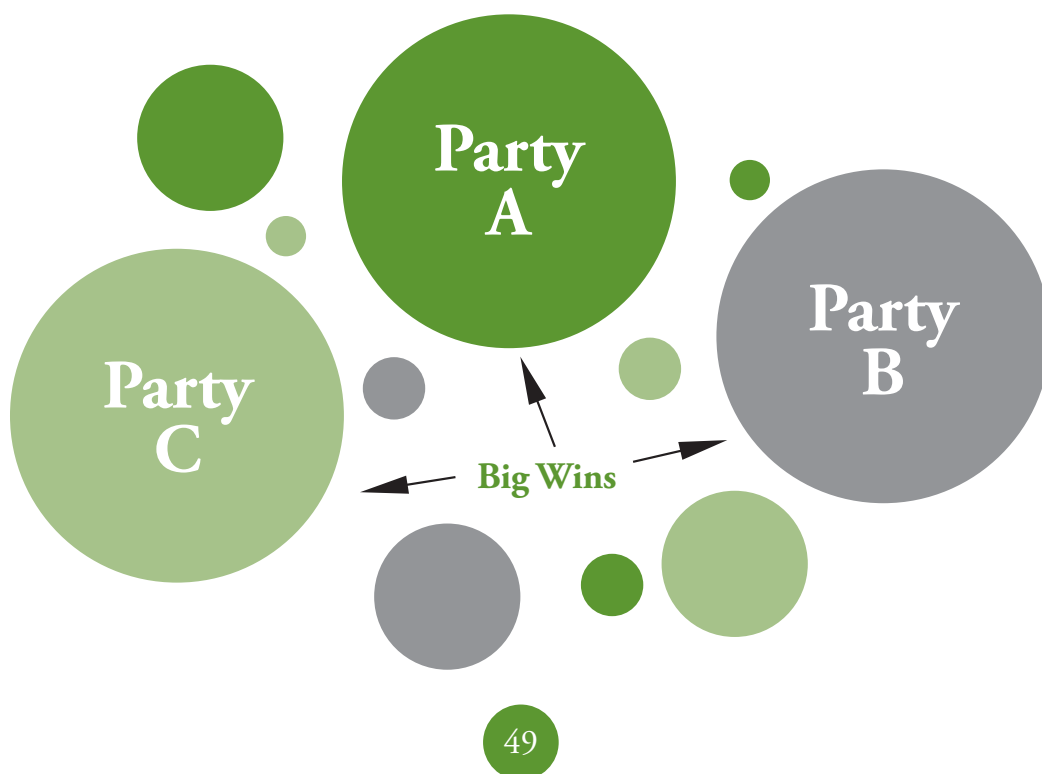
Party
A

Party
B

Party
C

Big Wins

Consider different options for resolving differences, but if necessary, agree to disagree.

When partners begin with positions that are quite far apart, the negotiation process is more likely to be tedious and protracted. In some cases, partners may experience multiple instances of deadlock before reaching an agreement. In the event negotiation teams cannot reach agreement on difficult issues, options include the following.

- *Option 1: Take a break*
  In the event of a stalemate because partners are so far apart, the discussions will usually be suspended allowing the various teams to consult their respective parties further. Negotiations may resume once the parties have found a new way forward.

- *Option 2: Refer the issue to party leaders*
  The leadership would most often include the party leader from each of the coalition partners and the prime minister/president in the event s/he is not one of the party leaders.

Figure 10: Negotiating a Policy Program for Government

No policy document can cover every single detail or predict every need over the term of a government. In a coalition-building context, detailed agreements can pre-empt disagreements and minimize surprises further down the line. However, parties have different options to choose from depending on their circumstances.

Option 1: A detailed program is negotiated between the coalition parties. Often, this leads to compromises that the members of the member parties do not recognize as their own. Parties should make it clear to their supporters that in a coalition compromises are inevitable and that such compromises are a first, necessary step to the realization of their own policy goals. Experience shows that it is political suicide for parties to defend compromises as their "own" policies.

Option 2: A detailed program is negotiated, but the coalition partners give each other the opportunity to include party-specific items in the coalition program. (This approach is currently used in The Netherlands.) This results in fewer compromises, but there is a risk that the coalition policy program will appear less coherent. If it is a coalition between a left-leaning and a right-leaning party, then the left-wing political group in the parliament is obliged to defend right-wing coalition program decisions of the executive and the other way around.

Option 3: A general/less detailed coalition program is negotiated. This approach is more common for minority coalition governments. Options 1 and 2 involve detailed programs that the parliamentary groups of the member parties are required to support. In the event of a majority coalition, then the parliament supports the executive's proposals with limited pushback or debate. As a result, some people favor of a small or less detailed "general" coalition program

that leaves many decisions to the political dynamics in the parliament. From the democratic perspective this sounds very good: it is the representative body of the people (the parliament) that serves as the real decision making body on various policy issues. From the perspective of a party in a coalition – especially for smaller parties – this can be risky: if it is a left-wing party in a center-left government, then there is always the possibility that, if center and right parties have a majority in the parliament, the right-wing in the parliament dominates (and the other way around, of course). This can cause tension among partners.

Option 4: Mixed model. Combining the different approaches is also a possibility: partners can reach agreement on a short general program with more detailed, negotiated measures to supplement the country's top priorities and leave other issues open.

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- *Option 3: Refer the issue to an independent body or trusted third party*
  In the case of ruling coalitions, another alternative could be to refer the issue to an independent body or a third party: this could involve the establishment of a commission or conducting a referendum once the coalition is in government. Note however, a referendum that results in coalition partners campaigning on different sides of the same issue could damage relations among the partners and create negative publicity, with the effects lasting beyond the duration of the referendum campaign. In the United Kingdom, the agreement between the Liberal Democrats and the Conservative Party included 29 policy reviews and five commissions, a partial indication of areas where they had not been able to reach agreement. In addition, the two parties agreed to disagree on selected issues including electoral reform (campaigning on different sides of a referendum on the subject) and nuclear power.[21]

- *Option 4: Agree to disagree*
  For issues where agreement proves difficult or impossible, parties have the option of agreeing to disagree. Under this arrangement, each party is allowed to voice its own positions or to vote according to them in parliament. For instance, in Norway, the KrF dissented from its coalition partner over abortion policy (see former Prime Minister Bondevik's submission later in this publication for additional information). While this approach can present a solution for intractable issues, the eventual public debate over the parties' differences can damage the cohesion of the coalition. As a result, this solution should only be used for a small number of issues and only if absolutely necessary. There are two ways to handle such issues in the agreement document: either list the specific policy areas on which each party and its legislators may freely cast their vote; or omit these policy issues from the agreement altogether. The most important point is that all the member parties know what to expect. Figure 10 outlines some options for negotiating a policy program for government.

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21 Ruth Fox, "Five Days in May: A New Political Order Emerges," 615.

Agree on procedures for coalition dispute resolution before they are needed.

Based on the internal preparedness of various party members and the negotiation process, coalition members will already have some indication of potential sticking points that could threaten coalition unity. Additional and unanticipated issues may arise as domestic and international developments unfold. For disputes that cannot be resolved at lower levels, the dispute resolution mechanisms established during the negotiation phase will need to be activated. What is important is that the rules and procedures are clear, and that everyone knows what to expect. As a result, the negotiation teams should also agree on a procedure for resolving disputes that may arise once the coalition is up and running.

Balance the need for party consultations and buy-in with the need for confidentiality.

Throughout the negotiation process, each party should continue its own internal communications about the coalition-building process. This should be in accordance with the timeline and procedures that each individual party outlined while developing its own strategy.

As indicated above, some political parties establish a reference group that is also briefed by the negotiation team. This reference group usually comprises five or six individuals, including the leaders of the women's and youth wings, as well as representatives of other groups that are important to the party and its supporters. The negotiation team meets with the reference group several times a week to provide updates on the discussion and upcoming agenda items. From time-to-time the negotiation teams also consult with their parliamentary groups and party boards. These consultations help secure broader party buy-in for the negotiated agreement even before the process is fully complete. In other cases, however – and as illustrated by various responses to the questionnaires – concerns about confidentiality have led parties to limit the number of people who are briefed about the negotiations until the agreement is final. More generally, given the potential implications for governance and political stability, it is more likely that some external communications will be required during negotiations to form a government. Confidentiality may be of greater concern for electoral alliances. Regardless of the approach used, it is paramount that everyone knows what to expect ahead of time: managing expectations is often the most important way to limit disappointment and discontent.

Personal experiences

Keeping Party Structures in the Loop During Negotiations

Romania

The fact that senior figures within the party form the core of the negotiation team ensures that there is smooth communication with the topmost decision-making actors on matters of immediate concern. However, both before and after major negotiation meetings, there must be formal gatherings of the party leadership, ensuring that the negotiation team has a clear mandate to proceed and that the party leadership has a clear picture of the process.

Ireland

Such communication may need to be restricted! Most negotiations are conducted behind closed doors and confidentially so other party structures are not involved except the leadership. Confidentiality is critical during negotiations, so only including a very small group in the process helps in this regard.

Communication is much more important in explaining the agreement and subsequently during the life of the coalition. The important thing is that everyone knows what to expect, in terms of communication, before the process begins.

Argentina

Problems arise when coalition negotiations are left exclusively in the hands of experts/specialists without the participation of party structures. When decision-making is exclusively reserved for party leaders – in other words, when decisions are imposed on party structures – this can also threaten the unity of a coalition.

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Step 3: Getting Started

As agreement is reached and negotiations begin to wrap-up, the deal needs to be formally sealed. This includes finalizing a written agreement that outlines the terms agreed upon, securing formal approval of the deal from the structures of the various political parties and announcing the coalition to the general public.

Outline the details in a written agreement that is detailed enough to guide the day-to-day management of the coalition.

Written agreements tend to be more common after parties have some experience with coalitions. For instance, German coalitions in the 1950s were based on an exchange of letters between party chairmen. However, from the early 1960s on, written agreements became increasingly common. These agreements are largely political – rather than legal – documents. (As indicated above, in countries like Kenya and Mexico, regulations require political parties to submit their agreement documents to enforcement agencies and outline a number of issues that these documents must contain.) While large parts – especially policy agreements – are made public to keep voters informed, other aspects of agreements among coalition members – details of how positions were allocated, for instance – are kept private to avoid any potential awkwardness that may be associated with public release.

Even when they are not legally required, agreement documents should be considered for each coalition. They:

- Provide a public policy agenda against which performance can be measured and that the coalition can be held accountable to (in the case of government coalitions);
- Make it more difficult for member parties to violate the agreement, especially if the agreement is public, as this may reflect poorly on them;
- Reduce uncertainty – both for the public and the coalition members – thereby providing some efficiency in government; and
- Help identify and defuse conflict even before the coalition is up and running.

While a major benefit of an agreement document is a certain degree of certainty, there may be times when changes/adjustments have to be made in response to changing circumstances. Parties should therefore agree on a procedure for deciding whether the agreement should be changed. Worksheets 8A and 8B provide a basic outline for a coalition agreement and a list of questions that can be used to review the draft.

Changes may take time to negotiate, increasing uncertainty. In addition, a renegotiation may cause bad feelings or generate negative media. Changes should be considered only when absolutely necessary and should be based on consensus among all partners.

Coalition Agreements

Belgium

In the negotiation, deal with everything and finalize things. Fudging issues to get to the agreement causes many problems in the end.

Ireland

Poorly formulated coalition agreements can lead to endless time-wasting– and subsequently instability/unpredictability.

Follow the rules for approval by each party.

The coalition agreement will need to be approved by the decision-making body of each party. The process may vary from one party to the next. If key party structures were consulted and kept in the loop while the party's strategy was being developed and at appropriate points during the negotiation process, securing broad support for the deal should be easier, as there should be no major surprises at this stage.

In addition, even those who are opposed to the coalition should be given fair opportunity to voice their concerns. The bylaws for Ireland's Labour Party require that members endorse coalition-building. In the lead-up to the Labour/Fine Gael coalition government that took office in 2010-2011, the Labour Party Congress featured a three-hour debate on coalition-building. Equal time was allocated to hearing the views of those for and against entering the coalition. This was designed to help ensure that all members felt their views had been given equal consideration regardless of the outcome.

If there are concerns about possible leaks before the final details of the agreement have been approved by their respective structures, parties can explore the possibility of scheduling their party approval processes simultaneously.

Selling the Deal to Party Members

United Kingdom

We are, above all, a democratic party, and we therefore have processes that are the despair of those we work with. However the outcomes are stable because they are shared and owned. Other parties may have different cultures that would not respond well to our methods. We had a "triple lock": agreement to a coalition was contingent on the team presenting a package to the leader, and him making a recommendation first to the

members of parliament (Commons and Lords), then to the federal executive (a standing body elected by party members to oversee the activities of the whole party) and then, if so approved, to a special conference of party representatives. The latter attracted around 2,000 voting members, and of course took 10 days to organize, leading to some political hiatus. However, the result – about 50 voted against – has been a bulwark against internal criticism that has been invaluable.

The process during the negotiations (conducted over four days and nights) was iterative, with reports back to the leader after each session, and to the parliamentary party once or twice a day.

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Germany: Approving the Coalition Deal

Examples

In 2013, Germany's Social Democrats announced that any coalition deal would be put to a full membership vote. Previously, a congress of party delegates had approved coalition deals. Various media reports suggested that the direct membership vote strengthened SDP's negotiating position, but also provided a mechanism for ensuring that the deal had broad support across the party.

The Economist reported,

"…*Mr. Gabriel, needing to cement the support of his own base, took the unprecedented step of letting the SPD's 470,000 members vote on whether to approve a coalition contract. Tactically, this was a masterstroke, because he can use the threat of this grassroots referendum to beat more leftist concessions out of Mrs. Merkel. Strategically, it is dangerous, because the SPD's blue-collar base may actually reject a deal when the votes are counted…*"[22]

A separate Reuters article noted,

"*Despite losing the election, they [SPD leader Sigmar Gabriel and his deputies] lobbied hard to win over skeptical members after getting much of their campaign program incorporated into the coalition agreement…*

'*We're not only the oldest party in Germany but we're also the most modern party – the party of mass participation,' Gabriel told some 400 cheering SPD volunteers who had spent the day counting some 369,680 ballots in a cold Berlin warehouse.…*

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22 "Those uppity Social Democrats," *The Economist,* November 21, 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21590587-spd-behaving-if-it-won-election-angela-merkels-efforts-form-new-government.

'We've set new standards,' added Gabriel, who managed to turn September's electoral defeat into a rallying point for the SPD with the referendum gamble. 'We don't just talk about grassroots democracy. We live it. I haven't been as proud of my party in a long time.'...

Thanks to what analysts called a clever strategic move to ask grassroots members to vote on the coalition, the SPD forced Merkel to accept many of the SPD's leftist policies even though the conservatives scored 41.5 percent of the vote in September compared to 25.7 for the SPD."[23]

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Communicate the approved agreement to each party's structures and members.

Many members and supporters may not have been involved in the internal consultations that occurred while the coalition was being negotiated and approved. Once the relevant party structures have confirmed the agreement, party officials should not only be trained on the contents, particularly elements that can be presented as party achievements, but also on how to explain some of the concessions the party may have had to make. As soon as possible, these individuals should be dispatched around the country to inform members and supporters of the agreement's contents. In addition, appropriate briefing material can be disseminated through online and social media communication platforms.

Go public with the deal after party approval is final.

When the coalition agreement is finally announced, it is important that every political party is given the opportunity "to shine." Therefore, before the official announcement, a very carefully designed external communication strategy must be developed and agreed to. Most importantly, the deal should not be presented to the public as final until the relevant party structures and officials have been briefed on the details and have approved the content. Party leaders who have jumped the gun to go public with coalition deals have often ended up embarrassing themselves when party officials/members deny any knowledge of the deal. In some cases, these denials have blossomed into full rebellions against party leaders, making coalition deals tenuous or no longer viable.

Examples

Agreement Documents in Australia[24]

In most cases, all the members of a coalition are signatories to a single agreement package that outlines policy agreements, coalition procedures, and the roles and responsibilities of the various members. However, in the aftermath of Australia's 2010 elections, the Labor

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23 Erik Kirschbaum, "German SPD members vote to join Merkel despite misgivings," *Reuters,* December 14, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/14/us-germany-coalition-idUSBRE9BD03X20131214.

24 Brenton Holmes and Sophia Fernandes, *2010 Federal Election: a brief history,* Research Paper no. 8 2011-12 prepared for Parliamentary Library of Australia, March 6, 2012, http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1112/12rp08.

Party (ALP) entered into three separate agreements with Honorable Andrew Wilkie – an Independent, the Greens and two other Independents. (The Labor Party and its main opponent, the Liberal/National Coalition, had each won 72 of the 150 seats in the lower house.) While there were a number of similarities across the three agreements, each document highlighted particular policy commitments negotiated with Labor. For instance, all three agreements referenced:

- Broad principles of transparency, accountability and integrity in government and the need for policies in the national interest;
- The junior partners' commitment to:
  - Vote in favor of ALP appropriation/spending bills; and
  - Oppose any motion of no confidence in the government unless they introduced or seconded the motion themselves.
- ALP's agreement to:
  - Weekly meetings between the prime minister and each junior partner when parliament was in session to discuss and negotiate planned legislation;
  - Meet at least every other week during parliamentary recess, to discuss the upcoming legislative agenda;
  - Exchange views with its partners when developing the budget;
  - A minimum of six working days' notice of upcoming legislation;
  - A process whereby junior coalition partners could submit new policy proposals to the government; and
  - Additional staff for their junior partners.

The agreement with the Greens highlighted policy agreements on climate change, health care and gambling; the accord with the two Independents outlined an agenda for parliamentary reform, a framework for a stronger regional policy and the creation of a minister for regional Australia; and the deal with Honorable Wilkie provided for a full parliamentary debate on the war in Afghanistan, reforms to improve parliamentary processes and funding for health facilities in Tasmania.

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Step 4. Working in Coalition

Maintaining good relations among coalition partners requires that members show respect for each other's views and traditions. Efforts should be made to establish a climate of respect, trust, tolerance and accommodation of one another, including among the principals (e.g., in the case of a coalition, the president, the prime minister, the minister of finance, etc.). Communication, consultation, consensus-building and compromise remain important even though a deal has already been reached.

Personal experiences

Building Trust

The Netherlands

In a "normal" situation, I think personal relationships among the key actors of the potential coalition partners are very important. Although "trust" is a rare commodity in politics, it can be enhanced in various ways. Getting to know each other helps builds trust. This can be done through:

- Discussions between key actors of the different parties;
- Cooperation between the parliamentary groups on concrete issues;
- Cooperation outside parliament with citizen groups; and
- Cooperation at local and regional levels.

Argentina

In our case, initially, we formed a legislative coalition and then subsequently formed an electoral coalition. The trust and joint initiatives developed in the national congress and in the Buenos Aires parliament, as well as opportunities for greater participation in governing the city, played an important role in laying the groundwork for the electoral coalition. Technical teams – with support from a think-tank – played an important role in merging the legislative agendas bit-by-bit and at the local and national levels.

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Pay special attention to the role of the coalition leader.

Effective coalition leadership requires the ability to:

- Maintain an open-door policy toward other senior coalition officials;
- Foster relationships with a wide range of individuals;
- Command respect and inspire trust among various coalition members;

- See and respect others' points of view; and
- Use formal and informal means to negotiate consensus and broker compromises.

One of the primary roles of a coalition leader is to rise above politics and ensure equitable and fair treatment to all members. From time-to-time, this may require that s/he take positions that are less favorable to his/her own political party but are in the broader interests of the coalition as a whole. For this reason, some parties may choose to separate the position of party leader from that of coalition leader. This can help limit real or perceived bias toward a particular party and give the principal leader the leeway required to act on behalf of the entire coalition.

Personal experiences

Working in Coalition: The Role of the Leader

Norway

Coalition leaders need to create an environment of trust and respect for different opinions. The leader needs to ensure that the negotiating parties believe that s/he is a person of integrity and would not jeopardize the joint work for his/her own gain. For example, in 1997 and 2001, the prime minister from the Christian Democratic Party was not the leader of his own party. The role of the prime minister was to lead the party in negotiations with the coalition party leaders and to lead the government in the implementation of the joint platform. This required a great deal of trust but it was done with an understanding of the importance of building trust in the process and in decisions made. This created a strong foundation for governing, as the prime minister could play a more neutral role and seek the approval of all coalition parties in the work ahead to realize the joint policies.

Ireland

The relationship between party leaders is key – in effect a senior cabinet committee that is formalized…Parity of esteem is crucial. All share the responsibility of government equally – even a very small party. The prime minister must be particularly sensitive to the pressures on smaller parties to "deliver."

The Netherlands

The biggest challenge was the relationship with the bigger party: there was a structural behavior of mistrust and competition between the two parties. Personal relationships were not good. (This was between 1990 and 1994.) Between 2006 and 2014, both parties ruled again at the city level, thanks to good relationships between the key actors and a more modest attitude of the bigger party.

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Choose parliamentary group leaders (where applicable) carefully.

For coalitions that operate in the parliament, it is also important to have individuals with strong leadership, negotiation and diplomatic skills as the leaders of each party's parliamentary group. These individuals – and his/her team – can help maintain cohesion and discipline among their party's MPs and also negotiate with other parliamentary group leaders in the coalition as needed.

Develop clear lines of communication.

The key to success in building and maintaining any kind of coalition is communication: there can never be "too much" communication with various stakeholders to inform them of the latest developments. Decisions that are taken behind closed doors without the participation of different coalition members are a recipe for misunderstanding, mistrust and the possible collapse of the coalition. Once the coalition is established, parties must maintain communication – between coalition members, within individual parties, and with the public and the press – to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

These open channels of communication can help build confidence in the coalition so that partners continue to see the benefits after the "honeymoon" period is over. Coalitions should develop clear lines of communication between:

- Parliamentary groups (or candidates in electoral alliances); and
- The executive and the parliament (campaign staff in electoral alliances).

In addition, each party will need to maintain good communication between party officials serving in coalition structures on one side and party officials serving outside the coalition on the other (i.e., women's and youth wings, trade unions, etc.). A coordinated public strategy is also necessary.

Use a combination of formal and informal communication channels.

While the cabinet and other coalition management structures will meet regularly for formal decision-making meetings, many coalitions have experienced the advantages of having regular informal meetings where new issues can be raised, ongoing debates can be enriched, difficult questions can be aired, and potential disputes or conflicts can be resolved before too much personal or party prestige has been involved. Formal mechanisms should be detailed in writing so that all involved know what to expect. However, informal communication is equally important and can provide additional opportunities to develop relationships and build trust. Parties should continue investing the time necessary to get to know their partners better – both at institutional and individual levels. They should try to see issues and events from their partners' perspectives and sustain efforts to seek win-win solutions.

Use political advisors to facilitate communication and to help resolve low-level conflict.

Legislators and members of the executive need competent staff to help manage coalition processes. Political advisors can play important roles in this process by:

- Facilitating information-sharing among coalition members and party-specific stakeholders; and
- Managing low- to medium-level conflict, helping to resolve problems before they escalate, and keeping them out of the public eye and off of the leaders' agenda.

For instance, in the Ireland case study included in this publication, former Prime Minister John Bruton describes the role advisors played help to ensure that the coalition program was implemented across government, and in resolving differences that had previously taken up significant time and energy at cabinet meetings of previous coalitions.

Personal experiences

Working in Coalition: Communication

Belgium

A smaller subset of the negotiation team remained in place to make sure that communications remained open and to troubleshoot issues of concern.

Colombia

Simplicity, clarity and fluidity should be the criteria for communication: direct communication, fluency in communication of the decisions made and clear messages, all help minimize possible ambiguities [or misunderstandings] that can cause difficulties. Keep two channels of communication open: a formal relationship between factions or parties, and informal conversations that allow the parties to "take the pulse" of their relationship.

The Netherlands

There was a regularly scheduled meeting of the key individuals from each of the coalition member parties. In our case, these were the leaders of the parliamentary groups. The main task of this "coalition-meeting-group" was to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the coalition program under the actual ever-changing political/social circumstances. A mix of flexibility and stability is required so that each partner takes a combination of wins and losses in a balanced way. If there are specific problems between coalition members, the executive members and/or the parliamentary group members tasked with leading the group's work on that particular policy area should be invited to discuss how to solve these problems.

Besides the "coalition-meeting-group," it is advisable that the boards of the coalition's member parties meet from time-to-time. Parliamentarians of the different coalition members may meet and develop parliamentary initiatives on certain issues, so they build mutual trust while working as parliamentarians. There may also be a yearly "general meeting" of the coalition partners (representatives and key actors) to discuss policy items.

Romania

The most important factor is for all partners to remember their shared goal. Efficient communication will follow necessarily if all parties see the importance of maintaining the coalition. Other than that, it is useful to have not only regular formal meetings, but also informal ones as often as it is required. Moreover, the coalition architecture should include a formal court of arbitration, to solve as expediently as possible all inevitable problems.

Norway

The coordination, collaboration and communication between the minister, the committee(s) and the parliamentary group is crucial in Norwegian politics. Each minister needs to develop a clear line of communication with all leaders of the standing committees within the ministry's field of work. This two-way communication allows the minister to channel information and use the standing committees as sounding boards, where ideas and new initiatives can be discussed. This is a channel that involves both representatives from the governing parties and the opposition, and all should be taken into consideration when developing the policies for the nation. Committee leaders also help facilitate communication with each parliamentary group and its leadership.

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Use specialized subcommittees when needed.

Coalitions can also form subcommittees that can be assigned to research and facilitate discussions. These issue-based subcommittees can be consulted when larger policy decisions are being considered. They can facilitate coordination between the coalition and different sectors of society, and provide a mechanism for incorporating public outreach and greater participation into governance.

Examples

Coalition Communications in Norway

Norway's KrF led a three-party coalition government from 1997-2000. In the aftermath of the coalition, the party conducted an evaluation of its experiences and identified the following lessons learned or best practices in internal and external communications.

- The executive, national party structures and the parliamentary group must maintain excellent communications. For the KrF, communication systems included the appointment of a "courier" responsible for ensuring the transmission (and delivery) of written communications between each of these groups.
- Weekly meetings provided opportunities for information sharing between each minister and his/her staff on the one hand, and parliamentary group members and party headquarters officials on the other.
- A combination of regular formal and informal meetings (including social activities) involving members of the coalition government proved to be an important tool. One of the lessons learned in this area was to include individuals from different levels in the ministries. Informal activities bringing together individuals from ministries, the parliamentary group and party headquarter were also useful.
- For updates and consultations, the members of parliament from each party in the coalition held weekly meetings with ministers from their party.
- Each party established *ad hoc* committees that researched and drafted policy proposals that were not already addressed in the government program. These committees fed their work to ministers and members of parliament from their respective parties. The committees also provided a mechanism for involving different levels of the party in strengthening the KrF's contributions to government.
- Ministers from the party traveled extensively to branches, seeking member input on and sharing information about the party's activities in government. These encounters were particularly important when the KrF had to reach compromises with other members of the coalition.
- Whenever the government sought public input on a particular issue, the party played an active role in these efforts and organized internal meetings to seek input from local branches.
- Whenever the government identified policy issues that would have a particular impact on a specific social group or geographic area, ministers made special efforts to consult individuals from these groups or areas.
- Each ministry had a dedicated individual who was responsible for identifying important issues that should be incorporated into the government's media strategy.

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Speak to the public with one voice, but give each member party opportunities to share the stage.

External communication should be carefully coordinated so that the coalition presents a united front to the public. The communications strategy should be crafted to provide each member fair opportunities to highlight or present its contributions to the overall coalition. Often a coalition will have one principal spokesperson, supported by professional staff. In addition, the coalition may assign different individuals as spokespersons for particular policy or issue areas.

In Ireland, media outreach is based on the program for government that is negotiated among the coalition partners. Once the agreement is final, the coalition prepares a system of "timed announcements," outlining long- and short-term media engagement plans, taking into account predicted events. Ministerial press officers report to the government press office, which is managed by a spokesperson and his/her deputy. Typically, the spokesperson is from the senior coalition partner, while the deputy is from a junior partner. This press office ensures coordination across ministries and, when needed, establishes emergency systems to deal with crises.

Resolve disagreements behind closed doors.

Public squabbles reflect poorly on all coalition members. As much as possible, disputes should be handled behind closed doors and the coalition should present a united front to the media and the public.

Examples

Coalition Management in Sweden[25]

1. <u>Cabinet:</u> The cabinet met once a week on a regular basis. These meetings provided opportunities to take formal decisions and to discuss issues that would eventually require a decision in the future. Daily lunch meetings provided ministers an opportunity for more informal discussions.

2. <u>Coordination Groups:</u> Chaired by state secretaries, these groups of coordination officers, organized around specific policy areas, worked through various aspects of day-to-day coordination and low-level differences.

3. <u>State Secretaries:</u> In addition, the deputies in each ministry (usually state secretaries) held regular meetings with each other. They also attempted to resolve differences that could not be solved by the coordination groups.

4. <u>Party Leaders:</u> Differences that could not be resolved by the state secretaries were referred to the leaders of the coalition member parties.

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Carve out a unique space within the coalition.

All parties involved in coalitions face a balancing act as they strive to meet their obligations to their partners while maintaining their unique party identity. Preserving a party's distinct profile is important because presumably a party believes its policies and leaders are the best. In addition, parties should be interested in showing how they have lived up to the promises they made during the

25 Olof Ruin, "Managing Coalition Governments: the Swedish Experience," 715-716.

election campaign. Finally, maintaining a unique identity helps a party strategically position itself ahead of subsequent elections.

Coalitions require compromise. Partners should actively debate and discuss issues as they arise. Each member party will inevitably "win" on certain issues and cede ground to its partners on others. Based on the priorities identified during the internal preparedness phase, parties should be well placed to push for their signature issues and to position themselves strategically even within a coalition. In addition, political parties can use the media, and their own support groups and networks to highlight their priorities.

Keep some key officials outside government.

Understandably, parties serving in coalition governments often seek to place as many individuals as they can in leadership positions inside the executive. However, ensuring that a few key senior officials remain outside the coalition government will increase a party's options for maintaining a unique identity and communicating positions or messages that reflect the party – not the coalition's positions.

Keep party structures in the loop.

The party's executive body members should meet regularly for updates and consultations on the coalition. This will allow them to provide input where needed and to communicate relevant information to party structures and supporters. Two-way communication – using online and social media communication platforms as well as traditional methods – is needed to ensure that party members/supporters and leadership are on the same page about the rationale for coalition policies/decisions. Party leaders also need to make time for dialogue with members and citizens to continue to make the case for the coalition, to clarify misunderstandings, and to help manage any discontent or frustrations in the party base. Left unaddressed, initially low levels of discontent can quickly escalate into more dramatic divisions.

In addition, parliamentary group leaders should provide a thorough account to their party congress. This session will normally include a report on the party's work in parliament and a question and answer session. The suggestions approved by the congress sets the tone for the party's future policies.

Personal experiences

Working in Coalition: Keeping Party Structures in the Loop

Ireland

Being in government is hugely rewarding but also very demanding. A coalition government is even more so. For a smaller party, getting the message out and taking credit is important but it is difficult to do when the larger party has more clout and influence. Regular briefings for the party at every level do help to overcome this.

The key issue from a party perspective is managing the expectations of members and supporters. Coalition governments dilute policy positions, and the size of the party influences how much dilution there is. Voters tend to support a party based on some of their policy positions and are often disappointed when only a watered-down version emerges.

Grassroots members are usually the most polarized, with the party leaders being the most cordial. Creating a more collegial relationship at every level is difficult but worthwhile.

Norway

When the implementation phase starts and the coalition is carrying out its political platform, the internal party machinery takes over the role of carrier of information and communication. The internal dialogue takes place on all levels. Typically each party has a parliamentary group that meets on a weekly basis to discuss issues being debated in the government. The group plays a central role as it represents the party and their voters. In addition, the central board of each party meets four to five times a year, and a large board with members from constituencies meets two to three times a year. These meetings set the tone for how the party is positioned for negotiating policies and creating the implementation process that it believes will benefit not only its own members but the nation as a whole.

Colombia

Ideally, parties should design a system for communicating with different levels of their organization. Although different groups will set up their own "real" systems for communication, these formal systems can be used to cut through the noise, keep a lid on rumors and minimize conflict.

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Coalition Management Structures in Germany[26]

Examples

1. **Regular Routine Talks:** The group that negotiated the agreement transforms itself into a permanent but informal body where all major decisions are made. The group meets every two weeks and includes very senior representatives from each of the member parties. The group would include a total of approximately 12 people.

2. **Regular Coordination Meetings Between Parliamentary Groups:** These meetings involve a total of about 12-15 of the most senior parliamentary group members, including the chancellor and other cabinet members. The meetings provide an opportunity to exchange information and to coordinate parliamentary strategies.

3. **Policy Working Groups:** These working groups are organized around specific policy issues. They are based on equal participation of the different member parties and include technical experts in the relevant policy areas. In addition to allowing member parties to pool their policy expertise, they free more senior politicians from potentially technical and complicated issues.

4. **Elephant Rounds:** These meetings between the principals from each member party are used to resolve problems or conflicts that cannot be settled during the regular routine talks.

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Keep organizing party-specific activities.

Even while in coalition, individual political parties should continue to conduct their own party activities. Parties can highlight their own positions on policies that are not covered in the coalition agreement. They can hold internal and external meetings to highlight their successes and explain the challenges they have faced.

Continuously monitor the impact of the coalition on your party and take remedial actions if needed.

Over the course of a coalition, member parties may contemplate leaving several times. Worksheet 9A outlines a framework that political parties can use to regularly assess the coalition's accomplishments and challenges, and the partnership's impact on the individual party's ability to advance policy priorities, its public profile and its support. Public opinion research can also be a helpful tool in gauging public perceptions of a party's performance. For instance, during Norway's 2001-2005 coalition government, the member parties commissioned an opinion poll to seek the views of the electorate on their performance. The poll had two major sections. The first covered public perceptions

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26 Adam and Braum, *Coalitions.*

of the coalition government's performance (as compared with the previous single-party government). The second section asked the supporters of each of the coalition member parties to rate their own party's performance in the coalition government. The responses to this second set of questions helped each member party to develop strategies for maintaining appropriate visibility and protecting its profile within the coalition. Regardless of how a party chooses to review its performance, this analysis may lead a party to consider leaving a coalition before it has fulfilled its stated objective. In other cases, parties may choose to remain in coalition for the full term of their agreement.

Personal experiences

Working in Coalition: Maintaining Your Party's Identity

Romania

At all times while within a coalition, a party should uphold a set of ideas and projects that conforms to its own ideological flavor. It is best if these have already been accepted by the partners at the previous stage, during negotiations, so there is a clear understanding not only within the party, but also within the coalition, of what each partner holds as the most important tenets. Having these landmark issues respected throughout the duration of the coalition will bolster the sense of identity of each party.

Belgium

My party communicated regularly to members and sectors, and ministers organized regional meetings quarterly.

The Netherlands

This is a big challenge. A party should do its own thing, even while it is a member of a coalition. Options include undertaking various parliamentary initiatives and organizing meetings with citizen groups to promote its own ideas and policy and strengthen relationships with the outside world. Of course the party is "bound" to the coalition program but new, unforeseen problems arise, so there is also a world outside the coalition agreement program. The party can also prioritize some political issues they want to work on to enhance their profile. My experience is that the best way to emphasize your political identity is to organize communication channels and communication tools for your own party, through which you can keep target groups informed about what your party is doing. Of course your partners will be aware of this communication policy, so you have to be sure that your stories are true.

Ireland

Ministers and junior ministers of each party, together with senior party officials, should meet regularly to assess their performance and the implementation of policy that matters most to them. If this is properly structured, it will lead to a communications strategy that will help to sustain the party's individual identity. However, curb your enthusiasm – there will be extreme sensitivity to one party appearing to claim credit for certain actions or successes. A cross-party management structure is vital for building and maintaining cross-party trust and providing a forum for dealing with sensitivities and issues as they arise.

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Coalitions should have formal mechanisms for reviewing their performance. For electoral alliances, the immediate aftermath of the polls provides a natural time for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign as well as the coordination among coalition partners. For ruling and legislative coalitions, annual reviews should outline progress toward achieving goals outlined in the coalition's program. In areas where individual members of the coalition have acted separately based on their own party positions, they should assess their gains and losses. Some of this information can be used in public outreach, highlighting policy successes. Other aspects will help inform party strategy.

Step 5: Drawing Lessons Learned

Some of the common reasons for dissolving a coalition include the following.

Differences Over Policy: This may include general widespread disagreement on the overall direction to take in addressing such issues as the national budget, defense, health care, etc. It may also involve the withdrawal of a particular member of the coalition over a signature policy issue.

Differences Among the Principals: Chemistry or interpersonal, informal relations are as important in coalition-building as formal structures and procedures. Although few official reports confirm it, soured interpersonal relations between principals have helped lead to the collapse of coalitions.

Disadvantages Begin to Outweigh the Advantages: One or more of the coalition partners identify that the costs (in terms of policy positions and/or public support) outweigh the benefits of the coalition. (Junior partners often emerge from coalitions far more damaged than the "senior" partner[s].)

Internal Party Splits: In some cases, divisions within one or more of the partners over continued membership in the coalition can be so severe that the involved party is unable to meet its obligations to its partners and must leave the coalition to focus on repairing party unity.

Coalition Has Served Its Purpose: Once a coalition has served its purpose – e.g., elections are over or the ruling coalition has served its term in government – the partners may reach a mutual agreement to go their separate ways.

Coalitions that have proven successful and that appear to enjoy significant public support may choose to remain in partnership with the same parties. This will likely include one of the following options.

- *Option 1: Reactivation.* In the event that the coalition members previously ran as an electoral alliance, the coalition partners may reactivate – with or without minor adjustments – the mechanisms from the previous election. In most cases, the coalition partners will need to agree on the policy agenda to be presented in the upcoming election.
- *Option 2: Renegotiation.* The coalition partners – based on the experiences and lessons learned from recent coalition-building – conduct a comprehensive renegotiation in preparation for renewing the electoral alliance. The outcome of these negotiations could be anything from a loose alliance to the most comprehensive and detailed electoral alliance agreement.
- *Option 3: Go It Alone.* The coalition partners agree to campaign as individual competitors – that is, without forming an electoral alliance – but with the (publicly stated or tacit) understanding that they will seek to form the next governing coalition if given the mandate by the electorate.

Following the next election, several scenarios are possible.

- **Defeat:** Any governing coalition or party running for re-election might find that its mandate is not renewed. This means that the ruling party/coalition has to step down in a matter of days. In the aftermath of electoral defeat, the former ruling party or parties may decide to function separately or in coalition while they serve in opposition.
- **Reconfiguration:** One or more of the coalition partners in the previous coalition might decide – due to lack of support from the voters, internal divisions and/or increased confidence it has other options for achieving its goals – to go it alone. The remaining coalition partner(s) might then decide to include one or more new members to secure the support required to form the next government. This will require a full-fledged negotiation (either to form an electoral alliance or a reconfigured government coalition).
- **Renewal:** When a coalition running for re-election does get a renewed mandate from the electorate, postelection negotiations are still needed to agree on a new policy program for the new government and to assign positions in the executive. In the event that individual coalition partners have experienced significant changes in their electoral support, this will be one of the factors that influence postelection negotiations.

Review coalition accomplishments and lessons learned.

Regardless of whether each party plans to move forward alone or in another coalition, it is important to review and document lessons learned from each coalition-building experience. This will make it possible to:

- Get a clear picture of the positive and negative impacts of coalition-building on the party;
- Identify lessons learned that can inform any coalition-building efforts in the near or distant future; and
- Map a way forward.

Engage different levels of the party in assessing the impact of the coalition on the party's profile and support, and in mapping a way forward.

In many cases, the impact of coalition-building and any lessons learned may seem obvious to party leaders. Nevertheless, a more structured series of discussions may still be helpful in:

- Gathering different perspectives on what worked well and what did not;
- Giving people – particularly those who are dissatisfied – an opportunity to be heard; and
- Getting new ideas for ways to move forward with a stronger party (and coalition, if relevant).

Input from local party structures can be especially helpful. These structures are in closest contact with members and supporters around the country and can provide feedback on views from the grassroots. This process can be organized in different ways but should ideally incorporate perspectives from a party's:

- Leadership;
- Publicly elected officials;
- Grassroots structures and membership; and
- Affiliated groups (e.g., women's and youth wings, trade unions).

In addition, the review process should seek relevant party stakeholders' views on lessons learned for each of the steps in the process. For instance, in the aftermath of the 2001-2005 coalition government in Norway, officials from the KrF's headquarters facilitated a consultative process involving former ministers and their support staff, members of the parliamentary group, and officials working in party structures. The lessons learned were subsequently reviewed and finalized in a meeting of the party's national executive council.

In some cases, a damaging coalition experience may result in the resignation of the party leader and the need to select new leadership. If that is the case, debate over the impact of the coalition on the party and a way forward will likely feature heavily in the leadership campaign. Regardless, a proper process for reviewing the party's performance in the coalition is still necessary. It should be designed in such a way that it creates meaningful opportunities for drawing lessons learned rather than just blaming the party leaders.

Of course, a lot will depend on the process used to decide upon coalition-building in the first place. If the process was inclusive, party leaders still bear some responsibility for that outcome. However, the burden of identifying lessons learned and future improvements can and should be shared by the broader party organization. A consultative process is a way of sharing this burden but also setting expectations for future coalition-building. If the process was not inclusive, then sharing the burden will be more difficult. Nevertheless, this can also lead to a conversation within the party about how these and other decisions should be made in the future.

Options for a review of the coalition-building experience include the following, which are not mutually exclusive.

Option 1: Table the Topic for Discussion Through Established Consultative Mechanisms.

Most parties have established consultative mechanisms that could serve as forums for reviewing the impact of coalition-building and any lessons learned. They include:

- National executive council meetings;
- Parliamentary group meetings;
- Affiliated group (e.g., women's and youth wings) meetings; and
- Party conferences/conventions.

Discussions about the coalition experience could be tabled for discussion during the regular meetings of these structures. Alternatively, extraordinary meetings could be called with the sole objective of reviewing the coalition experience and mapping a way forward.

Option 2: Conduct Specialized Consultations.

Especially if there is a perception that coalition-building has had a significant and negative impact on a party, a more specialized consultative process may be required. This can take the form of a broader party renewal effort. This could include the establishment of a commission to oversee the process and provide recommendations; and a series of consultations – through "town hall-style meetings" with members, member surveys, online and social media communication platforms, and/or special party conferences. In addition, parties may choose to commission public opinion research that can shed light on public perceptions of the party, its performance in the coalition and areas it should focus on in the future. As indicated in Step 2, public opinion research played an important role in helping Norwegian parties determine how to position themselves within the 2001-2005 coalition government.

Worksheets 9A and 9B outline questions that should be considered as part of the review process, regardless of the approach used.

Feed lessons learned into future coalition-building efforts.

Lessons Learned

Personal experiences

Colombia

The coalition ended up eroding the party's internal consensus and brought up underlying differences. We had to overcome this through internal deliberations and by organizing a democratic party congress.

Belgium

The greatest challenge was managing the expectations of party members and MPs: helping them realize that the party was not a majority government but was sharing power.

Romania

Maintain civilized relationships with all political actors – today's enemy could be tomorrow's ally!

Argentina

The differences among the coalition members – in terms of personalities, votes and government posts – were the greatest challenge. We were able to compensate for some of these differences by demonstrating our qualitative influence in developing legislative agendas at the national and local level (Buenos Aires) and by showcasing our leadership style, an approach based on consensus-building as well as respect for diversity and complexity.

Lessons Learned from the Liberal Democrat Experience[27]

Examples

In the final months of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition that ruled the United Kingdom from 2010-2015, the Institute for Government published a paper written by a senior Liberal Democrat official. The publication outlined some of the lessons learned from serving in government alongside the Conservatives as well as recommendations for future coalition-building. This was a public document that highlighted a combination of issues related to the functioning of government but also some of the impact the coalition had on his own party. It is illustrative of how important and helpful such reviews – including internal, confidential party reviews on more sensitive issues – can be. Highlights from the paper include the following.

"*The principle of 'no surprises' between the partners is crucial in a good working coalition… It must be the foundation of any future coalition.*" During the negotiations, the two parties had agreed that the deputy prime minister (a Liberal Democrat) would see all documents going to the prime minister and have to agree on the proposed course of action. Once the coalition government was up and running, this turned out to be far more significant than many had anticipated.

"*Working arrangements need hammering out in far greater detail at the outset.*" Liberal Democrat officials had mixed experiences with access to the media and making high-profile announcements. Although the initial agreement had provided for a coalition committee that could be called upon to resolve any issues that could not be resolved by a cabinet committee, in practice this structure rarely met. The official suggested that in the future, the coalition committee comprise whips and cabinet ministers instead, and meet to resolve tensions over such issues as media access, only referring to the most-senior officials any issues that it could not resolve.

"*[E]stablishing well in advance our clear 'demand' in terms of government machinery and positions…will put us in a stronger position and save valuable time.*" Although the Liberal Democrats had spent significant time preparing to negotiate policy positions, it appears that the Conservatives had been well prepared both in terms of policy and government positions. The official noted that in future coalitions, his party should demand more high profile-ministerial positions and negotiate for more political advisors.

Ultimately, the Conservative Party secured a majority in the 2015 election. As a result, a coalition was not required to form government.

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27   Nick Harvey, "After the rose garden: Harsh lessons for the smaller coalition party about how to be seen and heard in government," *The Institute for Government,* February 2, 2015, http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/After%20the%20rose%20garden_0.pdf.

Worksheet 1: Coalition Checklist

Step 1: Developing a Party Strategy

Parties that develop a good strategy before they embark on negotiations are more likely to identify strategic partners, negotiate a good deal and avoid some of the common pitfalls associated with coalition-building.

☐ Determine the objective(s) of the coalition.

☐ Check the legal framework.

☐ Check the internal party rules.

☐ Clarify and communicate any additional internal party rules and procedures that may be needed.

☐ Establish a team to draft a party strategy. The strategy team should:

- Review the party's strengths and weaknesses;
- Do as much research as possible on potential partners;
- Prioritize the party's policies, clarifying first and second preferences as well as any "redlines";
- Prioritize other coalition-building demands (e.g., ministerial or candidate slots, staffing arrangements, etc.), clarifying first and second preferences as well as any "redlines";
- Draft proposals for how the eventual coalition should be structured and which issues the agreement document should address (e.g., roles and responsibilities, dispute resolution procedures, etc.);
- Draft proposals for the negotiation process (e.g., the structure, procedures, administrative arrangements, how external relations should be handled, etc.); and
- Consider whether a "convener" or a formal chair is necessary.

☐ Identify a small negotiation team (if different from the party strategy team) that has party backing and confidence and will be respected by the other side.

☐ Test the waters with potential partners: remember that coalitions with like-minded partners are more likely to be successful.

Step 2: Negotiating a Coalition

Based on the strategy that each party has prepared, parties in Step 2 come together to negotiate and hopefully reach agreement on the terms for the coalition.

☐ Negotiate the negotiation: clarify the rules and procedures governing the negotiation process.

☐ Negotiate easy items first: this will help build trust and create a positive environment.

☐ But apply the "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" principle.

☐ Document the proceedings.

☐ If necessary, delegate difficult technical issues to working groups.

☐ Use different approaches to find compromise.

☐ Consider different options for resolving differences, but if necessary, agree to disagree.

☐ Agree on procedures for coalition dispute resolution before they are needed.

☐ Balance the need for intraparty consultations and buy-in with the need for confidentiality.

Step 3: Getting Started

As negotiation begins to wrap-up, the agreement between political parties needs to be finalized in writing, approved by the relevant structures of the coalition's member parties and announced to the general public.

☐ Outline the agreement in a written document that is detailed enough to guide the day-to-day performance of the coalition.

☐ Follow the rules for approval by each party.

☐ Communicate the approved agreement to each party's structures and members.

☐ Go public with the deal after party approval is final.

Step 4: Working in Coalition

As the member parties work to implement their agreement, they will need to maintain good relations with each other. Each party will also need to strike a balance between respecting its obligations to the coalition and maintaining its individual identity.

☐ Pay special attention to the role of the coalition leader.

☐ Choose parliamentary group leaders (where applicable) carefully.

☐ Develop clear lines of communication.

☐ Use a combination of formal and informal communication channels.

☐ Use political advisors to facilitate communication and to help resolve low-level conflict.

☐ Use specialized subcommittees when needed.

☐ Speak to the public with one voice, but give each member opportunities to share the stage.

☐ Resolve disagreements behind closed doors.

☐ Carve out a unique space within the coalition.

☐ Keep some key party officials outside government.

☐ Keep party structures in the loop.

☐ Keep organizing party-specific activities.

☐ Continuously monitor the impact of the coalition on your party and take remedial actions if needed.

Step 5: Drawing Lessons Learned

Regardless of whether each party plans to move forward alone or in another coalition, it is important to review and document lessons learned from each coalition-building experience. This will make it possible to: get a clearer picture of the positive and negative impacts of coalition-building on the party; and identify lessons learned that can inform any coalition-building efforts in the near or distant future.

☐   Review coalition accomplishments and lessons learned.

☐   Engage different levels of the party in assessing the impact of the coalition on the party's profile and support, and in mapping a way forward.

☐   Feed lessons learned into future coalition-building efforts.

Worksheet 2: Checking the Legal Framework

Purpose: To help ensure that parties are aware of and prepared to meet any legal requirements for coalition-building.

For Use By: The Party Strategy Team

When: Step 1 – Developing a Party Strategy

Parties considering coalition-building should check the legal framework for the following:

What restrictions exist on and what are the requirements for how coalitions are formed and operate?

Consider the following:

- Who can form a coalition and for what purpose?
- Are there special political finance allocations or reporting provisions for coalitions?
- In proportional-representation systems, is there an electoral threshold for coalition lists? (*They may be different from the thresholds for single-party lists.*)

What documents are required to register a coalition?

Consider the following:

- What are the specific details the agreement document must include?
- What documents and approvals need to be appended?

What is the timeline for submission of any necessary documents to election management or party regulatory bodies?

Consider the following. What are the deadlines for:

- Securing legal recognition of the coalition;
- Filing candidate nomination papers; and
- Submitting campaign finance reports?

Tips & Tools

Worksheet 3: Party Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

Purpose: To inform the choice of strategic coalition partners and negotiation strategy.

For Use By: The Party Strategy Team

When: Step 1 – Developing a Party Strategy

A Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT) analysis is one of the common tools for developing a strategy. It can be used in a variety of contexts: business, personal career development and politics. In the context of coalition-building, a SWOT analysis can be used to inform the development of a party strategy that:

- Maximizes your own party's strengths;
- Addresses its weaknesses;
- Takes the utmost advantage of any opportunities; and
- Manages any threats.

Strengths	Weaknesses
- What does the party do well? - What do others perceive as the party's strengths? - On which policy issues is your party particularly strong/have a strong and positive reputation among the public? - With which demographic (e.g., gender, age, geographic location, socioeconomic status) is the party most popular?	- In what policy areas could the party improve? - With which demographic is the party least popular? - What do others see as the party's weaknesses? - In what areas does the party have fewer resources than other parties? - Are the majority of members likely to support coalition-building?

Opportunities	Threats
• What weaknesses or needs do other parties have that your party could help them address? • What might the party gain by forming a coalition with others? • On which political issues does the party have the potential to become more influential?	• What other coalition-building options might be available to possible partners? • How might coalition-building negatively affect/dilute the party's image? • Can we really trust the other parties? • Are there foreseeable political compromises that the party will have to make that could damage its reputation or support base?

Variation: SWOT Plus Time

Coalition-building does not happen in a vacuum. The electoral calendar, the deadline for registering candidates, the possibility of other coalitions and the deadlines for forming government may have implications for coalition-building options. As part of the SWOT analysis, consider whether each of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are likely to remain the same over time, worsen or improve. In other words, for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats, consider:

• What happens if you do nothing?
• If you leave things as they are, will they get better, worse or remain the same over time?

Worksheet 4: Prioritizing Policies and Coalition Roles

Purpose: To inform negotiation strategy.

For Use By: The Party Strategy Team (and/or the Negotiation Team, if separate)

When: Step 1 – Developing a Party Strategy (*worksheet is completed*)
Step 2 – Negotiating a Coalition (*worksheet serves as a reference document*)

Consider the party's policy positions and the various leadership roles and responsibilities that will need to be filled if a coalition is formed. In the context of an electoral alliance, consider various roles and responsibilities during the campaign period (e.g., campaign messaging, candidate selection, campaign team leadership, etc.). For governing coalitions, consider the program for government, ministerial portfolios or other assignments in government.

Which of these policies, and roles and responsibilities are most important to your party? Prioritize them based on:

● Your party's political identity;
● The policy and/or position's (candidate slot, ministerial portfolio or other) significance relative to the party's public image; and
● The expectations of party supporters/members.

Using the chart below, list each policy or role/responsibility in order of priority. For each, identify the first and next-best preferred options, as well as any compromise positions and limits to the party's willingness to negotiate. Additional rows may be added as necessary.

Priority Policy Issues and Positions	First preferred option	Next-best preferred option	Compromise (fallback) position	Red-line position

Worksheet 5: Mapping the Interests of Coalition Partners

Purpose: To inform negotiation strategy.

For Use By: The Party Strategy Team (and/or the Negotiation Team, if separate)

When: Step 1 – Developing a Party Strategy (*worksheet is completed*)
                 Step 2 – Negotiating a Coalition (*worksheet serves as a reference document*)

Map the interests of each coalition partner as well as your own party's interests, demands and expectations. List them in the table below. In the far right-hand column, use the traffic light system to indicate each item as follows:

- Green: where the parties' interests/expectations are compatible.
- Yellow: where moderate modifications may need to be made to accommodate the interests of all parties.
- Red: where the parties' interests/expectations are incompatible or in conflict with one another.

	Us	**Them**	
		Party 1 Compatibility (Red, yellow, green)	**Party 2 Compatibility (Red, yellow, green)**
Policies			
What are each partner's policy priorities (as indicated by policy documents, voting records, etc.)? What are the main similarities and differences across the various policy priorities?			
Structural Arrangements			
General *What resources or strengths can/should each partner bring to the table?*			

	Us	Them	
		PARTY 1 COMPATIBILITY (RED, YELLOW, GREEN)	PARTY 2 COMPATIBILITY (RED, YELLOW, GREEN)
Electoral Alliances *What formula or approach should be used for candidate selection?* *What aspects of the campaign should be managed separately by each party?* *What joint structures/ mechanisms may need to be established for coordinated aspects of the campaign?*			
Ruling & Legislative Coalitions *What structures will be needed to coordinate (e.g., in the executive or the parliament, and between party structures outside the parliament/executive)?* *How should roles and responsibilities within the coalition be handled (e.g., formula for allocation of ministerial portfolios, particular positions that are priorities for each partner)?*			
COMMUNICATIONS			
General *How should communications be managed? Consider the need for communication within the coalition as well as with the media and broader public.*			
Electoral Alliances *How should the campaign strategy and messaging be coordinated (consider arrangements for spokespersons, media, campaign events, etc.)?*			

Worksheet 6: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Negotiating a Coalition

Purpose: To inform negotiation strategy.

For Use By: The Party Strategy Team (and/or the Negotiation Team, if separate)

When: Step 1 – Developing a Party Strategy (*worksheet is completed*)
                   Step 2 – Negotiating a Coalition (*worksheet serves as a reference document*)

Using the chart below, map the advantages and disadvantages of coalition-building for your party and for potential coalition partners. For each question, consider the potential risks and benefits from different perspectives: advancing party policy priorities, increasing party visibility, and likely support from the party and among voters/supporters.

	Advancing Party Policy Priorities	Party Visibility/ Public Profile (e.g., through candidate slots or leadership positions in government)	Support from Party Structures and Members/Supporters	Support from Voters
What are the advantages for us of negotiating a coalition agreement?				
What are the risks for us of negotiating a coalition agreement?				
What are the disadvantages for us of negotiating a coalition agreement?				
How can any potential risks be mitigated?				

	Advancing Party Policy Priorities	Party Visibility/ Public Profile (e.g., through candidate slots or leadership positions in government)	Support from Party Structures and Members/Supporters	Support from Voters
What are the advantages for the other(s) of negotiating a coalition agreement?				
What are the risks for the other(s) of negotiating a coalition agreement?				
What are the disadvantages for the other(s) of negotiating a coalition agreement?				
How can any potential risks be mitigated?				

Worksheet 7: Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement and Mutual Gains

Purpose: To inform negotiation strategy.

For Use By: The Party Strategy Team (and/or the Negotiation Team, if separate)

When: Step 1 – Developing a Party Strategy (*worksheet is completed*)
Step 2 – Negotiating a Coalition (*worksheet serves as a reference document*)

What is our party's ultimate goal? (i.e., what goals/objectives does our party hope to accomplish through coalition-building?)	
What is our party's Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA)? In other words, what is the best option(s) or action(s) available to our party in the event that the coalition negotiations do not succeed?	
What offers could assist the coalition negotiation to succeed and secure a win-win situation?	
What can our party offer to our negotiation partner(s)?	What could our negotiation partner(s) offer to us?
What arguments and objective criteria could our party use to support its position?	

Worksheet 8A: Coalition Agreement Outline

Purpose: To guide the development of an agreement document.

For Use By: The Negotiation Team and Party Leadership

When: Step 2 – Negotiating a Coalition
                Step 3 – Getting Started
                (*During the drafting and finalization of the agreement document.*)

- Name of the Coalition

- Coalition Member Parties

- Broad Goals, Objectives & Principles

- Coalition Management Structures & Processes
  For ruling coalitions, this should include the allocation of government portfolios and staffing arrangements.

  For electoral alliances, this should include procedures for candidate selection, campaign management and fundraising/financial management (including, if relevant, procedures for allocating public funding among coalition members and meeting disclosure/reporting requirements).

- Policy Commitments
  This should include any commitments for parliamentary group support, issues where dissent is permitted, etc.

- Dispute Resolution Procedures

- The Duration of the Coalition *(and any relevant arrangements for its dissolution or renewal, as appropriate).*

Worksheet 8B: Coalition Agreement Checklist

Purpose: To guide the development of an agreement document.

For Use By: The Negotiation Team and Party Leadership

When: Step 2 – Negotiating a Coalition
                  Step 3 – Getting Started
                  (*During the drafting and finalization of the agreement document.*)

☐   Does the agreement include enough detail to provide a clear idea of how the coalition will be managed (including policy agreements, provisions for information-sharing, dispute resolution, etc.)?

☐   What are the procedures for approval of the agreement by each party?

☐   What is the timeline for securing those approvals?

☐   Have the rules and procedures for each individual party been followed?

☐   What is the procedure and timeline for public release/announcement?

Worksheet 9A: Evaluating the Coalition Experience and Drawing Lessons Learned

Purpose: To assess the coalition's accomplishments and challenges, and the impact of coalition-building on individual parties so that remedial actions may be taken where needed.

For Use By: Party executives, in consultation with various intraparty groups (e.g., elected representatives, youth/women's wings, etc.)

When: Step 4: Working in Coalition; and Step 5: Drawing Lessons Learned

The tables below provide a framework that parties can use to review coalition accomplishments and challenges as well as the impact of coalition-building on their individual party.

	Management of the Coalition	Electoral Outcomes	Public Policy	Public Support
What have been the coalition's main accomplishments?				
What have been the coalition's main challenges?				

	Advancing Party Policy Priorities	Party Visibility/ Public Profile (e.g., Opportunities for the Party to Serve in Leadership Positions)	Support from Party Organs and Members	Support from Party Supporters and Voters
How has involvement in the coalition affected our party?				

If coalition-building may be necessary again or remains an option, based on lessons learned from past experience, consider the following:			
What are the advantages of another coalition?			
What are the disadvantages of another coalition?			
How can any potential risks be mitigated?			

Based on the above analysis, parties should be in a better position to choose one of the following options.

Option 1: Go It Alone. Parties may choose to go it alone because: coalition-building is no longer needed; the disadvantages outweigh the benefits; or the party is damaged and needs to focus on renewal/rebranding. (In some cases, parties may leave a coalition early or start to distinguish themselves more and more from coalition partners as elections approach.)

Option 2: Remain in Coalition. Alternatively, parties may choose to remain in coalition working with the same partners or a reconfigured partnership.

Even if the decision is to remain in coalition, parties should once again begin by developing an internal party strategy and following the other steps in the coalition-building cycle. Even if the coalition has the same partners and has proven relatively successful, it is worth reviewing the party's strategy and other aspects of the process. For instance, based on the accomplishments and challenges of previous coalition-building, and its impact on the party and its support, each party may want to renegotiate the allocation of government positions, candidate slots (for electoral alliances), structures for communication, policy platforms, etc.

Tips & Tools

Worksheet 9B: Evaluating the Coalition Experience and Drawing Lessons Learned

Purpose: To assess the coalition's accomplishments and challenges as well as the impact of coalition-building on individual parties so that remedial actions may be taken where needed.

For Use By: Party executives, in consultation with various intraparty groups (e.g., elected representatives, youth/women's wings, etc.)

When: Step 4: Working in Coalition; and Step 5: Drawing Lessons Learned

To inform future coalition-building efforts, parties should review and document the strengths and challenges at each step in the cycle, and identify any improvements that should be made for future coalition-building.

	What Worked Well?	What Were the Main Challenges?	What Improvements Should Be Made in the Future?
Step 1: Developing a Party Strategy *Consider the party's performance in the following areas:* • *The internal rules for forming coalitions (and how the party complied with external rules if relevant).* • *Establishing party strategy and negotiation teams.* • *Preparing negotiation strategies.* • *Inclusion of/ consultation with intraparty stakeholders (e.g., branches, affiliated organizations, etc.).*			

	What Worked Well?	What Were the Main Challenges?	What Improvements Should Be Made in the Future?
Step 2: Negotiating the Coalition *Consider the following:* • *Negotiation rules, structure and logistics.* • *Negotiation outcomes.* • *Consultations with party structures during the negotiations.*			
Step 3: Getting Started *Consider the following:* • *Structure, content and level of detail of the agreement document.* • *Securing formal party approval for the deal.* • *Communicating the deal to party supporters and the broader public.*			
Step 4: Implementation *Consider the effectiveness of the following:* • *Formal and informal communication (among coalition partners, between the party and its support base, and with the broader public).* • *Coalition dispute resolution mechanisms.* • *Formal and informal communication, and consultation within the party and its structures, including the national executive.*			

Case Studies

Chile

How the Chilean Coalition Accomplished the Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy and Governed for 20 Years.

Sergio Bitar, former minister, Chile

Many times, when a democratic coalition defeats an authoritarian regime and starts governing it faces major political and economic challenges. It becomes more difficult for the coalition to maintain the cohesion necessary to achieve democratic reforms. Often initial agreements between the parties fail and democratic forces split. Chile's Coalition of Parties for Democracy (*Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*, Concertación) has been relatively unique in avoiding these consequences. Initially coming together to campaign against the extension of Pinochet's rule in a 1988 referendum, the coalition went on to win every election and govern from 1990-2010. In this article, Sergio Bitar, describes how the coalition came about and shares some of its lessons learned. Among other things, he highlights how Concertación:

- Drafted consensus policies on economic and social issues prior to each election;
- Developed dialogue that enhanced trust at various levels of the coalition and with social movements;
- Recognized the need to remain united, given the opposition it faced in implementing democratic reforms;
- Ensured close coordination among government and party leaders; and
- Benefited from responsible economic policies, favorable economic conditions and international recognition.

Sergio Bitar is the director of the Global Trends Initiative at the Inter-American Dialogue and president of Foundation for Democracy (Fundación por la Democracia), Chile. Most recently, he served as minister

of public works under President Michelle Bachelet in Chile. Before that he served as minister of education, minister of mining, as a senator and as president of the Party for Democracy (Partido por la Democracia, PPD) on three occasions. Bitar continues to develop proposals for the future of Chile. Bitar founded the Latin American Center for International Economics and Politics (CLEPI), where he served as president from 1987-1993. He is president of the Chilean Council for Prospective and Strategy, the Nitrate Museum Corporation (Corporación Museo del Salitre), and is vice president of Citizen Peace Foundation (Fundación Paz Ciudadana). He edited with Abraham Lowenthal the book Democratic Transitions. Conversation with World Leaders, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.

The defeat of General Pinochet in the plebiscite of 1988 and the subsequent success of four governments of the same coalition, the Coalition of Parties for Democracy (1990-2010), was the result of a prolonged period of substantive convergence of political and social forces, from 1975-1989.

At the time of the military overthrow of the Popular Unity (*Unidad Popular*, UP) government of President Salvador Allende in 1973, the political parties of the center (Christian Democratic) and the left (Socialist and Communist) were profoundly divided. And the same can be said for the social sectors they represented.

Nevertheless, in 1975, in the midst of intense repression and destruction of democratic institutions by the Pinochet dictatorship, the democratic political forces began to coordinate their activities, with important support from international organizations. Socialist leaders distanced themselves from experiments of real socialism in the Socialist bloc countries and came closer to social democratic experiences, being carried out by European parties.

Simultaneously, segments of the Christian Democratic Party (*Partido Demócrata Cristiano*, PDC) opposed to the dictatorship realized that they would be incapable of defeating it by themselves. The PDC leaders, who had opposed the UP but were open to change, began the first conversations with moderate leaders of the UP from their exile locations in Europe, Latin America and the United States.

Multiple political working groups formed inside Chile. The first was the Constitutional Group of 24, created in 1979 to write a democratic constitution in counter-position to the document imposed by Pinochet in 1980. One of the leaders of that effort was Patricio Aylwin, who would become the first president in democracy.

In 1982, parties of the center and noncommunist left created the Democratic Alliance (*Alianza Democrática*). Around the same period, copper workers rose up in a strike to demand higher wages and large public protest rallies took place for the first time. In 1985, the Archbishop of Santiago convened meetings to explore a broad National Accord to achieve a political path out of dictatorship, and these talks included sectors of the moderate right.

In 1986, the Civic Assembly brought together new organizations of professionals, unions, and women's and students' movements. And in 1987, in anticipation of a new plebiscite called by the military government, democratic leaders created the Committee for Free Elections. The following year, 1988, the Alianza Democrática was reorganized into the Concertación for the "NO", to campaign against Pinochet's proposal to extend his rule another eight years. The campaign included training citizens to staff polling places, and having opposition leaders travel up and down the country. The Concertación requested international support to bring in outside election observers and to organize a parallel vote-counting operation.

It was a period of tremendous energy within the process of substantive convergence. Research centers linked to the democratic parties and supported by international organizations studied the country's problems and issues, and prepared consensus policy platforms. Exiles returned in great numbers and a robust interior-exterior symbiosis began to produce a common strategy.

The prolonged and intense process allowed for the development of trust at the personal, party and policy level. A consensus emerged: nobody could do this alone; the effort required a broad coalition of social and political forces. Agreements were reached to promote democracy, human rights and economic growth with equity.

The Concertación triumphed in the 1988 plebiscite and turned to the upcoming presidential and parliamentary election in 1989. The movement renamed itself the "Concertacion de Partidos por la Democracia". Initially comprising 17 political entities, the Concertación evolved rapidly into four major parties, essentially the PDC, the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista de Chile*, PS), the PPD and the Radical Party (*Partido Radical*). The coalition – joining previous adversaries of the center and left, all of which had undergone significant political evolution – became the bedrock of a governing coalition that was to hold together for two decades and become the longest-lasting in the Western Hemisphere.

This was an amazing convergence: it required change and openness by each group, and the result was not just a coalition to win an election but a coalition to actually govern the country.

What explains the durability of this coalition?

The parties and the Chilean people found strong motivation to remain united from the destruction of the democratic institutions and the suffering and misery brought about by the dictatorship's repression and violation of human rights. In addition, the presence of Pinochet as commander in chief of the armed forces for the first eight years of democratic governance (1990-1998) required the coalition to remain united.

Nevertheless, controversies and policy disagreements were inevitable. To overcome them, the parties formulated governing programs before each election, and the elected president was given authority above the level of the parties to form his/her government. Also, political parties created a primary system to select the presidential candidate of the coalition. Another unifying factor was the unique

"binomial" electoral system, a Pinochet creation. The system led to two large political blocs, equalizing the number of elected members of Congress of the largest coalition (the Concertación) with the losing coalition (rightist opposition), and punishing any group that excluded itself from them.

Parliamentary elections were scheduled to coincide with the presidential election. The Constitution did not (and does not) allow for an immediate re-election of the President. These rules obliged each president to focus on carrying out his/her program and then to support the next coalition presidential candidate in order to pursue pending and new reforms.

Competent economic management and rapid growth together with solid social policies were also factors promoting unity. Poverty declined from 38 percent to 12 percent and per capita income doubled.

Between 1990 and 2010, the coalition was able to win four presidential, six parliamentary and five municipal elections, forming effective governments under presidents Patricio Aylwin, Eduardo Frei, Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet. Notwithstanding its success, the coalition's unity began to fray as it entered its second decade in power. Democracy had been consolidated, Pinochet died (in 2006) and strong economic and social expectations emerged, which were more difficult to manage than the return to democracy.

The parties began to diverge in their approach to these aspirations for greater equality and participation of the expanding middle-income sectors. Some members of Congress abandoned the Concertación; and in 2010 the coalition of rightist parties won the presidency and governed for four years.

The Concertación changed the course of history for Chile: it knew how to interpret the national culture and consolidated a political mind-set in favor of gradual reforms. In 2014, an expanded coalition, called the New Majority, returned to power for a four-year term, under the leadership of President Michelle Bachelet, with a reinvigorated government platform based on tax reform, education reform and a new constitution.

Norway

Norwegians Often Say That in a Debate, It Is the Strongest That Should Give.

Kjell Magne Bondevik, former prime minister, Norway

In Norway, coalition-building is often required to form government, compromise and consensus-building therefore plays a large role. In this article, Kjell Magne Bondevik discusses the importance of negotiation and compromise in every aspect of negotiating and working in a coalition government. Among other things, he highlights:

- Different approaches that Norwegian parties have used to reach the compromises required for coalition-building;
- The importance of investing sufficient time and effort in reaching agreement on coalition policies;
- How parties have struggled to keep their individual identity, while negotiating a coalition platform; and
- The importance of two-way communication, both within a coalition and between party leaders and their members during a coalition.

Kjell Magne Bondevik served as Norway's prime minister from 1997-2000 and from 2001-2005. In both cases, he was at the head of a coalition cabinet. He was a member of parliament from 1973-2005, and was the leader of his party – the Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti, KrF) for much of the 1980s and 1990s. Bondevik served as the U.N. Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the Horn of Africa in 2006-2007. During his career, Bondevik also held positions as minister of foreign affairs, minister of church and education, and state secretary at the office of the prime minister for the KrF. Currently, he is founder and president of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights. He holds the degree of Cand. Theol. and was ordained as a priest in the Lutheran Church of Norway in 1979.

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Coalition-building means compromise, to achieve a win-win for the member parties. While coalition-building allows parties to join forces with partners to increase their political influence and perhaps even form a government, it also requires a certain amount of compromise on the part of each of the member parties. This may involve setting aside or diluting party policy positions. In addition, each member of the coalition may struggle to maintain its own policy identity/profile while working in

coalition. This may have implications for how policies are evaluated by the party and the public broadly.

In Norway it is common to establish a coalition before a popular election. This coalition will agree on joint policy positions, making statements based on the joint coalition platform. More-sensitive issues are dealt with separately and are discussed exclusively from a particular party view. These issues are normally dealt with after the election, during the government negotiations. It is in the two to three weeks following an election that major compromises are made. In 1997, the coalition included the KrF, the Center Party (*Senterpartiet)* and the Liberal Party (*Venstre*), who agreed on a joint platform before the election. Negotiations on sensitive issues were left until after the election and they were prioritized based on the election results: the party with the most votes had priority in the negotiations.

Even though Norwegians generally create a coalition prior to the election it is also common to agree on coalitions after the election with the aim of seeking a majority to govern jointly. In 2001, the KrF, Senterpartiet and Venstre coalition sought the mandate of the people to govern but did not receive the votes needed for its joint mandate. The KrF, the Conservative Party (*Høyre*) and Venstre managed to create a coalition after the election. As the coalition was formed after the election, all issues – sensitive and non-sensitive – were negotiated after the polls. In this coalition, the issues related to finance were the road blocks. Challenges arose due to a large difference between the parties in the coalition and the fact that issues had not been negotiated pre-election.

Policy compromises are usually reached through one of two approaches: midway or block negotiations.

Under the "midway" approach, parties with different stands on a sensitive issue meet each other halfway. One example of a "midway" negotiation was the taxation compromise reached between the coalition government parties in 2001. The Conservative Party wanted a 40 million Norwegian krone (NOK) tax reduction, while the Liberal Party supported cuts of 20 million NOK. The KrF supported about 10 million NOK reductions. The negotiation resulted in a compromise on 20 million NOK in tax reductions to be implemented during the coming four governing years.

Alternatively, issues of importance to the parties are paired or bundled in groups, and the parties negotiate block by block. As a result of this approach, each party compromises on some issues but sees the coalition accept its policies on other issues (often in the areas where the party has a specific interest that its support base values the most). Norwegian parties have found that block negotiation is often more effective and gives greater satisfaction to parties and voters: each party feels it has won a great victory as their main issue is fully accepted by the coalition and included in the government's policy. In 2001, the KrF was in strong support of an increased international development aid budget and proposed that 1 percent of the gross national product be set aside for it. Venstre focused great attention on transparency in public institutions and Høyre wanted to create a more conducive environment for domestic businesses. All three parties got their key issues agreed to in the negotiation and all three areas were implemented during the governing period. Given that the parties had started

further apart than the KrF/Senterpartiet/Venstre coalition, it was especially important to create a sense of win-win to keep the coalition strong and intact for governing.

Some coalitions host a wide variety of political parties, which stand rather far apart from each other politically but have decided to join hands in governing the country. In those cases, it is even more important to facilitate negotiations that allow each party to feel as though it has more to win being part of the coalition than standing on the sidelines. However, it is a fine balance for each party to decide if the coalition is worth all the sacrifices. In some cases, Norwegian political parties have reached a point where they decided to file a reservation, a so-called dissent. Such examples can be found on several occasions; in 1983 the issue of abortion created such split in government that the KrF decided to file a dissent, as the majority in the coalition supported legislation to allow for free abortion. This led to a vote in parliament following the line of the majority and minority parties in government.

Another example can be found in 2001, with the European Union's Patent Directive. This was an attempt to harmonize the laws of member states regarding whether developments in biotechnology (including living matter like plant varieties and human genes) can be patented. (Although Norway is not a member state, it has a variety of agreements with the European Union through its membership in the European Economic Area [EEA].) The directive sparked significant debate across Europe as various groups raised concerns about ethical issues involved in patenting living matter. While Høyre supported the EU directive, Venstre and the KrF opposed it. The issue was brought to vote in parliament, and the side supporting the implementation of the Patent Directive secured a majority. Such splits within a government are not common, and all coalition governments try to keep them to a minimum as they create a negative image for the coalition government. However, it is important to have a venue to discuss disagreements because it is important for democratic values to be strongly debated in a transparent manner. This often leads to internal party discussions where core issues are debated. This process also helps each party to confirm whether the coalition is still best for their party and if they should stay or leave the coalition government.

In 2001, disagreements caused a deadlock and suspension of the government negotiations between Høyre, the KrF and Venstre. The suspension occurred over differences on the distribution of ministerial posts, district policy and taxation. But at the request of Høyre, negotiations eventually resumed. This is one example of the balancing act that the parties need to perform both in the negotiations leading up to the coalition as well as throughout the period when they are working in a coalition. To maintain party identity, the negotiations were suspended. However, this also serves as a good example of how the process can be resumed: as the internal negotiations continue, parties might be able to anchor "a change" in their standpoint internally so that they can move forward with coalition-building.

In addition, Norwegian policymakers also have the option of using hearings where specialists are consulted. This is common when issues of national importance are proposed by the government. The experts' suggestions might go against the government's opinion, but the parties will try to find ways of including this in their own policy. These policy changes can sometimes be reached through compromises, but in certain areas where the party identity cannot be conceded, the party will need

to reflect on its future role within a coalition.

These examples clearly show **the importance of allowing enough time and putting in a lot of effort to develop a joint platform for the coalition.** All parties should take part in creating the platform and all parties should contribute by outlining their position. This is work that requires communication, understanding for each other's agenda and respect for the negotiation process. But even more importantly, the parties need to have trust: trust in the process and trust that the coalition will generate more opportunities to influence politics than if the parties were not part of the coalition.

Although political parties have an obligation to consider citizen and member feedback when developing policies, there may be times when that feedback is difficult to act upon. Similarly, there may be times when political parties have to push forward unpopular but much-needed policies. In 2005, the Norwegian coalition made up of the Left Socialist Party (*Sosialistisk Venstreparti*, SV), the Senterpartiet and the Labor Party (*Arbeiderpartiet*) faced a large split over NATO membership and the EEA agreement. The SV was against both agreements, the Senterpartiet opposed the EU agreement and the Arbeiderpartiet was in favor of both. There was a clear majority in parliament for both agreements, which the Senterpartiet and the SV had accepted.

Norwegians often say that in a debate, it is the strongest that should give, a phrase that has often helped to further the political agenda and consensus-building.

When small parties operate in a coalition there are gains to be made. In 1997, for example, one of the KrF's core issues was the "child care allowance," where all people with children received an allowance whether they decided to use the state-subsidized kindergarten facilities or other options. The two coalition partners accepted the KrF's proposal and the government achieved an agreement. Best practices and lessons learned from Norway show that coalitions help small parties gain ground through negotiation.

With regard to political accountability in Norway, there are formalized reporting mechanisms. In political reports, the prime minister and the coalition's party leaders report what they have (or have not) achieved according to what they initially set out to do, based on their platform. All the reports are transparent and party members and members of the media attend party congresses. Public scrutiny is obvious during party congresses and when the government reports on accounts and accomplishments. The voters are free to publicly criticize the government or individual parties, and their vote in the next election is the ultimate proof of whether the political parties' policies and ideas are supported by the people.

Finally, some **general advice and recommendations to parties in emerging democracies**:

1. The party platform/policymaking process must include members, to help the party to push its agenda forward and stimulate participation, which is needed for democratic development.
2. The parties must respect and accept different opinions, to work against discrimination.
3. Ruling coalitions must interact with, talk and listen to the opposition.

Ireland

Coalition Experience in Ireland…What Works?

John Bruton, former prime minister, Ireland

Coalition governments are common in Ireland. In this article, former Prime Minister John Bruton, who served in four different coalition governments, outlines lessons learned from his experiences:

- Having a parliamentary majority is a big help;
- A third party in government can mitigate tensions; and
- The dynamics of coalitions will vary depending on: how they came about, the relative size of parties' representation, economic circumstances, systems for managing differences and understanding a smaller party's difficult role.

Among other things, he highlights the role that political advisors in each ministry played in helping to manage coalition relations and how regular meetings among ministers from his party proved helpful in pre-emptively addressing any issues that could cause friction with other coalition members.

John Bruton is a former Irish prime minister (Taoiseach). He was first elected to the Irish Parliament (Dáil Éireann) in 1969 as a member of the Fine Gael Party, becoming party leader in 1990 and leading it into government in 1994. He served as Ireland's minister for finance (1981-1982 and 1986-1987); minister for industry & energy (1982-1983); minister for trade, commerce & tourism (1983-1986); and parliamentary secretary (junior minister, 1973-1977). He has served as the European Union ambassador to the United States. Currently, Bruton is chairman of IFSC Ireland, a private-sector body set up to develop the financial services industry in Ireland. He is a member of the board of Ingersoll Rand PLC, and of Montpelier Re PLC. He is also a member of the board of the Centre for European Policy Studies, a distinguished fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations in Washington, D.C. and a visiting fellow at the European Institute in the London School of Economics.

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In this article I would like to draw on my personal experience of working in coalition governments in Ireland to put forward some ideas that may be useful in other countries.

But first it is necessary to say a word about the party political landscape in Ireland during the period of my career, 1969-2004.

During this time, there were five major parties in Irish politics, all of whom had some involvement in coalition governments at different times.

These were the parties, in declining order of size:

Fianna Fáil (a traditional nationalist party, which until 1989 had refused, on principle, to take part in coalitions);

- Fine Gael (a centrist party in the European Christian Democrat tradition);
- the Labour Party (a Social Democrat party with trade union links);
- the Democratic Left (a socialist party since merged with the Labour Party); and
- the Progressive Democrat party (a party that espoused liberal economics, which has since been dissolved).

I served in four different coalition governments: 1973-1977, 1981-1982, 1983-1987 and 1994-1997. Also during this period, Ireland had a Fianna Fáil/Labour coalition (1993-1994) and Fianna Fáil/ Progressive Democrat coalitions (1989-1992 and 1997-2002). Fine Gael and Labour participated together in coalitions in the 1940s and 1950s.

I was a junior minister in the 1973-1977 coalition government involving Fine Gael and Labour, a full cabinet minister in the second and third (1981-1982), and taoiseach in the fourth (1994-1997).

All the coalitions in which I served involved my party, Fine Gael, as the largest party, and the Irish Labour party as the second largest. A third party, the Democratic Left, was also in the 1994-1997 government.

I will headline below the lessons I have derived from my experience.

Having a parliamentary majority is a big help!

The parties in the 1981-1982 government did not make up a majority in the Dáil, hence the government's short life.

While it did obtain a majority vote for an emergency budget shortly after taking office in 1981, it could not persuade a majority to vote for its more-comprehensive budgetary proposals in 1982. The result was a general election, which the parties lost. They were succeeded by a minority Fianna Fáil government, which introduced a budget almost identical to the one they had voted against to bring down the previous coalition.

Internal negotiations between coalition parties themselves tend to be difficult enough. Having to negotiate with individual deputies or parties outside the government to ensure a majority to pass individual measures is an added complication.

All the other coalitions (besides 1981-1982) had working majorities for all business on which the parties could agree, but the 1983-1987 coalition broke up because the parties could not agree on a policy for the 1987 budget.

A Third Party in Government Can Mitigate Tensions

The 1994-1997 coalition of three parties, which I led as taoiseach, was the only three-party government in Irish history and the only one to be formed in the middle of a parliamentary term without a general election.

A realignment of parties to form that new government without a General Election was made possible through by-election victories for parties in opposition earlier in the parliamentary term. It was also necessitated by a breakdown in trust between the Labour Party and Fianna Fáil, with whom Labour had formed a coalition after the 1992 General Election.

My personal opinion is that the dynamics of a three-party coalition are easier to manage than that of a two-party coalition. This is because, if there is a difference between two of the parties, the third can often be the catalyst for compromise. The presence of three parties in the coalition can avoid binary conflicts on a given issue, where one of the two parties involved has to lose face.

The Dynamics of Coalitions Will Vary Depending…

On How They Came About

The parties in the 1973-1977 and 1994-1997 governments remained united and faced the general elections of 1977 and 1997 respectively, seeking re-election on a joint program. This is a testament to good relations between the coalition parties. In the other cases, the outgoing coalition parties contested the elections separately. To date, however, no coalition government of the same parties has been re-elected.

The internal dynamic of each of the four coalitions in which I was involved was different. The personalities involved were different, and personality traits are very important in politics.

But the circumstances of their election, and the relativity in size of the parties and economic conditions, also made a big difference.

A coalition that had already agreed on a joint program before the election from which it emerged, as was the case with the 1973-1977 coalition, probably has a better chance of staying together for its full term and seeking subsequent re-election on a joint program, than has a coalition that is not negotiated and formed until after the election from which it emerged. This is so for the following reason: if parties have fought an election on different and competing programs – and subsequently have to negotiate a joint program involving the inevitable sacrifice of points on which they had fought the election – this will make the subsequent life of the government more difficult. Such parties are more likely to be accused of "broken promises." But agreeing on a joint program before an election, in which coalition parties will still be competing for votes with one another, is not easy either.

On the Relative Size of Parties' Representation

The 1973-1977 Fine Gael/Labour government was first elected in 1973 on the basis of an agreed-upon platform, which encouraged electoral cooperation between them and maximized their seats. The leaders of the two parties had experienced the frustration of opposition, having served in parliament for a long time, mostly out of power, and were personally determined to hold the government together, notwithstanding the substantial differences in interest between their support bases. Labour had a strong influence on the taxation policies of this government, which reflected the number of seats it had.

In the parliaments of 1981-1982 and 1983-1987, the Fine Gael Party was numerically stronger relative to Labour than in 1973-1977, and this had to be reflected in the content of the government's economic policy. Economic conditions were difficult because of international circumstances, and framing fiscal policy was thus a hard task. Labour influence was exercised to resist reductions in public spending, which inevitably increased the overall tax burden.

On Economic Circumstances

The three-party coalition of 1994-1997 served in more benign economic times.

Economic growth accelerated rapidly during the term of office of the government, which made the framing of fiscal policy easier than it had been in the 1980s.

While Fine Gael was the bigger party, Labour had more parliamentary strength than it had had in the 1980s, and this additional strength was reflected in the fact that Labour, although still the smaller party, held the finance ministry, a post that the bigger party had always held in previous coalitions. This ensured that there was a better sharing of responsibility for fiscal policy between the parties than may have been the case before. This reduced tension. The Democratic Left also played a key role in facilitating compromise, as indicated earlier.

On Systems for Managing Inevitable Differences

The 1994-1997 government also benefited from having a more structured system for resolving policy differences between parties and ministries than had been the case in earlier coalitions.

Ministers from all three parties each had two advisors who were political appointees.

One was a "Program Manager," whose job it was to work with his/her own minister and the other program managers to ensure that the agreed-upon program of the three parties was implemented across government.

The other appointee was a conventional political advisor who looked after his/her minister's political interests, relations with his party, etc.

In my view, the program manager system was particularly effective in ironing out technical disputes on politically sensitive issues that had absorbed too much time and emotional energy at cabinet meetings of previous coalitions.

As a general rule, as taoiseach, I did not take an issue to cabinet unless differences had first been ironed out or simplified by the program managers, or in discussion between the three party leaders.

On Understanding a Smaller Party's Difficult Role

The relationship between a bigger and a smaller party in a coalition is sensitive because experience in Ireland has been that the smaller party tends to get more of the blame, and the bigger party more of the credit, for what the coalition does in government. Thus the smaller party runs the risk of doing relatively less well in the subsequent election.

Dealing with this problem is a primary responsibility of the leader of the bigger party, the taoiseach of the day. To this end, in 1994-1997, I minimized, to some extent, my own media appearances to allow attention to be taken by other ministers, including Labour ministers.

I also arranged for regular separate meetings of Fine Gael ministers where we discussed issues that might be coming up well ahead of time, with a view to identifying ways to manage any that might otherwise cause friction between the parties at the cabinet table.

Argument at cabinet should be a last resort!

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