

① RESEARCH QUESTION

What Happens to Pledges After the Election? Which Factors Explain the Fulfilment of Pledges?

The theoretical basis is the **mandate theory**. According to this theory, parties campaign for votes by presenting political programmes. If parties are successful in the election and not only enter parliament but also go on to form part of the government, they possess political power and are in a position to implement their programmes. Parties that hold an absolute majority in parliament and govern alone are generally able to shape policy independently. In contrast, parties that hold less than 50 per cent of the seats and form part of a coalition government must first convince their coalition partners in order to implement their programmes.

The validity of the mandate theory – and thus the link between political programmes and policymaking – is a **key feature of a functioning democracy**.

② DEFINITION PLEDGE

Within the scope of this research, a pledge is defined as a **concrete demand made by a party for the implementation of a specific measure or the achievement of a particular goal**. It is important to note that only those demands that are clearly and specifically formulated by the parties can be identified as pledges. This means that it must already be clear from the election manifestos under which conditions the pledge can later be considered fulfilled.



③ QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

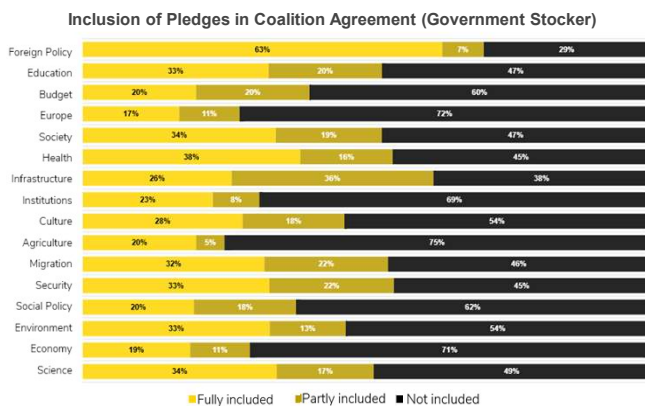
The starting point was the **election manifestos of parties that later entered government**. In a first step of analysis, all pledges – as defined – are identified using quantitative content analysis. Researchers carefully read the manifestos and record all concrete demands. Parts of the manifestos are coded independently by two individuals in order to minimise the risk of misinterpretation. In a second step, it is examined whether the pledges were included in the coalition agreement and whether they were implemented.



Sources from left to right:
- Manifesto FPO 2017
- Manifesto ÖVP 2024
- Manifesto SPÖ 2024
- Manifesto NEOS 2024
- Manifesto GRÜNE 2019

④ INCLUSION IN COALITION AGREEMENT

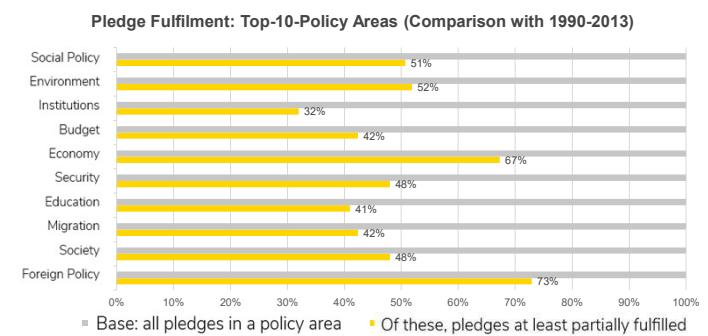
The Politikmonitor shows that **45% of the pledges made by the ÖVP, SPÖ and NEOS were included in the coalition agreement** of the Stocker federal government (27% were fully included). In the coalition governments analysed so far, an average of 51% of all pledges made by governing parties were at least partially included in the coalition agreement.



Reading example: Figures in per cent. N = 1,683 objectively testable pledges. Of all concrete pledges in the election manifestos of the governing parties of the Stocker government in the area of foreign policy, 63% were fully included in the coalition agreement.

⑤ FULFILLMENT DURING LEGISLATIVE PERIOD

- The review of the implementation of election promises from the 2024 National Council election campaign begins on the 100th day in office of the Stocker government.
- On average, previous research has shown that 55% of all election promises made by governing parties were at least partially fulfilled.
- Factors that increase the likelihood of implementation include: the status quo, exclusive national competence, economic growth, and full legislative periods as key determinants in policymaking.



Reading example: Figures in per cent. N = 1,996 objectively testable pledges. Of all specific election promises in the election manifestos of governing parties (1990–2013) in the social policy sector, 51% were at least partially implemented during the legislative period following the election.

SOURCES

Praprotnik, Katrin & Laurenz Ennsner-Jedenastik. 2023. Ambiguity and vagueness in party competition. Party Politics 30(6): 1152-1160. Praprotnik, Katrin. 2017b. Parteien und ihre Wahlversprechen. Einblicke in die Politikgestaltung in Österreich. Wiesbaden: Springer Verlag.
 Royed, Terry J. (1996). Testing the Mandate Model in Britain and the United States: Evidence from the Reagan and Thatcher Eras, in: British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 26(1), 45-80.
 Dolzeal, Martin, Ennsner-Jedenastik, Laurenz, Müller, Wolfgang C., & Winkler, Anna-Katharina (2016). Analyzing manifestos in their electoral context a new approach applied to Austria, 2002–2008. Political Science Research and Methods, 4(3), 641-650.

The comparative figures on the implementation of election promises in Austria (6 legislative periods between 1990 and 2013) were collected as part of the AUTNES project (Dolzeal et al. 2016, University of Vienna).