

Who Likes Rebels? Representation and the Electoral Success of Parliamentary Mavericks

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Abstract

Why do voters express support for rebellious politicians? Dissent could impede parties from attaining their goals and perhaps even undermine a system that these same voters otherwise support? We implement a conjoint survey experiment on a nationally representative sample of the U.K. voting population to uncover the logic behind voter support for rebellious politicians. The survey elicits voters' perceptions of politicians who take on a series of attributes, one of which is acting a rebel with respect to their party on votes in parliament. The study reveals the value of rebellion to sitting Members of Parliament, and helps to shed light on the conditions under which being a rebel is electorally advantageous. The abundance of rebellious rhetoric during electoral campaigns, as well as on the parliamentary floor, makes these questions of empirical and normative importance. We find support for the notion that voters express a preference for rebellious MPs, but it is contingent upon context. Moreover, we find that voters do not seem to connect rebellious activity to a violation of a norm to support the party and voters to not punish rebel activity that runs counter to the preferences of the the broader public or the MP's constituency.

Keywords: Legislative behavior, Voting behavior, Party politics, Parliamentary mavericks

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1 Introduction

Voters often seem thrilled by maverick politicians who cast themselves as outsiders. They appear to reward politicians for anti-party or even anti-system rhetoric and actions. Knowing this, politicians may portray themselves as rebels for electoral gain. Indeed, it is relatively common for politicians to buck the party line in political systems that allow for the cultivation of a “personal vote” such as the US and the UK. Political science research has offered evidence that rebellious behaviour by parliamentarians can lead to a bump in the polls.

But why do voters seem drawn to candidates for political office who rebel against their parties? This study elicits voters’ perceptions of politicians portraying themselves as rebels with respect to their party and the public. By probing voters’ attitudes about different types of MPs, we seek to understand whether rebellion is beneficial for MPs, and, more importantly, if so, why. The study uncovers the value of rebellion to sitting MPs and elicits the conditions under which it is electorally advantageous or detrimental. The abundance of rebel rhetoric during electoral campaigns, on the parliamentary floor, as well as in debates about the legitimacy of the current establishment make these questions of empirical and normative importance.

We parse out the effects of different factors that may make rebels appealing to voters by employing a conjoint-experimental design embedded in an online survey on a nationally representative sample of the UK population. Our study explicitly considers the party’s reaction to rebels, the target of rebellion (e.g. against party, district opinion, or public opinion), while also triggering respondents’ considerations of a norm that stipulates MPs usually follow party discipline. Our methodology is well suited to understand how citizens make complex multi-dimensional choices such as electoral decisions (Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto, 2014). The design allows us to determine when such rebellious strategies are most effective and whether they undermine democratic representation in the eyes of the electorate. Survey respondents choose between two hypothetical candidates who possess a range of characteristics (e.g. whether they vote against their party and the length of their tenure in parliament). The survey instrument randomly assigns which characteristics participants see, the exact realization of these characteristics, and which political issue is the object of rebellious activity.

This experiment sheds new light on democratic representation by elucidating how voters perceive, reward, and punish MPs’ individual decisions to support or rebel from their party and their voters. It adds both to the political science literature on representation, parties,

and legislatures, as well as to the psychology literature on groups, conformity, and collective decision-making. We find that voters do reward rebellious behavior, but their support for rebels is contingent on other factors in a way that support for MPs who engage in constituency service is not. We find no robust evidence that a preference for rebellion is driven by behavior of MPs that is congruent with public or district opinion or that voters' rejection of rebels is conditional on whether voters are primed to consider party discipline.

2 Theory and hypotheses

Elected politicians in representative democracies often rebel against (or at least portray themselves as having rebelled against) their own party, their own government, or indeed the whole political class. Recent electoral campaigns in many of the world's democracies have featured calls to elect someone who stands up to the "elites" and brings the government back to the "people." While populist parties are frequent advocates of this rebellious call, many mainstream politicians defect from their party claiming that they are "fighters for the people," or at least for the constituents who elected them. And even within niche, populist parties certain factions justify their defections from the party line by claiming a superior understanding of the will of the people for themselves.

Representatives often behave as parliamentary mavericks and dissent from the positions taken by their party leadership, sometimes in quite provocative ways. In the United Kingdom, Philip Hollobone, a Conservative Party MP went so far as to vote against his own party's 2013 Queen's Speech, the annual statement of the government's policy agenda. It was the first rebellion by government MPs against their own agenda since 1946. Hollobone, along with three other Conservatives, instead put forward an "Alternative Queen's Speech" outlining policies such as bringing back the death penalty, privatizing the BBC, and banning the Burka. In Germany, in 2011 two members of the governing coalition made unprecedented speeches denouncing the Euro bailout plans of their own CDU-led government. They prominently voiced their dissent in the Bundestag, provoking negative reactions from party leaders across the spectrum for fear that other MPs would also try to rebel against their parties in parliament (Proksch and Slapin, 2015).

In some instances, rebellion on parliamentary votes can lead to policy defeats on important issues. The UK government suffered such a defeat in December 2017 over whether to give the

UK House of Commons a vote on the final Brexit deal. In other instances, rebellious behavior can feature rhetorically in electoral campaigns, such as when German politicians from the CSU portrayed themselves as dissenting from their CDU co-partisans during the 2017 German election campaign on the issue of immigration. And in the aftermath of the Italian elections in 2013, all main Italian parties publicly dealt with dissenting rebels, leading to several expulsions of party members, party switching, and party fission. In short, the consequences of rebellion are real.

An increasing number of studies explores rebellion. They often focus on legislative activity and examine the type of MP who is likely to deviate from the party line and the conditions under which they do so (e.g. Benedetto and Hix (2007); Kam (2009); Ceron (2015); Proksch and Slapin (2015); Proksch, Lowe and Soroka (2018); Bäck and Debus (2017)). In the context of the UK, these studies tend to find that rebels are ideological extremists in the governing party who have little chance of serving on the party's frontbench. Literature on the US Congress suggests that Members who deviate more often from their party can parlay rebellion into electoral support (Carson et al., 2010), and studies of Westminster systems suggest that casting votes against one's party can lead to greater name recognition and higher approval ratings (Kam, 2009). Research in this vein generally assumes that voters like rebellious activity, although it tends not to address the reasons why. Other literature has examined public support for populism and anti-system rhetoric (e.g. De Vries and Edwards (2009); Barr (2009)), but has not generally connected the findings to the literature on political rebellion.

Survey research using experimental methods provides some empirical backing for the notion that voters like rebels. Using evidence from the UK, researchers find that citizens do indeed express support for politicians who engage in rebellious behavior compared with those who toe the party (Campbell et al., 2016). But this literature still does not address the underlying motivations why citizens support rebellious politicians or the implications of rebellious activity for democratic representation. A small number of works in political science addresses rebellion in proportional electoral systems, which tend to be more party- than candidate-centered (Vivyan and Wagner, 2018).

Within the UK's candidate-centered Westminster system, we explore rationales why rebellious activity of MPs may be electorally advantageous but also whether that activity may undermine voters' sense of representation within the political system. In line with previous literature, we first evaluate the claim that

Hypothesis 1 *voters prefer MPs who dissent against their party leadership*

Whichever motivations drives support for rebels, to win elections and govern effectively, a significant body literature suggests that presenting a coherent party message helps at election time by cueing voters into the party “brand” (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1992; Cox and McCubbins, 2005). This unified message is particularly important in party-centered electoral systems (Proksch and Slapin, 2015), where voters are unwilling to support parties that they consider too divided or incoherent (Greene and Haber, 2015). This literature would suggest that parties ought to do their utmost to prevent rebellion. However, others have suggested that parties can pick up votes through obfuscation, trying to be all things to all voters (Sommer-Topcu, 2015).

It is therefore unclear under which conditions rebellion is advantageous to a politician, to the party, and to parliamentary democracy more generally. Short-term gains for individual rebels may be juxtaposed with long-term erosion of parties’ ability to govern and ultimately the ability of democratic institutions to function. The motivations for voters to support (or reject) rebels could, thus, vary substantially. They could perceive rebels as being ideologically closer to them; they could value an “independent spirit” no matter the policy implications; they could punish politicians who violate group norms; or they could value actions that undermine a system that they view as flawed. The current literature does not examine these underlying motivations, even though they have significant consequences for the functioning of democracy and representation.

The literature in psychology provides us with a general discussion of how one may view rebels, beyond the political realm, where early research argued that conformity has been seen as problematic for a group’s success (Nemeth, 1995) – while later work sees it as an asset (Jetten and Hornsey, 2010). Why should being a rebel work to the benefit of the group (which is the party/district/public in our study)? Nemeth (1995) argues that seeing somebody who is dissenting with the majority triggers divergent thinking of the kind: how can they be so sure and yet so wrong. Minority opinions are said to stimulate a search of information on all sides of the issue (Nemeth and Rogers, 1996) and change onlookers’ own level of conformity (Nemeth and Chiles, 1988). We test whether

Hypothesis 2 *voters value rebels as MPs who push diverging ideas for the benefit of the party and not just help the party leadership to achieve its goals. This is a preference for independent MPs.*

Perceiving a politician as a dissenter alerts voters’ judgment with respect to violations of norms. Besides the valuation of being a team player, as general societal norm, normative

democratic principals require MPs to be responsive to what the public desires beyond petty partisan scramble. If this norm of responsiveness is violated, the legitimacy of the system of democratic representation is under threat. We explore whether

Hypothesis 3 *voters appreciate rebellious activity if it suits public or constituent opinion but reject it when it does not.*

In other words, we evaluate whether voters value a constituency-minded MP over a MP who is a party soldier.

We further will also evaluate existing claims in the literature about the moderating effect of various variables on voters' preference for a rebellious MP: (1) Whether the MP was pivotal in the legislative vote case presented to respondents; (2) Whether the MP deviates in his/her position towards the center or the extreme; and, (3) Whether the MP's vote was congruent or opposed to UKIPs' announced preference

To examine the effect of candidates' attributes such as rebellious activity on vote choice, we estimate the relative importance of one attribute assigned to the candidates over others. Specifically, following Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014), we estimate the Average Marginal Component Effect (AMCE). Testing H1, we compare the AMCE of rebellious activity on vote preference and feeling thermometer scores when public opinion aligns with the MP's vote to when it does not. Similarly, to assess H2, we compare the AMCE of rebellious activity on vote preference and feeling thermometer scores when the opinion of MP's constituent aligns with the MP's vote to when it does not. Finally, we compute the difference in AMCE of rebellious activity on outcome measures in baseline vs party discipline treatment to evaluate H3.

The comparison between the issue treatments serves as robustness check.

3 Methodology

3.1 Experimental design

We embed a paired conjoint experiment with an online survey of the UK electorate. The survey experiments allows us to study the reaction of voters to a variety of characteristics of rebellious behavior we are able to control and vary randomly (see Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014); Hainmueller, Hangartner and Yamamoto (2015)). While rebellious behavior in the real world occurs only occasionally, in forms that cannot be controlled by the researcher, and with

potentially recurring characteristics, we are able to elicit reactions of voters to a wide variety of the context in which rebellious behaviors occurs and to rebelling of different nature. We are therefore able to also draw inferences about certain types of rebellion that rarely occur in the real world and that make it easier to understand the effects of different characteristics of rebellion. For instance, is it more important for voters' reactions whether a rebel has changed a voting result with her rebellion or whether the rebel acts against public opinion in dissenting from the position of the party leadership. In reality, these two characteristics will often be correlated - a rebel may only vote against public opinion when his or her action do not have consequences. This makes it hard to ascertain which characteristic is more important for voters' reactions. In our survey experiments, we can create (hypothetical) situations in which the pivotality of the rebel is high but the rebel is reported to have voted against public opinion. This makes is possible to better identify the causal effect of certain characteristics of rebellious behavior.

Specifically, we present respondents with short vignettes of an instance of (non-)rebellious behavior by an MP when voting on a bill in parliament. Each respondent sees six vignettes in which they are asked to make a choice. The different vignettes randomly vary on a number of attributes that we deem influential for voters' reactions to rebellious behavior. After each vignette, we ask respondents about outcomes of interest.

Each vignette describes the hypothetical voting behavior of an MP on a bill in parliament. This behavior is characterized by a range of attributes and realizations of attribute levels. Before respondent see the profiles of the two candidates, they are given an introductory text: "Recently, Parliament voted on a bill that would affect the levels of [taxes and government spending/immigration]. People have different opinions about what their Member of Parliament should do[, but usually MPs support the position of their party]. Please compare the two following MPs and answer our three questions. You will be asked to make six comparisons. Please remember there are no right or wrong answers."

Respondents are randomly assigned to one of two *issue treatments*: whether the bill mentioned in the introductory text is concerning "taxes and government spending" or "immigration;" and, they are randomly assigned to one of two *party discipline primes*: whether following party discipline is identified as what MPs "usually" do or party discipline is not mentioned. Then, voters see the candidate profiles; Figure 1 is an example of what respondents see on their screen.

Figure 1: Exemplifying profiles of candidates as shown to respondents

MP 1	MP 2
Conservative	Labour
The MP's party leadership voted in favour of the bill	The MP's party leadership voted in favour of the bill
The majority of the public opposes the bill	The majority of the public opposes the bill
The majority of the public in the MP's electoral district supports the bill	The majority of the public in the MP's electoral district opposes the bill
The MP voted against the MP's party	The MP voted with the MP's party
The MP's party leadership did not condemn the MP's behaviour	The MP's party leadership did not condemn the MP's behaviour

Which attributes are shown is randomized across vignettes (while the same attributes are shown for both candidates within one vignette) and the exact realization of the attribute levels are randomly assigned (and potentially differ between candidates within one vignette). In this way, we implement a three-step, sequential randomization:

1. Random assignment of issue- and party discipline prime-treatments to respondent
2. Random assignment of attributes to respondent (selection of 5 out of 11 attributes per vignette).
3. Random assignment of attribute order and attribute value realization in 6 vignettes for each respondent

Attributes and the realizations of attribute levels are taken from the following list:

1. *Party*: The MP's party (e.g. Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat): "Conservative", "Labour", "Liberal Democrats"
2. *Party's position*: Whether the party leadership voted in favour or against the bill: "The MP's party leadership voted in [favour/against] the bill"
3. *Rebellion*: Whether the MP voted with or against his party: "The MP voted [with/against] the MP's party"
4. *Public opinion*: Whether the majority of the public supported the bill: "The majority of the public [supports/opposes] the bill"

5. *District opinion*: Whether the majority of the public in the MP’s electoral district supported the bill: “The majority of the public in the MP’s electoral district [supports/opposes] the bill”
6. *Pivotality*: Whether the vote by the MP made a difference to the outcome of the vote: “The MP’s vote [did not change/changed] the final vote tally”
7. *Centrality*: Whether MP takes an extreme or moderate position: “The MP takes an [extreme/moderate] position on the bill”
8. *Party competition*: Whether UKIP supports or opposes the MP’s voting behaviour: “UKIP [supports/opposes] the MP’s voting behaviour”
9. *Tenure*: Whether the MP has spent three, ten or twenty-one years in parliament: “The MP has been a member of parliament for [three/ten/twenty-one] years”
10. *Constituency service*: The amount of time that an MP spends in the constituency: “The MP spends [more/less] time working on local constituency issues than national issues.”

Note, for the *party’s position*-attribute the same values for both MPs are shown if both MPs are from the same party and *party* is also one of the shown attributes. When *public opinion* is randomly determined to be one of the attributes, it also shows the same value for both MPs. The *Rebellion*-attribute is displayed on every vignette but the exact position in the table of attributes varies randomly to increase the number of observations with this attribute that is of core interest.

Then, outcome measures are elicited after each set of profiles on the same screen. Specifically, we ask for

1. approval of MP 1: “How favourable do you feel towards MP 1 on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 means very unfavourable and 100 means very favourable.”
2. Approval of MP 2: “How favourable do you feel towards MP 2 on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 means very unfavourable and 100 means very favourable.”
3. Vote intention: “In a hypothetical election, if these two MPs were standing against one another in an election, which MP would you vote for?”

Finally, we prompt respondents with a manipulation check: we ask for a guess of how many instances of MPs voting against their party happened in the year 2017. The overall mean answer is 86 (5, 196). Unfortunately, we do not find a difference in the estimated number of respondents across treatment groups of the party discipline primes treatment. In other words, we cannot be sure respondents recognized the one-line prime telling them that MPs usually vote with their party or do not connect party discipline and rebellious behavior as intended. There is, however, a positive (but not significant) relationship between observing an instance of a rebel (a candidate profile that contains an MP that is said to have voted against the party) and the

estimated number of events in parliament where a MP voted against the party. The coefficient estimate of a regression of guessed number of rebel events on a count of observed rebel events in the experiment is 1.63 (-.45, 3.71) with an associated $p = .13$.

3.2 Identification

In order to identify the effect of candidates' attributes on vote choice and on voters' feelings towards the candidate, we estimate the relative importance of one attribute assigned to the candidates over others. Specifically, following Hainmueller, Hopkins and Yamamoto (2014), we estimate the Average Marginal Component Effect (AMCE). The AMCE of a specific attribute category on the outcome variable (either MP preference or warmth of feeling towards MP) when we change the attribute value from the reference category to that specific attribute category. For example, the AMCE of Labour party membership of the MP is the change in the predicted probability of preferring a Labour Party MP over a Conservative Party MP (the reference category for the party of MP attribute).

All results presented in this paper are based on such regressions of the outcome variable on a set of dummy variables for each attribute included (excluding a reference category). Throughout the result section, we will present the results graphically given the large number of coefficient estimates; all regression results are available in Tables XX-XX in the SI. The estimate of the relative effect of each attribute value over a reference category is displayed on the x-axis with the associated 95% confidence interval.

The identification of the AMCE of any attribute, then, rest on two assumptions: First, the order of decision vignettes shown to respondents and the order of attributes within displayed profiles do not matter for respondents' choice. To meet this assumption, we randomize the order of vignettes and attributes across respondents and control for order in our regressions (variable *vignette #*).¹ Additionally, the randomization of attributes and realizations of the values of attributes need to be carried out in such a way that respondents' choices are statistically independent of the vignette assignment (accomplished by randomization within the survey software). Second, we assume that the number of attributes does not change responses; a larger number of attributes per profile should not lead to satisficing, in which respondents use choice heuristics to break down the complexity of too much information.²

¹The coefficient on *vignette #* is significantly interacting with other covariates in affecting the dependent variables in the regressions from which results are displayed in Figure 4, 5, and B.2.

²Bansak et al. (2018) find that choice tasks with up to 30 attributes do not lead to meaningful changes in the

4 Results

We collected observations on 2055 respondents. However, we did not force a response so we obtained observations on fewer respondents for each of the 6 hypothetical choices. In particular, the response rate was 65% in the first choice and declined monotonically to 55% in the sixth and last choice.

4.1 Voters preference for rebels and its interaction with MP and context characteristics

Before we arrive at testing our main hypotheses (hypotheses 2 and 3), we assess whether voters value rebels in general as well as how important candidate characteristics and features of the contexts of a rebellious vote are in respondents' valuation of rebellious MPs.

Figure 2 shows a positive effect of rebellion on candidates' probability of being preferred over the alternative candidate and Figure 3 gives a positive and significant effect of rebellion on voters' feelings towards the candidate. In particular, the probability of a MP to be chosen increases by $.04(-.01, .03)$ but that change is not significant at the $\alpha = .05$ -level.³ But, the warm feeling towards a candidate does significantly increase when that candidate votes against the party; the difference in feeling thermometer score is $1.94(1.13, 2.48)$.

The strongest relative positive bump of any attribute on candidates' electoral prospects emerges for candidate who spend more time on local than national issues. In contrast to a candidate who spends more time on national than local issues, such a candidate sees a by $.07(.05, .08)$ significantly higher probability of being elected. Similarly, a candidate is significantly more likely to be chosen if the MP's constituents support the bill and the MP's vote changed the final vote tally but also when the party leadership supported the bill and when the MP is a member of the Labour party. The MP receives less support when it takes an extreme in contrast of a moderate position on the bill and when UKIP supported the MP's voting behavior. These results are robust for both outcome measure: preference over candidates and feeling thermometer. We find no significant effect of the MP's party on respondents' vote preference or their feelings towards the MPs.

estimates of the relative importance of any one attribute; our number of attributes is well below.

³ACMEs are given with 95% confidence bounds in parenthesis.

Figure 2: Change in the predicted probability of preferring a candidate. For all figures, estimates are based on an OLS regression of respondents' choices against a set of dummies for each attribute realization (omitting a reference category) with respondent-clustered standard errors. 95% confidence bounds are shown.

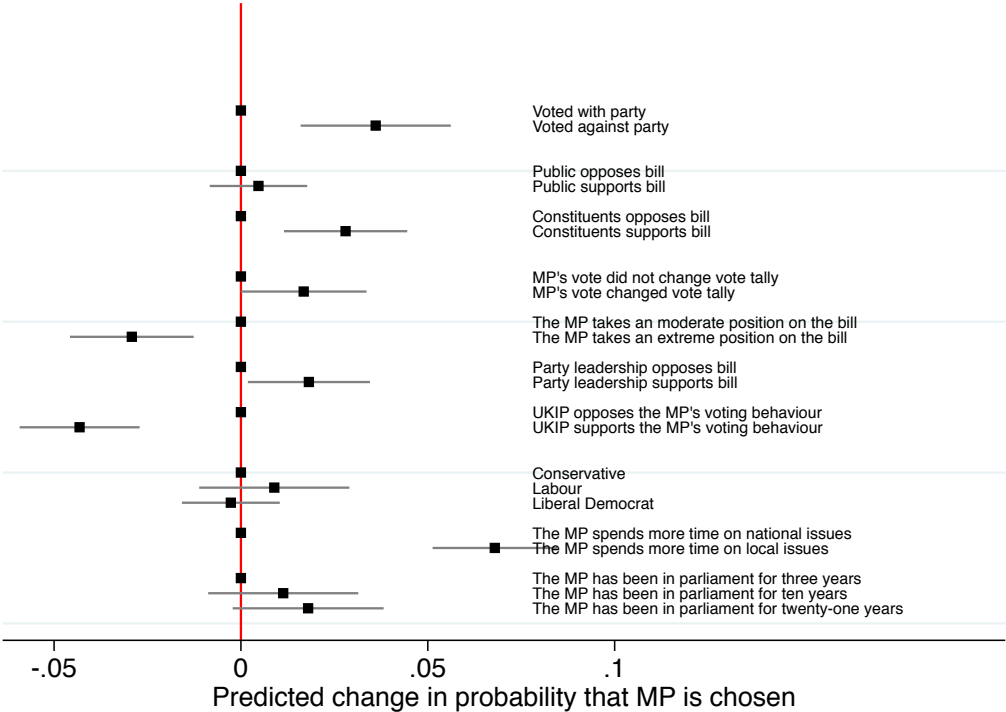
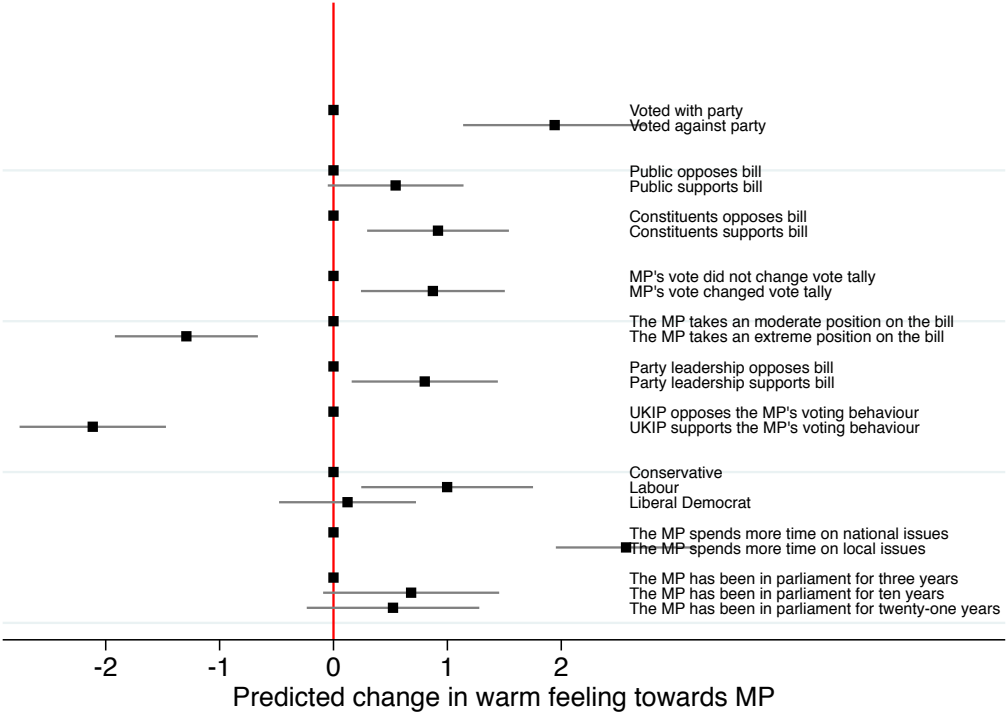


Figure 3: Change in the predicted warm feeling towards candidate.



In other words, and in line with previous literature,

Result 1 *voters generally prefer rebellious MPs.*

The finding of a tendency among respondents to prefer candidates who vote against their own party is robust to variation in the issue tackled in the bill. When a MP votes against the party on a taxation and government spending bill, the predicted probability of getting elected changes significantly by .04 (.01, .07), as it does for MPs who vote against the party on a vote on immigration; for the latter the relative change in predicted probability comparing a candidate who votes against the party to one who votes with the party is .03 (.00, .06). These results hold for the outcome variable feeling thermometer (See Figure B.1 and B.2 in the SI).

Besides providing a direct tests of the hypotheses laid out above, our analysis also allows us to characterize voters evaluation of a rebelling candidate given a range of variables describing the context of the rebellious action: whether the MP was pivotal in determining the vote outcome, whether the MP took an extreme position on the bill, whether the party leadership supported the bill, and whether the MPs vote was in line with UKIPs position. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate insights into those questions about the context of a vote against the party. We see that candidates who voted against the party are not preferred more or less than candidates who voted with the party when taking into account variation in those context variables. For none of the four context variables is the difference between candidates who rebelled and candidates who fell in line with the party significantly different from zero.

Figure 4: Change in the predicted probability of preferring a candidate for profiles where the MP voted with the party and those where the MP voted against the party.

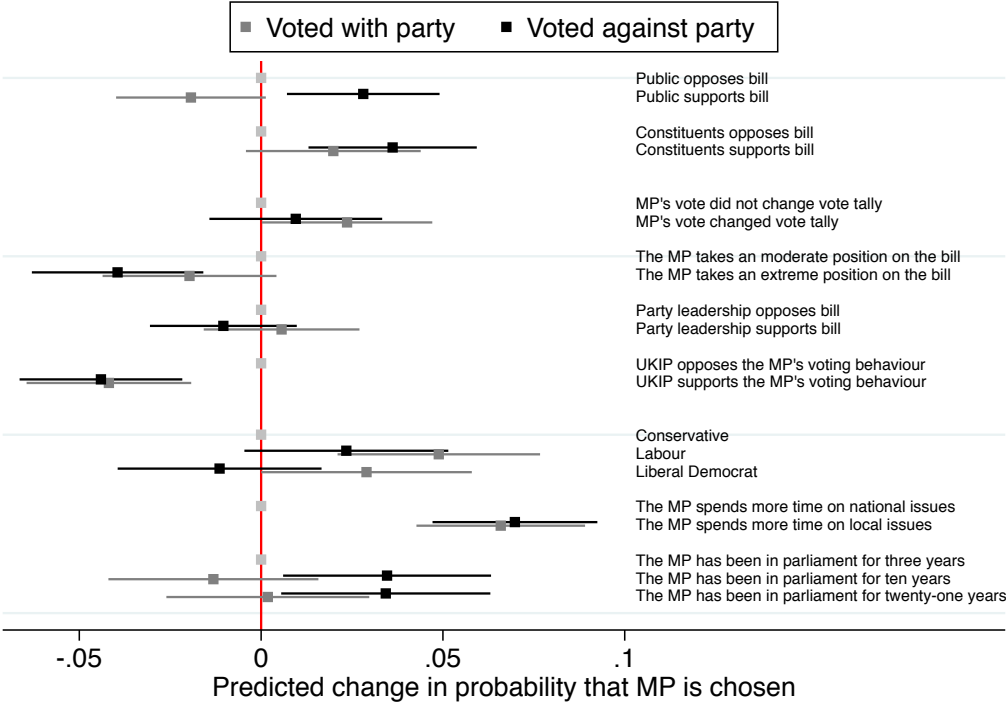
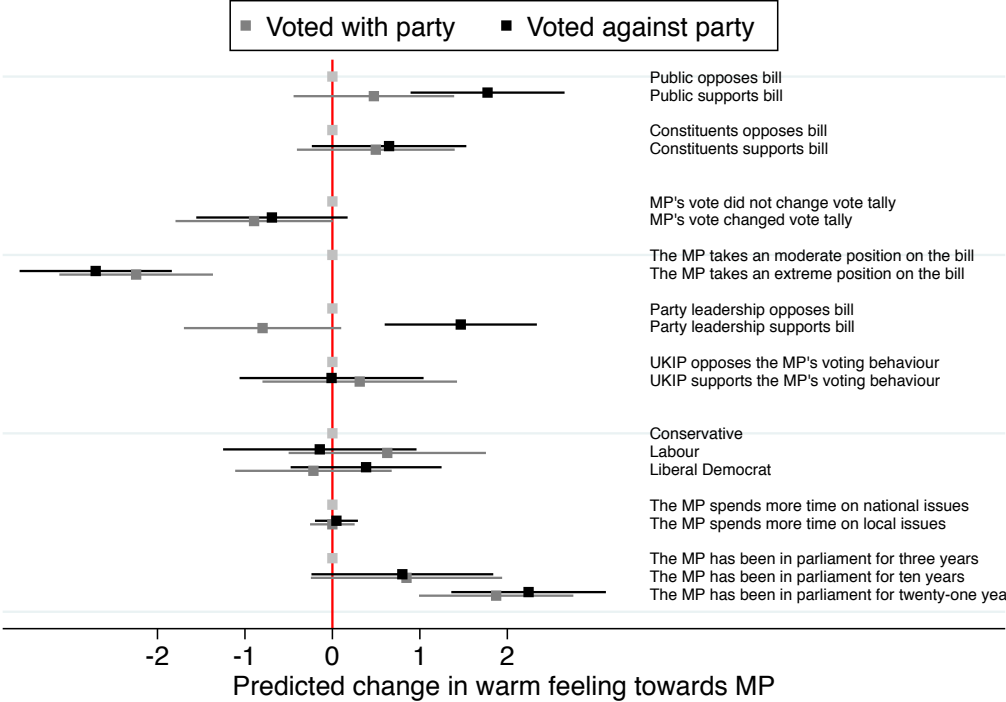


Figure 5: Change in the predicted warm feeling towards candidate for profiles where the MP voted with the party and those where the MP voted against the party.



The same is true for our other outcome variable, feeling towards the candidate, as shown in Figure 5, except for the observation that MP's who voted against their party experience a positive change in warm feeling when the leadership of the party supported the bill over when it did not while candidates who voted with the party see no change in how warm voters feel towards them.

4.2 Is rebellion rewarded when it aligns with constituents or the broader public?

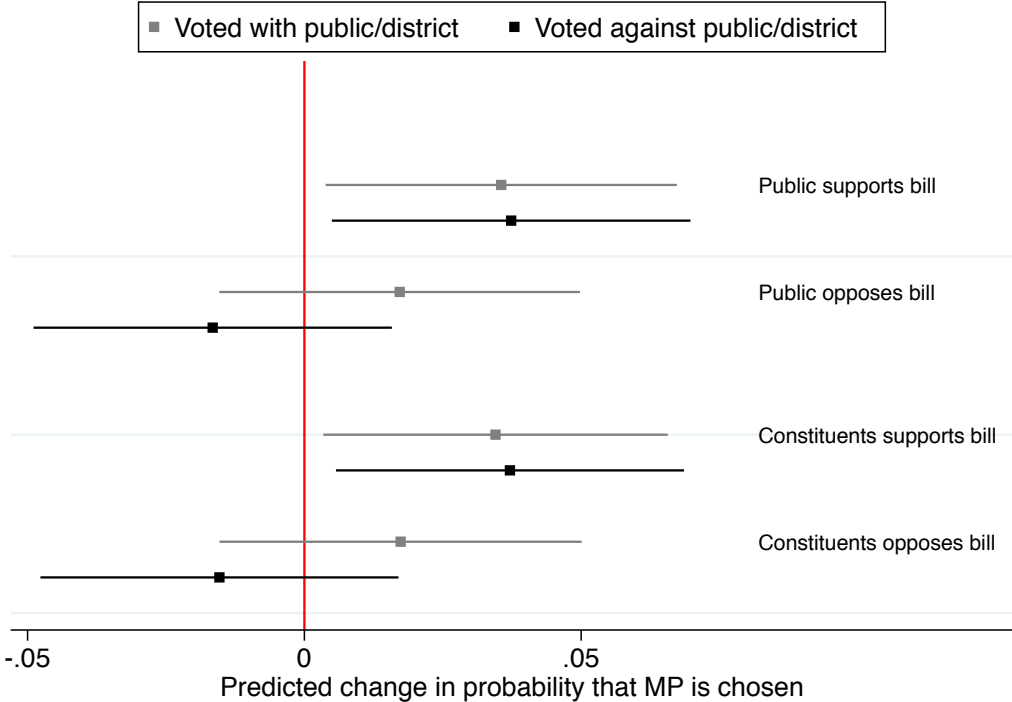
In Figures 2 and 3 we saw that voters have a general preference for rebels while, among other covariates, controlling for the support of the public and a MP's constituents for the bill the MP rebels on.

Once we look at those votes where the bill aligned with public opinion and compare it to situations where a bill opposed public opinion, neither vote preference nor feelings towards rebels are any different. In particular, the difference in relative effect of being a rebel on vote choice between two such kind of votes is $-.01, (-.05, .03)$. The difference in relative effect on feeling towards the candidate is $.26 (-1.25, 1.76)$. Similar (null) results arise when we study the effect of a bill that is supported by the MP's constituents (compared to one that is not supported) on the influence of voting against the party on voters' preferences over candidates and the feeling of warmth towards the candidate. Here the difference in relative effect of rebellion on vote preference between a vote that is in alignment with constituent's preferences over the bill and one that is not is $.02 (-.02, .05)$. Considering the other outcome measure, feeling of warmth toward the candidate, the difference is $(.59 (-.93, 2.10))$.

However, the appropriate test for whether voters condition their support for rebels on whether the public or the district actually favored the bill the MP voted against, we need to show the AMCE of rebellion separately for situations where the MPs rebellion against the party coincides with a vote against the bill and situations where voting against the party meant voting for the bill.

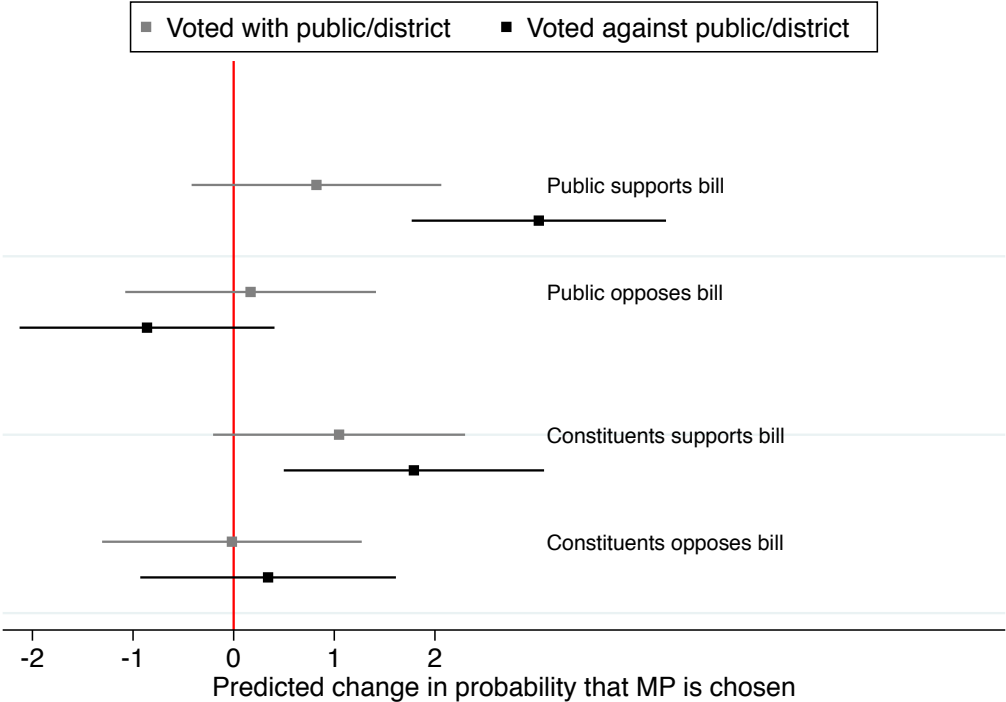
Figure 6 compares the marginal effect of voting against the party on voters' preference for the MP across several different profiles: when the vote against the party is a vote for the bill versus when the vote against the party is a vote against the bill – and when the bill is supported by the public/district versus when it is not.

Figure 6: Change in the predicted probability of preferring a candidate for profiles where the MP voted with the party and those where the MP voted against the party.



We find no significant difference in the effect of voting against the party on preference for MP when that vote is also a vote against public or district opinion supportive of the bill than when it aligns with public or district opinion in support of the bill. The AMCE of rebellion is .04 (00, 07) when the public supported the bill but the MP voted against it, it is the same, .04 (.00, 07), in situations when the MP voted with public opinion (rebellious against the party). A similar result arises considering district opinion but this result is not robust across outcome measures (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Change in the predicted warm feeling towards candidate for profiles that vary in whether the public or the district supported or opposed the MP.



Considering the warm feeling towards MPs, we see that a preference for rebellion is, in parts, driven by MPs voting against the party when they concurrently defy of public opinion.

Summarizing,

Result 2 *we find no robust evidence that a preference for rebellion is driven by behavior of MPs that is congruent with public or district opinion.*

4.3 Is rebellion rewarded when it opposes party discipline?

Lastly, we argued that voters may prefer independently minded MPs who are not simple party soldiers. We test whether that is the case by comparing AMCE of voting against the party in a treatment condition containing a prime that tells respondents MPs usually vote with the party (party discipline primes treatment).

Figure 8: Change in the predicted probability of preferring a candidate across party discipline primes treatment conditions.

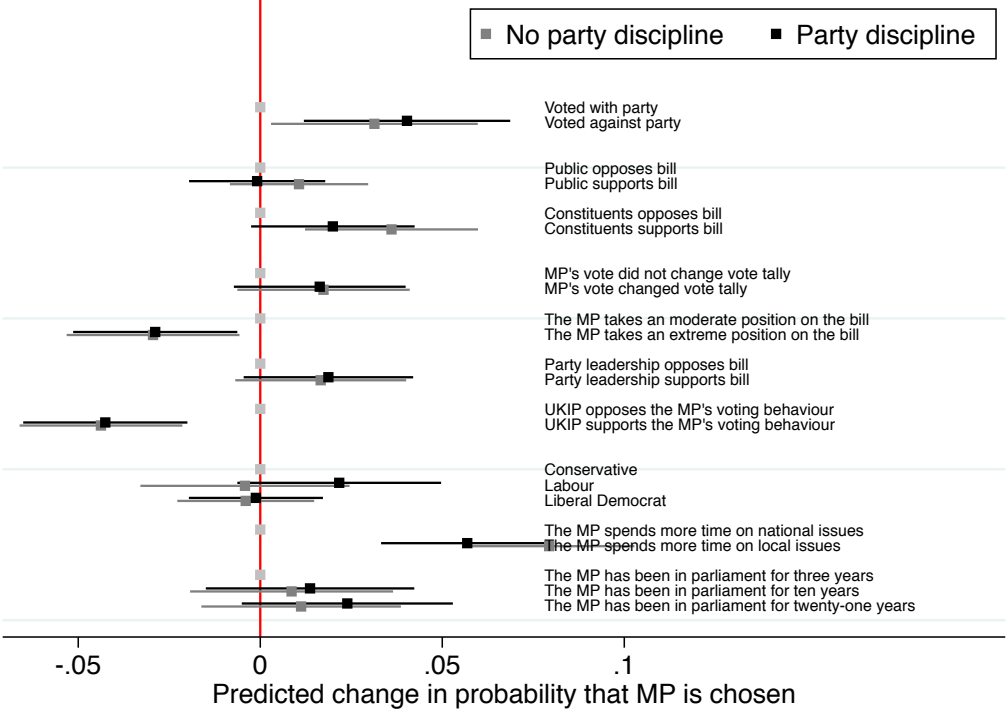
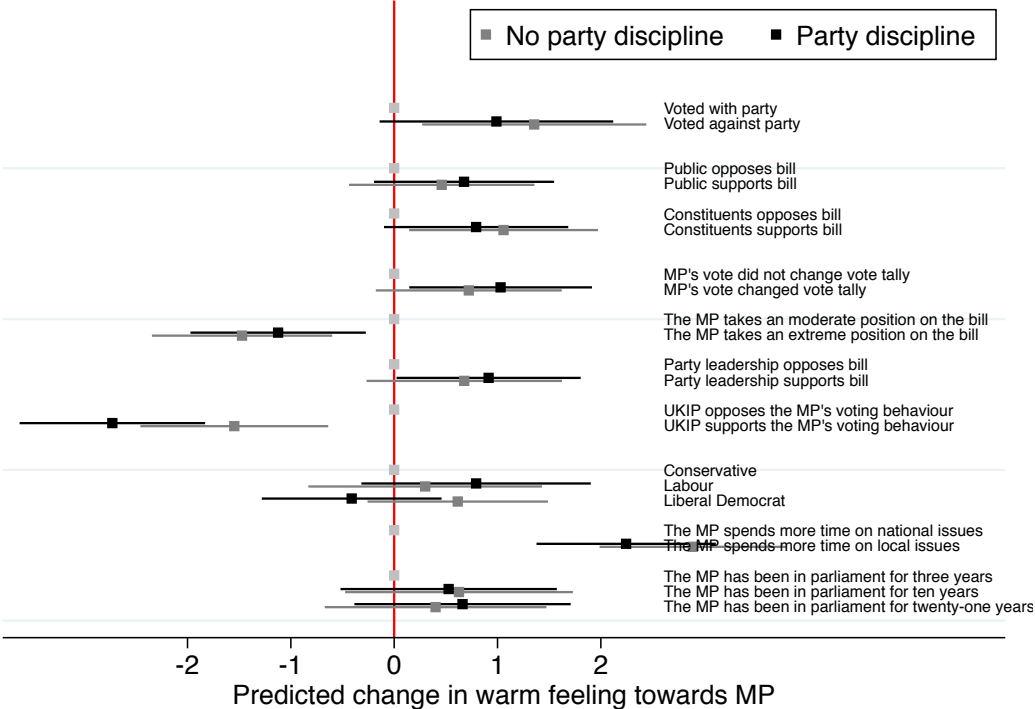


Figure 9: Change in the predicted warm feeling towards candidate across party discipline primes treatment conditions.



We do not find a difference in the average marginal conditional effect of rebelling against the party between those respondents who were primed to think about MPs behavior as one that usually follows party discipline and respondents who have not seen such prime.

Result 3 *Voters preference for rebels is not conditional on whether voters are primed to consider party discipline.*

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Supporting information

A Experimental design

B Statistical appendix

B.1 Robustness of main results

Figure B.1: Change in the predicted probability of preferring a candidate across issue treatment conditions.

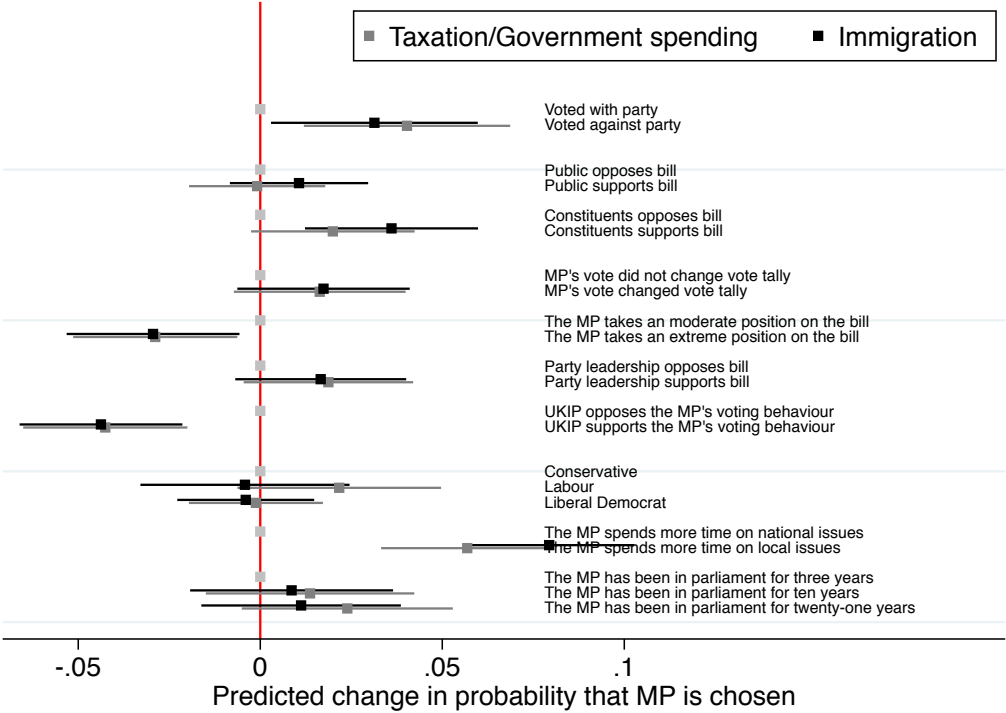


Figure B.2: Change in the predicted warm feeling towards candidate across issue treatment conditions.

