

Government, Agreement and Minimality
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As is well-known, the relation of government played a central role in the quasi-eponymous theory of government and binding (Chomsky 1981, 1986a,b). It is usually said that this relation plays no role in minimalist syntax, although this has never actually been demonstrated. Here I will show that such a relation is readily reconstructible in bare phrase structure, and consider whether it is needed alongside Agree, relativised minimality and the Phase Impenetrability. The conclusion will be that a general notion of government is not needed, but – terminology aside – it breaks down into sisterhood, intervention and impenetrability.

First, we show that (head-)government can be defined in conventional bare phrase structure; all that is needed, in addition to the usual notion of syntactic object (SO), is a notion of intervener (Starke 2001, Rizzi 1990, 2001) and a simple definition of minimal head. Then government can be defined as follows:

- (1) Government: α **governs** β iff α c-commands β , there is no γ , an intervener for c-command(α , β) and α is a minimal head.

In the GB literature, slightly differing notions of government were applied to a range of syntactic relations including the following:

- (2) (Internal) θ -role assignment, categorial and semantic selection, Case assignment, binding domains (whence the PRO theorem), licensing *pro*, licensing traces (the Empty Category Principle) and L-marking.

The question now is: do we need (1) in order to account for these relations? If not, then GB was substantially on the wrong track and minimalist approaches are an improvement. The body of the talk will be devoted to showing that the above relations are non-uniform, but reduce to sisterhood, intervention and impenetrability.