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Preface

It was 2009 when I assisted Simon Franzmann in a project on the dynamics of party competition. Becoming interested in the relevant concepts, I read his working paper on programmatic heterogeneity and ideological polarization of the European party systems. I found his conceptual clarification of polarization very enlightening. According to Franzmann, polarization connects to both sides of the political market, parties and voters, as it occurs when parties politicize latent lines of conflict present in a society. In distinction to polarization, Franzmann introduces the concept of programmatic heterogeneity which solely captures the diversity in the programmatic offerings of parties. Based on his empirical findings, he ascertains that new parties often form when the programmatic heterogeneity of existing parties is low. It is exactly this hypothesis which sparked my interest in the topic of new political parties. I am very thankful to Simon Franzmann for his encouragement to elaborate on this initial hypothesis and also for his advice in the following years.

It seemed plausible to me to start from the side of parties when theorizing about new political parties as the programmatic supply of existing parties should influence the chances of new contestants. Although this influence of existing parties plays an important role in the literature on new parties, studies had a stronger focus on triggers for new party formations on the electoral side. However, there are also cases in which the formation of a new party is not preceded by strong and neglected electoral demands. At this point, the German *Pirate Party* provides a fitting example. The party presented itself as a clear alternative to existing parties with regard to its policy focus on internet related issues, when the party formed in 2006. Nevertheless, at the time, there did not exist strong electoral interests in the policy focus of the *Pirate Party*. Only later when the regulation of the internet became a publicly debated issue, the party started to attract stronger attention on the side of the electorate. The picture looks different for the *Alternative for Germany*. In this case, the formation followed on the heels of the dissatisfaction in parts of the electorate regarding the treatment of the Euro crisis by the existing parties. These two examples illustrate that the occurrence of new parties is not only and always triggered by unsatisfied electoral demands but, in general, it is the programmatic supply by existing parties which determines the room for new policy offerings with which new parties can appeal to voters.

Following the relationship between the formation and success of new parties, I then started to think to what extent the electoral performance of newly formed parties is dependent on the state of the programmatic supply side. Simultaneously, I also noticed that the existing literature on new party success did not fully consider the influence of their own complete programmatic profiles and their evolution over time. Based on these ideas, I developed the plan of this dissertation: a comparative and systematic analysis of the formation and success of new political parties in established democracies which focuses on the programmatic competition between parties.

Executing and finalizing this plan would not have been possible without the on-going advice and support of my two supervisors, André Kaiser and Ingo Rohlfing, for which I am very grateful. Working as student assistant at the Chair of Comparative Politics of André Kaiser over many years and visiting several of his seminars provided me with the best possible preparation for conducting this dissertation. In particular, I would also like to highlight the Research Seminar in which students and colleagues alike present their current research. Getting insights in actual research projects and their problems as well as following André Kaiser's comments on matters of research design served as invaluable lessons for my own research. Moreover, the way how he conducts this seminar and establishes an atmosphere of rigorous and, at the same time, constructive criticism, represents a role model for interacting in the scientific community. Throughout the dissertation, André Kaiser handed out advice on all matters of my research and was also willing to share his own wealth of experience with me. For all of this, I owe him special thanks. The same holds true for Ingo Rohlfing. He allowed for an open and on-going dialogue about all parts of this dissertation which inspired and helped me greatly. I have benefited from his intellectual precision and his broad knowledge on methodology, research design as well as party research. Added to this, I would also like to thank him for his personal encouragement when I felt stuck in my research process. His openness and his willingness to treat me not only as a PhD student but also as a colleague motivated and helped me to overcome these challenges.

A major landmark for this dissertation was my research stay at the University of Sussex where I found a stimulating and friendly atmosphere. I am very thankful to my advisors at Sussex, Sabina Avdagic and Paul Webb. They both showed great interest in my work and gave many useful comments which led to multiple improvements in my work. I am also glad that I had the

opportunity to meet other PhD students and to discuss my ideas with them. Here, my special thanks goes to Nikoleta Kiapidou for her great support and friendship.

Dealing extensively with one topic over a long period of time can be quite demanding. The best allies in this task are your colleagues. I was very fortunate to always work around supportive, intelligent and friendly people. This includes Sarah Berens and Christina Zuber with whom I shared offices over long periods of time. Although Sarah and I were working on different topics, she was always interested in my work and offered great advice on many issues. Christina and I shared an interest in theories of party competition and had long conversations about them. She was always keen on discussing new ideas and thoughts. I also owe special thanks to Saskia Ruth and Holger Reinermann who commented on the introductory chapter of the dissertation. Besides, I am grateful for many inspiring and helpful conversations with Jan Sauermann, Andreas Kammer, Ulrich Glassmann and Leonce Röth.

I think, many people who have completed a dissertation would agree that doing so is not only an academic but also a personal challenge. For me, it was only possible to meet these challenges through the close support of my friends, family and my partner. My oldest and closest friends, Sebastian and Jörn, were never tired of listening to my troubles. They ensured that I kept a clear head and always reminded me that life is not all about my dissertation – and so did my brother, Matthias. I am also deeply thankful to my close friend Julia whose presence and support I will never forget. During writing this dissertation, I was very fortunate to meet my partner, Bettina, who changed my life for the better in so many ways. I admire her for her loving patience, understanding and ability to calm me down for which I cannot thank her enough – she really was my tower during this time. Without doubt, the biggest thanks has to go to my parents. Without her unconditional love, support and believe in me throughout my entire life, it would have been impossible for me to get this far. For this reason, I dedicate this dissertation to them.

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Regarding the occurrence and performance of new political parties, political science has long concentrated on explanations which are rooted outside the mere programmatic competition between parties. This is due to the fact that the phenomenon of new party formation is located in the more general literature on party systems and party system change in which institutional and sociological explanations have predominated for a long time. While the former concentrates on the effects of electoral systems (Duverger 1967; Riker 1982; Lijphart 1994; Cox 1997; Norris 2004) the latter regards the societal cleavage structure as the driving force behind the condition of party systems (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1970). Yet another strand of this literature (Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994; Neto and Cox 1997; Geys 2006; Cox 1997: 23–7) connects institutional and sociological factors, highlighting the importance of interactions between the two. Nevertheless, in the perspective of these approaches, the appearance and success of new political parties are expected to be rare since they should only occur as a consequence of major shifts in the institutional or societal configuration of a political system.

The first comparative studies on the formation and success of new political parties acknowledge the central role of existing parties. Apart from cleavages and institutional features, Hauss and Rayside (1978: 37) subsume the behavior of existing parties under political facilitators for new party development and argue that '[i]f voters believe that the existing parties have failed to provide a solution for the aggrieved group problems […], the chances of a new party's development are rather good' (Hauss and Rayside 1978: 38). Similarly, Harmel and Robertson (1985: 502) connect the rise of new parties to unsatisfied representational needs in the society. This line of reasoning emanates from the voter side and follows a purely representational view on parties according to which new parties solely form as a consequence of societal developments. Accordingly, this perspective prevents to capture how the dynamics of the programmatic competition between parties themselves can trigger the formation of new parties and, thus, disregards the possibility that political actors form parties without strong pre-existing and salient electoral demands.

In his seminal contribution, Hug (2001) touches on this point and adds to the aforementioned previous research by providing a game-theoretical model explaining the emergence of new parties as a consequence of existing parties rejecting demands of 'potential new parties' (Hug

2001: 14–5). On the one hand, in contrast to the pure representational view on parties, these potential new parties and their demands are not solely attributed to the societal side of the political market (Hug 2001: 40). On the other hand, in the empirical analysis, the corresponding concept of new issues is then captured by macro indicators exclusively linked to the side of voters and the state of the economy (Hug 2001: 88–99).

This dissertation connects to Hug's approach by examining the phenomenon of new political parties starting from the programmatic level of party competition. It provides a coherent analysis of how the programmatic supply by existing parties shapes the conditions of the formation and success of new parties and shows how the long-term electoral success of new parties is affected by their own programmatic profiles. In this way, it theoretically acknowledges that the phenomenon of new parties is located on the supply side of the political market and is influenced by the conditions prevailing in the competition between parties. The precondition for this approach is a clear distinction between the supply side, which is the side of parties, and the demand side, the electorate, in both, theoretical and empirical terms. On the supply side, I seize on and refine the concept of programmatic innovation (Franzmann 2011) which stands for new policy offerings of parties towards voters (Hindmoor 2008: 499) and is rooted in salience theory (Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1983; Budge 2015). I differentiate between programmatic innovations which connect to already existing unsatisfied demands in the electorate and programmatic innovations for which demand has to be created first (De Vries and Hobolt 2012). Thereby, I avoid any ambiguity regarding the concept of new issues and its connection to the supply and demand side of the political market. I start from the premise that preference shaping between parties and voters can occur in both directions (Robertson 2006: 168–9) – an idea which is also present in the general literature on party systems and their reinforcing relationship to societies (Sartori 2005: 170, 257/260; Mair 1998: 8). In the analysis of the electoral success of new parties, I connect to the literature on niche parties. New parties and niche parties are overlapping concepts. The new party definition given by Hug (2001, p. 14) rests on purely organizational criteria of a party, tied to the first appointment of candidates at a national election. Following this definition, a party stops to be considered as new when it takes part in a national election for the second time. Although deduced from the literature on new parties[1], the original niche party definition of Meguid (2008, pp. 3–4) and following approaches (Adams *et al.* 2006; Wagner 2012; Meyer and Miller 2015; Bischof 2015) rest on

[1] Meguid (2008: 3) introduces the concept of niche parties when referring to waves of new parties in the second half of the 20th century.

criteria linked to the programmatic profile of a party, irrespective of how many times that party has (already) participated in an election. As a common core, all niche party definitions share the attribute that these parties show programmatic differences in general or in specific policy fields compared to their competitors. Therefore, the concepts of new parties and niche parties are not identical but overlapping. For their first participation in an election, niche parties then however build a subgroup of all new parties. As niche parties per definition address issues not previously dealt with in the competition between parties, they are prime examples of programmatic innovators when they start as new parties.

With regard to the research design, throughout the dissertation, I take account of the distinction between the formation of new political parties and their electoral performance as factors facilitating their formation cannot be assumed to affect their success in the same way (Harmel and Robertson 1985: 502). Thus, the way the programmatic competition between parties affects the formation of a new party has to be distinguished from the way it impacts on the electoral performance once the new party has formed. Concerning the analysis of the electoral success of new parties, this dissertation considers the temporal dimension of this phenomenon as new parties, once formed, undergo a programmatic evolution that may not only include changes in their platforms over time but also changing electoral effects of their programmatic features – a point that previous research has not fully considered. Regarding the research design for the analysis of the electoral performance of new parties, there exist two different possible levels on which such an analysis can be approached. The level of parties represents the first option. Studies following this approach take vote shares of parties as their dependent variable (Meguid 2005; 2008; Hug 2001; Hino 2012; Willey 1998). The second option centers on the individual level and takes the individual vote choice as the dependent variable. To the best of my knowledge, there exists no study which opts for this second approach. This dissertation uses both of these angles to fully illuminate how programmatic factors influence the electoral success of new political parties.

Due to the focus of the dissertation on the programmatic competition between parties, I use various concepts on the party system and party level which refer to the state of the overall programmatic supply by parties and to programmatic profiles of single parties. For the measurement of these concepts, I rely on the analysis of manifesto data provided by the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project (MRG/CMP) (Budge *et al.* 2001; Klingemann *et al.* 2006; Volkens *et al.* 2013). Manifestos represent a valuable source for

capturing programmatic profiles of parties as they officially state a party's stance on policies vis-à-vis the electorate (Laver 2001: 72). By means of these concepts and these measurements, this dissertation offers a coherent analysis in theoretical and empirical terms.

The remainder of this introduction is structured as follows: in section 1, I elaborate on the existing literature on the formation and success of new parties and how this dissertation adds to the existing research in the field. In section 2, I present my key arguments in greater detail and explain important aspects of the research design. Finally, in section 3, I give an overview on the individual parts of this dissertation.

1. State of the Art

As outlined above, the research on the formation and success of new political parties connects to the broader literature on party systems and party system change. Originally, the party system literature was heavily influenced by two different schools. The first school emanates from the work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967) who regarded party systems as manifestations of major cleavages prevalent in European societies. According to this view, which also finds expression in the related model of the mass party (Duverger 1967; Krouwel 2006), societies are structured along these cleavages. The belonging to a certain group or class which depicts the existing cleavage structure then determines political preferences. Consequently, parties are considered to be agents of groups or classes which have built around these cleavage structures (Katz and Mair 1995: 6–7). With regard to preference shaping, this approach assumes that parties align to preferences of broad segments in the electorate. Following this sociological view on parties and party systems, new and prospering parties can only be expected when new cleavages emerge or existing parties fail to represent existing social groups. When Lipset and Rokkan (1967) conducted their research, social cleavage structures had been persistent over a long period of time and with them the corresponding party systems. This led the authors to formulate their well-known freezing hypothesis (Lipset and Rokkan 1967) according to which the emergence and success of new parties should be an unlikely and rare phenomenon.

The second school in the literature on party systems focuses on the effects of electoral systems and dates back to the work of Duverger (1967). His core argument relates the state of party systems to the degree of proportionality of electoral systems through its conditioning effect on voting behavior. More specifically, plurality systems are associated with two-party systems while proportional electoral systems result in multi-party systems. The microfoundation of what

has become known as *Duverger's law* rests upon a mechanical effect and a psychological effect (Duverger 1967; Riker 1982). The mechanical effect relates to the translation from votes into seats. In contrast to proportional systems, majoritarian systems favor concentration of seats among the strongest parties in terms of votes. The psychological effect refers to voters' anticipation of the mechanics of an electoral system. The effect assumes that voters do not want to waste their votes on non-viable candidates or parties, and hence, adjust their voting behavior accordingly, i.e. they vote strategically (Cox 1997). Following this perspective, party systems and the number of viable parties are expected to be stable as well, since fundamental changes of electoral systems are rare, at least in developed democracies. In this view, the emergence and success of new parties are only likely in case of major changes in an electoral system.

In contrast to these expectations, however, the second half of the 20th century showed a considerable number of new emerging parties. For example, Harmel and Robertson (1985: 507) identify 233 new parties in 19 West European and Anglo-American countries between 1960 and 1980. Moreover, Tavits (2006: 106) counts 358 new parties in 22 OECD countries between 1960 and 2002. Apart from this high number, sociological and institutionalist approaches have difficulties to explain variation in the number of new parties in single countries over time, as they focus on explanatory factors which show high levels of persistence. Comparative research on new political parties thus started to extend these sociological and institutional explanations by providing a more general framework for a systematic analysis of the emergence and success of new political parties (Hauss and Rayside 1978: 37; Harmel and Robertson 1985: 503). Apart from incorporating social and institutional factors, this framework explicitly takes political factors into account, in particular the role of existing parties and party competition as such. The stronger focus on parties and their behavior can also be linked to the shift away from the mass party model (Duverger 1967: 63; Krouwel 2006) towards the catch-all party model (Kirchheimer 1966) and a more issue-based competition between parties (Mair 2008: 219–20). Nevertheless, these first comparative studies on new parties are also guided by the assumption that events on the side of parties are triggered by changing demands in the electorate as their core argument is that 'new parties are formed primarily to fill representational needs of the society' (Harmel and Robertson 1985: 502). According to this argument, the failure of existing parties to address (new) electoral demands which can also be linked to the concept of new issues (Tavits 2006: 101; Hug 2001: 38) leads to the emergence of new parties. Lago and Martinez (2010) describe this scenario as *electoral market failure*. Studies on the emergence of the green

and extreme right party families also support this argument (Müller-Rommel 1993; Ignazi 1992; Müller-Rommel 1982).

Extending the focus on the side of parties, Hug (2001) provides a game-theoretical model according to which the formation of a new party is the result of an interaction between an existing party and a potential new party under uncertainty. In the model, a new party forms when the existing party does not take up a demand of the potential new party and when, at the same time, the potential new party has the capacity to realize its threat of formation and entering the electoral market (Hug 2001: 50–4). According to the description of this model, no assumption is made about the specific origin of the raised demands:

> 'The potential new party can be a social movement, a citizen initiative, a political entrepreneur, or even a group of members of an existing party. It is characterized and defined by the fact that it has a new demand or neglected issue that it would like to have addressed by the polity' (Hug 2001: 40).

In the subsequent empirical analysis, Hug (2001: 88–99) does not pursue this aspect any further when he refers to the concept of new issues by indicators which are solely connected to societal and economic factors, disregarding the supply side of the political market. In a similar way, Tavits (2006: 103) connects the concept of new issues to the societal side and uses macro indicators like population size and ethnic fragmentation.

Following the initial point of Hug's game-theoretical model that potential new parties and their demands do not have to descend solely from the societal side, I offer a theoretically and empirically coherent analysis of the formation of new parties which starts from the state of the programmatic competition between parties and does not assume unidirectional preference shaping between parties and the electorate. Before I will present the main points of this approach in greater detail, I will elaborate on the literature on the success of new political parties in order to highlight at which points this dissertation adds to the existing research in this field.

As distinguished from formation, the success of new political parties can be defined in various ways. To start with, it can be linked to the goals of vote-, office- and policy-seeking (Strom 1990). Success in terms of office manifests itself in government participation of new or former new parties when they enter government for the first time (Deschouwer 2008). With regard to policy-seeking, it is critical to what extend established parties react to the platform offered by

a new party (Harmel and Svasand 1997). Meguid (2005; 2008: 27–30) describes strategies of mainstream parties which are linked to the offerings of niche parties and target other mainstream competitors. For example, green parties in the 70s and 80s of the last century formed in order to promote policies aiming for the protection of the environment and natural resources. Meanwhile, these ideas and policies have spread to other parties and are approved by large parts of the electorates in developed democracies. Although this can be considered a success in terms of policy, the takeover of ideas of (former) new parties by competitors can electorally hurt these parties, which have initially promoted these policies. This is an important reason why it is crucial to distinguish these different dimensions of success.[2]

The main focus in the literature is on the electoral success of new parties which can be captured by the initial success at the first election or by focusing on its long-term success.[3] With regard to the initial success, the literature concentrates on factors also present in the analysis of the formation of new parties. Differentiating between credible and non-credible (potential) new parties[4] and taking into account the dependence between formation and electoral success, Hug (2001: 141) finds a positive impact of new issues on the initial success of new parties. The concept of new issues and their upcoming are, however, solely operationalized through the size of the population. Main points of criticism raised by Hug (2001: 144–5) himself related to these findings are targeted in the part of the dissertation investigating the success of the new parties: first, the analysis of the electoral success of new parties has to consider the impact of the programmatic competition between parties; secondly, such an analysis has to investigate whether and how voters react to the appearance of new parties.

Concerning the first of Hug's points, I tie in with the literature on niche parties which considers the impact of the programmatic competition on the electoral performance of these parties. The niche party literature explicitly takes into account the link between inter-party programmatic competition and electoral performance. Meguid (2005; 2008) finds that the electoral destiny of niche parties is mainly dependent on programmatic strategies of established mainstream parties. This argument is based on the assumption that mainstream parties are able to set the agenda (Meguid 2008: 14–6). According to this theory, niche parties suffer electorally when

[2] Another angle for defining success of new political parties is their organizational persistence or durability (Harmel and Robertson 1985: 513; Bolleyer 2013: 12).
[3] Bolleyer and Bytzek (2013) use entering and re-entering parliament as another criterion linked to electoral success.
[4] Credibility exists when the benefits of a formation exceeds its costs (Hug 2001: 50).

mainstream parties either ignore the issues promoted by the niche party (dismissive strategy) or when they take over programmatic offerings of niche parties to offer an alternative choice for voters caring about the corresponding issues (accommodative strategy). In contrast, a niche party benefits when a mainstream party takes opposing positions on issues promoted by the niche party (adversarial strategy). In this case, attention is drawn to the issue priorities of the niche party which, at the same time, can preserve its unique programmatic characteristic. The empirical analysis of 43 niche parties (Meguid 2008: 45–6), including green and radical right parties, in 17 West European Countries, confirms the expected effects of mainstream party strategies on the electoral performance of niche parties (Meguid 2008: 58–9). While highlighting the essential role of the strategic behavior of parties on the programmatic level of party competition for the electoral success of niche parties, this approach does not regard whether and how niche parties' actual programmatic profiles impact their electoral performance. As I will outline in the next section, I investigate the electoral effects of programmatic features of niche parties starting as new parties in this dissertation. Unlike former studies, I consider the possibility that these parties change their profiles over time and exert influence on their own electoral fate.

Hino (2012) also examines the long-term success of niche parties[5]. There exist two important differences compared to Meguid's analysis. First, following Hug (2000; 2001: 65–78), Hino (2012: 2–4) acknowledges that niche parties start as new parties by differentiating between their formation and subsequent electoral performance. Secondly, and in difference to Meguid, Hino (2012: 95, 149) does not only focus on the programmatic behavior of competing parties but also incorporates the policy profiles of niche parties themselves. His key variable is the difference in the emphasis of pre-defined core issues between the given niche party and the remaining parties. The empirical analysis of 26 left niche parties[6] across 15 West European Countries (Hino 2012: 53–6), mainly consisting of green parties, reveals that a lower emphasis of these core issues by existing parties, on the one hand, positively influences the probability to emerge but, on the other hand, impacts their subsequent electoral performance negatively (Hino 2012: 102–3). For a group of 24 extreme right parties (Hino 2012: 57–9), this positive effect on new party emergence is also present, however, no significant effect is found with respect to the electoral performance of extreme right parties (Hino 2012: 152–3).

[5] Hino (2012) uses the term *challenger parties*. However, he selects parties according to programmatic criteria which are in line with, for example, the definition of niche parties given by Meguid (2008: 3–4).
[6] Hino (2012: 14–7) uses the term *new politics parties* and defines them on the basis of their programmatic focus on certain policy areas like environmental protection, multiculturalism or pacifism.

While Hino takes into account the programmatic features of niche parties with respect to their electoral performance, his focus is on pre-defined core issues of these parties. However, profiles of these parties cover other issues as well which might also affect their electoral performance. Apart from this, there is an important aspect which is linked to the temporal dimension in the analysis of the long-term electoral success of new parties and has not been addressed in the existing literature on niche parties so far. This is the time-dependency of electoral effects of parties' programmatic features. Although defined in programmatic or ideological terms, niche parties start as new parties when they first participate in an election. Thereafter, they undergo what I call a *programmatic evolution*. For the analysis of the long-term electoral success of niche parties as former new parties their programmatic evolution has two implications: first, platforms of these parties may change over time, and, secondly, parties face different challenges throughout their lifecycle, hence, the effect of programmatic characteristics of these parties on their electoral performance may differ over time.

2. My Contribution

This dissertation investigates how programmatic competition between parties affects the formation of new parties as well as their electoral success. Regarding the formation of new parties, I make use of the conceptual distinction between the supply side (parties) and the demand side (voters) of the political market. More specifically, I explore how the programmatic structure of the former is central for the probability of new party formation. The programmatic structuration of the supply side of political competition is most relevant in this respect since it shapes the room for new policy offerings by parties towards voters which represent *programmatic innovations* (Franzmann 2011). Programmatic innovations can first consist of the introduction of new topics or issues previously not addressed by parties. These may also include neglected issues which have been dealt with in the past. The second form of programmatic innovation is the offering of a new policy mix, which is the combination of issues previously not united in a single platform.[7] Innovations provide new parties with the opportunity to appeal to voters. Regarding the success of new parties, I explore how their programmatic features impact their electoral performance over time. Thereby, I specifically introduce a temporal dimension into the analysis of the electoral performance of new parties. Furthermore, in collaboration with Ingo Rohlfing, I take a direct look at the demand side of the

[7] In this context, Robertson (2006: 172) refers to 'governing methodologies' or 'an idea, a methodology, a prime value, which tends towards organising a party's policy offerings across all of what it does'.

political market by investigating individual voting behavior with regard to new parties.[8] In particular, we examine how the programmatic offerings of existing parties influence voters' reactions to new parties on the ballot.

Concerning the formation of new parties, my argumentation starts from the side of parties and not from the side of voters as it is the former which influences the room available for new programmatic offerings (i.e. innovations) by new parties towards voters. Although I do not exclude that new parties connect to unsatisfied demands present in the electorate, at the same time, I do not assume that this is the only way in which preference shaping between parties and voters can take place. A new party can also come up with programmatic innovations which aim at inducing demands on the side of voters that are not yet present or salient when the new party forms (De Vries and Hobolt 2012; Robertson 2006: 168–9). The focus on the concept of programmatic innovation to explain the formation and success of new parties is based on the assumption that parties and voters connect through a programmatic linkage. For the purpose of this dissertation, this assumption is reasonable, since it analyses new political parties in the context of developed democracies. The assumption of programmatic party competition, however, does not hold to the same extent in contexts in which other party-voter linkages – like clientelism and personalism – prevail (Kitschelt 2000).

The concept of programmatic innovation draws on salience theory (Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1983; Budge 2015). According to salience theory, parties do not (only) compete via positioning themselves on certain issues or dimensions but (also) through the emphasis they put on different issues (Marks and Steenbergen 2004: 166–7; Laver 2001). Against this, spatial models of party competition in the tradition of Downs (1957) locate parties on left-right-dimensions and share a focus on strategic equilibria between parties (Laver 2005; Adams 2012: 402). Here, new policy offerings by parties are then merged into distinct party positions. This transmission is highly dependent on how these models are theoretically designed (De Vries and Marks 2012). Consequently, salience theory with its stronger focus on issue emphasis is better suited for capturing processes linked to programmatic innovation aiming to influence the relation between supply and demand on the political market (Hindmoor 2008). This is also because salience theory includes the idea that the supply and the demand side can

[8] I developed the initial proposal of examining the influence of the programmatic supply of existing parties in an analysis of individual voting behavior with respect to new parties. After this, Ingo Rohlfing and I contributed equally to all following steps in the research process (elaborating the theoretical argumentation, preparing data, conducting the empirical analysis).

differ with respect to (salient) dimensions or issues (Robertson 2006: 168–9; 1976: 57–8). Hence, it is also important to carefully distinguish strategic equilibria between parties on the supply side, stressed by spatial models, and equilibria between the supply and demand side on the issue market (Franzmann 2011: 330) where programmatic offerings of parties in the form of issues meet demands of voters. Three aspects impede the existence and stability of equilibria on the issue market. First, although in general parties may have a good idea about voters' demands, it cannot be assumed that they meet *all* of them due to imperfect information[9] and the fact that these demands are subject to change. Secondly, parties pursue varying, sometimes conflicting goals (Strom 1990). They also face different restrictions for ideological and intra-party reasons (Robertson 1976: 31–5) which may prevent them from addressing voters' demands in some cases. Thirdly, political actors can seek to reshape the prevailing structures on the issue market by changing the issue agenda through inducing and provoking certain demands in the electorate (De Vries and Hobolt 2012). These three points lead to the contestability[10] of the issue market and enable the formation of new parties promoting programmatic innovations. The room for such innovations is influenced by the programmatic supply of existing parties. Following the perspective of salience theory, the latter can be characterized according to its diversity in emphasized issues (Franzmann 2008). Concerning the formation of new parties, the central hypothesis of the second chapter of this dissertation states that a lower programmatic diversity of existing parties increases the probability of the formation of new parties as it leaves more room for programmatic innovations which provide new parties with the opportunity to appeal to voters.

From the perspective of programmatic competition between parties, investigating the electoral success of new parties means to analyze how it is affected by their programmatic profiles and the programmatic actions of their competitors. Against the backdrop of this dissertation and its framework, this requires to account for programmatic profiles in a way that is in line with the concept of programmatic innovation. Therefore, in the third chapter, I capture programmatic profiles of parties by means of two features: nicheness and programmatic concentration. The first has been recently introduced by Meyer and Miller (2015) and accounts for programmatic

[9] Hug (2001: 50–4) also underlines the importance of imperfect information and uncertainty as a precondition for the formation of new parties. Franzmann (2011: 329) similarly highlights uncertainty as a precondition for innovation.

[10] Franzmann (2011: 329) and Bartolini (1999: 457) use the term *contestability* in connection with the institutional requirements for the possibility of the formation of new parties. Here, I add another dimension of contestability which refers directly to conditions prevailing on the issue market, in particular with regard to the relationship between programmatic supply and demand.

differences between a given party and its competitors. Therefore, this concept also captures the degree of innovation in programmatic profiles of parties as such innovations find expression in programmatic differences through issue emphasis. However, the concepts of nicheness and programmatic innovation are not fully congruent as nicheness also reflects (long) established differences of issue emphasis between (existing) parties. Nevertheless, nicheness represents a valid indicator for the degree of programmatic innovation of new parties which present their platform for the first time in the context of a general election.

As a second feature of programmatic profiles of parties, I introduce the concept of programmatic concentration. It reflects the range of issues addressed by a party and the concentration of emphasis the party puts on these issues. Whereas nicheness is a relative concept as it refers to programmatic differences between parties, programmatic concentration solely relates to the profile of a single party. Taken together, these two concepts represent a new approach to capture programmatic profiles of parties from the perspective of salience theory. Moreover, as both concepts refer to differences in degree, they are suitable to depict gradual differences in programmatic profiles between parties and for the same party over time. In the third chapter of the dissertation, I use the concepts of nicheness and programmatic concentration in order to investigate programmatic profiles of green and extreme right parties from their electoral start onwards. Members of these two party families are treated as typical cases of niche parties in the literature (e.g. Meguid 2005; 2008: 16). These parties stand out due to two aspects. First, they started as new parties in the sense of Hug's (2001: 14) definition and, secondly, both party families are connected to the promotion of certain issues (Meguid 2008: 16), indicating programmatic innovation. The investigation of their profiles by means of nicheness and programmatic concentration pursues two goals: first, comparing the profiles of green and extreme right parties to the ones of their competitors for their initial and all the following elections; secondly, tracing the programmatic evolution of these parties from their electoral start in order to look for trends in their platforms. Results suggest that green and extreme right parties in many cases do not display levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration which are significantly higher than those of their competitors. The same holds true when one restricts the comparison to long established mainstream parties (Meguid 2008: 46). Additionally, the findings do not reveal any clear trends in the programmatic evolution of green and extreme right parties. Their patterns of programmatic change do not appear to be different compared to their competitors. Especially the absence of significant differences in nicheness for the first election of these parties usually regarded as typical cases of niche parties

questions the innovative character of their platforms. Yet, two aspects give reason for a careful interpretation: on the one hand, the analysis rests on the complete profiles of these parties. A party can indeed exhibit programmatic innovation and therefore high nicheness in a certain policy area while, taken as a whole, its programmatic profile does not show the same level of nicheness. Secondly, because the measurement of nicheness and programmatic concentration is linked to election manifestos, it cannot be ruled out that competing parties have already reacted to new programmatic ideas between elections.

Starting from the uncovered variance in the programmatic profiles between parties and over time in the third chapter, the fourth part of the dissertation studies how this programmatic variance of green and extreme right parties affects their electoral performance. Taking into account that these parties start as new parties, I argue that nicheness and programmatic concentration have different effects on electoral performance over time as parties face different challenges over their lifecycle. The main hypothesis is that, at their electoral beginning, these parties benefit from high levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration while over time these positive effects diminish. By introducing a temporal dimension in the analysis of the effects of programmatic profiles on electoral performance I extend the existing literature in several ways. First, I show that niche parties take advantage from distinct (high nicheness) and clear (high programmatic concentration) programmatic profiles when they are new and enter electoral competition. This finding also points to the benefits of programmatic innovation. Second, tracing the programmatic evolution of these parties reveals that these positive effects diminish over time and that neglecting this aspect leads to biased inferences. Third, the analysis uncovers that niche parties' behavior has an influence on their electoral fate. Altogether, the focus on members of the two party families, green and extreme right parties, questions the generalizability of inferences with regard to new parties in general. Nevertheless, studying these parties exemplifies that programmatic profiles of new parties matter for their electoral performance and reveals the importance of the time dimension.

Until now, comparative studies on the electoral performance of new parties have exclusively focused on the level of parties. This is also the analytical approach deployed in the previously described chapter 4 of this dissertation. While this research provides valuable inferences on the level of parties, it offers only indirect insights about voters' reactions when it comes to elections featuring new parties. Additionally, inferences about individual behavior on the basis of aggregate data bear the risk of ecological fallacies (King 1997). Therefore, the fifth and final

part of the dissertation illuminates electoral prospects of new parties from a different angle by switching to the individual level of analysis. In this collaborative study with Ingo Rohlfing, we investigate individual voting behavior with respect to new parties. Therefore, we take the individual vote choice as the dependent variable and differentiate between voting for a new party, voting for an existing party and abstention. Considering the focus of this dissertation on the programmatic competition between parties, our main interest centers on the influence of the programmatic supply by existing parties on vote choice with regard to new parties. To the best of our knowledge, there currently exists no comparative study on individual voting in relation to new parties. Furthermore, the study takes on an important role in the dissertation itself. By examining voting behavior, it focuses directly on the demand side of the political market and complements the preceding parts which concentrate on the supply side and are located on the party as well as party system level. While the second part of the dissertation looks at how the programmatic diversity of existing parties impacts on the probability of the formation of new parties, the fifth part analyzes how the same factor – i.e. diversity – affects voters' reactions to new parties participating in a general parliamentary election for the first time. Moreover, another innovation concerns the research design which takes into account that voting for a new party and abstention are part of the same choice set. Investigating both phenomena in isolation might cause biased inference regarding voting behavior.

As explained above, the study includes the diversity of existing parties as a major determinant of the probability of voting for new parties. However, it faces the limitation that, due to lacking manifesto data for many minor new parties, it is not possible to also consider the actual programmatic profiles of the new parties included in the study. The dilemma for comparative research between the aim of including all new parties for a certain group of countries and period of time and, at the same time, being able to capture their programmatic profiles is difficult to dissolve. Also for this reason, both the theory as well as the findings of this dissertation serve as a starting point and pose several avenues for follow-up research. Facing the above mentioned dilemma, it seems promising to use additional methodological angles in order to complement (Lieberman 2005) the research of this dissertation. Two strategies are of value here. First, case study research (Rohlfing 2012) could uncover causal mechanisms behind the formation and initial electoral performance of new parties – in particular the interplay between (potential) new parties, existing parties and electoral demands in a temporal perspective. Secondly and related to this, sequence analysis (Blanchard *et al.* 2014) can also address this interplay by analyzing

different chains of events. Such methodological approaches are also able to illuminate party competition between elections as well as the origins and effects of programmatic innovation.

3. Overview

Chapter 2 marks the starting point of this dissertation by exploring how on the programmatic level of party competition the programmatic diversity of existing parties influences the probability of the emergence of new political parties in developed democracies. Apart from institutional factors, previous comparative studies on this topic concentrated on the demand side of the electoral market (voters) and its interaction with the supply side, i.e. the programmatic offerings of existing parties. I choose a different theoretical starting point by emphasizing that the emergence of a new political party is a phenomenon taking place on the supply side of the political market. Subsequently, I elaborate that programmatic factors linked to the supply side in themselves represent a strong determinant of the probability of the emergence of new parties. In this context, I extend the concept of programmatic innovation (Franzmann 2011) which refers to new programmatic offerings made by parties vis-à-vis the electorate. In contrast to other studies, I do not assume that preference shaping between parties and voters occurs in only one direction. On the one hand, programmatic innovations can pick up already existing unsatisfied demands in the electorate. On the other hand, actors can also come up with programmatic innovations for which they first have to induce demand. The core argument of the analysis is that the probability of the formation of new parties increases when the programmatic diversity of existing parties decreases, as this extends the room for programmatic innovations by new (potential) parties. For the differentiation between genuinely new parties and splits from existing parties as subtypes of new parties empirical results confirm this effect for the former but not for the latter and prove the importance of the structure of the programmatic supply in the process of new party formation.

Chapter 3 examines the programmatic profiles of niche parties. It verifies whether green and extreme right parties, typically considered as niche parties in the literature, show programmatic characteristics linked to the niche party concept. For this purpose, complete programmatic profiles of parties are captured by means of two features: The first, nicheness (Meyer and Miller 2015), refers to programmatic differences between the given party and its competitors. The second concept, programmatic concentration, captures the range of a programmatic profile of a given party and the varying emphasis it puts on the addressed issues. While the nicheness of a party is influenced by both the given party and its competitors, programmatic concentration is

only dependent on the programmatic profile of the given party. Ensuing from attributes present in definitions of the niche party concept, niche parties are expected to show higher levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration compared to their competitors. Contrary to that, results show that for more than 50 per cent of all elections of green and extreme right parties in the sample, these parties do not show levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration significantly higher than those of all competing parties. This is not only true when we compare the scores of these parties to all of their competitors but also when we restrict the comparison to their mainstream party counterparts. With regard to changes over time, niche parties show significant changes for nicheness as well as for programmatic concentration. The fact that changes do not only occur in nicheness but also in programmatic concentration indicates that niche parties do not statically stick to their initial programmatic profile. Rather, they adapt their platforms over time. This also points to the possibility that changes in their nicheness are not automatically and solely the result of the behavior of their competitors but also caused by actions of niche parties themselves. In sum, results of this study do not support a static classification of parties into categories of niche (and mainstream) parties along the lines of party family membership. Instead, investigating parties by means of their nicheness and programmatic concentration enables us to capture programmatic differences (in degree) between parties and over time. In this way, these measures broaden the conceptual toolbox for analyzing party competition, enabling us to look on parties' profiles from a salience theory perspective.

Chapter 4 investigates how the variation in the programmatic profiles of niche parties affect their long-term electoral performance. Previous comparative studies on the electoral performance of niche parties either concentrate on the programmatic behavior of certain mainstream parties or solely on core issues of niche parties (Meguid 2005; 2008; Hino 2012). However, manifesto data show that the platforms of these parties cover far more than just their assumed core issues. Taking complete programmatic profiles into account, there are differences in nicheness and programmatic concentration between these parties and also over time (see chapter 3) which leads to the question how this variation in profiles affects electoral performance. In this context, I argue that the programmatic features of niche parties, nicheness and programmatic concentration, have different effects over time. At the beginning, when niche parties are new in the electoral arena, they should benefit from high levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration. A high nicheness stands for a distinct programmatic profile which serves as a unique characteristic for parties entering party competition. Similarly, at the

beginning, niche parties should also profit from high levels of programmatic concentration. A high programmatic concentration implies a clear programmatic focus and makes it easier to transport the core message of the party and attract awareness on the side of voters, especially when the given party is new on the scene. However, in the long run, these positive effects of nicheness and programmatic concentration should diminish. In order to attract broader segments of the electorate, parties have to leave their programmatic niche. Parties which maintain high levels of nicheness over time are more likely to attract only a minority of voters in the long run. With regard to programmatic concentration, it might be necessary for niche parties to broaden their profiles for the long term in order to attract groups of voters who care about more issues than the ones the party focused on at the beginning. In addition, the positive effect of programmatic concentration on awareness of voters is likely to decrease once the party passed its initial phase after entering the electoral arena. Results confirm these hypotheses. At the beginning, nicheness and programmatic concentration, both, show positive effects on electoral performance of green and extreme right parties. In the long run, these effects vanish. All in all, results show that nicheness and programmatic concentration as features of niche parties do matter with regard to their electoral fate but their effects vary over time.

Chapter 5, a collaboration with Ingo Rohlfing, focuses on the reactions of voters to new parties. Whereas the other chapters concentrate directly on the supply side of the political market by investigating the influence of programmatic factors linked to party systems and parties on the fate of new political parties, this chapter shifts the focus directly to the voters (demand side). The theoretical starting point for this chapter is that the existing literature on new parties assumes that new parties' prospects rise in the face of mismatches between parties' programmatic offerings and demands of the electorate. While the second chapter of the dissertation shows that the formation of genuinely new parties becomes more likely in situations of a lower programmatic diversity of existing parties, chapter 5 examines how diversity affects individual voting behavior with regard to new parties which participate in a national election for the first time. Thus, the study takes into account the multi-level structure both in theoretical and empirical terms. By applying this research design, it adds to the existing studies on electoral performance located on the analytical level of parties. Theoretically, we point out several reasons why new parties do not automatically benefit from situations of low programmatic diversity. In this context, it is also important that we consider the whole set of choices voters have, which apart from voting for an existing or a new party also includes abstention. For example, voters' dissatisfaction with regard to parties might have already reached a point at

which they refuse voting at all. Additionally, it is not guaranteed that new parties offer policies suitable for dissolving mismatches between supply and demand on the political market, either because they misread the situation or because they have other motivations. Among multiple hypotheses on the effects of the programmatic supply of existing parties and individual voter-related determinants on voting behavior, our main expectation is that a decrease in programmatic diversity of existing parties, on average, leads to a higher probability of voting for a new party. A multilevel analysis of 20 elections in parliamentary democracies offers support for this expectation.

Table 1: Overview on individual publications.

Title	**Aim**	**Status**
The Influence of Programmatic Diversity on the Formation of New Political Parties	Argues that the programmatic diversity of existing parties is a crucial factor for the probability of new party formation as it determines the room for programmatic innovation by (potential) new parties	Published in Party Politics, 21 (6), 919-929
Are Niche Parties Really Different? The Programmatic Profiles of Green and Extreme Right Parties	Complements the nicheness concept by introducing programmatic concentration for capturing the programmatic profiles of parties from a salience theory perspective; analyzes programmatic differences of green and extreme right parties in relation to competing parties on the basis of nicheness and programmatic concentration	In 2013 awarded in its first version with the Party Politics Peter Mair Prize as the best paper at the 23rd ECPR Summer School on "Political Parties and Democracy"
How Programmatic Profiles of Niche Parties Affect Their Electoral Performance	Argues that the effects of nicheness and programmatic concentration on electoral performance of niche parties which start as new parties vary over time.	A later, shortened and revised version is published in West European Politics 39 (6), 1205-1229
Programmatic and Individual Determinants of Vote Choices for New Parties: A Multilevel Analysis of Voting Behavior in 20 Parliamentary Elections (together with Ingo Rohlfing)	Provides an analysis of individual voting behavior with respect to new parties and takes into account that voting for new parties is influenced by the programmatic supply of existing parties.	

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Chapter 2

The Influence of Programmatic Diversity on the Formation of New Political Parties[1]

Gregor Zons

Abstract

Quantitative studies aiming at general explanations for the emergence of new political parties stress the importance of new issues and the programmatic behaviour of other parties. I connect these two aspects by arguing that the programmatic diversity of existing parties is a strong influence on the incentives for new party formation, as it determines the scope for possible programmatic innovations. I use two measures for programmatic diversity in order to capture the programmatic supply by existing parties. It can be shown that the explanatory contribution of programmatic factors is as high as or even higher than that of the factors usually cited in the literature on new political parties, e.g. electoral institutions. Moreover, the results underline the necessity of differentiating between genuinely new parties and splits from existing parties as subtypes of new political parties.

KEY WORDS ▪ new parties ▪ conceptual definition ▪ measurement ▪ statistical analysis

[1] A later version is published in Party Politics 25 (6), 919-929, which was published online before print in 2013.

Introduction

Over recent decades, developed democracies have seen a considerable number of new political parties, including green and right-wing parties. The literature on new political parties offers explanations for cross-country variation in the emergence of new parties, relying on electoral institutions (Willey 1998) and sociological factors (cleavages) which are in general persistent over time. In addition, there are qualitative studies emphasizing the influence of new programmatic offerings in the context of the formation of new parties (Müller-Rommel 1993; Ignazi 1992). Similarly, quantitative studies aiming at general explanations for the phenomenon of new party formation mention the importance of new issues (Hug 2001; Tavits 2006). This study aims at contributing to this line of research by investigating the influence of the programmatic supply by existing parties on the formation of new political parties over time in a cross-country design.

This analysis adds to approaches which tie in with models of strategic entry (Cox 1997; Tavits 2006). The basic idea of these models is that the formation of a new political party is the result of a calculation by rational actors who balance the costs of formation on the one hand against, on the other hand, the benefits of office as well as the probability of being elected. As the following analysis includes the programmatic supply of the existing parties, which determines the possible leeway for programmatic innovations by new competitors, it takes account of the fact that the decision to form a new party is dependent on the behaviour of other actors in the arena. I argue that the programmatic level of party competition is central to the incentives to form a new political party. To capture the programmatic supply, I use two measures for programmatic diversity of political parties. The quantitative approach also enables a comparison of the explanatory power of the introduced programmatic factors and factors usually cited in the literature. In addition, whereas previous quantitative studies treated both genuinely new parties and splits from existing parties as new parties, without checking for any differences in their formation process, the following empirical analysis differentiates between both subtypes.

A better understanding of the formation of new parties is also essential for the understanding of their success (Hug 2000), as these phenomena are interlinked but not identical with regard to their explanatory factors (Harmel and Robertson 1985: 502). Although many newly formed parties never achieve electoral success, the few successful ones represent a subsample of this larger group. Assuming that their success is at least partly attributable to the prospect of

programmatic innovations, it is necessary to examine how the leeway for such innovations affects the formation of new parties in the first place. Even without making electoral inroads, newly formed parties are relevant, as existing parties may react to their emergence and their policy offerings (Meguid 2005, 2008). The focus on the programmatic level of party competition also speaks to the literature on the stability of party systems and the functioning of party competition in general. As this study demonstrates that the emergence of new political parties is linked to the programmatic level of party competition, it indicates that this is an expression of programmatic innovation, which is an important condition for functioning competition between parties (Franzmann 2011: 330).

Theory on the Formation of New Parties

One of the most prominent arguments in the literature on new political parties is 'that new parties are formed primarily to fill representational needs' (Harmel and Robertson 1985: 502) and respond to dissatisfied voters (Hauss and Rayside 1978: 38). Apart from the demand side, this quote hints at the importance of the behaviour of political parties on the programmatic level of party competition. Studies of single parties and party families have addressed this point by looking at the programmatic offerings of existing parties with respect to certain issues (Müller-Rommel 1993). Quantitative studies aiming at a general explanation for the emergence of new political parties mention the concept of new issues, which also touches on the relationship between the programmatic supply and electoral demands. In this article, I concentrate on the programmatic supply side of the political market. I argue that diversity of the programmatic supply by existing parties determines the leeway for programmatic innovations by new challengers and represents an important factor in the process of new party formation. The consideration of factors linked to the behaviour of parties on the programmatic level of party competition is important as it can account for variation in the number of new parties over time.

Theoretical models in quantitative studies on the phenomenon of new party formation have addressed the importance of the programmatic supply side to various degrees. Hug (2001), in his well-known work on new parties, develops a game-theoretic model to explain their formation. The actors in this game are an existing party and a potential new party. The result of this model depends on the response of the existing party to demands by potential challengers under the condition of uncertainty. Thereby, the formation of a new party follows from the programmatic behaviour of existing parties. On the basis of this model, Hug (2001:

54ff.) states five hypotheses which influence the probability of new party formation. Among them is that the probability of new parties emerging increases with the importance of new issues.

Tavits (2006) starts with a general rational choice model which comes from Cox's (1997) illustration of entry models and describes the rational calculus of elites deciding whether to form a new party or not. According to this calculus, a formation occurs when the valuation of the benefits of holding political office and the (expected) probability of getting elected exceeds the costs of forming a new party. As this calculus is very general, it is important which factors are connected to these three parameters.

The probability of getting elected has to be assessed by the potential new party before the election and before its decision to participate in it. Actors are assumed to look at previous elections to estimate their potential electoral success. Beyond this assumption, there is the argument that the strength of voters' commitments to particular parties is increasing in the age of a democracy as the viability of parties grows more and more apparent (Tavits 2008: 116f.). Taking a line similar to Hug, Tavits also states that 'if societal conditions are such that the probability of new issues emerging is high, then new parties should be more frequent' (Tavits 2006: 103). The concept of new issues also points to the importance of the programmatic level of party competition as it affects the conditions for connecting to electoral demands in the first place.

In order to capture the importance of the programmatic supply side, I tie in with theories about party competition which differentiate between the sides of the parties and the voters. Robertson (1976; 2006), in contrast to Downs (1957), who assumes that parties and voters are part of the same political space, starts from two political spaces: one of parties and one of voters. Building on this distinction, one can see that the two spaces differ in their dimensionality and their dominant issues, and therefore do not have to be congruent. Following this line of thought, Franzmann (2011: 330) uses the concept of the issue market, in which issues are the goods traded between parties (supply side) and voters (demand side). In an equilibrium on the issue market the programmatic supply of the political parties would perfectly cover all voters' demands, or, in other words, there would be a perfect congruence between parties' programmatic offerings and voters' demands. However, the existence of such an equilibrium over time is highly unlikely. Owing to imperfect information, party actors

are not entirely certain about voters' (future) demands or their electoral consequences (Hug 2001: 50f.), the more so because of a constantly changing environment. Added to this, parties might not be able or willing to adapt their programmatic profiles, for example due to intra-party reasons (Robertson 1976: 38). These factors lead to the contestability of the issue market and the vulnerability of incumbent parties. They give incentives and opportunities for political entrepreneurs to offer new programmatic ideas to the electorate. I call these 'programmatic innovations', as 'innovation' refers to the actual introduction of a given policy idea (Hindmoor 2008: 499).

I differentiate two types of programmatic innovation. The first is the promotion of new issues not yet addressed by the existing parties. This includes issues that were covered by parties in the past but subsequently lapsed, as the handling of an issue may vary over time due to an ever changing environment. The second type of innovation refers to the way parties think about politics in general and how they structure their programmatic offerings. According to Robertson (2006: 172), political parties are not completely flexible in the political party space. They hold certain 'governing methodologies', 'an idea, a methodology, a prime value, which tends towards organising a party's policy offerings across all of what it does'. Here, there exists another possible source of innovation. A political entrepreneur can come up with a new mode of policymaking in general which could enable a new combination of already existing but unconnected issues or a combination of old and new issues. Programmatic innovations can connect to unsatisfied demands and in this way respond to representational needs. Lago and Martinez (2010) call these situations electoral market failures. However, political entrepreneurs may also conceive innovations for which they first have to stimulate demand (de Vries and Hobolt 2012). This means that preference shaping between parties and the electorate occurs in both directions but, irrespective of the direction of preference shaping, the introduction of a new programmatic offering which I call programmatic innovation is the precondition to trigger and connect to electoral demands. Additionally, although programmatic innovations are not guaranteed to meet the approval of voters, they nevertheless offer the opportunity to appeal to them in the first place. The leeway for possible innovations is dependent on the range of policies offered by the existing parties. The less diverse the existing supply, the more leeway there is for innovations by new contestants. The diversity of the programmatic supply by existing parties follows from two factors. The first is the *overall* issue coverage of all parties and comprises all issues which are addressed at least by one party and, in this way, are part of the programmatic competition between parties. The second factor

refers to the actual programmatic differences *between* parties. All in all, this leads to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The probability of new party formation increases with a lower diversity of the programmatic supply by existing parties.

With regard to the benefits of office, Tavits (2006: 104) argues that the benefits of holding political office vary according to the opportunity for influencing policies. This general argument is then linked to the type of interest mediation: corporatist arrangements are expected to show fewer newly formed parties than pluralist systems, as the former provide channels for influencing policies apart from the parliamentary arena. The dispersal of power across state institutions should also be relevant to the decision process about party formation. A higher number of veto points in a political system increases the possibilities of influencing policies. Yet only party actors have access to these veto points[1]. Consequently, the second hypothesis reads as:

Hypothesis 2: The probability of new party formation increases with the number of veto points that are accessible for party actors.

Turning to formation costs, the literature emphasizes that higher costs lower the probability of new party formation (Tavits 2006; Hug 2001). The costs are determined by the electoral system and regulations with regard to party registration. The following analysis controls for these factors.

Operationalization

Previous quantitative studies follow Hug's (2001: 14) definition of new parties according to which a new political party is defined as 'a genuinely new organization that appoints, for the first time, candidates at a general election to the system's representative assembly'. According to this definition, fissions and genuinely new parties are counted as new parties, whereas electoral alliances and fusions are excluded. However, studies which follow this classification do not verify whether their theoretical expectations hold for both subtypes, genuinely new parties and splits from existing parties, in the same way. I have argued that the programmatic supply of existing parties determines the possible leeway for policy innovations and in this way influence the incentive structure for new party formation. Although it is not impossible

for splitting parties to innovate as described above, their formation process is expected to be linked to their party of origin rather than to the programmatic behaviour of all existing parties. Hence, in order to detect differences in the formation process of genuinely new parties and splits, the following empirical analysis differentiates between both of these subtypes.

Data and Measures

The dataset covers 232 national legislative elections of 21 OECD democracies between 1960 and 2002. Hence, the units of observation are national elections. With regard to the dependent variable, I distinguish between genuinely new parties and splits from existing parties. Table 1 summarizes how the number of these two types of new parties is distributed over elections in each country [2] and Table 2 shows the overall distribution of both variables.

With regard to the independent variables, it is important to find indicators that capture the programmatic supply by political parties as closely as possible (Selb and Pituctin 2010: 148). Parties' manifestos provide the opportunity to follow the programmatic offerings made to the voters. Because of the time span involved, I use the data of the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) (Budge 2001; Klingemann 2006). In this project, party manifestos were coded on the basis of a number of predefined categories. For example, a number of 4.6 for a given party *A* at election at time-point *t* with regard to category *z* means that in terms of content 4.6 percent of the (quasi-)sentences in that party manifesto can be subsumed under this category.

In order to measure the diversity of the programmatic offerings made by existing parties, I rely on two different measures. The first is the number of categories in the CMP scheme which show zeros for all given parties at a given election, meaning that the related issues are not addressed by any of the existing parties. These issues are not part of the programmatic competition between parties. Hence, this number is a measure for the overall issue coverage by all existing parties. This approach assumes that not only do positive values in the CMP dataset reflect parties' behaviour but so do the zero values.[3] This first measure mainly indicates the leeway for the first type of programmatic innovation (new or neglected issues).

The second measure, invented by Franzmann (2008), reflects the differences between parties in the number of categories which are actually addressed by at least one party. Thus, in contrast to the first measure, this second measure only focuses on issues which are part of the programmatic competition between parties. The programmatic heterogeneity for country *c* at

Table 1: Distribution of genuinely new parties across countries over time.

	Number of genuinely new parties and splits																
Election	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Country																	
Australia	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1		0	0	0	
1963-2001	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0		0	0	0	
Austria	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0					
1962-1999	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0					
Belgium	0	4	0	1	2	3	1	0	2	0	1	0	0				
1961-1999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0				
Canada	0	1	0	1	1	2	2	4	3		1	1					
1963-2000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2		0	0					
Denmark	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
1960-2001	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Finland	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0						
1962-1999	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0						
France	0	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0						
1992-2002	1	1	0	3	4	2	2	0	0	0	0						
Germany	2	1	1	2	2	4	1	3	1								
1961-1990	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0								
Greece	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0								
1977-2000	2	2	0	2	3	0	1	1	0								
Iceland	1	0	1	0	1	1	4	0	0								
1971-1999	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	2								
Ireland	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	0				
1961-2002	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0				
Italy	0	0	0	4	2	2	5	1		0	1						
1963-2001	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0		1	0						
Luxembourg	0	0	3	1	2	0	0										
1968-1999	0	1	1	0	1	0	0										
Netherlands	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1					
1963-2002	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0					
New Zealand	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0			0	1			
1963-2002	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0			1	1			
Norway	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0						
1961-2002	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	0						
Portugal	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	0								
1979-2002	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0								
Spain	5	1	9	2	0	0	0										
1979-2000	0	3	2	8	0	0	0										
Sweden	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0			
1960-2002	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Switzerland	2	0	2	1	2	2	1	0	0								
1967-1999	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0								
UK	1	0	0	4	0	3	1	3	0	0	0						
1964-2001	0	0	2	2	0	8	2	1	0	0	0						

The first row in each country cell refers to the number of genuinely new parties, the second to the number of splits.

time-point *t* reads as follows:

$$Het_{ct} = \frac{\frac{1}{K-z}\sum_{i=1}^{K-z} s_{ict}^2}{\sqrt{P_{ct}}}$$

In the formula, *K* stands for the overall number of categories in the CMP dataset and *z* for the number of categories which show zeros for all given parties. s_{ict}^2 is the variance of the salience scores of the parties in category *i* and P_{ct} represents the number of parties. This means that the programmatic heterogeneity is measured as the averaged variance of the salience scores over *K-z* categories, corrected by a factor for the number of parties.[4] This measure indicates the leeway for the second type of innovation (new combinations of issues). In general, there is a high positive correlation (r = 0.55) between both measures. In part, this is due to the fact that the number of categories not addressed is included in the formula for programmatic heterogeneity. However, the correlation, when the latter is not adjusted by the number of zero categories, still amounts to r = 0.40. This means that a higher number of nonaddressed categories is associated with greater differences between parties in the remaining categories.

Table 2: Overall distribution of the number of genuinely new parties and splits.

Counts	Genuinely new parties	Splits
0	127	159
1	63	42
2	22	19
3	10	7
4	6	3
5	3	0
6	0	0
7	0	0
8	0	2
9	1	0
Total No	185	129
Mean	0.80	0.56
Std. Dev.	1.22	1.11
N	232	232

Both measures show variation between countries and over time. Table 3 shows that on average the number of non-addressed categories decreases over decades. The same can be observed for the programmatic heterogeneity. On average, Sweden features the highest number of non-addressed categories (Ø = 19) and the lowest number is found for Spain (Ø = 3). The highest programmatic heterogeneity on average exists in Finland (Ø = 6.78), the

lowest in the Netherlands (Ø = 0.80). As the first hypothesis is linked to the homogeneity of the programmatic supply by existing parties, the scores for programmatic heterogeneity are multiplied by -1. Thus, in the following, I use the term 'programmatic homogeneity' with regard to this measure. High values then indicate a high degree of homogeneity between the programmatic offerings by existing parties.

Table 3: Average of programmatic diversity measures over time.

	N	No of zero-categories	Programmatic heterogeneity
1960-1969	43	14.77	3.77
1970-1979	61	13.28	3.52
1980-1989	63	11.13	2.61
1990-2002	65	9.43	2.35
Overall	232	11.89	2.99

According to hypothesis 1, the expectation is that the probability of party formation at election point *t* increases with a lower diversity of the election at point *t-1*. I use the time lag because I assume that the decision process of forming a new party takes a certain amount of time, which is why the effect of the programmatic diversity at the time of a given election should first become visible at the time of the next election. The measures of programmatic diversity serve as indicators of the leeway for programmatic innovation. As argued above, such leeway is regarded as the main reference point for the expected long-term probability of getting elected.

The age of the democracy is included as a control variable. Assuming that voters' commitments to parties become more stable over time, the effect of the age of the democracy should be decreasing over time rather than being linear. Thus, its natural log is used in the analysis.

As previous studies do, I use three different variables as indicators of the costs of party formation: first, the size of the deposit necessary for a party registration; second, the number of signatures per million eligible voters which are required for access to the ballot; third, a dummy variable indicating whether parties receive state financial support.[5] Apart from these factors, the electoral rules determine the difficulty of winning seats in parliament. In this context, Selb and Pituctin (2010: 148) criticize that 'effects of electoral institutions that primarily operate at the level of electoral districts are usually specified at the national level, albeit often with measures originally tailored for the constituency level.' Owing to the fact

that other concepts (first and foremost programmatic diversity) are located at the national level, a shift of the analytical level from the national to the district level is not feasible in this study. Instead, two measures which are located at the national level depict the influence of the electoral system. First, the mean district magnitude captures the disproportionality of the transformation of votes into seats.[6] Second, the national threshold of representation (Taagepera 2002) measures the difficulty for a party to win its first seat in parliament.[7]

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the independent variables.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Registration costs	232	.0321983	.1067622	0	.77
Petition signatures (logged)	232	1.567942	2.066957	-.6931472	7.387919
Party financing	232	.5560345	.4979245	0	1
Mean district magnitude	232	16.93789	34.17475	1	150
Nat. threshold	232	2.141145	.9704201	.4966888	4.651302
Age of democracy (logged)	232	2.301835	.4514625	.6931472	3.135494
Integration	232	3.255927	1.094941	1.625	4.75
Inst. constraints	232	1.88069	1.374393	0	5
GDP	232	2.560129	2.414856	-6.8	12.2
Unemployment	232	5.359483	4.277627	.1	22.4
Population (logged)	232	9.10047	1.325679	5.32301	11.0359
Ethnic fragmentation	232	.7842672	.2061256	.23	.96
Programmatic homogeneity	232	-2.987655	2.512055	-16.98514	-.3784071
Number of ‘zero’ categories	232	11.89224	6.125069	0	33

The model employs two indicators of the benefits of holding office. In order to take into account Tavits’s (2006: 111f.) significant findings concerning corporatism, I use Siaroff’s (1999) integration index. I additionally include an index of institutional constraints on central state government[8] as a measure related to veto points in order to capture the spread of power over policies in state institutions.

The dataset includes two variables which can be linked to society: the size of the population (logged) and ethnic fragmentation.[9] Additional variables control for the influence of economic factors on voting behaviour. These are the GPD per capita growth and the unemployment rate.[10] Table 4 gives the descriptive statistics for all independent variables.

Analysis

The two count variables for the number of genuinely new parties and splits per election differ in their distribution (Table 2). In particular, in the case of splits, the count variable shows a higher number of zero counts. In order to enable a comparison between both phenomena, in

Table 5: Regression results.

	M1	M2	M3	
	Genuinely New Parties Occurrence (Log. Regression)	Splits Occurrence (Log. Regression)	Genuinely New Parties Number (Neg. Bin. Regr.)	
	b / (se)	b / (se)	b / (se)	std. % Δ
Registration costs	-2.007**	-0.000	-1.574*	-15.5
	(0.590)	(1.594)	(0.634)	
Petition signatures	0.089	0.054	0.168**	41.4
(logged)	(0.056)	(0.174)	(0.038)	
Party financing	-0.093	-1.316	-0.162	
	(0.247)	(0.845)	(0.243)	
Mean district	0.007*	0.017**	0.003	
magnitude	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.002)	
Nat. threshold	-0.157	-0.057	-0.129	
	(0.156)	(0.220)	(0.089)	
Age of democracy	-0.326	1.186	-0.432*	-17.7
(logged)	(0.376)	(0.707)	(0.200)	
Integration	-0.260*	-0.179	-0.241**	-23.2
	(0.102)	(0.308)	(0.085)	
Inst. constraints	0.270*	-0.529*	0.129*	19.3
	(0.123)	(0.209)	(0.063)	
No of previous splits		-0.768**		
		(0.176)		
GDP	0.029	-0.010	-0.016	
	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.028)	
Unemployment	-0.019	0.144**	0.004	
	(0.038)	(0.053)	(0.025)	
Population (logged)	0.030	0.222	0.127	
	(0.134)	(0.316)	(0.092)	
Ethnic fragmentation	-1.453**	6.968**	-0.578	
	(0.545)	(1.353)	(0.342)	
Prog. homogeneity	0.075	-0.020	0.072*	24.1
(lagged)	(0.059)	(0.053)	(0.032)	
No of 'zero'-categories	0.076*	-0.069	0.039*	28.2
(lagged)	(0.031)	(0.042)	(0.018)	
Constant	1.247	-7.257	0.307	
	(1.975)	(4.204)	(1.217)	
Wald	320.45	171.91	794.94	
Alpha			.505	
			(0.237)	
N	232	232	232	

* $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$. Country clustered standard errors.

a first step these count variables are transformed into binary variables indicating the occurrence of either subtype. This transformation allows the use of a logistic regression in both cases. Pooled time-series cross-section data are prone to heteroskedasticity and serial correlation causing observations to be dependent on each other. In order to account for country clustering robust standard errors are used. With regard to the temporal dependence,

two variables are included in a preliminary analysis (Beck et al. 1998). The first counts the number of elections since the previous occurrence (of a genuinely new party in the first model or a split in the second model). The second captures the number of previous occurrences. Only the second variable appears to be significant (at the 1 percent level) in the case of splits and is included in model presented below.

The results of the logistic regression (table 5) for both subtypes, genuinely new parties (model M1) and splits (model M2), reflect similarities but also important differences with regard to the explanatory factors. The high Wald statistics show the overall significance of both models. With regard to the variables linked to the probability of electoral support, the results show that the lagged programmatic homogeneity does not have any significant effect on the occurrence of either subtype. However, the number of categories that are not raised by any party has a positive effect on the probability of the occurrence of genuinely new parties. This effect is significant at the 5 percent level. The coefficient amounts to 0.076, meaning that the nonaddressing of an additional category leads to a 0.076 increase in the log-odds of the dependent variable linked to the occurrence of genuinely new parties. A higher number of non-addressed categories indicates a less overall issue coverage by the existing parties. Hence, this finding supports the first hypothesis, as the probability of the occurrence of genuinely new parties is expected to increase with a lower overall issue coverage by the existing parties. In contrast, this variable shows no significant effect on the probability of the occurrence of splits. This result underlines the proposition that factors reflecting the diversity of programmatic offerings by all existing parties influence the incentive structure for the formation decision in the case of genuinely new parties, but not splits.

Differences between the subtypes also become apparent in respect of the indicators linked to the benefits of office. Integration, the indicator for corporatism, displays a negative effect (significant at the 5 percent level) on the dependent variable for the first model (M1), while no effect is visible in the case of splits (model M2). The negative effect for genuinely new parties is in line with the theoretical expectation that corporatist arrangements feature less new political parties than pluralist systems, as the former provide channels for influencing policies apart from the parliamentary arena. As actors deciding about a split from an existing party are likely to be already part of this arena, channels apart from the electoral arena should be of less importance. Institutional constraints on central state government have different effects on each subtype. Their significance (5 percent level) underlines the fact that the distribution of

power in a political system influences the incentive structure for new party formation. For genuinely new parties the effect of institutional constraints on central state government is positive. Tighter constraints on central state government mean that there are more veto points outside the government, increasing the potential to influence policies. Assuming that actors deciding whether to form a completely new party have an out-of-government perspective, they benefit from such constraints. In the case of splits, institutional constraints show a negative effect. This indicates that for parties originating from splits the government perspective is more relevant than it is for genuinely new parties or that they fear losing access to veto points occupied by the party of origin.

Considering the variables linked to the formation costs, the registration costs show a significant (at the 1 percent level) and negative effect for the first model, M1. This means that the probability of the occurrence of genuinely new parties decreases as registration costs rise. The direction of this effect fits the expectation that higher costs should reduce the probability of new parties. However, this effect is not present in the model for splits, M2, indicating that financial obstacles do not prevent the occurrence of splits. This could be explained by different levels of financial resources of genuinely new parties and splits. The logged number of necessary signatures, as well as the dummy variable indicating party funding by the state, do not show any significant effects for either subtype. This does not necessarily mean that state financing does not influence the incentives for forming a new party. However, the existence of state financing could also work against new parties if the rules favour established ones. For example, funding could be related to the achievement of a certain threshold of votes. The mean district magnitude has a positive effect on the occurrence of both subtypes, significant at the 5 percent (M1) and 1 percent level (M2). This effect is hence in line with the theoretical expectation: a higher mean district magnitude implies lower formation costs as it is easier to win seats in parliament. As opposed to this effect, the national threshold of representation has no significant effect in both models. This result suggests that the overall disproportionality between votes and seats matters more than the chance of winning the first seat in parliament (Bischoff 2008). The results of models M1 and M2 reveal no significant effects of the age of democracy on either subtype.

There are also mixed results from the societal variables. No significant effects on either subtype can be found for the (logged) population size. However, ethnic fragmentation shows significant (1 percent level) but opposing effects. In the case of splits, the effect has a positive

sign. As higher values indicate lower levels of ethnic fragmentation, the probability of the occurrence of splits therefore decreases as ethnic fragmentation grows. Genuinely new parties experience the opposite effect. The probability of the occurrence of genuinely new parties increases with level of ethnic fragmentation. This means that a higher level of ethnic fragmentation diminishes the opportunities for splits in existing parties, while at the same time improving prospects for genuinely new parties. Although this aspect needs further consideration, it may explain why previous studies which did not separate the subtypes found no significant effects for this variable as the results cancel each other out. With regard to the economic variables, the growth of GDP per capita displays no effect on the occurrence of genuinely new parties or splits. The unemployment rate shows a significant and negative effect in model M2, indicating that the probability of the occurrence of splits increases when unemployment rises. The negative effect of the number of previous splits in model M2 suggests that the probability of the occurrence of splits decreases with the number of previous splits. In sum, the results of the logistic regressions show that there are important differences in the ways the explanatory factors operate on the two subtypes. This underlines the necessity of differentiating between genuinely new parties and splits when analysing new political parties.

As the focus of this article is on programmatic factors, in the last part of the empirical analysis I concentrate on genuinely new parties. So far, I have focused only on their occurrence. The distribution of the counts of genuinely new parties, however, also provides the opportunity to make use of the whole variance of the number of genuinely new parties per election. The dependent variable is then the number of genuinely new parties for each election. Because of the distributional parameters, a negative binomial distribution is assumed. The results of the third model M3 are based on a generalized estimating equation (GEE) model, which in this case is based on a negative binomial distribution and belongs to the family of population-averaged panel-data models. In contrast to a simple negative binomial regression, this approach allows the temporal dependence of the observations (Hilbe 2011: 450ff.).[11]

The high Wald statistic shows the overall significance of the model and the estimate of alpha justifies the assumption of the negative binomial distribution. Similar to the first model, the number of zero categories has a positive effect on the expected number of genuinely new parties (dependent variable), which is significant at the 5 percent level. In the third model, the lagged programmatic homogeneity also shows a positive effect (significant at the 5 percent

level) on the dependent variable. An increase in the lagged programmatic homogeneity leads to a higher expected number of genuinely new parties. The significance of both effects suggests that not only the overall issue coverage of all existing parties influences the incentive structure for the formation of genuinely new parties, but also the differences between the parties in the issues which are actually part of the programmatic competition between parties. Both of these effects support the first hypothesis. Contrary to the first model, the (logged) age of the democracy shows a negative effect (significant at the 5 percent level) in the third model, indicating that the probability of the occurrence of genuinely new parties is not influenced by the age of the democracy but that the latter diminishes the expected count of genuinely new parties.

In line with the first model, the results from the indicators linked to the benefits of office reveal that institutional constraints on central state government have a positive effect on the expected counts of genuinely new parties, which is significant at the 5 percent level. In the third model, the indictor of corporatism, integration, also has a negative effect (significant at the 1 percent level), which means that a higher level of corporatism decreases the expected counts of genuinely new parties. This resembles Tavits's findings (2006: 111) for new parties in general. Taking both of these effects together, this means that it is necessary to differentiate between different kinds of institutions. Corporatist arrangements offer opportunities for influencing policies from outside the parliamentary arena. State institutions constraining central government provide access to veto points which enable the exercise of influence over policies. However, this access is only gained through party channels.

The comparison with the logistic model for the occurrence of genuinely new parties shows that registration costs also have a negative effect (significant at the 5 percent level) in this model. Higher registration costs reduce the expected counts of genuinely new parties, supporting again the expectation about the formation costs. In contrast to the first model, the (logged) number of necessary signatures has a positive effect in this model, significant at the 1 percent level. Contradicting the theoretical expectation, an increase in the necessary number of signatures leads to a higher expected number of genuinely new parties. This effect is also found by Tavits (2006: 110f.) with regard to all new parties. A possible explanation is that these requirements serve as an information shortcut about possible electoral support (Tavits 2006: 111). Again, no effect is found for the public financing of political parties. Unlike in the first model, the mean district magnitude has no significant effect on the expected number of

genuinely new parties. This means that this variable explains the occurrence of this subtype better than the actual number of new parties per election. In the third model, neither the societal nor the economic control variables show any significant effects on the expected counts of genuinely new parties.

So far, only the direction and significance of the effects have been considered. To examine the magnitude of the different effects, the variables showing significant effects in the third model are standardized. The last column of table 5 shows the percentage changes in the expected number of genuinely new parties when one of the independent variables increases by one standard deviation. These numbers show that the (logged) number of necessary signatures has the strongest effect on the dependent variable. An increase of the first by one standard deviation leads to an increase in the expected number of genuinely new parties by 41.4 percent. Apart from that, the programmatic factors also show a high magnitude. The expected number of genuinely new parties rises by 28.2 percent when the (lagged) number of zero categories goes up by one standard deviation. For the (lagged) programmatic homogeneity this effect amounts to 24.1 percent. Comparison with the other significant effects suggests that these programmatic factors are not just statistically significant but also significant in terms of their magnitude.

Conclusion

In this study, I first argued that the diversity of the programmatic supply by existing parties represents an important factor in the process of the new party formation, as it determines the leeway for possible programmatic innovations. In order to capture this leeway, I introduced a measure for the overall issue coverage of political parties and a second measure for the programmatic differences between parties. Secondly, I pointed out that state institutions in the form of veto points are also relevant for the process of new party formation as they influence the benefits of office for new (potential) political parties.

Above all, the first part of the empirical analysis of the study showed the necessity of differentiating between genuinely new parties and splits from existing parties. Differences between the two subtypes were found in respect of factors linked to the diversity of the programmatic supply by existing parties. The overall issue coverage has a significant effect, but only on the occurrence of genuinely new parties: a lower issue coverage by the existing parties increases the probability of their occurrence. However, programmatic differences

between parties are not able to account for the occurrence of either subtype. Another difference between the subtypes is revealed by the indicators relating to the benefits of office. Institutional constraints on central state government increase the probability of the occurrence of genuinely new parties but have the opposite effect in the case of splits. The first part of the empirical analysis also demonstrates that factors connected with the formation costs have a different impact on the occurrence of both genuinely new parties and splits. Registration costs hamper the occurrence of genuinely new parties but not the occurrence of splits, while the mean district magnitude has a positive impact for both subtypes. Moreover, the different effect of ethnic fragmentation on both subtypes underlines the need for differentiation between them, although this effect needs further investigation. These varying results represent a starting point for future research, investigating the causal mechanisms behind these differences.

The results of the second part of the empirical analysis, which focused on the number of genuinely new parties, confirm and strengthen the importance of programmatic factors for the incentive structure for their formation. Fewer differences between parties as well as lower overall issue coverage are associated with a higher expected number of genuinely new parties. The independent effects of factors linked to the programmatic supply raise the question of what role electoral demands play in the emergence of programmatic innovations and the formation of genuinely new parties in general. On the one hand, it is possible that programmatic innovations pick up so far unsatisfied electoral demands but, on the other hand, political actors can come up with innovations and try to stimulate electoral demand for them in the future. To detect such interactions, future research using quantitative methods should include finer measures of electoral demands.

Although the effects of the programmatic factors indicate the importance of the scope for programmatic innovations in the formation of genuinely new parties, this analysis, due to the lack of available data, could not examine the actual programmatic offerings of genuinely new parties. However, it offers a basis for additional research for a more detailed examination of programmatic innovations, for example by investigating their origins and how they are connected to electoral demands and influence them. This could also illuminate why and when actors choose certain types of programmatic innovations. These aspects are relevant with regard to the electoral success of genuinely new parties and their programmatic offerings.

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Notes

[1] Franzmann (2011: 333ff.) points out how different types of veto points affect the diversity of the programmatic supply. However, there does not exist an unequivocal relationship between the number of veto points in a political system and the diversity of the programmatic supply by political parties.

[2] For elections until 1990, I rely on Hug's (2001) data retracing his original coding of both subtypes for his list of new parties. For the following elections, I followed Tavits's sources and counted the parties myself. A complete list of all parties counted is available on request. No reliable data on the number of new parties exist for the elections in 1993 in Australia, for the election in 1993 in Canada and for the elections in 1993 and 1996 in New Zealand. The election in 1994 in Italy is not included due to the significant transformation of the electoral system and party system before this election (Bartolini and D'Alimonte 1996). In the German case, only elections for West Germany until 1990 are included.

[3] It has to be noted that the CMP coding scheme is the same for all countries. It is possible that there exist issues which are not captured by this coding scheme. (Quasi-)Sentences of manifestos that address such issues are subsumed into a single category for uncoded sentences which in general does not reach high values. Nevertheless, a category in the CMP coding scheme, which is not addressed by any party, shows at least that there is potential scope for innovation.

[4] Quantitative measures with respect to parties often use vote-shares as weights (see, e.g., Dalton 2008). As the measures for programmatic diversity in this paper should solely capture the programmatic diversity of political parties, I deliberately do not introduce vote-shares as weights to these measures as this would reverse the conceptual separation between the side of parties and the electorate and in this way undermine the conceptual validity of the measures.

[5] As there exists no time series which cover the whole period for these variables, I rely on the data of Hug (2001: 178ff.) and Tavits (2006). Hug mainly took his numbers from the Interparliamentary Union (1976) as well as Sternberger and Vogel (1969). Tavits used information from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Deposits are measured in the local currency. Hug weighted these numbers by dividing them by GNP per capita. The values of this variable are present in his data set, but could not be checked on the basis of the sources he cites. For observations after 1990 only the weighted values exist.

With regard to GNP per capita, Tavits (2006: 166) refers to the Global Development Network Growth Database. However, this only features values for GDP; still, considering the relation between deposits and GDP/GNP per capita, the bias thus caused is marginal. The number of signatures necessary for registration is weighted by the number of registered voters. For the latter, data are available at http://www.idea.int/vt/index.cfm (29.10.12). Furthermore, a dummy variable indicates the presence of party funding by the state. For this, Hug relied on Paltiel (1981) and Tavits consulted http://www.idea.net. On the basis of IDEA (http://www.idea.int/political-finance, Question 19, 29.10.12), I corrected values for Belgium for the years after 1989 and for France after 1988.

[6] For the mean district magnitude, I rely on the dataset 'Democratic Electoral Systems (DES)' (Golder 2005; Bormann and Golder 2013). In the case of Germany, I calculated the mean district magnitude on the basis of the second vote. Similarly, for elections after 1993 in New Zealand the mean district magnitude refers to the list vote.

[7] The calculation is based on data of the DES dataset (Golder 2005; Bormann and Golder 2013). In multi-tier systems the threshold refers to the first tier, as this determines the access to seat allocations in the upper tiers. In case there is a threshold for the participation in the allocation of seats in an upper tier which is lower than the national threshold of representation for the first tier, the latter is replaced by the former. This is the case for Denmark. If there exists a legal threshold for the first tier which exceeds the national threshold of representation, the legal threshold is used (e.g. in Spain). For Germany, the calculation refers to the first vote.

[8] The data come from the Comparative Political Data Set I (Armingeon et al. 2012) and are based on the work of Schmidt (1996). The index ranges from 0 to 6. High values are a sign of strong constraints. The additive index is composed of six dummy variables: EU membership, degree of centralization of state structure, difficulty of amending constitutions, strong bicameralism, central bank autonomy and frequent referendums.

[9] The data rest on a Herfindahl–Hirschman index of concentration for ethnicity (Tavits 2006: 117). Data on ethnicity come from the CIA World Factbook (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html, 29.10.12). The World Bank (http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL, 29.10.12) provides data on population size.

[10] The data on the economic control variables come from the OECD Historical Statistics (1982; 1991; 2002) and for elections after 2000 from the OECD (http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=559# (20.06.13); DOI: 10.1787/lfs-data-en).

[11] An autoregressive correlation structure is assumed (Hilbe 2011: 462ff.).

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Chapter 3

Are Niche Parties Really Different?
The Programmatic Profiles of Green and Extreme Right Parties

Gregor Zons

Abstract

The debate about how to best define the niche party concept is still on-going. At the same time, empirical studies test causal claims linked to these parties and their programmatic features. However, there is a lack of systematically investigating their programmatic profiles as a whole and how these profiles change over time. Therefore, this study captures complete programmatic profiles of parties by two characteristics: (1) nicheness refers to programmatic differences to other parties while (2) programmatic concentration is linked to the range of issues a party addresses and the degree of emphasis it puts on these issues. Based on data of the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project (MRG/CMP), I operationalize both programmatic features by two continuous measures and compare green and extreme right parties, as typical cases of niche parties in the literature, with their competitors and over time. While controlling for statistical uncertainty due to the stochastic process of text generation, results first show that these parties in the majority of cases do not exhibit significant differences in nicheness and programmatic concentration. Secondly, nicheness and programmatic concentration of these parties change in different directions over time. Overall, results of this study question the static classification of niche parties along the lines of party family membership and call for a closer look on programmatic profiles of parties and their changes in general.

Keywords: nicheness; programmatic concentration; programmatic evolution; statistical uncertainty

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1. Introduction

The focus on niche parties in the literature on political parties has led to many arguments about their behaviour, electoral success, reactions of competitors and party competition in general (Meguid 2005, Adams *et al.* 2006, Ezrow 2008, Meguid 2008, Hino 2012, Meyer and Wagner 2013). At the same time, the debate about how to best define the niche party concept is far from being over (Adams *et al.* 2006, Meguid 2008, Wagner 2012, Meyer and Miller 2013, Bischof 2015). Similarly, while empirical analyses have so far tested many causal claims made in the context of niche parties, there is a lack of systematically examining the complete programmatic profiles of these parties. Most definitions of the niche party concept are tied to the emphasis of certain policy fields and treat the niche party label as a static attribution to certain groups of parties. Therefore, changes in programmatic profiles of these parties are masked and programmatic variation beyond pre-defined core issues is neglected. Hino (2012), for example, shows for his sample of green parties in Western Democracies that the Finnish Green Union features on average over time the highest salience of issues typical ascribed for green parties in party manifestos. This share amounts to 60 per cent. What about the other 40 per cent of programmatic statements? Are they more or less evenly distributed across issues, or are there additional topics beyond environmental policy heavily emphasized, and to what degree do these parties show differences in these other topics compared to their competitors? Other members of the green party family reach considerable lower values for the emphasis of green core issues, which makes these questions above even more relevant. Apart from that, parties change their platforms over time. Niche parties might broaden their profiles over time in order to appeal to more potential voters. For these reasons, this study aims at uncovering the programmatic variation between these parties and over time by examining *complete* programmatic profiles of members of the green and extreme-right party family, typically considered as niche parties in the literature (Meguid 2005, Adams *et al.* 2006, Meguid 2008).

Therefore, this study sorts these parties on the basis of two programmatic features which also connect to criteria mentioned in the niche party literature in order to systematically examine programmatic profiles. The first feature, nicheness (Meyer and Miller 2013), refers to the niche status and captures the programmatic differences of a party in relation to its competitors. The second feature, programmatic concentration, covers the concentration in the programmatic profile of a party itself and the varying emphasis of issues in its complete profile. Based on data of the Manifesto Data Collection/Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR, henceforth CMP)

(Budge *et al.* 2001, Klingemann *et al.* 2006, Volkens *et al.* 2013), I adapt an existing approach (Meyer and Miller 2013) with regard to the first feature in order to obtain a continuous measure of nicheness. For the second feature, programmatic concentration of a party, the Herfindahl-Hirschman-Index (HHI) as a concentration index is applied to salience scores of each party. This index is sensitive to the number of categories addressed by a party but also to the distribution of its salience scores across these issues. Concerning these measures, I take statistical uncertainty (Benoit *et al.* 2009) into account which makes it possible to distinguish between significant and non-significant differences.

Using the described measures on basis of manifesto data means that no issues are pre-selected, for example based on party family membership. Instead, I take complete programmatic profiles of parties into account. Moreover, by using this approach, it is not only possible to draw comparisons between parties but also to follow the programmatic evolution of parties taking place gradually over time. Capturing programmatic profiles in this way is not only relevant for the literature on niche parties but also speaks to the literature on party competition in general as party strategies on the programmatic level of party competition and their consequences should be reflected in the measures presented in this paper. The same is true for the literature on new political parties inasmuch as the latter makes arguments based on the programmatic otherness (e.g. new issues or programmatic innovations) of new compared to existing parties (Harmel and Robertson 1985, Hug 2001, Tavits 2006, Lago and Martinez 2010, Hino 2012, Zons 2013).

2. Theory

As this paper focuses on programmatic profiles of niche parties, it is necessary to consider what is meant when we speak about the niche party concept. The niche party concept rests on programmatic criteria and was introduced by Meguid (2005, 2008, pp. 3f.) who defines niche parties through three properties. First, niche parties focus "on sets of issues which were previously outside the dimensions of party competition" and are non-economic in their nature. Secondly, these issues "do not coincide with existing, 'left-right' lines of political division" and, thirdly, niche parties concentrate on "a restricted set of issues". The first two criteria refer to differences in certain policy fields compared to other parties in the arena whereas the last criterion solely connects to the range of the programmatic profile of a party itself. Adams et al. (2006, p. 513) refer to members of certain party families "who present either an extreme ideology […] or a noncentrist 'niche' ideology". In this way, their criteria resemble Meguid's

first two criteria. Wagner (2012, p. 846) relates to all of Meguid's criteria and defines niche parties "as parties that de-emphasize economic concerns and stress a small range of non-economic issues". Meyer and Miller (2013, p. 3) take a more general approach. Aiming at a minimal definition, they state that "a niche party emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors." Contrarily to the previous definitions, it entails no reference to a certain policy field but also no qualification with regard to the range of issues addressed by a party. Table 1 summarizes the criteria of these varying definitions of the niche party concept.

Table 1: Criteria of the niche party concept.

	Programmatic differences	Reference to policy field	Small range of issues
Meguid (2005, pp. 347–348, 2008, pp. 3–4)	x	x	x
Adams et al. (2006, p. 513)	x		
Wagner (2012, p. 847)	x	x	x
Meyer / Miller (2013, p. 3)	x		

Confronted with these varying definitions of the niche party concept, it is equally important to reflect on its negative concept, which is not always defined explicitly in these studies. The niche party concept is relational in its nature and, thus, one has to clarify which parties serve as a reference point for judging niche parties. As the above-mentioned concepts rest on mandatory criteria, the negative concept covers all parties which do not fulfil at least one of the defining attributes. The key question is whether the negative concept for niche parties equals the concept of mainstream parties commonly used in the niche party literature. This question does not only bear theoretical relevance but also affects operationalization and measurement issues. Studies on niche parties provide different answers to this question. For Meguid (2006, p. 46) the negative concept of niche parties and the concept of mainstream parties are not identical as she refers to mainstream parties as "a subset of political actors" which are "defined by both their location on the Left-Right political dimension and their electoral dominance of that left or right ideological bloc […]." Although Adams et al. (2006, p. 517) do not explicitly define the mainstream party concept, their operationalization shows a perfect congruence with the

negative concept of niche parties as they use a dummy variable indicating a niche party for capturing differences between niche and mainstream parties. Congruence between the mainstream party and the negative concept of niche parties refers to a dichotomy which stands for a clear classification of all cases into one of these two categories. Alternatively, instead of fixed categories and differences of kind, we could think of a party's otherness in terms of differences in degree according to which parties are more or less equal to one another. Meyer and Miller (2013) take this approach by introducing nicheness as a general quality of all parties. This differences-in-degree approach allows for detecting gradual variation in programmatic profiles between parties and also over time.

The nicheness of a party is influenced by the party under consideration as well as all other parties which are chosen as a reference point. Thus, merely looking at nicheness, we cannot know whether changes in nicheness are due to actions of the party under consideration, its competitors or both. Additionally, nicheness as defined by Meyer and Miller (2013) does not reveal any information about the range of programmatic profiles of parties. For these reasons, I expand the approach of Meyer and Miller (2013) by introducing another concept which I call programmatic concentration of a party. It connects to the range of issues addressed by a party and the degree of emphasis it puts on these issues. Thus, it refers to criteria which are present in definitions of the niche party concept mentioned above.[1] In contrast to nicheness, programmatic concentration only captures features of the programmatic profile of a party itself and is not directly influenced by profiles of other parties. Capturing programmatic concentration of parties is relevant for party competition in general because it informs us about the number of issues in which a party competes and about how evenly the party emphasizes these issues. Programmatic concentration has also effects on voters. On the one hand, a high programmatic concentration implies a sharp profile which might help getting attention and transmitting a clear message. On the other hand, in order to attract broader segments of the electorate, it might be necessary to have a broader programmatic profile meaning a lower programmatic concentration. Moreover, facing changes in nicheness, programmatic concentration can at least indicate whether changes in nicheness can be attributed to a party itself or its competitors. If we see a change in nicheness for a party while there is no change in

[1] Recently, Bischof (2015, p. 1) introduced a similar idea in the context of the niche party concept when presenting the concept of 'narrowness of niche parties' issue offers'. However, in contrast to my approach of programmatic concentration, narrowness according to Bischof does not refer to a party's complete programmatic profile. Rather, it is linked to several a-priori defined 'niche segments' which do not cover the full possible programmatic range of parties' profiles (Bischof 2015, p. 6).

programmatic concentration for the same party, it is very likely that nicheness changed due to actions of competing parties.[2]

Although these two features capture different characteristics of parties' platforms they are not fully independent of each other. In general, party systems in which parties show high programmatic concentration opens up more room for nicheness to occur than party systems in which parties show less programmatic concentration. For individual parties, different combinations of programmatic concentration and nicheness are possible. A party with a high programmatic concentration features a high nicheness when it focuses on different issues than its competitors. The nicheness of the same party is lower when it concentrates on issues which are also addressed by other parties to a similar degree. A party with a broad and balanced platform should feature a lower nicheness except for the unlikely case that other parties only strongly concentrate on few other issues.

In this article, based on the programmatic features of nicheness and programmatic concentration, I will analyse the programmatic profiles of parties which are considered as niche parties in the literature in order verify to what extent these parties meet features present in most definitions of the niche party concept. The second goal is to illustrate the programmatic evolution of these parties by depicting their nicheness and programmatic concentration over time. Following the programmatic evolution of parties can inform us about how stable programmatic profiles of parties are over time or if their platforms show any trends in nicheness or programmatic concentration. Based on the above mentioned definitions of the niche party concept, one would expect that niche parties show a high degree of nicheness compared to their rivals. Apart from that, Meguid (2005, 2008) and Wagner (2012) mention that niche parties only address a small number of issues which implies a higher programmatic concentration compared to their competitors. In addition, Meguid (2008, p. 15) argues that niche parties are vulnerable to strategies of their mainstream rivals because they are committed to their core issues and cannot easily adapt their platforms. If so, niche parties should show constant levels of programmatic concentration while, at the same time, changes in nicheness then are caused by strategies taken by competing parties.

Expectation 1: Niche parties should show higher levels nicheness than their competitors.

[2] Except for the unlikely case that a party substitutes its profile by switching topics while, at the same time, preserving the distribution of emphasis of its addressed issues.

Expectation 2: Niche parties should show higher levels of programmatic concentration than their competitors.[3]
Expectation 3: Niche parties should show more changes in nicheness than in programmatic concentration.

As both features, nicheness and programmatic concentration, capture *complete* programmatic profiles of parties and, thus, solely refer to the supply side of the political market, it is also possible to compare their levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration with the perception of voters (although this is behind the scope of this article). For example, further analysis might show that a so-called niche party addresses many issues but is only known by voters for its niche status on one particular issue. Capturing programmatic profiles of parties on the basis of these two programmatic features also offers a new way to investigate the relationship between programmatic offerings and electoral success. This link has so far been investigated for spatial models following Downs (Downs 1957, Adams *et al.* 2006, Adams 2012) and on the basis of certain issues (Meguid 2005, 2008, Hino 2012). The measures presented in this paper offer a way to examine the relationship between programmatic profiles and electoral success from a salience theory (Robertson 1976, Budge and Farlie 1983) based perspective, without pre-selecting any particular issues.

3. Data & Measurement

The aim of this paper is to verify whether niche parties show programmatic characteristics typically ascribed to them when we take their complete profiles into account. For this purpose, I investigate the programmatic profiles of green parties and extreme right parties in Western Europe. Looking at the various definitions of the niche party concept presented above, green and extreme right parties represent typical cases for this party type as we would expect them to feature all mentioned criteria of the niche party concept.[4] Green parties are selected based on CMP party family code[5]. For the sample of extreme right parties, I make use of the list presented by Spies and Franzmann (2011, p. 1052) and include all of these parties for which CMP data

[3] Expectations 1 and 2 do not claim any causal statement but refer to features of the niche party concept itself.
[4] In the following, I will treat the terms 'green and extreme right parties' and 'niche parties' as synonymical whereas I am aware that niche parties are not restricted to these party families.
[5] The CMP *parfam*-variable codes ecology parties with 10.

are available.[6] Altogether, the sample of this study consists of 15 green parties and 12 extreme right parties spread across 15 West European countries.

The CMP provides the opportunity to examine programmatic profiles of many parties across countries and over time. The general approach of the CMP is the coding of party manifestos by means of a fixed coding scheme consisting of 57 categories (see Table 7 in the appendix) while the last category is a residual category covering all (quasi-)sentences which cannot be subsumed under the first 56 categories. In the context of CMP data, Gemenis (2012) points to a general source of bias caused by the use of different document types. In the context of this study, special attention has to be paid to cases for which scores have been estimated. For CMP data, this means either taking over scores of later elections or mean imputation using preceding and following elections. The use of these estimated data is problematic as, in fact, one compares manifestos of different points in time which ignores the strategic context in which party manifestos represent crucial reference points for each other. Therefore, CMP data handling in this study is guided by Meyer and Miller (2013, p. 6): elections are dropped from the dataset when they cover at least one party with estimated data which has a vote or seat share equal or higher than 5 per cent. Otherwise, only the party observation is dropped.

While CMP data do not provide any measures of uncertainty for the point estimates of salience scores, Benoit at al. (2009) point to different sources of error in the process of "positions to text to coded data". A full outline of this process is beyond the scope of this article but I follow their approach which addresses the uncertainty introduced by the "stochastic process of text generation" (Benoit *et al.* 2009, p. 498). Its core assumption (Benoit *et al.* 2009, p. 500) reads as:

$$E(p_{ij}) = \pi_{ij}$$

π_{ij} denotes the manifesto authors' true policy position in category *j* for country-party-date unit *i*. According to the assumption, the expected value of the observed frequency score represents an estimator for π_{ij}, whereby p_{ij} would be the CMP score in this particular category. Benoit et al. (Benoit *et al.* 2009, p. 500) explain the source of uncertainty in the following way:

> "The realization of π_{ij} in any given manifesto […] reflects the stochastic process of text authorship, yielding the observed

[6] Additionally, I include the *Sweden Democrats* (Rydgren 2002), the Dutch *Party for Freedom* and the *Alliance for the Future of Austria* (van der Brug, Wouter *et al.* 2013, p. 58).

proportions p_{ij}. Every time a manifesto is written with the intention of expressing the same underlying positions π_{ij}, we expect to observe slightly different values p_{ij}."

Estimating the error variance can be accomplished analytically or by simulations, both based on the assumption of a multinomial distribution (Benoit *et al.* 2009, pp. 500ff.). As the measures executed in this study rest on all CMP categories, the second approach is applied because it does not require any assumptions about the correlation between counts in different categories (Benoit *et al.* 2009, p. 502). For the simulation, each manifesto is bootstrapped on the basis of a multinomial distribution taking p_{ij} as parameters (Benoit *et al.* 2009, p. 503). In order to receive a quantification of uncertainty for any measure based on CMP data, the given measure has to be calculated for every bootstrapping draw whereupon mean and standard deviation can be calculated for all draws. Consequently, it is possible to differentiate between significant and non-significant differences for all measures based on CMP data.[7] This procedure depends on complete information on party manifestos, including manifesto length. Regarding missing information, I proceed in the same way as for estimated data (see above).

In order to operationalize nicheness, I adapt the continuous indicator invented by Meyer and Miller (2013) which measures the average of (squared) differences in the emphasis of a number of dimensions or issues between the party under consideration and the mean of all other parties. The formula reads as follows:

$$\sigma_i = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N}\sum_{j=1}^{N}\left(x_{ij} - \overline{X_{j,-\iota}}\right)^2}$$

N stands for the number of dimensions or issues. x_{ij} denotes the score of the party i under consideration on dimension/issue j whereas $\overline{X_{j,-\iota}}$ is the mean value of all other parties on the same dimension or issue. Meyer and Miller (2013) base their calculations on dimensions linked to original CMP data which are oriented to minister portfolios (Bäck *et al.* 2011, p. 454). According this approach, some categories are assigned to more than one dimension. Thus, nicheness in these categories is given more weight. One peculiar aspect of the CMP coding scheme is that it consists of positional (positive and negative categories) and non-positional

[7] Note that this does not capture other sources of error like for example measurement error due to coding. For a comparison with the CMP approach towards non-systematic error, see Meyer and Jenny (2013). As the CMP approach rests on time series (Meyer and Jenny 2013, pp. 177–178) and many niche parties do not feature a long history, the approach of Benoit et al. (2009) is more suitable for this study.

categories (McDonald and Mendez 2001). All pairs of positive and negative categories are assigned to the same dimension. For example, the CMP categories "European Community: Positive" (per108) and "European Community: Negative" (per109) are both attached to the "foreign"-dimension. In the context of the nicheness measure, this implies that it does not make any difference to the nicheness of a party whether it has a positive or negative stance towards the European Community. Only focusing on this topic, facing for example three parties which share a positive stance on EU matters, an EU-sceptical fourth party would have no higher nicheness than the others. In this way, this approach could lead to underestimating nicheness.[8] For this reason, I use the original CMP values as the basis for calculating nicheness.[9] The downside of this approach is that not all topics are differentiated along positive and negative mentions. In order to check whether empirical findings are sensitive to the handling of the CMP categories respective their aggregation, I provide replications of the results for two different handlings of original CMP values: (1) summation of positive and negative categories and (2) summation of categories along the 7 policy domains provided by CMP (see Table A1 in the appendix). Bischof (2015, p. 6) suggests another aggregation following niche segments which, however, do not cover all CMP categories. As my focus is on complete profiles of parties, I exploit the full coding of manifestos by CMP. Because of the content validity of the concept, the measure of nicheness should purely reflect programmatic differences. Therefore, in contrast to Meyer and Miller (2013), I deliberately do not introduce vote shares as weights to this formula. In the context of this study, the formula then changes to:

$$\sigma_i = \sqrt{\frac{1}{57}\sum_{j=1}^{57}\left(p_{ij} - \overline{p_{J,-\iota}}\right)^2}$$

In the formula p_{ij} stands for the salience score of party *i* in the CMP category *j*, while $\overline{p_{J,-\iota}}$ denotes the mean salience score of all remaining parties in the same category. The salience score of a party indicates the share of (quasi-)sentences in its manifesto which can be subsumed under the given category. Note the fact that the non-covering of a category by party *i* which is emphasized by other parties also contributes to the nicheness of the party under consideration, meaning, according to this measure, that the nicheness of a party is not only the result of

[8] Additionally, assigning categories to multiple dimensions does not allow the implementation of the approach of Benoit et al. (2009) regarding uncertainty because it relies on the real manifesto length as a central parameter.

[9] There is also a debate about the coding reliability in the context of CMP data which also suffers from the complex coding scheme (Mikhaylov *et al.* 2012). Although Mikhaylov et al. (2012, p. 90) argue in favour of simpler schemes for future research, at the same time, they conclude that summing up original CMP data into more coarser categories does not solve the problem of measurement error which is due to coding.

addressing issues which other parties do not emphasize strongly but also of neglecting issues mentioned by other parties. The measure is calculated on the basis of all 57 CMP categories[10] although it is known that the number of categories which show zeroes for all parties varies across countries and over time (Hans and Hönnige 2008). However, in this way, comparability is ensured as the measure is based on the same categories for each election in every country. The minimum value of σ_i amounts to 0 while its maximum is reached when all parties are single-issue parties and emphasize different issues. In the latter scenario, all parties share the same value for σ_i[11]. In order to account for uncertainty generated by the stochastic process of text generation, I follow the approach described above. Party manifestos are bootstrapped for each election thousand times. For each draw, σ_i is computed. Afterwards, mean and standard deviation are calculated.

The number of categories addressed by a party gives a first hint about its programmatic concentration. The shortcoming is that this approach ignores the fact that parties do not usually put the same degree of emphasis on each issue they address. This becomes visible in CMP data which show varying salience scores over categories for each party. For this reason, concentration indices are suitable as they are able to capture the distribution of salience scores over categories.[12] In this study, I use the Herfindahl-Hirschman-Index (HHI)[13] which in this context reads as:

$$HHI_i = \sum_{j=1}^{57} p_{ij}^2$$

[10] This includes the *peruncod*-category which captures the amount of (quasi-)sentences that could not be subsumed under the other categories. Although this category can cover several issues per party and varying issues between parties, I include this category as an approximation for topics not covered by the MRG/CMP coding scheme. To subtract out this category would introduce a bias by ignoring these issues completely.

[11] For this reason, Meyer and Miller (2013, p. 5) propose to standardize the measure by subtracting the mean nicheness score of the remaining parties from the nicheness score of the party under consideration. This is not necessary for this study as single comparisons between the given party and each of its competitors will be considered.

[12] Franzmann (2013, pp. 227–228) points out the applicability of concentration indices for CMP data.

[13] Bischof (2015, p. 8) applies an alternative concentration index to parts of the original CMP data. While he also presents two attributes of the niche party concept linked to programmatic differences and focus, he then merges both to an additive index called nicheness (Bischof 2015, 8). My approach is to uphold the conceptual distinction between programmatic differences to other parties (here: nicheness) and programmatic concentration in their measurement because they refer to different aspects of parties' programmatic profiles. Besides, this distinction is justified as concentration is only influenced by the given party while nicheness also depends on actions of other parties – a point Bischof (2015, p. 9) acknowledges in a similar fashion.

In the context of this study, the HHI adds up the squared shares of (quasi-)sentences for each category *j* for each party *i*. It is suitable for measuring the programmatic concentration of a party as it is sensitive to the number of addressed issues[14] but also to the distribution of salience scores in these issues[15]. As for nicheness, the CMP coding scheme also affects the HHI scores as it determines the number of categories and the distribution of salience scores over these categories. The issue here is that some policy fields are divided into more categories than others. For example, there exist 16 categories which are linked to the 'Economy' domain but only one addresses environmental policy. Assuming that green parties mostly concentrate on the latter they should show higher HHI scores compared to parties which mention a broad range of economic issues. This has to be acknowledged when comparing niche parties to other parties. The replicated results based on different aggregations of original CMP categories offer a way to assess this effect. Based on all 57 categories[16], the HHI can take values between 1/57 and 1. Bootstrapping as described above uncovers uncertainty caused by the stochastic process of text generation.

4. Results

Before investigating the green and extreme right parties in the sample, I want to give a brief descriptive overview about the two programmatic features, nicheness and programmatic concentration. Table 2 displays the mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient according to the CMP party family code. Included are all elections and all parties in 18 West European countries (CMP country code: 11-51; 53) for which CMP data exist (see also p. 8f for data handling). This leads to 1711 party observations. Numbers show differences between these groups of parties. In particular, the differences in the correlation between both features illustrate the usefulness and relevance of the general distinction between nicheness and programmatic concentration. In general, the operationalization of both concepts suggests a positive relationship between both measures. Broadly speaking, a higher HHI score implies higher salience scores in fewer categories which makes it more likely that the same party shows significant differences in these categories compared to its competitors, causing higher nicheness.

[14] Assuming equal emphasis on each issue, addressing more issues leads a lower HHI score.

[15] Assuming an equal number of issues, a more unequal distribution of salience scores leads to a higher HHI score.

[16] Similar to the nicheness index, I also include the *peruncod*-category for the HHI.

Table 2: Programmatic concentration and nicheness according to party family.

		HHI		Nicheness		
Party family	N	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	Corr
10 – ECO	83	0.106	0.062	0.030	0.013	0.92
20 – COM	234	0.124	0.103	0.031	0.013	0.70
30 – SOC	367	0.097	0.067	0.027	0.011	0.58
40 – LIB	272	0.112	0.094	0.029	0.011	0.58
50 – CHR	265	0.087	0.049	0.028	0.011	0.70
60 – CON	183	0.109	0.092	0.030	0.014	0.74
70 – NAT	64	0.143	0.152	0.035	0.015	0.82
80 – AGR	85	0.108	0.089	0.032	0.016	0.89
90 – ETH	91	0.105	0.072	0.028	0.015	0.93
95 – SIP	67	0.141	0.098	0.033	0.011	0.43
ALL	1711	0. 108	0.086	0.029	0.013	0.68

Excluding elections for which data of either green and right parties in the sample or relevant (vote or seat share above 5 per cent) competing parties are estimated or missing, the dataset comprises 134 elections of these niche parties whereas some observations refer to the same election when more than one party in the sample participated in the same election. Table 3 shows how green and right parties in the sample score on the measures of programmatic concentration and nicheness for each election compared to their respective competitors at the same election. The first two columns of Table 3 state country name and party label whereby the third column displays the number of elections in which the given party has participated and for which non-estimated CMP data are available. The number of addressed issues provides a first indication about the concentration of the programmatic profiles of parties. As mentioned above, in part definitions of the niche party concept entail that parties concentrate on a limited number of issues. The fourth column of Table 3 states in how many of its elections the given party addresses the lowest number of categories. Numbers do not show that green and extreme right parties only confine themselves to a small number of issues. Compared to their competitors, green and extreme right parties in the sample only address the lowest number of categories in 31 out of the considered 134 elections (23.13 per cent). Out of the 27 parties in the sample, 10 parties do not cover the smallest number of categories in any of their elections. Apart from the Portuguese *Ecologist Party*, no other party in the sample displays the lowest number of mentioned categories in all of its elections.

Table 3: Green and extreme right parties compared to all competitors (based on original CMP scheme).

				Programmatic concentration			Nicheness		
Country	Party Name (CMP party code)	No of elections	Lowest No of issues	highest	sign. highest	not sign. lower	highest	sign. highest	not sign. lower
Sweden	Green Ecology Party (11110)	7	6	6	2	7	5	0	7
	Sweden Democrats (11710)	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	New Democracy (11951)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Norway	Progress Party (12951)	9	1	4	1	7	9	8	9
Denmark	Danish People's Party (13720)	5	1	1	0	4	2	0	5
	Progress Party (13951)	11	2	4	0	8	3	0	8
Finland	Green Union (14110)	6	0	1	0	4	1	0	5
	True Fins (14820)	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
Iceland	Left Green Movement (15111)	5	1	2	0	5	1	0	5
Belgium	Ecologists (21111)	4	1	1	0	2	1	0	2
	Green! (21112)	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Flemish Bloc (21914)	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Netherlands	Green Left (22110)	7	2	2	1	4	3	2	5
	List Pim Fortuyn (22720)	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
	Party of Freedom (22722)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	The Greens (23112/23113)	6	1	2	1	5	4	1	4
France	The Greens (31110)	4	2	2	0	4	0	0	2
	Ecology Generation (31111)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	National Front (31720)	4	0	0	0	1	3	1	3
Italy	Green Federation (32110)	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
	Northern League (32720)	6	1	1	0	3	1	1	2
Portugal	Ecologist Party "The Greens" (35110)	5	5	4	3	5	5	3	5
Germany	Alliance '90 / Greens (41111/41112/41113)	9	1	3	0	6	0	0	5
Austria	The Greens (42110)	8	2	3	2	6	3	1	5
	Alliance for the Future of Austria (42710)	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Switzerland	Green Party of Switzerland (43110)	6	1	1	1	5	1	1	4
Ireland	Green Party (53110)	5	2	1	0	2	2	1	3
	SUM	134	31	39	11	84	46	19	91
	Share in %		23.13	29.10	8.21	62.69	34.33	14.18	67.91

However, the pure number of addressed categories ignores the fact that parties do not emphasize each topic to the same degree. The HHI as a measure for programmatic concentration takes this varying distribution of emphasis into account. The fifth column of Table 3 shows the number of elections in which the given party reaches the highest level of programmatic concentration (measured through HHI) compared to all of its competitors. Numbers do not offer strong support for the expectation that niche parties show high levels of programmatic concentration. Only in 39 out of 134 elections (29.1 per cent) green and extreme right parties show the highest level of programmatic concentration compared to their rivals.[17] Ten parties never reach the highest level of programmatic concentration for any of their elections. This rank order is based on point estimates which do not account for the uncertainty due to the stochastic process of text generation. Therefore, the sixth column states the number of elections in which the party's programmatic concentration is significantly higher than that of all other parties at the same election. Only for 11 out of 134 elections (8.21 per cent), programmatic concentration of the given party lies significantly above the scores of all other parties at the same election. 20 of the green and extreme right parties do not show the significantly highest level of programmatic concentration in any of their elections. A weaker criterion is the number of elections in which the given party does not feature a score of programmatic concentration which is significantly lower than that of any other party for the same election (column 7 in Table 3). According to the expectation formulated above, at least there should be no competing party with a significantly higher score of programmatic concentration. For 84 elections (62.69 per cent), we find that there is no other party at the same election which reaches a significantly higher score of programmatic concentration than the given green or extreme right party in the sample. Five parties show levels of programmatic concentration which are exceeded by at least one party in each of their elections. All in all, in most cases green and right parties do not feature levels of programmatic concentration which are significantly higher than that of all of their competitors. In fact, in many cases their level of programmatic concentration is significantly exceeded by at least one competing party. This means that the data do not offer strong support for the expectation that niche parties show higher levels of programmatic concentration compared to their competitors.

[17] Especially for green parties, this means, although the coding scheme of MRG/CMP/MARPOR should lead to an upward bias in programmatic concentration for green parties due to a non-existing subdivision of the environmental issue compared to other policy areas, they generally do not feature higher levels of programmatic concentration than their competitors.

The eighth column of Table 3 displays the number of elections for which parties in the sample reach the highest score of nicheness compared to their competitors. According the expectation formulated above, green and extreme right parties should show higher levels of nicheness compared to their rivals. In 46 out of the 134 considered elections (34.33 per cent), parties in the sample feature the highest score of nicheness. At the same time, ten parties do not display the highest level of nicheness in any of their elections. As for programmatic concentration, these comparisons are based on point estimates without consideration of uncertainty. Therefore, the ninth column of Table 3 states the number of elections for which the level of nicheness of the given party in sample lies significantly above the nicheness scores of all other parties at the same election. This is the case for only 19 elections (14.18 per cent). 18 parties do not reach levels of nicheness significantly higher than all competing parties in any of their elections. This last criterion can be relaxed by looking at the number of elections for which at least no other competing party has a significantly higher score of nicheness (column 10). We find that this is the case for 91 elections (67.91 per cent). When applying this weaker criterion, only for three parties there is at least one party in every election which features a significantly higher nicheness than the given party in the sample. As for programmatic concentration, parties do not clearly fulfil the expectation that niche parties show levels of nicheness higher than that of competing parties.

While the numbers in Table 3 refer to calculations based on the original CMP category scheme, Table A2a in the appendix show the results based on the modified category scheme (addition of positive and negative categories). The aggregated numbers for the whole sample do not reveal any substantial differences compared to Table 3. This could be interpreted mainly in two ways: parties might originally emphasize topics coded in non-positional categories to a higher degree or they avoid each other on topics, for which positive and negative mentions are coded which would be in line with the non-confrontational aspect of salience theory. The overall results based on the aggregation of categories according to seven CMP policy domains show that parties meet the expectations formulated above even to a lesser degree (Table A2b). That green and extreme right parties exhibit fewer significant differences for this approach can be explained by this broad aggregation (from 56 to 7 categories) which masks differences found for the more nuanced category schemes.

Table 4: Green and extreme right parties compared to mainstream party rivals.

				Progr. conc.		Nicheness		Progr. conc. & nich.	
Country	Niche party CMP code	Mainstream party (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower
Sweden	11110	Social Democratic Labour Party (11320)	7	5	0	3	0	3	0
	11710	Moderate Coalition Party (11620)	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
	11951	Moderate Coalition Party (11620)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	12951	Conservative Party (12620)	9	8	1	8	0	7	0
Denmark	13720	Conservative People's Party (13620)	5	2	0	2	0	2	0
	13951	Conservative People's Party (13620)	11	3	0	2	0	1	0
Finland	14110	Social Democrats (14320)	6	2	0	1	1	1	0
	14820	National Coalition (14620)	7	0	3	0	0	0	0
Iceland	15111	The Alliance (15328)	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belgium	21111	Francophone Socialist Party (21322)	4	2	2	2	0	2	0
	21112	Socialist Party Different (21321)	4	0	2	2	0	0	0
	21914	Christian People's Party (21521)	4	3	0	3	0	3	0
Netherlands	22110	Labour Party (22320)	7	5	1	4	0	3	0
	22720	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
	22722	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	2	2	0	2	0	2	0
	23112/23113	Socialist Worker's Party (23320)	6	2	0	4	0	2	0
France	31110	Socialist Party (31320)	4	2	0	2	0	2	0
	31111	Socialist Party (31320)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	31720	UDF (31624)	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
Italy	32110	Democrats of the Left (32220) / Olive Tree (32329)	3	2	0	2	0	2	0
	32720	Go Italy (32610) / People of Freedom (32061)	6	1	1	1	0	1	0
Portugal	35110	Socialist Party (35311)	5	5	0	4	0	4	0
Germany	41111/41112/41113	Social Democratic Party (41320)	9	1	0	3	0	1	0
Austria	42110	Austrian Social Democratic Party (42320)	8	5	0	5	0	4	0
	42710	Austrian People's Party (42520)	2	1	0	1	0	1	0
Switzerland	43110	Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (43320)	6	4	0	3	0	3	0
Ireland	53110	Labour Party (53320)	5	3	0	4	0	3	0
		SUM	134	59	10	63	2	48	0
		Share in %		44.03	7.46	47.01	1.49	35.82	0.00

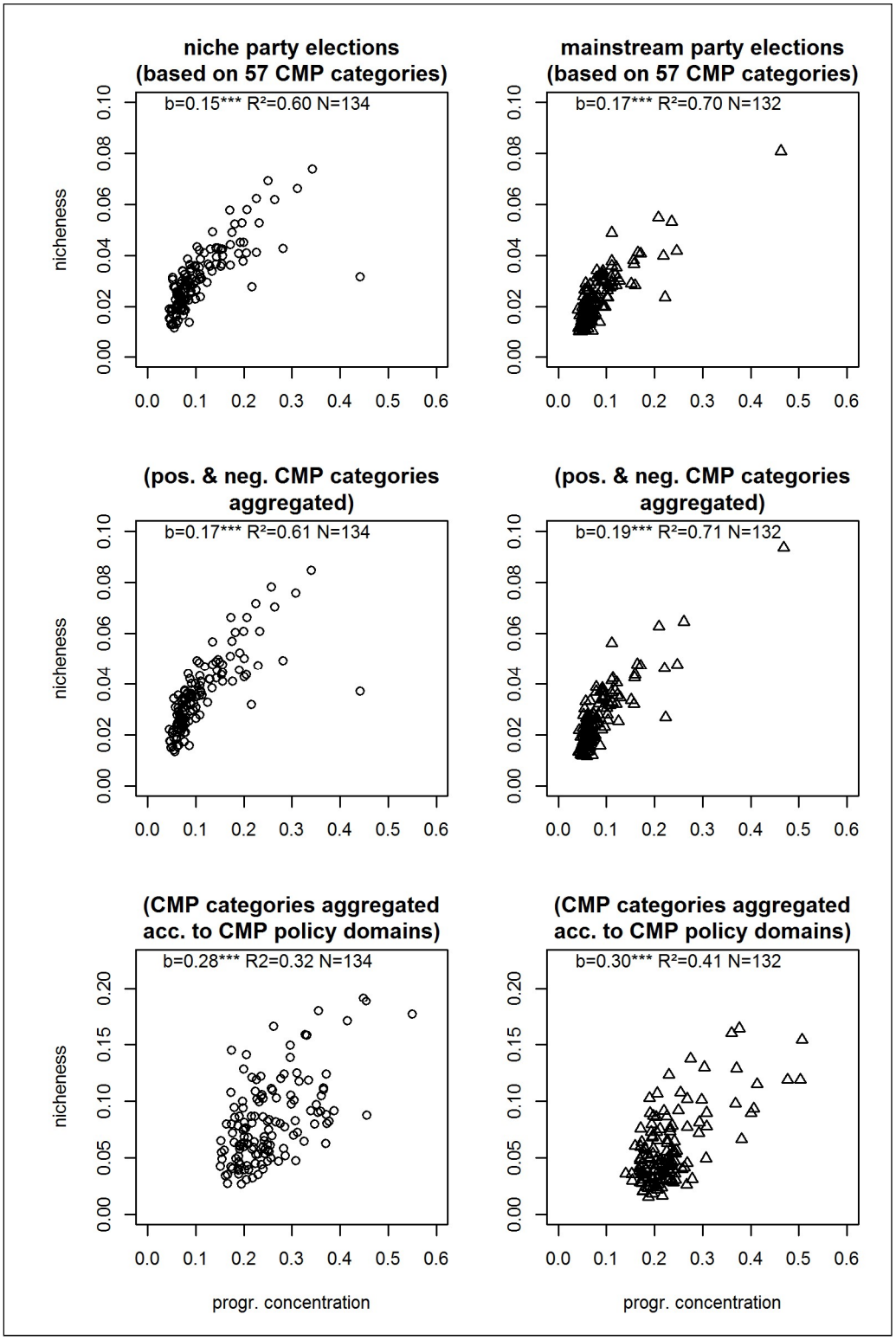
So far, I have compared green and extreme right parties according to their nicheness and programmatic concentration with regard to *all* of their respective competitors. Applying the narrower definition of mainstream parties of Meguid (2008, p. 46), it is possible to compare green and extreme right parties (as niche parties) with these long established mainstream parties for both programmatic features.[18] This represents an even stronger test of the expectations formulated above, as under all competing parties one expect the programmatic otherness of niche parties to be most pronounced when compared to these major parties.

Table 4 shows the results for the comparison between green and extreme right parties (as niche parties) on the one hand and their mainstream rivals on the other hand. The listing of green and extreme right parties is equal to Table 3. Additionally, the third column displays the name of the mainstream party to which the given niche party is compared.[19] The fifth column states the number of elections for which the niche party reaches significantly higher programmatic concentration compared to its mainstream competitor. For 59 out of 134 elections (44.03 per cent), this is the case. This means, even if we compare programmatic concentration of the niche parties in the sample only with the values of their mainstream rivals, in the majority of elections the former do not feature significantly higher levels of programmatic concentration. Seven parties in the sample do not significantly exceed the programmatic concentration of their mainstream party rival for any of their elections. Thus, similar to the comparison with all competitors, expectation 2 cannot be approved for the majority of cases. Moreover, in 10 elections (7.46 per cent) the mainstream parties even show significantly greater programmatic concentration than the given green or extreme right party in the sample (column 6). The picture looks similar when we look at nicheness (column 7). In 63 out of 134 elections (47.01 per cent), green and extreme right parties display significantly higher scores of nicheness compared to their mainstream competitors. Thus, the majority of elections do not confirm expectation 1. Five parties in the sample never reach a significantly higher level of nicheness than the corresponding mainstream party for any of their elections. We also observe two elections (1.49 per cent), for which the given mainstream party has a higher nicheness than the niche party (column 8). Looking at nicheness and programmatic concentration at the same time, green and extreme right parties feature significantly higher scores for both measures in 48 elections (35.82

[18] However, still all competing parties serve as reference point for calculating nicheness of both niche and mainstream parties.

[19] For the selection of mainstream parties, I make use of the list provided by Meguid (2008, p. 47). In cases for which there is no match in Meguid's list, I selected parties myself, according to party family membership and electoral history.

Figure 1: Relationship between nicheness and programmatic concentration for niche and mainstream parties.



per cent) whereas there is no case for which the mainstream party rival shows significantly higher values for both, programmatic concentration and nicheness. All in all, for more than fifty per cent of all elections, niche parties do not fulfil the stated expectations as niche and mainstream parties cannot significantly be distinguished from each other for both programmatic features. The alternative handlings of CMP category scheme (Tables A3a & A3b) support this finding as they show the same effects as for the comparison to all competitors.

So far, nicheness and programmatic concentration have been investigated separately for the parties in the sample. In order to examine their relationship, they are plotted against each other. Figure 1 shows scatter plots for all elections of niche and mainstream parties, differentiated according to the three different handlings of the CMP category scheme.[20] In general, there exists a positive relationship between nicheness and programmatic concentration, for both niche and mainstream parties and regardless of the calculation basis. The significantly positive coefficients of a linear regression of nicheness on programmatic concentration also underline this positive relationship. The aggregation of positive and negative CMP categories does not cause any major differences in the relationship between nicheness and programmatic concentration compared to the use of the original CMP scheme. For the aggregation of the original categories according to the seven CMP policy domains, the scatter plots for niche and mainstream parties show a less strong relationship between both programmatic features, also illustrated by the lower R^2-scores.

The third expectation addresses the temporal dimension, stating that over time niche parties feature more changes in nicheness than in programmatic concentration. Table 5 summarizes how green and extreme right parties change on programmatic concentration and nicheness over time.[21] As a reference point, Table 6 describes the same for the mainstream parties mentioned above. Each table differentiates between both features and between the direction of change. Additionally, they also entail the number of elections for which the given party features significant differences between elections for both features at the same time. Regarding green

[20] Considering the plots for niche parties, the upper two plots show an outlier on the right side, which is Danish Progress Party in the 1977 election. Its high score for programmatic concentration is due to the high percentage of uncoded quasi-sentences (peruncod = 65.4). The outlier in the upper right corner of the two upper right plots for mainstream parties is the Finnish National Coalition in the 1979 election. For this election, it features a relatively high score (58.33) in the per504-category (welfare state expansion).

[21] The reduced number of elections is explained by the focus on consecutive elections and the exclusion of parties with only one (observed) election.

Table 5: Green and extreme right parties: changes in programmatic concentration and nicheness over time.

			Programmatic concentration		Nicheness		Both	
Country	Party name (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher
Sweden	Green Ecology Party (11110)	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	Progress Party (12951)	7	4	2	3	1	1	0
Denmark	Danish People's Party (13720)	4	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Progress Party (13951)	10	2	1	0	0	0	0
Finland	Green Union (14110)	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
	True Finns (14820)	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
Iceland	Left Green Movement (15111)	4	1	0	1	0	1	0
Belgium	Ecologists (21111)	2	0	1	0	2	0	1
	Green! (21112)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Flemish Bloc (21914)	2	0	2	0	2	0	1
Netherlands	Green Left (22110)	6	1	3	2	3	0	0
	List Pim Fortuyn (22720)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Party of Freedom (22722)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxemberg	Green Alternative (23112/23113)	4	1	0	2	0	1	0
France	The Greens (31110)	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
	National Front (31720)	3	1	1	1	0	1	0
Italy	Northern League (32720)	5	1	3	2	3	0	1
Portugal	Ecologist Party 'The Greens' (35110)	3	2	0	2	0	1	0
Germany	The Greens (41111/41112/41113)	8	1	2	1	0	0	0
Austria	The Greens (42110)	7	2	2	2	2	0	0
	Alliance for the Future of Austria (42710)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	Federation of Green Parties (43110)	4	0	2	1	2	0	0
Ireland	Green Party (53110)	4	1	0	2	1	1	0
	SUM	97	18	20	22	17	6	4
	Share in %		18.56	20.62	22.68	17.53	6.19	4.12

Table 6: Mainstream parties: changes over time.

			Programmatic concentration		Nicheness		Both	
Country	Party name (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher
Sweden	Social Democratic Labour Party (11320)	6	0	0	0	1	0	0
Norway	Conservative Party (12620)	7	0	2	1	2	0	0
Denmark	Conservative People's Party (13620)	14	2	1	0	1	0	0
Finland	Finnish Social Democrats (14320)	5	1	0	0	1	0	0
	National Coalition (14620)	5	2	0	1	1	0	0
Iceland	The Alliance - Social Democratic Party of Iceland (15328)	4	1	0	1	0	1	0
Belgium	Socialist Party Different (21321)	2	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Francophone Socialist Party (21322)	2	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Christian Democratic and Flemish (23521)	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	Labour Party (22320)	6	1	0	1	0	0	0
	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	3	1	1	0	1	0	1
Luxembourg	Socialist Workers' Party of Luxembourg (23320)	4	1	0	1	0	0	0
France	Socialist Party (31320)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Democratic Mouvement (21624)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	People of Freedom (32061)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Go Italy (32610)	3	0	1	1	2	0	1
Portugal	Socialist Party (35311)	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
Germany	Social Democratic Party of Germany (41320)	8	1	1	1	1	0	0
Austria	Austrian Social Democratic Party (42320)	7	2	2	2	1	0	0
	Austrian People's Party (42520)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (43320)	4	1	1	1	1	0	0
Ireland	Labour Party (53320)	4	1	0	2	1	0	0
	SUM	97	17	15	13	15	1	4
	Share in %		17.53	15.46	13.40	15.46	1.03	4.12

and extreme right parties, we see that significant changes in programmatic concentration take place in both directions with similar frequency. For 18 out of 97 elections (18.56 per cent) parties feature a significant lower programmatic concentration in comparison with the previous election, meaning a broader policy profile. Significant increases in programmatic concentration appear for 20 elections (20.62 per cent). The fact that changes occur in both directions argues against a general trend for these niche parties to a lower or higher programmatic concentration.

Considering nicheness, we also find a number of significant changes in both directions for consecutive elections. For 22 elections (22.68 per cent), there is a significant shift towards lower nicheness whereas in 17 elections (17.53 per cent), parties feature a significant increase in nicheness. Thus, similar to programmatic concentration, there is also no universal trend for these parties to become more or less niche. Moreover, Table 5 shows that in 10 elections (10.31 per cent) significant shifts appear for both features at the same time in the same direction. This also means that there are a number of cases in which changes are restricted to only one of both features which underlines the relevance of the distinction between programmatic concentration and nicheness. Overall, these findings do not support the third expectation as changes occur for both features with similar frequency. The alternative handlings of the CMP category scheme also call the third expectation into question (Tables A4a & A4b).

Considering the patterns of mainstream competitors in Table 6, the picture looks similar to the one for green and extreme right parties. Mainstream parties show significant changes in programmatic concentration in both directions. For 17 out of 97 elections (17.53 per cent), mainstream parties display a significant lower programmatic concentration than in the previous election while in 15 elections (15.46 per cent) their programmatic concentration appears to be significantly higher. With regard to nicheness, we observe a significantly lower value for 13 elections (13.4 per cent). A significant increase in nicheness appears for 15 elections (15.46 per cent). Simultaneous significant changes in the same direction for both features appear for 5 elections (5.15 per cent). Similar to green and extreme right parties, also mainstream parties display a number of elections for which they only significantly change on one characteristic which again underlines the relevance of the distinction between programmatic concentration and nicheness as related but different facets of programmatic profiles of parties. Overall, compared to their mainstream rivals, niche parties show slightly higher shares of elections with significant changes, however numbers do not indicate a general different pattern of programmatic changes over time for these parties.

5. Conclusion

In this study, I have presented a new approach for capturing complete programmatic profiles of parties based on two features. The first feature, nicheness, is linked to the niche status of a party determined by the amount of programmatic differences compared to rival parties. The second feature refers to the concentration of a party's programmatic profile. Since these concepts refer to differences-in-degree in complete programmatic profiles of parties, they enable uncovering variance in programmatic profiles between parties and over time. The characteristic of programmatic concentration is a useful complement to nicheness as nicheness is not only determined by the programmatic behaviour of other parties but also by the behaviour of a party itself. The latter is directly linked to the programmatic concentration. Starting from an overview about the different definitions of the niche party concept, I formulated expectations for niche parties linked to their programmatic profiles. According to them, niche parties should show higher levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration when compared to competing parties. Concerning changes over time, more changes for nicheness than for programmatic concentration were expected. I tested these expectations for green and extreme right parties which, according to the literature, are typical cases of niche parties. In order to operationalize the two features, two continuous measures were presented. The nicheness measure originating from Meyer and Miller (2013) and the Herfindahl-Hirschman-Index used for CMP data enable the mapping of programmatic profiles of parties. Comparisons between parties can inform about the distinctiveness of parties while comparisons over time for single parties show their programmatic evolution. For both measures, I applied simulations in order to uncover statistical uncertainty caused by the stochastic process of text generation (Benoit *et al.* 2009). By doing so, it is possible to differentiate between significant and non-significant differences in all measures used in this study. The empirical results do not offer strong support for the above mentioned expectations. For many green and extreme right parties, we observe that they do not reach significantly higher scores for programmatic concentration and nicheness, both when compared to all given competitors or just one mainstream rival. Results also show significant changes over time for these parties. That these changes do not only occur for nicheness but also for programmatic concentration shows that niche parties modify their platforms from the beginning. Although findings suggest that green and extreme right parties display slightly higher numbers of significant changes over time, they show a similar pattern compared to their given mainstream party rivals. The fact that we also find cases in which only one of the two features exhibits a significant shift underlines the relevance of the distinction between programmatic concentration and nicheness capturing two different features of parties' policy profiles. All in all, findings question the dichotomous and static classification of parties into

niche and mainstream parties according to party family membership. Instead, the continuous approach of this study enables us to take a more nuanced perspective on programmatic profiles of political parties and differences between them. The results of this study can serve as a starting point to test and modify existing arguments made with respect to niche parties but also to develop new theories. In particular, future research might examine how electoral success is influenced by the features of programmatic profiles presented in this study or/and whether parties adapt their profiles due to electoral results (Meyer and Wagner 2013). The measures used in this study are applicable to all types of parties and therefore relevant for general arguments about the programmatic level of party competition. They are solely based on the party side of the electoral market. Future research might investigate the relationship with the voters' side and, for example, compare voters' perceptions of parties with their actual programmatic profiles. This is only possible through a clear distinction of both sides. This study offers a way for a clear coverage of the supply side of the electoral market which can serve as starting point for such research.

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Appendix

Table A1: CMP coding scheme.

Domain 1: External Relations	409 Keynesian Demand Management
101 Foreign Special Relationships: Positive	410 Economic Growth: Positive
102 Foreign Special Relationships: Negative	411 Technology and Infrastructure
103 Anti-Imperialism	412 Controlled Economy
104 Military: Positive	413 Nationalisation
105 Military: Negative	414 Economic Orthodoxy
106 Peace	415 Marxist Analysis: Positive
107 Internationalism: Positive	416 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive
108 European Community/Union: Positive	**Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life**
109 Internationalism: Negative	501 Environmental Protection: Positive
110 European Community/Union: Negative	502 Culture: Positive
Domain 2: Freedom and Human Rights	503 Equality: Positive
201 Freedom and Human Rights	504 Welfare State Expansion
202 Democracy	505 Welfare State Limitation
203 Constitutionalism: Positive	506 Education Expansion
204 Constitutionalism: Positive	507 Education Limitation
Domain 3: Decentralisation	**Domain 6: Fabric of Society**
301 Federalism	601 National Way of Life: Positive
302 Centralisation	602 National Way of Life: Negative
303 Governmental and Administrative Efficiency	603 Traditional Morality: Positive
	604 Traditional Morality: Negative
304 Political Corruption	605 Law and Order: Positive
305 Political Authority	606 Civic Mindedness: Positive
Domain 4: Economy	607 Multiculturalism: Positive
401 Free Market Economy	608 Multiculturalism: Negative
402 Incentives	**Domain 7: Social Groups**
403 Market Regulation	701 Labour Groups: Positive
404 Economic Planning	702 Labour Groups: Negative
405 Corporatism/ Mixed Economy	703 Agriculture and Farmers: Positive
406 Protectionism: Positive	704 Middle Class and Professional Groups
407 Protectionism: Negative	705 Underprivileged Minority Groups
408 Economic Goals	706 Non-economic Demographic Groups

Table A2a: Green and extreme right parties compared to all competitors (replication of table 3; positive and negative categories aggregated).

				Programmatic concentration			Nicheness		
Country	Party Name (CMP party code)	No of elections	Lowest No of issues	highest	sign. highest	not sign. lower	highest	sign. highest	not sign. lower
Sweden	Green Ecology Party (11110)	7	5	6	2	7	5	0	7
	Sweden Democrats (11710)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	New Democracy (11951)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Norway	Progress Party (12951)	9	3	5	2	8	9	8	9
Denmark	Danish People's Party (13720)	5	1	1	0	4	2	0	4
	Progress Party (13951)	11	2	4	0	7	3	0	8
Finland	Green Union (14110)	6	0	1	0	4	1	0	5
	True Fins (14820)	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Iceland	Left Green Movement (15111)	5	1	1	0	5	2	0	4
Belgium	Ecologists (21111)	4	0	1	0	2	1	0	2
	Green! (21112)	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Flemish Bloc (21914)	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Netherlands	Green Left (22110)	7	2	2	1	4	3	2	5
	List Pim Fortuyn (22720)	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
	Party of Freedom (22722)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	The Greens (23112/23113)	6	2	2	1	5	4	1	4
France	The Greens (31110)	4	2	2	0	4	1	0	2
	Ecology Generation (31111)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	National Front (31720)	4	0	0	0	2	2	1	3
Italy	Green Federation (32110)	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
	Northern League (32720)	6	0	2	0	3	1	1	2
Portugal	Ecologist Party "The Greens" (35110)	5	5	3	3	5	5	3	5
Germany	Alliance '90 / Greens (41111/41112/41113)	9	1	3	0	6	1	0	5
Austria	The Greens (42110)	8	1	3	2	5	3	1	5
	Alliance for the Future of Austria (42710)	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Switzerland	Green Party of Switzerland (43110)	6	1	1	1	5	1	1	4
Ireland	Green Party (53110)	5	2	1	1	2	2	1	3
	SUM	134	29	39	13	84	47	19	88
	Share in %		21.64	29.10	9.70	62.69	35.07	14.18	65.67

Table A2b: Green and extreme right parties compared to all competitors (replication of table 3; aggregation based on CMP policy domains).

				Programmatic concentration			Nicheness		
Country	Party Name (CMP party code)	No of elections	Lowest No of issues	highest	sign. highest	not sign. lower	highest	sign. highest	not sign. lower
Sweden	Green Ecology Party (11110)	7	2	5	1	7	2	0	5
	Sweden Democrats (11710)	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	New Democracy (11951)	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Norway	Progress Party (12951)	9	1	2	1	5	9	7	9
Denmark	Danish People's Party (13720)	5	1	1	0	2	3	0	5
	Progress Party (13951)	11	1	2	0	8	1	0	7
Finland	Green Union (14110)	6	0	2	0	5	0	0	4
	True Fins (14820)	7	0	0	0	4	3	0	4
Iceland	Left Green Movement (15111)	5	1	2	0	5	2	0	5
Belgium	Ecologists (21111)	4	1	1	1	2	1	0	2
	Green! (21112)	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Flemish Bloc (21914)	4	0	0	0	2	1	0	2
Netherlands	Green Left (22110)	7	0	0	0	3	1	0	5
	List Pim Fortuyn (22720)	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
	Party of Freedom (22722)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Luxembourg	The Greens (23112/23113)	6	0	2	0	5	0	0	4
France	The Greens (31110)	4	1	3	0	3	0	0	2
	Ecology Generation (31111)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	National Front (31720)	4	0	0	0	2	3	1	3
Italy	Green Federation (32110)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Northern League (32720)	6	1	1	0	3	2	0	2
Portugal	Ecologist Party "The Greens" (35110)	5	3	5	3	5	4	2	5
Germany	Alliance '90 / Greens (41111/41112/41113)	9	0	1	1	8	0	0	5
Austria	The Greens (42110)	8	0	2	0	6	1	0	6
	Alliance for the Future of Austria (42710)	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Switzerland	Green Party of Switzerland (43110)	6	1	1	0	5	2	0	3
Ireland	Green Party (53110)	5	0	1	0	2	0	0	4
	SUM	134	13	32	7	84	39	11	91
	Share in %		9.70	23.88	5.22	62.69	29.10	8.21	67.91

Table A3a: Green and extreme right parties compared to mainstream party rivals (replication of table 4; positive and negative categories aggregated).

				Progr. conc.		Nicheness		Progr. conc. & nich.	
Country	Niche CMP code	Mainstream party (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower
Sweden	11110	Social Democratic Labour Party (11320)	7	5	0	2	0	2	0
	11710	Moderate Coalition Party (11620)	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
	11951	Moderate Coalition Party (11620)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	12951	Conservative Party (12620)	9	8	1	8	0	7	0
Denmark	13720	Conservative People's Party (13620)	5	2	0	2	0	2	0
	13951	Conservative People's Party (13620)	11	3	0	2	0	1	0
Finland	14110	Social Democrats (14320)	6	2	0	1	1	1	0
	14820	National Coalition (14620)	7	0	3	0	1	0	1
Iceland	15111	The Alliance (15328)	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belgium	21111	Francophone Socialist Party (21322)	4	2	2	2	0	2	0
	21112	Socialist Party Different (21321)	4	0	2	2	0	0	0
	21914	Christian People's Party (21521)	4	3	0	3	0	3	0
Netherlands	22110	Labour Party (22320)	7	5	1	4	0	3	0
	22720	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	2	1	0	0	1	0	0
	22722	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	2	2	0	2	0	2	0
	23112/23113	Socialist Worker's Party (23320)	6	2	0	4	0	2	0
France	31110	Socialist Party (31320)	4	2	0	2	0	2	0
	31111	Socialist Party (31320)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	31720	UDF (31624)	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
Italy	32110	Democrats of the Left (32220) / Olive Tree (32329)	3	2	0	2	0	2	0
	32720	Go Italy (32610) / People of Freedom (32061)	6	1	1	1	0	1	0
Portugal	35110	Socialist Party (35311)	5	5	0	4	0	4	0
Germany	41111/41112/41113	Social Democratic Party (41320)	9	1	0	2	0	1	0
Austria	42110	Austrian Social Democratic Party (42320)	8	5	0	5	0	4	0
	42710	Austrian People's Party (42520)	2	1	0	1	0	1	0
Switzerland	43110	Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (43320)	6	4	0	4	0	4	0
Ireland	53110	Labour Party (53320)	5	3	0	4	0	3	0
		SUM	134	60	10	62	3	48	1
		Share in %		44.78	7.46	46.27	2.24	35.82	0.75

Table A3b: Green and extreme right parties compared to mainstream party rivals (replication of table 4; aggregation based on CMP policy domains).

				Progr. conc.		Nicheness		Progr. conc. & nich.	
Country	Niche CMP code	Mainstream party (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower
Sweden	11110	Social Democratic Labour Party (11320)	7	2	0	2	0	2	0
	11710	Moderate Coalition Party (11620)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
	11951	Moderate Coalition Party (11620)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	12951	Conservative Party (12620)	9	5	1	8	0	4	0
Denmark	13720	Conservative People's Party (13620)	5	1	0	3	0	1	0
	13951	Conservative People's Party (13620)	11	3	1	2	1	2	0
Finland	14110	Social Democrats (14320)	6	2	1	1	1	1	1
	14820	National Coalition (14620)	7	0	2	0	1	0	0
Iceland	15111	The Alliance (15328)	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
Belgium	21111	Francophone Socialist Party (21322)	4	2	1	2	0	2	0
	21112	Socialist Party Different (21321)	4	0	3	1	1	0	1
	21914	Christian People's Party (21521)	4	3	0	2	0	2	0
Netherlands	22110	Labour Party (22320)	7	2	0	4	0	1	0
	22720	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
	22722	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	2	2	0	2	0	2	0
	23112/23113	Socialist Worker's Party (23320)	6	1	1	1	0	1	0
France	31110	Socialist Party (31320)	4	1	0	2	0	1	0
	31111	Socialist Party (31320)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	31720	UDF (31624)	4	0	0	4	0	0	0
Italy	32110	Democrats of the Left (32220) / Olive Tree (32329)	3	1	0	1	0	1	0
	32720	Go Italy (32610) / People of Freedom (32061)	6	1	1	0	0	0	0
Portugal	35110	Socialist Party (35311)	5	4	0	3	0	3	0
Germany	41111/41112/41113	Social Democratic Party (41320)	9	1	0	2	0	1	0
Austria	42110	Austrian Social Democratic Party (42320)	8	0	0	1	0	0	0
	42710	Austrian People's Party (42520)	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
Switzerland	43110	Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (43320)	6	2	0	2	0	1	0
Ireland	53110	Labour Party (53320)	5	1	0	1	0	0	0
		SUM	134	35	11	46	5	25	2
		Share in %		26.12	8.21	34.33	3.73	18.66	1.49

Table 4a: Green and extreme right parties: changes in programmatic concentration and nicheness over time (replication of table 5; positive and negative categories aggregated).

			Programmatic concentration		Nicheness		Both	
Country	Party name (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher
Sweden	Green Ecology Party (11110)	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	Progress Party (12951)	7	4	2	3	1	0	0
Denmark	Danish People's Party (13720)	4	1	1	0	1	0	1
	Progress Party (13951)	10	2	1	0	0	0	0
Finland	Green Union (14110)	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
	True Finns (14820)	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
Iceland	Left Green Movement (15111)	4	1	0	1	0	0	0
Belgium	Ecologists (21111)	2	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Green! (21112)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Flemish Bloc (21914)	2	0	2	0	2	0	1
Netherlands	Green Left (22110)	6	1	3	2	3	0	0
	List Pim Fortuyn (22720)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Party of Freedom (22722)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxemberg	Green Alternative (23112/23113)	4	1	1	2	0	0	0
France	The Greens (31110)	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
	National Front (31720)	3	1	0	2	0	0	0
Italy	Northern League (32720)	5	1	3	2	3	0	1
Portugal	Ecologist Party 'The Greens' (35110)	3	2	0	2	0	0	0
Germany	The Greens (41111/41112/41113)	8	1	1	1	0	0	0
Austria	The Greens (42110)	7	2	2	2	1	0	0
	Alliance for the Future of Austria (42710)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	Federation of Green Parties (43110)	4	0	2	1	2	0	0
Ireland	Green Party (53110)	4	1	0	2	1	0	0
	SUM	97	19	19	22	15	0	4
	Share in %		19.59	19.59	22.68	15.46	0.00	4.12

Table 4b: Green and extreme right parties: changes in programmatic concentration and nicheness over time (replication of table 5; aggregation based on CMP policy domains).

			Programmatic concentration		Nicheness		Both	
Country	Party name (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher
Sweden	Green Ecology Party (11110)	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	Progress Party (12951)	7	3	1	3	1	0	0
Denmark	Danish People's Party (13720)	4	1	1	0	1	0	1
	Progress Party (13951)	10	0	1	0	0	0	0
Finland	Green Union (14110)	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
	True Finns (14820)	5	1	0	1	0	0	0
Iceland	Left Green Movement (15111)	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belgium	Ecologists (21111)	2	1	1	0	2	0	1
	Green! (21112)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Flemish Bloc (21914)	2	0	2	0	1	0	1
Netherlands	Green Left (22110)	6	2	3	1	1	0	0
	List Pim Fortuyn (22720)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Party of Freedom (22722)	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Luxemberg	Green Alternative (23112/23113)	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
France	The Greens (31110)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
	National Front (31720)	3	0	1	1	0	0	0
Italy	Northern League (32720)	5	0	1	0	0	0	0
Portugal	Ecologist Party 'The Greens' (35110)	3	1	0	1	0	0	0
Germany	The Greens (41111/41112/41113)	8	1	0	0	0	0	0
Austria	The Greens (42110)	7	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Alliance for the Future of Austria (42710)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	Federation of Green Parties (43110)	4	0	2	1	1	0	0
Ireland	Green Party (53110)	4	2	1	0	1	0	0
	SUM	97	13	15	11	8	0	3
	Share in %		13.40	15.46	11.34	8.25	0.00	3.09

Table 5a: Mainstream parties: changes in programmatic concentration and nicheness over time (replication of table 6; positive and negative categories aggregated).

			Programmatic concentration		Nicheness		Both	
Country	Party name (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher
Sweden	Social Democratic Labour Party (11320)	6	0	0	0	1	0	0
Norway	Conservative Party (12620)	7	0	2	1	1	0	0
Denmark	Conservative People's Party (13620)	14	2	1	0	1	0	0
Finland	Finnish Social Democrats (14320)	5	1	0	0	1	0	0
	National Coalition (14620)	5	1	0	1	1	0	0
Iceland	The Alliance - Social Democratic Party of Iceland (15328)	4	1	0	1	0	0	0
Belgium	Socialist Party Different (21321)	2	1	1	1	1	0	1
	Francophone Socialist Party (21322)	2	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Christian Democratic and Flemish (23521)	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Netherlands	Labour Party (22320)	6	0	0	1	1	0	0
	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	3	1	1	0	1	0	1
Luxembourg	Socialist Workers' Party of Luxembourg (23320)	4	1	0	1	0	0	0
France	Socialist Party (31320)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Democratic Mouvement (21624)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	People of Freedom (32061)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	Go Italy (32610)	3	0	1	1	2	0	1
Portugal	Socialist Party (35311)	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
Germany	Social Democratic Party of Germany (41320)	8	1	1	1	1	0	0
Austria	Austrian Social Democratic Party (42320)	7	2	2	2	1	0	0
	Austrian People's Party (42520)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (43320)	4	1	1	0	1	0	0
Ireland	Labour Party (53320)	4	1	0	2	1	0	0
	SUM	97	15	15	12	15	0	4
	Share in %		15.46	15.46	12.37	15.46	0.00	4.12

Table 5b: Mainstream parties: changes in programmatic concentration and nicheness over time (replication of table 6; aggregation according to CMP policy domains).

			Programmatic concentration		Nicheness		Both	
Country	Party name (CMP party code)	No of elections	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher	sign. lower	sign. higher
Sweden	Social Democratic Labour Party (11320)	6	1	1	1	0	0	0
Norway	Conservative Party (12620)	7	1	2	0	0	0	0
Denmark	Conservative People's Party (13620)	14	1	1	1	1	0	0
Finland	Finnish Social Democrats (14320)	5	1	2	0	1	0	0
	National Coalition (14620)	5	2	0	1	0	0	0
Iceland	The Alliance - Social Democratic Party of Iceland (15328)	4	1	0	1	0	0	0
Belgium	Socialist Party Different (21321)	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
	Francophone Socialist Party (21322)	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Christian Democratic and Flemish (23521)	2	0	1	1	0	0	0
Netherlands	Labour Party (22320)	6	2	1	0	0	0	0
	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (22420)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Luxembourg	Socialist Workers' Party of Luxembourg (23320)	4	2	1	1	0	0	0
France	Socialist Party (31320)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Democratic Mouvement (21624)	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Italy	People of Freedom (32061)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Go Italy (32610)	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Portugal	Socialist Party (35311)	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
Germany	Social Democratic Party of Germany (41320)	8	1	1	0	1	0	0
Austria	Austrian Social Democratic Party (42320)	7	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Austrian People's Party (42520)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Switzerland	Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (43320)	4	0	2	1	1	0	0
Ireland	Labour Party (53320)	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
	SUM	97	15	15	9	5	0	0
	Share in %		15.46	15.46	9.28	5.15	0.00	0.00

Chapter 4

How Programmatic Profiles of Niche Parties affect their Electoral Performance[1]

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Abstract

Previous studies on the electoral performance of niche parties have not fully taken into account the evolutionary aspect of the programmatic profiles of these parties, in that the majority of these parties were analysed from their start of existence, when they were new parties. Acknowledging the variation in programmatic profiles between niche parties and over time, I argue that the electoral effects of nicheness and programmatic concentration as programmatic features of niche parties vary over their lifecycle. When entering the electoral arena, niche parties benefit from high levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration. However, these positive effects decrease as parties grow older and face different challenges compared to their beginning. The empirical analysis of green and extreme right parties in this article supports the corresponding hypotheses. Results show that the positive effects of nicheness and programmatic concentration vanish over time and indicate niche parties' influence on their own electoral destiny.

Keywords

nicheness; programmatic concentration; new political parties; manifestos; statistical uncertainty

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[1] A later, shortened and revised version is published in West European Politics 39 (6), 1205-1229.

INTRODUCTION

One of the prominent topics in the field of party research in the last decade has been the work on niche parties. On the one hand, studies have dealt with the definition of the niche party concept itself (Meguid 2005; 2008; Adams *et al.* 2006; Wagner 2012; Meyer and Miller 2015; Bischof 2015). On the other hand, research has made and tested causal arguments about niche parties. Here, the main focus is either on the relationship between certain aspects of their programmatic profiles and their electoral performance or their influence on mainstream party behaviour (Abou-Chadi 2014; Meguid 2005; 2008; Adams *et al.* 2006; Ezrow 2008). Although some of these studies also investigate the electoral performance of niche parties[1], we do not know much about how electoral performance of niche parties is influenced by their programmatic profiles, when taken as a whole. This is due to the following reasons: first, parts of the literature do not fully elaborate on the influence of niche parties' programmatic profiles for their own electoral performance. For example, Meguid (2005; 2008) argues that, on the programmatic level of party competition, it is the strategies of mainstream parties which determine the electoral performance of niche parties. Secondly, while the existing literature on niche parties acknowledges that niche parties may change their status and platforms over time (Wagner 2012; Meyer and Miller 2015; Bischof 2015), this aspect has not been taken into account for the analysis of the electoral performance of these parties. Third, studies on niche parties often concentrate on core issues of these parties rather than taking their complete profiles into account (Meguid 2005; 2008; Hino 2012; Bischof 2015). Finally, to the best of my knowledge, there is no study on the electoral performance of niche parties which considers the temporal dimension in theoretical and empirical terms. Comparative studies on niche parties usually follow them from their start (first election) up to the present or the point of electoral death. However, neglecting the programmatic evolution of niche parties, implies that programmatic features of these parties have the exact same effect over their entire lifecycle. Therefore, in this study, I focus on the electoral performance of green and extreme

right parties in Western Europe, typically considered as niche parties in the literature, and analyse the electoral effects of their programmatic profiles over time. For this purpose, I capture parties' profiles based on two features: nicheness and programmatic concentration. Nicheness (Meyer and Miller 2015) refers to the degree of programmatic differences between a given party and its competitors. In contrast to nicheness, programmatic concentration is only linked to the profile of the given party and takes account of the narrowness of the whole programmatic profile. Focusing on these two programmatic features enables to depict differences in complete programmatic profiles, between parties but also over time. Additionally, as nicheness and programmatic concentration both depend on the programmatic profile of a given party, this study acknowledges that the electoral performance of niche parties, apart from institutional factors, might not only be influenced by the programmatic behaviour of other parties in the arena but also by their own actions. Furthermore, I will argue that programmatic features of niche parties have different effects on their electoral performance over time – an aspect previously not considered in the literature. The empirical results support this argument. This study also speaks to the literature on new political parties, as all examined parties started as new parties when they first participated at a national election. It is also relevant for the literature on party competition in general as the approach used in this study can be applied to all parties and captures party strategies on the programmatic level of party competition. The study precedes as follows: on the basis of the existing literature, the second part will outline the theoretical arguments. In the third part, I will deal with data and methodological issues. The fourth part will present the empirical results. I will end this study by addressing open questions and offering conclusions.

THEORY

Before theorizing about the electoral performance of niche parties, it is necessary to deal with the niche party concept itself as there exist different definitions of this concept. The first

studies on niche parties originate from Meguid (2005; 2008) and Adams et al. (2006). Meguid (2008: 3f.; Meguid 2005: 347–8) defines niche parties along three criteria: (1) niche parties address issues which, so far, are not part of party competition; (2) these issues do not fit the classical left-right dimension and (3) niche parties only concentrate on a limited number of issues. Wagner (2012: 847) ties in with this conception by defining that niche parties 'de-emphasize economic concerns and stress a small range of non-economic issues'. Adams et al. (2006: 513) start from a spatial logic and focus on differences on the left-right-dimension for the identification niche parties. Meyer and Miller (2015: 260) aim for a minimal definition by stating that 'a niche party emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors' and present a continuous approach, called *nicheness*, which refers to complete programmatic profiles of parties. These varying approaches share that they start from the premise that niche parties emphasize different issues in comparison to other parties in the arena and, in this way, connect to salience theory (Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1983).[2] While, in the end, the definitions of Meguid, Adams et al. and Wagner lead to a dichotomous classification of parties (partly along party family membership), nicheness according to Meyer and Miller (2015) expresses a general characteristic of parties, referring to the *degree* of programmatic differences between a given party and its competitors. Because of not pre-selecting any issues and its continuous nature, the nicheness approach is suitable for detecting variance in complete programmatic profiles of parties. Meyer and Miller (2015: 263–4) capture the differences between parties solely on the basis of the pure emphasis of overall topics. I extend the understanding of nicheness by acknowledging that parties might also emphasize confronting issues[3] in order to distinguish themselves from each other. For example, this aspect also plays an important role in Meguid's (2008: 26–9) description of mainstream party strategies. I also take up this aspect in the section on the operationalization of nicheness.

Furthermore, I complement the concept of Meyer and Miller (2015) by introducing another programmatic feature, called programmatic concentration, which is also rooted in salience theory. It captures the broadness of the entire programmatic profile of a party and focuses on the number of issues a party addresses and the varying emphasis it puts on these issues. Recently, Bischof (2015: 1) presented a similar idea in his approach to define and operationalize the niche party concept which he terms *narrowness*. Similar to the concept of programmatic concentration, it is also related to the broadness of parties' policy offerings but, in contrast to the first, Bischof (2015: 6, 8) links narrowness only to a-priori defined niche segments and not to complete programmatic profiles of parties. In this article, programmatic concentration refers to entire profiles of parties in order to capture their full programmatic offerings towards voters. Programmatic concentration also connects to criteria present in niche party definitions which deal with the broadness of programmatic profiles of niche parties (Meguid 2005: 348; 2008: 4; Wagner 2012: 847). Whereas the niche status of a party is influenced by the party itself and its competitors (Wagner 2012: 849), programmatic concentration solely depends on the programmatic profile of the given party. Thus, these two features capture different features of parties' programmatic profiles, both of which can impact electoral performance.

So far, only few studies (Meguid 2005; 2008; Adams *et al.* 2006; Ezrow 2008) have taken the electoral performance of niche parties as a dependent variable. Apart from institutional factors, these studies include programmatic factors as their key independent variables. Meguid (2005; 2008) argues that the electoral performance of niche parties is mainly dependent on strategies of mainstream parties with regard to niche parties' core issues as mainstream parties are expected to use these strategies to hurt their mainstream party rivals. Accommodative strategies mean that mainstream parties take over positions of the niche party which harms the latter electorally and ceteris paribus leads to a lower nicheness for the niche

party. Mainstream parties use dismissive strategies when they ignore issues addressed by niche parties. Following adversarial strategies implies that mainstream parties take opposing positions on core issues of the niche party. Although both dismissive and adversarial strategies increase the nicheness of a niche party, according Meguid's logic they have opposing effects on its electoral performance. Based on the assumption that mainstream parties control the agenda, dismissive strategies decrease electoral prospects of niche parties as they reduce the voters' awareness of the respective issues. Contrarily, adversarial strategies increase awareness while, at the same time, preserving the unique characteristic of the niche party. A regression analysis of the vote shares of green and extreme right parties demonstrates the effectiveness of these strategies (Meguid 2008: 57–60).While Meguid's focus is mainly on mainstream party strategies, Hino (2012) concentrates more on programmatic differences (in terms of emphasis) between niche parties[4] and their competitors in their respective niche areas. Niche parties are expected to achieve higher vote shares when rival parties disregard the topics put forward by the niche parties (Hino 2012: 95, 149). Empirically, a positive effect of the policy gap variable only exists for the emergence of such parties, while there are negative or no effects for the subsequent electoral performance of these niche parties (Hino 2012: 103, 259). Starting from a spatial approach, Adams et al. (2006) argue that niche parties are punished by voters for moderating their position on the left-right dimension. However, these insights cannot be generalized to general features of programmatic profiles as the respective arguments refer to changes in nicheness rather than levels of nicheness. Also arguing spatially, Ezrow (2008) explicates that, in terms of votes, niche parties benefit from occupying extreme positions on the left-right dimension in the eyes of voters. These studies share a theoretical and/or empirical focus on segments of parties' profiles. More importantly, they have in common that they do not incorporate the temporal dimension as they implicitly assume that the effects of programmatic factors are the same irrespective of the point in time in the lifecycle of a niche party.

I will argue that the electoral effects of programmatic features of niche parties vary over time. In general, niche parties considered in the literature (e.g. green parties) started as new parties. When entering the electoral arena, having a distinct programmatic profile, implying high nicheness, should be beneficial for these new parties as it serves as a unique characteristic vis-à-vis voters compared to existing parties. In the case of new parties, a high nicheness is the result of programmatic innovations (Zons 2013: 3; Franzmann 2011) which are new policy offerings towards the electorate (Hindmoor 2008: 499). Such innovations can connect to unsatisfied demands or 'representational needs' (Harmel and Robertson 1985: 502) of voters. Lago and Martinez (2010: 7) call these situations in which existing parties fail to address present electoral demands 'electoral market failure'. Apart from this, Zons (2013: 3) presents another form of programmatic innovation which aims for generating demand, first. This links to De Vries's and Hobolt's (2012: 247) concept of issue entrepreneurship defined as 'mobilizing conflict on a new issue dimension to change the basis on which voters make political choices and thereby potentially improving their electoral fortunes.' In general, programmatic innovations of both types offer the opportunity for new parties to attract voters by offering a distinct policy profile compared to existing parties. Thus, high levels of nicheness should be electorally beneficial when new parties enter the arena.[5] The underlying assumption beyond the positive effect of nicheness through programmatic innovations is that niche parties can influence their own electoral destiny by forming their programmatic profile. Programmatic innovations are designed for changing the agenda (De Vries and Hobolt 2012: 247). As innovators, these parties can hope to gain a first mover advantage, especially in situations of electoral market failure (Lago and Martinez 2010) when existing parties are proved to have, at least partly, the "wrong" agenda.

While nicheness, as argued above, exhibits a positive impact on electoral performance of niche parties when they enter the electoral arena, it is not guaranteed that this effect will

persist over time. Rather, I argue that this effect diminishes over time. If former new niche parties keep maintaining high levels of nicheness over time after they have entered party competition, this indicates, first, that they might have failed to integrate other topics beyond their original niche profile which are important to larger parts of the electorate. These could include, for example, valence issues (Stokes 1963). Integrating such issues into their platforms does not mean that these parties abandon their original niche issues or that they refrain from other delimiting issues. Yet, taking up issues also addressed by other parties is a means for such a party to present itself more compatible to larger parts of the electorate. Persistent high levels of nicheness for a niche party over time might also be a sign that the programmatic innovation has not succeeded. If it were attractive to large parts of the electorate, other parties would have had a strong incentive to adapt their platform in this direction which would result in a lower nicheness. On the side of niche parties, upholding a high level of nicheness, despite potential negative electoral effects in the long run, may suggest that these parties favour policy seeking over vote seeking (Strom 1990) or are not able to adapt their platforms for internal reasons (Robertson 1976: 39–44). Summing up, I expect that the positive effect of nicheness at beginning of the lifecycle of a niche party decreases over time. In sum, this leads to the following hypotheses:

H1a: When entering the electoral arena, niche parties benefit electorally from high levels of nicheness.

H1b: Over time, the positive effect of nicheness on electoral performance decreases.

So far, I have only dealt with nicheness. However, as indicated above, programmatic profiles of parties can not only be characterized in terms of differences in comparison to their competitors. As I will argue, the programmatic concentration of a profile itself is another feature which is relevant in the context of the electoral performance of niche parties. When

parties enter the electoral arena and present new programmatic offerings to voters, they extract advantages from promoting a clear and focused platform, implying a high programmatic concentration. First, by concentrating on one or few core issues, new parties are able to generate a clear programmatic identity. Secondly, such a clear identity is useful to gain attention and increase awareness in the media and on the side of voters. This is especially important in the context of programmatic innovations as 'voters must be aware of the differences in the position of the parties on the new issue' (De Vries and Hobolt 2012: 249).

However, after the entering stage, the positive electoral effect of programmatic concentration should diminish. Once awareness through high programmatic concentration is achieved and parties have introduced themselves, challenges change as niche parties might face incentives or pressures to broaden their profiles. Niche parties might suffer from competitors adopting their innovations. In the words of Meguid (2005; 2008), these are accommodative strategies which harm niche parties electorally. In such situations, broadening its programmatic profile is one strategy for a niche party in order to connect to other topics beyond their initial core issues. Failing to do so and adhering to high levels of programmatic concentration, for example, due to intra party reasons, might lead to diminishing vote shares. Even if parties maintain their original niche profile over time, keeping up high levels of programmatic concentration might be electorally harmful as it is likely that voters, over time, do not care about only one set of issues initially promoted by the new niche party. In order to be compatible for these voters over time, parties have to address other issues as well. Such strategies would result in lower levels of programmatic concentration. Similar to nicheness, maintaining high levels of programmatic concentration is likely to be associated with gaining less votes over time. All in all, these arguments lead to the following hypotheses with regard to programmatic concentration:

H2a: When entering the electoral arena, niche parties benefit from high levels of programmatic concentration.

H2b: Over time, the positive effect of programmatic concentration on electoral performance decreases.

The hypotheses about the effects of nicheness and programmatic concentration are not competing as, theoretically, both, nicheness and programmatic concentration, can affect electoral performance at the same time. However, contrary to nicheness, programmatic concentration refers to features influenced by the given party only. In this way, checking for effects of programmatic concentration illuminates to what extent niche parties determine their own destiny.

DATA & METHODS

I test the above mentioned hypotheses for members of the green and extreme right party families in Western Europe for which manifesto data are provided by the *Manifesto Data Collection/Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR)* (Volkens *et al.* 2013; Klingemann *et al.* 2006; Budge *et al.* 2001)[6]. Although the niche party concept extends beyond these two party families, according to the literature, green and extreme right parties are typical cases of niche parties (Meguid 2005; 2008) and started as new parties in party systems which consolidated after World War II. Thus, theoretical expectations with regard to niche parties should hold for these parties in particular. Green parties are selected according to the CMP party family coding. Based on this coding, I was able to identify 16 parties in 13 countries. As the CMP party family coding does not offer a separate category for extreme right parties, I mainly draw on a list of extreme right parties provided by Spies and Franzmann (2011: 1052) which includes 31 extreme right parties in 16 countries. However, only nine[7] of these parties are included in the CMP dataset as it generally contains only parties that won at least one

Table 1: Party sample.

Country	CMP[a]	Party name	Type[b]	n[c]	Elections[d]
Sweden	11110	Green Ecology Party	0	7	1982(1e), 1985(2e), **1988(3), 1991(4), 1994(5), 1998(6), 2002(7), 2006(8), 2010(9)**, 2014(10i)
	11710	Sweden Democrats	1	1	1988(1e), 1991(2e), 1994(3e), 1998(4e), 2002(5e), 2006(6e), **2010(7)**, 2014(10i)
	11951	New Democracy	1	1	**1991(1)**, 1994(2e), 1998(2e)
Norway	12951	Progress Party	1	9	**1973(1), 1977(2), 1981(3), 1985(4)**, 1989(5g), **1993(6), 1997(7), 2001(8), 2005(9), 2009(10)**, 2013(11i)
Denmark	13720	Danish People's Party	1	5	**1998(1), 2001(2), 2005(3), 2007(4), 2011(5),** 2015(i)
	13951	Progress Party	1	11	**1973(1), 1975(2), 1977(3), 1979(4), 1981(5), 1984(6), 1987(7), 1988(8), 1990(9), 1994(10), 1998(11),** 2001(12e)
Finland	14110	Green Union	0	6	1983(1f), 1987(2f), **1991(3), 1995(4), 1999(5), 2003(6), 2007(7), 2011(8),** 2015(i)
	14820	True Fins	1	7	1962(1e), 1966(2f), 1970(3h), 1972(4h), 1975(5h), **1979(6), 1983(7), 1987(8), 1991(9)**, 1995(10f), 1999(11f), **2003(12), 2007(13), 2011(14)**, 2015(15i)
Iceland	15111	Left Green Movement	0	5	**1999(1), 2003(2), 2007(3), 2009(4), 2013(5)**
Belgium	21111	Ecologists	0	4	1981(1f), 1985(2f), 1987(3f), **1991(4), 1995(5)**, 1999(6h), 2003(7h), **2007(8), 2010(9)**, 2014(10i)
	21112	Green!	0	4	1981(1f), 1985(2f), 1987(3f), **1991(4), 1995(5)**, 1999(6h), 2003(7h), **2007(8), 2010(9)**, 2014(10i)
	21914 & 21917	Flemish Bloc / Flemish Interest	1	4	1978(1f), 1981(2f), 1985(3f), 1987(4f), **1991(5), 1995(6)**, 1999(7f), 2003(8f), **2007(9), 2010(10)**, 2014(11i)
Netherlands	22110	Green Left	0	7	**1989(1), 1994(2), 1998(3), 2002(4), 2003(5), 2006(6), 2010(7)**, 2012(8i)
	22720	List Pim Fortuyn	1	2	**2002(1), 2003(2)**, 2006(3e)
	22722	Party of Freedom	1	2	**2006(1), 2010(2)**, 2012(3i)
Luxembourg	23111	Green Left Ecological Initiative	0	0	1989(1h)
	23112 & 23113	Green Alternative / The Greens	0	6	**1984(1)**, 1989(2h), **1994(3), 1999(4), 2004(5), 2009(6), 2013(7)**
France	31110	The Greens	0	4	1986(1e) 1988(2e), 1993(3h), **1997(4), 2002(5), 2007(6), 2012(7)**
	31111	Ecology Generation	0	1	1993(1e), **1997(2)**
	31720	National Front	1	4	1973(1e), 1978(2e), 1981(3e), 1986(4h), 1988(5f), 1993(6f), **1997(7), 2002(8), 2007(9), 2012(10)**
Italy	32110	Green Federation	0	3	**1987(1)**, 1992(2h), 1994(3f), **1996(4)**, 2001(e), **2006(6)**
	32720	Northern League	1	6	1987(1e), 1992(2f), **1994(3), 1996(4), 2001(5), 2006(6), 2008(7), 2013(8)**
Portugal	35110	Ecologist Party "The Greens"	0	5	**1983(1)**, 1985(2f), 1987(3h), 1991(4e), 1995(5e), 1999(6e), **2002(7), 2005(8), 2009(9), 2011(10)**
Germany	41111 & 41112 & 41113	Alliance '90 / Greens	0	9	1980(1e), **1983(2), 1987(3), 1990(4), 1994(5), 1998(6), 2002(7), 2005(8), 2009(9), 2013(10)**
Austria	42110	The Greens	0	8	**1986(1), 1990(2), 1994(3), 1995(4), 1999(5), 2002(6), 2006(7), 2008(8)**, 2013(9i)
	42710	Alliance for the Future of Austria	1	2	**2006(1), 2008(2)**, 2013(3i)
Switzerland	43110	Green Party of Switzerland	0	6	1979(1f), 1983(2f), **1987(3)**, 1991(4h), **1995(5), 1999(6), 2003(7), 2007(8), 2011(9)**
Ireland	53110	Green Party	0	5	1987(1e), 1989(2f), **1992(3), 1997(4), 2002(5), 2007(6), 2011(7)**
				134	

[a] CMP party code; [b] niche party type: 0 – green party, 1 – extreme right party; [c] number of elections/observations used for the empirical analysis; [d] elections for single parties. Number in brackets corresponds to election number variable; [e] missing in CMP; [f] estimate in CMP; [g] missing information in CMP; [h] election dropped due to estimate for relevant party; [i] election missing in CMP

parliamentary seat.[8] In addition, I also include the *Sweden Democrats*, the Dutch *Party of Freedom* and the *Alliance for the Future of Austria*, also mentioned as extreme right parties, for example by van der Brug et al. (2013: 58). Due to the CMP criterion extreme unsuccessful green and extreme right parties are excluded from the analysis. This introduces a bias for the results with regard to hypotheses H1 and H2. However, the electoral performance of parties in the sample still shows a high level of variation between parties and also over time. All in all, the sample for the empirical analysis includes 28 parties, 16 green and 12 extreme right parties (see Table 1).

The dependent variable is the vote share of each niche party.[9] The main independent variables are linked to programmatic profiles of parties. Party manifestos provide a valuable source for investigating programmatic profiles of political parties (Laver 2001: 72; Gemenis 2012: 594) and are widely used in comparative research on parties because they offer comparable data across countries and over time. I draw on the CMP as the most comprehensive dataset on manifestos with regard the number of countries and time span being covered. The CMP codes party manifestos on the basis of a coding scheme which, for Western Europe, consists of 56 categories which are linked to certain topics, and one additional category subsuming remaining parts of manifestos. Scores in single categories state the percentage shares of (quasi-)sentences in a manifesto which refer to the respective topics. In the context of CMP data, Gemenis (2012) points at the consequences of different document types being used as the data basis by the CMP. These also include estimates resting on following or preceding elections. Such estimates are problematic as they fail to capture the strategic element of party competition according to which parties interact on the programmatic level. Thus, data handling is guided by Meyer and Miller (2015: 264). Excluded from the dataset are complete elections when the given party in the sample or a relevant (vote or seat share above five per cent) party feature estimated or missing data. Non-relevant parties with estimated or missing

data are dropped individually. Taken together, 134 elections in which green and extreme right parties in sample participated are used for the following analysis (indicated by bold numbers in Table 1). The last column of Table 1 lists all observations per party. The numbers in brackets stand for the election count of each party. For example, *(3)* means that, in this election year, the given party participated for the third time in a national election. This election count variable also enters the empirical analysis as an independent variable addressing the temporal dimension.

In order to capture the nicheness of parties, I start from an existing approach, developed by Meyer and Miller (2015: 262):

$$\sigma_i = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N}\sum_{j=1}^{N}\left(x_{ij} - \overline{X_{j,-i}}\right)^2}$$

In the formula, *N* stands for the number of issues or dimensions, in which parties compete and for which the nicheness σ_i of party *i* is calculated. x_{ij} stands for the score of the given party *i* in issue or dimension *j*. $\overline{X_{j,-i}}$ denotes the mean score of the remaining parties in the same issue or dimension. In other words, nicheness σ_i is calculated as the square root of the mean squared distance between the score of the given party and the average score of all remaining parties over all issues or dimensions. In their original version, Meyer and Miller (2015: 263–4) calculate nicheness on basis of several dimensions, which comprise different CMP categories and refer to typical ministry portfolios (Bäck *et al.* 2011: 454–5). In general, there is no single right level of aggregation regarding the original CMP category scheme. On the one hand, the aggregation according to ministry portfolios is highly relevant as they represent an important reference point for parties. On the other hand, the high level of aggregation also masks important differences between programmatic profiles of parties and, thus, also in nicheness. For example, the *interior*-dimension covers such diverse topics as *democracy* and

law and order. The aggregation in this case means that it does not make any difference for the nicheness of a party which of these issues is addressed. Furthermore, the merging also pertains to pairs of positive and negative CMP categories. This form of aggregation fits a pure salience theory point of view which focuses on non-confrontational modes of party competition. However, research indicates the relevance of confrontational strategies, also in the context of niche parties (Meguid 2005; 2008).[10] Moreover, according to the aggregation of Bäck et al. (2011: 454–5), several CMP categories are assigned to more than one dimension. Therefore, nicheness in these categories is overemphasized. For these reasons, I calculate nicheness on basis of the original CMP data.[11] In order to check the sensitivity of the results regarding the approach to the CMP category scheme, I replicate the results by handling the CMP categories in two different ways. First, I only aggregate positive and negative categories in order to arrive at a coherent, pure salience based scheme. Secondly, I aggregate all categories according to the seven CMP policy domains[12] which resembles the original approach of Meyer and Miller (2015) without multiple assignment of the original categories. Besides, in contrast to Meyer and Miller (2015: 262), I do not use vote shares as weights because, in the context of this study, the nicheness measure should purely reflect programmatic differences between parties, irrespective of their size in terms of votes or seats. Following these remarks, the above mentioned formula for nicheness changes to:

$$\sigma_i = \sqrt{\frac{1}{57}\sum_{j=1}^{57}\left(p_{ij} - \overline{p_{J,-\iota}}\right)^2}$$

As outlined, I calculate nicheness based on all 57 CMP categories, relevant for Western Europe.[13] p_{ij} stands for the salience score of party *i* in category *j* while $\overline{p_{J,-\iota}}$ is the average score of the remaining parties in the same category.

For measuring programmatic concentration, I apply the Herfindahl-Hirschman-Index (*hhi*) to the manifesto data of the CMP (Franzmann 2013: 227–8). As a standard measure of concentration it is sensitive to both, the number of issues addressed by a party and the distribution of emphasis put on these issues.[14] The according formula reads as:

$$hhi_i = \sum_{j=i}^{57} p_{ij}^2$$

hhi_i is then the sum of the squared salience scores of party *i* over all 57 *CMP* categories whereby low values indicate low programmatic concentration. hhi_i reaches its minimum when all *CMP* categories are emphasized to the same degree and its maximum of 1 when a party only addresses one category. Similar to nicheness, this index is also affected by the structure of the CMP coding scheme. At this point, the replication of the results on the basis of the two different aggregations of the original CMP categories again serve as sensitivity analysis.

Before I precede, I want to give a brief descriptive overview about nicheness and programmatic concentration (based on original CMP categories). Table 2 shows mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient for both measures. The numbers in the upper half of the table refer to all available observations for 18 West European countries in the CMP dataset (CMP country code: 11-51; 53) and are broken down according to the CMP party family code. The mean values for both measures display differences between party families and exhibit face validity. Special issue and nationalist parties feature on average the highest levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration which seems plausible as they are expected to concentrate on few issues not covered by other parties. In contrast, social democratic and Christian parties feature low levels of programmatic concentration and nicheness. Many members of this party family pursue catch-all strategies and resemble Meguid's (2008: 46) definition of mainstream parties which should be associated with broad

programmatic profiles and low values of nicheness. Considering the operationalization of nicheness and programmatic concentration, a positive relationship between both measures is expected. A high score for programmatic concentration results from high salience scores in few categories which, at the same time, makes it likely that the same party show differences in these categories compared to its competitors, implying high nicheness. Although, we observe positive correlations for all party families, there exists nevertheless variation among correlation coefficients. Party families which are labelled as niche in the literature such as green, nationalist and ethnic parties show a relatively high correlation between nicheness and programmatic concentration although special issue parties appear to be an outlier in this case. All in all, these differences illustrate the relevance of the distinction between programmatic concentration and nicheness as two distinct characteristics of programmatic profiles of parties. The lower half of Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for the parties in the sample, ordered by the election count variable. Numbers do not reveal any trends for neither nicheness nor programmatic concentration but show variation over time which will be exploited in the regression analysis. In the distribution of nicheness and programmatic concentration for the parties in the sample, one observation appears as an outlier due to its high value of programmatic concentration. This is the Danish Progress Party in the 1977 election. Its high value of programmatic concentration is attributed to the large share of uncoded sentences (65.4%). I will later check the influence of this observation in the regression analysis.

With regard to manifesto data and the associated coding process, Benoit et al. (2009) point at different sources of error and present an approach addressing the uncertainty due to the stochastic process of text generation. This procedure relies on bootstrapped samples for each manifesto in order to obtain standard errors for each salience score in every CMP category. The same can be applied to every measure based on these data. For this, the given measure is calculated for every bootstrapped sample. Regarding uncertainty caused by the stochastic

process of text generation, it is then possible to distinguish between significant and non-significant differences by using confidence intervals.[15] I follow this procedure for the measures of nicheness and programmatic concentration.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for programmatic concentration and nicheness (based on 57 CMP categories).

		Programmatic concentration		Nicheness		
CMP party family code	N	mean	std. dev.	mean	std. dev.	corr
10 – ECO	83	0.106	0.062	0.030	0.013	0.92
20 – COM	234	0.124	0.103	0.031	0.013	0.70
30 – SOC	367	0.097	0.067	0.027	0.011	0.58
40 – LIB	272	0.112	0.094	0.029	0.011	0.58
50 – CHR	265	0.087	0.049	0.028	0.011	0.70
60 – CON	183	0.109	0.092	0.030	0.014	0.74
70 – NAT	64	0.143	0.152	0.035	0.015	0.82
80 – AGR	85	0.108	0.089	0.032	0.016	0.89
90 – ETH	91	0.105	0.072	0.028	0.015	0.93
95 – SIP	67	0.141	0.098	0.033	0.011	0.43
ALL	1711	0.108	0.086	0.029	0.013	0.68
Election count						
1	13	0.130	0.081	0.037	0.016	
2	11	0.092	0.061	0.028	0.013	
3	13	0.152	0.109	0.035	0.010	
4	16	0.108	0.055	0.032	0.012	
5	16	0.099	0.043	0.028	0.009	
6	15	0.097	0.050	0.028	0.013	
7	16	0.118	0.078	0.034	0.017	
8	13	0.099	0.046	0.028	0.010	
9	11	0.103	0.055	0.030	0.011	
10	6	0.077	0.021	0.027	0.008	
11	1	0.087	-	0.028	-	
12	1	0.084	-	0.039	-	
13	1	0.064	-	0.026	-	
14	1	0.058	-	0.028	-	
SAMPLE	134	0.108	0.065	0.031	0.012	0.77

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Vote share	134	7.30	4.45	0.42	22.91
Nicheness	134	0.031	0.012	0.012	0.074
Prog. concentration	134	0.108	0.065	0.045	0.442
Election No	134	5	2.87	1	14
Mean distr. magn. (log)	134	2.109	1.263	0	5.011
Federalism	134	0.25	0.44	0	1
GDP per capita	134	31374.3	8770.839	12508	66857
Unemployment rate	134	6.50	3.08	0.7	15.3
Type	134	0.41	0.49	0	1

Apart from the programmatic variables presented above and the election count variable, the following analysis includes several other variables which account for factors which might also influence the electoral performance of niche parties and have been considered in the literature

before. District magnitude[16] captures the impact of the electoral system. In systems featuring low district magnitudes, niche parties may appear less viable and, therefore might suffer from strategic voting. A dummy variable indicates whether the party competes in a federal system.[17] The latter offers the chance for niche parties to establish themselves on the subnational level first and to present themselves as a viable option. Thus, niche parties should perform better in federalist systems. In order to control for potential general differences between green and extreme right parties I include a dummy variable taking the value of 1 for right niche parties. GDP per capita and unemployment rate[18] serve as economic control variables. Last, the following model also incorporates the electoral performance of the previous election as a lagged dependent variable in order to take account of the fact that electoral performance is also time dependent in that past performance offers a clue to voters about the viability of parties. Table 3 displays descriptive statistics for the variables used in the empirical analysis.

I start testing my hypotheses by using the following model:

$$\text{M1:} \quad VS_{i,t} = b_0 + b_1 * \text{niche.}_{i,t} + b_2 * \text{prog. conc.}_{i,t} + b_3 * \text{elec. count}_{i,t} + b_4 * \text{niche.}_{i,t} * \text{elec. count}_{i,t} + b_5 * \text{prog. conc.}_{i,t} * \text{elec. count}_{i,t} + b_6 * \text{niche.}_{i,t} * \text{prog. conc.}_{i,t} + b_7 * \text{niche.}_{i,t} * \text{prog. conc.}_{i,t} * \text{elec. count}_{i,t} + b_8 * \text{party type}_i + b_9 * \text{mean district magnitude}_{i,t} + b_{10} * \text{federalism}_{i,t} + b_{11} * GDP_{i,t} + b_{12} * \text{unempl.}_{i,t} + b_{13} * VS_{i,t-1} + \textit{country dummies}$$

Subscript *i* refers to parties and *t* denotes the election count of party *i*. My hypotheses emphasize interactions of both, nicheness and programmatic concentration, with the election count variable. However, this common moderating variable then also establishes a statistical relationship between nicheness and programmatic concentration which has to be accounted

for. Therefore, model M1 features all possible combinations of all three variables, including a threefold interaction term. Omitting any of these terms would lead to biased results for the coefficients in the model (Braumoeller 2004: 810–1)[19]. For interpreting interaction effects, it is not sufficient to look on single coefficients and their statistical significance (Brambor *et al.* 2006). In order to test the above mentioned hypotheses, I calculate the marginal effects of nicheness and programmatic concentration, depending on the election count variable. Due to the threefold interaction term, the respective third variable has also to be taken into account when calculating these marginal effects. According to the hypotheses, I expect the marginal effects of nicheness and programmatic concentration to be positive when election count is low. As election count increases the marginal effects should diminish.

Table 4: Regression results (based on 57 CMP categories).

	M1	M2a		M2b	
	OLS	OLS	SIMEX	OLS	SIMEX
	b (rob. SE)	b (rob. SE)	b (SE)	b (rob. SE)	b (SE)
Nicheness	487.4039**	209.9535***	297.1655***		
	(187.3268)	(76.5699)	(104.2125)		
Progr. conc.	124.3111***			35.4665***	42.0780***
	(38.9329)			(9.9927)	(13.6622)
Election count	2.3889**	0.7343	1.1442**	0.2917	0.4063
	(1.0651)	(0.4937)	(0.5452)	(0.3821)	(0.3061)
Nich. * progr. conc.	-2790.5807***				
	(978.6111)				
Nich. * elec. count	-73.0789**	-32.1956**	-45.5050***		
	(33.3612)	(13.5192)	(17.0200)		
Progr. conc. * elec. count	-20.5219**			-5.2007**	-6.2859**
	(10.0308)			(2.4403)	(2.6105)
Nich. * conc. * elec. count	461.5907**				
	(214.3274)				
Party type	3.8328***	3.5883***	3.8734***	3.2587***	3.3152***
	(1.0468)	(1.0891)	(1.0176)	(1.0845)	(0.9535)
district magn. (log)	-0.6341	-0.2437	-0.2377	-0.2438	-0.2368
	(0.5875)	(0.5989)	(0.6983)	(0.6068)	(0.6860)
Federalism	-3.1641***	-2.4840**	-2.8586	-2.2767**	-2.3945
	(1.1098)	(1.0195)	(2.1916)	(0.8733)	(2.1161)
GDP per capita	0.0004***	0.0003***	0.0003***	0.0003***	0.0003***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Unempl. rate	0.1718	0.1413	0.1561	0.1726	0.1850
	(0.1406)	(0.1359)	(0.1506)	(0.1411)	(0.1504)
Lagged DV	0.2559**	0.3202**	0.3210***	0.2921**	0.2878***
	(0.1252)	(0.1255)	(0.0897)	(0.1272)	(0.0896)
Intercept	-23.4989***	-11.3668***	-14.1635***	-9.5531***	-10.3626***
	(6.4094)	(4.2529)	(4.5099)	(3.6016)	(3.5619)
Country dummies	included	included	included	included	included
Adj. R^2	0.54	0.51		0.53	
Num. obs.	119	119	119	119	119

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

To begin with, I estimate the first model M1, using an OLS regression as a starting point (Table 4). Due to signs of heteroscedasticity, I use robust standard errors. Faced with a model including a lagged dependent variable, I apply the test for AR(1) serial correlation in models including a lagged dependent variable suggested by Wooldridge (2006: 420f.). Regressing the residuals on their lag and the independent variables does not reveal strong signs of serial correlation (p-value of the lagged residual is 0.098). The adjusted R-squared amounts to 54 per cent, indicating the explanatory power of the model. First of all, results show that all three core variables (nicheness, programmatic concentration, election count) and their interactions are strongly significant, either on the 5%- or 1%-level. Despite its panel structure, the dataset does not correspond to the typical application scenario for panel corrected standard errors (PCSE, Beck and Katz 1995) as it is highly unbalanced and *N* (parties) exceeds *T* (time unit: election count). Nevertheless, the significance of the effects also persists in the case of PCSE. This finding suggests that nicheness and programmatic concentration have time-dependent effects on electoral performance of green and extreme right parties.

Among the control variables, the dummy variable for extreme right parties shows a positive effect ($b_8 = 3.83$), significant on 1%-level. According to this finding, extreme right parties, on average, reach higher vote shares than green parties. Niche parties perform worse in federal systems ($b_{10} = -3.16$, significant on the 1%-level). Moreover, GDP features a positive effect ($b_{11} = 0.0004$), significant on the 1%-level. The lagged dependent variable also features a positive effect ($b_{13} = 0.256$). It is significant on the 1%-level and illustrates that past electoral performance has a formative and positive influence on future elections.

Figures 1 and 2 help verifying the hypotheses related to nicheness and programmatic concentration by illustrating their marginal effects. Figure 1 shows the marginal effect of nicheness in dependence of election count for three different levels of programmatic

concentration (hhi: mean-sd, mean, mean+sd). The distribution of the election count variable is displayed in the in Table 2. When first looking on the low level of programmatic concentration (plot on the left), we see a positive marginal effect of nicheness on electoral performance for the first four participations in elections as confidence intervals lie above the zero line. This fact offers confirmation of hypothesis H1a. The positive effect of nicheness also appears to be substantial in its magnitude. For the first election, a rise in nicheness of one standard deviation brings about an increase of 3.86 percentage points. Yet, the plot also reveals that this positive effect of nicheness decreases with the number of participations in elections. From the fifth election onwards, the confidence intervals cannot be significantly distinguished from 0. This trend over time is in line with hypothesis H1b. The plots for the medium and high level of programmatic concentration show a different picture. While the marginal effect of nicheness in the case of the medium level of programmatic concentration seems to follow a similar trend as before, it only reaches statistical significance (5%-level) for the third and fourth election participation. For the high level of programmatic concentration, there is no significant marginal effect of nicheness on electoral performance.

Figure 1: Marginal effect of nicheness on vote share dependent on election count for three different levels of programmatic concentration (hhi).

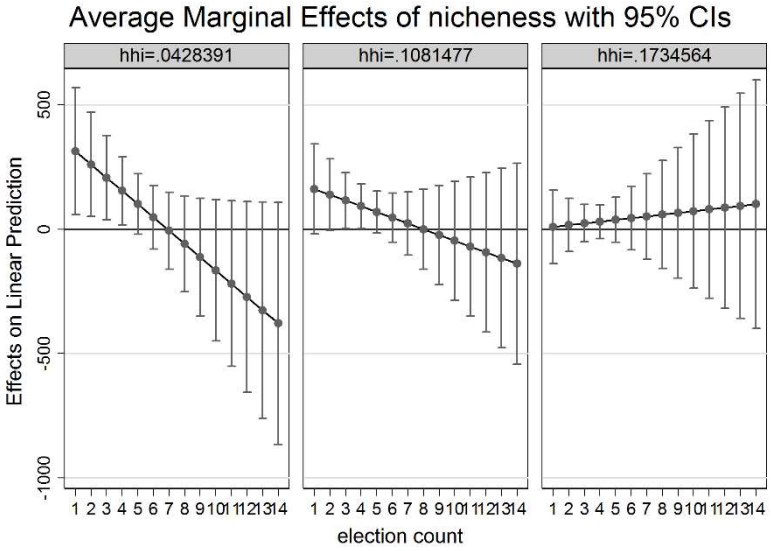


Figure 2: Marginal effect of programmatic concentration dependent on election count for three different levels of nicheness.

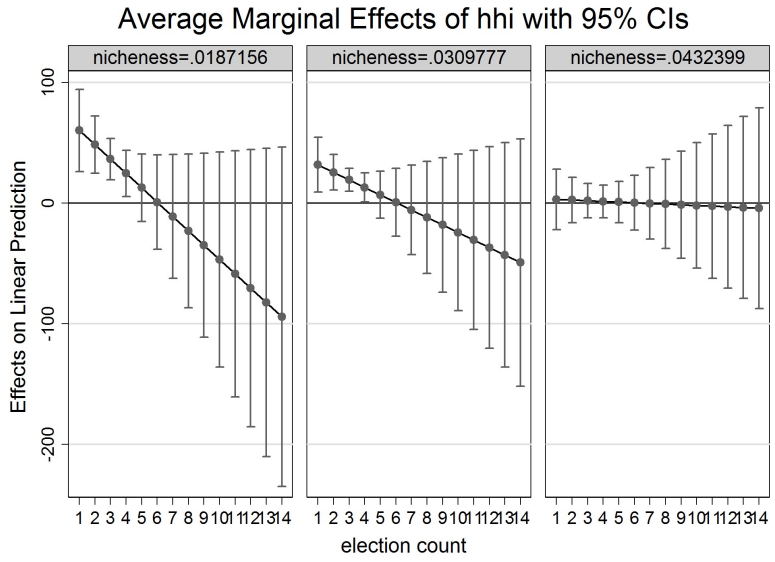


Figure 2 displays the marginal effect of programmatic concentration in dependence of the election count variable for three different levels of nicheness (mean-sd, mean, mean+sd). The left plot (low nicheness) reveals a similar pattern like in Figure 1. There is a positive marginal effect of programmatic concentration for the first four elections which supports hypothesis H2a. The magnitude of the effect for a one standard deviation increase amounts to 3.91 percentage points. At the same time, the plot also illustrates a decreasing trend for the marginal effect of programmatic concentration which goes along with its insignificance from the fifth participation in an election onwards. This trend confirms hypothesis H2b. The same pattern becomes visible for the medium level of nicheness although the magnitude of the marginal effect of programmatic concentration appears to be slightly lower. Against this, the plot on the right side (high level of nicheness) does not reveal any significant effects of concentration. Earlier, I pointed at the high value of programmatic concentration for the Danish Progress Party in the 1977 election. While this observation does not represent an outlier with regard to its residual, dropping it leads to the general insignificance of the

marginal effect of programmatic concentration in the model with robust standard errors (not with PCSE). With regard to the handling of CMP data, the aggregation of positive and negative categories only leads to marginal changes in the results (see Table A1 in the appendix). Although it matters theoretically whether we consider nicheness to be affected by parties taking different positions with regard to certain topics, the empirical results are not influenced by this aspect. Applying the broader aggregation based on the CMP policy domains (see Table A2), only reveals positive but, over time, diminishing effects for programmatic concentration. However, this finding can be tied to the high level of aggregation that levels differences *between* parties to which the nicheness measure reacts. So far, results offer partial support for the hypotheses stating time-dependent effects of nicheness and programmatic concentration. In general, the precision of the estimation is affected by the high correlation between nicheness and programmatic concentration in the sample. Thus, in a second step, I estimate two separate models for both variables:

M2a: $VS_{i,t} = b_0 + b_1 * \text{nicheness}_{i,t} + b_3 * \text{elec. count}_{i,t} + b_4 * \text{nicheness}_{i,t} * \text{elec. count}_{i,t} + b_8 * \text{party type}_i + b_9 * \text{mean district magnitude}_{i,t} + b_{10} * \text{federalism}_{i,t} + b_{11} * \text{GDP}_{i,t} + b_{12} * \text{unempl.}_{i,t} + b_{13} * VS_{i,t-1} + \textit{country dummies}$

M2b: $VS_{i,t} = b_0 + b_2 * \text{prog. conc.}_{i,t} + b_3 * \text{elec. count}_{i,t} + b_5 * \text{prog. conc.}_{i,t} * \text{elec. count}_{i,t} + b_8 * \text{party type}_i + b_9 * \text{mean district magnitude}_{i,t} + b_{10} * \text{federalism}_{i,t} + b_{11} * \text{GDP}_{i,t} + b_{12} * \text{unempl.}_{i,t} + b_{13} * VS_{i,t-1} + \textit{country dummies}$

For these separate models, it is then also possible to take into account the measurement error of these programmatic variables caused by stochastic process of text generation. Ignoring measurement error in explanatory variables can cause bias and inefficiency of the respective

coefficients (Hausman 2001: 58; Benoit *et al.* 2009: 505), in particular for OLS regressions (Benoit *et al.* 2009: 506). In this context, Benoit et al. (2009: 506) recommend the application of simulation-extrapolation (Raymond J. Carroll *et al.* 2006; Stefanski and Cook 1995), SIMEX, as an error correction model. The basic idea behind this approach is to identify a trend in the bias by adding increasing levels of measurement error in a simulation procedure. After this, it is then possible to infer to the absence of measurement error by extrapolation (Benoit *et al.* 2009: 506). I later apply SIMEX for models M2a and M2b, in which measurement error exists for nicheness and programmatic concentration. Note that the SIMEX procedure cannot be applied to the first model M1 because it includes an interaction between the two variables which contain measurement error[20] and starts from an OLS regression with normal standard errors.

Table 4 also displays the results for model M2a from an OLS regression, using robust standard errors. The test for AR(1) serial correlation does not indicate serial correlation (p-value of the lagged residual amounts to 0.19). Like in the first model, results point to a time-dependent effect of nicheness. Nicheness (b_1 = 209.954) as well as its interaction with election count (b_4 = -32.196) show significant effects (on the 1%- and 5%-level), also present when using panel corrected standard errors. Besides, the remaining variables reveal the same pattern as in model M1. The fourth column of Table 4 displays the results for the SIMEX estimation for model M2A. We see that, compared to the OLS regression, the coefficients of nicheness (b_1 = 297.166), election count (b_3 = 1.144) and their interaction increase (b_4 = -45.505) in their magnitude. At the same time, election count and the interaction variable reach higher significance levels. Among the remaining variables, federalism stops to appear significant. While the aggregation of positive and negative categories leads to overall similar results (Table A1), nicheness shows no significant results for the broader aggregation of the original CMP categories (Table A2), as it was the case for model M1.

Figure 3: Marginal effect of nicheness on vote share dependent on election count.

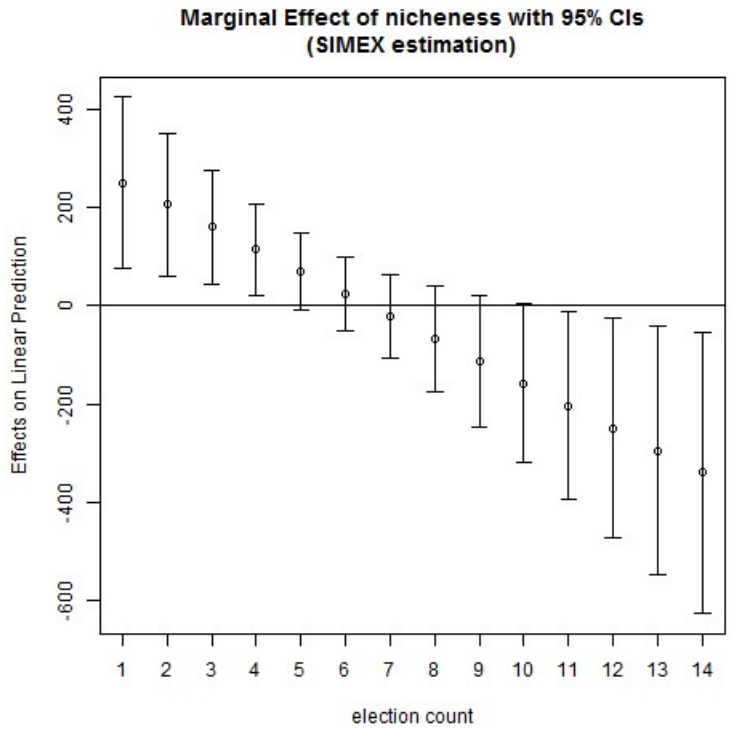
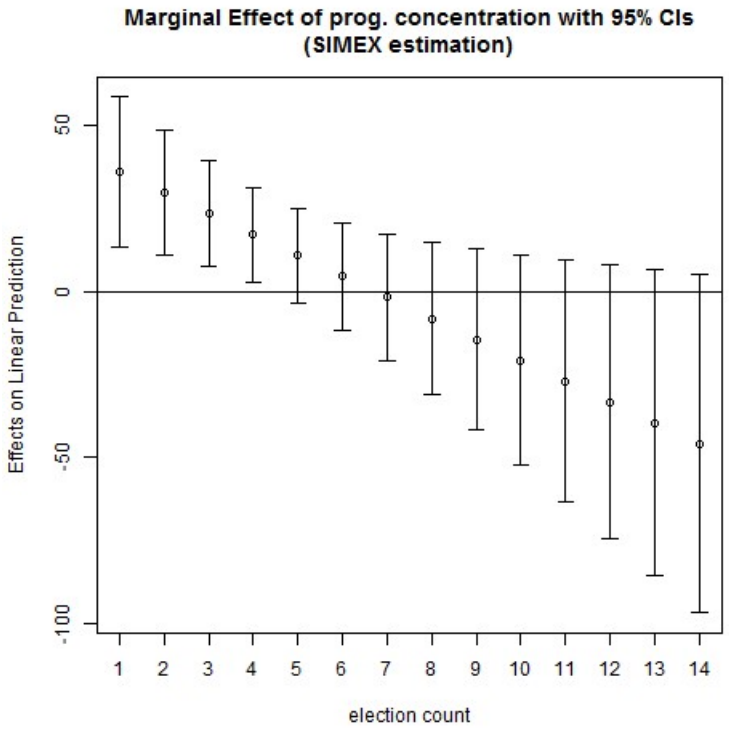


Figure 3 illustrates the marginal effect of nicheness in dependence of election count, based on the SIMEX estimation. In this model without programmatic concentration, nicheness has a positive effect on electoral performance for the first four elections which is in line with hypothesis H1a. Yet, the magnitude of this effect decreases with the number of elections in which a party participates. Thus, hypothesis H1b can also be confirmed. Between the fifth and tenth election, the effect of nicheness is insignificant but, for the elections afterwards, it becomes significantly negative. At this period in time, nicheness features a negative impact. The pattern for the marginal effect does not change when positive and negative CMP categories are aggregated. In the case of the aggregation according to the CMP policy domains, the marginal effect of nicheness is always insignificant which can again be explained by the loss of information caused by this broad aggregation.

The OLS (robust standard errors) results for model M2b are displayed in the fifth column of Table 4. As for nicheness, they indicate a time-dependent effect of programmatic concentration on electoral performance. The effects of programmatic concentration (b_2 = 35.467) and its interaction with the election count variable (b_5 = -5.201) both appear significant on the 1%- and 5%-level, also when using panel corrected standard errors. The other variables in the model show no different effects than in the previous models. Also in this case, the SIMEX estimation (sixth column) leads to a higher magnitude for the main variables of interest (b_2 = 42.078 and b_5 = -6.286). The two different handlings of the original CMP category scheme confirm the time-dependent effect of programmatic concentration (Table A1 & A2).

Figure 4: Marginal effect of programmatic concentration dependent on election count.



Based on the SIMEX estimation, Figure 4 depicts the marginal effect of programmatic concentration on electoral performance for the values of the election count variable. For the

first four elections, programmatic concentration exhibits a significant and positive influence which offers evidence for hypothesis H2a. The plot also illustrates that this positive effect decreases over time. From the fifth election onwards, programmatic concentration does not contribute significantly to the explanation of electoral performance. Thus, hypothesis H2b finds support as well. The pattern of this marginal effect also endures when excluding Danish Progress Party in the 1977 election as an outlier for its high programmatic concentration score. The same is true for both alternative aggregations of the original CMP categories.

Summing up, results of models M2a and M2b illustrate that programmatic profiles of niche parties matter for their electoral performance. Another important finding is that programmatic features of these parties exhibit different effects over time. At the beginning of their electoral lifecycle, when niche parties are new on the scene, they profit from high levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration. The longer they exist the more these positive effects vanish. These results are consistent for different statistical estimations. The results of the separated models substantiate the significant effects found in the first model M1. In the latter, the high correlation between nicheness and programmatic concentration hampers the precision of estimates but also in this model the significance of the interaction terms signals that time plays a role for the way programmatic features impact electoral performance. Additionally, what has to be kept in mind is that both, nicheness and programmatic concentration, relate directly to the behavior of the given niche party. Nicheness results from the programmatic actions of both, the niche party and its competitors, as programmatic concentration solely refers to the given party. With that said, the significant results for both features indicate that niche parties exert influence on their electoral destiny by their own programmatic actions and are not simply at the mercy of rival parties' strategies.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I investigated the influence of niche parties' programmatic profiles on their electoral performance. Previous research has focused on selected core issues, actions of mainstream competitors or concentrated on the relationship between changes in parties' left-right-positions and their performance. This study adds to this research by analysing how nicheness and programmatic concentration take different effects on electoral performance over time. Both programmatic features refer to complete programmatic profiles of niche parties and account for the fact that these profiles might not be always just tailored to one issue and that parties might change their platforms over time. I complemented the concept of nicheness already present in the literature by introducing programmatic concentration as a second feature of parties' programmatic offerings. Nicheness captures the degree of differences between the given party and its competitors and is therefore influenced by both sides. Against this, programmatic concentrations refers to the range of programmatic profiles, also to what degree parties just concentrate on few issues. Both features also connect to attributes present in niche party definitions.

As the main theoretical contribution of the article, I connect the effects of programmatic features of niche parties on electoral performance to their electoral lifecycle. The core argument, here, is that effects of programmatic features of niche parties have different effects over time – a point not yet addressed in the literature on niche parties. Niche parties benefit from high levels of nicheness and programmatic concentration when they enter the electoral arena. A high nicheness contributes to a unique programmatic characteristic by which parties can present themselves as a clear alternative to platforms of existing parties. This effect should be most important when niche parties are new. Over time, this effect is expected to diminish once voters are familiar with the niche profile and might expect the party to deal with other issues as well. Additionally, persistent high levels of nicheness might also indicate

that competing parties do not evaluate the niche topics as promising and therefore stick to a dismissive strategy while the niche party itself is unable or unwilling to adapt its profile. Similar to nicheness, I argued that niche parties profit from high levels of programmatic concentration when they enter the electoral arena. High levels of programmatic concentration indicate that parties hold a clear message which is helpful to get the attention of (new) voters. However, this effect should diminish over time. The attention effect weakens once parties have established themselves in the electoral arena. Moreover, over time voters might expect a party to broaden its policy mix and integrate further issues into its program like, for example, valence issues.

I tested these hypotheses for green and extreme right parties as these two party families are considered as typical cases of niche parties in the literature and started as new parties in established party systems. I used CMP data as a source for parties' programmatic profiles. For capturing nicheness and programmatic concentration, two continuous measures were used, also for different handlings of original CMP data. In order to address statistical issues and to validate the results, I applied different statistical estimation techniques. Particularly, the SIMEX approach addressed the issue of measurement error in the programmatic variables. Despite the high correlation between nicheness and programmatic concentration, the first model including both variables indicated time-dependent effects. These effects found confirmation in the separate models in which nicheness as well as programmatic concentration also showed positive but diminishing effects on electoral performance. These results are consistent over different statistical estimations and confirm the hypotheses presented above. While it matters theoretically whether we think of nicheness only in terms of emphasis of overall topics or take into account that parties in some cases hold opposing positions regarding the same overall topic, this difference did not become visible in the results of this study (see aggregation of positive and negative CMP categories). The broad

aggregation according to CMP policy domains only revealed significant results for programmatic concentration as it levels differences between parties which matter for detaching nicheness.

Overall, results of this study show that one cannot assume programmatic features of niche parties to have constant effects over time. Rather, the analysis of this study suggests to take account of the electoral lifecycle of parties when investigating effects of their programmatic features. This becomes particular important in the view of the fact that most niche parties considered in the literature start off as new parties. This study offers several avenues for further research. First of all, nicheness and programmatic concentration can be examined for all political parties in general. In addition to spatial models, they therefore represent an alternative conceptual toolbox to capture dynamics of party competition from a salience theoretical perspective. Secondly, as highlighted above, niche parties examined in this study began as new parties. In this context, it would be interesting to expand this kind of analysis to other types of new parties, especially to new parties which explicitly do not promote programmatic innovations but rather emulate existing parties and attack them on their programmatic ground (Lucardie 2000; Sikk 2011). Last and foremost, this study reminds us to consider the temporal dimension explicitly, when investigating the dynamics of party competition and the programmatic evolution of parties.

NOTES

[1] The causal direction between electoral performance and programmatic profiles of niche parties can go both ways. Taking the former as an independent variable, we can ask how electoral performance leads to changes in programmatic profiles (Meyer and Wagner 2013;

Somer-Topcu 2009). However, in this study, I take electoral performance as the dependent variable as I am interested in the question how it is affected by differences in programmatic profiles between parties and also over time.

[2] With certain qualifications, this is also true for Adams et al. (2006). Although their analysis rests on a spatial logic, they categorize niche parties according to party family membership (Adams *et al.* 2006: 513) which itself is linked to the emphasis of specific issues.

[3] Robertson (2006: 168) provides a useful description of how issues can relate to each other.

[4] Hino (2012: 24, 45) uses the term challenger parties instead of niche parties but his selection of parties follows programmatic emphases which are line with the niche party literature. Thus, his sample mainly consists of green and extreme right parties.

[5] Nevertheless, new parties can also promote issues and policies already addressed by existing parties. Purifiers (Lucardie 2000) and 'Project-of-Newness'-parties (Sikk 2011) are examples for this kind of strategies which can be linked to competition over valence issues (Stokes 1963).

[6] In the following, I use the initial abbreviation *CMP*. The empirical analysis is based on the 2014b version of the dataset.

[7] I exclude the Austrian Freedom Party as it is not regarded as an extreme right party throughout its entire existence. Ignoring this mixed history would introduce a bias with regard to the arguments linked to the temporal dimension as the Austrian Freedom Party was not a new party when it started to be considered as an extreme right party by the literature.

[8] see: https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/questions.

[9] Data for this variable are also taken from the CMP dataset.

[10] In her theory, Meguid (2008: 26–7) makes a connection between salience theory and spatial approaches on party competition. Furthermore, Robertson (2006: 168) elaborates on the relationship of the concepts of issues and dimensions.

[11] Coding reliability is another issue debated for CMP data. Very detailed coding schemes with many categories carry the danger of coding error. Although this concern speaks for broader and simpler schemes, aggregating categories in existing datasets does not solve this problem (Mikhaylov *et al.* 2012).

[12] These CMP policy domains consist of: external relations, freedom & democracy, political system, economy, welfare & quality of life, fabric of society and social groups (see CMP codebook, https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/down/documentation/codebook_MPDataset_MPDS2015a.pdf , last accessed: 14 October 2015).

[13] This includes the category for uncoded (quasi-)sentences although this category can capture different issues between parties. However, excluding this category would mean to ignore these topics completely.

[14] Bischof (2015: 8) applies a different concentration index to certain parts of manifestos. I focus on concentration in complete programmatic profiles as a distinct feature and different from nicheness.

[15] For a comparison with the CMP approach towards error treatment see Meyer and Jenny (2013). As the CMP approach builds on time series which can be rather short in the case of niche parties, the approach of Benoit et al. seems appropriate in the context of this study.

[16] Numbers come from Democratic Electoral Systems (DES) dataset (Bormann and Golder 2013).

[17] The dummy variable is based on the coding of federalism in the Comparative Political Data Set I 1960-2010 (Armingeon *et al.* 2012) which inter alia goes back to the Comparative Welfare Data Set (Huber *et al.* 2004).

[18] Economic variables, GDP per capita and unemployment rate, originate from the OECD (http://stats.oecd.org; Annual National Accounts; Labor Force Statistics). GDP is specified as

per capita, constant prices, constant PPPs with reference year 2005. Earlier unemployment figures for Denmark, France and Switzerland come from OECD Historical Statistics (1982; 1991; 2002).

[19] Note that Braumoeller (2004: 811) in footnote 6 explicitly deals with the scenario of two interactions featuring a common moderating variable.

[20] See R help file for the SIMEX package.

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APPENDIX

Table A1: Regression results (positive and negative CMP categories aggregated).

	M1	M2a		M2b	
	OLS	OLS	SIMEX	OLS	SIMEX
	b (rob. SE)	b (rob. SE)	b (SE)	b (rob. SE)	b (SE)
Nicheness	423.3713**	186.0350***	238.6277***		
	(171.2312)	(68.0962)	(85.5125)		
Progr. conc.	119.5835***			35.4688***	42.6904***
	(37.2706)			(9.8438)	(13.8746)
Election count	2.2792**	0.7278	1.0036**	0.2991	0.4254
	(1.0657)	(0.4990)	(0.5017)	(0.3804)	(0.3136)
Nich. * progr. conc.	-2356.9019***				
	(851.1423)				
Nich. * elec. count	-62.3108**	-28.5067**	-36.3597***		
	(30.6096)	(12.2709)	(13.8208)		
Progr. conc. * elec. count	-18.8322**			-5.1840**	-6.3723**
	(9.1086)			(2.3706)	(2.6516)
Nich. * conc. * elec. count	373.7417**				
	(177.3480)				
Party type	3.8593***	3.6060***	3.8049***	3.2639***	3.3166***
	(1.1038)	(1.1048)	(1.0079)	(1.0848)	(0.9538)
district magn. (log)	-0.6340	-0.2301	-0.2196	-0.2523	-0.2455
	(0.5998)	(0.6012)	(0.7026)	(0.6068)	(0.6874)
Federalism	-3.1646***	-2.4416**	-2.7259	-2.2932**	-2.4254
	(1.1178)	(1.0075)	(2.1946)	(0.8809)	(2.1190)
GDP per capita	0.0004***	0.0003***	0.0003***	0.0003***	0.0003***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Unempl. rate	0.1675	0.1417	0.1522	0.1716	0.1821
	(0.1410)	(0.1352)	(0.1506)	(0.1414)	(0.1505)
Lagged DV	0.2589**	0.3221**	0.3231***	0.2918**	0.2862***
	(0.1267)	(0.1252)	(0.0898)	(0.1274)	(0.0896)
Intercept	-23.2765***	-11.3682***	-13.3059***	-9.6194***	-10.5016***
	(6.6153)	(4.2459)	(4.3501)	(3.6181)	(3.5842)
Country dummies	included	included	included	included	included
Adj. R^2	0.54	0.52		0.53	
Num. obs.	119	119	119	119	119

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1

Table A2: Regression results (CMP categories aggregated according to 7 CMP policy domains).

	M1	M2a		M2b	
	OLS	OLS	SIMEX	OLS	SIMEX
	b (rob. SE)	b (rob. SE)	b (SE)	b (rob. SE)	b (SE)
Nicheness	140.8612	28.3287	30.0881		
	(87.0682)	(26.1598)	(30.1974)		
Progr. conc.	85.4024***			29.7982**	45.2493***
	(29.2773)			(12.9814)	(16.8045)
Election count	2.9266**	0.2418	0.2632	0.7520	1.2730**
	(1.4175)	(0.4459)	(0.4351)	(0.6875)	(0.6243)
Nich. * progr. conc.	-571.0368**				
	(284.6690)				
Nich. * elec. count	-25.0748*	-6.1160	-6.3691		
	(13.6090)	(4.2581)	(4.7329)		
Progr. conc. * elec. count	-13.0099**			-4.2596*	-6.4474**
	(5.5295)			(2.5086)	(2.5846)
Nich. * conc. * elec. count	93.5555*				
	(48.9369)				
Party type	3.7995***	3.5723***	3.5901***	3.0121***	3.0683***
	(1.0967)	(1.1937)	(1.0761)	(1.0252)	(0.9726)
district magn. (log)	-0.3843	-0.3333	-0.3390	-0.2282	-0.1989
	(0.6824)	(0.6055)	(0.7140)	(0.5969)	(0.6982)
Federalism	-2.6756**	-1.5393	-1.5547	-2.3964***	-2.8712
	(1.1049)	(0.9721)	(2.2067)	(0.8938)	(2.1872)
GDP per capita	0.0003***	0.0003***	0.0003***	0.0003***	0.0003***
	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)	(0.0001)
Unempl. rate	0.1897	0.1423	0.1440	0.1417	0.1596
	(0.1466)	(0.1412)	(0.1557)	(0.1408)	(0.1521)
Lagged DV	0.3268***	0.3220**	0.3221***	0.3489***	0.3611***
	(0.1241)	(0.1277)	(0.0919)	(0.1260)	(0.0950)
Intercept	-25.8941***	-6.3641*	-6.4917*	-12.1666**	-16.1347***
	(8.6144)	(3.6140)	(3.7685)	(4.7212)	(5.2109)
Country dummies	included	included	included	included	included
Adj. R^2	0.52	0.49		0.51	
Num. obs.	119	119	119	119	119

$^{***}p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.05$, $^{*}p < 0.1$

Chapter 5

Programmatic and Individual Determinants of Vote Choices for New Parties:
A Multilevel Analysis of Voting Behavior in 20 Parliamentary Elections

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Abstract

New parties play an important role in democracies as they provide unrepresented and unsatisfied voters with an alternative. The literature on new parties assumes that they can benefit from the poor representation of parts of the electorate by existing parties. This strand of research provides plausible results, but it operates on the macro level, which is problematic for theoretical and methodological reasons. We overcome these problems by performing a multilevel analysis of the vote choice between new parties, existing parties and abstention. We formulate multiple hypotheses on the effects of the programmatic supply of existing parties and voter-related determinants on voting behavior. A multilevel analysis of 20 elections in parliamentary democracies confirms our main expectation that a declining programmatic diversity of existing parties increases the probability of voting for a new party. This finding indicates that new parties can at least partially accommodate non-represented voters and ensure their electoral participation.

1. Introduction

In developed democracies, parties compete for votes by offering policies to the voters during elections. When the electoral market is working, voters find an attractive policy offer for which they are prepared to vote. In a functioning electoral market, the emergence of new parties addressing the unfulfilled demands of voters plays an important role. They represent the capacity of democracies for programmatic innovation and prevent the long-term dissatisfaction of voters who feel poorly represented by the existing parties (Bartolini 1999: 452/457; Bartolini 2000: 58–9; Hindmoor 2008; Franzmann 2011: 330; Zons 2013). If parties continuously fail to meet the programmatic demand of voters, the latter might turn completely away from elections and undermine the legitimacy of the parties and democracy more broadly. The literature about the formation and success of new political parties assumes that they can benefit from the poor representation of parts of the electorate by existing parties (Hauss and Rayside 1978: 38; Harmel and Robertson 1985: 502; Lago and Martinez 2010).

Thus far, research on new parties has operated on the macro level by focusing on institutional effects (Willey 1998), the consequences of the programmatic supply of existing and new parties (Hug 2001; Hino 2012; Zons 2013), and by using aggregated macro variables to measure voter preferences and behavior (Hug 2001: 88–99; Tavits 2006). This strand of research provides valuable insights, but there are multiple reasons for a multilevel analysis of *individual* vote choices on new parties that enter party competition. Regarding the effects of institutions, we observe substantial variation in the emergence and success of new parties within countries (Tavits 2006: 107; Zons 2013: 4). Institutions are largely invariant over time and cannot explain longitudinal within-country variance. With respect to the programmatic supply of existing parties, it is plausible that this is a major determinant in explaining the emergence and success of new parties. The latter are likely to be founded when political

actors perceive that existing parties fail to address salient issues in the electorate (Hauss and Rayside 1978: 46; Harmel and Robertson 1985: 502). The emergence of Green parties in the 1980s and Extreme Right Parties are the prime examples of this line of reasoning (Müller-Rommel 1982; Ignazi 1992; Hino 2012: 153).

However, macro-level studies that link the programmatic supply of existing parties to the emergence of new parties put the voters in a black box and do not empirically examine whether a new party can attract parts of the electorate. Three reasons render it fallacious to infer from the emergence of new parties at elections that they will successfully appeal to voters. First, the new party might misread the programmatic demand of voters and fail to address discontent voters. Second, the programmatic supply of existing parties might be homogeneous and issues may remain unaddressed, but these issues are not important to the voters and there are no dissatisfied voters to whom the new party could appeal. Third, the new party acts as a policy entrepreneur and offers policies for which it has to stimulate demand in the medium run (Zons 2013: 3; De Vries and Hobolt 2012). Macro-level studies (Hino 2012) that link the programmatic offers of existing parties to the electoral success of new parties do not suffer from these problems. Electoral success implies that a new party receives a sufficiently large number of votes, i.e., there is indirect evidence for supportive voter behavior. However, such studies have to make cross-level inferences and draw conclusions about voters based on macro-level results. They suffer from well-known problems of ecological inference (King 1997) that threaten the validity of causal inferences on voter behavior. For these reasons, an empirical individual-level analysis of the interplay between the programmatic profile of existing parties and individual vote choices for new and existing parties is in order. We formulate multiple hypotheses on the effects of the programmatic supply of existing parties and voter-related determinants on the voters' choice between new parties, existing parties and abstention. Our main hypothesis is that a decreasing diversity of

the existing parties' programmatic supply increases the probability of voters opting for a new party. We use data from the European Social Survey and Comparative Manifesto Project to test the hypotheses in a multilevel model comprising 20 elections in parliamentary democracies from 1999 to 2010. The main hypothesis finds empirical confirmation and the results are robust to different model specifications. This finding underlines the importance of the existing parties' programmatic profiles for voter behavior and the prospects of new parties. Moreover, our study points to the essential role of new parties for parliamentary democracies as they provide voters with an alternative when existing parties fail to address parts of the electorate.

2. New parties at national elections: review

The distinction between the *supply* and *demand* side of the political market has been central to the literature on the formation and success of new political parties. On the supply side, the behavior of existing parties represents the prime factor in the analysis (Hauss and Rayside 1978; Harmel and Robertson 1985; Hug 2001; Tavits 2008; Lago and Martinez 2010; Hino 2012; Zons 2013). Apart from general features of party systems and party competition such as party system size or the dimensional structure of the policy space (Harmel and Robertson 1985: 505), in recent years, studies on new parties have taken a more direct look on parties' programmatic behavior. Hug (2001) develops a game-theoretical model which describes the interaction between existing and (potential) new parties. Following this, Zons (2013) shows that a lower programmatic diversity of existing parties increases the probability of the emergence of genuinely new parties. In a similar vein, the niche party literature investigates the effects of the programmatic behavior of existing parties on the fate of these parties (Meguid 2005; 2008; Hino 2012).

With regard to the demand side of the political market, early research focused on societal cleavages (Hauss and Rayside 1978; Harmel and Robertson 1985). In follow-up analyses, the idea of "new issues" entering the political market was introduced, but was only captured by crude proxies in empirical terms such as, for example, economic performance indicators and indicators for social diversity (Hug 2001: 55f; 88; Tavits 2006).

The supply and demand sides of the political market have been studied on their own terms, but the interplay between them plays a central role in the theory about the formation and success of new parties. Here, the rise and prospering of new parties are the result of the failure of existing parties to address programmatic demands present in the electorate (Hauss and Rayside 1978: 46). Harmel and Robertson (1985: 502) refer to this as 'representational needs', whereas Lago and Martinez (2010: 7) describe these mismatches as 'electoral market failure'. All these studies share the at least implicit assumption that new parties automatically profit from mismatches between programmatic supply by existing parties and demands in the electorate. However, this does not necessarily need to be the case. First, the dissatisfaction of voters might have already reached levels at which they completely turn their backs on parties. Second, it is not guaranteed that new parties offer policies which are suitable for overcoming electoral market failure because the new party might misinterpret the demand for a new contender. Third, the new party might not want to address the mismatch in the short run. De Vries and Hobolt (2012) and Zons (2013: 3) describe an entrepreneurial type of programmatic innovation which aims at generating demands in the electorate that were previously non-existing or non-salient.

These studies share that their units of analysis are parties or party systems. Although voters play a central role on the theoretical level, they do not figure in empirical analyses or only in form of aggregated macro variables. The multilevel nature of electoral market failure is

empirically ignored, which can give rise to the well-known problems of cross-level causal inferences (King 1997). Our review of research on the occurrence and success of new parties points to blind spots that need to be addressed. First, we should take into consideration that neither electoral market failures due to the supply side, nor new programmatic demands on the side of voters are sufficient for the appeal of new parties to voters. This might be the case, but we find it more plausible to assume that demand and supply side factors both matter. Voter demand for new issues should have different consequences on vote choice depending on the state of programmatic supply, and vice versa. Second, as voter behavior depends on programmatic supply as a party-system variable, its explanation requires a multilevel theory and statistical multilevel analysis.

3. New parties and vote choice: hypotheses

Our analysis of vote choices for new parties is based on two assumptions. First, we assume that the programmatic behavior of parties and voters is best couched in terms of *salience theory* (Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1983; Dolezal *et al.* 2014), which, in recent years, has become more important in party research (Jensen 2010; Meyer and Müller 2013; e.g. Steenbergen and Scott 2004). Salience theory has a high level of plausibility in our context because usually, new parties only emphasize a small number of issues in order to become owners of these issues and receive an advantage in the electoral market (Guinaudeau and Persico 2013). Second, in formulating the hypotheses, we presume that voters evaluate existing parties based on a comparison of their own policy demand and the available party platforms. The assumption of *programmatic linkage* excludes other forms of party-voter linkage such as clientelism (Kitschelt 2000). This premise is justified for our analysis, which draws on consolidated Western democracies where programmatic linkage has traditionally been strong. Voters might also judge new parties programmatically, but, as we argue below, one also needs to take into account that voters might vote for new parties based on valence-

related reasons such as presenting itself as an anti-establishment party. In the sensitivity analysis, we further discuss that voter behavior might additionally be subject to strategic concerns.

Our theoretical and empirical unit of analysis is the vote choice of an individual voter. We distinguish three types of behavior: abstention, voting for an existing party and voting for a new party. We define a new party as one that runs for votes at a given election for the first time.[1] An existing party is defined as a party that participates in an election for at least the second time. The set of existing parties can be a heterogeneous group comprising parties competing for votes the second time or the tenth time. We consider this distinction justified because the attractiveness of a new party flows from its newness, which pertains to its first occurrence at an election. A party that offers a platform for the second time can no longer claim a newness bonus and we assume that voters judge new parties and all other parties differently when making a vote choice. We exclusively focus on elections that involved new parties because we want to study the effects of programmatic diversity *given that* voters can vote for new contenders.

The party-system variable on which we focus is the programmatic supply of existing parties in terms of the *diversity* of their policy offers. Our premise for all hypotheses is that a voter makes a vote choice in light of the existing parties' programmatic diversity. High programmatic diversity of existing parties means that they cover a broad range of issues. The broader the programmatic supply, the more likely it is that a voter perceives herself to be represented by one of the existing parties and vote for it. There is no reason to run the risk of switching to a new party when a voter feels programmatically represented by an existing one.

[1] According to the definition given by Hug (2001: 14), we count splits from existing parties and genuinely new parties as new parties, whereas fusions and electoral alliances are not regarded as new parties.

Voting for a new party is risky because it is uncertain whether it will make it into the parliament (see below) and how reliable the new party is in terms of its offered policies and longevity (Bolleyer 2007; Bolleyer and Bytzek 2013). However, when existing parties feature a low programmatic diversity and the platforms become more homogeneous, it is more likely that a voter does not feel represented. New parties can seize the opportunity and address unrepresented voters in two complementary ways. First, a new party can put issues that are demanded by parts of the electorate high on their political agenda. This line of reasoning resonates with arguments about the emergence of new parties. For example, Zons (2013: 3) argues that a low level of programmatic diversity creates room for programmatic innovation by a new party that can appeal to discontent voters. Second, the party can follow a valence-oriented strategy and try to build on the discontent of non-represented voters by establishing a reputation as an anti-establishment party.

Hypothesis 1: The higher the programmatic diversity of existing parties, the less likely it is that a voter votes for a new party as opposed to an existing party.

There is a second way in which decreasing programmatic diversity of existing parties might influence voting behavior. Following our assumption of programmatic linkage, we hypothesize that a decreasing programmatic diversity increases the probability of non-voting. An increased probability of non-voting can pertain to voters who are considering voting, but cannot identify a satisfactory programmatic offer that meets their demands. Alternatively and on a more general level, a voter might be discontent with the functioning of party competition and the political system and lose the general will to cast its vote for any party. This argument

ties in with the literature that regards abstention as an expression of voters' dissatisfaction with parties (Hortala-Vallve and Esteve-Volart 2011).[2]

Hypothesis 2: The higher the programmatic diversity of existing parties, the less likely it is that a voter abstains as opposed to voting for an existing party.

Taking together hypotheses 1 and 2, decreasing heterogeneity should make abstention and voting for a new party more likely. Ideally, we would be able to distinguish non-represented voters who are more likely to abstain from voters who are more likely to vote for the new party when diversity decreases. Theoretically, the probability of voting for a new party should increase when the voter feels programmatically attracted to the new party or finds its anti-establishment strategy appealing. Decreasing programmatic diversity should increase the probability of non-voting if neither of the mechanisms of attraction apply. Empirically, the problem is that cross-national survey data do not include items allowing us to distinguish types of voters along these lines. Consequently, we formulate two general hypotheses predicting that both voting for a new party and abstention should increase when diversity declines.

With regard to *individual-level* determinants of vote choice, we expect that the voters' decisions between abstention, voting for an existing party and voting for a new party should be influenced by their general party preference. The general preference in turn should be driven by a voter's party identification, his judgment of competencies related to valence issues (Stokes 1963) and the perception of party candidates and leaders (Enelow and Hinich

[2] Hypotheses 1 and 2 do not contradict each other because the outcome has three categories and we run a multinomial model estimating the effects of heterogeneity on the probability of abstention relative to voting for an existing party, and on the probability of voting for a new party relative to voting for an existing party (see below).

1982). If the individual has already developed a general affinity to a new party, this should increase the probability that this person will vote for this new party. If the voter is attached to neither a new party nor an existing party, the probability of abstention should increase compared to voting for either type of party.

Hypothesis 3: Voters who feel close to a new party are more likely to vote for that new party as opposed to abstention and voting for an existing party.

Hypothesis 4: Voters who do not feel close to new or existing parties are more likely to abstain as opposed to voting for a new party and an existing party.

Our second theoretical expectation on individual-level determinants of voting behavior pertains to *political information*. New parties usually dispose of fewer resources than existing parties for drawing voter attention on a large scale. Voters therefore need to consume more political information in order to perceive the emergence of new parties and their programmatic profile. Voters who inform themselves about everyday politics should have a higher probability of knowing that there is a new contender in the political arena and its profile, which is in turn a prerequisite for casting a vote for a new party and should increase the probability of voting for it, on average.

Hypothesis 5: Voters with a higher level of political information are more likely to vote for a new party as opposed to an existing party or abstaining.

Correspondingly, the less informed voters are about party competition, the less likely it is that they will collect relevant information about the occurrence of a new party and its platform.

We expect that a decreasing level of political information makes abstention more likely in comparison with voting for any type of party.

Hypothesis 6: Voters with a lower level of political information are more likely to abstain as opposed to voting for an existing party or a new party.

The level of political information of an individual voter is critical to their awareness of new political parties. In addition, we expect that the degree of political information *moderates* the perception of the programmatic supply of existing parties and vice versa. The programmatic diversity of existing parties can only influence a voter's decision if that voter is actually informed about their policy offers. This leads us to argue that the effect of programmatic diversity on vote choice is moderated by a voter's level of political information. Building on hypotheses 1 and 2, the more informed a voter is, the more amplified the effect of programmatic diversity on vote choice should be.

Hypothesis 7: The higher a voter's level of political information, the stronger the negative effect of programmatic heterogeneity on voting for a new party as opposed to an existing party becomes.[3]

Hypothesis 8: The higher a voter's level of political information, the stronger the negative effect of programmatic heterogeneity on abstaining as opposed to voting for an existing party becomes.

[3] Since the non-moderated effect of heterogeneity is negative, a larger effect means that it becomes more negative with increasing levels of political information.

In addition to the moderating effect of information on the effect of heterogeneity, we argue that heterogeneity moderates the effect of political information on vote choice. The higher the programmatic diversity of the existing parties, the less political information is needed to notice programmatic differences among them. In contrast, the demands with regard to political information rise, the more similar party platforms become because it is more difficult to identify differences between them.[4]

Hypothesis 9: The higher the level of programmatic diversity, the smaller the positive effect of political information on voting for a new party as opposed to voting for an existing party becomes.

Hypothesis 10: The higher the level of programmatic diversity, the larger the negative effect of political information on abstention as opposed to voting for an existing party becomes

.4. Data and empirical strategy

4.1 Data

The dependent variable is the vote choice of an individual and has three categories: abstention, voting for a new party, and voting for an existing party. The outcome and all other individual-level variables are taken from the first five waves of the European Social Survey (2002; 2004; 2006; 2008; 2010). The voter types are distinguished based on the item *vote* and we derive the type of party from the items *prtvt** (* is a placeholder for the country-election abbreviations in the ESS). The appendix to this paper contains the list of parties that we classified as new for a given election and that we used to identify voters of new parties. We

[4] Gerber et al. (2014) make a similar argument when describing the interaction between the clarity of parties' profiles and the political sophistication of individual voters.

determined new and existing parties covered by the ESS by cross-checking their names with various sources on the parties' participation at elections.[5]

We operationalize the programmatic diversity of existing parties with a measure for *programmatic heterogeneity* proposed by Franzmann (2008).[6] It is calculated based on the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR, henceforth CMP) coding of quasi-sentences in party manifestos according to a pre-specified coding scheme consisting of 56 categories (Budge *et al.* 2001; Klingemann *et al.* 2006; Volkens *et al.* 2013). The unit of analysis of the CMP data is the party-election year. Each of the 56 categories is linked to one political issue; an additional 57th category captures quasi-sentences that do not fit into one of the 56 categories. The CMP raw numbers contained in each category denote the percentages of quasi-sentences belonging to each issue and represent the *salience* a party attaches to an issue.[7] The formula we use for calculating the programmatic heterogeneity of existing parties in country *c* for the election at time *t* reads:

$$Het_{ct} = \frac{\frac{1}{57 - z}\sum_{i=1}^{57-z} s_{ict}^2}{\sqrt{n_{pct}}}$$

[5] As a starting point, we consulted Wikipedia for each election in Western Europe covered in ESS rounds 1 to 5 and then used additional sources in order to verify information, including national official sources, Nohlen and Stöver (2010) as well as http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/.

[6] See Zons (2013) for a recent application of this measure in a macro study about the formation of new parties.

[7] See Volkens (2001) for a detailed description of the coding procedure. Although the CMP approach is based on salience theory (Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1983), its coding scheme compromises non-positional and positional categories, i.e., positive and negative mentions (McDonald and Mendez 2001). As differences between parties can relate to the overall emphasis of issues as well as to positions taken on issues, we use the full range of information provided by the CMP data. We ensure comparability because the measure of programmatic heterogeneity is applied uniformly across elections and countries.

The categories of the CMP coding scheme are denoted by i. s_{ict}^2 is the variance of the salience of item i across all existing parties in country c at election t.[8] In total, the numerator captures the mean variance across all items i at an election in a country. We exclude categories that have zero mean variance, denoted by z, which are items that have not been mentioned by existing parties at a given election. A look at the zero-categories shows that at least some of the non-addressed issues such as 'anti-imperialism' are not likely to be demanded by the electorate and picked up by new parties in current times. The inclusion of such issues would result in a lower mean item-variance and underestimate the degree of diversity. We decide for a conservative measurement strategy by leaving zero-categories aside and assess the robustness of the results to the use of different diversity measures in our sensitivity analyses. The final heterogeneity score is obtained by standardizing the mean variance of salience scores by the square root of the number of existing parties at an election (n_{pct}).[9]

The individual-level measure for party attachment is the item *prtcl**. The item asks which party the respondent feels closer to, with the option of saying that it is none of the parties. Based on the identification of new parties, we coded respondents as feeling closer to a new party, an existing party or to no party. The response that one does not feel closer to any party does not necessarily mean that a person does not feel attached to any party, as one might also get the response when the voter feels equally attached to multiple parties. However, we consider it more plausible to assume that respondents give this answer when they do not feel attached to any party. The base category is 'feeling closer to an existing party' and we add a 'feel closer to new party'-dummy and a 'feel closer to no party'-dummy to the models.

[8] The ESS includes more parties than the CMP because the latter only contains parties that entered the parliament. Still, the CMP-based heterogeneity score is a reasonable proxy for our purposes because the voters' assessment of programmatic diversity in a country is likely to be based on the major parties' platforms that are covered by the CMP.

[9] The denominator serves to account for the number of parties for which programmatic differences are considered (Franzmann 2008: 19–20).

The variable 'political information' builds on the items measuring the consumption of political information via television (*tvpol*), radio, (*rdpol*), and newspapers (*nwsppol*). Each item asks for the time that a respondent uses the specific medium per week. We measure a respondent's degree of political information by taking the maximum level of information across all three media, as we are interested in the level of information and not the specific medium.[10] The scale of the political-information variable runs from zero to seven, with seven representing the highest score. In the basic model, we additionally include individual measures for age, gender, employment relations and cognitive capacities. Detailed information on these control variables and the previously discussed variables is summarized in table 2. Based on this data, our models include 29048 individuals in 20 elections that are distributed across 13 parliamentary democracies over the period 1998 to 2010 (see figure 1 and 2). We describe the data for new-party voters and programmatic heterogeneity in more detail at the beginning of section five, which covers the empirical analysis. Descriptive statistics for the other data are presented in the appendix.

4.2. Empirical strategy and expectations about parameters

We are interested in the relationship between systemic as well as individual-level variables and a trichotomous outcome that is located on the individual level. This calls for the estimation of a multinomial multilevel model in order to avoid the pitfalls inherent in the analysis of aggregated micro data (Steenbergen and Jones 2002).[11] We take voting for an existing party as the base category and estimate the marginal effects of a covariate on the

[10] We do not consider it meaningful to add the amount of consumption. We believe that when a respondent spends three hours watching TV, listening to the radio and reading the newspapers, there is much overlap in terms of the information that is acquired. Combining levels of consumption would overestimate the actual degree of consumption.

[11] We estimate the models with the *gllamm*-routine using Stata 13.1 (Rabe-Hesketh *et al.* 2004).

probability of abstention and the probability of voting for a new party relative to the base. Level 2 represents the election-level and features the election-specific variable 'programmatic heterogeneity of existing parties'. Level 3 represents the country level and takes into account that multiple elections held in the same country might not be independent of each other.[12]

We summarize our expectations on the coefficient estimates in table 1 and present the expectations for each pairwise comparison of vote choices covered by our hypotheses. The entry 'none' signals that we do not have a theoretical expectation for this comparison of alternatives.

Table 1: Expectations about parameters

Variable	Voting for new party vs existing party	Abstention vs voting for existing party	Voting for new party vs abstention
Programmatic heterogeneity	- (Hypothesis 1)	- (Hypothesis 2)	None
Close to new party	+ (Hypothesis 3)	None	+ (Hypothesis 3)
Close to no party	None	+ (Hypothesis 4)	- (Hypothesis 4)
Political information	+ (Hypothesis 5)	- (Hypothesis 6)	+ (Hypothesis 6)
Heterogeneity x information	- (Hypothesis 7, 9)	- (Hypothesis 8, 10)	None

We follow the advice of estimating multilevel models that are made increasingly complex in a stepwise fashion (Hox 2010: 54–9). In the article, we present the estimates for the empty model and the relevant models with covariates and refer the reader to the appendix for the report of all models and estimates. Model 1 (see table 3) below is an empty model that

[12] We estimate random effects on the country level as opposed to fixed effects because we do not limit our inferences to the countries under analysis.

Table 2: Concepts, operationalization and sources[13]

Concept	Indicator	Operationalization	Source
voting decision (dependent variable)	vote at the last election	0 – abstention 1 – vote for an existing party (reference category) 2 – vote for a new party	ESS item *prtvt** – party voted for in last national election
general party attachment	closeness to a party	close to a new party (0 – no; 1 – yes) close to no party (0 – no; 1 – yes) reference category: close to existing party	ESS item *prtcl** – which party feel closer to
political information	political consumption	maximal hours spent on acquiring political information among TV, radio and newspaper per weekday 0 – no time 1 – less than 0.5 hours 2 – 0.5 hour to 1 hour 3 – more than 1 hour, up to 1.5 hours 4 – more than 1.5 hours, up to 2 hours 5 – more than 2 hours, up to 2.5 hours 6 – more than 2.5 hours, up to 3 hours 7 – more than 3 hours	ESS items *tvpol* – TV watching, news/politics/current affairs on average weekday *rdpol* – radio listening, news/politics/current affairs on average weekday *nwsppol* - Newspaper reading, politics/current affairs on average weekday
cognitive capacities	level of education	0 – lower secondary education or lower (ISCED 0-2) (reference category) 1 – upper secondary education or higher (ISCED 3-5)	ESS item *edulvla* – highest level of education
age	age	age	ESS item *agea* - age of respondent, calculated
gender	gender	1 – male; 2 – female (reference category)	ESS item *gndr* – gender
employment status	employment status	unemployment 0 – no (reference category); 1 – yes	ESS item *emplrel* – employment relation
programmatic supply of existing parties	programmatic diversity of existing parties	programmatic heterogeneity higher score mean larger heterogeneity (minimum = 0 when all parties have exact the same programmatic profile)	Manifesto Research Group / Comparative Manifestos Group (CMP) (Klingemann *et al.* 2006; Volkens *et al.* 2013)

[13] We do not include an income variable because of too many missings.

estimates the random intercepts on the election-level and country-level (Snijders, Tom A. B and Bosker 2012: 46–8).[14] Model 2 includes the individual-level variables that are estimated as fixed effects. Model 3 adds programmatic diversity as an election-level variable. Model 4 is a fully specified model according to our hypotheses and contains a cross-level interaction between heterogeneity and political information that is then estimated as random slopes.[15] We run deviance tests comparing the more complex model to the simpler (see appendix). For all comparisons of models in the main analysis, the deviance test is significant, suggesting that the complexification of a model is warranted.[16]

We do not weight observations because we are interested in model-based inference as opposed to design-based inference (Snijders, Tom A. B and Bosker 2012: 216–31). Model-based inference is concerned with finding the appropriate "data generating mechanism" (Snijders, Tom A. B and Bosker 2012: 217) for the dependent variable and can include additional variables related to the survey design and potentially connected to the outcome. In addition, model-based analyses seek to generalize inferences beyond the sample at hand (Snijders, Tom A. B and Bosker 2012: 216; 223; 225-231; Heeringa *et al.* 2014: 245–6). We follow the model-based approach because of our interest in modeling the data-generating process and generalizing the results. We do not use weights in the estimation procedure, but

[14] The estimation of an empty model often includes the calculation of the intraclass coefficient (ICC) serving as an indicator for the degree of variation which is due to the upper level. However, for multinomial outcomes, there exists one ICC per outcome category that is more difficult to interpret than for models with a continuous outcome (Hedeker 2008: 255–6; Twisk, Jos W. R. 2006: 46). Since we perform deviance tests, we do not report the ICCs.

[15] The appendix contains the results for a model with political information estimated as random slopes without the interaction term.

[16] A deviance test comparing the cross-level interaction model with a random-slopes model for political information is not significant (see appendix). A full stepwise complexification of the models indicates that the cross-level interaction is not warranted, which is confirmed by our results (see below).

add the ESS design weight as a control variable in the robustness analysis for determining the sensitivity of our results toward weighting (Heeringa *et al.* 2014: 250).[17]

Finally, we choose to not center the variables 'political information' and 'programmatic heterogeneity' that constitute the cross-level interaction. The rationale for centering is to avoid misinterpretation of the marginal effects of the two constitutive variables (Dalal and Zickar 2012). Misinterpretation can occur when a variable has no zero point or a zero point which is unlikely to be observed empirically (programmatic heterogeneity). However, the political science literature on interaction models dealt with this issue in great detail in the 2000s and raised our awareness of it (Brambor *et al.* 2006). We use the original scores because estimation with non-centered variables does not create econometric problems and the mean of the variables is of no theoretical interest to us (which would be the zero point after centering).

5. Empirical analysis

We begin our empirical analysis with descriptive insights on new-party voters and programmatic heterogeneity. Figure 1 presents the distribution of new-party voters across elections. It shows that the new party voters are unevenly distributed across elections. A low number of new-party votes per election is not a problem per se for the estimation of multilevel models (Snijders, Tom A. B and Bosker 2012: 56). However, relying on the data of one new-party voter for a given election or a very large number such as for the Netherlands in 2002 creates concerns about the sensitivity of the results towards the inclusion of these elections

[17] The models are estimated without robust standard errors clustered by countries. Cluster-robust standard errors improve estimation with a large number of units on the level at which the clusters are located which is the country level in our analysis. The recommendation is to have at least 100 units (Hox 2010: 216). Since we do not have that many countries, we do not estimate robust standard errors because the costs in terms of efficiency would outstrip the benefits.

because they have larger weight than elections with a small number of new-party voters (Snijders, Tom A. B and Bosker 2012: 56). We will return to this issue in the sensitivity analysis.

Figure 1: Voters of new parties across elections

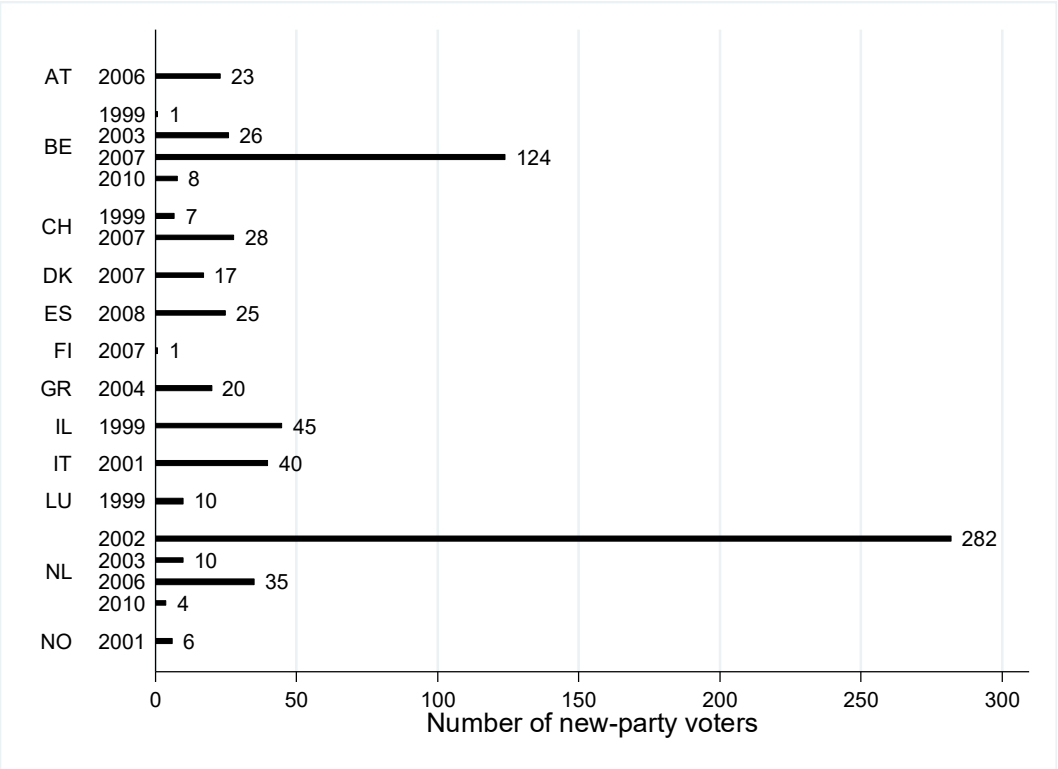
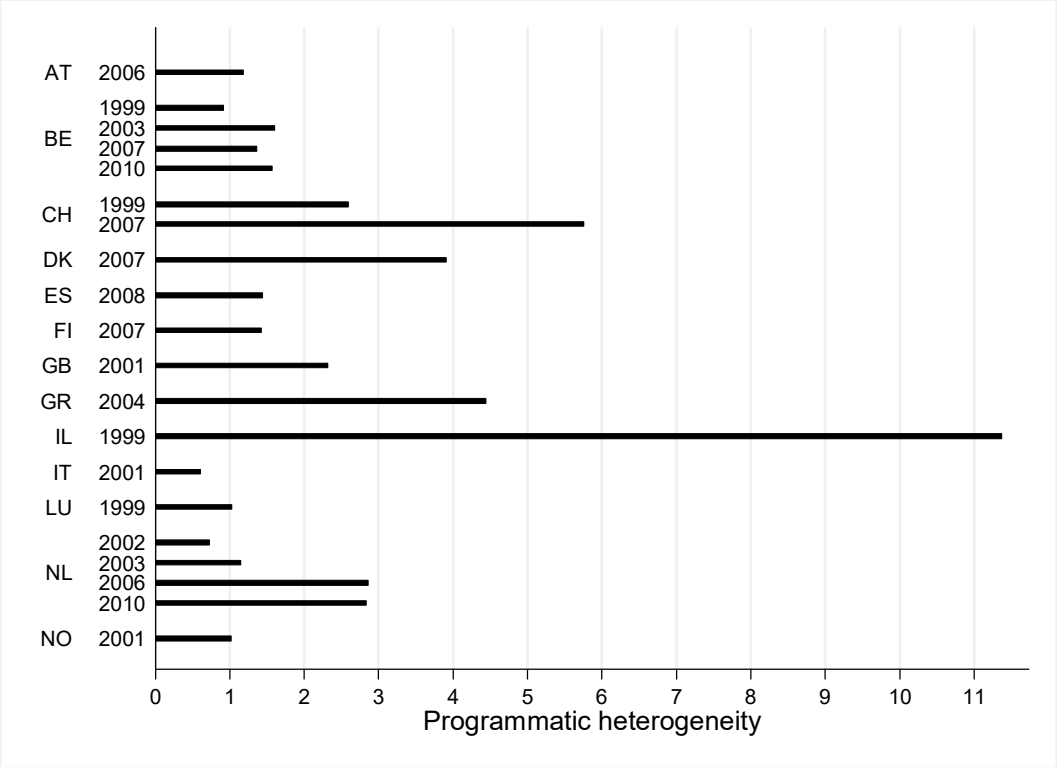


Figure 2 presents the scores for programmatic heterogeneity across elections. The distribution varies within and across countries which is variation we exploit for our empirical analysis. The outstanding heterogeneity score for Israel in 1999 equally creates concerns about the robustness of the results which we will assess below.

The estimates for models 1 through 4 are presented in table 3. Model 3 includes the central explanatory variable programmatic heterogeneity, the two individual-level determinants and

Figure 2: Programmatic heterogeneity across elections



voter-related control variables. The estimates confirm hypothesis 1 because voting for a new party as opposed to an existing party becomes significantly less likely with increasing heterogeneity. The probability of voting for a new party increases by a factor of 1.14 per one-unit decrease in heterogeneity.[18] The effect of heterogeneity on abstention compared to voting for an existing party is positive and the opposite of what we expected in hypothesis 2. While statistically significant, the marginal effect is substantively small because a one-unit decrease in heterogeneity increases the probability of abstention only by a factor of 1.03. On the individual level, the estimate for the dummy variable indicating closeness to a new party confirms hypothesis 3. The marginal effect is significantly positive and large, as the probability of voting for a new party is about 330 times larger for voters who feel close to a

[18] In the running text, we discuss marginal effects in terms of the relative risk ratio which is equivalent to *e* to the power of the log-odds coefficient in the regression tables.

Table 3: Regression results

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
New-party voters				
Constant	-3.799***	-4.226***	-3.682***	-3.924***
	(0.043)	(0.198)	(0.203)	(0.218)
Close to no party		1.700***	1.669***	1.670***
		(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.106)
Close to new party		5.737***	5.800***	5.792***
		(0.152)	(0.154)	(0.154)
Political information		0.072**	0.077**	0.062
		(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.040)
Cognitive capacity		-0.317***	-0.247**	-0.259**
		(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.095)
Age		-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.012***
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Male		0.119	0.104	0.105
		(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Unemployed		-0.173	-0.160	-0.142
		(0.194)	(0.196)	(0.196)
Programmatic heterogeneity			-0.130***	-0.079*
			(0.021)	(0.039)
Progr. het. * political information				-0.005
				(0.011)
Non-voters				
Constant	-1.691***	-0.278***	-0.111	-0.365***
	(0.025)	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.080)
Close to no party		1.339***	1.344***	1.344***
		(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Close to new party		1.492***	1.493***	1.488***
		(0.185)	(0.185)	(0.185)
Political information		-0.105***	-0.107***	-0.118***
		(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.020)
Cognitive capacity		-0.789***	-0.772***	-0.784***
		(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Age		-0.025***	-0.025***	-0.025***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Male		0.096**	0.094**	0.099**
		(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Unemployed		0.709***	0.694***	0.714***
		(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.056)
Programmatic heterogeneity			0.027***	0.075***
			(0.006)	(0.011)
Progr. het. * political information				-0.005
				(0.004)
Random estimates				
Intercept-variance level 1	0.192	0.039	0.109	0.002
	(0.023)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.006)
Slope-variance political information				0.008
				(0.003)
Covariance random intercepts and slopes level 1				0.003
				(0.002)
Intercept-variance level 2	0.371	0.438	0.125	0.182
	(0.029)	(0.047)	(0.012)	(0.016)
Log-likelihood	-17834.09	-14588.04	-14549.96	-14540.85
N	29969	29048	29048	29048

Estimates and standard errors (in parentheses) in log-odds form; $p < .05$ *; $p < .01$ **; $p < .001$ ***
Reference category of dependent variable: Voting for existing party.

new party as opposed to an existing one. Hypothesis 4 is corroborated by the estimate for the dummy capturing closeness to no party for non-voters. It has a significantly positive effect and shows that the probability of abstention vs voting for an existing party increases by a factor of 3.83. For political information, we estimate a positive and significant effect on the probability of voting for a new party versus an existing party. This confirms hypothesis 5, but the effect is not large because the probability of voting for a new party increases by a factor of 1.08 per one-unit increase in information. For abstention, the level of political information has a significantly negative effect, confirming hypothesis 6. The probability of abstention versus voting for an existing party decreases with higher levels of political information with a factor of 0.90.

The estimates for assessing the second part of hypotheses 3, 4 and 6 cannot be easily derived from the results for model 3 because the hypotheses stipulate the effect of a covariate on the probability of abstention as opposed to voting for a new party. For enhanced interpretation, we therefore estimate model 3 using abstention as the reference category. We present the full results in the appendix and only report the relevant estimates here. The probability of voting for a new party versus abstention increases by a factor of about 59 if a voter feels close to a new party, which is confirming evidence for hypotheses 3. When a voter does not feel close to any party, the probability of voting for a new party goes up by a factor of 1.32. This is in opposition to hypothesis 4 because we expected a negative association between the close-to-no-party dummy and voting for a new party. We find hypothesis 6 confirmed because a one-unit increase in political information increases the likelihood of voting for a new party by a factor of 1.18.

All estimates of model 3 are robust to the inclusion of the multiplicative interaction term involving political information and heterogeneity. In model 4, the coefficient for the

multiplicative interaction is not significant, meaning the *change* in the marginal effect of programmatic heterogeneity for a one-unit change in the level of political information is not distinguishable from zero, and vice versa. Thus, hypotheses 7 to 10 do not receive empirical confirmation. The significance of the marginal effect of programmatic heterogeneity for any given *level* of political information and vice versa cannot be discerned from the regression table. Although the interaction term is not significant, it is important to calculate the marginal effects of a variable because they might only be significant for a range of values of the moderating variable (Brambor *et al.* 2006: 74). Figure 3 presents the marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals for programmatic heterogeneity for both voter types across all levels of political information.

Figure 3: Marginal effect of programmatic heterogeneity for levels of political information

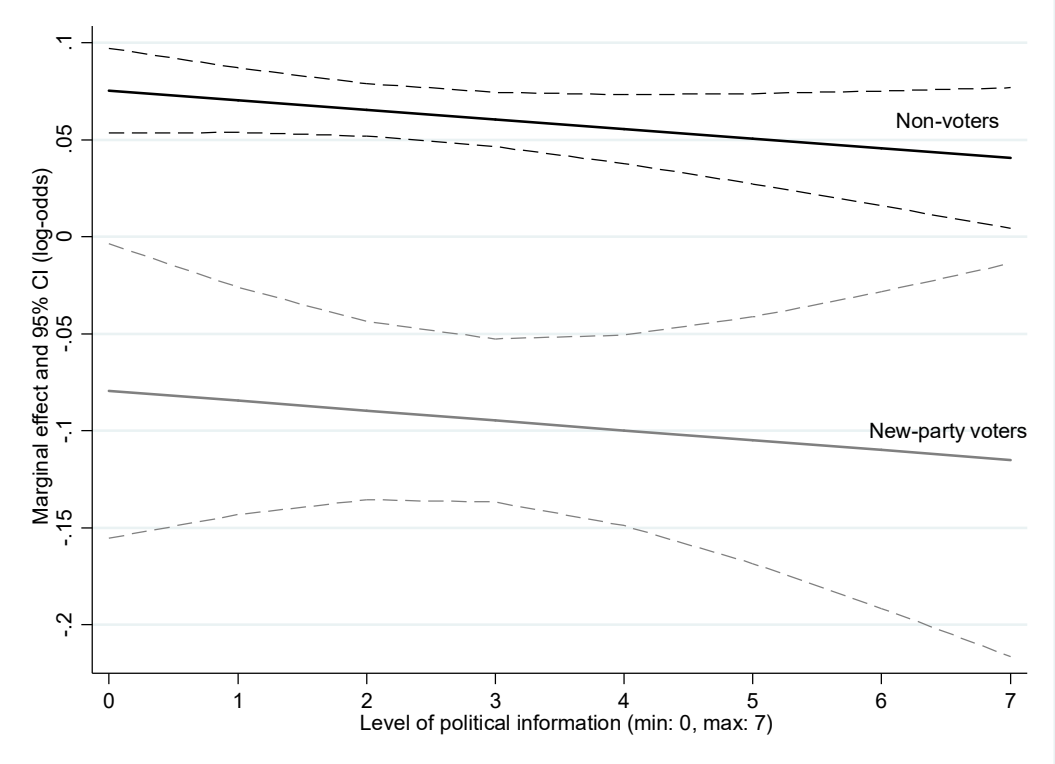
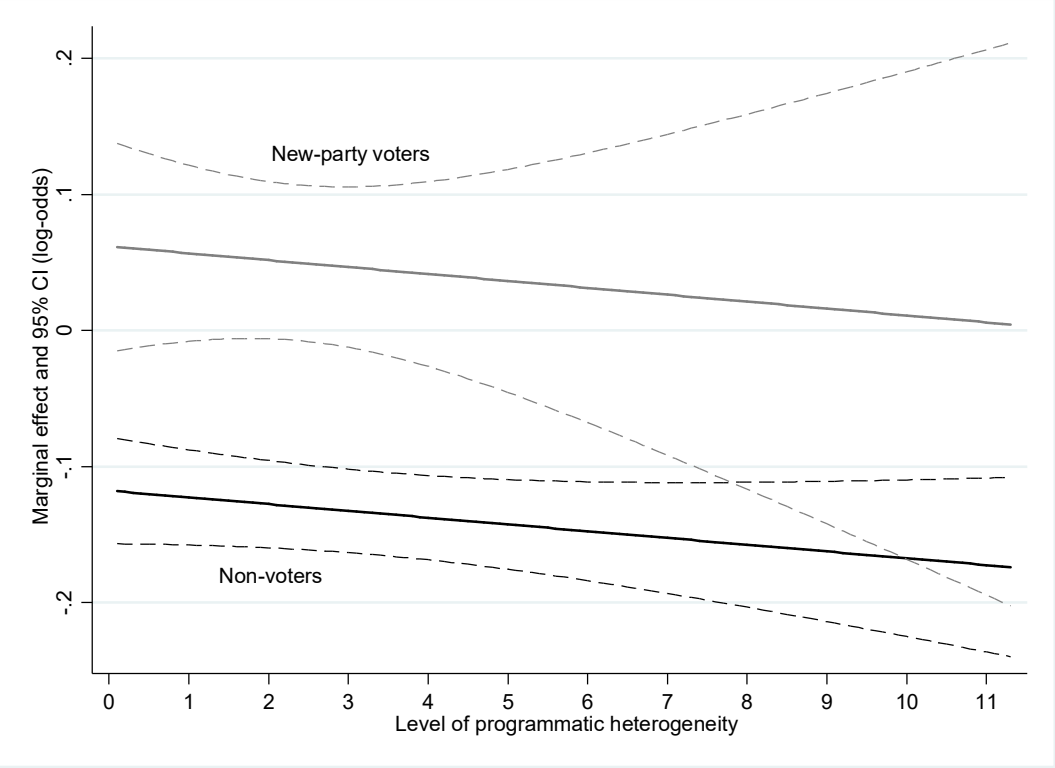


Figure 3 shows for non-voters that the larger the level of political information, the smaller the marginal effect. Similarly, the marginal effect becomes more negative for increasing levels of

political information for voters of new parties. The plot shows that we can reject the null hypothesis of no effect of heterogeneity on vote choice for all levels of political information. Figure 4 contains the marginal effects of political information across the range of observed values of programmatic heterogeneity. We see a similar picture as in figure 3 because the marginal effect for non-voters is always significantly different from zero and non-distinguishable from zero for new-party voters.[19]

Figure 4: Marginal effect of political information for levels of programmatic heterogeneity

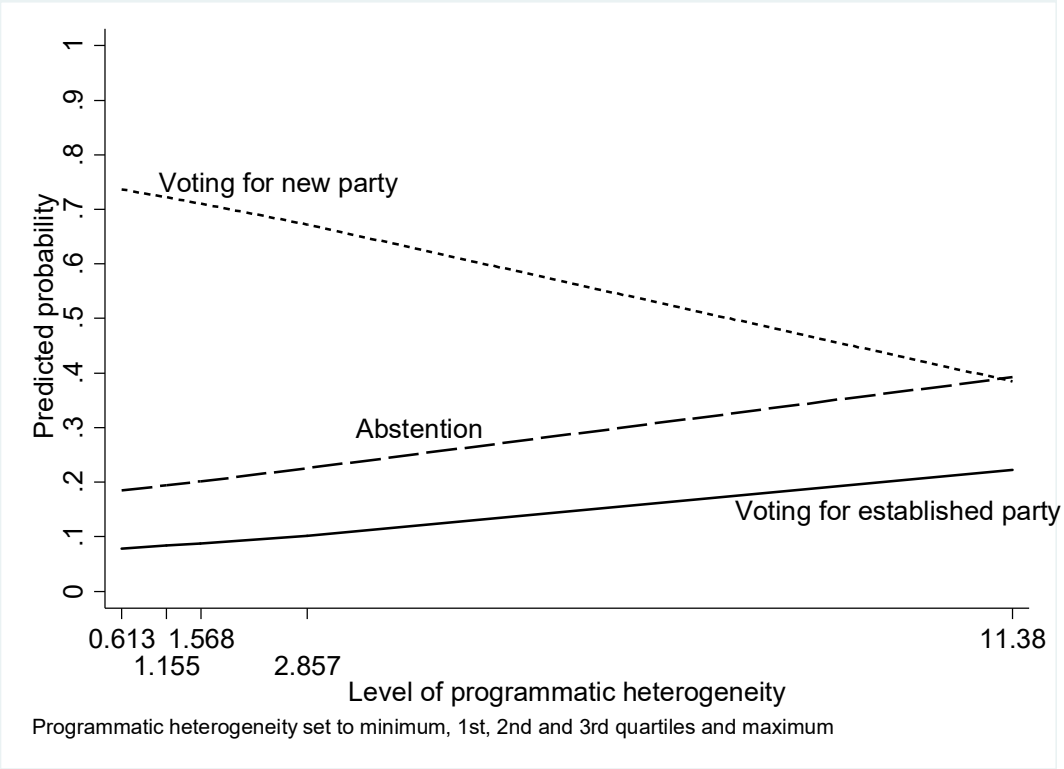


The marginal-effects plot is instructive because it shows that programmatic heterogeneity has an effect in the expected direction which confirms hypotheses 1 and 2. However, the estimates for the interaction term imply that it is not necessary to add it to model 3. Substantively, we see no gain in making the random intercept model unnecessarily more

[19] The non-significance of the marginal effect for new-party voters contrasts with the significance of heterogeneity in model 3 without the cross-level interaction. However, the non-significance of the interaction term and the non-significant deviance test comparing a random slopes model with the cross-level interaction indicate that the interaction is not warranted.

complex by estimating random slopes and a cross-level interaction. We settle on model 3 for the following discussion of conditional probabilities and the sensitivity analysis.

Figure 5: Predicted probabilities of heterogeneity values for voters feeling close to a new party



For enhanced substantive interpretation of the results, we calculate the *predicted probabilities* for all three vote choices across different values of programmatic heterogeneity for individuals feeling close to a new party. We present the estimates for this group because model 3 points to the importance of feeling close to a new party.[20] For programmatic heterogeneity, we derive the probabilities for the minimum score, the first, second and third quartiles and the maximum score. All other variables are set to their grand mean or grand median in case they are dummy variables. Figure 5 demonstrates that low heterogeneity scores are linked to probabilities of voting for a new party more than 60 percent. For the third

[20] The predicted probabilities for the other two types of closeness are presented in the appendix.

quartile of the heterogeneity scores with a score of 2.857, the probability of casting a vote for the new party remains above 60 percent.

Based on model 3, heterogeneity therefore not only has a significant effect, but is also associated with substantively high predicted probabilities of voting for a new party. Toward the right end of the spectrum, the probability of voting for a new party is slightly smaller than the probability of abstention. However, the uncertainty of the predictions is large in this range, as 75 percent of all heterogeneity values are less than 2.857 and concentrated at the lower end of the spectrum.[21]

6. Sensitivity analysis

In this section, we assess the robustness of the estimates of model 3 toward various alternative specifications. *Strategic voting* might influence voting behavior because people considering voting for new parties might decide against it because of fears of wasting their votes. In model 5, we take strategic voting into account by including district magnitude as a control variable. We use the data by Bormann and Golder (2013) and utilize the natural log as a macro-variable (Gschwend 2009). Model 6 controls for potential effects of the state of the macro economy on vote choice (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2011). We add a variable taken from the World Development Indicators (WDI, 2014) measuring the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita at market prices based on constant local currency in pre-election years.

Model 7 adds a federalism dummy because federal countries offer citizens more opportunities for political participation (Weldon 2006). The possibility of holding elections on multiple territorial levels might increase satisfaction with existing parties and reduce the incentives to

[21] The *gllamm*-routine did not allow us to estimate the uncertainty of the predicted probabilities.

vote for a new party. On the other hand, federalism might also allow new parties to gain experience and prominence on the sub-national level, which could increase their chances in a later national election. We control for potential federalism-related effects and add a dummy variable from Persson and Tabellini's data (2003).[22] Model 8 picks up the question of whether the estimation should include weights (see section 4.2). Following Heeringa et al. (2014: 250), we control for potential effects of non-weighting in our baseline analysis and add the individual design weight contained by the ESS as a covariate. Table 4 shows that the estimates for the key covariates measuring closeness, political information and programmatic heterogeneity are robust across all models.

Table 4: Regression results for sensitivity analysis

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
New-party voters				
Constant	-5.313***	-4.233***	-4.225***	-4.159***
	(0.236)	(0.206)	(0.205)	(0.247)
Close to no party	1.672***	1.665***	1.639***	1.669***
	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.106)
Close to new party	5.739***	5.818***	5.680***	5.803***
	(0.157)	(0.153)	(0.153)	(0.154)
Political information	0.061*	0.080**	0.058*	0.079**
	(0.028)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.027)
Cognitive capacity	-0.161	-0.253**	-0.154	-0.245*
	(0.097)	(0.095)	(0.096)	(0.095)
Age	-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.011***	-0.012***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Male	0.159	0.110	0.094	0.103
	(0.088)	(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Unemployed	-0.052	-0.145	-0.175	-0.165
	(0.196)	(0.196)	(0.195)	(0.196)
Programmatic heterogeneity	-0.105***	-0.127***	-0.065**	-0.101***
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Logged average district magnitude	0.298***			
	(0.029)			
Lagged GDP/growth per capita		0.009		
		(0.020)		
Federalism			0.047	
			(0.161)	
Individual ESS design weight				0.054
				(0.116)
Non-voters				
Constant	-0.533***	-0.748***	-0.678***	-0.213*
	(0.086)	(0.076)	(0.078)	(0.089)

[22] We extended the data on the time dimension because none of the countries under analysis changed their form of territorial organization during the period of analysis.

	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Close to no party	1.342***	1.342***	1.347***	1.344***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
Close to new party	1.483***	1.500***	1.433***	1.485***
	(0.186)	(0.185)	(0.186)	(0.185)
Political information	-0.102***	-0.105***	-0.104***	-0.105***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Cognitive capacity	-0.793***	-0.782***	-0.801***	-0.779***
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.036)
Age	-0.025***	-0.025***	-0.025***	-0.026***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Male	0.089**	0.094**	0.097**	0.098**
	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Unemployed	0.689***	0.696***	0.715***	0.687***
	(0.055)	(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.055)
Programmatic heterogeneity	0.078***	0.028***	0.065***	0.056***
	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Logged average district magnitude	-0.081***			
	(0.012)			
Lagged GDP/growth per capita		0.062***		
		(0.008)		
Federalism			1.085***	
			(0.063)	
Individual ESS design weight				-0.267***
				(0.043)
Random estimates				
Intercept-variance level 1	0.041	0.065	0.047	0.097
	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.009)	(0.019)
Intercept-variance level 2	0.258	0.277	0.065	0.114
	(0.028)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.014)
Log-likelihood	-14461.84	-14546.57	-14523.22	-14531.40
N	29048	29048	29048	29048

Estimates and standard errors (in parentheses) in log-odds form; $p < .05$ *; $p < .01$ **; $p < .001$ ***
Reference category of dependent variable: Voting for existing party

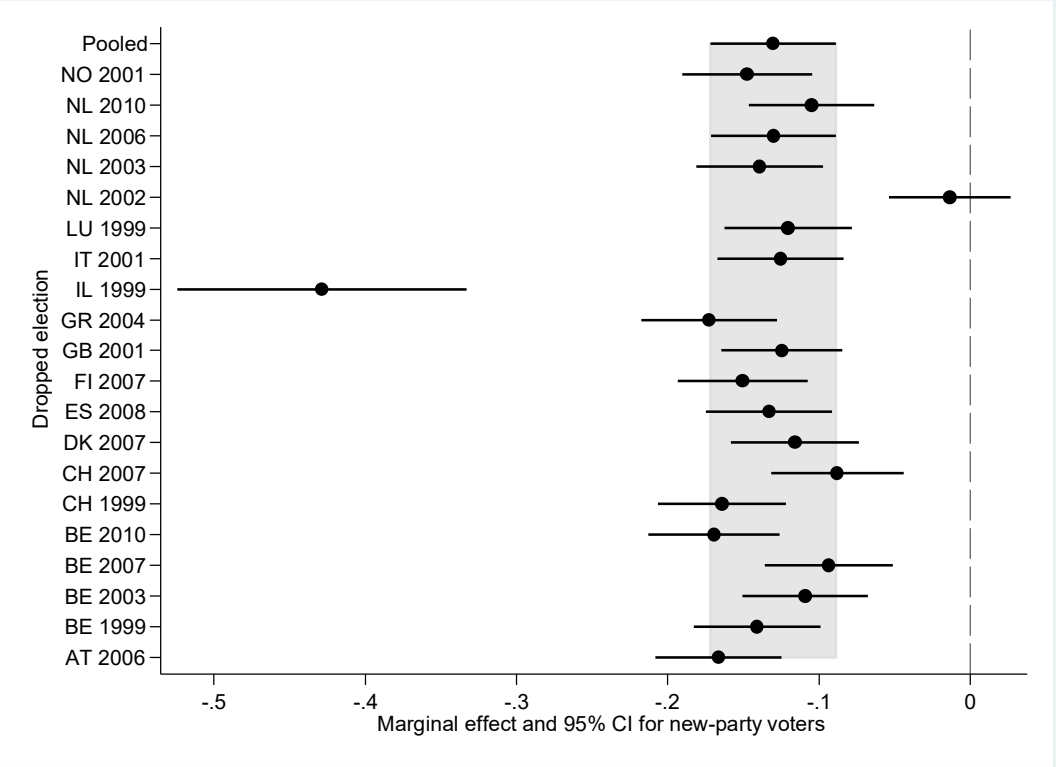
We explained in section 3 that programmatic heterogeneity as our key macro variable involves all 57 CMP categories, i.e., it includes the *peruncod* category with quasi-sentences not fitting into one of the 56 substantive categories and excludes all categories not addressed by any existing party (zero-categories). While we deem this the most plausible operationalization of programmatic diversity, we assess the robustness of the estimates to the use of alternative measurement strategies. Table 5 presents the estimates for four models representing the possible combinations of including or excluding the *peruncod* category and zero-categories. The first column reproduces the estimates of model 3 for purposes of better comparison. Table 5 shows that our findings are robust to different ways of measuring programmatic diversity.

Table 5: Regression results for alternative measures of programmatic heterogeneity

	57 categories no 0s	57 categories, with 0s	56 categories no 0s	56 categories with 0s
New-party voters				
Constant	-3.682***	-3.888***	-3.884***	-4.049***
	(0.203)	(0.204)	(0.203)	(0.208)
Close to no party	1.669***	1.403***	1.672***	1.651***
	(0.106)	(0.107)	(0.106)	(0.106)
Close to new party	5.800***	5.664***	5.800***	5.785***
	(0.154)	(0.151)	(0.153)	(0.155)
Political information	0.077**	0.071**	0.082**	0.076**
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Cognitive capacity	-0.247**	-0.214*	-0.259**	-0.235*
	(0.095)	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.096)
Age	-0.012***	-0.014***	-0.012***	-0.012***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Male	0.104	0.137	0.103	0.102
	(0.087)	(0.086)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Unemployed	-0.160	-0.195	-0.164	-0.186
	(0.196)	(0.190)	(0.196)	(0.196)
Programmatic het.	-0.130***	-0.239***	-0.137***	-0.222***
	(0.021)	(0.031)	(0.021)	(0.033)
Non-voters				
Constant	-0.111	-0.461***	-0.316***	-0.696***
	(0.073)	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.079)
Close to no party	1.344***	0.982***	1.348***	1.339***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
close to new party	1.493***	1.354***	1.493***	1.462***
	(0.185)	(0.182)	(0.185)	(0.185)
Political information	-0.107***	-0.102***	-0.103***	-0.104***
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Cognitive capacity	-0.772***	-0.781***	-0.789***	-0.791***
	(0.036)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Age	-0.025***	-0.026***	-0.025***	-0.025***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Male	0.094**	0.142***	0.092**	0.094**
	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Unemployed	0.694***	0.694***	0.690***	0.701***
	(0.055)	(0.052)	(0.055)	(0.055)
Programmatic het.	0.027***	0.028**	0.024***	0.101***
	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.011)
Random estimates				
Intercept-variance level 1	0.109	0.072	0.081	0.077
	(0.015)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Intercept-variance level 2	0.125	0.349	0.345	0.314
	(0.012)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.049)
Log-likelihood	-14549.96	-15592.59	-14549.45	-14529.63
N	29048	32399	29048	29048

Estimates and standard errors (in parentheses) in log-odds form; $p < .05$ *; $p < .01$ **; $p < .001$ ***
Reference category of dependent variable: Voting for existing party

Figure 6: Estimate for programmatic heterogeneity under election-wise deletion



The final issue we need to address is the sensitivity of the estimates to the inclusion of single elections in the analysis. This is warranted because figure 1 highlighted an uneven distribution of new-party voters across elections and figure 2 pointed to an outstanding level of heterogeneity for the 1999 election in Israel. We perform election-wise deletion in order to assess robustness of the results on this dimension, i.e., we run model 3 20 times and leave out one election each time. Figure 6 contains the estimates for our key variable programmatic heterogeneity for voters of new parties in the form of 95% confidence intervals. The top interval refers to the estimate in model 3 and the shaded area in the plot highlights the range of estimates that do not significantly differ from the estimate in the main analysis. The figure shows that the estimate is sensitive to the inclusion of the elections in Israel in 1999 and the Netherlands in 2002. The exclusion of Israel leads to a much larger effect of heterogeneity, but also considerably increases the uncertainty of the estimate. This finding for Israel can be understood in light of the special nature of party competition which strongly revolves around

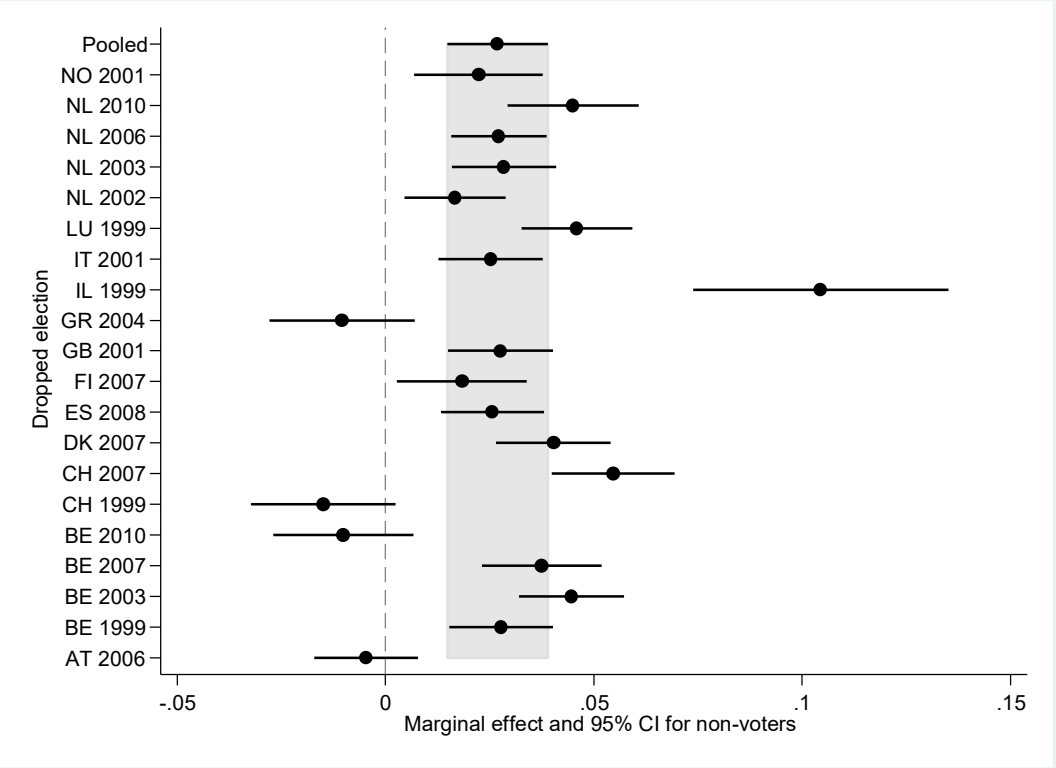
the Palestine conflict and Israel's foreign policy in the Middle East. Moreover, the Israeli electoral and party system stands out because the effective number of parties is much larger than in the other countries and the election in 1999 features the highest effective number of parties (both in terms of votes and seats) for Israel itself (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005: 343; Gallagher 2014: 20).

The election in the Netherlands in 2002 contributes about 40 percent of all new-party voters in our sample. In this light, we believe that the non-significant estimate attached to the elimination of this election is due to a loss of power. The effect of heterogeneity in model 3 is not large and thus is much less likely to be significant when we take away 40 percent of all new-party voters. In a qualitative view, this election does not stand apart from other elections in our sample. The 2002 election in the Netherlands saw the appearance of the List Pim Fortuyn, i.e., a right-leaning populist party. This does not render this election special because the Austrian election of 2006, for example, witnessed the advent of the BZÖ as a right-wing populist party. In 2002, programmatic heterogeneity was low in the Netherlands, suggesting that Pim Fortuyn could take advantage of unaddressed issues, but other elections have similarly low levels of heterogeneity. On the system-level, the Netherlands is equally comparable to other parliamentary democracies in terms of political and economic variables. Although we can only provide a short qualitative discussion of the Netherlands in 2002 here, we see no apparent issue explaining the change due to the exclusion of this election. This leads us to conclude that the decline in new-party voters and the loss in information account for it.

Figure 7 presents the results for election-wise deletion for non-voters. Again, we see that the effect and the attached uncertainty increase when Israel in 1999 is excluded. Eliminating the Netherlands in 2002 does not significantly alter the estimate compared to the complete model.

This is reassuring evidence for our previous argument because if this election was special in some respect not accounted for by model 3, we would also expect a strong impact on the estimate for non-party voters. However, the elimination of five other elections than the Israel 1999 election results in an estimate that is significantly different from the pooled model. The non-robustness toward five elections concerns four different countries at different points in time and the common element that could explain this insight is not apparent to us.

Figure 7: Estimate for programmatic heterogeneity under election-wise deletion



7. Discussion

We summarize our findings by relating the reported estimates to the hypothesis in table 6. The empirical analysis confirms our first hypothesis that the probability of voting for a new party decreases with an increasing programmatic diversity of existing parties. This supports our reasoning that higher programmatic diversity entails reduced incentives for voting for a new party because a voter is likely to feel represented by an existing party. Seen from the other

side, a lower programmatic diversity of existing parties makes it more likely that individual voters turn to new parties. This indicates that existing parties can at least partially shape the electoral prospects of new parties and have it in their hands whether a voter decides for a new contender or not. This association makes it worthwhile to examine why existing parties decide to emulate each other's platforms and create opportunities for new parties. Two possibilities exist: first, they might misinterpret voter demands and underestimate the share of voters to which new parties can appeal. Second, existing parties might intentionally abandon parts of the electorate because the electoral benefits of abandonment are perceived to outweigh the costs (Budge 1994: 461).

Table 6: Comparison of expectations with estimates

Variable	Voting for new party vs existing party	Abstention vs voting for existing party	Voting for new party vs abstention
Programmatic heterogeneity	- (Hypothesis 1)	- (Hypothesis 2)	
Close to new party	+ (Hypothesis 3)		+ (Hypothesis 3)
Close to no party		+ (Hypothesis 4)	- (Hypothesis 4)
Political information	+ (Hypothesis 5)	- (Hypothesis 6)	+ (Hypothesis 6)
Heterogeneity x information	- (Hypothesis 7, 9)	- (Hypothesis 8, 10)	

Shaded cells denote confirmed hypotheses; white cells denote non-confirmed hypotheses; blank cells denotes that the we did not formulate an expectation

Hypothesis 2 stipulates a negative of effect of diversity for the probability of abstention versus voting for an existing party, but the results consistently point in the opposite direction. The probability of abstention increases with programmatic diversity, although the effect and the substantive significance are small. This finding underlines the benefits of making a three-fold distinction of voting behavior and demands further investigation. Some voters might regard a high level of programmatic diversity as a sign of malfunctioning of party competition

because parties emphasize different issues or the same issues to a different degree. The emphasis on programmatic differences instead of similarities might be disliked by those parts of the electorate who prefer a more consensual style of politics and therefore abstain from voting. This finding suggests unobserved heterogeneity among the electorate because voters could differ regarding their interpretation and appreciation of programmatic diversity.

Feeling close to a new party has a strong positive effect on the probability of voting for this type of party, which confirms hypotheses 3 and illustrates that, despite their newness, party attachment matters. Feeling attached to no party is associated with an increase in the probability of abstention as opposed to voting for an existing party, confirming one half of hypothesis 4. The second part does not receive confirmation because the probability of abstention decreases compared to voting for a new party if a voter feels close to no party. This speaks to the potential of new parties to appeal to voters, even when a voter does not develop an attachment to them.

Our findings confirm hypotheses 5 and 6 on the positive influence of political information because more informed voters are less likely to abstain. With higher levels of information, voters seem to be more likely to perceive new parties as viable choices and correctly perceive the diversity of the existing parties' programs. In contrast, uninformed voters would rather abstain from voting as they lack crucial information about parties and their platforms and see less value in voting. Hypotheses 7 to 10 capturing the moderating relationships do not find empirical support. Figure 3 showed that the level of programmatic heterogeneity has a significant effect for all levels of political information. This insight and the estimates for model 3 point to the relevance and strong perceptibility of the programmatic competition between political parties. Our finding that the effect of political information is independent of the level of programmatic diversity indicates that respondents may additionally absorb

political information beyond the parties' platforms, e.g., about characteristics of candidates or parties' past performances. The strength of the signal in terms of the degree of programmatic diversity would then only be one element voters use to form their opinions. Taken together, our findings show that the vote choice is influenced by individual-level factors and the existing parties' programmatic heterogeneity.

Our results are robust regarding the inclusion of several control variables, in particular, district magnitude covering effects of the electoral system and incentives for strategic voting. However, our sensitivity analysis points to the influence of some elections on the estimates. The strong influence of the Israeli election can be understood in light of the country's special situation and electoral system, which sets party competition there apart from other established democracies. The consequence of eliminating the Netherlands' 2002 election is in our reading a sign for diminished statistical power due to the loss of about 40 percent of new-party voters in our sample. Follow-up studies covering more elections and new-party voters should be less susceptible to the exclusion of one election and potentially validate our claim that the non-significance of heterogeneity without the Netherlands 2002 election is a statistical artefact.

8. Conclusion

Our guiding research question was how the programmatic supply by existing parties shapes the voters' decision between voting for a new party, an existing party and abstention. Following the literature on the formation and success of new parties, we argued that the probability of voting for a new party increases when programmatic diversity of existing parties decreases. We moved beyond the existing literature on new parties by theorizing multiple structural and individual determinants of voting behavior and testing them in a multilevel analysis. The multinomial analysis allowed us to take an integrated perspective by acknowledging that abstention and voting for a new party are alternatives of the same choice

set and should not be considered in isolation. The empirical results offer support for our hypothesis that programmatic diversity matters for individual voting in the context of new parties. The probability of voting for a new party decreases with the programmatic diversity of existing parties. However, we also unexpectedly find the opposite effect of programmatic diversity on the probability of abstention. Although the effect of programmatic supply on abstention needs further investigation, in general, our results underline the relevance of programmatic diversity of existing parties. For the set of developed democracies that we studied, the effect of the programmatic supply points to the general importance of the competition between parties for voting behavior. Moreover, our results underline the important role of new parties for the functioning party systems in that they offer an alternative when existing parties do not present a sufficient range of policies. As this is, to our knowledge, the first study using a multilevel approach for the analysis of voting behavior regarding new parties, there certainly is need for follow-up studies examining the interplay between programmatic supply and voting behavior. These studies could cover a broader range of countries and elections or use longitudinal data from a smaller number of countries that would allow one to make more empirical distinctions than we could. New studies could distinguish different types of new parties in terms of organizational origin or party family membership. On the voter side, added value would be derived from distinguishing between discontent voters who can be mobilized in principle and those that are turned into committed non-voters and hence lost.

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Appendix

Table A.1: Party classification

Country	Election	ESS Round	ESS vote variable	Party Name	Status
Austria	2006	3	prtvtaat	SPÖ	old
				ÖVP	old
				FPÖ	old
				BZÖ	new
				Grüne	old
				LIF	old
				KPÖ	old
				other	
Belgium	1999	1	prtvtbe	Agalev	old
				CVP	old
				SP	old
				VLD	old
				VU-ID	old
				PVDA-AE	old
				Vlaams Blok	old
				VIVANT	new
				ECOLO	old
				PSC	old
				PRL-FDF	old
				PS	old
				FRONT NATIONAL	old
				PTB-UA	old
				OTHER	
Belgium	2003	2	prtvtabe	Agalev/Groen!	old
				CD&V	old
				N-VA	new
				SP.A-Spirit	old
				Vivant	old
				Vlaams Blok	old
				VLD	old
				CDH	old
				Ecolo	old
				Front National	old
				MR	old
				PS	old
				Other	
				Blank	
				Invalid	
Belgium	2007	4	prtvtbbe	Groen!	old
				CD&V + N-VA	old
				Lijst Dedecker	new

Country	Election	ESS Round	ESS vote variable	Party Name	Status
				SP.A. + Vlaams - Progressieven (Spirit)	old
				Vlaams Belang	new
				Open VLD + Vivant	old
				CDH	old
				Ecolo	old
				Front National	old
				MR	old
				PS	old
				Other	
				Blank	
				Invalid	
Belgium	2010	5	prtvtcbe	Groen!	old
				CD&V	old
				N-VA	old
				Lijst Dedecker	old
				SP.A	old
				PVDA+	old
				Vlaams Belang	old
				Open VLD	old
				CDH	old
				Ecolo	old
				Front National	old
				MR	old
				PS	old
				PTB	old
				Parti Populaire	new
				Other	
				Blanco	
				Ongeldig	
Denmark	2007	5	prtvtbdk	Socialdemokraterne - the Danish social	old
				Det Radikale Venstre - Danish Social-Li	old
				Det Konservative Folkeparti - Conservat	old
				SF- Socialistisk Folkeparti - the Socia	old
				Dansk Folkeparti - Danish peoples party	old
				Kristendemokraterne - Christian democtr	old
				Venstre, Danmarks Liberale Parti - Vens	old
				Ny Alliance - New alliance	new
				Enhedslisten, De Rød-Grønne - The Red-G	old
				Andet - other	
Finland	2007	5	prtvtbfi	The National Coalition Party	old
				The Swedish People´s Party (SPP)	old
				Liberals, (The liberal party of Finland	old
				The Centre Party	old
				True Finns	old

Country	Election	ESS Round	ESS vote variable	Party Name	Status
				Christian Democrats	old
				Finnish People's Blue-whites	old
				Senior Citizens' Party	old
				Independence Party	new
				The Green League	old
				Finnish Social Democratic Party	old
				The Left Alliance	old
				Communist Party of Finland	old
				The Communist Workers' Party of Finland	old
				Workers Party	old
				Other	
Greece	2004	2	prtvtagr	PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement)	old
				ND (New Democracy)	old
				KKE Communist Party)	old
				SYN (Left Wing Coalition)	old
				DIKKI (Democratic Social Movement)	old
				LAOS (Popular Orthodox Party)	new
				Other	
Israel	1999	1	prtvtil	Israel ahat	old
				Likud	old
				Shase	old
				Meretz	old
				Mafdal	old
				Yahadut-hatora, Agudat-Isarel, Degel-ha	old
				Am ehad	new
				Shinuy	old
				Haehud haleumi	old
				The center party	new
				Israel baliya	old
				Israel byteno	new
				Hadereh hashlishit	old
				Pnina Rozenblum	new
				Tzomet	old
				Gimlaim	old
				Hadash	old
				Balad	old
				Hatnua Harabit Hameauhedet	old
				Haravi Hahadash	old
				Other party	
				White Ballot	
Italy	2001	2	prtvtait	Democratici di sinistra	old
				La Margherita	old
				Comunisti Italiani	new
				Verdi e SDI (Girasole)	old

Country	Election	ESS Round	ESS vote variable	Party Name	Status
				SVP (Sudtirol Volkspartei - Partito Pop	old
				Rifondazione Comunista	old
				Forza Italia	old
				Alleanza Nazionale	old
				CCD-CDU	old
				Lega Nord	old
				Nuovo PSI	old
				Lista di Pietro	new
				Democrazia Europea	new
				Pannella-Bonino	old
				Fiamma Tricolore	old
				Other	
				Scheda bianca	
				Ulivo	old
				Ha votato solo al maggioritario	
Luxembourg	1999	1	prtvtlu	Parti Chrétien Social (PCS)	old
				Parti Socialiste Ouvrier Luxembourgeois	old
				Parti Démocrate (PD)	old
				Les Verts	old
				La Gauche	new
				Comité d'action pour la Démocracie et l	old
				Autres	
Netherlands	2002	1	prtvtnl	Christian Democratic Party	old
				Labour Party	old
				Party for Freedom and Democracy	old
				List Pim Fortuyn	new
				Democrats `66	old
				Green Left	old
				Socialist Party	old
				Christian Union	old
				Liveable Netherlands	new
				Social Reformed Party	old
				Other	
Netherlands	2003	2	prtvtanl	Christian Democratic Party	old
				Labour Party	old
				People's Party for Freedom and Democrac	old
				List Pim Fortuyn	old
				Democrats 66	old
				Green Left	old
				Socialist Party	old
				Christian Union	old
				Liveable Netherlands	old
				Political Reformed Party	old
				Party for the Animals	new

Country	Election	ESS Round	ESS vote variable	Party Name	Status
				Other	
				Blanc	
Netherlands	2006	4	prtvtcnl	Christian Democratic Party	old
				Labour Party	old
				Party for Freedom and Democracy	old
				List Pim Fortuyn	old
				Democrats `66	old
				Green Left	old
				Socialistic Party	old
				Christian Union	old
				Liveable Netherlands	old
				Social Reformed Party	old
				PVV (List Wilders)	new
				Party for the Animals	old
				Other	
				Blanc	
Netherlands	2010	5	prtvtdnl	Party for Freedom and Democracy	old
				Labour Party	old
				PVV (List Wilders)	old
				Christian Democratic Party	old
				Socialistic Party	old
				Democrats `66	old
				Green Left	old
				Christian Union	old
				Social Reformed Party	old
				Party for the Animals	old
				TON (List Verdonk)	new
				Other	
				Blanc	
Norway	2001	2	prtvtno	Red Electoral Alliance (RV)	old
				Socialist left party (SV)	old
				Labour Party (A)	old
				Liberal Party (V)	old
				Christian Democratic Party (Krf)	old
				Centre Party (Sp)	old
				Conservative Party (H)	old
				Progress Party (FrP)	old
				Coast Party (KYST)	new
				Other	
Spain	2008	5	prtvtbes	Partido Popular	old
				Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE	old
				Izquierda Unida (IU)	old
				Convergència i Unió (CiU)	old
				Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC)	old

Country	Election	ESS Round	ESS vote variable	Party Name	Status
				Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV)	old
				Bloque Nacionalista Galego (BNG)	old
				Coalición Canaria-Partido Nacionalista	old
				Nafarroa-Bai (NA-BAI)	old
				Unión Progreso y Democracia (UPyD)	new
				Other	
				Blank vote	
				Spoiled vote	
Switzerland	1999	1	prtvtch	Radicals	old
				Christian-democrats	old
				Social-democrats	old
				Swiss People's Party	old
				Liberal Party	old
				Alliance of the Independents	old
				Evangelical People's Party	old
				Christian-Social Party	new
				Swiss Labour Party	old
				Green Party	old
				Swiss Democrats	old
				Federal Democratic Union	old
				Freiheits-Partei	old
				Women's Parties	old
				Lega dei Ticinesi	old
				Others	
Switzerland	2007	4	prtvtbch	Radicals	old
				Christian democrats	old
				Socialist party	old
				Swiss people party	old
				Liberal party	old
				Christian-social	old
				Swiss labor party	old
				Green party	old
				Green liberal party	new
				Swiss democrats	old
				Federal Democratic Union	old
				Evangelical People's Party	old
				Lega dei Ticinese	old
				Blank paper	
				Mixed vote	
UK	2001	1	prtvtgb	Conservative	old
				Labour	old
				Liberal Democrat	old
				Scottish National Party	old
				Plaid Cymru	old

Country	Election	ESS Round	ESS vote variable	Party Name	Status
				Green Party	old
				Other	
				Ulster Unionist Party (nir)	old
				Democratic Unionist Party (nir)	old
				Sinn Fein (nir)	old
				Social Democratic and Labour Party (nir	old
				Alliance Party (nir)	old
				United Kingdom Unionist Party (nir)	old
				Women's Coalition (nir)	new

Descriptive statistics

Figure A.1: Level of political information

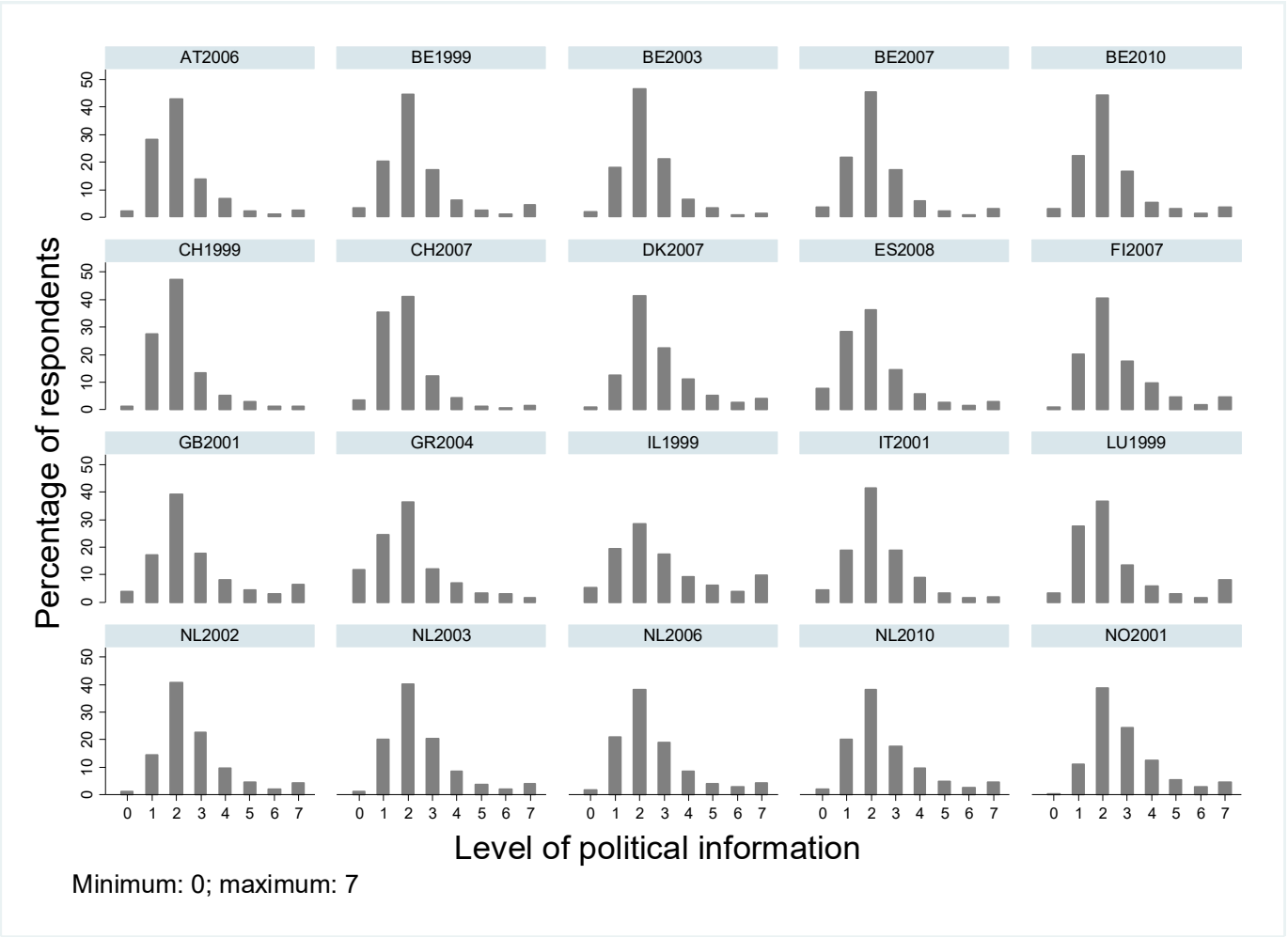

Figure A.2: Logged average district magnitude (tier 1 of electoral system)

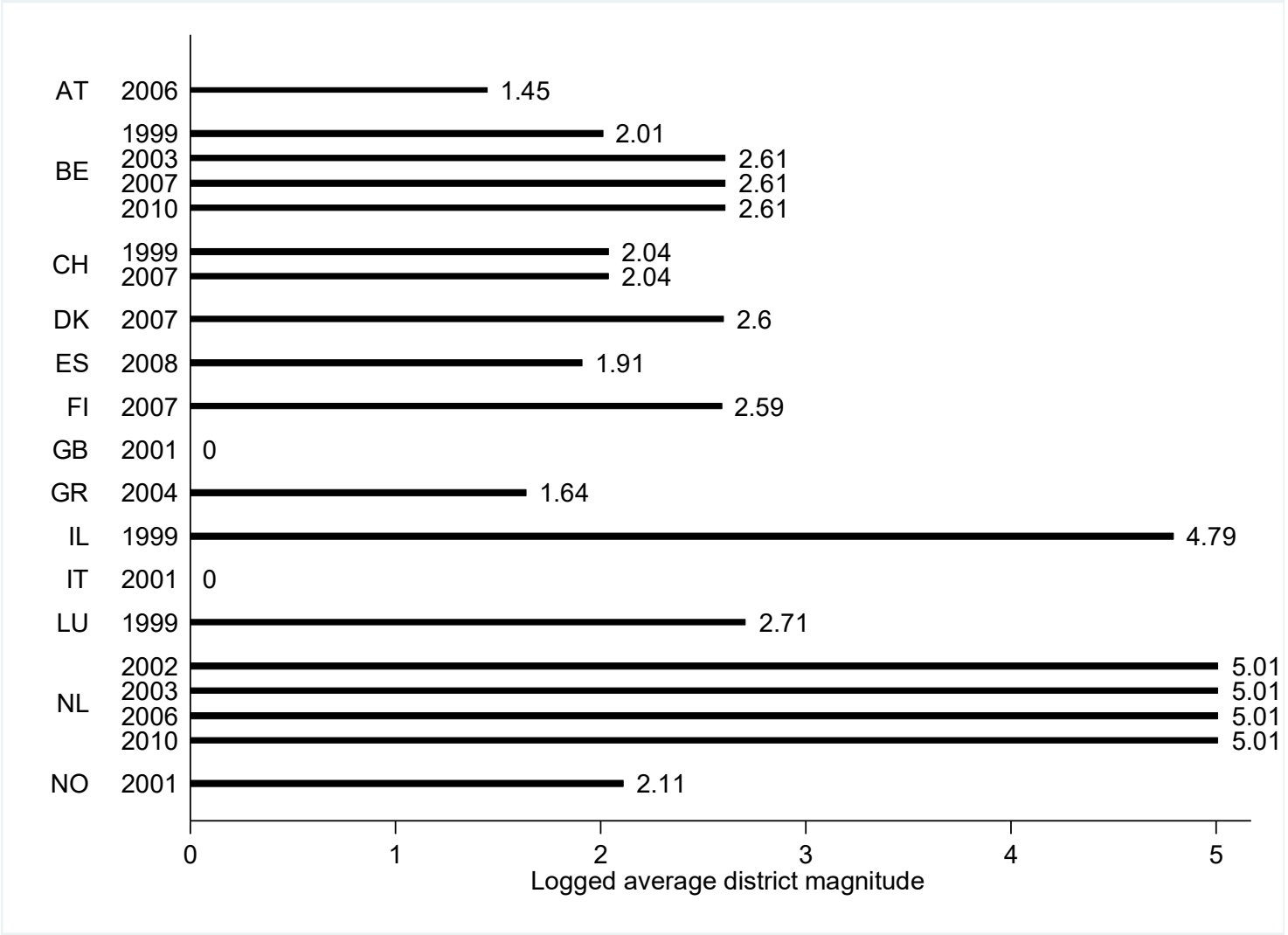

Figure A.3: Voter age

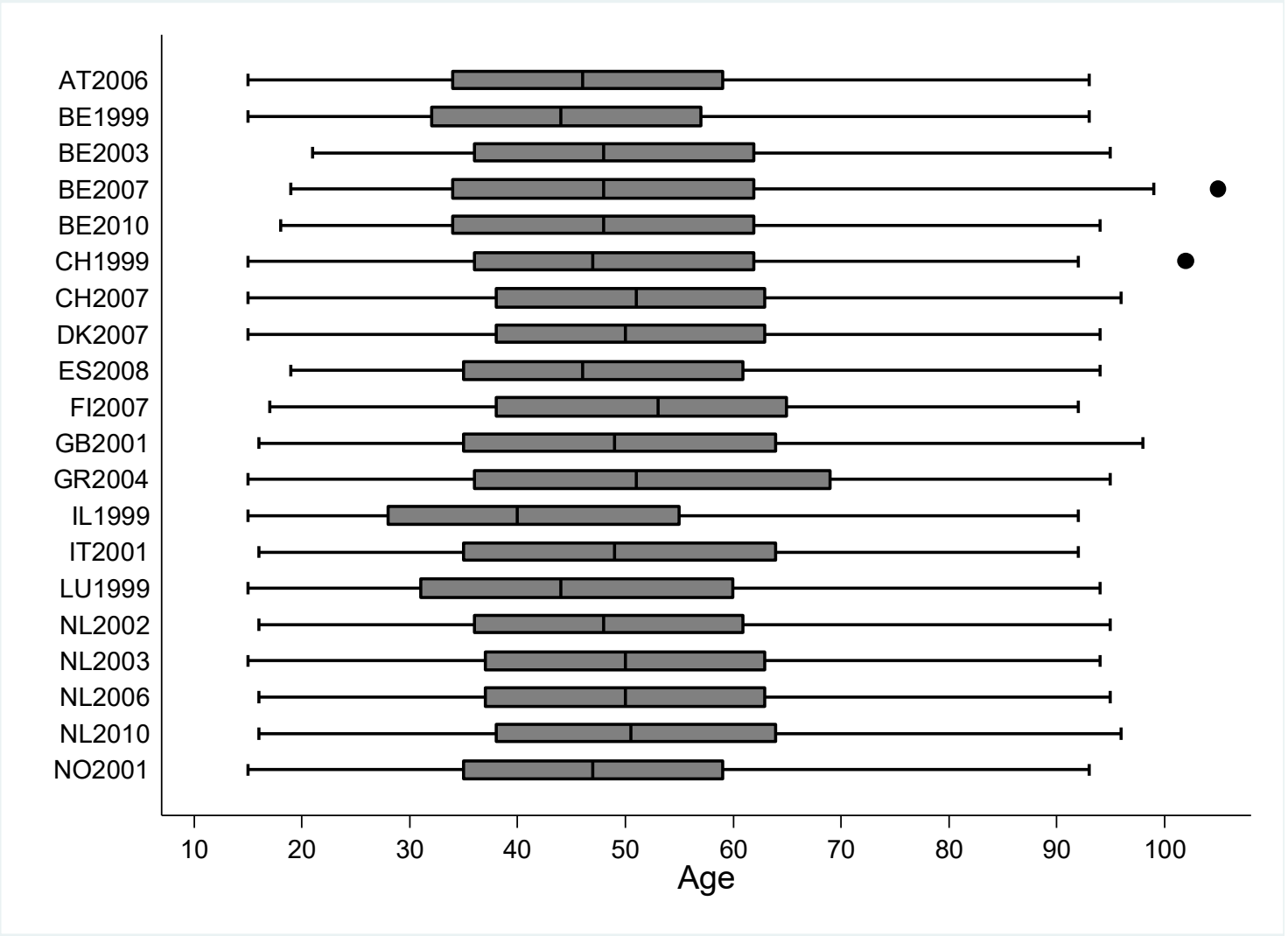

Figure A.4: Voter gender

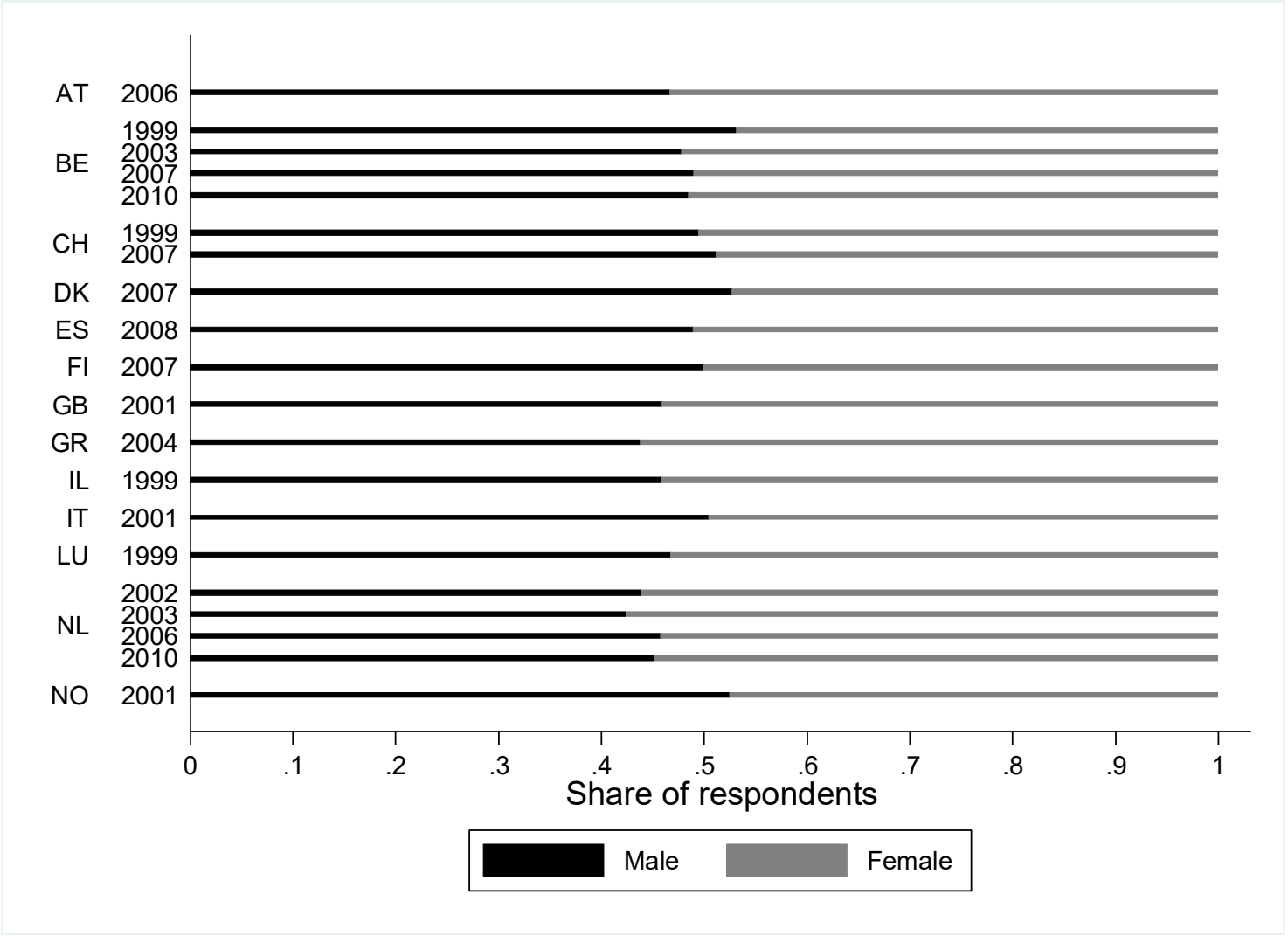

Figure A.5: Employment status of respondent

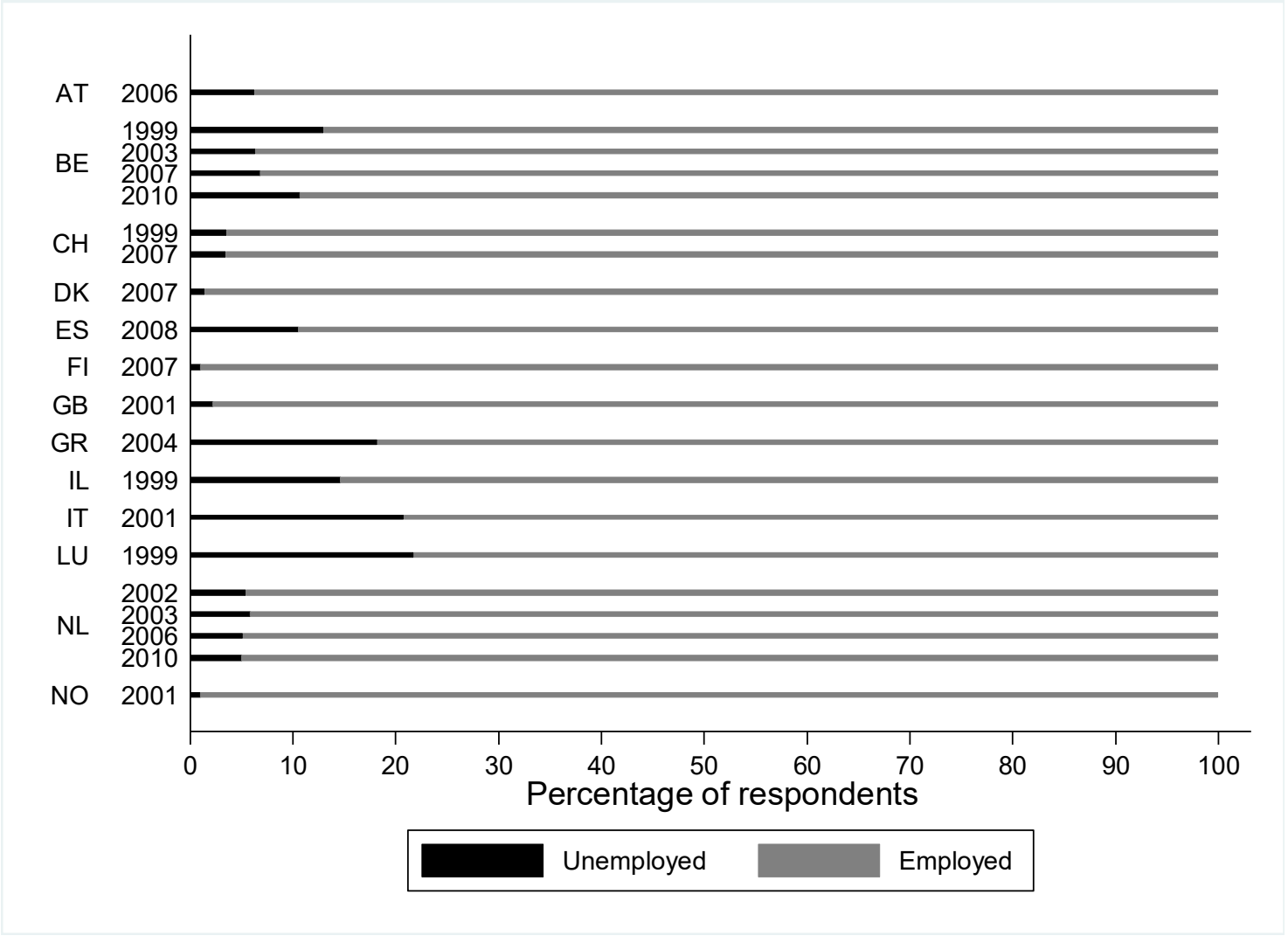

Figure A.6: Respondent feels close to

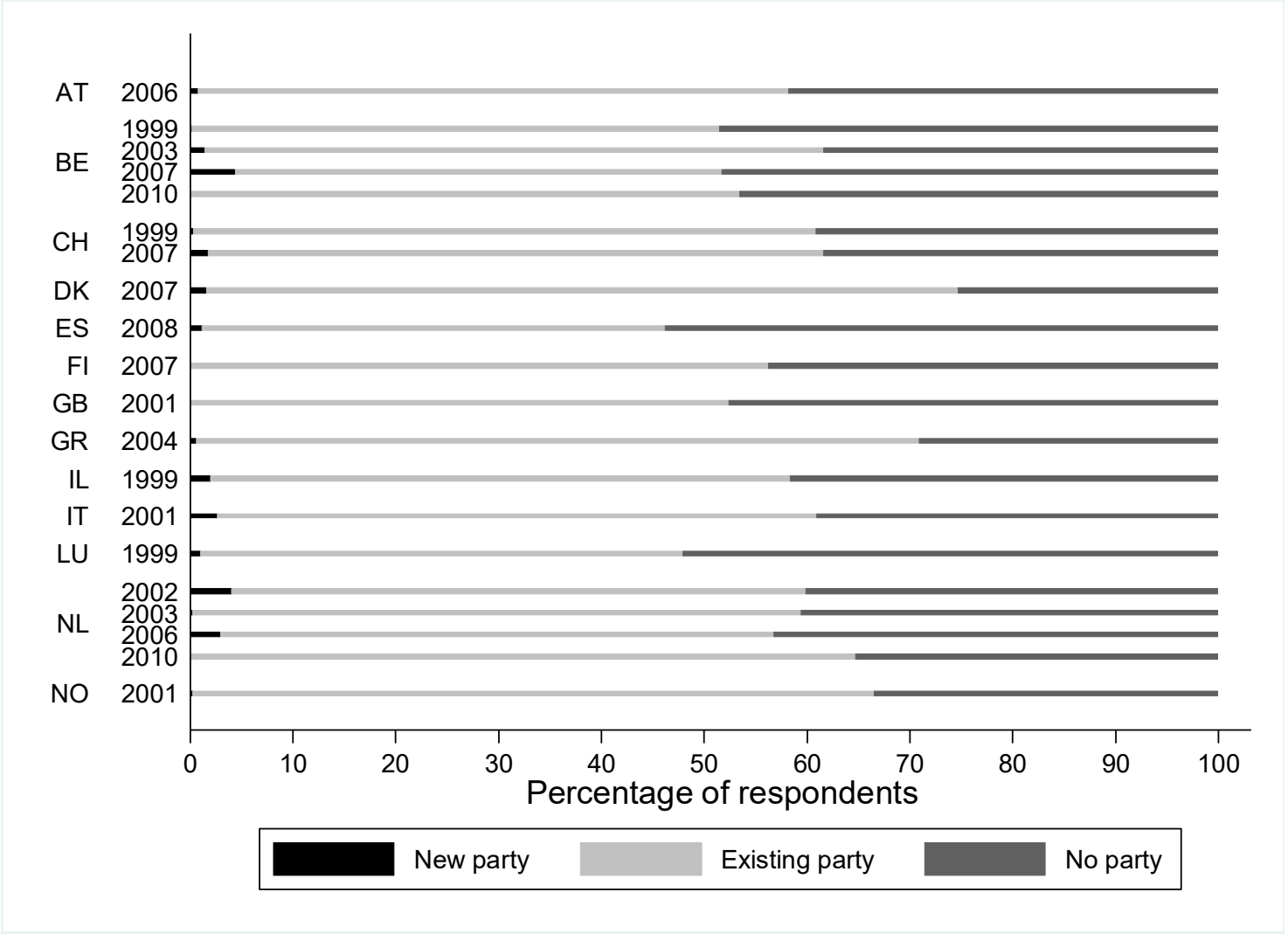

Figure A.7: Cognitive capacity of respondent

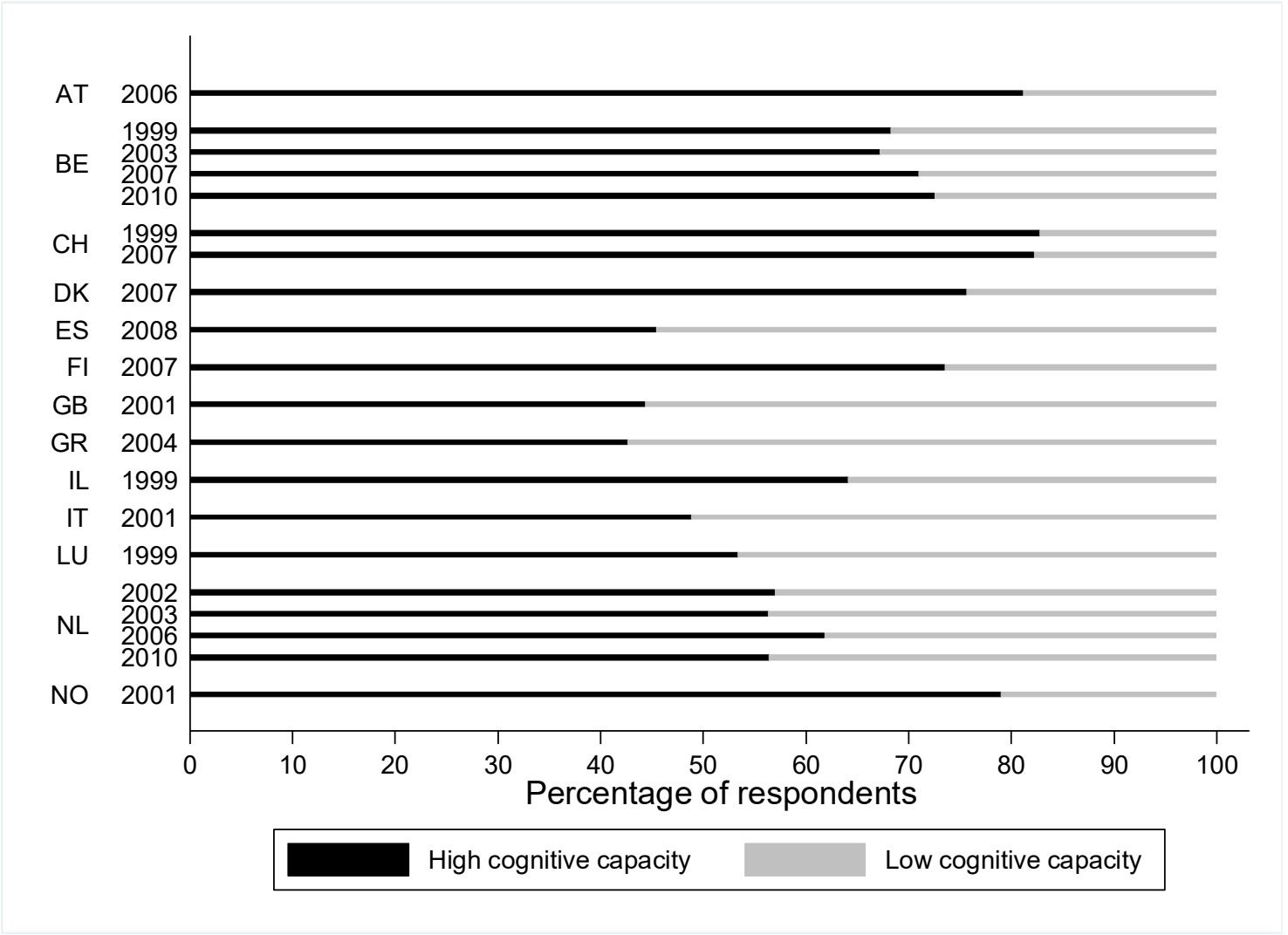

Figure A.8: Growth of gross domestic product per capita in pre-election year

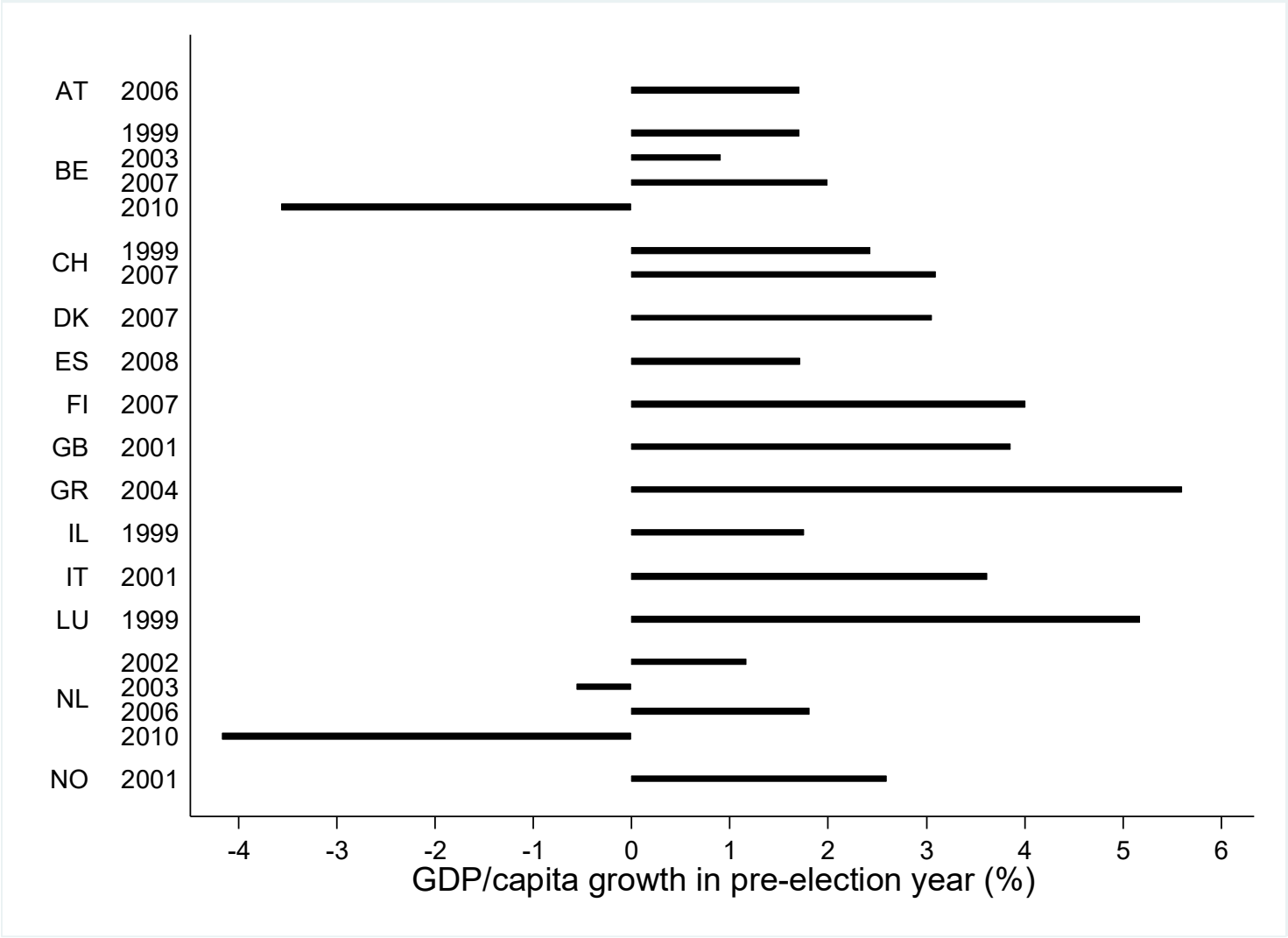

Figure A.9: Territorial organization

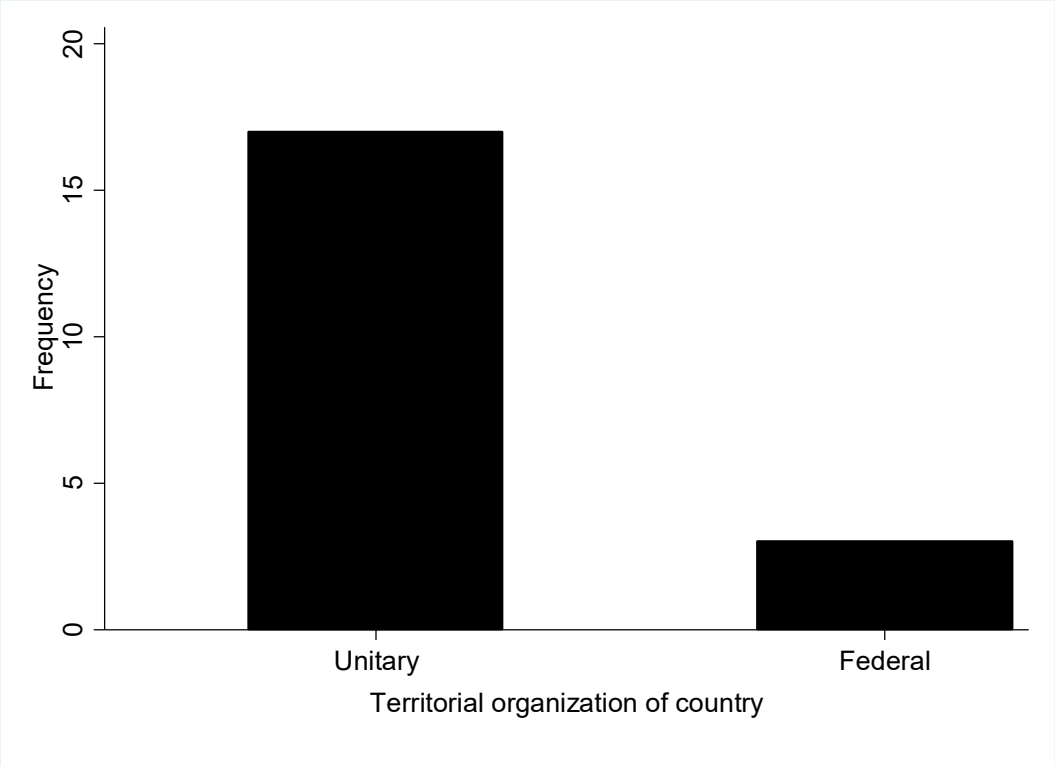

Table A.2: Table 3 in manuscript plus random slopes for political information (model A.1)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model A.1	Model 4
New-party voters					
Constant	-3.799***	-4.226***	-3.682***	-3.787***	-3.924***
	(0.043)	(0.198)	(0.203)	(0.204)	(0.218)
Close to no party		1.700***	1.669***	1.671***	1.670***
		(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.106)
Close to new party		5.737***	5.800***	5.807***	5.792***
		(0.152)	(0.154)	(0.154)	(0.154)
Political information		0.072**	0.077**	0.106***	0.062
		(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.028)	(0.040)
Cognitive capacity		-0.317***	-0.247**	-0.268**	-0.259**
		(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.095)
Age		-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.012***
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Male		0.119	0.104	0.104	0.105
		(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.087)	(0.087)
Unemployed		-0.173	-0.160	-0.157	-0.142
		(0.194)	(0.196)	(0.196)	(0.196)
Programmatic heterogeneity			-0.130***	-0.136***	-0.079*
			(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.039)
Progr. het. * pol. information					-0.005
					(0.011)
Non-voters					
Constant	-1.691***	-0.278***	-0.111	-0.229**	-0.365***
	(0.025)	(0.071)	(0.073)	(0.076)	(0.080)
Close to no party		1.339***	1.344***	1.346***	1.344***
		(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.034)
close to new party		1.492***	1.493***	1.502***	1.488***
		(0.185)	(0.185)	(0.185)	(0.185)
Political information		-0.105***	-0.107***	-0.075***	-0.118***
		(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.020)
Cognitive capacity		-0.789***	-0.772***	-0.791***	-0.784***
		(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.036)
Age		-0.025***	-0.025***	-0.025***	-0.025***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Male		0.096**	0.094**	0.097**	0.099**
		(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.033)
Unemployed		0.709***	0.694***	0.698***	0.714***
		(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Programmatic heterogeneity			0.027***	0.020**	0.075***
			(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.011)
Progr. het. * pol. information					-0.005
					(0.004)
Random estimates					
Intercept-variance level 1	0.192	0.039	0.109	0.003	0.002
	(0.023)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Slope-variance (pol. information)				0.007	0.008
				(0.002)	(0.003)
Covariance random intercepts and slopes level 1				0.003	0.003
				(0.002)	(0.002)
Intercept-variance level 2	0.371	0.438	0.125	0.218	0.182
	(0.029)	(0.047)	(0.012)	(0.026)	(0.016)
Log-likelihood	-17834.09	-14588.04	-14549.96	-14541.97	-14540.85
N	29969	29048	29048	29048	29048

Estimates and standard errors (in parentheses) in log-odds form; p < .05 *; p < .01 **; p < .001 ***
Reference category of dependent variable: Voting for existing party

Table A.3: Model 3 with non-voting as reference category

	New-party voters	Existing-party voters
Constant	-3.742***	0.311***
	(0.209)	(0.073)
Close to no party	0.280**	-1.350***
	(0.109)	(0.034)
Close to new party	4.077***	-1.524***
	(0.195)	(0.187)
Political information	0.173***	0.103***
	(0.029)	(0.012)
Cognitive capacity	0.623***	0.816***
	(0.098)	(0.036)
Age	0.015***	0.025***
	(0.003)	(0.001)
Male	-0.012	-0.088**
	(0.090)	(0.033)
Unemployed	-0.943***	-0.721***
	(0.195)	(0.055)
Programmatic heterogeneity	-0.179***	-0.079***
	(0.020)	(0.006)
Random estimates		
Intercept-variance level 1	0.061	
	(0.010)	
Intercept-variance level 2	0.546	
	(0.034)	
Log-likelihood	-14490.19	
N	29048	

Estimates and standard errors (in parentheses) in log-odds form; p < .05 *; p < .01 **; p < .001 ***
Reference category of dependent variable: Abstention

Predicted probabilities

Figure A.10: Predicted probabilities for voters feeling close to no party

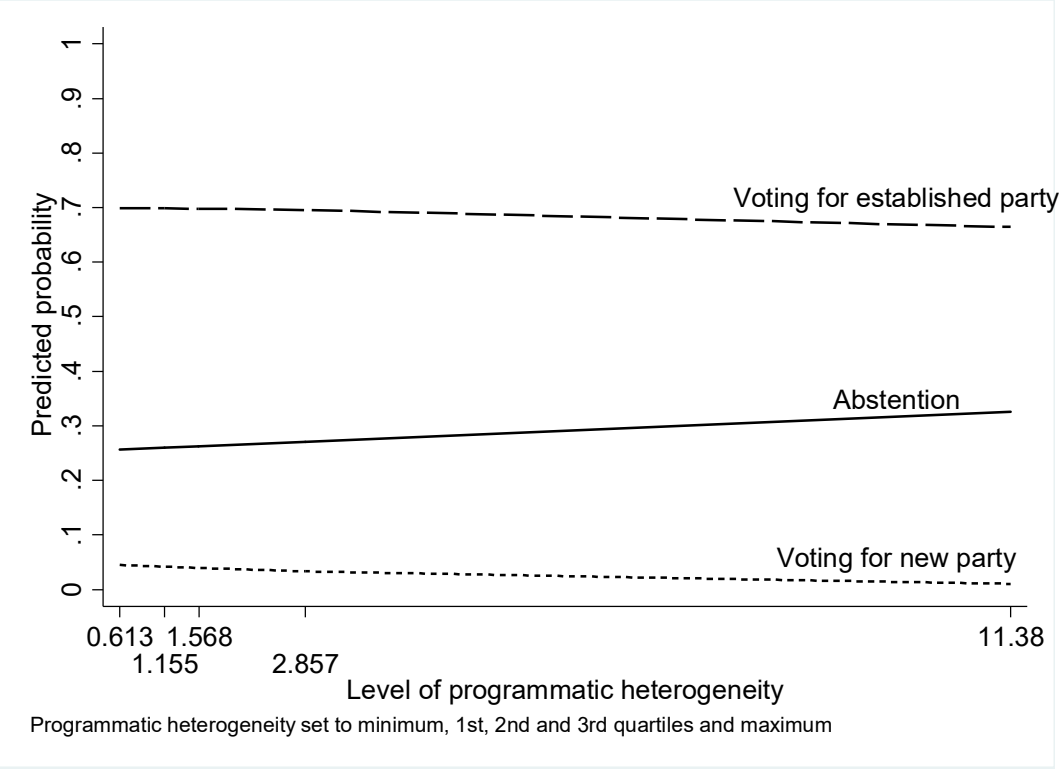

Figure A.11: Predicted probabilities for voters feeling close to existing party

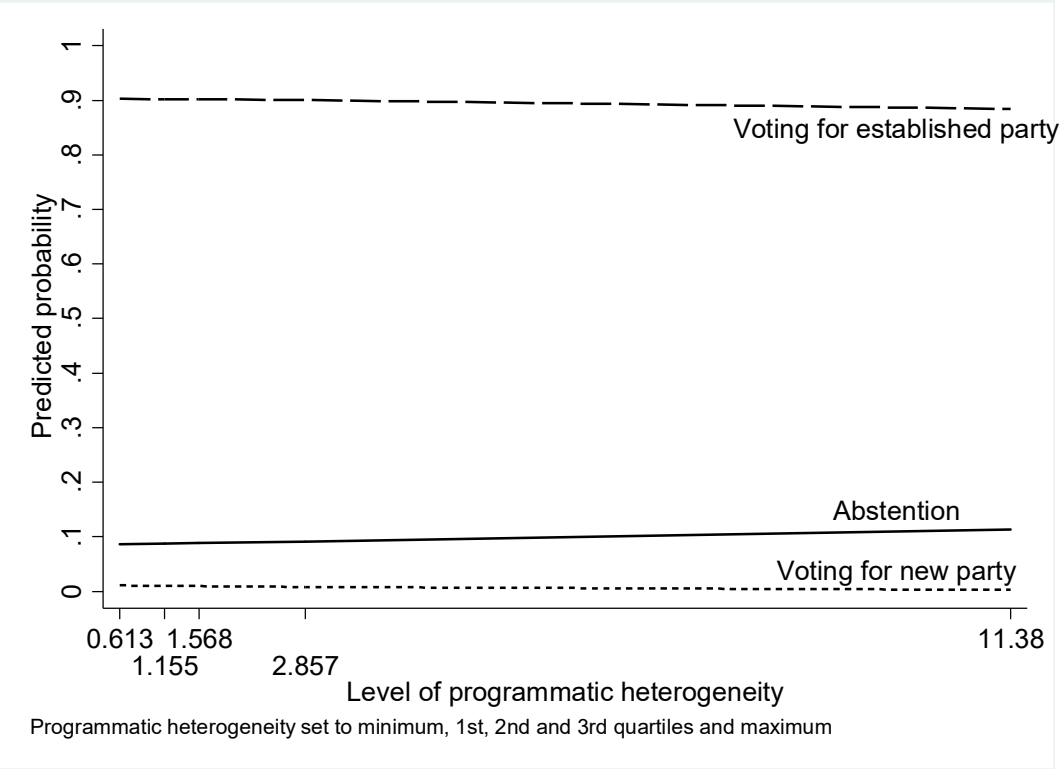

Table A.4: Deviance scores and critical chi2-value for main models (see table A.1)

Model comparison	Critical chi^2 value ($p<.05$)	Deviance score
1 versus 2	23.68	6492.09
2 versus 3	5.99	76.17
3 versus A.1	5.99	15.98
A.1 versus 4	5.99	2.24
3 versus 4	9.49	18.23