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Martin Rachuj

The Impact of Strategies on the Vote Share of New Parties

Nomos

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Prof. Dr. Susanne Pickel, University of Duisburg-Essen
Prof. Dr. Christof Hartmann, University of Duisburg-Essen
Prof. Ingo Rohlfing, PhD, University of Passau

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1 The New Party Phenomenon
Introduction

In 1986, a murmur went through the German federal state of Bavaria. After the foundation of the Republicans by former CSU ministers in Munich in 1983, the new party achieved an unexpectedly high result in the federal elections, with 3 percent of the vote (Schultze, 1987). Although the unrivaled rule of the CSU was confirmed once again and the Republicans ultimately failed to reach the 5 percent threshold, Franz-Josef Strauß, the long-time chairman of the CSU, expressed a powerful sentence in response to this election result, in which he declared that there can be no democratically legitimate party to the right of the CDU/CSU. Here, Strauß formulated a strategy aimed at the inclusion of social milieus, especially at the margins of the political spectrum, to ensure that no new party becomes a threat to the CDU/CSU. Strauß argued to cultivate the core clientèle, while at the same time, he believed tapping into new voter strata would be a mistake. Thus, he formulated the fundamental dilemma of established parties in dealing with new challenges: How much policy movement towards the new contender is needed to convince new voters, how much is possible without losing old voters?

One could dismiss this anecdote as a regional debate if it would not be regularly quoted to the present day whenever there were political disputes over direction between the sister parties CDU and CSU on how to deal with new challenges and challengers like the AfD (cf. Haupt, 2016). Thereby the Strauß sentence draws attention to a research question that is interesting both from a real-world and a scientific point of view: *Can established parties influence the electoral success of new competitors with their election programs?*

Despite its long history, the research on the emergence and success of new parties has not yet answered this question. Instead, attention to the study of new parties has often been driven by the emergence or success of individual (new) party families such as the Greens (Kitschelt, 1989, 1993; Müller-Rommel, 1985, 1992), or right-wing parties (Kitschelt, 1997). Today it is the ”populist zeitgeist” (Bayerlein, 2021; Mudde, 2004), which draws attention to the phenomenon of the emergence and success of new parties. In addition to these event-driven attention cycles, there also have been efforts

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to better understand the phenomenon through macro-comparative analyses (Bolleyer and Bytzek, 2017; Harmel and Robertson, 1985; Tavits, 2008) of the general population of new parties. Although these earlier works focus on sociological and institutional variables, the influence of ideology has only recently been addressed (Zons, 2015). Most of this research seeks to quantify the impact of new parties on their mainstream contenders (Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020). A contrary perspective is only taken by Meguid (2005), who emphasizes the importance of the strategies of mainstream parties for the success of niche parties. I generalize her theory in this project from niche parties and apply it to the broader category of new parties.

So far, the influence of established parties' strategies on the success of new parties has not been examined. However, the importance of new parties for political competition has long been emphasized. Downs (1957) has already pointed out the blackmail potential of new contenders. More importantly, new parties alter party systems and policies by their sheer existence (Hug, 2001). Some new parties even manage to gain office (Deschouwer, 2008). As wide-ranging as the study of new parties is, the definitions used are equally varied. I use a criterion of organizational novelty, according to which parties are considered new if they have won a seat in parliament for the first time and did not belong to the original party system.

If we look at the number of new parties based on this definition, we have every reason to get to the bottom of this phenomenon (cf. Figure 1.1). The number of new parties in parliament has increased dramatically in the past 50 years: Overall, there has been an increased number of new parties since the 1960s, with slight wave-like declines in the 1970s and early 1980s. It is striking that the number of new parties reached an unprecedented high after the financial crisis of 2008/2009, which underlines the timeliness of the new party phenomenon.

Based on this data, it is safe to say that the established parties face an increasing number of new parties with potentially significant influence. I assume that the established parties are primarily trying to maximize their vote share. To achieve this primary goal, it is also in their interest to keep competitors as small as possible. This is especially true for new parties, as their entry into parliament shakes up the previously existing power structure. What needs to be clarified is whether this is possible for them by changing their position or issue salience.

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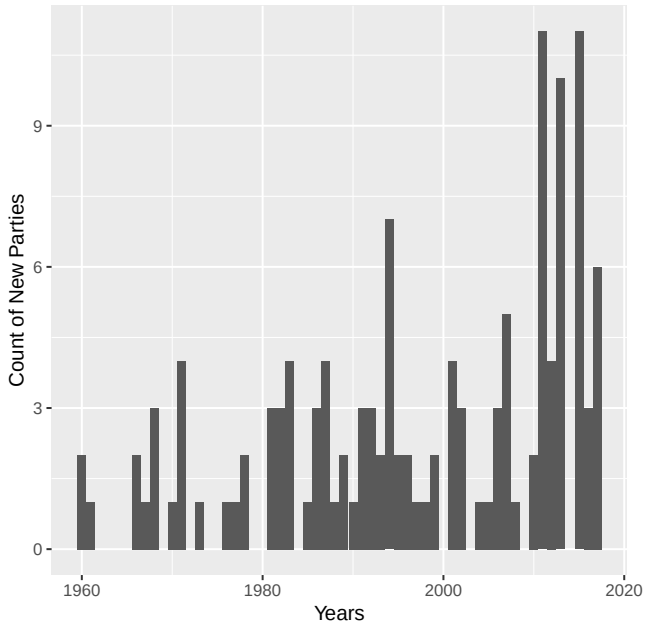

Figure 1.1: Number of New Parties in Parliament in 18 Highly Developed Countries

In order to answer this question, I analyze 168 new parties in 18 highly developed democracies[1] using election data (Jahn et al., 2018a) and party manifestos (Krause et al., 2018; Volkens et al., 2020).

I will show in this book that established parties are not out of options but can influence the vote share of the new contenders by changing their selective issue emphasis. My results show that the effect of a shift in the issue profile of an established party depends strongly on the concurrent competitive situation: Both ideological proximity and the expected election outcome play an essential role. Established parties successfully fight new parties with an engagement strategy if they act from a position of strength, i.e., if their vote gains are in prospect. Furthermore, the ideological proximity of the new party should be taken into account when choosing the strategy: within the same

1 The countries in the sample are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

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ideological bloc, an engagement strategy can be pretty successful; outside the bloc, this is instead not the case. While these results are based on measures of the text similarity of election manifestos, policy moves of established parties measured on the left-right dimension do not affect the vote share of new parties.

To come to this conclusion, I developed a novel measure based on the automated content analysis of election programmes and compared it with a more established measure of left-right position based on the RILE index. The salience measure I propose is based on text similarity and captures party policy convergence or ideological distance. The measure has the advantage of dispensing with assumptions about important issues or ideological dimensions that might be inappropriate for new parties.

I will go into the details of the measurements and the analysis in the following chapters. In the next section I clarify what exactly is meant by the term ”new party” and what is meant by ”established party”. Then I present the main argument in greater detail and explain the structure of the book.

1.1 Concepts and Definitions of New Parties

When dealing with new parties, it quickly becomes apparent that there is some conceptual confusion in this field: The term new parties is confused with neighbouring concepts such as small parties (with a low ideological offer and a small vote share) (Spoon, 2011, p. 5), new challenger parties (which are participating in an election for the first time with particular new issues) (Hino, 2012, p. 8) or with niche parties (that are solely defined by special issues put forward) (Bischof, 2017; Meguid, 2008; Meyer and Miller, 2015; Wagner, 2012).

Even when explicitly referring to new parties, there are considerable differences in understanding. For example, Hug (2001) defines a new party as a ”genuinely new organization that appoints, for the first time, candidates at a general election to the system’s representative assembly” (Hug, 2001, p. 14), while Barnea and Rahat (2011) describe a new party ”as a party that has a new label and that no more than half of its top candidates (top candidates list or safe districts) originate from a single former party” (Barnea and Rahat, 2011, p. 312).

Such different definitions significantly impact the cases investigated, data availability, and appropriate explanatory factors. Therefore it is essential to establish a clear definition for further work on this phenomenon. To this

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end, I will first briefly describe which definitions have been advocated in the literature so far. Afterward, I discuss the definition of the new party used here and its counterpart, the established party.

Towards a systematic view on new party concepts

To bring a systematic structure to the definitions of new parties, I refer to Pedersen's party theory.[2] According to this theory, four stages or thresholds in party life can be distinguished: the thresholds of declaration, authorization, representation, and relevance (Pedersen, 1982, p. 6). The first step to becoming a party for a group of people is to declare an intention to compete in elections. Next, some legal regulations have to be dealt with to become authorized to participate in elections. Third, parties need to get elected to parliament to overcome the threshold of representation. The final step is to become relevant, whereby there is no concrete norm when this is the case. Certainly, governing parties meet the criteria, but also parties with blackmail potential can be considered relevant.

Three groups of definitions can be identified based on these thresholds or phases in a party's life span. In addition, I discuss a fourth type of definition, which introduces party characteristics as a further typological feature.

The first broad definition is related to the thresholds for declaration and authorization. Definitions of this type include all new parties that declare their intention to participate in elections and meet the registration requirements. Examples for the application of this definition are the studies of Harmel and Robertson (1985), Hug (2001), and more recently Obert and Müller (2017). The second definition is more strict than the first one: it puts the "threshold of representation" at the center of attention. Here parties are defined as new when they have entered parliament for the first time. Examples are the studies presented by Bolin (2014) and Bolleyer and Bytzek (2017). The third type of definition is based on the "threshold of relevance". An example can be found in the book by Deschouwer (2008), whose qualifier is the first entry of a party into government.

In addition to these three types of definitions, there are also attempts to describe new parties concerning features such as party name, party leader,

2 For an early discussion on the divergent concepts of new parties compare Harmel (1985).

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and program (Litton, 2015). Another discussed criterion is the number of new candidates (Barnea and Rahat, 2011; Sikk and Köker, 2019).

Looking at the first three definition types, it can be noted that with each type, another criterion is added to the definition so that the number of parties classified as ”new” decreases. At the same time, the importance of the identified new parties for political competition increases and with it the availability of data.

The first type includes a vast number of new parties. This can quickly add up to thousands of parties in a time-series cross-section analysis. In addition, it is challenging for such a large set of often short-lived political organizations to collect (ideological) data, especially when looking at more extended time series.

The number is considerably smaller if the second type of definition is used. Focusing on parties with a minimum of strength in terms of vote or seat shares is a frequently used approach (Janda, 1980; Volkens et al., 2018), which assures a more manageable number of observational units as well as improved availability of data.

In the third type of definition, the number of new parties may vary, especially if a strict criterion such as incumbency is used in the definition. The number of new parties may be insufficient for statistical analysis so that case studies may be more appropriate.

Furthermore, these different definitions influence the theoretical assumptions about the importance of individual explanatory factors. For example, while registration restrictions and ”costs of entry” (Tavits, 2006) are of great importance for parties in their early stages as a political group, other factors should play a more prominent role after successful participation in elections or even after entry into government.

With regard to definitions that include ideology or the party program itself, I see two problems: First, boundaries to neighboring concepts such as new challenger parties (de Vries and Hobolt, 2021; Hino, 2012) or niche parties (Bischof, 2017; Meyer and Miller, 2015; Wagner, 2012) are blurring. These conceptual overlaps potentially compromise the clarity and stringency of the research. So, for instance, while it is true that niche parties are usually also new parties, not all new parties are niche parties.[3] This difference should be kept in mind in explanations to deal with all cases as appropriately as possible. Therefore both concepts should not be used interchangeably.

3 More detailed information on this argument can be found in subsection 5.4.3.

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Second, the inclusion of ideology as a defining criterion presupposes characteristics of the parties that could themselves be part of the research. So, the extent to which new parties bring new issues into parliament can be clarified in empirical research and be part of the model itself. This is impossible if the novelty of issues is part of the definition and thus the case selection. I will discuss this later in more detail.

Since the focus here is on competition between new and established parties on an ideological level, reference to definitions based on the "threshold of relevance" seems most appropriate. The number of cases is high enough for statistical analysis, and at the same time, there is good data availability, especially for ideological data. The following section presents the definition I adopted and justifies its criteria.

Parliamentary Participation after Consolidation

I define as a new party all parties that have won at least one seat in elections to national parliaments and do not belong to the original party system consolidated after the first elections. I consider the party systems consolidated after 1960.[4] Accordingly, all parties that won at least one seat in parliament for the first time before 1960 (or 1980) are considered established.

So, the decisive criterion of my definition is parliamentary participation after consolidation. The definition focuses on organizational rather than ideological novelty. In doing so, I directly follow the work of Bolin (2014) and Bolleyer and Bytzek (2017). There are several reasons for choosing the criterion of parliamentary participation when analyzing the influence of the established parties on new contenders. Looking at the literature, the use of this selection rule can be justified both methodologically and in terms of content.

Entering parliament for the first time is a particularly important event for a party: Parliamentary entry distinguishes it from the multitude of newly founded parties that receive little attention. The new party's importance and chances of success increase in many ways: Media coverage is increasing, and the available resources are growing; the new party can thus represent and publicize its positioning and emphasis of issues much better than before.

4 In Greece, Portugal, and Spain, democratization took place later, which is why I have set the threshold for these countries at 1980. This ensures that at least one election has taken place before parties entering parliament for the first time can be considered new.

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Voters who previously avoided voting for the insignificant new competitor now see that their vote is not wasted. Thus, new parties that have entered parliament are far more likely to influence politics.

Therefore, the new party poses a severe challenge to the established forces. Scarce resources are redistributed after a new party enters parliament, which shocks established competitors. The former equilibrium in the political establishment is disturbed, new coalitions may become possible, issues previously thought to be safe may be discussed anew, or even wholly new issues may be integrated into the discussion. This makes it likely that an established party reacts to this kind of new contender by shifting the position and/or emphasis on issues.

Methodologically, this definition is helpful because the focus on parties with a minimum of strength and relevance limits the cases "to a more manageable level of hundreds, rather than thousands [...] for which information is more likely to be available" (Janda, 1980, p. 7).

Last but not least, by excluding the ideological profile of a party from the definition, I can include parties in the data analysis that would otherwise not be part of the sample. The variance at the ideological level allows me to include it as an independent variable in my model.

So, all in all, this definition seems to be the most appropriate approach considering the analysis' focus on the vote share of new parties in parliament.

1.2 The New Party Challenge

I argue that a new party's first entry to parliament has far-reaching consequences. The new party gains access to new sources of finance, media attention increases, and the personnel resources improve considerably. From the perspective of the established parties, this situation is a challenge. After the entrance of a new party, a new competitive structure has to be taken into account. The limited amount of public attention and the scarce seats in parliament have to be shared now. A previously existing balance between parties has been shaken. This new situation requires adaptation, not least in terms of ideological orientation.

This is the starting point of the study at hand. I assume that the established parties adopt a strategic positioning vis-à-vis the new challengers to compete with them. The theory developed here suggests that established parties may respond to this challenge by changing positions and selectively emphasizing issues, thereby changing the assessment of voter proximity, the attribution

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of issue ownership, and the public agenda, which ultimately contributes to changing vote shares of new parties.

I identify three strategies to deal with this challenge on the left-right dimension. The ”maintaining strategy” is characterized by a party's unwillingness to change its own policy position; the ”adopting strategy” means that the positions of the new party are taken into account and leads to a decreased position difference between both parties, and the result of the ”confronting strategy” is an increase in the differences between both parties.

Concerning the new party's issues, I distinguish among three salience-based strategies. Parties can be indifferent to these issues, they can adapt their election program to them (”engagement”), or eliminate these issues (”avoidance”).

So far, it is unclear what influence political opponents' positioning, and issue priorities will have on the success or failure of the new party in parliament. Let us consider the German case as an example. Since the 1960s, only two new parties have entered the political stage. The Greens came into parliament as a result of the 1983 elections. The PDS managed to win seats in the German Bundestag seven years later. While the two parties gained votes for very different reasons, a similar situation occurred from the point of view of the established parties: a new competitor to the left arose. This presented a challenge to them.

If we look at the examples from this perspective, we find the following strategies: In preparing for the 1987 election, the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP avoided issues addressed in the Green's manifesto. Subsequently, an increased vote share (from 5.6% to 8.3%) of the Greens in the 1987 election was observed. The PDS experienced a similar but slightly more complex situation in the 1994 election. While the CDU/CSU and FDP manifestos had a lower similarity with the PDS manifesto than before, the SPD's program became more similar to the PDS. Nevertheless, in 1994 the PDS gained more votes than in 1990 (an increase from 2.4% to 4.4%). This example suggests that the avoidance strategy is associated with the new party's vote gain.

Of course, some cases present the opposite picture. The Irish Progressive Democrats can be cited here as an example. After their electoral success in 1987, the Workers' Party, Labour, and Fine Gael avoided their issues in 1989, while Fianna Fáil published a more similar manifesto. Subsequently, the Progressive Democrats lost half of their electorate (11.8% to 5.5%).[5]

5 Despite their declining vote share in the next elections, the Progressive Democrats were involved in several governments as junior partners until they finally dissolved in 2009.

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The Green Alternative in Austria is another apt example: in the 1995 election, the Austrian Social Democratic Party (SPÖ), the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), the Liberal Forum (LF) as well as the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) avoided the issues of the Green Party. As a result, the Green Alternative lost 2.5 percent of its votes in this election.

These few examples show that the success of new parties is a phenomenon that is difficult to grasp, as the "dramatic disintegration of newcomers that entered parliaments with extensive vote shares, and the resilience of those new parties that never won more than a few vote percentages" (Bolleyer and Bytzek, 2013, p. 775) illustrate.

In this book, I will approach this problem. For this purpose, I have developed measures, gathered data, and analyzed it based on my research design. In order to present my work as clearly as possible, I will lay down the plan of the project in the next section.

1.3 Projekt Framework

In this book, I adopt a macro-comparative perspective. One of the advantages of this approach is that my findings are based on data from as many cases as possible and over a long period. At the same time, this approach also has disadvantages that should not be ignored here: The high level of abstraction goes hand in hand with a low depth of focus, i.e., in favor of statements that are as generally valid as possible, the individual cases cannot be appreciated in their uniqueness. Furthermore, the correlations identified by frequency statistics are not direct evidence of a causal relationship. Thus, while the observed changes in the similarity of election programs are a fact, this work ultimately cannot prove that the increase or decrease in the similarity of election programs was a strategic decision of party elites. It would be desirable to learn more about how election manifestos are produced and the strategic considerations of the authors. However, this is beyond the work presented here.

Furthermore, I apply a text-as-data approach. That means I conduct quantitative computer-assisted content analyses of political parties' election programs. Computer-assisted content analyses are fast and inexpensive, but more importantly, all coding decisions are intersubjectively comprehensible and can be reviewed and changed at any time. The independence from individual coders makes computer-assisted content analysis very replicable. Moreover,

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the method allows thorough validation, as the influence of changes in the coding rules can be checked at any time by repeating the analysis.[6]

At the same time, I am aware that this technique is regularly met with resistance: It is questionable to what extent computer-assisted content analysis equals or surpasses manual procedures. I will discuss this problem in greater detail later in this work. Although the suitability of manual content analysis has been proven in countless works, the disadvantages should not be forgotten: human coding is error prone, tedious, and expensive. Repetition in large corpora is therefore virtually impossible so that retrospective changes to the analysis are no longer possible. However, I see the text-as-data approach as a promising method that can only develop further if it is also used in content-related work. At the same time, I also use data generated by manual content analyses to base my analysis on a foundation as broad and sustainable as possible.

In summary, I argue that cosine similarity is well suited to capture salience changes between election programs. However, to also allow for a positional determination of the parties, I resort to the RILE. Together, both methods allow us to estimate the impact of salience and position changes on the electoral success of new parties.

In this work, I try to advance the research in terms of content and methodology: On the substantive or content level, I follow an x-centered research design (Ganghof, 2005) that attempts to explain the influence of the strategy of established parties on the electoral success of new parties. In doing so, I also take a look at the role of moderators of this relationship: The fundamental ideological proximity of both parties to each other and the specific ideological offer of the new party with regard to all other parties I see as critical intervening variables whose influence must be taken into account.

On the methodological level, I develop new measurements to capture the strategy of established parties and the ideological specificity of new parties. In this way, my work follows other text-as-data approaches (Laver et al., 2003; Slapin and Proksch, 2008). I have structured the work as described below to achieve these two goals.

In chapter two, I look at classical theory as well as empirical research from the perspective of interest in new parties and their vulnerability to rivals in the party system. I start with spatial and saliency theory as the foundations of many contemporary approaches and see what they say about my research

6 A complete report on the validation process and the results for the data used here can be found in the validation report (Düpont and Rachuj, 2020).

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questions. I then discuss two important empirical research strands: policy move and new party research, which inform my theory development and analysis. In doing so, I show that previous research provides many approaches to my research question but has not taken into account the influence of positional competition and issue competition in equal measure.

In chapter three, I use the insights gained in this way to clarify my argument, the underlying assumptions and justify the causal relationships. In essence, I draw on Meguid's "Position, Salience and Ownership Theory" (or PSO Theory for short), which describes the strategy of mainstream parties vis-à-vis niche parties, and extend its scope to new parties. To this end, I review the basic assumptions of Meguid for their viability and rearrange some elements of the theory. Finally, based on this extended theory, I develop hypotheses on the connection between possible strategies of established parties and the electoral outcome of new parties.

Chapter four is the transition to the empirical part of the project. This chapter deals with the content of election programs and the advantages and disadvantages of previous measurement methods. I focus on the RILE as a prominent representative of a left-right index based on manual content analysis and contrast it with the cosine similarity scores, a measurement of text similarity based on the bag-of-words approach. Through a simulation experiment, I can show how both measures behave when election programs become artificially more similar by adopting individual sentences. The resulting synthetic election programs thus also give an impression of the influence of individual sentences on the RILE or the cosine similarity scores. Thus, this chapter can also be read as a validation of the text-analytical measurement of issue competition between new and established parties presented in chapter five since this measurement is based on the cosine similarity scores. At the same time, the experiment helps to understand the empirical results in chapter six better.

In chapter five, I first present the data and justify the selection of the cases and time period under study. I then explain the dyadic approach chosen here and operationalize the dependent and independent variables. Here I present in detail the newly developed measurements for the issue competition strategy of the established parties as well as the measurement of new parties' nicheness. I also discuss the validation of these measurements. Moreover, I present descriptive statistics, which already give a first impression of the expected results. Finally, I justify using multilevel regression models as a method of analysis.

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In chapter six, I present the results of the empirical analysis. In doing so, I draw on the hypotheses presented in chapter three. Then, based on the regression models, I endeavor to falsify them. Finally, I also show what influence the strategies of the established parties have on their new challengers, discuss my findings and present conclusions for future work.

In chapter seven, I summarize my work. For this purpose, I recapitulate my work and the most important research results and discuss them critically. I also identify desiderata as an outlook for possible further research.

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2 Explanations of Success and Failure of New Parties
Research Review

I begin my literature discussion with theoretical works. First, I look at the classics of economic theory in political science to see what they say about new parties and their relationship with competitors. The two most important and competing schools of theory are spatial and saliency theory, to each of which I devote a section. I end each section with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the theories.

The discussion of these theoretical approaches can be summarized in three points: First, new parties have received little attention in the development of theory as a whole. Second, considerable differences can be found about the presumed influence of a party's strategy on its competitors. Third, the conception of saliency and spatial theory as (irreconcilable) opposites goes too far. Instead, the two approaches complement each other.

Afterward, I will review the current state of empirical research. Because there is only one work that really analyzes the effect of strategies on the vote share of (niche) parties, I go up the ladder of abstraction and look first for research that deals with my primary independent variable, the policy move literature. Second, I go through research dealing with my dependent variable, the vote share (or, even more general, the success) of new parties.

The discussion shows that the explanation of new party success focuses mostly on sociological and institutional factors, while ideology is a relatively new factor in that research. The policy move literature explicitly recognizes the ideology of rivals as an essential factor. However, it primarily examines the influence of the opponent's policy moves on the direction of the focal party's policy moves. So, my research fills a gap in the literature.

2.1 Theoretical Foundations

The spatial theory is grounded in the idea of a market where sellers are placed along the street to reach buyers as effectively as possible. This analogy has been transferred to politics: the political market stretches along an ideological dimension on which parties take different positions to win over voters.

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This idea is opposed by saliency theory, which emphasizes the importance of selective issue emphasis. In this reading, it is not different positions on issues but their selection and emphasis that is the powerful lever in political competition.

These two theories lead to different conclusions regarding competition between new and established parties, elaborated in the following sections. Thereby it is shown that the two theories can complement each other.

2.1.1 The Role of New Parties in Spatial Theory

The positioning of political parties is at the core of spatial theory. In a nutshell, spatial theory implies ”that parties compete by taking different positions on a pre-given policy dimension resulting in a party political agenda fixed on a few connected issues” (Green-Pedersen, 2007, p. 608). This ”has been a fairly accurate description of party competition in Western Europe” (p. 608).

In the following, the development of this theory will be briefly reviewed to identify theorems relevant to the competition of new and established parties.

Spatial theory can be traced back to the seminal work of statistician and economist Harald Hotelling (Hotelling, 1929). His work attracted great attention early on. Lerner and Singer, Smithies, and Downs further developed spatial theory to its present form.

Hotelling was among the first to give up an idealized market without any spatial expansion by allowing distance between sellers placed along a line. Instead, Hotelling argues that sellers can shape the number of their customers by changing their position. He shows that if the position of seller A is fixed, seller B will move as close to A as possible, thereby maximizing his profit. If new sellers are added to this model, the result does not change: ”If a third seller C appears, his desire for as large a market as possible will prompt him likewise to take up a position close to A or B, but not between them. [..] As more and more sellers of the same commodity arise, the tendency is not to become distributed in the socially optimum manner but to cluster unduly” (Hotelling, 1929, p. 53). So, under competitive conditions, the suppliers sell in the middle. Hotelling calls this ”agglomerating tendencies” (Hotelling, 1929, p. 53-54) and sees them at play everywhere: ”The mathematical analysis thus leads to an observation of wide generality. Buyers are confronted everywhere with an excessive sameness” (Hotelling, 1929, p. 54).

Hotelling’s remarks can easily be transferred to politics and thus to new and established parties, as long as they share the same rationale, which means

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if both seek to maximize votes. From his point of view, new parties will behave very similar to the established forces and position themselves in the middle of the political spectrum, to the right or left of existing competitors. The distance to the established parties will be as small as possible in order to win the most significant possible number of voters, because ”there is an incentive to make the new product very much like the old, applying some slight change which will seem an improvement to as many buyers as possible without ever going far in this direction” (Hotelling, 1929, p. 54).

The next developmental step was taken by Lerner and Singer, who were able to show that Hotelling’s conclusions are only valid for special cases. Different configurations appear dependent on ”the relationship between three quantities: (a) the length of the market; (b) the cost of transport; (c) the price buyers are willing to pay for the delivered commodity, i.e., price plus transport cost” (Lerner and Singer, 1937, p. 148). Sometimes the sellers cluster together; other times, they are more evenly distributed across the market.

Of particular interest here is their analysis of the entry of a third seller. Lerner and Singer describe a system with two producers in which a third competitor arises. This corresponds to a two-party system in which a new party positions itself right or left to the established parties in the center. When one of the established parties now decides on its future position, it has an incentive to leapfrog the new party in order to escape its squeezed position and win over voters left or right of the new party: ”If the movements are infinitesimal, the three producers stay at the center. If, when the middle man is squeezed out, the man on the other side moves up to fill the gap, they also remain at the center. But if, before such an adjustment takes place, the new prisoner in the middle makes a dash for the out-side, there will ensue a movement [...], whereby the group is broken up into two parts” (Lerner and Singer, 1937, p. 178). What is described here is a dynamic situation of party competition. The parties follow a zigzag course, leading them to the margins until more voters can be won by a change of position towards the middle again.

While Lerner and Singer assume that ”each takes the location of the others as given” (Lerner and Singer, 1937, p. 178), Smithies relaxes this assumption. In his model, each seller expects ”reactions of his rival” (Smithies, 1941, p. 424). This allowed him to show that there are competitive situations in which competitors do not cluster in the middle of the market but keep a distance from each other.

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However, the most outstanding developmental step and the final inclusion to spatial theory in the canon of political science can be attributed to Downs. He embedded the spatial analogy, as he calls it, in his broader economic theory of democracy. Downs supplements Hotelling's work in several respects. The first addition concerns the meaning of the scale. Downs assumes ordered political preferences upon which all citizens can agree. This order is usually identified as a left-right axis, although other classification criteria are also conceivable. Furthermore, in Downs's theory, parties are vote-maximizing actors who try to represent a policy that appeals to as many voters as possible: "The major force shaping a party's policies is competition with other parties for votes" (Downs, 1957, p. 102). On this basis, Downs stresses the contradiction between the conclusions already drawn by Hotelling and others and the observations of empirical research: while theory suggests that parties will have ideologies with only minor differences, in reality, the differences between parties are striking (Downs, 1957, p. 100).

Downs shows that party system configurations can be understood as consequences of different voter distributions along the left-right axis. According to Downs, the number of parties in a party system depends on the modality of the voter distribution. While uni-modal distributions lead to two-party systems, multi-modal distributions will cause multiparty systems. Bi-modal distributions with peaks at the ends of the political spectrum can lead to the breakdown of the party system. Thus, it makes sense for parties in Down's model to formulate different ideologies to appeal to different social groups. The limit of differentiation is the lack of election success. Parties stick to their manifesto if they win votes. If not, changes in their ideology can be drastic (Downs, 1957, p. 109).

These theoretical advances lead to a refined perspective on rivals' impact on the party ideologies. Downs identifies electoral successes and losses of competitors as the decisive reference points for parties. In a hypothetical constellation in which each of three parties appeals to a particular group of voters, but only one party regularly wins an overwhelming number of votes, this leads, according to Downs, to an ideological adaptation of the other parties. The rationale behind this is that the losing parties need to convince voters of the winning parties in order to stay in the game (Downs, 1957, p. 101).

Thus, the Downsian approach shows that party ideology is determined by utility calculations that take into account the positioning of voters and rivals. This is a central insight concerning the relationship between new and established parties.

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With regard to new parties, Downs assumes two types: The real type is founded to win elections by filling a gap in the ideological spectrum of the party system. These gaps open up if voter preferences change over time so that established parties do not cover this particular position on the dimension of competition. The influence type, on the other hand, is instrumentally founded to influence the established parties by threatening them with loss of votes (Downs, 1957, p. 127). He assumes that new parties of the influence type are relatively short-lived, while he does not make any predictions about the fate of the real type new parties.

Of course, Downs also admits that every party needs votes to survive and that hardly ever is a party founded whose sole purpose is to influence other parties. Nonetheless, Downs sees the influence type of the new party as a real possibility, especially in cases where established parties lose supporters at their margins by positioning themselves too centrally. Downs describes the logic of these influence parties as follows: ”In order to threaten party B with defeat unless it moves back toward the right, the right-wing extremists found party C. This party cannot possibly win itself, but it can throw the election to A by diverting extremist votes from B. To get rid of this menace, party B must adopt some of C’s policies, thus moving back to the right and taking the wind out of C’s sails. This will cause party C to collapse, but it will have accomplished its purpose of improving the platform of one of the real contenders, B, in the eyes of its extremist supporters” (Downs, 1957, p. 131).

This example shows that, in Downs’ view, vote gains and losses occur primarily in competition with the ideologically closest opponent. The new far-right party, called C in Downs’ example, gains votes at the expense of the right-wing party B. An adopting strategy of the established party B vis-à-vis the new party C then leads, according to Downs, to a restoration of the status quo ante, i.e. (substantial) vote losses for the new party. This admission of Downs can be seen as an early form of the argument developed here, according to which established parties react to new parties and thus contribute to determining their fate.

In the relationship between parties and voters, the role of uncertainty must also be taken into account. Uncertainty is defined as ”any lack of sure knowledge about the course of past, present, future, or hypothetical events” (Downs, 1957, p. 77). So how do voters and parties deal with uncertainty, and how does this affect the fate of new and established parties?

Let us start at the voter level. To track and compare all the actions of parties and governments is beyond voters’ capacity. That is why voters need

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shortcuts to reduce the costs necessary to keep up with political developments (Downs, 1957, p. 98). Research has confirmed (Adams et al., 2011) and psychologically substantiated (Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier, 2011; Kahneman and Frederick, 2012; Tversky and Kahneman, 1973) these assumptions. In the spatial model, ideology serves the voters as a heuristic for understanding politics.

So we can assume that voters are more interested in the overall picture, i.e., the ideology, than in the very details of political discussions, i.e., the issues. As Downs puts it: ”Instead of comparing government behaviour with opposition proposals, he compares party ideologies and supports the one most like his own. Thus he votes on ideological competency, not on specific issues” (Downs, 1957, p. 99).

What does that mean at the party level? As we have seen, voters need shortcuts to follow politics. The parties offer these shortcuts in the form of an ideology that is reflected, among other things, in the party manifestos. To address as many voters as possible, it is rational for parties to blur their offerings and ”to adopt a spread of policies which covers a whole range of the left-right scale” (Downs, 1957, p. 133).

For the competition between new and established parties, we would thus suspect an adoption strategy, where the position of the new party is integrated into the manifesto of the established parties. Party programs that unite many different policies allow for voters' different perceptions of the party position. However, there is no guarantee that this calculation will work, as voters may question the party's credibility if parties try to integrate too many different positions.

A methodological consequence can be drawn from this insight: It is not the prime directive to measure the differences between parties' positions on individual issues ever more finely, but to use a measure that can capture the overall positioning of the party as voters may perceive it. This problem is discussed in more detail in the measurement chapter.

Of course, the development of spatial theory did not end with Downs. For the problem of new entrants or dealing with rivals, scholars like Enelow and Hinich (1984), Palfrey (1984), Shepsle and Cohen (1990), Greenberg and Shepsle (1987) and Kitschelt (1994) have added to spatial theory. I will briefly discuss their work in the following, focusing on the central ideas I derived for this project.

Enelow and Hinich contrast the social-psychological approach of election research with their spatial theory, which describes electoral decisions as utility-maximizing actions of rational actors. According to their model, the

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electoral chances of a policy or candidate depend on the distance to the median voter and other electoral offers: ”Viewed in simplest spatial terms, the voter will cast his vote for the candidate ‘closest’ to him in a space that describes all factors that are of concern to the voter” (Enelow and Hinich, 1984, p. 3).

There are two essential insights here: First, the voter’s decision space is multidimensional. Voters compare the candidates’ positions on different issues. Second, voters minimize the distance between their position and the candidate’s position. Therefore, electoral success can be explained by analyzing the distance between positions in a multidimensional political space.

To deal with the inherent multidimensionality of politics, voters label candidates based on simplified information obtained from indirect sources such as the media (Enelow and Hinich, 1984, p. 38). Enelow and Hinich assume that these labels can be used as ”predictive dimensions that represent the underlying space in which electoral competition takes place” (Enelow and Hinich, 1984, p. 38). Furthermore, they ”are convenient devices for simplifying discussions of policy issues by avoiding the alternative of listing the policy position of the candidate on a broad range of issues”(Enelow and Hinich, 1984, p. 38).

Given the above, it can be concluded that the prediction of election results does not require a detailed examination of each issue but rather an abstract assessment of the parties’ position.

This leads to another important insight, which I utilize in this project: The authors point out that measurements do not need to have an absolute origin. Rather, ”the absolute difference between any two points (such as that between two labels) can be used to measure deviations” (Enelow and Hinich, 1984, p. 39). Based on these considerations, I determined changes in party platforms through their relative distance from each other in this book.

At the same time Palfrey (1984) explored the idea of an equilibrium that stabilizes party systems with two established parties, that ”choose their platforms competitively while rationally anticipating entry of a vote-maximizing third party” (Palfrey, 1984, p. 139).

Palfrey argues that established parties face the problem that a policy move in the direction of the other established party increases their vote share in the short term, but at the same time increases the risk that a new party will occupy the unoccupied, more extreme area of the political spectrum (Palfrey, 1984, p. 153). Ultimately, his reflections lead to the dictum that established parties will never fully converge and new parties will never win the election.

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Greenberg and Shepsle (1987) take up these considerations and show that the entry of a new party is possible and that it disrupts the former spatial equilibrium between the established parties (Greenberg and Shepsle, 1987, p. 535). The authors argue that this leads to ”a strategic tension in multiparty systems: each established party is torn between competing against its established opponents and protecting its flanks against potential entrants trying to displace it” (Greenberg and Shepsle, 1987, p. 535). Furthermore, they point out that established parties may have advantages in electoral competition because of their reputation for past performance (Greenberg and Shepsle, 1987, p. 535). Here, the idea of issue ownership, as discussed below, is already present.

Palfrey's line of thought was further discussed by Shepsle and Cohen (1990), who examined the consequences of new party entry in situations of multiparty competition. The authors show that the dimensionality of space is a loose end in spatial theory, putting harsh restrictions on the modeling process. At the same time, the authors doubt that progress is possible without the restriction to unidimensionality (Shepsle and Cohen, 1990, p. 36).

The problem of multidimensionality, or more precisely, new lines of conflict in political space, is also emphasized by Kitschelt in his seminal book about the transformation of social democratic parties in Europe (Kitschelt, 1994).

Concerning the questions addressed in this book, Kitschelt's concept of ”oligopolistic competition” (Kitschelt, 1994, p. 144) is of central interest. However, in a deviation from the scholars presented, Kitschelt softens the assumption of vote-maximizing parties. Instead, he introduces the idea of long-term vote maximization, which can lead to political decisions that are irrational from a short-term perspective.

The basic idea of oligopolistic strategies is that parties forego short-term vote gains if they have the prospect of securing long-term vote gains by damaging their opponent (Kitschelt, 1994, p. 128). Kitschelt examines what conditions must be present in a political system for social democratic parties to apply such a strategy in the face of their new challenges. Thereby he is mainly interested in the influence of these strategies on the electoral success of the social democratic parties. To this end, he examines several European countries focusing on the 1970s and 1980s.

In summary, I take from this theoretical tradition the basic idea of political competition as changes in spatial proximity and distance, as stated in the Hotelling-Downs model. Based on the extension of this basic idea, political competition can be described more concretely as rivalry between established

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parties on the one hand and new parties on the other. The established parties are in a quasi-equilibrium, which is disrupted by new party entry.

To deal with these new challenges, established parties can react strategically: these oligopolistic strategies serve to harm the political opponent in the hope of securing long-term vote gains. All this happens in a multidimensional space whose poles are not fixed but are the subject of political debate.

This book builds on these ideas and examines the broad category of new parliamentary parties competing with established parties for 18 countries since the 1960s. In short, the central thesis is that new parties disrupt the former equilibrium and that established parties respond strategically to restore the former oligopoly situation through policy moves on various issues.

Of course, spatial theory is not without its critics. In the next section, I discuss some of the main problems. Afterward, I introduce the saliency theory as a (complementary) approach.

Problems of Spatial Theory

In the 1960s, Stokes pointed out that the ”Hotelling-Downs model” is based on the axioms of unidimensionality, fixed structure, ordered dimensions, and common reference (Stokes, 1963) – and that these axioms are challenged in the real world.

First, Stokes argues that ”the space in which political parties compete can be of highly variable structure” (Stokes, 1963, p. 371), which is very different from the metaphorical Main Street or intercontinental railroad Hotelling used to describe his theory. Hence ”the dimensions that are salient to the electorate may change widely over time” (Stokes, 1963, p. 371). This idea turns spatial theory upside down; it is not the changing distribution of parties and voters that explains election outcomes, but ”changes in the coordinate system of the space” (Stokes, 1963, p. 372). Therefore party leaders need to know ”what issue dimensions are salient to the electorate or can be made salient by suitable propaganda” (Stokes, 1963, p. 372).

Second, Stokes shows that sometimes there is no ”ordered set of alternatives of government action” (Stokes, 1963, p. 372) as assumed by spatial theory. That is why he introduces the differentiation between ”position-issues” and ”valence-issues”. Position issues, such as the degree of state intervention in the economy, are characterized by an ordered set of alternatives. In contrast, valence issues, such as advocacy of peace or justice, are not. Nevertheless, these issues can be decisive for the outcome of the election. The argument

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is then about ”which party is more likely to achieve it” (Stokes, 1963, p. 374). If parties ”maneuver in terms of valence-issues, they choose one or more issues from a set of distinct issue domains” (Stokes, 1963, p. 374), which potentially aids them. So valence issues cannot be excluded from the consideration of party competition.

Third, position-based approaches need to deal with the multitude of conflicts and issues around which party competition revolves. Depending on the perspective, this is discussed as multi-dimensional policy space (Linhart and Shikano, 2009) or as increasing capacity and complexity of issue competition (Green-Pedersen, 2007).

The problem itself is twofold. On the one hand, some argue that ”the intrusion of a new issue dimension had changed the structure of the space in which the parties competed for electoral support” (Stokes, 1963, p. 372). In order to deal with that problem, there are attempts to integrate new issues into the dominating left-right dimension (Jahn, 2011). However, there is an upper bound to that approach: Adding new issues to the existing dimensions is not adequate every time because the number of possible new issues is, in principle, unlimited. To place all issues on the left-right dimension would devalue these categories' meaning. Therefore, some scholars question the relevance of the left-right dimension itself (Grossman and Sauger, 2019; Otjes, 2018).

With an increasing number of new issues, there are also attempts to identify entirely new dimensions to meet the requirements of spatial theory and political reality. Examples of such efforts include the GAL/TAN (Hooghe et al., 2002) and the Green-Growth dimension (Jahn, 2016, p. 43-49), which allows for new issues and replaces the ordering function of left and right. Some authors even try to find a statistical super dimension (Gabel and Huber, 2000).

Unfortunately, these strategies lead to new problems. Firstly, it calls into question the axiom of ordered dimensions: If there are several issues arranged on several dimensions, can we speak of an ordered set of alternatives, or is this idea more or less a theoretical construct, an attempt to bring ex-post order to the chaos of reality? This problem becomes even more striking when the valence issues are considered. By definition, these have no alternative position; therefore, it is hard to integrate them into existing (bi-polar) dimensions.

At the very least, it can be stated that the introduction of new dimensions requires intensive justification. Otherwise, there is a danger that artifacts will

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ultimately be created that are not of fundamental importance for structuring political competition.

While the initial axiom of unidimensionality is perhaps an oversimplification, true multidimensionality cannot be the solution either. It is too much of a burden for the voter to keep track of many dimensions, issues, and alternatives. Perhaps politicians can follow politics in detail, but to assume that voters can do so is probably going too far. However, this raises the question of the extent to which the common reference axiom is valid (Stokes, 1963, p. 374).

In particular, it should not be forgotten that we live in a highly complex world, based on the division of labor and divided into social systems. So there are good reasons to believe that voters and politicians hold different perceptions of politics. Adams et al. (2011) show "that voters do not systematically adjust their perceptions of parties' positions in response to shifts in parties' policy statements" (p. 370) and that there even is "no evidence that voters adjust their Left-Right positions or their partisan loyalties in response to shifts in parties' campaign-based policy statements" (p. 370).

In a review, Adams discusses the problems and challenges of spatial theory in greater detail. He points out that while scholars were able to show that parties act very much as predicted by spatial theory, the effects of this positioning on the voting stays hazy (Adams, 2012, p. 412). Adams argues that voters often do not act in accordance with spatial theory, whereas parties do. Adams lists three possible causes for these findings: citizens who do not follow politics, the irrelevance of manifestos as most analyzed party communiqués, and contradictory and therefore blurring messages of factions within parties.

2.1.2 Saliency Theory and Issue Competition

Stoke's criticism can be seen as the starting point for saliency theory, which was later refined by the work of Robertson (1976), Budge (1982), Budge and Farlie (1983) and others. In a nutshell, saliency theory argues that parties "rarely take specific policy stands at all or mention any other party or issue-position. Instead their programmes assume there is only one tenable position on each issue and devote their energy to emphasizing the policy areas on which their credibility on that position is strong enough to pick up votes" (Budge, 2001a, p. 79).

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Saliency theory argues that party competition is rather about ”emphasizing certain topics and playing others down” (Budge, 1982, p. 149), than about direct confrontation of different views and answers. In a sense, this is an exaggeration of Stokes' basic argument. While Stokes sees parties as competing on position and valence issues, Budge argues that parties only compete with each other through selective emphasis of specific issues (cf. Dolezal et al., 2014, p. 60).

The basis for this theory is a series of assumptions leading to the selective emphasis dictum. Saliency theory suggests that ”party strategists see electors as overwhelmingly favouring one course of action on most issues. Hence all party programmes endorse the same position, with only minor exceptions. [...] Party strategists also think that electors see one party as more likely than the others to carry through the favoured course of action” (Budge, 2001a, p. 82).

Accordingly, some issues are identified with a party, which helps the party win votes when they are at the center of political debate. The concept of ”issue ownership” was introduced to describe this phenomenon. Although several alternative definitional approaches exist, one of the most recent attempts to combine them comes from Stubager. He defines issue ownership as ”the perception in a voter's mind that a specific party over the long term is most competent at handling - in the sense of delivering desired outputs on - a given issue” (Stubager, 2018, p. 349).

A party that takes that seriously ”emphasizes its 'own' issues in its election programme, in an attempt to increase the salience of these for voters. It emphasizes 'rival' issues less or not all” (Budge, 2001a, p. 82). If all parties follow this logic, political differences are reduced to a selective emphasis on different issues and position competition on ideological dimensions is canceled out.

From the perspective of saliency theory, the new party distinguishes itself through new issues. The competition between new and established forces revolves around issue ownership and the public agenda. Accordingly, the new party's thematic specificity, or nicheness, is of considerable importance to understand party competition.

This shows that saliency theory is an alternative approach to the spatial model in many ways. Instead of uni-dimensionality and ordered preferences, selective issue emphasis comes to the forefront. The fixed structure of political competition is replaced by a political agenda, which is the subject of party competition. So it is not surprising that saliency theory comes to different

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results than spatial theory. To illustrate this point, consider the following examples.

As we have seen, spatial theory suggests incentives for broad party positioning. On the one hand, a blurred ideological program can attract many different voters and maximize a party's votes. But, on the other hand, this kind of uncertainty reduces the attractiveness for a single voter and undermines the credibility of party positioning. Therefore, parties are somewhat locked in their ideology niche.

From the perspective of saliency theory, this problem can be reformulated as a question of issue ownership, which leads us to a different view. Saliency theorists would stress that issue ownership benefits the established parties: they can stick to an issue identified with them and secure their vote share. Moreover, in contrast to spatial theory, the lock-in effect is a much lesser concern since the party can take up other issues at any time without the potential of losing credibility.

Concerning the new party phenomenon, we see another exciting difference. The spatial perspective leads us to think only of new parties that exploit significant shifts in the party or voter preferences that opened a gap in the political spectrum or as functional start-ups that only intend to influence established parties. From the perspective of saliency theory, the situation is different. New parties have more opportunities in political competition. They are not limited to their role as means of pressure or as beneficiaries of changes in ideological views.

First, the new parties must deal with the issue-party connections already established. So, new parties could attack the issue ownership of the old parties as discussed by Meguid (2005, 2008). However, Seeberg (2020b) questioned whether this is a promising strategy. I will discuss this later. Another strategy is to avoid conflict and address issues that have been ignored so far. This niche party strategy (Meyer and Miller, 2015; Wagner, 2012), achieves issue ownership on its own. It is important to note that this strategy is not, as in spatial theory, based on the fact that voters or parties have changed their ideological views and that an established party does not occupy a position on the left-right dimension. Instead, it opens up a new issue that cuts across the main dimension of party competition.

More generally, these strategies are referred to as issue competition, as opposed to the position competition strategies discussed in spatial theory. Issue competition originated in Carmines and Stimson's (1986; 1989; 1993) work about issue evolution. Green-Pedersen adopted it and developed it further into a synthesis of spatial and salience approaches. That makes it well

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suited to be applied to competition between new entrants and established parties.

In short, Green-Pedersen argues that issue competition is about parties forcing each other to address issues they do not want to discuss. It is about dominating the public agenda with their issues and making other parties' issues disappear (Green-Pedersen, 2007, p. 609).

This recalls the "influence type" of the new parties proposed by Downs as well as the niche party concept. While the former is about forcing other parties to adopt a particular position, the latter reminds us that an ideological niche formed by neglected issues can provide a habitat for smaller parties.

Issue competition literature further suggests that two areas of party competition can be distinguished, namely "the content of the agenda of party competition and party positions on the issues on the agenda" (Green-Pedersen, 2007, p. 612). Both areas complement each other so that "party competition becomes considerably more complex" (Green-Pedersen, 2007, p. 612).

In summary, salience-based approaches emphasize the importance of selective issue emphasis for the public agenda. This causal path goes beyond the influence on issue ownership and is thus a valuable complement to saliency theory. Furthermore, it sheds light on an important lever for parties in dealing with (new) competitors and adds a new perspective to party competition. Finally, with the issue competition theory, an approach was presented here that combines saliency theory with spatial theory to account for the complex nature of party competition.

Problems of Saliency Theory

Saliency theory was developed as a counter-proposal to spatial theory and based on different assumptions about political competition. However, much like spatial theory, saliency theory is challenged too. In particular, party strategists, i.e., those party elites who play a decisive role in formulating election programs, seem to be far less convinced of a uniform voter opinion on most issues than saliency theory predicts.

At the heart of salience-based approaches is the issue ownership concept, which is challenged by empirical findings. Meguids' "Position, Salience and Issue Ownership" theory is an example. It empowers mainstream parties with salience-based strategies that alter issue ownership and thus election results of niche parties. The basis for this idea is that issue ownership is a

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short-term phenomenon with volatile attributions from election to election. Therefore, it is subject to party competition (Meguid, 2005, 2008).

Dolezal et al. (2014) shows that "parties disproportionally emphasize issues they 'own'. Yet, the core assumption of saliency theory that parties compete via selective issue emphasis rather than direct confrontation over the same issues fails to materialise in the majority of cases" (p. 57). Based on these results, it is uncertain whether the assumptions of saliency theory are sound in this respect.

This ongoing debate can be traced backed to the seminal work of Petrocik (1996), who delineated both short-term and long-term effects. Despite the lengthy debate and the fact that research results have recently tended to point in the direction of long-term phenomena (Seeberg, 2017, 2020b; Stubager and Slothuus, 2013), there is still no general consensus.

On this basis, a moderate position is taken here, arguing that issue ownership is "mostly stable over time but not always constant" (Seeberg, 2020b, p. 19). This leaves room for the possibility "that a party can counteract a rival party's issue ownership over a longer period of time by slowly changing its position in a way that voters accept. Several social democratic parties have done so on immigration in recent decades" (Seeberg, 2020b, p. 19). Therefore, a possible influence of changes in issue ownership should not be ruled out, but this alone is not sufficient to adequately explain volatile election results.

2.1.3 Conclusions

While the basic idea of the Hotelling-Downs model has remained in place, continuous further development, especially by Palfrey (1984), Kitschelt (1994), Adams (2012) and many others have led to much more refined models of party competition that also take the strategies of the parties seriously.

The interest in political science has focused on the fundamental tendencies that result from different party system configurations. Initially, spatial theory assumed agglomerative tendencies, but it was quickly shown that this is only a special case. The entry of a new rival can lead to a dynamic competitive situation in which leapfrogging occurs. However, an even distribution of parties is just as conceivable, at least as long as electoral successes by rivals do not force a change in their ideology.

All in all, less attention was paid to the impact of new entrants and the nature of their offer, which is the center of interest here. Of course, spatial

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theory contains interesting perspectives for a detailed analysis of the relationship between new and established forces, with positioning being a key aspect. However, it is certainly not the whole picture.

Critics of spatial theory point out that axioms such as the uni-dimensionality of political preferences do not hold in the real world. Thus, at least for voter behavior, its explanatory power is limited. Complementary theoretical considerations are necessary to explore the influence of established parties on the vote share of new competitors. Accordingly, extending spatial theory with concepts from the salience perspective seems reasonable.

Saliency theory was developed as an alternative approach to spatial theory. Unlike spatial theory, it does not focus on a uni-dimensional preference structure but emphasizes that various issues can be the subject of party competition. Saliency theory broadens the scope of party action by shedding light on an essential aspect of party competition.

Yet, in light of empirical findings, saliency theory remains controversial. Moreover, issue ownership as a central causal path is problematic. With these problems, issue competition theory points to an alternative causal path that could explain the influence of salience-based party competition on the vote share of (new) parties beyond issue ownership.

However, on its own, no single approach seems capable of presenting the overall picture of party competition between new and established parties, so further development of the theory is necessary. Accordingly, I propose to consider issue competition (Green-Pedersen, 2007) as a complementary causal path of the influence of salience on election outcomes, which is open to positional competition too. It fits very well into the current development of theoretical research (Elias et al., 2015) as well as the empirical approaches central to this work (Meguid, 2005).

2.2 State of the Art in Empirical (New) Party Research

While a growing body of literature focuses on explaining the success and failure of parties based on their policy moves, studies that look at the impact of strategies on the vote share of competing parties are comparatively rare. A significant exception is Meguid's work "Party competition between unequals" (Meguid, 2008), where she explains the success of niche parties depending on the strategies of established parties.

Therefore, I went up the ladder of abstraction and searched for studies dealing with my primary independent variable, competitor strategies' impact,

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or the dependent variable, the vote share of new parties. While the first strand of literature deals with the causes (and consequences) of party policy moves, the latter focuses on explanations of new party success. Relevant studies are discussed in the subsequent sections.

2.2.1 Causes and Consequences of Party Policy Moves

This book focuses on the importance of ideological position changes of established parties for the vote share of new parties in parliament. Thus the work fits into the party policy move literature as a larger context. In particular, the search for reasons and consequences of party policy moves is an extensive and highly recognized research field. Thus, its comprehensive presentation exceeds the scope of this work. Therefore, I present the studies below that directly affect the research conducted here. Specifically, these are studies that either consider the influence of ideological positioning on parties' election results, which explain why parties move at all, or that deal with the influence of the positioning of rival parties.

The influence of new parties on the election programs of old parties was already examined early on. Harmel and Svåsand (1997) came to the finding that old parties "will change its ideological identity in reaction to a successful new party only when the established party itself experiences poor election results which it can attribute to the new party" (p. 315). This finding was grounded on a small sample of only two new parties. Concerning niche party success, this result has recently been confirmed (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Abou-Chadi and Krause, 2020). This shows that rivalry between parties is an essential driver of political competition.

Somer-Topcu (2009) proved that parties change their position due to gains and losses in a previous election. However, this effect seems to diminish over time: "Parties tend to shift their policies more when they have lost votes in the previous election than when they have gained votes; and the effect of past election results dissipates with the passage of time" (Somer-Topcu, 2009, p. 238). The extent to which parties are willing to change their position depends on past election results. Thus, it can be assumed that established parties react to new parties, especially when they have lost votes. In a similar vein, Abou-Chadi and Orlowski (2016) showed that previous election results influence party strategies of mainstream and niche parties.

In addition to election results, policy moves by rivals themselves are also a reason to change position: Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009b) examine the

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question of whether and in which direction parties react to the policy shifts of their competitors. The authors found ”that political parties respond to rival parties' policy shifts by shifting their own policies in the same direction” and ”that parties are more responsive to policy shifts by other members of their ideological family than to the policy shifts of other parties in the system” (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b, p. 842). Parties thus become more alike, especially when they share the same ideological niche.

Another interesting approach comes from de Vries and Hobolt (2021). The authors examine the relationship between dominant or mainstream and challenger parties. They interpret policy moves as strategic behavior by the dominant parties toward the challenger parties. Moreover, the identified strategies combine positional and issue competition. All in all, they identify three strategies motivated by vote-seeking of the dominant party: The first strategy is referred to as ”distinctive convergence”. It is a form of policy moderation whereby dominant parties appeal to voters with a central position. The second strategy, called ”issue avoidance,” is salience-based. Dominant parties that apply such a strategy aim to ”keep certain policy options off the political market” (de Vries and Hobolt, 2021, p. 88), by ”a strategy of ambiguity that blurs their position or downplays the issues' importance (de Vries and Hobolt, 2021, p. 98). The authors name ”competence” as the third strategy of dominant parties: ”To secure the middle ground in competition with very similar parties, they end up offering ”valence” policies that emphasize their competence in implementing policies that are widely agreed on by a broader electorate” (de Vries and Hobolt, 2021, p. 88).

From these studies, I conclude that one of the main assumptions of this work, namely that established parties respond strategically to new parties, is valid. Furthermore, past election results are an important factor worth considering.

Which consequences do these policy moves have for parties? Ezrow (2005) demonstrates that parties with moderate positions have advantages in electoral competition. His findings confirm the importance of party position in general and the median voter theorem in particular.

These results also led to the question of the extent to which niche parties are subject to the same logic. Of particular interest is whether niche parties adapt their position due to changes in public opinion and whether the electorate positively receives these policy moves. Adams et al. (2006) could show ”that the answer to both questions is no” (p. 513). The study has shed light on the fact that mainstream parties and niche parties must expect different results, even if they act similarly. Interestingly, niche parties suffer vote losses if they

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take moderate positions, while mainstream parties do not have to fear this. This result also holds up in more recent work (Abou-Chadi and Orlowski, 2016).

The fact that the moderation of a party position can result in a loss of votes is called "Costly Policy Moderation Hypothesis" (Adams et al., 2006, p. 526). In a research note, Ezrow examines this phenomenon in greater detail. He points out that there is indeed an "inverse relationship between votes and proximity for niche parties" (Ezrow, 2008). Furthermore, he confirms that a moderate policy position has the opposite effect for niche parties as for mainstream parties: "Based on the findings reported here, budding niche parties would be well-advised to start off by adopting comparatively radical left-right policy positions. Furthermore, the logic of niche party policy differentiation, raised by Bonnie Meguid, appears to hold along the traditional left-right dimension of party competition" (Ezrow, 2008, p. 216). This is, of course, an exciting result, as it raises the question of whether this will hold when new parties are taken into account.

Zons (2016) provides the first indications of an answer to that question. In his analysis of ideological profiles of niche parties, Zons shows that the specificity of niche parties decreases over time: "Overall, the 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 taking into account the electoral lifecycle of parties when investigating the effects of their programmatic features. This becomes particularly important in view of the fact that most niche parties considered in the literature start off as new parties" (Zons, 2016, p. 1224). This reveals at least two interesting thoughts. First, the lifetime of parties (or time more generally speaking) is an essential factor to consider. Second, there is an overlap between new parties and niche parties, but they are not identical, as is often implicitly assumed. Both considerations are reflected in this book.

Of course, Zons is not the only one who has recognized that time matters. Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009a) suggest "that parties' policy promises exert lagged effects on their electoral support: namely, parties gain votes at the current election when they moderated their policies at the previous election. By contrast, we find only weak and inconsistent evidence that parties' support responds to their current policy programs" (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009a, p. 678). It is clear from this work that the consequences of a policy move are not necessarily reflected in the current election. Instead, lagged effects must also be considered. I took this insight into account in the conception of the regression models, as will be discussed later.

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2.2.2 Explanation of Success (and Failure) of New Parties

There is extensive literature that examines the conditions for the success and failure of party families such as the Greens (Müller-Rommel, 1993), right-wing (Arzheimer, 2009; Golder, 2003) and populist parties (Mudde, 2004). Less extensive is the number of studies that deal with new parties independently of the respective party family. In the following, I focus on the strand of literature dealing with the (initial) success of new parties, as this is the main research interest of this project.

Overall, three different meanings of success can be distinguished: Initial success means that parties succeed in winning seats for the first time, or in other words, that they overcome the threshold of representation. Studies sharing this definition try to explain the number of new parties in parliament after an election. The second definition focuses on the new parties' vote share: success is a party's vote gain in an election. Finally, the third definition focuses on the long-term fate of parties, i.e., the party's survival in parliament.

Below, I present studies from each of these three groups to discuss the various explanations that researchers have come up with so far. Roughly, two different research strands can be distinguished based on the focal points concerning the independent variables.

The first strand of the literature focuses on institutional or sociological factors as key explanatory variables for the number of new parties at an election in a country (Tavits, 2006) or their vote share (Tavits, 2006; Willey, 1998). In other words, party-external factors are stressed. The studies of this literature strand represent the majority of the work in this field of research. By elucidating the variance between countries, these studies contribute significantly to the knowledge about the conditions for the success of new parties.

At the same time, inherent limitations of this research design must also be taken into account. This is clearly expressed in Lago and Martinez (2010): "However, they do not explain why viable parties do or do not emerge in the same institutional setting. In other words, while these studies are useful for explaining inter country variation, they do not account for the emergence of successful political parties in a specific country at any given time. Given that electoral systems and population diversity rarely change markedly within countries, and certainly not as often as party systems, the emergence of new viable parties within countries cannot be explained based on the findings of these studies (Chhibber and Kollman, 1998: 328; 2004: Ch. 1). Constants cannot explain variables" (p. 5).

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Based on this criticism (cf. Meguid, 2005, p. 347), a second important strand of literature has developed, which sees the success of parties more strongly determined by party ideology of its own and of others. This view was first introduced into the discussion by Meguid (2005).

Meguid emphasized the importance of strategies of mainstream parties for the election success of niche parties by including the role of party position, issue ownership, and salience in her theory. She argues that positional competition and mainstream parties' selective emphasis of issues alters issue ownership, which influences the vote share of right-wing and green niche parties.

She distinguishes between three strategies: The dismissive strategy is characterized by the established party's unwillingness to deal with the issue of a new niche party. This strategy decreases the salience of the issue and thereby decreases the vote share of niche parties. If a mainstream party uses the accommodative strategy, it adopts the position of the niche party. Thus, the salience of the issue increases, the position converges, and the issue ownership is transferred to the mainstream party. Therefore, Meguid presumes a decreased vote share of the niche party. The third strategy is called adversarial. The mainstream party increases the salience of the issue by opposing it. This strategy reinforces the new parties' issue ownership, which presumably leads to an increased vote share.

Meguid brought a completely different perspective to the discussion with this approach, which led to several studies that examine somewhat similar approaches.

For instance, this approach was examined recently by van Spanje and de Graaf (2018). The authors focus on Meguid's key hypothesis and show that established parties decrease the vote share of other parties if they adopt the policy position and ostracise the party: "Parroting a party decreases its support only if that party is ostracised at the same time" (van Spanje and de Graaf, 2018, p. 1).

Spoon (2011) took the opposite perspective of Meguid and developed a theory on small party survival, putting small party agency in the center: "The parties' perseverance is based on their strategic decisions and interactions with the larger parties in the policy, electoral, and communications spheres. This behavior has changed over time and varies with the political context. Moreover, this behavior helps small parties persist despite adverse systemic, partisan, and individual-level factors" (Spoon, 2011, p. 12). Like Meguid, she stresses the role of ideology to explain the fate of parties. The novelty here is that she broadened the argument beyond mainstream and niche parties.

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However, she only tests her theory on selected green parties, so it is unclear whether this finding can be transferred to other small parties.

The explanation of success with party characteristics like the programmatic offer has become increasingly popular. Zons argues that the programmatic profile of the existing parties explains the initial success of new parties because "it determines the scope for possible programmatic innovations" (Zons, 2015, p. 1). An important difference to Meguid's approach is that Zons focuses on the programmatic diversity of the party systems. He can show that ideology contributes greatly to explaining the number of new parties. However, the influence of the strategies of individual established parties could not be clarified in this way. The consequences of density within ideological niches were analyzed by van de Wardt et al. (2016). They find that increasing density within a niche increases the odds that parties in that niche will exit from parliament (van de Wardt et al., 2016, p. 250). A similar approach was used by Zur (2019). He answers two questions: "First, when do parties fail? Second, which parties survive longer?" (Zur, 2019, p. 1). As a main result, he can show that most parties fail in the first elections. Moreover, ideological moderation and distinctness are long-term benefit factors (Zur, 2019, p. 16).

In a more recent wave, the survival and termination of parties, thus the long-term perspective, gained increased scholarly attention. While Zur (2019) analyzes all parties in a given party system, regardless of their idiosyncrasies, Bolleyer et al. (2016) focuses on the particular conditions, leading to the termination of party mergers. In a more general manner, Bolleyer et al. (2019) analyze the different factors of party dissolution and merger. This work "stresses the impact of party and country characteristics on the hazards of both types of death" (Bolleyer et al., 2019, p. 1). Of particular interest here is that the authors found evidence that parties "may profit from their distinct ideological profile" (Bolleyer et al., 2019, p. 25). About new parties, this suggests that ideological profiles of these parties should be taken into account in the model.

Moreover, this strand of the literature suggests the importance of parliamentary entry for the survival of new parties: Obert and Müller (2017) analyze the factors explaining new party survival in the Czech republic. They show that entry into the regional council is essential for the long-term survival of new parties. This result is in line with Dineas et al.'s (2015) findings on the influence of parliamentary entry for the future vote share of small parties. Bianco et al. (2014) complements this reasoning by pointing to the importance of party relevance (e.g., control over legislative outcomes) for

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party survival: "In new democracies, holding other factors such as seat shares constant, relevant political parties are more likely to perform better in elections and survive over time compared with irrelevant or less relevant parties" (p. 256). These results show that it makes sense to analyze new parties after their first entry into parliament, as they are significantly more persistent than parties that have not yet crossed this threshold.

Overall, the literature on the conditions of success and failure of new parties shows that sociological and institutional factors have been well explored. At the same time, ideological factors of party competition are still developing as an explanatory approach in this field of research. In particular, the influence of the change of position of established parties on new parties has not been studied so far. This is done in this book.

2.2.3 Conclusions

In the first section, I have discussed studies that explain the causes or consequences of policy moves. The studies presented make it clear that parties act for strategic reasons, such as compensating for losses of votes in previous elections or reacting to policy moves by their rivals. Moreover, these policy moves have consequences: The vote share of the moving party is influenced, but not necessarily as theorized by the scholars. The consequences of policy moves for the vote share of new parties have not yet been studied. I aim to fill that research gap.

The studies presented in the second section investigate either how the number of new parties in parliament can be explained or the extent to which vote gains and losses are a function of sociological, institutional, or ideological factors. This research mainly focuses on the initial success of new parties, but recently, long-term success has become more important in the research.

Summarizing this literature, it becomes clear that sociological and institutional factors influence the emergence and vote share of new parties, but their impact is limited. Thus, research started to incorporate ideology into the models. The ideology of the focal party, the ideology of the competitors, or the programmatic profile of the party system was discussed. Bonnie Meguid's work can be regarded as the most important study about the research questions examined here. Hence, research is most developed with regard to niche parties, while the general category of new parties still requires further research. I fill this gap with this project and modify Meguid's theory

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to apply to new parties. In doing so, I take into account the findings presented above. The results of these efforts are presented in the following chapter.

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3 The Impact of Strategies
Theory and Hypotheses

In this project, I examine the impact of positional and issue competition between parties on the electoral fortunes of new parties in developed democracies. Thus, this work closes a gap in empirical research that was previously focused on institutional and sociological explanations.

I argue that the electoral performance of new parliamentary parties depends on the strategies of established parties and that this relationship is influenced by party characteristics like the ideological distance and nicheness of the parties involved.

The theory developed here is based on Meguid's work on niche parties, the position, salience, and issue ownership theory (PSO theory) of party competition (Meguid, 2008) as well as the issue competition theory (Green-Pedersen, 2007).

Meguid was among the first to bring together the concepts of position and salience in her modified spatial theory. In the context of this synthesis, she has inferred strategies of mainstream parties vis-à-vis their niche contenders.

This book applies its theory to the broader categories of established and new parties, thus including niche parties as an application case in a broader context. To clarify the extent to which assumptions and conclusions of her modified spatial theory of party competition also apply to new parties, the individual concepts of the theory are presented below and discussed in light of previous theoretical work and the current state of research.

In the following section, I summarize Meguid's PSO theory of party competition and present the changes I made to transfer her argument to new parties. Finally, I discuss possible strategies of established parties and the hypotheses that can be derived from the theory.

3.1 The PSO Theory of Party Competition

As discussed in the research review, the utility of sociological and institutional factors in explaining the vote share of (new) parties is limited. These structural factors hardly change and are therefore not suitable to explain the volatile vote share of parties. Moreover, structural factors underestimate the ability of

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parties to adapt and react to changing requirements (Meguid, 2005, p. 348). Most importantly, parties can change the position and emphasis of issues to compete for votes against each other.

The predominant perspective tries to explain a party's vote share by its own policy moves. Meguid introduced a new perspective on the problem by examining the influence of policy moves on the vote share of niche parties. This change in perspective highlights the strategic aspect of policy moves in party competition.

At the core of her PSO theory of party competition are strategic positioning and salience of mainstream parties, which influences the ownership attribution of issues and thus the electoral support of niche parties (Meguid, 2005, p. 348-350). So the theory provides "mechanism-based explanations" (Hedström and Ylikoski, 2010) for the niche party phenomenon.

Meguid assumes that issue ownership is not static and therefore an object of strategic manipulation by parties: "A relatively undertheorized phenomenon, issue ownership, or issue credibility, has been overlooked by standard spatial theories of voting and party competition, which claim that voter decisions depend only on ideological proximity" (Meguid, 2008, p. 26).

In her theory, Meguid differentiates between dismissive, accommodative, and adversarial strategies of mainstream parties vis-à-vis niche parties and examines the impact on the niche party vote. The dismissive strategy is characterized "by not taking a position on the niche party's issue" (Meguid, 2005, p. 349). With this strategy, "the mainstream party signals to voters that the issue lacks merit. If voters are persuaded that the niche party's issue dimension is insignificant, they will not vote for it" (Meguid, 2005, p. 349). Meguid assumes a reduction in issue salience as the mechanism of action for this strategy. She contrasts this with the accommodative and adversarial strategies, which increase issue salience: The "accommodative tactic undermines the distinctiveness of the new party's issue position, providing like-minded voters with a choice between parties" (Meguid, 2005, p. 349). Winning over the new party's voters is likely to be more successful the closer the established party is to the new party. The background to this hypothesis is a presumed negative influence on the new party's issue ownership. On the other hand, in the adversarial strategy, the mainstream party takes an opposing position. In this case, it is assumed that the issue ownership of the new party is strengthened, which favors its electoral success.

I see four shortcomings of PSO theory that must be overcome to extend the theory's scope to new parties.

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(1) I move away from pre-defined single issues: While Meguid focuses on green, right-wing, and ethnoterritorial issues, this project applies a new similarity measure based on party manifestos. This approach follows the work of Ezrow (2008, p. 209), who applied Meguid's argument to the left-right dimension. However, I go one step further and assess the overall accordance between new parties and the average of their established competitors in the party system. This is appropriate since not all new parties are niche parties in Meguid's sense. This transforms the nicheness of a party from a binary attribution to a metric variable, somewhat similar to the niche party measure that was proposed by Bischof (2017).

(2) In order to be able to measure the issue competition strategies of the established competitors independently of predefined categories, I also propose the change in text similarity between the election program of the new party and that of the established party at two successive election dates as a novel measurement of party accordance. The advantages of this approach will be discussed in greater detail later.

(3) On theoretical grounds, I complement the concept of issue ownership with the concept of issue competition, thereby taking into account current research findings. Meguid's theory assigns the decisive role to issue ownership. Issue ownership is the causal path that decides the fate of niche parties. Therefore it is central to her theory to see issue ownership as a short-term phenomenon that rivals can alter from one election to another. However, newer research shows that, on the one hand, issue ownership indeed can be attacked by rival parties (Seeberg, 2020b). On the other hand, "issue ownership appears quite stable across time" (Seeberg, 2017, p. 14). Therefore it seems to be "a general and long-term rather than a local and short-term phenomenon" (Seeberg, 2017, p. 1).

That means parties have to face the fact that voters already have comparatively stable ideas about the competence and credibility of parties, which will not change considerably between two elections: "Hence, parties can take advantage of issue ownership in their competition for voters, but will also be constrained by issue ownership in the sense that strategies have to be put around issue ownership" (Seeberg, 2017, p. 15). In order to ensure the effectiveness of their strategies, parties need to act as consistently as possible over more extended periods. Through consistent issue setting and positioning, the small changes in position and salience are strengthened and thus lead to changed issue ownership of the party. Of course, in reality, parties are unlikely to maintain the same strategies over long periods. Intra-party factions, a change of leadership, or continuing electoral defeat can lead to

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implementing a new strategy. Furthermore, other parties act as agenda setters, just like the mass media. Changing environmental conditions and significant events such as economic crises or migration movements also ensure that specific issues become relevant so that parties are forced to occupy positions and issues that run counter to a consistent strategy.

To address this problem theoretically, I propose combining issue competition theory with Meguid's approach. In addition to issue ownership, issue competition also influences the public agenda, giving parties additional leverage to respond to changes in the voters' will.

(4) Instead of defining mainstream parties by a specific ideological spectrum, as in the original PSO theory, I include all parties in a given party system. The extended scope of the theory allows for statistically more robust inference. Moreover, the influence of ideological proximity on the main context can be investigated.

In the next section, I present the generalized theory in detail, i.e., I address the proposed theoretical expectations, discuss the strategies that established parties can use, and conclude by deriving hypotheses that will be tested in the empirical part of the book.

3.2 Explaining the Impact of Strategies on the Electoral Fortunes of New Parties

The previous sections explained the PSO theory of party competition and examined which explanations could be extracted about new parties. Furthermore, we have seen that spatial theory has represented party politics well in the Western world. However, the economically based left-right dimension is no longer the only driving force of political competition. Instead, salience-based competition is becoming increasingly important. That is why positional party competition and issue competition should be considered together (cf. Green-Pedersen, 2007, p. 608).

In order to extend the scope of theory to explain new parties' electoral success and failure, some modifications are necessary. While position and salience are undoubtedly the two most essential levers parties can use in their communications and thus represent the core elements of party strategies vis-à-vis their competitors, the role of issue ownership seems somewhat overstretched in light of current research findings. Therefore, I propose incorporating the idea of issue competition into the theory.

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3.2.1 Summary of the Proposed Theory

Based on this re-conceptualization, the theory I propose here can be summarized as follows:

The entry of a new party into parliament changes the equilibrium of party competition. The established parties confront a new challenger, which suggests a critical inventory of their position and issue orientation. In order not to lose ground in the zero-sum game of party competition, a strategic positioning concerning their core voters as well as the electorate of the new party is necessary.

This means that established parties have to choose between an adopting, confrontation, or maintenance strategy with regard to the new party's position. Engagement, avoidance, and indifference are possible issue competition strategies that can change the relevance of a new party's issues for voters and, ultimately, the election result. Established parties have to remember that their election programs signal voters about their position on issues and their relevance.

As Meguid's conceptualization has already shown, it can be difficult or almost impossible for parties to take a position on an issue without giving it increased salience. This problem is alleviated if Green-Pedersen's dictum is taken into account, according to which positional competition takes place on the left-right dimension. In contrast, issue competition is unbound in this respect. This suggests that two independent measurements should be conducted.

Adopting, confronting, and maintaining thus concerns a fundamental positioning along the economically defined left-right axis. At the same time, engagement, avoidance, and indifference refer directly to the idiosyncrasies of the new parties and their issues.

Choosing an engagement strategy signals the new party's voters that their concerns are taken seriously. Linked to this is the hope that these voters will migrate away from the new party. On the other hand, established parties give an additional impetus to these issues; voters may thus be tempted to vote for the original, i.e., the new party. For the avoidance strategy, the opposite effects can be assumed, whereas the indifference strategy is, well, indifferent in this respect.

I argue that it depends on the ideological proximity of the two parties, which of these mechanisms prevails. Within the same ideological niche, I assume a positive correlation between an engagement strategy and the election result of the new party. Voter migration is less likely between parties

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of distant ideological positions than between similar parties. As a result, the responsive behavior of the established party may have no or even a harmful effect on the new party's vote share.

To justify the theory and my hypotheses, I present a stylized model that shows the relationships between the individual concepts that make up the theory. Finally, based on the proposed theoretical expectations, I derive hypotheses and test them in the empirical part of this book.

3.2.2 Model and Hypotheses

In my model, I distinguish between micro phenomena at the voter level and macro phenomena at the party level (Figure 3.1). Thus, party position, salience, and vote share are macro phenomena. Of course, "the macro level, the system behavior, is an abstraction, nevertheless an important one" (Coleman, 1994, p. 12). So, the proposed causal path is not direct but mediated by micro-level phenomena. Party positions and selective issue emphasis affect the voting behavior and the chances of new parties' electoral success via the agenda perception and ideological proximity assessments of the voters. These mediating mechanisms shape the relationship observable at the macro level.

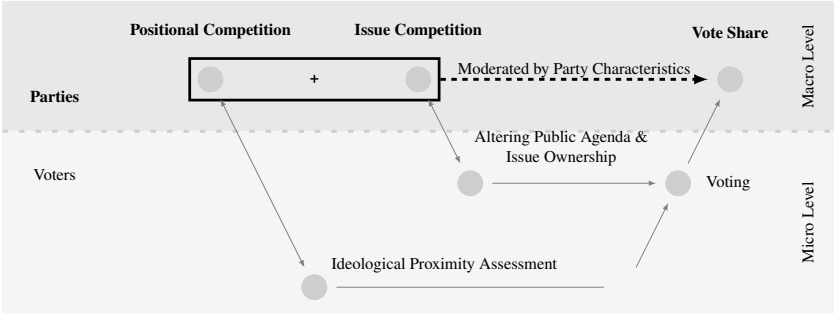

Figure 3.1: Macro- and Micro Level Propositions: Mediated Effects of Party Policy Positions and Issue Competition of Established Parties on the Vote Share of New Parties

In principle, this model explains the influence of positional and issue competition for all types of parties. However, the special dynamics of the model arise when it is applied to competition between new and established parties. In this particular case, the existing equilibrium in the party system is shaken

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so that established parties have the incentive to change their issue emphasis or position to influence voters' proximity assessments or even the public agenda. In this sense, the political moves of the established parties can be characterized as strategic.

I define strategies as specific changes in the election program of an established party that addresses or contrasts issues and positions of the new party. By influencing the voters' assessment of ideological proximity, the perception of relevant issues as well as their issue ownership attribution, these strategies change voting behavior.

Both salience and positional strategies can be described by the spatial metaphors of convergence, divergence, and fixation. At the level of positional competition, one party can approach the other, i.e., adopt a similar position, move away from a presumed dimension or maintain the existing difference. These three fundamental distinctions are referred to as adopting, confronting, and maintaining.

At the issue competition or salience level, parties can take up the issues of their rivals, i.e., emphasize the rival issues more than before, which is called engagement strategy here. The reverse strategy is also conceivable, i.e., rejecting a previously emphasized issue. This is called issue avoidance. The third option, i.e., not changing the emphasis, is referred to as indifference.

Previous studies suggest that the specifics of the parties involved may alter the consequences of strategic policy moves (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b). Based on those findings, I assume that an established party in the same ideological niche as a new party may influence its rival differently than a party outside that niche. Similarly, new parties with a highly differentiated ideological offering may be challenged differently by the strategies of established parties than more conventional new parties. Therefore, I introduce shared party family membership and a party's nicheness as important variables in the model.

In the following, I summarize the theoretical concepts to derive hypotheses about the consequences of the different strategies.

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3.2.2.1 Positional Competition

The importance of strategies of established parties for the vote share of new parties derives directly from spatial theory. It has already been discussed that the fundamental problem of positioning within a system of competitors has long occupied the development of spatial theory. The dispute between "agglomerative tendencies" (Hotelling, 1929, p. 53) and even distribution over the available space (Downs, 1957, p. 126) has not yet been settled (cf. Ezrow, 2008, p. 217).

Even less is known about the consequences of strategic policy moves, i.e., the impact of a larger or smaller gap between a new party and its established rivals on the new party's share of the vote. Yet, despite the uncertainty about the concrete consequences of policy moves, the fundamental problem can be well described by Downs' approach.

Let us assume that the parliamentary parties position themselves only along one dimension, which we can call the left-right axis in ideological terms. The electorate is also distributed along this axis. In the initial state, citizens vote for the party closest to their position. In other words, voters assess the proximity between their own position and the position of the parties and vote for the party where this distance is minimal. Therefore, parties can change the voter assessment to their benefit by moving their position along the left-right dimension towards the voters. This movement affects the vote share of the moving party and the vote share of the new party, as we have seen in the research review.

Theoretically, the new party will lose votes if the established party adopts its position because a part of the voters will now be closer to the established party than to the new party:

H 1a. *If an established party adopts a new party's position, the new party's vote share decreases.*

It is well known from the literature that parties often react to their competitors with moderation, i.e., their policy move goes in the same direction as the rival's previous move. In the research conducted here, I examine a slightly different case, namely the extent to which the established party changes or maintains its distance from the former position of the new party. Here I expect no impact on the vote share of the new party because the ideological proximity assessment of the voters does not change.

H 1b. *If an established party maintains its distance from the new party, the new party's vote share is not affected.*

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Suppose the adopting strategy is associated with a lower vote share for the new party. In that case, the confronting strategy should have an opposite effect because the established parties do not present themselves as an alternative to the voters who prefer the position of the new party. Furthermore, as the established party moves away from the new party, it loses some voters for whom the new party is now the optimal choice because the distance to the established party is higher than to the new party.

H 1c. *If an established party confronts a new party's position, the new party's vote share increases.*

So, from the perspective of the established party, parroting seems to be the best answer to the new party threat. However, party competition is not only about a specific position on the left-right dimension. Instead, parties compete about which issues are important and which are not. The next section discusses the possible impact of issue competition on the new party vote share.

3.2.2.2 Issue Competition

Issue competition between parties shapes the public agenda and mobilizes voters who share the same issue relevance assessment. Established parties are faced with the difficult decision of whether they can ignore the issues of the new party or whether they should include them in their election program. In the case of an engagement strategy, they give the issue additional salience, which potentially benefits the new party. An avoidance strategy can be dangerous, too, if the issue gains overall importance for voters but is not emphasized by the established party.

Meguid discusses the consequences of different salience-based strategies in her PSO theory. She assumes that an accommodative strategy is unfavorable for niche parties because it transfers issue ownership to the mainstream party. The adversarial strategy strengthens the niche party because it reinforces its issue ownership (Meguid, 2005, p. 350).

While Meguid is focused on the pivotal role of issue ownership of parties, Riker broadens the perspective and admits that the agenda of the parties involved impacts party competition. He proposed the dominance and the dispersion principle. The principle of dominance suggests forcing other parties into areas where the electorate is on its side (Riker, 1996, p. 106). In other words, the agenda needs to be shifted towards issues where the

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party has issue ownership. Other parties can be dominated in this field. An established party should therefore not take up issues of the new party if there is a risk of leaving the area of its issue ownership.

However, the opposite strategy is suggested by Riker's dispersion principle: Issues can be removed from political competition to a certain extent because the deliberate withdrawal of political alternatives sterilizes them. A strategy based on the dispersion principle makes use of the stand-off, which "should lead both sides to abandon the subject" (Riker, 1996, p. 124), by taking over positions of the competitor. So, Riker assumes that an issue loses importance in political competition when both parties emphasize it. The engagement strategy would then harm the new party by neutralizing its issues.

So, based on these scholars, I assume a negative influence of the engagement strategy on the vote share of new parties:

H 2a. *If an established party utilizes the engagement strategy towards the issues of a new party, the new party's vote share decreases.*

The engagement strategy is characterized by increasing accordance with the issues emphasized by both parties. On the one hand, the engagement strategy increases attention to the issues of the new party, resulting in a change in the public agenda. However, on the other hand, this increased attention does not necessarily have to be positive for the new party: According to Riker, issues emphasized by both competitors lose their appeal to voters. Hence, if an established party takes up the issues of its new competitors, there is no longer any compelling reason for voters to prefer the new party to the established party. Instead, the mere experience of the established party could be the decisive argument for voters that this party is more capable of implementing its new position.

Another feasible option is the indifference strategy. Here, the established party does not change their issue salience concerning the new competitor. In contrast to the engagement strategy, where the established party emphasizes the issues of the new party, the indifference strategy is characterized by the fact that the similarity of both parties remains the same. Thus, I assume that the vote share of the new party is not affected:

H 2b. *If an established party is indifferent to the issues of the new party, the new party's vote share is not affected.*

Another option for an established party is the avoidance strategy. I assume that the avoidance strategy is applied from a position of weakness: established parties avoid the issue because the new party has issue ownership. Therefore

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they think they cannot compete successfully in this area. Ultimately, the avoidance strategy strengthens the new party because the party does not have to compete with a rival that emphasizes the same issue. Because avoidance implies that the established party reduces the emphasis on specific issues, the new party's electorate is secured and extended. The established party no longer represents some of its former voters, so they vote for the new party at the next election.

H 2c. *If an established party avoids the issues of a new party, the new party's vote share increases.*

In summary, an engagement strategy is the most unfavorable strategy for the new party because it runs the risk that its (valence) issues will lose their appeal to voters if other parties also emphasize their support of those issues. By taking up issues of the new party, the established party presents itself as an alternative that can also appeal to voters who previously voted for the new party. Swing voters are shown that their problems are taken seriously. Therefore, it is more difficult for the new party to present itself as the only suitable representative of a specific issue. In contrast, the avoidance strategy should be associated with a vote gain for the new party, while the indifference strategy likely has no impact.

The hypotheses presented do not yet capture the influence of party characteristics. In the following section, I therefore discuss the party family, nicheness, and previous vote share as factors that influence the strength (and direction) of the correlation outlined here.

3.2.2.3 Influences on the Impact of Issue and Positional Competition

The hypotheses presented outline the basic relationship between positional and issue competition strategies on the vote share of new parties. However, they do not take into account the influence of moderating factors. I assume that the characteristics of the competing parties influence the strength or direction of the proposed relationships. So, to take into account the specific characteristics of the parties, I introduce additional variables into my model. The first is the nicheness of a party. I consider nicheness as a factor that amplifies the effects of issue competition strategies of established parties because it alters the vulnerability of a new party.

The second variable is the ideological distance between the new and the established parties. Depending on the distance between both parties, strategies

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are likely to have different impacts: a green party adopting the pro-nuclear position of a new niche party in the same party family is likely to have a different effect than the same strategy employed by a conservative party on the other side of the political spectrum.

The third variable is the competitiveness of the established party: a more successful established party may have a more substantial influence on the vote share of the new party than a less successful party because their policy moves are not only more pivotal in the party system and get greater attention but can also be interpreted as an indication of its competitiveness and its future ability to deliver on its promises through sound policies.

Thus, I examine characteristics of the new party (nicheness), the established party (competitiveness) as well as the relationship between the two parties (ideological proximity).

Beyond these variables, there are other influences on the electoral outcome of a new party. For instance, the electoral system of a party system has to be taken into account: Electoral systems determine how individual votes are transformed into seats. Thus, they provide the crucial link between micro and macro phenomena. Another significant influence is the median voter's position because this variable represents the voter distribution. Since the influences of these variables do not directly affect the main relationship I am studying, I consider them as control variables and discuss their implications and measurement in the method section of this book.

3.2.2.4 Nicheness

Spatial competition revolves around a fixed, uni-dimensional axis, commonly identified as the left-right dimension, but not all new parties do so (Lucardie, 2000): Instead, some new parties introduce new issues to the agenda, which are not part of the classical left-right spectrum. These new niche parties represent a group of special cases. Therefore new parties should not be equated with niche parties. Rather, niche parties are a particular manifestation of the new party phenomenon. To distinguish niche parties dichotomously from all other parties in the party system seems too crude; instead, I follow authors such as Bischof (2017) and concretize nicheness as a property that parties can exhibit to varying degrees.

In the most concise form Meyer and Miller (2015) define a niche party as a party, which "emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors" (p. 261). Potentially, the universe of neglected issues is infinite. Therefore, limiting

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the study conducted here to individual issues, like ecology or migration, does not make sense. Instead, I compare the new party's offer with the offer of all other parties in the party system on all issues to determine a party's degree of nicheness.

However, the left-right dimension is generally regarded as the central axis of political conflict, so by definition, these issues are not considered niche issues. So, nicheness revolves explicitly around issues not part of the left-right dimension. Therefore I do not see a moderating effect of the new parties' nicheness on the influence of positional competition:

H 3a. *Parties' nicheness has no impact on the influence of positional strategies.*

Concerning issue competition, I see a moderating effect of nicheness: Potentially, new parties that have a differentiated offer compared to the average of the other parties are likely to be more vulnerable electorally than new parties that hardly differ ideologically from the established parties. While the electoral success of a new niche party depends strongly on its ideological specificity, this is not the case for new parties that have been successful with a mainstream electoral program. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H 3b. *High degrees of nicheness boosts the the impact of issue competition strategies.*

New niche parties rely on voters who support the new party because of its capacity to address neglected issues and bring them to the public agenda. Therefore, a change in the issue salience of established parties directly affects a new niche party's raison d'être. The vote for the new niche party may have been without an alternative, but this changes abruptly as soon as the established party adjusts its issue salience. Therefore, I assume that high nicheness boosts the impact of the issue position strategies, especially the engagement strategy.

3.2.2.5 Ideological Proximity of New and Established Parties

Besides nicheness, the ideological proximity between parties is an important feature that influences competition between parties. The ideological similarity between parties can be captured in different ways; I refer here to the party families of the parties involved as a form of a priori judgment in the sense of Mair (2001).

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Specifically, this means that if two parties are competing in the same party family, group of like-minded party families, or ideological bloc (Adams et al., 2009), the strategy of the established party is likely to have a different effect than if the two parties are more distant from each other.

With regard to positional competition, I assume that parties belonging to the same party family or ideological group should be highly susceptible to the strategic policy moves of their rivals because both parties compete for the same voter milieus. If an established party decides to adopt the position of a new competitor, voters have no reason to vote for the new party anymore. Changing the voting intention should be particularly easy in this case, as both parties are pretty similar. Therefore, adoption should lead to a smaller vote share of the new party than the confrontation strategy. This is in line with hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c, but adds the ideological distance as an intervening variable, which boosts the effect of the strategy:

H 4a. *Ideological similarity boosts the impact of positional competition strategies.*

Therefore, I expect that the confronting strategy's effect favoring the new party's vote share and the negative effect of the adopting strategy will be more pronounced for parties with a similar ideological orientation.

Regarding the strategies of issue competition, the impact of ideological proximity is more complicated because issue ownership and the public agenda play a role too.

I assume that if both parties share the same ideological bloc, the established party has an issue ownership advantage because it has time to build a track record and gain voters' trust. Accordingly, the voters are more inclined to vote for the established party. Conversely, if the established party lowers its emphasis on the issues of the new party, it sends a clear signal that these issues are insignificant. Therefore, voters who trust the established party in this ideological segment are less likely to vote for the new party.

In contrast, an engagement strategy leads to a stronger emphasis on the issues of the new party. If even the established party takes up these issues, this signals that the issue is indeed relevant. In this case, the new party is more likely to increase its vote share.

The reason for this is that an engagement strategy shapes the competition in this ideological group around the issues of the new parties and gives them more public attention. The new party has an advantage as the original representative of this issue. The avoidance strategy should be associated

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with a lower vote share for the new party because the downplay of the issues prevents this.

Of course, these contradict hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c. Therefore, I assume that the ideological proximity of the parties changes the direction of the proposed relationship:

H 4b. *The effect of issue competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if parties are ideologically close.*

In other words, I assume that the engagement strategy (according to hypothesis 2a) only leads to a loss of votes for the new party if both parties belong to different ideological blocs. The same restriction by the intervening variable "ideological proximity" of course also applies to the avoidance strategy, which (according to hypothesis 2c) leads to a gain of votes for the new party.

3.2.2.6 Competitiveness of the Established Party

Finally, I assume that the established party's previous vote gains and losses will influence its strategies vis-à-vis the new contenders. The idea that previous vote shares influence the ideological position of a party is well known (Abou-Chadi and Orlowski, 2016; Abou-Chadi and Stoetzer, 2020; Harmel and Svåsand, 1997; Somer-Topcu, 2009). Abou-Chadi and Orlowski (2016) note that "past elections do not only signal voters' preferences but also the degree of competitiveness that is to be expected in a subsequent election. This, in turn, will affect party strategies" (p. 869). So, based on these studies, I consider previous vote gains and losses of the established party as a signal to voters about the prospects of that party to implement its position and issue priorities. Hence, the competitiveness of the established party likely moderates the effect of its strategies.

I formally summarize these assumptions in the following two hypotheses:

H 5a. *The effect of positional competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if the established party lost votes in the previous election.*

H 5b. *The effect of issue competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if the established party lost votes in the previous election.*

I assume that the previous vote gains and losses of the established party influence the direction of the effect of its position and issue strategies. Electoral

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success in the previous election signals to the electorate that the established party is competitive and thus able to implement the position it represents or tackle the emphasized issues. In this case, both the adoption and the engagement strategy lead to losing votes for the new party. This is in line with hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c and hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c.

The situation is entirely different when the established party has lost votes: In this case, it is highly doubtful whether the established party is competitive and will implement policies that match its profile after the election. Therefore, I assume that both the position and issue competition strategies have an opposite effect on the electoral success of new parties following a loss of votes by the established party.

3.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have presented Meguid's position, salience, and issue competition theory, which plays an essential role in this project. The subsequent discussion showed that the causal mechanism she proposed is based on issue ownership. However, recent empirical findings challenge this concept. Therefore, the micro foundation of the theory requires a supplement, which I found in the issue competition theory. Furthermore, I have argued that niche parties constitute a special group within the larger group of new parties. Therefore, I attempt to generalize Meguid's PSO theory.

By broadening the scope of the theory from niche parties to all new parties, I have a more comprehensive range of cases to analyze and am no longer bound to a few niche issues. Instead, I recognize the multidimensionality of party competition. To this end, I conceptually distinguish between positional and issue competition strategies, where positional competition revolves around the left-right dimension. In contrast, issue competition is not bound to assumptions about important issues.

Furthermore, I integrate party characteristics as moderating variables in my model. Besides the nicheness of the new party, I identify ideological proximity and electoral competitiveness of the established party as essential factors that may alter the fundamental relationship between the strategies of established parties and the vote share of new parties.

This further development takes up theoretical developments and empirical findings in equal measure. By developing a model and deriving hypotheses, the theory is accessible to empirical testing, which I address in the following chapters of this book.

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4 Assessing Similarity in Manifestos
An Overview and a New Measure

Finding and evaluating similarities and differences is the core of the comparative method. In one way or another, this basic principle is applied in many studies, regardless of whether policy moves, party strategies, or other phenomena are studied.

The comparative principle is also common in linguistics and computer science. Computer-assisted methods are used at the intersection of these disciplines to compare texts, detect patterns, and extract information from them. Therefore, the study of (political) documents represents an exciting connection to those disciplines.

In this work, I examine the central thesis that established parties can influence the electoral success of new parties by making strategic changes to their election programs. Such changes may affect the position of the party or the issue salience. I combine two different measures to integrate these two aspects into my models. Based on innovative methods of computer-assisted text analysis, cosine similarity scores capture the degree of similarity between two documents. This allows tracking changes in the parties' issue salience. In addition, I resort to the RILE, which is based on manual content analysis, to identify changes in the parties' positions in the left-right dimension.

The use of a new method like cosine similarity must be justified, its quality validated. This is what I will deal with in this chapter. Therefore, natural language processing and machine learning techniques are applied to election programs of political parties. By comparing the results with those obtained with the help of content analysis methods from political science, it will be shown that computer-assisted procedures are suitable instruments for dealing with political science questions.

Accordingly, this chapter deals with the question: How do different position or salience measurements of election programs behave compared to text analytic measurements? A novel simulation experiment was developed to compare the different position and salience measurements to answer this question.

In the experiment, synthetic data are generated from existing election programs that exhibit predetermined known properties. Based on these synthetic

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manifestos, it can be shown that changes in position and salience can be detected by text analysis at least as well as by established methods.

In order to present these results, the first step will be to examine the characteristics and content of election programs and how they have been analyzed in political science so far. For this purpose, the criticism of previous methods will be addressed.

In a second step, I will discuss which computer-assisted text analysis methods are available today for the automated analysis of text content and the principles on which they are based.

Finally, the simulation to compare the existing indices is presented in detail, and the results of the experiments are discussed.

4.1 The Content of Election Programs

The study of party programs has occupied political science for decades. As Budge and Bara present in a brief historical outline, the systematic content analysis of party programs can be traced back to the work of David Robertson in the early 1970s (Budge and Bara, 2001, p. 6).

Robertson used the method of manual content analysis, which in turn has a long tradition whose earliest roots lie ”in theological studies in the late 1600s” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 3). He was among the first to analyze party manifestos to gain insights into policy positions. This way, he laid the foundation for a new branch of research.

While this early study was still limited to the election manifestos of the Conservatives and Labour party (Robertson, 1976, p. 72), it is thanks to the Comparative Manifesto Project that party manifestos are analyzed over long periods and in many countries.

The Comparative Manifesto Project was created to extract party policy positions from the documents that parties themselves create: the election programs. One goal was to test Down’s economic theory based on more than voter surveys (Budge and Bara, 2001, p. 6-7).

The core of the CMP is the collection and content analysis of the election programs of political parties. Currently, the dataset covers 56 countries, 753 elections, and 1154 parties. In total, 4582 manifestos were coded. More than 2000 of them are as raw or annotated documents available for download (Volkens et al., 2020). These are better known as the Manifesto corpus.

As part of the project, the election programs are broken down into so-called quasi-sentences and assigned to one of 56 content policy categories

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through a coder. A further category is used to record non-assignable quasi-sentences. These data allow long time series to be created and compared between different countries. Furthermore, indices can be created to capture the content of party programs along different ideological dimensions. The best-known use of CMP data is to measure the content of left and right issues in a party program. The corresponding index is widely known as RILE and considered the ”crowning achievement” (Budge and Klingemann, 2001, p. 19) of the project.

This data has led to an explosion in manifesto-based research studies, dealing with numerous questions of party competition. Furthermore, research projects have been inspired that expand the selection of documents (e.g., Regional and Local manifesto project) and the coding scheme (cf. Gemenis, 2013, p. 4).

Political science owes a multitude of insights to these data. A key finding of the manifesto project is that election programs differ in their emphasis on individual policy issues, i.e., the amount of text devoted to a particular topic. At the same time, direct confrontation is rarely found. This finding is generally regarded as the most important confirmation of the saliency theory.

While the comparative manifesto projects focus on the policy content of party platforms, scholars started to emphasize the content of election programs beyond policy positions. A notable example is the Austrian National Election Study. Dolezal et al. (2018) analyze Austrian election manifestos to shed light on so far neglected content of election manifestos like ”references to the past (party records), promises about the future (pledges) and attacks on competitors (negative campaigning) as well as the degree of personalization” (p. 3). Other authors approach platforms in a similar way: For example, election pledges (Mansergh and Thomson, 2007; Thomson et al., 2017) as well the temporal focus of statements (Müller, 2022) are examined.

These studies have in common that they go beyond the traditional category scheme of the Comparative Manifesto Project and perform their own manual or automated content analysis on the documents.

This development puts an old branch of research into a new light: With the availability of manifesto corpus documents and increasing computing power and new software packages, a ”back to the roots” movement can be observed in more recent research. Nowadays, interest in raw texts is growing again, as computer-assisted content analysis methods enable cost-effective (re-)analyses.

So, despite these terrific achievements of the CMP, new research techniques question the ”gold standard” (Pennings, 2011) status of the data. It is,

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therefore, worth taking a critical look at both the CMP data and the alternative approaches. Therefore, the following section summarizes the CMP and the criticism of the data and its use.

Subsequently, alternative, computer-based text analysis methods and the simulation experiment to compare both approaches are presented and discussed.

4.1.1 The CMP and CMP-based Measurements

The most extensive and systematic criticism of the CMP data comes from Gemenis (2013). In his article, he differentiates between problems of "(1) theoretical underpinnings of the coding scheme; (2) document selection; (3) coding reliability; and (4) scaling" (Gemenis, 2013, p. 4). The upcoming discussion follows this classification and supplements the individual points of criticism where necessary.

The Theory Behind the Coding Scheme

The CMP's category system was developed explicitly based on the assumption that parties behave according to the saliency theory. From that point of view, most issues are valence issues, i.e., parties consider only one position on these issues to be occupiable: they advocate education, peace, environmental protection, and economic development; they are opponents of inequality, injustice, or high inflation. As Budge put it: "Long digressions on the growth of unemployment are presumably saying it is a bad thing and the party would do something to counter it. Is any party going to say explicitly that it is in favour of unemployment?" (Budge, 2001b, p. 219).

Political competition can thus be described as selective emphasis: Parties choose issues they credibly represent and emphasize them in their election program. Topics that other parties have successfully occupied are ignored wherever possible. A decidedly contrary stance, the articulation of contradiction, will be encountered only very rarely: "A party might, however, say very little about unemployment and expatiate greatly on the evils of inflation, implying that all other considerations should be subordinated to fighting this problem. These tricks of party rhetoric are no doubt familiar to every reader. They do not leave much room for parties to line up for or against each issue.

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What party wants to appeal for votes by extolling either unemployment or inflation – or supporting war against peace?" (Budge, 2001b, p. 219).

The category scheme of the CMP reflects the consequences of the assumptions of this theory: According to the self-description of the project, a "salience coding" is performed. Accordingly, most of the categories are formulated in such a way that the naming of the respective topic is collected, "whether they seem to have a direct policy content or not" (Budge, 2001b, p. 219).

This coding is described by Budge as "one-positional" and justified by the nature of the texts considered: "Coding-categories are inductively derived – basically formed by grouping related sentences in the text – and so they reflect the textual practice of only endorsing the 'obvious' position on each issue – against unemployment, inflation and high taxes, for extending services, etc. Hence the codings directly reflect party assumptions that there is only one tenable position on each issue" (Budge, 2001b, p. 220).

Deviating from this, dichotomous positive or negative statements were collected for twelve topic areas: "Scepticism on the part of certain members of the Manifesto Research Group at the very beginning of the coding operation resulted in 'pro-con' codings being put in for certain issue areas where confrontation between parties was thought most likely" (Budge, 2001a, p. 78). However, from the point of view of the CMP, these categories essentially confirmed the salience assumptions and were mainly used as validity checks.

The problem with this theoretical basis is that the saliency theory is much less secure than assumed by Budge. Gemenis (2013) names various empirical and theoretical studies that question the validity of saliency theory and thus the appropriateness of the CMP category scheme.

For instance, Laver pointed out that there "are issues deemed highly salient by people with radically different substantive policy positions. They include issues involving: the redistribution of resources in an unequal society, which generates a fundamental conflict of interest between rich and poor; a range of potent 'moral' issues such as abortion, capital punishment and euthanasia; issues generating conflicts of interest between religious, linguistic, ethnic or other social groups; and so on" (Laver, 2001, p. 74). For such issues, it is simply inappropriate to assume a single reasonable position and base the coding scheme on this from the outset.

For genuine valence issues like the environment, empirical findings have also shown that even the choice of an ineligible position does not have to detract from success (cf. Gemenis, 2013, p. 13). Furthermore, even the classification as a valence or position issue is not constant over time (Gemenis,

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2013, p. 6; Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006, p. 170). It has also been shown that attacks on opposing parties are not frequent but still do occur in party manifestos (Dolezal et al., 2018, p. 9).

Document Selection

A second important criticism of the CMP data is the use of so-called proxy documents (Gemenis, 2012). These documents are analyzed instead of election programs wherever they were not available. Proxy documents are, for example, newspaper articles, interviews, or speeches. This concerns a significant number of observations (Gemenis, 2012, p. 596-597).

The problem with these documents conceptually is that they were not always published directly by the party and thus contain less the self-representation of the party's policy position than potentially inaccurate perceptions from outside or, in the case of speeches, the possibly distorted presentation of individual politicians. Furthermore, it is questioned whether the CMP coding scheme captures "accurately the policy content of proxy documents" (Benoit et al., 2012, p. 605).

Empirically it was shown that proxy "documents can introduce measurement error in addition to the error introduced into the CMP by other means" (Gemenis, 2012, p. 601). Several solutions to this problem have been proposed, including the replacement of proxy documents by the correct election programs, the exclusion of these data from the analysis, and the use of alternative scales (Gemenis, 2012, p. 601-602; Benoit et al., 2012, p. 608). A separate section is devoted to the latter proposal.

Content Analysis

The quality assurance of manual content analysis is of central importance for the usability of the resulting data. Therefore, it must be ensured that all coders assign the same text component to the same categories. This is called reliability. Common measures of reliability require that the same coder either produces the same results at different times (stability, or intra-coder reliability) or that different coders produce the same result (reproducibility, or inter-coder reliability) (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 214-216). The correspondence between the two coders is measured with the Holsti coefficient or Krippendorf's alpha (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 221-243).

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The Comparative Manifesto Project is criticized because only one coder processed all election programs at a single time. Accordingly, established reliability measures cannot be given. Instead, extensive coder training has been provided to ensure the reliability of the measurements. Although this is one of the commonly used steps of manual content analysis, it cannot replace a check using the results of other coders.

That these concerns are more than mere speculation is shown by an experiment of Mikhaylov et al. (2012). Using former coders of the CMP project, the study shows a considerable lack of reliability: ”Our examination of coder disagreement using experimental recoding of core CMP documents clearly indicates that the CMP coding process is highly prone to misclassification and stochastic coding errors. Bearing in mind that the minimum standard conventionally deemed acceptable for the reliability coefficients reported in Table 2 is 0.8, the coefficients we find are worryingly low, almost all in the range [0.3, 0.5]” (Mikhaylov et al., 2012, p. 90).

It can be assumed that there is a high amount of noise in the data, which is based on wrong assignments of quasi-sentences to categories. This noise is adding bias to the CMP estimates, ultimately leading to ”bias of estimated causal effects when CMP quantities, especially Rile, are used as covariates in regression models”(Mikhaylov et al., 2012, p. 90).

The coding scheme and the coding process would have to be fundamentally revised to solve this problem, which is unlikely or impossible due to the high costs involved. However, one possible way out is computer-assisted automatic coding and more robust scaling techniques.

The Right-Left index

The previous sections have dealt with the basic principles of data collection of the CMP. However, in passing, it has already been mentioned that these problems also affect scaling based on this data. This applies in particular to the standard left-right scale of the project, the RILE: ”Aggregation of misclassified categories to coarser scales - such as the Rile scale of left-right policy - does not eliminate this problem” (Mikhaylov et al., 2012, p. 90).

This is very important because the RILE index is ”by far the most common way to use the manifesto dataset (arguably for 80-90 percent of users of the data)” (Mölder, 2016, p. 38). The importance of RILE was emphasized not least by the project leaders themselves: ”The crowning achievement of the Manifesto Research Project has been to measure party policy change

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in a variety of countries over an extended time period along the Left-Right dimension" (Budge and Klingemann, 2001, p. 19).

Created by Laver and Budge in the context of their work about party policy and government coalitions (Laver and Budge, 1992), the RILE became the standard left-right scale of the CMP. Moreover, indeed, there are good reasons for the popularity of this scale. The data is readily available, but more importantly, "the rich time series produced by MRG/CMP, covering a 50 year period for many democracies" (Budge and Pennings, 2007a, p. 123) is outstanding in the field.

Furthermore, the basic construction of the index is easy to understand and reproduce: The RILE is based on the identification of thirteen right and an equal number of left categories. Their observed relative frequency is summed separately for the left and right categories. Subsequently, the sum of all left categories is subtracted from the sum of the right categories. The result is a value between -100 (the manifesto is left) and +100 (all quasi sentences of the considered categories in the manifesto are right).

The CMP group considers the measurement results obtained in this way to have a good face validity (Budge and Bara, 2001, p. 14). In order to prove that, line plots of the party policy movements in many different countries have been published (Budge and Klingemann, 2001, p. 19-50), as well as comparisons with an expert survey, have been conducted (Budge and Pennings, 2007b, p. 136).

Unfortunately, not everyone could be convinced this way. As a result, the right-left index has been criticized both conceptually and empirically.

The most fundamental criticism of RILE results from the nature of political competition, often portrayed as inherently multidimensional (Adams et al., 2005; Albright, 2010; Benoit and Laver, 2012). Besides that "there is no 'one true' dimensionality for any given policy space" (Benoit and Laver, 2006, p. 110), the analysis of one dimension for a given research interest can be justified. However, this does not necessarily have to be the left-right dimension, even though it has proven its great importance in many contexts.

Another point of criticism focuses on RILE's assumptions about the nature of the left-right dimension: "For the index it has been assumed that the left-right dimension is meaningfully invariant across time and space" (Mölder, 2016, p. 40). However, research results on the change in values in Western European societies (Inglehart, 1977) clearly show that there is a change in the meaning of right and left.

Nor does Western European conceptualization work in the context of Central and Eastern Europe (Mölder, 2016, p. 40). As Benoit and Laver

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put it: ”However, our results also suggest quite strongly that the substantive meaning of left and right is a poor international traveler” (Benoit and Laver, 2006, p. 152).

As Jahn pointed out, at least some common ground must exist to be able to speak meaningfully of right and left (Jahn, 2011, p. 5). At the same time, this does not exclude that parties are also ”able to ‘modernize’ the left-right semantic by integrating new issues within their ideology” (Jahn, 2014, p. 299). Unfortunately, these differences in meaning and importance between countries and across time are not taken into account by the RILE index.

Attempts to solve these problems with inductive methods such as the vanilla method (Gabel and Huber, 2000) or the FK index (Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006) have contributed significantly to the understanding of time- and country-dependent differences, but they suffer from the fact that they are challenging to interpret (Mölder, 2016, p. 46; Jahn, 2011, p. 4). For this reason, Jahn (2011) combines a deductive core (LR core) with inductively gained complementary issues (LR plus).

In empirical terms, the criticism of RILE is even more pronounced. To begin with, Mölder showed that the issues grouped as left or right have hardly any common inner context (Mölder, 2016), which is a core assumption of summated rating scale construction.

Furthermore, changes in the RILE not only occur because the number of quasi-sentences devoted to the left or right change, but also because all excluded sentences change. Suppose a party decides to give more weight to an issue that is not left or right. In that case, the RILE subsequently portrays the party as more centrist: ”To take a very simple example, imagine a document from a left-wing party with a total (N) of 100 sentences, in which 50 sentences were coded left (L) and zero coded right (R). The Rile score is (R-L)/N = -0.5. Now imagine that 50 sentences are added to the manifesto, consisting of uncodable rhetoric singing the praises of the party leader and trashing the other parties. The Rile score is now -0.33 and the party appears to have moved to the center” (Benoit et al., 2012, p. 606).

Kim and Fording (1998) tried to correct this problem ”by dividing the difference between the left and right components, not by the total number of quasi-sentences in the manifesto, but by the total number of quasi-sentences included in the L–R scale” (Gemenis, 2013, p. 13). But unfortunately, this adjusted scale tends to force ”scores toward the extremes” (Benoit et al., 2012, p. 607; Lowe et al., 2011).

This is a severe problem because it means that a more left RILE score could be the result of a higher number of quasi-sentences referring to left

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topics, or a reduction of sentences referring to right topics, or a reduction of the number of topics that are neither right nor left, or a combination of all these sources. In the worst case, a change in the RILE score is thus a pure measurement construct without a corresponding basis for a party's change in position.

As a consequence of these shortcomings, "implausible results for left-right scores based on CMP data for party systems as diverse as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and The Netherlands" (Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006, p. 164) and significant differences compared to expert surveys (Benoit and Laver, 2006) have been reported. This has raised doubts about the proposed face validity (Jahn et al., 2018b; Pelizzo, 2003) and usability of the index: "The locations and the corresponding differences between parties as assumed by the index [...] capture only a marginal amount of variance that is present in the political positions of parties according to the manifesto dataset. Therefore, it is questionable whether such a measure is suitable for evaluating the political differences between parties" (Mölder, 2016, p. 45).

Conclusion

The points of criticism of the CMP and RILE outlined in the previous four sections illustrate the significant problems in the valid and reliable measurement of party positions.

Based on this discussion, it should be noted that the CMP is still one of the best datasets available for comparative political science. Therefore, the criticism expressed should not mean a complete turning away from the CMP data, but a reflected use instead of the "earlier suggestions to accept the CMP data 'as is'" (Gemenis, 2012, p.602) or to declare them the "gold standard" (Pennings, 2011).

This can, for example, consist of using "CMP's codings but not its policy scale" (Benoit et al., 2012, p. 608). As already mentioned, this path has been followed several times and has produced a series of indices that were intended to remedy the weaknesses of RILE. These include the vanilla approach (Gabel and Huber, 2000), the FK index (Franzmann and Kaiser, 2006), the LR index (Jahn, 2011) and the logit scaling method (Lowe et al., 2011).

These proposals have given rise to lively debates that intensively discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the respective approaches. Common to all alternatives mentioned is that they are based on the CMP-category scheme and thus on the saliency theory. Hence they share specific problems of the RILE,

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like misclassification and ”implicitly positional and censored” (Gemenis, 2013, p. 5) categories. Thus, these approaches only address the fundamental problems to a limited extent. Concerning the use in empirical studies, it should be noted that none of the approaches has so far come close to the popularity of RILE.

In order to avoid the discussed weaknesses of the CMP in principle, we have to go back to the original documents. However, due to the high cost of manual content analysis, computer-assisted text analysis methods were suggested as an alternative. The advantages and disadvantages of this approach are discussed in the next section.

4.1.2 Computer-Assisted Text Analysis in Political Science

The previous section reported the problems of determining a party position based on the CMP data in detail. Very similar analyses exist on the problems with expert interviews (Benoit and Laver, 2007b; Laver and Garry, 2000) and other data sources. In the end, all procedures and data sources have ”serious methodological and practical problems” (Laver et al., 2003, p. 311).

The baseline of this debate is that party programs are the most reliable source for party positions: ”Even though party manifestos are not written to inform citizens about a party’s position on a Left-Right dimension, but rather to accommodate strategic challenges in order to win an election (Laver 2001), they can be used to deduce a party’s underlying ideological position” (Jahn, 2011, p. 2). They are ”concrete by-products of strategic political activity” (Laver et al., 2003, p. 311) and can be ”analyzed, reanalyzed and reanalyzed again without becoming jaded or uncooperative” (Laver et al., 2003, p. 311).

These advantages raise the question of how valid and reliable party positions can be extracted from political texts without the need for cost- and time-intensive manual content analysis. Two answers have been given: The first one is the ”direct attempt to reproduce the hand-coding of texts, using computer algorithms to match texts to coding dictionaries” (Laver et al., 2003, p. 312). As one of the earliest representatives, Laver and Garry (2000) should be mentioned here. This approach is promising, but unfortunately, it cannot do without human coders developing and testing the dictionaries. However, recent breakthroughs in machine learning suggest that there will be significant progress in this area in the future. The second answer is more radical because it touches the structure of the texts themselves, treating ”words unequivocally as data” (Laver et al., 2003, p. 312). Of course, this refers to

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the ”Wordscore” (Laver et al., 2003) and the ”Wordfish” (Slapin and Proksch, 2008) approaches.

Despite significant differences in the procedure, both share several assumptions and procedural fundamentals. The common basis of both approaches was an important inspiration and source for the cosine method proposed here for measuring party strategy.

Wordscore and Wordfish have shown that policy positions of political parties can be measured using bag-of-words approaches, thus laying the foundation for further developments in this field of research. Therefore, the following section explains the principles of bag-of-words (or vector space) models and how the cosine approach works.

Fundamentals of Bag-of-Words Models

The Wordscore approach was the first to establish the bag-of-words model in political science. Slapin and Proksch (2008) took up this model and developed their own method for determining party positions from manifestos. Scholars of political science using bag-of-words approaches assume ”that relative word usage of parties provide information about their placement in a policy space” (Slapin and Proksch, 2008, p. 708).

The bag-of-words model was initially developed at the interface between linguistics and computer science in the field of information retrieval. However, it is of great importance today in many natural language processing tasks.

The core assumption of bag-of-words approaches is that the frequency of words in a document is sufficient to extract relevant information. In contrast, the order of words and sentences in the document can be ignored: ”Automated text analysis methods usually treat documents as a vector containing the count of each word type within the document, disregarding the order in which the words appear. This ‘bag-of-words’ assumption reduces the dimension of natural language text, representing each document as a single vector with length equal to the number of unique words in the text” (Lucas et al., 2015, p. 257).

Due to its initially seemingly simple form of document representation, this approach is often met with skepticism: ”Critics of word frequency-based approaches are quick to point out that such algorithms are ignorant of sentence structure and context. For instance, the expressions “We are against lowering taxes, and for tax increases” and “We are for lowering taxes, and against tax increases” use the exact same words with the same frequencies,

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even though the meaning is reversed. A word frequency approach used on only these statements, however, will provide identical estimates. While this may indeed be cause for concern for short statements, we believe that this is not problematic for the analysis of long texts such as election manifestos" (Proksch and Slapin, 2009, p. 324).

In addition to the word order, possible problems due to the changing meaning of words are often pointed out. Especially if the intention is to create long time series, it can become a problem that the meaning of words changes over time: "For Wordscores, the difficulty is that the political lexicon changes over time" (Benoit and Laver, 2007a, p. 132). If, on the other hand, only two consecutive election dates are compared, the impact of the language change is negligible: "We are in effect assuming that party manifestos in country c at election t are valid points of reference for the analysis of party manifestos at election t + 1 in the same country. Now this assumption is unlikely to be 100 % correct, since the meaning and usage of words in party manifestos change over time, even over the time period between two elections in one country. But we argue not only that it is likely to be substantially correct, in the sense that word usage does not change very much over this period, but also that there is no better context for interpreting the policy positions of a set of party manifestos at election t + 1 than the equivalent set of party manifestos at election t" (Laver et al., 2003, p. 314).

Furthermore, lexical ambiguity can be a problem. Scholars of lexical semantics have developed concepts to capture differences in the relationship between words and their meanings: "Synonyms are words with the same meaning (or very similar meaning): Car and automobile are synonyms. Homonyms are words that are written the same way, but are (historically or conceptually) really two different words with different meanings which seem unrelated. Examples are suit ("lawsuit" and "set of garments") and bunk(sic!) ("river bank" and "financial institution")" (Manning and Schütze, 1999, p. 110).

While these may seem like big problems at first, practice shows that, in reality, they are comparatively small problems, especially when texts of the same genre and time are compared. Political texts as means of communication are carefully written to ensure that their meaning is as unambiguous as possible. Again, especially long texts, like party manifestos, are less susceptible to this kind of problem. Even semantic errors rarely occur, so they have little influence or even out in longer texts.

In essence, the "bag-of-words" approach is therefore considered to have a good performance: "An ongoing surprise and disappointment is that struc-

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turally simple representations produced without linguistic or domain knowledge have been as effective as any others" (Lewis, 1998, p. 6).

In order to determine policy positions or party ideology based on the bag-of-words approach, some further assumptions are necessary. First of all, the construct to be measured should be considered as a latent variable: "This means that ideology is not something that the researcher can directly observe, rather it must be indirectly estimated based upon observable actions taken by parties and their members. The observable action we are most concerned with here is the writing of election manifestos" (Proksch and Slapin, 2009, p. 324).

Building on the distinction between ideal policy positions and stated policy positions (Laver, 2001), a more fine-grained operationalization presents the writing of a manifesto as "a stochastic text generation process" (Benoit et al., 2009, p. 497), in which ultimately three different policy positions can be differentiated.

First of all, there is a true (or ideal) policy position, which is "fundamentally unobservable even, arguably, to the author" (Benoit et al., 2009, p. 498). The true position must be distinguished from the "intended message" about the position.

The intended message can be the honest attempt to formulate one's true position or the strategic communication of another position to be taken for one's own. This intended message "exists only in the brain of the author and is also fundamentally unobservable" (Benoit et al., 2009, p. 498).

In order to communicate this intended message, the author produces the observable text, the stated position. Even if the intended message is the same, each new attempt to formulate it will differ. A text can therefore be understood as the result of a random experiment. A true value exists, but every single run of the experiment produces a slightly different result.

When trying to put a message into words, the authors are not entirely free. The number of synonyms is limited. The rules of grammar allow only certain phrases, words have fixed meanings, and therefore there is only a finite number of ways to formulate a particular meaning through them.

For this reason, it is reasonable to assume that "the language used by political parties expresses political ideology. Ideology manifests itself in the word choice of politicians when writing party documents. More specifically, Wordfish assumes that parties' relative word usage within party documents conveys information about their positions in a policy space (Proksch and Slapin, 2009, p. 324).

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This is the same assumption that guides other methods like probabilistic topic models as well: ”Topic models ... are based on the idea that documents are mixtures of topics, where a topic ... is a probability distribution over words” (Steyvers and Griffiths, 2007, p. 427).

In linguistics, this assumption is known as the ”distributional hypothesis”: ”This hypothesis is often stated in terms like ‘words which are similar in meaning occur in similar contexts’ (Rubenstein & Goodenough 1965); ‘words with similar meanings will occur with similar neighbors if enough text material is available’ (Schütze & Pedersen 1995); ‘a representation that captures much of how words are used in natural context will capture much of what we mean by meaning’ (Landauer & Dumais 1997); and ‘words that occur in the same contexts tend to have similar meanings’ (Pantel 2005), to quote a few representative examples. The general idea behind the distributional hypothesis seems straightforward. There is a correlation between distributional similarity and meaning similarity, which allows us to utilize the former in order to estimate the latter” (Sahlgren, 2008, p. 34).

Since different topics are described with different words (even agreement is signaled differently than disagreement), it seems linguistically justified to conclude from the distribution of words to latent constructs such as policy position. So in the next section, I will show how the bag-of-words approach is applied in practice.

Elements, Vectors and Matrices

In order to extract information from texts, they are represented as a vector whose individual elements represent the frequency of unique words in the text. These vectors are combined into the document-feature matrix (DFM) to compare several texts.

The DFM is a table whose individual rows correspond to a unit of investigation (mainly a document), while the columns stand for a feature (mainly unique words). The observed frequency of each feature is entered in the individual cells.

The resulting document-feature matrices are usually characterized by a high number of individual features, whereby many cells remain unoccupied so that we speak of a sparse matrix.

Document-feature matrices can be manipulated in many ways. The most important is the stemming of individual words and the removal of so-called stopwords that carry little meaning but are grammatically necessary. Fur-

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thermore, the values of the matrix can be inverted (term frequency-inverse document frequency or tf/idf) (cf. Manning and Schütze, 1999, p. 543) to reflect the importance of words or otherwise weighted in order to meet the requirements of the research project.

Based on this data, very different statistical inference methods can be applied. In the following section, one of these methods, the vector space model, is presented.

4.1.3 Cosine Similarity and the Vector Space Model

Party programs are generally seen as ”encyclopedic statements of the parties’ positions” (Slapin and Proksch, 2008, p. 709), from which information on left-right positioning of parties can be obtained (Jahn, 2011). In addition, Pelizzo emphasizes that election programs and measurements based on them, such as the RILE, ”indicate parties’ direction, that is how (and how much) parties move to adjust to changing political conditions and to remain competitive” (Pelizzo, 2003, p. 67).

This section explains how statistical methods can measure party positions using bag-of-words approaches. More specifically, the measurement developed here is intended to capture the strategy of an established party vis-à-vis a new party, whether or not these changes occur on issues of the classical right-left dimension. This is necessary because there is a particular intersection between new and niche parties.

The cosine similarity approach presented here has certain parallels with the well-known Wordscore method of Laver et al. (2003). Conceptually, the main difference is that no external reference texts are used as content validation of the measured dimension. Instead, a pairwise measurement of party programs is used, whereby the selection of these party programs allows conclusions to be drawn about which party is developing in which direction.

In technical terms, there are further differences. Wordscore uses reference texts to locate the texts to be analyzed closer to one pole or the other with respect to their correspondence of the observed word frequencies with the frequencies of the reference texts. For this purpose, conditional probabilities are calculated for each word (Laver et al., 2003, p. 317).

Wordfish, on the other hand, estimates regression parameters based on the assumption that words are used according to the Poisson distribution (Slapin and Proksch, 2008, p. 709-710). Both procedures have in common that they

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try to map several texts on one dimension, whereas in this study, a pairwise comparison of party manifestos is intended.

A further difference is that both methods are proprietary developments in political science. This is surprising because one of the most basic analysis methods for bag-of-words approaches, the vector space model (or vector similarity model), has never been applied in political science. However, it "is one of the most widely used models for ad-hoc retrieval, mainly because of its conceptual simplicity and the appeal of the underlying metaphor of using spatial proximity for semantic proximity (Manning and Schütze, 1999, p. 539). This directly addresses the theory of party competition, which was presented earlier.

The basic idea of the vector space model is to equate spatial and content proximity of documents. The documents represented as vectors are thus mapped in a multidimensional space. The cosine of the included angle of both documents is a measure for the similarity of the content. Thus, from the frequency of words in different documents, the similarity of these documents is inferred. Documents that have a higher degree of correspondence between their terms are thus considered to be more similar.

This method has been successfully used for search queries. The calculation of the vector similarity between the search query, on the one hand, and the available documents, on the other hand, has proven that relevant documents can be found: "The most relevant documents for a query are expected to be those represented by the vectors closest to the query, that is, documents that use similar words to the query. Rather than considering the magnitude of the vectors, closeness is often calculated by just looking at angles and choosing documents that enclose the smallest angle with the query vector" (Manning and Schütze, 1999, p. 539).

To illustrate this principle, consider the following example: A researcher wants to know which parties have a similar attitude towards environmental topics. Therefore, a highly simplified dictionary is being developed that consists only of the terms "pollution" and "sustainability" to address this question.

In the first manifesto, document A, the term pollution (called feature i) is observed twice. The term sustainability (or feature j), on the other hand, is observed four times. The corresponding vector is called A(2,4). In document B, feature i occurs four times, but feature j occurs only three times. Therefore, the vector is called B(4,3). Both vectors can be represented in a two-dimensional coordinate system (Figure 4.1).

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The cosine of the included angle determines the difference in the direction of both vectors. If a third document C would be added, where feature i occurs four times and feature j two times, the angle between documents A and C can be determined additionally. Since the angle is larger, it is clear that documents B and C are more similar to each other than documents A and C or an A and B. Documents B and C use the word pollution equally often. However, the emphasis on sustainability differs by one reference. Document A uses the word pollution half as often but emphasizes sustainability. Thus, it can be concluded that parties B and C have a more similar attitude towards environmental topics than parties A and C do.

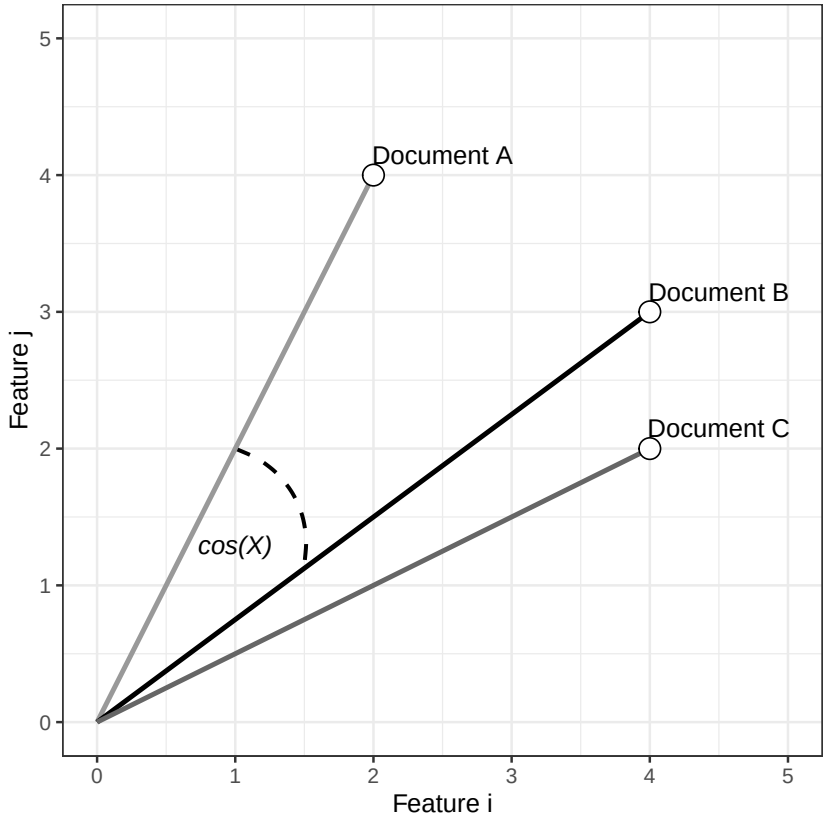

Figure 4.1: Cosine Similarity of Three Documents in a Two-dimensional Vector Space

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This fact can not only be read off graphically but also calculated as cosine similarity according to the following equation:

$$\cos x \quad \frac{\sum_{i1}^{n} A_i \cdot B_i}{\sqrt{\sum_{i1}^{n} A_i^2} \cdot \sqrt{\sum_{i1}^{n} B_i^2}} \tag{1}$$

Figure 4.2: Equation to Calculate Cosine Similarity of Documents A and B

In the formula, the ”inner product” of the two vectors in the numerator is divided by the vector magnitude in the denominator. This makes cosine similarity insensitive to different document lengths: ”To compensate for the effect of document length, the standard way of quantifying the similarity between two documents d1 and d2 is to compute the cosine similarity of their vector representations V (d1) and V (d2) where the numerator represents the dot product (also known as the inner product) of the vectors V (d1) and V (d2), and the denominator is the product of their Euclidean lengths” (Manning et al., 2008, p. 111).

To return to the above example: According to the formula, the cosine similarity between document A and B is 0.89, between document A and C 0.8, and between document B and C 0.98 if only the features of the ”environment dictionary” are used.

The cosine similarity approach has several advantages that make it suitable for analyzing political texts:

First, the approach follows the principle of parsimony. Whether parties behave as saliency theory assumes or not is not presupposed but is the subject of empirical research. This corresponds to the demand in the literature.

Furthermore, cosine similarity considers the number of different features, their frequency and the length of the compared documents. This is a significant advantage over other measurements of vector similarity like the Jaccard index. For example, the Jaccard index covers only the vocabulary overlap but is blind to the frequency of words and the length of the manifesto.

Thus, the cosine approach also meets Slapin and Proksch’s (2008) requirements, who pointed out that parties sometimes write manifestos of above-average length and measurements, therefore, have to correct this [p. 706].

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Even the weighting of words according to the probability of their occurrence, which is essential for Wordfish, can also be easily taken into account in the vector similarity approach by weighting the document-feature matrix.

In order to avoid potential problems caused by the change in political vocabulary and at the same time ensure the interpretability of the index, the chosen documents play a decisive role.

Election programs of new and established political parties are compared so that the measurement of similarity indicates the direction of policy change. These strategies are determined based on two measurements of three party programs:

First, the similarity between the election program of the established party at election t_0 and the reference election program of the new party at the same election is determined. Then the election program of the established party at the subsequent election t_1 is compared with the reference election program of the new party at t_0.

From the comparison of both measurements, it can be concluded whether the established party has brought its election program closer to that of the new party or not.

By using election manifestos, it is ensured that texts are sufficiently long to obtain reliable measurements. Among other things, this ensures that individual problematic terms have only a negligible effect on the measured value. Furthermore, removing terms that do not make sense ensures that similarity between texts is not based on grammatically necessary words that have no meaning. Third, the comparison of election programs is limited to a maximum of two consecutive election dates so that a stable political vocabulary can be assumed.

Last but not least, the cosine approach also allows for an ideological calibration that goes beyond the use of election programs as reference texts, much like it is known from other text analysis methods like Wordscore or the study from Proksch and Slapin (2006), who ”examine party positions in two dimensions (economic and social)” [p. 540] by parsing ”the reference texts into economic and social sections and then estimate positions using the respective sections only” (Slapin and Proksch, 2008, p. 707).

So by selecting document sections that are assigned to a specific dimension, for example, the left-right or the green-growth dimension (Jahn, 2016), it is possible to focus more specifically on aspects of content that are of interest.

Here, too, it is important to note that, on the one hand, as many different terms as possible should be included to cover the phenomenon in its entire range, and, on the other hand, that the selection of reference texts should not

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be too comprehensive. In the first case, there is the danger of not capturing essential elements of the dimension; in the second case, the measurement would no longer discriminate between concepts (cf. Laver et al., 2003, p. 315).

While cosine similarity has proven its usefulness in diverse natural language processing tasks, the evidence is still missing that political texts can be analyzed as well. I will try to provide this proof in the next section.

4.2 Synthetic Manifestos – Assessing Measurement Properties

The previous sections discussed why previous measurements of party position have been met with criticism. Then, based on the information retrieval literature, a new approach was presented that can be used to explore parties' strategies.

The crucial question now is how well the presented computer-assisted approach can measure differences in party programs. In other words: How valid are the measurements?

Assessing the measurement quality of different indices is a great challenge. While reliability can be determined relatively easily by repeating the same measurement on the same data, this is not the case for validity.

In the literature, different validity measurements have been discussed (Adcock and Collier, 2001). The so-called external validation, i.e., comparing one measurement with the result of another measurement from a different independent data source, is considered the ideal solution. Different methods for assessing external validity are conceivable for scholars of party policies.

One possible method is the comparison to expert surveys. The problem with that method is that experts, due to the definition of the term, really know their subject matter well, i.e., they consider the election manifestos and the corresponding research. Accordingly, this measurement is not independent of other measurements.

Another particularly frequently used method is the comparison with a "gold standard" like the RILE: "Computers can easily count words in an electronic text. But how do we know that these are really telling us what we want to know about policy? An easy way is to compare the estimates these generate with the previously validated ones from the Manifesto data" (Budge and Bara, 2001, p. 2).

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Problems with this method arise when established indices like RILE have validity problems. Furthermore, if the same data is used for both scaling methods, the independence requirement is violated again.

So, as long as it is ultimately unclear what ideological content a document has, it is challenging to establish the validity of a new measurement beyond doubt. To address this problem, a simulation experiment was conducted here.

The simulation aims at better understanding the behavior of different position measurements by generating synthetic manifesto data. Synthetic manifestos have the advantage that the researcher can determine the ideological content of the party programs under study. Thus it is then also clear which measurement correctly represents the latent variable.

The theoretical basis of the simulation is the assumption that different topics are usually formulated with different terms, better known as the distribution hypothesis. The connection between words and topics is probabilistic, i.e., there is also the situation that the same terms are used to describe different things. However, this is not the rule.

From the analysis of the frequencies of terms, it is possible to conclude the underlying topics. As already discussed, this is the basis of numerous methods, for instance, topic modeling procedures, such as the Latent Dirichlet Allocation, as well as classification procedures for texts, as they are already used in political science.

As a basis of the analytical process, I assume that party programs are random selections from the universe of all possible propositions that express a particular policy position. On the sentence level, this corresponds to Slapin and Proksch's (2008) approach which assumes on the word level that a concretely observed word comes from a random selection of all possible terms.

The starting point of the simulation developed here are 33 German party programs with 67989 quasi-sentences encoded by the Manifesto Project. An average party program was constructed based on these codes: it contains as many sentences on the respective policy area as the average of the 33 party programs. The same is true for the length of this manifesto. This average party program is then processed, resulting in synthetic manifestos that differ from the average party program by exchanging a defined set of randomly selected sentences.

The next step is to compare the average manifesto with the party program changed by 10, 20, or even 1000 sentences, so the impact of a marginal sentence can be determined. The comparison is based on established measurements such as RILE or log RILE, but also on measurements of text similarity

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such as cosine similarity or Jaccard similarity. In order to ensure that the results are robust, this process is repeated ten times, with the sentences of the average party program being randomly selected each time. This repeated measurement thus ensures that no measurement artifacts are produced.

Of course, the result of this comparison process is determined by the population of the fed in sentences. The repeated generation of the average manifesto as well as the selection of sentences to be exchanged corresponds to a random sample from a population or, in terms of probability theory, it can be described as the basic urn model, where a ball (or sentence, in this case) is drawn from an urn (or here the entirety of all sentences) and then put back before the process is repeated.

Hence, the drawn sentences represent the entirety of all sentences in the same sense, as a random sample represents the population it is sampled from. Since the average manifesto refers to the same population as the entirety of the sentences, there would be no changes in the respective measurement values if the exchanged sentences come from the population of all sentences.

If, on the other hand, the population changes in advance, e.g., by making only left-wing or right-wing party programs the population, the replacing sentences change accordingly. Thus, as the number of replaced sentences increases, the following picture emerges: The measured values move closer and closer to the right or left population, i.e., they move away from the average manifesto with which the simulation was started.

The choice of different populations or selection bases thus corresponds to different test cases for the measurements used. This allows the advantages and disadvantages of the individual indices to be exemplified in terms of their ability to measure different issues.

Therefore, two experiments were performed. The first experiment changed the average manifesto by feeding in exclusively left sentences. This experiment aims to test the standard RILE scale where it should be strongest: When measuring the left-right dimension in election programs. The comparison with other measurements shows the extent to which they can detect positions on the left-right axis.

In the second experiment, the selection of sentences to be fed in was changed: Instead of left sentences, sentences are now fed that are assigned to the green-growth dimension. This second experiment reverses the first experiment: Instead of feeding sentences belonging to the left-right dimension, only sentences are added which do not belong to it. A valid measurement of a party's left-right position should not react to such changes.

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Taken together, both experiments provide information about the specificity and sensitivity of the measurements under investigation. In the following sections, the results of these two experiments are presented.

4.2.1 The Left-Right Experiment

The main line of conflict in the political competition continues to be the left-right dimension. Accordingly, it is crucial to validly capture changes in party position in this dimension. In order to assess the measurement quality, the content analytical measurements of the Manifesto Project need to be compared to text analytical measurements.

To ensure that the contents of party programs are known, synthetic manifestos are constructed. Therefore, the experiment uses the annotated sentences from the corpus of the Comparative Manifesto Project.

The starting point of the simulation is the construction of an ”average manifesto”. This average election program contains all 56 topics of the CMP in frequency as they are contained in all available German election programs. Deviating from this general rule, the number of sentences carrying left or right topics were determined to be precisely the same on the left and the right side. This was done because the RILE has a well-known tendency towards the center, which should be excluded from the measurement here.

In order to generate the average program, the first step was to analyze how frequently each issue occurs in all German election programs. In the next step, quasi sentences were randomly selected from the corpus and arranged to correspond to the calculated averages topic frequencies. This average party program was then replaced sentence by sentence with quasi-sentences devoted to left issues to simulate the growing importance of this dimension. The sentences to feed in were randomly selected from the collection of all sentences assigned to a category classified as left in RILE.

This simulation process was repeated ten times. This means that ten different average manifestos were constructed from randomly selected sentences based on given average frequencies. From each of these ten texts, 1000 sentences were randomly selected and replaced by a random sentence taken from those associated with the left position. Thus, this test series consists of 1000 different synthetic election programs. Due to the tenfold repetition, the

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simulation results are based on a total of 10000 election programs (Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4).[1]

The correlation between the absolute differences of the RILE and the cosine dissimilarity measurement with r=0.997 shows that both measurements are virtually identical.

A similar agreement is shown when the absolute RILE differences are compared with the cosine similarity scores calibrated to the left-right dimension. Here the correlation coefficient is 0.936.

Interestingly, the degree of agreement breaks down when the individual parts of the calibrated cosine similarity measurement are compared with the absolute RILE differences. While the correlation with the cosine scores calibrated with left sentences is still r=0.911, the correlation with the right sentences changes direction and goes down to r=-0.784. This is because the RILE is constructed as a summated rating scale. The calibrated right cosine score is negative because some right sentences are deleted and replaced by left sentences through the simulation process. The RILE hides this by design.

I present the raw results of the simulation to give an impression of the different ranges of values and variances, as well as the min-max standardized values, which allow a better comparison of the indices.

On the X-axis, the number of exchanged quasi-sentences is deducted. On the left Y-axis, the absolute differences of the RILE between the average manifesto and the respective synthetic manifesto are noted. On the right Y-axis, the text similarity or dissimilarity between 0 and 1 is recorded. The graph shows that the RILE correctly represents the increasing salience of the left position, so the index can be considered sensitive as long as the CMP codings are valid.

For better comparability, the measurement of text similarity between the average manifesto and the respective synthetic manifesto was inverted here so that dissimilarity is measured. As a result, both election programs' increasing degree of dissimilarity is correctly captured.

Interesting is the comparison with the calibrated measurement. Here, 1000 left, and 1000 right sentences were defined as reference texts. After the two measurements were performed, the result for the right reference text was subtracted from the left reference text.

1 Many overlapping data points pose a challenge for the graphical representation. To avoid overplotting, I drew a random sample of 200 measurement results to be shown in the graphs. The random sample ensures that the interpretation of the results does not differ from the original data.

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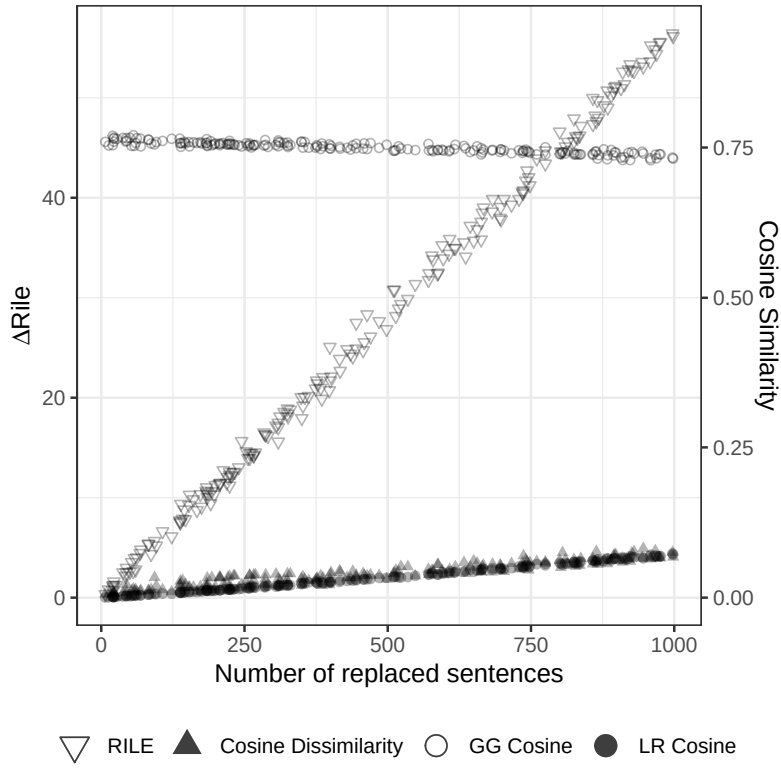

Figure 4.3: Raw Results of the Left-Right Simulation Experiment

Although the calibrated cosine method uses different reference points, the results are very similar. That makes it clear that the robust and straightforward cosine dissimilarity measurement based on the party programs can also be used to detect changes in the left-right dimension.

The calibrated green-growth measurement is based on the random selection of 1000 sentences dedicated to these issues. Surprising at first is the recorded changes of this dimension in the simulation. However, this can be easily explained: Another sentence from the average manifesto is replaced by a left sentence with each simulation run. The selection of these deleted sentences is random. Thus, sentences associated with the green-growth dimension can also be deleted during each run. Due to the random selection,

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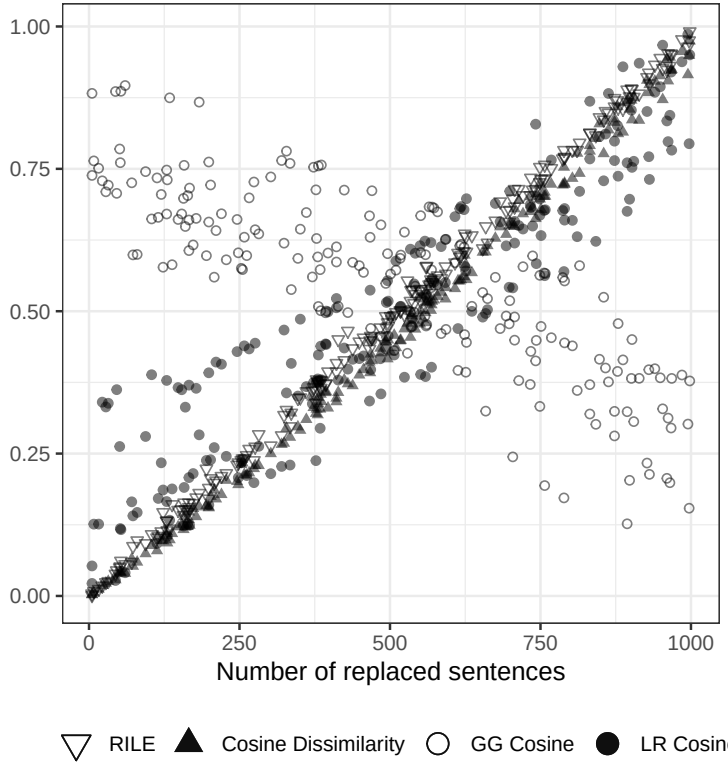

Figure 4.4: Normalized Results of the Left-Right Simulation Experiment

some deviation is possible at each measurement repetition. Certain variations occur, which are recorded here as a variance of similarity to green-growth issues. All in all, of course, the number of topics that are not left is decreasing. Correspondingly, the similarity to green-growth topics decreases overall.

This connection becomes even more apparent when the normalized values are considered (c.f. Figure 4.4). The min-max normalization standardizes the value ranges of the individual indices to values between 0 and 1. This facilitates the comparison of the individual measurements, as it shows the differences in the variance of the ten measurements and thus the size of the confidence intervals even more clearly.

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RILE and cosine similarity perform equally well and are nearly indistinguishable. However, the calibrated cosine measures have higher uncertainty because there are different ways to state the same position. This uncertainty could be reduced by increasing the number of sentences used for calibration. However, this leads to conceptual arbitrariness and endogeneity problems at a certain point.

4.2.2 The Green-Growth Experiment

The green-growth experiment was conducted to test the specificity of the RILE. In the experiment, a manifesto was simulated, in which the green-growth dimension becomes more and more salient in each run. Because no left or right categories are changed, the correct measurement would show no differences.

While very good matches between the indices were found in the left-right experiment, the green-growth experiment shows completely different results.

The correlation between RILE and cosine dissimilarity is only 0.119. The comparison with the left-right calibrated cosine measurement shows that this can be attributed to the RILE. Here the correlation is only r=-0.202. The RILE shows a similar, though low correlation with the calibrated green-growth measurement of r=0.183, while the cosine dissimilarity is correlated with the calibrated green-growth measurement by r=0.974. All in all, this pattern of correlations indicates that the RILE shows considerable noise here and therefore has a low correlation with all dimensions. This becomes even clearer when the graphs are considered (Figure 4.5 and Figure 4.6).

The simulation shows that the RILE measurement deviates significantly from the ideal. The purely random removal of sentences leads to deviations of up to 2.5 points when measuring the RILE. This value is just as high as party movements that are observed in real elections and are therefore considered worthy of explanation in empirical studies (Jahn et al., 2018a).

In contrast, the calibrated cosine measurement of the right and left issues shows the desired flat slope over all simulation runs. The cosine dissimilarity measure shows a parallel course to the calibrated green-growth measurement on a much lower level.

If the normalized data are used, how similar these two measurements perform becomes even more apparent. The cone-shaped course of the cosine dissimilarity measurement is also interesting here. The increasing number of exchanged sentences explains this: The number of unique words is related to

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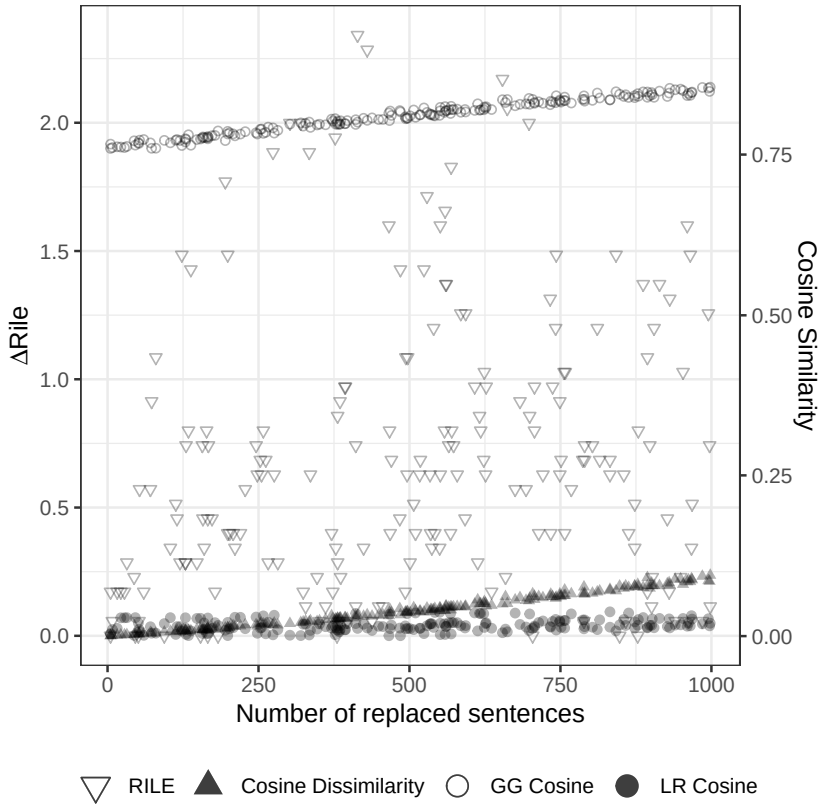

Figure 4.5: Raw Results of the Green-Growth Simulation Experiment

the text length. When 1000 sentences are exchanged, the number of features is greater than when only ten sentences are exchanged. Accordingly, the probability of unique words that do not occur in the other measurement increases with a higher number of replaced sentences.

4.2.3 Conclusion

When the results of both experiments are combined, it can be said that computer-assisted text analysis methods perform similarly well, if not better than methods based on manual content analysis. Despite their respective ad-

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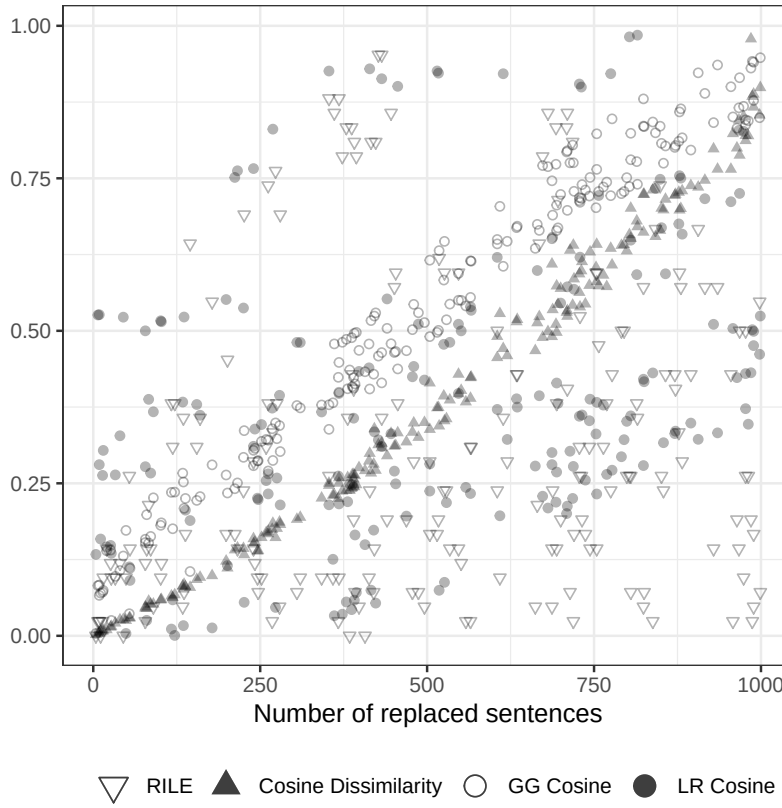

Figure 4.6: Normalized Results of the Green-Growth Simulation Experiment

vantages and disadvantages, both methods are suitable for capturing changes in party programs.

If the sensitivity to changes in the issue salience is the key issue, cosine similarity between the party programs can be used without hesitation. However, if specific issues or dimensions of political competition are to be addressed, a calibrated measurement is preferable.

The RILE can be used as long as it is clear that the main line of conflict is the left-right dimension. If there are concerns about this, for example, because niche parties advance issues for which there are indications that their ideological profile is different, text-analytical measurements are at an advantage.

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Based on this experiment, I argue that a combination of both measurements is reasonable: While the RILE captures changes in position on the left-right dimension, changes in issue salience are accounted for by the cosine similarity scores. Thus, if both measurements are integrated into one model, it can be assumed that they complement each other well. I deal with such modeling issues in greater detail in the next chapter.

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5 Modeling the New Party Vote
Data, Descriptive Statistics, and Method

In this project, I examine whether the strategy of the established competitors influences the electoral outcome of new parties. To this end, I distinguish between issue competition and positional competition strategies. To capture the issue competition strategy of established parties vis-à-vis new competitors, I use the change in text similarity between the election programs of new and established parties as the main independent variable. Furthermore, the change in the left-right position is used to account for the influence of positional competition.

Apart from that, two secondary questions are examined. First, the influence of the ideological proximity of new and established parties on the fundamental relationship is analyzed. For this purpose, their affiliation to party families or ideological blocs is recorded. Second, I examine the extent to which the ideological specificity – or nicheness in other words – of the new party has a moderating effect.

Since the voting process depends on the electoral system in place, which can potentially be subject to change during the period under study, the electoral system is also included as an influencing factor in the model. Furthermore, I integrate the median voter position in the model because it has proven essential in policy move research. Finally, commonly used control variables like decade-fixed effects ensure unbiased estimates.

To address the research questions, the analysis covers 169 new parties in 18 advanced Western democracies from 1960 to 2018. The chapter is structured as follows: First, I justify the case selection, the chosen observation period, and the data sources used. This is followed by explanations of the dependent and independent variables. Then I will introduce the method used. In the following chapter, I finally present and discuss the analysis results.

5.1 Data and Case Selection

The essential characteristic of scientific theories is to formulate falsifiable statements about reality. Empirical data are used to falsify these statements, and their selection is thus decisive for the validity of the tests conducted.

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The theoretical assumptions underlying this book require data on the position and issue emphasis of political parties. The theory claims to be valid for developed Western democracies in the post-war period so that data are required for as many parties as possible in different countries. In addition, time-series data is needed to capture the dynamics of party competition.

Several methods have been developed to obtain data on parties' positions in political science. Mair (2001) distinguishes between a priori judgments, secondary reading, expert surveys, mass surveys, elite studies, and the analysis of party programs and manifestos, each of which has its advantages and disadvantages and thus effects how the theory can be tested.

A priori judgments use the party family as a yardstick for an ordinal scaling of the party position. The basic idea is that parties of the same party family also have a similar position. However, this approach is now considered outdated. It captures party position statically and is thus not suitable for capturing ideological changes of parties between elections or in relation to each other.

Mair (2001) refers to secondary reading as a procedure in which the researcher determines party positions based on an intensive literature review. This procedure can be a precursor of the more formalized expert interviews. However, one central point of criticism is that it is questionable what the experts base their assessment on and how valid it ultimately is.

The more formalized expert surveys are supposed to deliver more valid results by increasing the number of persons determining the party position and thus developing a consensus that ideally comes closer to the actual party position than one expert alone can. Nevertheless, the fundamental problem of the justification of the experts' assessment remains: "Expert judgements are therefore not really an alternative to these other approaches; instead, they reflect a crude synthesis of these other approaches, filtered through the perceptions of well-read and intelligent observers. They are less an alternative than a short-cut" (Mair, 2001, p. 25). Furthermore, expert surveys usually only cover a specific point in time (Benoit and Laver, 2006; Castles and Mair, 1984). The Chapel Hill expert survey (Bakker et al., 2020) is an exception, as its first round took place in 1999 and has been repeated about every four years since then.

Mass surveys are another popular method. In these surveys, for example, the placement of political parties on the right-left axis is requested by the respondent, and thus the perception of the party position is measured. Surveys conducted in several waves also allow changes in party position to be

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determined. However, one main criticism is that the respondents' perception is not necessarily identical with the actual party position.

Elite studies take very different forms, including analyses of the voting behavior of parliamentarians as well as interviews with party members or functionaries. Here it is questionable how individual party members or functionaries reflect the party as a whole. Moreover, this method is time-consuming and associated with high costs, so time-series cross-section data are not available.

The analysis of party programs and manifestos is based on either manual or computer-assisted content analysis based on category schemes. The great advantage of this method is that it can be used to repeatedly analyze long past points in time with recourse to original documents. In the process, changed questions can also be taken into account. Nevertheless, even this approach is not perfect. For example, the comparability of election programs between countries is questioned. The party manifesto project is the most famous example of a systematic manual content analysis of election programs and "remains one of the great success stories of international political science" (Mair, 2001, p. 16).

Concerning the assessment of issue salience, the variety of methods is smaller than in the determination of party positions. Although there are individual actors such as the Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (Jung et al., 2013) that regularly collect data on the currently most important issue from the perspective of the population, these efforts usually remain limited to individual countries, too. Cross-national data is available from projects such as the European Value Study (EVS, 2021). However, these only record on an even more coarse scale which issues are considered relevant to the population or the respondents' attitudes to selected issues. To the best of my knowledge, there is no cross-national longitudinal survey data on the issue emphasis of individual parties.

The analysis of election programs, on the other hand, has been carried out for many years to identify the main issues of parties. Once again, the Manifesto project (Volkens et al., 2020) should be highlighted. The CMP category scheme is based on "fifty-seven categories into which sentences can be counted and percentaged" (Budge, 2001b, p. 219). According to the project's self-description, these data are to be regarded as the salience of the respective underlying issues, while their combination into indices such as the RILE allows the determination of a party position.

The analysis of election manifestos is thus a suitable method to determine both party positions and the salience of issues. To capture party position, I resort to the RILE, the most established and widely used index that captures

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party position based on the CMP categories. Moreover, the development of computer-assisted text analysis methods now makes it possible to analyze election programs cost-effectively and under new questions without having to resort to the CMP categories (e.g. Bräuninger et al., 2013). This is the path I am following with this work, whereby I intend to measure the issue salience of parties.

Overall, my analysis is based on the changes in electoral programs between elections in terms of party position and salience. This form of analysis also has implications for data availability and thus for the cases that can be included. To answer my research questions, I use the Parties, Institutions & Preferences (PIP; Jahn et al., 2018a) dataset. It combines data from the Manifesto project dataset with a collection of election results, cabinet compositions, and party fates. The main focus of the PIP dataset is to allow analyses with the most lengthy time series possible.

Another important data source is the Manifesto Project Dataset (Volkens et al., 2020), which covers 4656 election programs of 1170 parties from 56 countries. The dataset spans 761 elections from the year 1920 to the present. The main dataset contains, among other variables, the 57 main categories of the CMP category scheme and enables the calculation of indices such as the RILE. It covers "relevant parties, i.e. those that gained at least one seat in parliament" (Volkens et al., 2018, p. 2). This fits in with the definition of new parties used here.

The documents to be analyzed were taken from the Manifesto Corpus (Krause et al., 2018). This is the most comprehensive source of election programs. It contains the original documents on which the content analysis of the main dataset is based. The Manifesto Corpus Version 2018b used here contains 2317 election programs in nearly 40 languages. Due to missing election programs, the corpus size is smaller than the main dataset, limiting the analysis. The availability of manifestos varies from region to region. While election manifestos have been available for many Western countries since the 1960s, this has only been the case for Eastern European countries since the 2000s. Iceland, Greece, and Luxembourg also have poor coverage.

From these datasets, suitable cases are to be selected. As Pennings et al. (1999) pointed out, research designs can be straightforwardly defined by the number of cases included as well as the number of time points considered. In this sense, the study at hand conducts pooled analyses to maximize cases across time and space (Pennings et al., 1999, p. 28). There is a wide range of case selection methods in the field, without a clear consensus about the best method to choose (Beck, 2017). Case selection is made here in the

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spirit of the most-similar system method (Przeworski and Teune, 1970, p. 32-34). The basic idea is to keep the cases under study as similar as possible so that a few experimental factors can explain differences between them: "It is anticipated that if some important differences are found among these otherwise similar countries, then the numbers of factors attributable to these differences will be sufficiently small to warrant explanation in terms of those differences alone" (Przeworski and Teune, 1970, p. 32). Lijphart refers to this procedure as the "comparable cases strategy" (Lijphart, 1975, p. 164). As he goes on to explain, comparable cases are likely to be found "within a geographical-cultural area" (Lijphart, 1975, p. 159).

Accordingly, I limit my analysis to developed and highly industrialized Western democracies. Based on this definition, my initial sample included 22 developed democracies and highly industrialized OECD countries. Japan was excluded from this sample because, unlike the other countries, it has no European antecedents. In this sense, it is genuinely an individual case, dissimilar to the other nations in the sample regarding its cultural and historical roots (Castles, 1998, p. 9). Moreover, the USA fell out of the sample because no new parties meet the definition criteria used here. Due to a lack of data, I also had to omit Iceland, Greece, and Luxembourg. This leaves me with 18 Western democracies in the sample: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

For these countries, data availability in the Manifesto corpus is also comparatively high (cf. Table 5.1). A total of 1671 election manifestos from 306 parties are available. For the majority of countries, the period of investigation begins in the 1960s and extends to 2017, except for France, Germany, and the Netherlands, for which even older election programs were collected. The determination of the observation period depends mainly on the definition of new parties. For this project, a party is considered new if it enters parliament for the first time only after the formation and consolidation of the original party system.[1] To ensure that this period of formation and consolidation of the party system has already taken place, I only examine new parties that entered parliament for the first time after 1960. This threshold ensures that the party systems of the countries studied have reached a certain maturity so that new parties can no longer belong to the original party system. For

1 I exclude electoral alliances, but parties which came out of a party merger or split are included in the sample.

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Table 5.1: Manifesto Corpus Data Availability at Country Level

Iso	Country Name	Obs.	No. of Parties	First Year	Last Year
36	Australia	88	11	1961	2016
40	Austria	66	10	1966	2017
56	Belgium	134	24	1961	2010
124	Canada	53	9	1962	2015
208	Denmark	175	17	1960	2011
246	Finland	97	13	1962	2011
250	France	65	20	1958	2017
276	Germany	89	19	1949	2017
372	Ireland	75	15	1961	2016
380	Italy	100	38	1963	2013
528	Netherlands	130	27	1946	2017
554	New Zealand	82	11	1960	2014
578	Norway	95	8	1961	2013
620	Portugal	66	14	1975	2015
724	Spain	98	31	1977	2016
752	Sweden	103	9	1960	2014
756	Switzerland	94	17	1963	2015
826	United Kingdom	61	13	1964	2017
Total		1671	306	1946	2017

countries that were democratized later, such as Portugal and Spain, I have set the beginning of the period under study at 1980, so that here too, at least one election has taken place before parties entering parliament for the first time can be considered new.

There is also the question of whether there is a time limit on how long the party can be considered new for individual parties. This, too, depends heavily on the definitional criteria for new parties, so the approaches taken vary. While some studies circumvent this issue by focusing on the number of new parties that enter parliament for the first time (Tavits, 2006; Zons, 2015), others explicitly examine the entire life span of a new party (Tavits, 2008; Willey, 1998). A third group tries to capture the degree of novelty by looking at characteristics of the party organization or its ideology (Barnea and Rahat, 2011).

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In this study, the newness of a party is defined by its first entry into parliament, which is described as organizational newness (Bolleyer and Bytzek, 2017). This criterion is in principle open to setting a point in time after which a party is no longer considered new. However, this threshold would be arbitrary because there is a lack of evidence in theory after how many elections the new-party effect has worn off. Hence, I argue for explicitly including the number of elections in which a new party contested as a control variable in the model.

The case selection procedure gives me a sample of 168 new parties in 18 countries for which at least some manifestos are available.[2] This results in a total of 5296 dyads that can be analyzed. Depending on the variables used in the model, the number of parties and dyads in the sample becomes considerably smaller. I give the exact number in the descriptions of the model in the corresponding subsections. One example should be enough here: Analysis demands at least two time points for each party in order to capture changes in the election program; therefore, all new parties which only have been in the parliament for one election are dropped in the model fitting process, which gives me 117 new parties without missing values for the strategy values.

I summarize the case selection and observation period as well as the number of parties and dyads in Table 5.2. In addition, a comprehensive list of all new parties, their respective manifesto ID (or CMP party code), and descriptive statistics on their vote share can be found in Table 8.1 in the appendix.

2 A detailed description of the availability of corpus data at party level can be found in section 8.1 in the appendix.

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Table 5.2: Case Selection

Country	Time		Observations	
	First Year	Last Year	No. of New Parties	No. of Dyads
Australia	2010	2016	3	26
Austria	1986	2017	6	71
Belgium	1968	2014	15	1121
Canada	1997	2015	4	46
Denmark	1960	2015	11	676
Finland	1970	2015	6	304
France	1993	2017	8	148
Germany	1983	2017	3	81
Ireland	1982	2016	10	143
Italy	1976	2018	23	435
Netherlands	1967	2017	20	745
New Zealand	1966	2017	9	253
Norway	1961	2017	3	170
Portugal	1983	2015	4	89
Spain	1982	2016	17	326
Sweden	1988	2014	4	116
Switzerland	1987	2015	12	374
United Kingdom	1983	2017	10	172
Total	1960	2018	168	5296

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5.2 Dyadic Approach

Previous work on the influence of rivals on party positions usually relies on observations of party-years, with these studies either focusing on the analysis of a few selected rivals (Meguid, 2008) or using a spatial-matrix approach in which the various movements of rivals are combined into one measure (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b).

A critical evaluation of this approach was made by Williams (2015). The author points out that summarizing the policy moves of different parties "violates our understanding of strategic party competition and produces unrealistic empirical predictions" (Williams, 2015, p. 146). His solution is to replace the uniform-weight matrix with more advanced spatial econometric models. The matrix is weighted according to different schemes to consider influences of neighbors, parties of the same family, and the like. On the one hand, this leads to more realistic empirical results, as its application in policy diffusion research shows (Böhmelt et al., 2016). On the other hand, the problem of information loss due to averaging persists.

Another solution to this problem is the dyadic approach, which I opt for here. The dyadic approach has been used mainly in international relations and in diffusion research (Volden, 2006). Recently, this approach has also become increasingly popular in party policy research (Düpont, 2017; Düpont and Rachuj, 2021). In the dyadic approach, each observation consists of a combination of two observation units. So instead of party-years, a dyadic study is based on dyad-years, i.e., a pair of parties is studied at different points in time. In the dyadic approach, each party is "allowed to be the potential "receiver" and "sender" of a policy, and independent variables can measure the characteristics of both "receivers" and "senders", as well as their relationships" (Gilardi and Füglister, 2008, p. 415). This method thus avoids averaging all movements of parties in a party system in one measurement and allows to take the characteristics of different parties and their relationship into account. Therefore, it is well suited for the analysis conducted here.

I compare each new party with every contender party in the same party system at that election. That means new parties are also compared to other parties considered new. The rationale behind this decision is that competition between new parties seems as influential as between established and new parties. Moreover, new parties in a party system may have entered parliament at very different times and therefore differ in their degree of maturity. A restriction, therefore, does not appear to be appropriate.

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After I have just explained the selection of cases and the data source, I devote the following sections to operationalizing the dependent and independent variables. I then turn to the modeling and method of statistical evaluation.

5.3 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of this analysis is the vote share of new parties. Since Downs (1957), models of spatial competition have been based on vote share, despite efforts to develop these models further (Strom, 1990). This seems appropriate because the vote share plays a central role in the political system. It decisively determines the number of seats to be expected in parliament, influences the prospects of gaining political office or participation in coalition formation, and is linked to many other advantages, such as the level of party funding or media coverage. Therefore, party strategists are likely to keep an eye on their own vote share and that of others.

From a methodological point of view, the vote share allows the modeling of success and failure over the entire life span of a party in parliament. Compared to other conceivable measures such as first-time re-election (Obert and Müller, 2017) or the number of total electoral participations, this is a great advantage for the research interest pursued here. Although other methods are also justified in their respective area, they do not fit the analysis of the dynamics of position and issue competition that is of interest here, as they focus on the beginning or end of a party's journey in parliament.

The distribution of vote shares (cf. Figure 5.1) for new parties shows a strikingly right-skewed distribution with a mean (dashed line) of 7.02% and a standard deviation of 6.43%. The median is 5.10%. So while the center of gravity of the distribution is in the range below 10% of the vote, there are a surprising number of observations that even exceed 20% of the vote.

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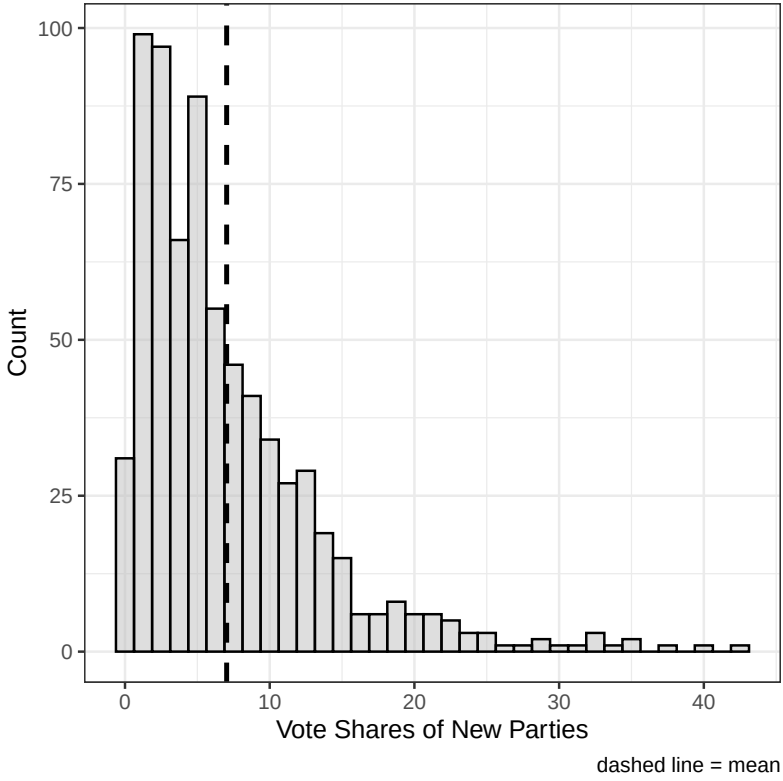

Figure 5.1: Distribution of Vote Shares of New Parties

Let us look at the distribution of the election results of new parties by countries (cf. Figure 5.2) for the whole observation period. We first see that relatively similar median values of around 5 percent are observed in the majority of countries, with a lower group with well below 5 percent in the countries Ireland, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Spain standing out relatively clearly from a smaller upper group consisting of Canada and Belgium with around 10 percent median vote share. Concerning the dispersion of the values, Italy, the Netherlands, and Canada are particularly striking, with a range of almost 40 percent of the votes. These sometimes large differences between countries suggest that country-fixed effects should be included in the model.

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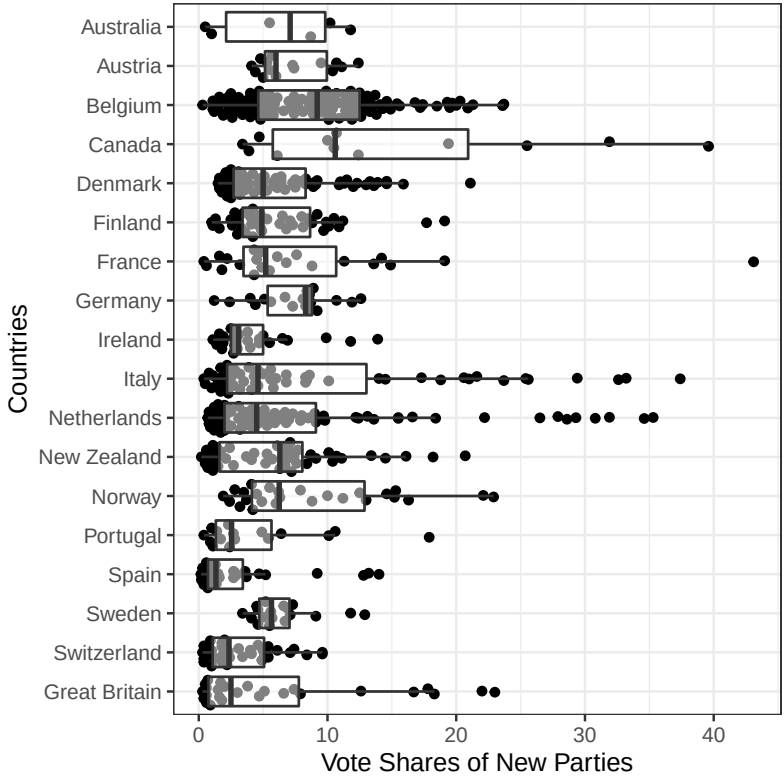

Figure 5.2: Election Results of New Parties by Countries

5.4 Independent Variables

The dyadic approach adopted here pairs new parties with established competitors. This makes it easy to capture characteristics of the established party, the new party, or their relationship using independent variables. This chapter follows the same logic: first, I explain how I operationalized the strategic behavior of the established party. I then discuss the measurement of nicheness as a characteristic of the new party. Next, the shared party family represents the relationship between the two parties. Finally, I discuss the selection and operationalization of control variables such as the type of electoral system.

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In this project, I consider positional and issue competition as the main areas of strategic party activity. I, therefore, formulate and examine the strategies of established parties vis-à-vis their new competitors with regard to these two dimensions. This requires appropriate measurements of both dimensions. I use manifesto data, specifically the RILE, to measure positional competition on the left-right dimension. The scholars of policy moves heavily utilized this approach, so I draw on their previous work. However, I use a different approach to measure issue competition, namely the computer-assisted text analysis of election programs. Both methods will be explained in greater detail below.

5.4.1 Positional Competition

The theoretical model on which this work is based sees positional competition around the left-right dimension as an essential part of strategic party competition. The basic idea of this approach is that voters prefer the party in an election which has the smallest distance to their position. A variety of approaches have been developed to capture the position of parties. A general overview of the most important of these methods has already been given in section 5.1. The conclusion is that no method is without weaknesses, so compromises are necessary. In the context of this work, I follow the leading strand of (policy move) research and use CMP data to calculate the RILE index (Budge and Klingemann, 2001) as a measurement of party position. A detailed discussion of the properties, advantages, and disadvantages of the CMP data and the RILE was carried out in chapter 4. Hence, in this section, I will explain the calculation of the strategy based on the RILE index.

Measuring Strategic Positional Competition

While in the policy move literature, the direction of the policy moves plays a crucial role, here the changes in the relative position of the new and the established party to each other are to be determined. For this purpose, the election program of the new parties is compared with that of the established party at two successive election dates (cf. Figure 5.3). Thus, the observed change in distance can be attributed to the policy move of the established party.

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$$D_1 \quad \left|NewParty_{t0} - Est.Party_{t0}\right| \quad \text{(Position Distance at Initial Election)}$$

$$D_2 \quad \left|NewParty_{t0} - Est.Party_{t1}\right| \quad \text{(Position Distance after Policy Move)}$$

$$Strategy_{RILE} \begin{cases} \text{confrontation strategy} & \text{if} \quad D_2 - D_1 > 0, \\ \text{maintainance strategy} & \text{if} \quad D_2 - D_1 \sim 0, \\ \text{adoption strategy} & \text{if} \quad D_2 - D_1 < 0 \end{cases} \quad \text{(Strategy)}$$

Figure 5.3: Equations to Calculate the Positional Strategy of Parties

First, I measure the difference in position between the election manifestos of both contenders in the initial election. Second, I compare the position of the established party in the next election with the position of the new party in the initial election. The comparison of the two differences allows conclusions to be drawn about the shift in the position of the established party. If the difference between the two parties has increased, the calculated strategy variable takes on positive values. The established party has chosen a confrontational strategy. If the distance has decreased, the values of the strategy variable are negative. The established party has taken a position closer to the new party, i.e., it has chosen an adoption strategy.

Descriptive Statistics

In order to determine the strategy of an established party, three election programs must be available. However, this has a negative effect on the total number of dyads to be examined. Of 5296 dyads of interest in the sample, a strategy value could be calculated for 3579 due to missing values. The distribution of values for the strategy variable is slightly right-skewed, with the range of values larger for negative values (representing adopting strategies). It is striking that the mean value is very close to zero. Thus, many parties change their right-left position slightly from election to election. At the same time, even large policy moves of 20 or more points are actually not rare, regardless of whether they are an expression of an adopting or a confronting strategy.

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When looking at the histograms for the individual countries (cf. Figure 5.4), somewhat smaller differences in detail become apparent:[3] In Australia (ISO code 36), the number of analyzable dyads is relatively small, contributing to noticeable gaps in the distribution of values. There are only minimal changes in the RILE in many cases in Spain (ISO code 724), which is reflected in a pronounced peak in the histogram. A similar pattern is observed in Belgium (ISO code 56). All in all, these country differences are relatively small, so it is not apparent that individual countries or groups of countries deviate to such an extent that no generalization is possible.

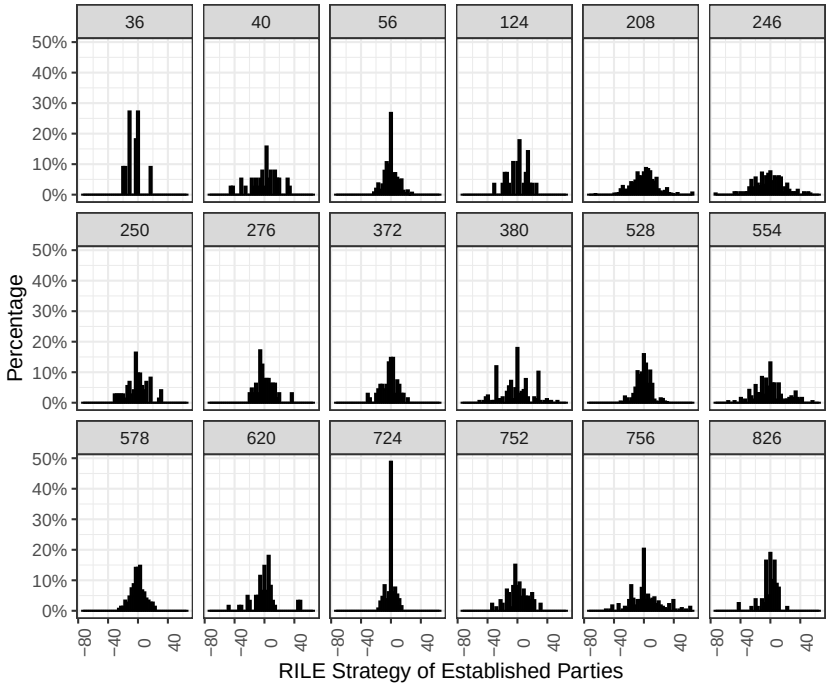

Figure 5.4: Distribution of Positional Strategies of Established Parties By Countries (ISO Codes)

3 In order to better compare the countries with each other, I present them side by side in one figure. In order to provide a good graphical representation of the histograms despite the different numbers of cases, I have chosen the percentage scale for the y-axis. Furthermore, I use the ISO codes instead of country names for better plotting.

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From a Downsian perspective, the adopting strategy should be associated with a lower vote share for the new party because voters have an established party as an alternative. Hence, confrontation should have the opposite effect. Furthermore, previous research suggests that parties tend to moderate their position, which means "that parties tended to shift their policy positions in the same direction that their opponents had shifted their policies at the previous election"(Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b, p. 825). This corresponds to a maintaining strategy with a relatively small effect on the vote share since the distance between the two parties remains the same.

However, following Green-Pedersen (2007, p. 608) I assume that positional competition plays a secondary role for new parties because the left-right dimension is not as crucial for new parties as it is for established parties. For this reason, adoption and confrontation strategies are likely to have relatively small effect sizes on the vote share of the new parties. Instead, issue competition is likely to have a more significant influence. I will discuss this in the following section.

5.4.2 Issue Competition

This study assumes that issue competition is, besides position, a fundamental component of party competition. Issue competition means that parties compete by emphasizing issues to different degrees. In this way, they try to convince voters of their competence in the respective area or the urgency of the respective issue to have a favorable starting position in the election.

The measurement of similarities and differences in the emphasis of issues between parties was so far done by evaluating CMP data (Seeberg, 2020a, p. 8). However, this means a restriction to a small number of specific issues. This limitation is particularly problematic when researching new parties. Instead, I aim for a truly multidimensional measure that avoids the a priori determination of issues to be investigated. Hence, in this project, I use a novel measure that determines the similarity of documents based on quantitative text analysis.

While the fundamentals of bag-of-words approaches (cf. section 4.1.2) and the calculation of cosine similarity scores (cf. subsection 4.1.3) have already been explained in great detail, this chapter focuses on the calculations necessary to construct a measurement of strategic issue adaptation and avoidance and the challenges posed by multilingual corpus documents.

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From Text to Data

Text-as-data approaches combine several advantages that justify their use in party research: For the thesis at hand, it is particularly favorable that the measurement does not require an a priori determination of categories. Thus, it is possible to capture changes in parties' issue competition strategies without relying on the prior specification of issues. This is a great advantage, especially when examining parties that potentially address new or niche issues that are not part of the left-right dimension.

In order to capture the similarity of the parties' issue emphasis, a quantitative text analysis was conducted. The basic idea of the measurement is grounded in the distribution hypothesis, according to which similar topics are formulated with similar terms (Sahlgren, 2008). Since only comparisons between election programs in successive elections were made, possible semantic problems due to the shift in the meaning of terms over time are not expected. So, if documents show a high correspondence of the terms used as well as their frequency, this is interpreted as an expression of a similar issue structure. Thus, following the bag-of-words approach, the text similarity of election manifestos is considered here to measure the similarity of the issues addressed by the parties in their election manifestos.

The election programs to be analyzed are formulated in natural language in all its complexity, "but not all of language's complexity is necessary to effectively analyze texts" (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013, p. 272). To reduce this complexity, information is discarded that is unnecessary for the statistical analysis. In this respect, the most consequent step is to discard the order of words in the document, analyzing only the frequency of the individual terms. The document-feature matrix constructed in this way represents text as word count data. While each column represents a unique term, each row represents a document. The cells contain the frequency of the respective feature in the text. For this matrix to be analyzed meaningfully, all documents must be available in the same language. I will explain the necessary translation and validation in a separate section (c.f. section 5.4.2).

The construction and preprocessing of the document-feature matrix has the task of converting the contents of the texts into frequency data, so that the text contents of interest become as easily accessible to the analysis as possible and are not obscured due to frequent terms or content-less stopwords. At the same time, the construction and preprocessing of the document-feature-matrix should not itself lead to bias. To meet these objectives, as few preprocessing steps as possible were carried out. All manifestos were subjected to the same

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preprocessing steps, i.e., all manifestos from all countries were translated into English. In this way, I ensure that the bias induced by these steps is as similar as possible for all electoral programs and that the observed differences are not falsely attributed to countries, for example, when they are actually methodological artifacts.

Before preprocessing of the documents can begin, however, it must be ensured that the documents to be compared are in the same language. Since comparisons are only made within countries, one might assume that this would not be a problem. However, in practice, it has become apparent that this is indeed a challenge. In Finland, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and Canada, the parties compete in more than one language. Therefore, I conducted a computer-assisted translation of the document-feature matrix of all manifesto corpus documents in the sample to overcome language barriers between manifestos. I report on the details of this process in the following section.

For the preprocessing steps, I follow generally accepted procedures (Reber, 2019, p. 5), which include splitting of n-grams, removal of stopwords, trimming, and normalization. N-grams are terms that consist of several individual words. These result, among other things, when compound words are translated for which there is no direct equivalent in the target language. In splitting, n-grams are broken down into individual words. This is justified because n-grams do not generally improve the quality of the analysis (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013). Afterward, so-called stopwords were removed based on a stopword list. Stopwords are terms that do not themselves convey any topic-related information because they mainly fulfill grammatical functions (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013, p. 273). They can therefore be ignored in the analysis conducted here. For the same reason punctuation, numbers, and symbols are removed from the text.

The removal of stopwords does influence the word distribution, but since the terms do not have any meaning in terms of content, this should be substantially insignificant (de Vries et al., 2018). Since the list of stopwords differs from language to language, this step is a potential gateway for bias. To exclude this, all document-feature matrices were translated into English, and the resulting translated DFM was freed from English stopwords. In a third step, terms were removed from the DFM that appeared in less than 1% and more than 99% of the documents. This so-called trimming serves to neither overestimate nor underestimate similarities of documents due to particularly rare or frequent terms (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013, p. 273). It also improves the efficiency and accuracy of the results (Welbers et al., 2017, p. 253).

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Finally, the DFM was weighted or normalized, i.e., the absolute frequencies in the cells were converted into relative frequencies. This step compensates for differences in the length of different documents.

The DFM thus obtained is the basis of the analysis carried out here. Based on this data, the text similarity between pairs of documents is calculated. I will go into the details of this procedure in a separate section (c.f. section 5.4.2).

Before that, however, the multilingualism of the election programs should be addressed in greater detail. As has already been said, the documents to be compared must be in the same language in terms of their textual similarity. Therefore, I had to translate the manifestos. In the following section, I give a brief overview of the process.[4]

Dealing with Multilingual Corpora

The best way to compare multilingual election programs is a human translation of all full texts into a common language. However, the large volume of data to be translated would require a tremendous amount of time and money. Fortunately, machine translation has made great strides in recent years. Although it has not yet reached the quality of human translation, it has become a viable option for political science as well, and it is fast, inexpensive (de Vries et al., 2018; Lucas et al., 2015; Reber, 2019), and easy to use. Providers such as Google Translate allow access to their service via the well-known web interfaces and APIs. Packages such as translateR (Lucas and Tingley, 2015) use the APIs to allow direct access by statistical software such as R (R Core Team, 2021) to process the data.

The pricing for machine translations usually depends on the volume of the characters to be translated. For example, a full-text translation of the entire Manifesto Corpus would cost more than 10,000 dollars using the Google translation service. In order to use scarce resources as efficiently as possible, it is therefore vital to keep the amount of text as small as possible.

Therefore, a term-by-term translation of the document-feature matrix as proposed by Reber (2019, p. 5) is performed here. This process allows the number of characters to be translated to be drastically reduced. Instead of translating the same words repeatedly, each unique term is translated only

4 The translation and data collection procedure presented in the next section was carried out in January and February 2019. Therefore, the data has already been validated and was applied in another project I am involved in (Düpont and Rachuj, 2021).

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once per language. Moreover, the number of characters in the DFM does not increase linearly with the number of election programs that this DFM represents. After a certain number of election programs, almost all terms have appeared once, and another election program hardly contains any new unique features. For example, while all German election programs contain about 20 million characters, the DFM of all German election programs has only 1.6 million characters. All in all, the number of characters to be translated for the entire sample is reduced from over 160 million to about 7.2 million characters and thus by more than 95%.

In the entire sample of 18 countries, 13 different languages are represented. These are Catalan, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish. English was chosen as the target language for the translation. English, already the lingua franca, is also the largest single language in the sample, with five English-speaking countries, so it makes sense to choose this language to have to translate as little as possible and thus keep the costs low. In addition, English has a reputation for delivering the best translation results, not least because most parallel corpora are available for English, based on which the translation models are trained (de Vries et al., 2018, p. 5). In total, 12 language pairs had to be translated.

As Grimmer and Stewart (2013) remind us, validation is central to text-as-data approaches. Of course, this also applies to machine translation. Three translation strategies can be distinguished: If the human full-text translation mentioned at the beginning is interpreted as the gold standard, then the machine full-text translation is to be seen as the silver standard, and the translation of the document-feature matrix as the bronze standard.

A comparison of the silver and bronze standards was carried out to validate the translation, i.e., to prove that the translated DFM is of comparable quality to a full-text machine translation. While for the whole corpus, the respective DFMs were translated with all manifestos of the respective source languages, a part of the corpus (about 20% of the texts for each language) was also full-text translated. The DFMs of the full-text translations were then compared with the feature-translated DFMSs in terms of cosine and Jaccard text similarity, vocabulary, and patterns of text similarity between the election programs.

The results show a high degree of text similarity between the texts despite different translation paths, a high degree of vocabulary similarity, and – most important here – a very high degree of correspondence in the similarity

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patterns found between the election programs.[5] These data confirm the results of Reber (2019). The term-by-term translation method has thus proven its suitability. In summary, the presented translation method allows for the cost-effective comparison of election programs of different input languages. It thus provides a good starting point for calculating the independent variable used here.

Measuring Strategic Issue Competition as Text Similarity

The previous section explained how the document-feature matrix was constructed and how the machine translation and validation were performed. This section explains how the text similarity was calculated based on the translated DFMs and how I derive a measure of strategic issue competition from it.

Several different measures have been proposed in the literature to capture the similarity between two texts (Bär, 2013, p. 17). This study uses the cosine similarity measure because it can be regarded as a baseline model: "[…] The standard way of quantifying the similarity between two documents d1 and d2 is to compute the cosine similarity of their vector representations […]" (Manning et al., 2008, p. 121). It has a common scale from 0 (no similarity) to 1 (equal texts) and is robust against different text lengths. Furthermore, this measure is well implemented in content analysis packages like Quanteda (Benoit et al., 2018) and fits perfectly with the dyadic approach.

In order to develop a measurement of issue competition strategy from the measurement of text similarity, I proceed analogously to the calculation of the positional strategy explained above. The measurement is done by comparing three election programs. First, I calculate the text similarity of the election programs of the two competitors in the initial election following the equation in Figure 4.2. Then I calculate the text similarity between the election program of the established party in the next election and the initial election program of the new party. From the comparison of the two indicators (cf. Figure 5.5), it can be concluded whether the established party has taken up issues of the new party or respectively emphasized them more than before (engagement strategy) or not (avoidance strategy). So I interpret this measurement as the established party's issue competition strategy against the new party.

5 A more comprehensive (including graphical) presentation of the validation process including all results can be found in the validation report (Düpont and Rachuj, 2020).

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$$S_1 \quad NewParty_{t0} \text{ vs. } Est.Party_{t0} \quad \text{(Cosine Similarity at Initial Election)}$$

$$S_2 \quad NewParty_{t0} \text{ vs. } Est.Party_{t1} \quad \text{(Cosine Similarity with New Manifesto)}$$

$$Strategy_{Cosine} \begin{cases} \text{avoidance strategy} & \text{if} \quad S_1 - S_2 > 0, \\ \text{indifference strategy} & \text{if} \quad S_1 - S_2 \sim 0, \\ \text{engagement strategy} & \text{if} \quad S_1 - S_2 < 0 \end{cases} \quad \text{(Strategy)}$$

Figure 5.5: Equations to Calculate the Issue Competition Strategy of Parties

Since the issue competition calculation is based on similarities in election programs, while the positional competition measurement is based on differences in position, I adjusted the measurement of issue competition so that negative values indicate an engagement strategy, just as negative values for position competition reflect an adoption strategy.

Negative values can be interpreted as an engagement strategy because the similarity between the new party's election program and the established party's changed manifesto is higher than before. The established party shares more words or uses the shared words more often than in the previous election. Vice versa, positive values correspond to an avoidance strategy: the distance between both manifests has increased, some issues are not or not as often emphasized as before. In the next section, I present descriptive statistics for this variable.

Descriptive Statistics

Presented above is the calculation of issue competition strategy based on two different text similarity measurements of three election programs. In total, the issue competition strategy could be calculated for 2770 dyads. The number of missing values is higher than for the positional strategy because of the smaller scope of the Manifesto Corpus. While the variable has a theoretical range of values from -1 to 1, we see an empirical range in the sample from -0.52 to 0.82. These are high numbers grounded on remarkable changes in the election programs of the established parties. However, such significant changes are comparatively rare.

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Moreover, the observed values are symmetrically distributed around the mean value of 0.008 (standard deviation 0.1). The median of the distribution is 0.0035. The avoidance strategy is observed slightly more often than the engagement strategy.

To gain more detailed insights, it is useful to look at the histograms for the individual countries (c.f. Figure 5.6).[6] Here, too, it can be seen that most countries have a rather symmetrical distribution of values around the midpoint, which is close to zero. That means strategies of issue avoidance (positive values) and engagement (negative values) roughly balance each other out.

Despite this fundamental similarity, there are also notable differences between the countries. Again, Australia (ISO code 36) catches the eye because the small number of dyads appear as gaps in the histogram. As in the analysis of the distribution of positional competition strategies, Spain (ISO code 724) stands out in particular. Here, a pronounced peak can be seen in the histogram, reflecting that in a high number of cases, only minimal changes are made to the election program of the established parties. In other words, the strategy of indifference towards the new parties is used particularly often in Spain. Italy, on the contrary, shows a comparatively broad distribution of values, i.e., changes in the electoral program in both directions (avoidance and engagement) are observed with similar frequency, as is the strategy of indifference.

However, most countries do not show any peculiarities in their histogram and thus resemble each other quite well. Therefore, I have no reason to believe that individual countries might distort the analysis results.

6 Like in Figure 5.4 I present country histograms side by side in one figure for better comparability. In order to provide a good graphical representation of the histograms despite the different numbers of cases, I have chosen the percentage scale for the y-axis. Furthermore, I use the ISO codes instead of country names for better plotting.

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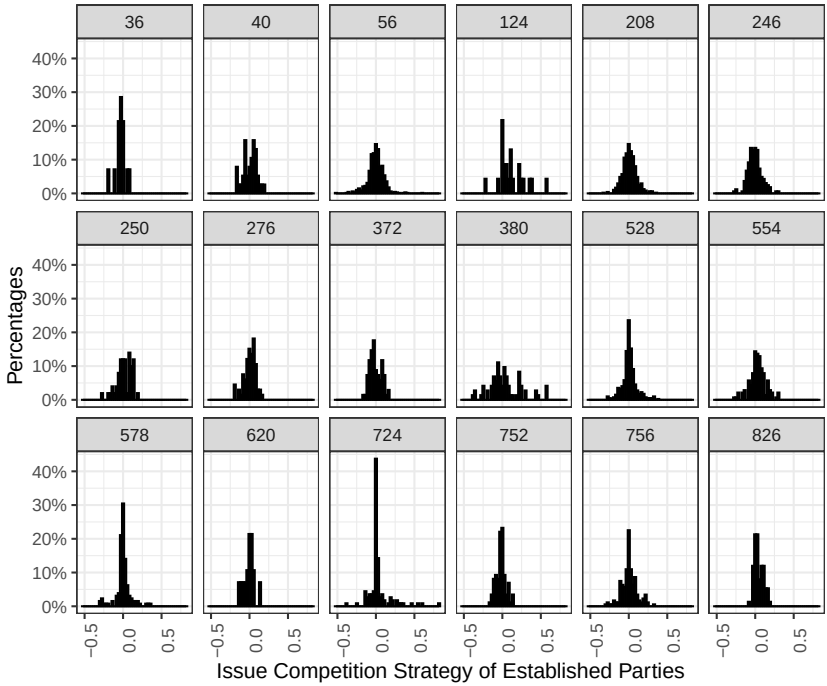

Figure 5.6: Distribution of Issue Competition Strategies of Established Parties By Countries (ISO Codes)

On theoretical grounds, I assume that an avoidance strategy is associated with a higher vote share for the new party because the party can mobilize their electorate around their issues without a rival with a competing offer in this segment. Accordingly, the engagement strategy is more likely to be associated with losing votes for the new party. Within the same ideological bloc, this relationship can disappear or be reversed. I will discuss this problem in the next section.

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5.4.3 New Parties and Niche Issues

The study of niche parties has been popular over the last 15 years. However, an important part of the research focuses on the definition of the term, as very different conceptions have been put forward: ”Researchers are still searching for concepts to clarify the defining criteria of niche parties, which results in different parties being perceived as niche parties” (Bischof, 2017, p. 220). Especially in early works, niche parties are considered a special type of party whose ideology differs from other parties by extreme (e.g., extreme nationalist) or non-centrist (e.g., green) issues. The classification into party families was used to identify such parties: ”We label the members of the Communist, Green, and extreme nationalist party families as niche parties” (Adams et al., 2006, p. 513). Meguid also identifies niche parties through party family affiliation. Her ”analysis focuses on the most common set of niche parties: the environmental and radical right parties (Meguid, 2005, p.351).

A different path was taken by Meyer and Miller (2015). The authors pointed out that niche parties are best captured with a minimal definition: ”A niche party emphasizes policy areas neglected by its competitors” (Meyer and Miller, 2015, p. 261). They further argue that ”other definitional elements proposed in the literature are variable rather than definitional properties. Specifically, (1) the novelty of its issues, and (2) its ’different’ (i.e. non-economic) ideology are not essential elements and should be seen as empirical correlates rather than defining elements” (Meyer and Miller, 2015, p. 261).

With this new conception, the focus is no longer on identifying individual parties as niche parties but on the degree of nicheness that a party exhibits. This shift is of particular importance concerning new parties: it is often implicitly assumed that new parties and niche parties are identical. I argue, however, that niche parties are a subset of new parties. They may well be more vulnerable or resilient than other new parties. Therefore, I test whether the degree of nicheness influences the electoral vulnerability of new parties to strategies of established parties.

In order to measure the degree of nicheness of a party, Meyer and Miller (2015) proposed a new measurement that ”should capture party nicheness as a relative concept of ‘being distinct’ from the competitors’ issue emphasis; assess the degree to which a party accentuates policy areas (i.e. being continuous rather than dichotomous); allow for variation over time; and it should not restrict policy niches to specific policy areas (such as immigration or environmental protection)” (p. 262). Therefore, Meyer and Miller

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(2015) compare for each policy dimension a "party's policy profile with the (weighted) average of the remaining parties in the system" (p. 262).

This measurement was later taken up and further developed by Bischof (2017), who combines two measures in order to generate an "additive nicheness index" (p. 226).

First, he uses the unweighed variant of the nicheness score proposed by Meyer and Miller. This "market share score" compares a party's selective emphasis on specific issues with the average emphasis on these issues by all other parties in the party system. He distinguished between ecological, agrarian, regional, extreme right, and eurosceptic segments. Bischof operationalizes his concept by assigning Manifesto Project pers to measure the emphasis of the market segments. These segments reflect the main issues of classic niche parties as identified by Adams or Meguid. What they all have in common is that they reflect non-economic issues on the fringes of the party system that mainly were ignored before the emergence of the niche party and thus integrate a new line of conflict into the party system (Bischof, 2017, p. 224).

Second, he develops a measure of specialization. It captures how different the parties' manifestos are for the five segments mentioned above. Combining both measures gives him a nicheness score, whereby high values represent a party with a significant market share advantage and a limited offer. In contrast, low values represent a diverse manifesto in which many market segments are discussed (Bischof, 2017, p. 227).

The main disadvantage of this type of measurement is the a priori definition of issues and the dependence on the availability of Manifesto Project data. The definition proposed by Meyer and Miller (2015) also does not mention specific issues or characteristics of these issues, while the concrete measurements make restrictions in this respect by focusing on particular issue segments. A measurement that builds directly on the election programs can avoid these shortcomings. I will propose such a text analytical measurement here.

Conceptually, it is based on the measurement developed by Meyer and Miller (2015) and Bischof (2017). The basic idea is that the nicheness concept describes that some parties make policy offers to voters that differ significantly from the offers already available in the party system. This is, of course, a question of degree and not of kind, so a continuous measure seems to be appropriate.

The measurement focuses on comparing the text similarity of the party under study with all other parties in the party system. So I compare the selective issue emphasis of one party with all the other parties in the party system

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for a particular election. The proposed nicheness score is best understood as the average similarity of a party to the party system. High values represent a party that is very similar to all the others, while low values show that the party focuses on other issues than the rest of the party system. While the first party could be referred to as a mainstream party, the second is a niche party. I call this measurement the party system similarity score.

I compare it with Bischof's nicheness score to validate my new measurement. A simple correlation analysis first shows the expected negative correlation (Pearson's R=-0.37), which indicates the plausibility of the new measurement (cf. Figure 5.7), but also that the two measures are not simply identical. Then, a more detailed analysis looks at the measurement value for different groups in the sample and at different points in time.

First, I compare the party system similarity score and the nicheness ccore for new versus established parties. If we look at the party system similarity score for new parties, we see that they have somewhat lower means overall than established parties ($\varnothing NewParties$ 0.45 vs. $\varnothing EstablishedParties$ 0.47). Two sample t-tests are statistically significant (p = 0.05).[7]

Bischof's nicheness score shows a substantially similar result, with new parties having a higher nicheness ($\varnothing NewParties$ 0.57) than established parties ($\varnothing EstablishedParties$ 0.51). Again the two-sample t-test is significant (p = 0.001).

This makes sense since new parties can often be assigned to one of the party families considered niche parties. Nevertheless, the slight difference also shows that an equation of new and niche parties is not appropriate. Therefore, the implicit equation of both concepts should be abandoned in favor of a concrete measurement of the nicheness of the parties.

7 Contemporary quantitative research in the social sciences and their neighbouring disciplines is subject to considerable criticism (c.f. Ioannidis (2005); Wuttke (2019)). The so-called replication crisis sheds light on weaknesses and problems in the application of quantitative methodology (Schrodt, 2014) as well as on publishing mechanisms. At the heart of the debate is a profound critique of the use of tests of statistical significance (cf. Gill (1999); McShane et al. (2019); Troeger (2019)). These tests are especially questionable when the study units are not randomly selected, or a complete sample is studied (Behnke, 2005), as is the case in this project. However, I follow the mainstream consensus in this field and report the p-values, but opt for a cautious interpretation due to the concerns expressed by the scholars mentioned above.

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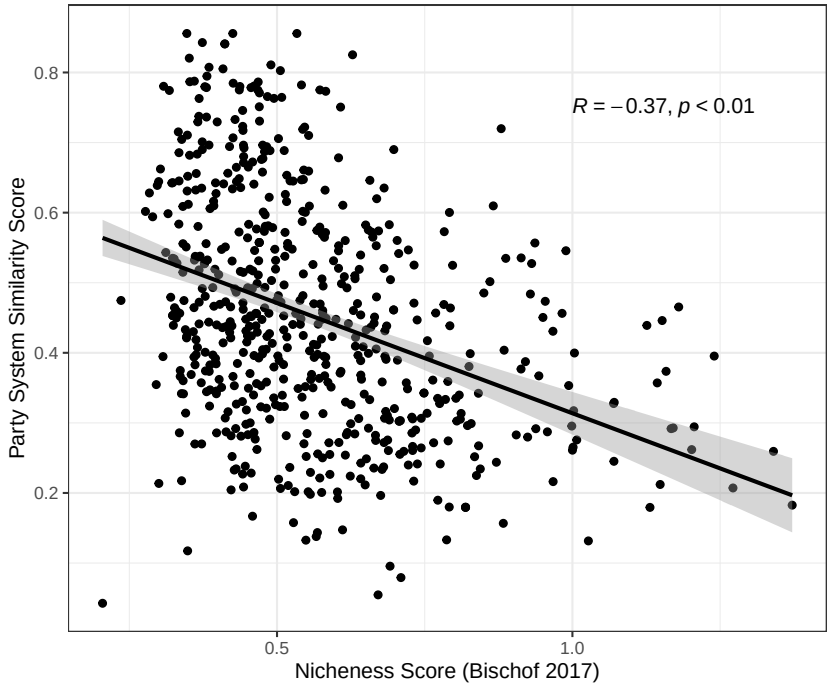

Figure 5.7: Relationship Between Different Nicheness Scores of New Parties

Table 5.3 summarizes mean, standard deviation, lower and upper quartile, as well as the median for the two measures by party families. Looking at the values in detail, we find that ethnic, regional, special issue, and nationalist parties show the least similarity with the rest of the party system on average.[8] This result is encouraging because these party families ideally represent issues classified as non-centrist or extreme. A similar picture emerges for Bischof's nicheness score: Special-issue parties, and the nationalists have the highest score. They are followed by the parties of the ecological party family.

At first glance, it is surprising that there seems to be a different assessment regarding the nicheness of green parties. However, it must be borne in mind that this comparison does not yet consider the temporal dimension, i.e., the

8 Because there are only two agrarian parties in the sample, I do not consider their values any further. In addition, I have ignored parties that do not belong to a party family (missing values) for this analysis.

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Table 5.3: Party System Similarity and Nicheness Scores for New Parties by Party Families

	Party System Similarity Score					Nicheness Score				
Party Family	Mean	SD	Q1	Median	Q3	Mean	SD	Q1	Median	Q3
Ecological	0.47	0.15	0.34	0.45	0.58	0.62	0.21	0.47	0.57	0.69
Socialist/Left	0.46	0.17	0.32	0.41	0.60	0.58	0.18	0.45	0.56	0.68
Social Democratic	0.49	0.17	0.36	0.45	0.60	0.56	0.21	0.42	0.49	0.66
Liberal	0.45	0.15	0.33	0.46	0.54	0.52	0.21	0.38	0.46	0.67
Christian democratic	0.47	0.19	0.31	0.44	0.66	0.48	0.16	0.37	0.44	0.55
Conservative	0.54	0.15	0.49	0.53	0.63	0.46	0.12	0.37	0.45	0.47
Nationalist	0.44	0.14	0.34	0.45	0.54	0.65	0.18	0.51	0.67	0.76
Agrarian	0.26	0.12	0.15	0.24	0.41	0.52	0.15	0.40	0.57	0.60
Ethnic/Regional	0.34	0.12	0.23	0.36	0.44	0.53	0.14	0.42	0.50	0.62
Special Issue	0.42	0.12	0.32	0.40	0.50	0.66	0.21	0.49	0.62	0.80
All	0.44	0.17	0.31	0.43	0.55	0.56	0.19	0.42	0.51	0.67

development of the measured values from election to election. Through Bischof's research, it is known that niche parties reduce their emphasis on niche issues over time (Bischof, 2017, p. 229). This is particularly true for the green parties, so a general average cannot suffice for the assessment. In the following, I also look at the development of the party system similarity score and the nicheness score during the first ten elections of new parties.

Plotting the measurement by party families and the number of elections shows the correspondence between the two indices even more clearly. For this purpose, I use a transformed party system similarity score, which facilitates comparisons with Bischof's nicheness score thanks to the rescaling. I obtain this by subtracting the party system similarity score from 1. This measurement can be called the party system dissimilarity score, i.e., higher values stand for a low similarity to the other parties in the party system (or a higher nicheness of the party), while low values stand for a high similarity to all other parties.

Figure 5.8 shows the median of the party system similarity score with a black dot and the upper and lower quartile of this variable by the length of the line. The respective values for the nicheness score are shown in red.

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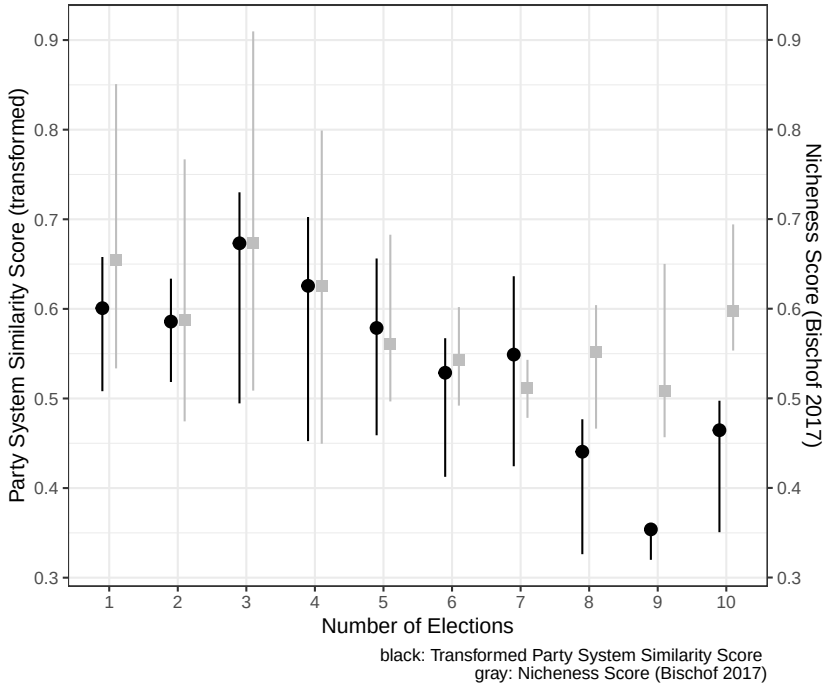

Figure 5.8: Nicheness Scores of Ecological New Parties

I present here the results for the new parties of the ecological party family. The plots for all other party families are in the appendix (c.f. section 8.3). For all party families, except for the Liberals, the transformed party system similarity score corresponds well with Bischof's nicheness score, especially concerning the direction of change. This results in very similar trends, which underlines the validity of the measurement.

At the substantive level, it is striking that in the case of the green parties, a trend towards a reduction in the emphasis of green issues can be seen, i.e., the nicheness of the parties in this party family decreases. A similar pattern can be seen in the special issue parties, which tend to become more moderate after the first elections. The proposed measurement can thus reproduce one of Bischof's key findings, which he calls the "first mover advantage" (Bischof, 2017, p. 230). Almost all other party families, perhaps most pronounced in regional parties, show a wave-like trend. Green and special issue parties are somewhat exceptions to the rule, underlining their status as niche parties.

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In summary, it can be said that statements about the nicheness of new parties are possible by measuring the similarity of election programs using text analysis. Even with small differences in detail, the newly proposed measurement leads to the same conclusions as Bischof's method. Moreover, the party system similarity score has the advantage of not being a priori fixed with regard to the niche issues to be examined. Thus, the measurement is closer to the definition of niche parties as put forward most rigorously by Meyer and Miller. Furthermore, generalization to other points in time or world regions is more straightforward. In addition, the measurement is not dependent on the availability of manual content analysis so that it can be applied cheaply and quickly to new electoral programs, for example, at the state level.

I use the party system similarity score of a new party in my model to measure how much the party deviates from the rest of the party system in terms of its issue emphasis. I suspect that nicheness makes a party vulnerable to the established party's issue competition strategies. As a single effect, I think that the higher nicheness of a new party is associated with a higher vote share for the new party because the high degree of specialty shows that voters have no other parties to vote for.

5.4.4 Ideological Proximity Between New and Established Parties

Downs' model suggests that the closer parties are to their opponents in ideological terms, the more dependent they are on changes in their positions and issues. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that voters prefer parties that are ideologically close to them. From the model's perspective, the policy move of a distant party at the other end of the ideological spectrum should hardly result in voter migration. In contrast, the policy move of a close party could well turn one's voters away. Due to this incentive structure, it can be assumed that parties will react to the policy moves of their rivals by changing their policies in the same direction. Empirical research confirms this assumption (Adams and Merrill III, Samuel, 2009; Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b; Williams, 2015).

At the same time, what electoral consequences this strategic behavior has for (new) parties remains to be seen. I first assume that parties in the same party family also share the same electorate. Therefore, the electoral outcome of new parties may be influenced differently by the policy moves of

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an established competitor in the same party family than by a competitor at the other end of the political spectrum.

I use a priori assessments of ideological position in the sense of Mair (2001) in order to include ideological proximity as a variable in the modeling without generating an endogeneity problem at the same time. The best known and most widely used concept is that of the (ideological) party family (Höhne, 2012; Mair and Mudde, 1998; von Beyme, 1984), by which parties are assigned to types based on their origin or core ideology. Although the concept is considered "one of the most undertheorized and least specified approaches to the general classification of parties" (Mair and Mudde, 1998, p.211), it has been widely used in comparative political science ever since.

For example, the Manifesto Project distinguishes ten party families: Ecological, Socialist, Social Democratic, Liberal, Christian Democratic, Conservative, Nationalist, Agrarian, Ethnic and Regional and Special Issue Parties. The frequency of new parties in these party families is shown in Table 5.4. Most of the new parties in the sample belonged to either the Socialists or the Liberals. New parties of the Ecological family follow them. New Agricultural parties are infrequent. Conservative new parties seem to be particularly successful, while Ethnic and Regional parties have the lowest average vote share.

Concerning new parties, the concept of party families is particularly challenged: While many new parties can be assigned to a traditional party family, others are regarded as founders or representatives of an entirely new group of parties (such as green parties). In the case of a third group, it is difficult to make a classification at all: "[...] Quite a few newly emerging parties might prove sui generis, with little or nothing in their genetic makeup to suggest an equivalence beyond the borders of their own respective polities" (Mair and Mudde, 1998, p. 214).

In order to overcome these problems of classification, concepts have been developed that group different party families into ideological blocs. Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009b) distinguish, based on the party families of the Manifesto Project, a left-wing bloc of Ecologists, Communists, and Social-Democrats and a right-wing consisting of Conservatives, Christian-Democrats and Nationalists (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b, p. 834). The Liberal parties are allocated as a centrist group but are not considered further in the analysis due to the small number of cases. In a broader version of the concept (Düpont, 2017, p. 82), Liberal and Agrarian parties can also be classified as right-wing so that as many party families as possible are represented in the two blocs. Both approaches have in common that Ethnic,

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Table 5.4: Vote Shares of New Parties by Party Family

Party Family	Average Vote Share	No. of New Parties
Ecological parties	5.25	20
Socialist or other left parties	5.70	25
Social democratic parties	7.74	13
Liberal parties	8.40	25
Christian democratic parties	8.59	17
Conservative parties	11.23	11
Nationalist parties	7.49	13
Agrarian parties	6.87	2
Ethnic and regional parties	3.78	17
Special issue parties	9.51	15
Missing information	5.62	10
All new Parties	7.02	168

Regional, and Special Issue parties are omitted, as they are comparatively rare.

I test all three conceptions in this book. Using the dyadic approach, I investigate whether the new and the established party belong to the same party family or ideological bloc. I construct a dummy variable for each of the three concepts, which equals one if both parties share the same group or zero otherwise. To capture the moderating effect of this variable, I introduce an interaction between the (issue) strategy and the (shared) party family into my model.

Regarding positional competition, I assume that parties belonging to the same party family or ideological group should be more susceptible to the strategic policy moves of their rivals because both parties compete for the same voter milieus.

For issue competition, it is conceivable that within the same party family, strategies have a different effect on new parties than they do on new parties outside their group. The reason for this is that an engagement strategy shapes the competition in this ideological group around the issues of the new parties

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and gives them more public attention. The new party has an advantage as the original representative of this issue. The avoidance strategy should be associated with a lower vote share for the new party because the downplay of the issues prevents this.

5.4.5 Competitiveness of the Established Party

Parties' vote maximization is at the heart of Downsian theory. Parties change their position in order to attract votes. Especially the experiences of past elections shape the parties' policy moves (Somer-Topcu, 2009). The past vote gains and losses are also an important signal for voters: a party that was able to win votes in the last election is seen as more competitive than a party that did not (Abou-Chadi and Orlowski, 2016).

Hence, I assume that the past election results of established parties moderate the impact of their strategies: From the voters' point of view, a competitive established party has a high probability of actually implementing its policies. By adopting the new party's position or emphasizing its issues, a competitive established party may convince voters that it is a better alternative than the new party. An established party that is not competitive will not have that advantage.

To examine this phenomenon, I look at the change in the established party's vote share between the previous and the current election. In my view, this raises two problems: the problem of time and the problem of endogeneity, which I briefly discuss below.

First of all, voters make "timely-descisions" (Somer-Topcu, 2009): Research shows that a loss or gain of votes in the last election only affects the current election if there are no more than two years between the two elections. Voters cannot, of course, see into the future, but they do have an eye for current poll results; only in this way is strategic voting conceivable.

At the same time, despite all the justified criticism, election polls as a whole have a considerable track record that reliably anticipates the election result to within a few percentage points of inaccuracy. I, therefore, assume that voters take the expected election result into account in their voting decision. At best, therefore, a poll as close to the election as possible should be used to account for the expected loss or gain of votes. However, since this polling data is not available for so many countries and such a long time series, calculating based on the actual election result is the best available option.

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The second problem is the possible endogeneity: the vote gain or loss of a new party is not independent of the vote gain or loss of the established party. In principle, this objection is correct, but it is only of minor importance in the context of the analysis carried out here.

The problem of endogeneity of the two election results is smaller than one might initially assume since the established party of the dyad under consideration is not the only or most important source of votes for the new party. Rather, a series of other parties take part in the election whose election results are not included in the model. Furthermore, the election results of the new party are also partly fed by former non-voters, so another important source is added.

Importantly, I am also looking at the moderating influence of the established party's competitiveness on the effectiveness of its strategy, i.e., the relationship between strategy and electoral gains and losses. However, this moderating effect on the strategy itself, which is of interest, does not have an endogeneity problem. I am not claiming that the established party's electoral gain leads to the new party's electoral loss, but that the strength and direction of the strategy's effect are influenced by electoral success or loss.

The empirical analysis of the vote gains and losses of the established parties shows a range of values from -28.0 percentage points to +20.6. The mean value is -0.35, with a standard deviation of 4.42. The variable is approximately normally distributed, with most values lying between -10 and 10 or within two standard deviations.

Figure 5.9 shows vote gains and losses of the established parties by countries.[9] The distribution of values in the individual countries is quite similar, with Australia (ISO code 36), Spain (ISO code 724), and Switzerland (ISO code 756) standing out slightly. Again, I see no evidence of a significant, country-specific effect that could confound the analysis.

I assume that the effect of the variable will be negative in the linear-additive model. However, in the linear-interactive model, the case is more complex. Since competitiveness is an essential aspect for voters, it can influence the direction of the effect of the implemented strategies of positional and issue competition, as formulated in hypotheses 5a and 5b.

9 Again, I present country histograms side by side in one figure for better comparability. In order to provide a good graphical representation of the histograms despite the different numbers of cases, I have chosen the percentage scale for the y-axis. Furthermore, I use the ISO codes instead of country names for better plotting.

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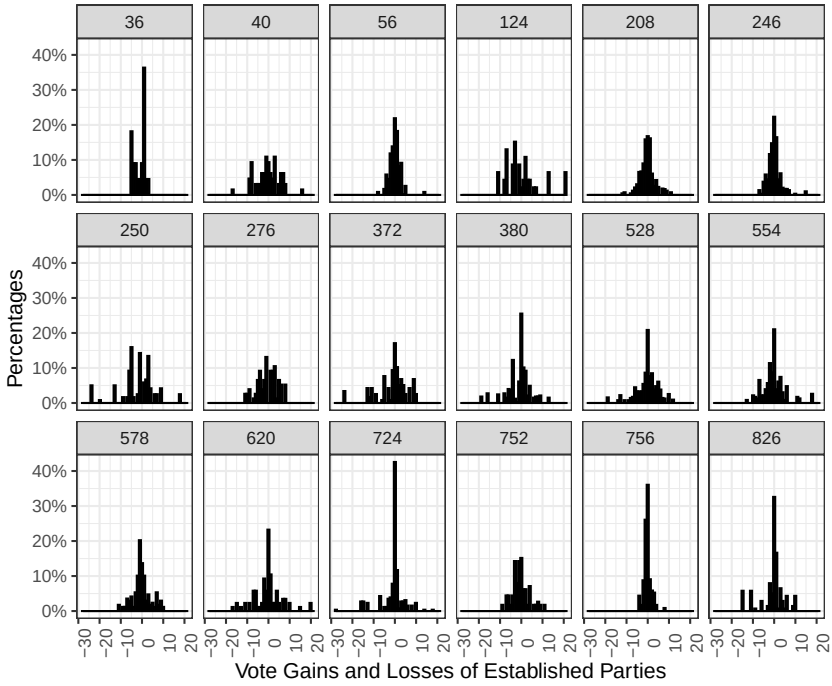

Figure 5.9: Distribution of Vote Gains and Losses of Established Parties by Countries (ISO Codes)

5.4.6 Public Opinion

Economic voting models suggest that public opinion is an essential aspect of party competition. The significance of public opinion derives directly from the premise of vote-seeking parties (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b, p. 826). Yet, this concept has been widely ignored in new and niche party research. This is especially surprising because the policy move literature adopted public opinion as a central variable since the seminal work of Adams et al. (2004). So I draw on that strand of literature and implement it in my models of new party success.

Basically, two different measures have been proposed: Utilizing Eurobarometer data, Adams et al. (2004) took ”the mean self-placements of the survey respondents from a given country in a given year as [...] measure of voter ideology” (Adams et al., 2004, p. 597). This approach has its merits be-

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cause it is based on a cross-national, longitudinal survey of voter preferences and thus independent of other data sources typically used in policy move research. However, the Eurobarometer data restricts possible analysis to a small number of Western European countries since the 1970s. Furthermore, it is questioned how valid cross-national comparisons based on surveys are (Huber, 1989; Kim and Fording, 1998) and whether these surveys are "a good match to the party-position data" (McDonald and Budge, 2005, p. 114-115) at all.

This led us to the second measurement, the median voter approach, which was developed by Kim and Fording (1998) and later widely adopted in research (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009b; Williams, 2015). The median voter is a measure of voter ideology or, more precisely, the "central tendency among voters" (Kim and Fording, 1998, p. 74). This approach conceives "ballots as questionnaires which instruct the 'respondent' to choose the party that is closest to him or her on a left-right ideological scale" (Kim and Fording, 1998, p. 77). In order to estimate the median voter position, they combine their "party ideology measure with election return data for each country "(Kim and Fording, 1998, p. 74).

The measurement is done in three steps: First, for each election, the ideology of each party is determined on the right-left dimension. Secondly, an interval is determined in which the respective party's voters are located. This is done by determining the midpoints between a party and its right- and left-wing rivals. Thirdly, the vote share of the party is determined.

In this way, a grouped frequency distribution is created, which makes it possible to calculate the median voter position according to the following formula:

$$M \;\; L \;\; \frac{50-C}{F} * W$$

M = Median voter position (RILE)

L = The lower end (RILE) of the interval containing the median

C = The vote share up to but not including the interval containing the median

F = The frequency (vote share) in the interval containing the median

W = The width of the interval containing the median

Figure 5.10: Equation to Calculate the Median Voter Position (Kim and Fording, 1998, p. 79-80)

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The measure was refined by McDonald and Budge (2005) to account for "situations when the farthest left or farthest right party in a system is involved in the formulation" (McDonald and Budge, 2005, p. 113-114). While in the original measurement, the interval extends to the endpoint of the value range, the refinement assumes a symmetrical interval, thus avoiding an undesired stretching of the voter distribution.

I apply this measure to account for the influence of public opinion on the new party vote share. Therefore, I calculate the distance between the median voter and the new party position based on the RILE.[10] Positive values of the variable represent a higher distance between the median voter position and the new party and should be associated with a smaller vote share for the latter. Thus, I expect a negative sign for the median voter distance.

5.4.7 Electoral System

In the study of new parties, electoral systems have always been considered to play a central role in both the initial breakthrough and the long-term success. Therefore, when discussing the influence of the electoral system on new parties, the emphasis is on the permissiveness of the electoral system, i.e., "how easy it is to win a seat" (Tavits, 2008, p. 115) given a certain number of votes.

Besides this "mechanical effect" (Duverger, 1954), the "psychological effect" has to be taken into account to: "Duverger's psychological effect assumes that the voters are aware of the workings of the mechanical effect. Potential voters for minor parties under small magnitude electoral laws are aware that minor parties are unlikely to win any seats. A vote for a minor party would therefore be wasted. With the goal of influencing the outcome of the election, the voter is likely to abandon the minor party and vote for one of the major parties, perhaps as a lesser of evils" (Willey, 1998, p. 655). This voting behavior is also referred to as strategic voting and represents a

10 This is a possible source of multicollinearity, as the RILE is also used to measure positional competition. In addition, the established parties' strategy towards new contenders influences the calculation of the median voter position and thus also the distance between the new party and the median voter. However, the influence on the estimates is likely to be relatively small, as a large number of other values are included in the calculation.

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separate branch of research (Blais and Carty, 1991; Cox, 1997; Kawai and Watanabe, 2013; Myatt, 2007).

Despite some studies finding evidence for strategic voting in mixed systems (Gschwend, 2007)) and proportional representation systems (Gschwend and Stoiber, 2014), most scholars argue that strategic voting is not equally important in all electoral systems. Basically, the larger the district magnitude, the lower the importance of strategic voting (Cox, 1997). In order to take the psychological effect of the electoral system into account in the model, it makes sense to determine the type of electoral system.[11] As Ezrow (2010) points out, "the major fault line that is drawn is between systems allocating seats by plurality voting and those that determine seat shares via proportional representation (PR) electoral formulae" (Ezrow, 2010, p. 8).

Accordingly, in this project, I use an ordinal scaled variable to take into account different degrees of proportionality in the electoral systems under scrutiny. A majority system is coded with zero, mixed system with one, and PR systems with two. I expect the variable to have a positive sign, as the risk of wasted votes, i.e., an important incentive for strategic voting, decreases the more proportional the voting system is.

5.4.8 Controls

To obtain as unbiased estimates as possible, I include the decade in which the election was held and the country under scrutiny as common control variables in the model. Furthermore, lagged dependent and independent variables are added in the model, which I discuss in the next section.[12]

First of all, I include a measure of the decade the election took place. The idea behind this is to control for exogenous shocks that affect all countries in the sample, e.g., the oil crisis, the collapse of the Eastern bloc, and the financial crisis of 2008/2009 (Plümper and Neumayer, 2010, p. 422-425).

11 Although the nesting structure in the multilevel model already controls for country differences, changes in electoral law over time are not yet taken into account.

12 I also tested the impact of the number of elections a new party has successfully participated in as a variable for my model. The idea was that this variable controls for the age of a new party in parliament to account for maturation effects. This might have been necessary since, in the model, I analyze the whole life of the new party, not just the first few elections. However, the variable itself has an extremely small insignificant coefficient and also barely changed the rest of the coefficients in the model, so I did not consider it further.

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Second, I control for the country where the election took place through the nesting structure in the conducted multilevel model. I will explain this in more detail in the next section. However, the basic idea is to take into account unobserved differences between countries, such as the degree of federalism, the size of the population, or its heterogeneity, which do not undergo significant changes from election to election. This is a solution to "Galton's problem" of (spurious) spatial dependence between two countries (Plümper and Neumayer, 2010, p. 426-428).

5.5 Method

The model specified here is intended to estimate the influence of issue and positional competition on the vote share of a new party, i.e., on a metrically scaled dependent variable. Accordingly, a method from the group of multiple regression analyses is to be selected. The time-series cross-section dyadic data to be analyzed here pose particular challenges for the models to be specified. The data exhibit both spatial and temporal dependencies that violate the Gauss-Markov assumptions so that the specification of an OLS linear regression is inappropriate (Beck and Katz, 1995, 1996).

Hence, I use multilevel modeling (Gelman and Hill, 2006; Hox, 2010) to account for the complex data structure.[13] Multilevel models have become very popular in political science because many research questions, such as the one examined here, appear "by its very nature to be multilevel" (Kedar and Shively, 2005, p. 298).

One of the advantages of these models is that group differences are explicitly accounted for by allowing for residual variance at each grouping level. This residual variance represents unobserved variables that lead to the correlation of observations within the same group, for example, parties in the same country or the same election. If such grouped observations are incorrectly treated as independent, biased standard errors of the regression coefficients are estimated, leading to incorrect inferences.

Multilevel models can be divided into three groups: varying intercepts models estimate a separate intercept for each group but keep the slope of the regression line constant. In contrast, random slope models keep the intercept

13 I fit all models using R (R Core Team, 2021) and the lme4 package (Bates et al., 2015).

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constant and estimate different slopes. Finally, the most complex models combine random intercepts and random slopes.

Following Gilardi and Füglister (2008) I use random intercept multilevel models because they "account for cross-sectional heterogeneity while at the same time allowing the inclusion of constant or rarely changing variables [...]. Second, each level has its own error and its own estimated variance, which helps address the complex dependencies that arise in dyadic datasets" (Gilardi and Füglister, 2008, p. 426).

The general regression equation for random (or varying) intercept multilevel models can be stated as follows:

$$\gamma_i \;\; \alpha_{ji} \;\; \beta x_i \;\; \epsilon_i$$

Figure 5.11: Varying Intercepts Multilevel Regression Model (Gelman and Hill, 2006, p. 237)

So, the model specified here allows for different intercepts of the regression line for each group and estimates them simultaneously, while the slope of the regression line is held constant. In a multilevel model, highly complex nesting structures are possible, which represent the data well, making it challenging to interpret the results and often suffer from non-convergence. A neat summary was presented by Meyer (2013, p. 225-228), who identified three problems that arise in party policy move research because the observations are nested within countries, parties, and elections. First, the assumption of homoscedasticity is violated because cases may vary across countries, parties, and elections due to unobserved factors. Second, contemporaneous correlation can occur because parties interact which each other, so that it "is unreasonable to assume, that parties shift their policy position independent of their competitors' shifts" (Meyer, 2013, p. 225). Third, serial correlation is expected because the positions of a party and its policy moves depend on decisions at previous elections.

To adequately account for the potential co-occurrence of heteroscedasticity, contemporaneous correlation, and serial correlation, Meyer opts for two three-level random intercept models and a third model with panel corrected standard errors and a lagged dependent variable.

In order to check to what extent a multilevel model is an appropriate specification, I calculated the intra-class correlations coefficient. Overall, I found high adjusted ICCs for nesting in elections, where group-differences account for 42% of variance, 9% for countries, and 53.8% if the model was

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nested in parties. If an ICC above 10 percent is observed, this is considered an indication that the multilevel approach is justified (Bliese, 1998).

However, in the model development process, I found only minor differences between the two-level model specifications and substantially similar results if two- and three-level model specifications are compared.

I, therefore, restrict my analysis to two-level random intercept models, in which observations are nested within one grouping factor, and run alternative model specifications as robustness checks. I test for nesting in elections or in countries to check for the robustness of my models.[14]

While these multilevel models account for heteroskedasticity, contemporaneous correlation and serial correlation must be treated separately. Contemporaneous correlation between parties and their competitors is less of an issue because it is modeled directly with independent variables.

In order to deal with serial correlation, I specify dynamic models (Beck and Katz, 2011) with lagged dependent and independent variables. Since Achen's (2000) seminal work, there has been a lively debate about the advantages and disadvantages of lagged dependent variables (LDVs) in political science. As Achen (2000) noted, LDVs can suppress the explanatory power of independent variables without enhancing theoretical understanding.

Later Wilkins (2018) showed with a simulation study that the answer to Achen's (2000) concerns are "more LDV and lagged independent variables [...] not fewer" (Wilkins, 2018, p. 1). Particularly, Wilkins argues for including two lagged dependent variables for t-1 and t-2 and a lagged independent variable. This model is a variant "of the autoregressive distributed lag (ADL) (2,1) model" (Wilkins, 2018, p. 3-4) proposed by Beck and Katz (2011).

I follow his advice to get unbiased estimates and include the lagged vote share of the new party at the last two elections. Furthermore, I integrated the lagged issue strategy variable in my model.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the methodological choices made to examine whether positional or issue competition, moderated by the shared party family or the degree of similarity to the other parties in the party systems, influences the new party's vote share.

14 If parties and elections are used as nesting factors, this corresponds to running a regression for each case, which makes general conclusions nearly impossible.

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Based on a text-as-data approach, I draw a sample of 5296 dyads from 168 new parties in 18 Western democracies from 1960 to 2018. The analysis uses multilevel random intercept models to account for the nested data structure.

It is assumed here that positional competition revolves around the left-right dimension. Therefore, I operationalize positional competition as absolute differences in the RILE scores of an established party. In contrast to positional competition, issue competition is not limited to a specific conflict dimension but can occur on all conceivable issues. So it is unfavorable to reduce the analyses only to specific issues or issue areas such as right vs. left or GAL vs. TAN. For this reason, I have developed a text analytic measure for the issue competition and will put it to the test here. The operationalization is based on the text similarity of the election programs of the new and established parties in different elections. It captures the movement of the established party toward or away from the new party.

The importance of new issues is especially intriguing concerning new parties often thought of as niche parties. In order to step away from predefined categories, I developed a new measure, the party system similarity score. This allows me to directly model the impact of a new party's nicheness without requiring manual content analysis, as with previous measures.

In addition, I account for the ideological similarity between the new and the established party. I operationalize this with a dummy variable with the value of one if both parties belong to the same party family. Furthermore, public opinion and the electoral system are known as important influences on the vote share of a party as well as their policy moves. Hence, I take them into account to avoid omitted variable bias. Finally, control variables like a decade fixed effect and lagged depend and independent variables are introduced to specify a dynamic model with as unbiased estimates as possible.

This lays the methodological foundations for this work. In the following section, I continue with the presentation of my results.

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6 The Influence of Strategies on the Vote Share of New Parties
Results

In this project, I present the main hypothesis that the electoral success of new parties is influenced by the ideological positioning and issue emphasis of established competitors. In addition, I analyze the moderating influence of party characteristics on this relationship.

My empirical analysis is oriented toward the causal model presented in the theory chapter and its hypotheses. I want to answer whether the strategies of issue and position competition of established parties, moderated by the nicheness of new parties, the competitiveness of established parties, or the ideological proximity of both parties, influence the new parties' electoral success.

The chapter is structured as follows: First, I analyze based on a linear-additive multilevel model whether the position or issue strategies have the expected influence on new parties' electoral success. I then turn to the moderating variables and successively add interaction effects to the model. First, I look at how the nicheness of the new party influences the main relationship, then I look at ideological proximity, and finally at the competitiveness of the established party.

The dyadic time series data suggest the use of multilevel regression models. I test different nesting structures to fit the data generation process and verify the models' robustness. Multilevel models have the advantage that the particular dependence structure of the individual observations is explicitly modeled. This avoids type 1 error, i.e., the underestimation of standard errors. In addition, the model includes several control variables that take into account both the dynamics of party competition and the environment in which it takes place. In this way, I ensure that the coefficient estimates are as unbiased as possible.

The analysis shows that positional competition has no proven influence on the electoral success of new parties. This contradicts previous work on the electoral fortunes of niche parties. In contrast, the analysis shows that issue competition strategies influence the electoral success of new parties. I conclude that classical party competition centered on the left-right dimension is of little importance for new parties and that issue competition is more important. On the one hand, this finding can be linked back to the results of

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Adams et al. (2011), who were able to show that policy moves are hardly noticed by voters. On the other hand, there is a link to Green-Pedersen and Mortensen's (2015) issue competition theory, which develops a framework to understand issue-oriented party competition.

Concerning the moderating factors, it first appears that nicheness does not have the expected amplifying influence on issue competition strategies. This emphasizes the contradiction with the results of earlier work on niche parties. With regard to ideological proximity, I work out that shared membership in a party family or ideological bloc makes a difference: Within the same ideological bloc, issue competition strategies have the opposite effect to that between the blocs. Last but not least, the analysis shows that the strategy of an established party is moderated by its previous vote gains and losses. Thus, I can corroborate the findings from the literature, which shows that voters take into account the likely impact of their choice and tend to vote for the representative of an issue who has the best chance of implementing the promised policies.

6.1 The Impact of Strategic Choices

I start my analysis with a base model that includes all independent variables and controls. Then I add interaction terms to the model to have a model for each theoretically derived interaction effect. Finally, I combine all these interaction terms into a chained interaction model (Kam and Franzese, 2007, p. 40) to take into account that the influence of strategy theoretically depends on nicheness, ideological proximity, and competitiveness.

First, I present the full regression table with all issue competition models (cf. Table 6.1). It is important to note that the interpretation of the reported coefficients changes between the basic linear-additive model and the following linear-interactive models: While the coefficient in the basic model can be interpreted as the effect of a one-unit change in the independent variable on the dependent variable, controlling for all other variables in the model, the interpretation for the linear-interactive model is somewhat more complex: Here, the effect of the interacting variables z varies over its value range, so that the coefficient of a variable x is not the only effect, but "just one effect x may have, namely, the effect of x at z = 0" (Kam and Franzese, 2007, p. 20). Hence, the t-test statistics are only valid for this one effect (Kam and Franzese, 2007, p. 43-44).

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I present marginal effect and predicted value plots for each interaction effect examined in my analysis to facilitate interpretation. This allows a graphical representation of the different effects and the statistical significance across the value range of the variables.

In addition, I present the models nested by election and the models nested by country side by side: This makes it possible to review the influence of these two different but theoretically equally defensible nesting structures. Finally, I interpret similar results as indicating the robustness of the models or the effect studied.

Following McCoach (2019) I test the model assumptions by checking for normality, outliers, multicollinearity, homogeneity of variances, and normality of residuals. To keep the main text concise, I present the corresponding figures in the appendix.[1]

A sometimes overlooked fundamental of linear-additive models is that they ”assume a linear interaction effect that changes at a constant rate with the moderator” Hainmueller et al. (2019, p. 163). To address this problem, the authors recommend two different estimation strategies that can be performed using the Interflex package they developed. I use the binning estimator strategy to test the assumption of linear interaction effects. For this purpose, the moderator is split into separate dummy variables that interact with the main independent variable (Hainmueller et al., 2019, p. 170). Results are plotted as a marginal effect plot, supplemented with the binning estimates and their corresponding standard errors. As default, the Interflex package generates three equal-sized bins based on the distribution of the moderating variable. Since the results support the assumption of a linear interaction effect, I do not change my models. The corresponding binning plots are in section 8.5 of the appendix.

1 In summary, the robustness checks do not give rise to any decisive concerns. Only the homogeneity of variance shows deviations from the ideal form. Because regression models are relatively robust against this kind of violation and will show unbiased estimators (Best and Wolf, 2014, p. 91), I decided against any transformation of the dependent variable. Of course, the standard errors can be inflated, which affects the significance tests and confidence intervals, but this is of less importance here, as the use of these tests is controversial and therefore should not be the only (or primary) criterion.

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6.1.1 Testing the Influence of Strategies – The Linear-Additive Base Model

The base model is suitable for testing hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c as well as 2a, 2b, and 2c and the direction of the effects of the control variables (cf. Table 6.2 for a summary of hypotheses and results). It is the most parsimonious model, which completely dispenses the interaction effects and thus potentially has a lower agreement with reality. The interpretation of the content of the lagged variables is omitted, as these are technical control variables intended to reduce bias in the estimates.

For the presentation of the results, I use not only the regression table (cf. Table 6.1) but also the graphical representation based on a forest plot (cf. Figure 6.1), which compares different model specifications of possible nesting structures of the base model.

First, I consider the influence of positional competition strategies according to hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c. The confrontation strategy is coded with positive values, the adoption strategy with negative values. Therefore, an increase in the variable by one unit means that the party has a greater distance on the left-right dimension defined by the RILE than was previously the case.

Surprisingly, the results clearly show that positional competition has no impact on the electoral success of new parties. Therefore, I have to reject hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c, which claim an influence of positional competition on the vote share of new parties. This contradicts the usual theoretical assumptions as discussed earlier in this book. The empirical analysis shows an extremely small coefficient and standard error so that the effect must be described as indistinguishable from zero. This result holds across different nesting structures and is independent of the inclusion of interaction terms. The stringency of the estimation despite different model specifications shows the high robustness of the result. In substantive terms, it can therefore be concluded that the adoption or confrontation of the new party's position on the left-right dimension by the established party has no significance for the electoral success of the new party. Accordingly, hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c are to be rejected.

Since positional competition has such a small influence on the models, I only discuss the influence of issue competition strategies in the following text and presented figures. The models for the influence of positional competition are documented in the appendix (cf. Table 8.2).

A different result is revealed by the analysis of the issue competition strategy of the established parties: Results show that a decrease in similarity,

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Table 6.1: Multilevel Regression Models for the Vote Share of New Parties

	Base	Nicheness	Proximity	Competitiveness	Full
LDV t_{-1}	0.72***	0.71***	0.71***	0.72***	0.72***
	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02
LDV t_{-2}	0.12***	0.12***	0.12***	0.12***	0.12***
	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Issue Competition	−0.34	0.53	0.36	−0.36	1.85
	0.71	1.98	0.86	0.71	2.07
Lagged Issue Competition t_{-1}	−0.49	−0.64	−0.69	−0.42	−0.45
	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73
Positional Competition	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Lagged Positional Competition t_{-1}	0.00	0.00	−0.00	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Party System Similarity Score	−1.94**	−1.92**	−1.90**	−1.91**	−1.85**
	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.80	0.80
Electoral System	−0.11	−0.11	−0.11	−0.11	−0.12
	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42
Distance Median Voter New Party	−0.02***	−0.03***	−0.03***	−0.02***	−0.02***
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
ΔVote Share Est. Party (Competitiveness)	−0.07***			−0.07***	−0.07***
	0.02			0.02	0.02
Dummy Ideological Proximity	0.06		0.08		0.06
	0.13		0.13		0.13
Issue Competition × Party System Similarity Score		−2.01			−3.35
		4.05			4.05
Issue Competition × Ideological Proximity			−2.07		−1.87
			1.33		1.33
Issue Competition × Competitiveness				0.35**	0.37**
				0.18	0.18
Intercept	3.22***	3.27***	3.24***	3.24***	3.19***
	0.99	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.99
Decade FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Random Parts					
Var: elecid.i (Intercept)	4.77	4.87	4.82	4.72	4.68
Var: Residual	6.05	6.12	6.12	6.04	6.04
Num. groups: elecid.i	122	122	122	122	122
AIC	7863.45	7868.85	7872.83	7859.21	7857.76
BIC	7965.96	7965.96	7975.34	7961.72	7976.45
Log Likelihood	−3912.73	−3916.43	−3917.42	−3910.61	−3906.88
Num. obs.	1628	1628	1628	1628	1628

Note: Multilevel models with non-hierarchical random intercepts for elections; decade FEs included but not shown

Levels of significance: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.1

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i.e., an increased distance between the two parties, which I call the avoidance strategy, leads to a lower vote share for the new party. The negative coefficient of -0.34 has a standard error of 0.71, so the resulting confidence interval includes positive and negative values. Statistical significance is therefore not reached.

Table 6.2: Summary of Hypotheses and Results on the Influence of Strategies

No.	Hypothesis	Supported	Rejected
1a	If an established party adopts a new party's position, the new party's vote share decreases.		X
1b	If an established party maintains its distance from the new party, the new party's vote share is not affected.		X
1c	If an established party confronts a new party's position, the new party's vote share increases.		X
2a	If an established party utilizes the engagement strategy towards the issues of a new party, the new party's vote share decreases.	(X)	
2b	If an established party is indifferent to the issues of the new party, the new party's vote share is not affected.	(X)	
2c	If an established party avoids the issues of a new party, the new party's vote share increases.	(X)	

Note: Parentheses indicate a conditional result that is only true under certain moderating influences.

At first glance, these findings contradict the relationships claimed in hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c. If an established party removes the issues of the new party from its election program, this leads to a loss of votes for the new party. A possible explanation for this result could be the influence on public opinion respectively the public agenda: If the established party reduces its attention to the issues of the new party, its issues receive less attention in the election campaign, so that the voters do not have the issues of the new party in mind when they make their election decision. The causal mechanism linking issue competition strategies to voters via the public agenda thus outweighs possible issue ownership influences, which tend to produce the opposite result. In principle, this result is robust for different model specifications or nesting structures, as the forest plot Figure 6.1 shows.

Interestingly, this result changes when moderating factors are taken into account. So, to frame that result differently: hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c are only conditionally supported by the data. The influence of the moderating variables is explained in the next section, but before that, I present the linear-additive effect of these variables and the controls in the model.

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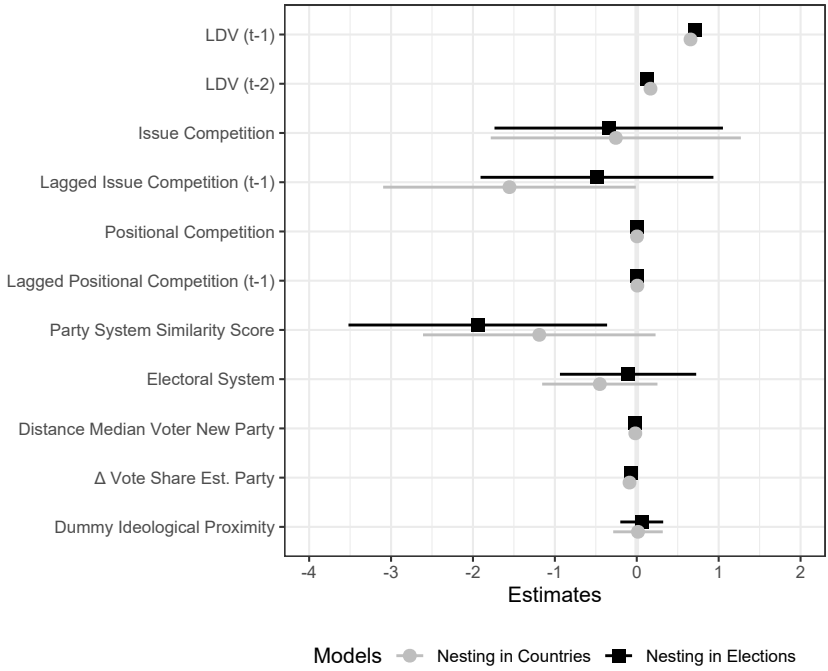

Figure 6.1: Base Models for the Vote Share of New Parties

In order to capture the influence of the new party's nicheness, I use the party system similarity score developed here. High scores indicate that the new party has a high average similarity with all other parties. Consequently, low scores indicate that the new party has a high degree of nicheness, i.e., it takes up issues that other parties ignore. The regression analysis shows a significant, negative effect of the party system similarity score on the election results of new parties. The more similar the new party is to all other parties, the lower its electoral success. From the voters' point of view, the new party is not a complementary offer in terms of content, so it makes sense that it would not benefit from such an issue emphasis. This result is consistent with my considerations presented earlier.

To measure whether both parties have a similar ideological positioning, I integrate a dummy variable into the model. The regression model uses Düpont's (2017) conception, which is an extension of the approach developed by Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009b). The coefficient is very small, while

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at the same time, there is a relatively high standard error, so there is no statistical significance. The effect is therefore indistinguishable from zero. Substantively, then, there is no special bonus or malus for new parties that compete in the same ideological bloc as an established party. This result also holds when other conceptions of ideological proximity, such as joint membership in a party family, are considered.

In order to capture the competitiveness of the established party, I use the change in the established party's vote share: voters get an idea of whether the established party is likely to be able to implement its issues through anticipated vote gains – or losses. The analysis shows that the coefficient has the expected sign, i.e., an anticipated vote gain for the established party is associated with a vote loss for the new party. Moreover, this result is statistically significant.

I included an ordinal scaled variable in my model to account for the voting system as an influence on the party system. A majority system is coded zero, a mixed system one, and a PR system two. In theory, a more proportional electoral system should be associated with a higher vote share for the new party because the incentives for strategic voting are lower, and small parties should be more likely to succeed. However, the empirical analysis shows no effect.

One possible explanation for this finding is that strategic voting for new parties does not have the assumed negative effect, i.e., voters are not dissuaded from voting for new parties because of strategic considerations. In this sense, new parties are the result of persuaders. This allows us to draw a parallel with Down's reflections on the two different types of new parties: It seems that the voters in the sample see the new parties predominantly as a real type that is office-seeking and less as a blackmail vehicle to influence established parties.

Last but not least, I check whether the distance of the new party to the median voter has a significant influence. Here, consistent with my considerations, a negative sign emerges: An increase in the new party's distance to the center of gravity of the voter distribution is associated with a loss of votes for the new party. This result is statistically significant and independent of different model specifications or nesting structures.

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6.1.2 Interactive Effects of Nicheness, Proximity and Competitiveness

The explanations so far have referred exclusively to the linear-additive base model. However, based on the theoretical considerations underlying this work, moderating influences on the relationship between strategies and vote share for new parties are a key component that has been formally captured in corresponding interactive hypotheses. Therefore, I extend the base model with three linear-interactive models to test these hypotheses. These models contain an interaction term consisting of the issue competition strategy and the moderating factor.

First, I test the interaction effect with the party system similarity score as a measure of nicheness. Then I deal with the ideological similarity of both parties. Finally, I analyze to what extent the competitiveness of the established party has a moderating influence on the effect of established party strategies. In the full chained interaction model, I integrate all three interaction terms.

Nicheness of the New Party

In order to test whether the nicheness of a new party has a moderating effect on the impact of the issue or positional competition strategy of an established party, I introduce an interaction of both variables into the model. This allows me to test hypothesis 3a and 3b (cf. Table 6.3). Since positional competition has such a small impact on the models, I consider hypothesis 3a to be supported and focus the presentation on the effects of issue competition strategies.

Table 6.3: Summary of Hypotheses and Results on Nicheness

No.	Hypothesis	Supported	Rejected
3a	Parties' nicheness has no impact on the influence of positional strategies.	X	
3b	High degrees of nicheness boosts the the impact of issue competition strategies.		X

To measure nicheness, I use the party system similarity score developed and validated here. High values of this score mean that the election program of the new party has a high average similarity with the election programs of all other parties. In this case, the new party uses many terms used by the established parties, so it has a low degree of nicheness. Conversely, if the terms used by the new party differ from those of the established parties, it

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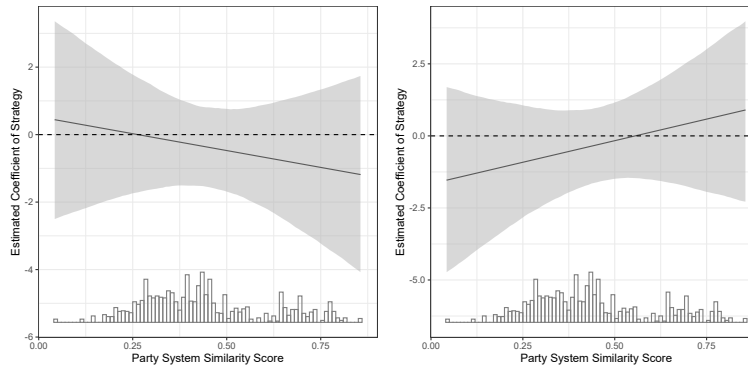
can be said that the new party has a high degree of nicheness. Small values reflect this on the party system similarity score.

The coefficients reported in the regression table in the nicheness model show high agreement with the coefficients of the base model. This is true for all variables not involved in the interaction. This speaks for the robustness of the results presented in the previous section. The coefficients of the issue competition strategy and the party system similarity score apply here exclusively to the case where the other variable takes the value 0 and therefore differs from the base model.

The issue competition strategy positively affects the vote share of new parties if they have a party system similarity score of 0, i.e., if they have an extremely high nicheness. However, empirically, this case is infrequent. To be able to make statements about the entire range of values of the party system similarity score, I refer to the marginal effect plots (cf. Figure 6.2).



(a) Nesting in Elections *(b) Nesting in Countries*

Figure 6.2: Marginal Effect Plots for the Moderation of Issue Competition Strategy by the Nicheness of the New Party

The plot shows that up to a party system similarity score of about 0.25, the issue competition strategy has a positive but non-significant effect. For the larger part of the value range, on the other hand, the effect is negative and insignificant. For parties with high similarity to all other parties, i.e., a low nicheness, an avoidance strategy is associated with losing votes. However, this observation only applies in the case of nesting in elections. If the country-nesting structure is taken into account, the opposite effect emerges. Combined with the high uncertainty of the estimation across both models, there are

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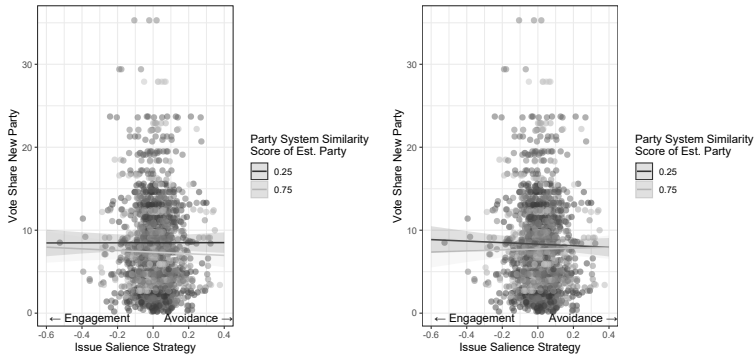
considerable doubts about the robustness of this effect, which ultimately lead to the conclusion that we should speak of a null result here.

Another way to show the influence of the interaction term on the dependent variable is to select specific values and map the predicted values for them based on the regression model. The predicted value plots (cf. Figure 6.3) show the predicted election result of the new party for party system similarity scores of 0.25 (high nicheness) and 0.75 (low nicheness). To give an impression of the distribution of the observed values, I represent them as points colored by their party system similarity score.

According to hypothesis 3b, the slope of both estimation lines should differ significantly while the direction of the effect remains constant in order to speak of a booster effect of nicheness. However, on the other hand, the plots show two almost parallel lines whose level hardly differs with similar predicted election results of about 8 percent.



(a) Nesting in Elections *(b) Nesting in Countries*

Figure 6.3: Predicted Values for the Vote Share of New Parties Depending on the Issue Competition Strategy and the Nicheness of the New Party

The calculations of model performance also show that the introduced interaction term does not increase the overall goodness of fit. These empirical results indicate that nicheness does not moderate the influence of issue competition strategies. Thus, I reject hypothesis 3b, which declared that high degrees of nicheness boost the impact of issue competition strategies.

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Ideological Proximity of New and Established Parties

The second interaction term considered in the model captures the influence of the ideological proximity of both parties on the effect of positional or issue competition strategies as laid down in hypotheses 4a and 4b (cf. Table 6.4). Again, I present only the results for issue competition strategies in the main text because positional competition has only very small effects, which leads me to reject the associated hypothesis 4a.

The idea behind hypothesis 4b is based on the notion that parties with high ideological proximity compete for the same segments of the electorate and are thus more directly affected by the strategic policy moves of their rivals than is the case with parties that are more ideologically distant. Therefore, differing effects depending on ideological proximity are likely.

Table 6.4: Summary of Hypotheses and Results on Ideological Proximity

No.	Hypothesis	Supported	Rejected
4a	Ideological similarity boosts the impact of positional competition strategies.		X
4b	The effect of issue competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if parties are ideologically close.	X	

In order to assess the ideological proximity of the two parties, I use the a priori measurement of the assignment of parties to party families. Since the assignment of new parties to party families can be problematic, I use a simplified classification into a right-wing and a left-wing ideological bloc based on the work of Düpont (2017) and Adams et al. (2009). If both parties are located in the same ideological bloc, this is coded with one, and if the parties are in different blocks with zero.

An examination of the proximity model shows a picture similar to that of the nicheness model: the coefficients of the model match those of the base model for all variables not involved in the interaction. This confirms the substantive interpretation of the base model.

With regard to issue competition, the coefficient of 0.36 shows a small, positive effect whose standard error is smaller than in the nicheness model. Issue competition thus has a positive effect on the vote share of new parties if both parties are not in the same party family. This means that avoiding issues outside the same ideological bloc is associated with an increase in votes for the new party.

An examination of the marginal effect plots (cf. Figure 6.4) shows that the effect of the strategy within the same ideological group is negative, i.e.,

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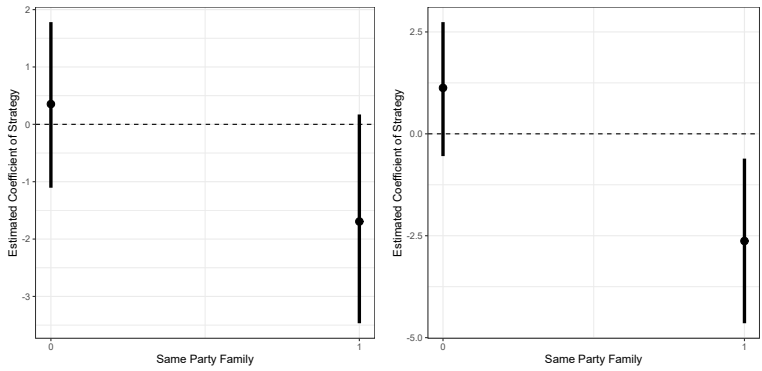
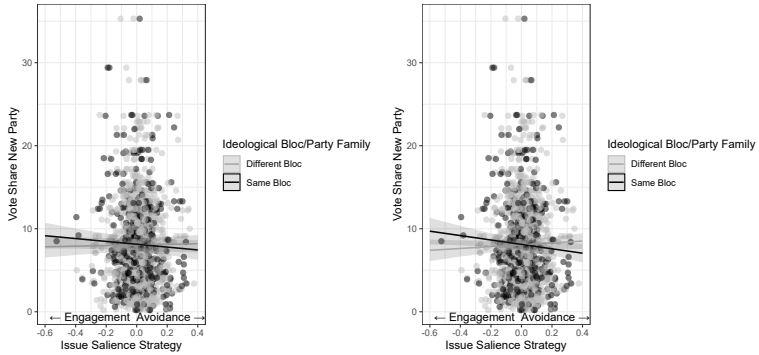


(a) Nesting in Elections *(b) Nesting in Countries*

Figure 6.4: Marginal Effect Plots for the Moderation of Issue Competition Strategy by the Affiliation in the Same Ideological Bloc

that the avoidance of issues leads to a reduction in votes for the new party! The comparison of the nesting structures also shows that the effect is more substantial in the case of nesting in counties and even exceeds the threshold of statistical significance.



(a) Nesting in Elections *(b) Nesting in Countries*

Figure 6.5: Predicted Values for the Vote Share of New Parties Depending on the Issue Competition Strategy and the Affiliation in the Same Ideological Bloc

This finding becomes even more evident when the predicted value plots (cf. Figure 6.5) are considered. Comparing both nesting structures shows

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substantially similar results, with nesting in countries showing more substantial effects. This is true for all models discussed here. The avoidance strategy is generally associated with a lower vote share for the new party within an ideological bloc. In contrast, the opposite effect occurs for parties outside the ideological bloc.

Based on these results, hypothesis 4b is supported. That means the effect of issue competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if both parties are ideologically close.

This is an interesting result, as it clarifies that in party competition, the relative position of the rival is of decisive importance for the direction of the effect of the established party's strategy.

Without considering the ideological proximity as an interaction term, the opposing effects would balance out on average. The base model erroneously shows an effect that is too small or points in the wrong direction. Moreover, the result supports the basic assumptions of Downsian theory, according to which competition for the same voter segments influences the effect of policy moves. The engagement strategy concentrates the issue competition in an ideological group on this issue and thus ensures increased public perception. This favors the new party in this case. At the same time, the avoidance strategy prevents this effect by lowering public awareness of the new party's issues through the silence of the established party, which harms the new party.

Competitiveness of the Established Party

The third interaction term I consider in the model captures the influence of the competitiveness of the established party. The basic idea is that voters react differently to the strategies of competitive established parties than they do to less competitive parties.

In order to assess the competitiveness of the established party, I take into account its expected vote gains and losses since the last election. Furthermore, I assume that voters take the expected gains and losses of the next election into account in their voting decision since this distribution of votes ultimately determines whether policies have a chance of being implemented. This leads me to hypotheses 5a and 5b (cf. Table 6.5), whereby the former can be considered rejected due to the low influence of positional competition and will not be discussed further.

The competitiveness model reproduces the coefficients reported for the other models. Strikingly, the issue competition strategy has a small negative

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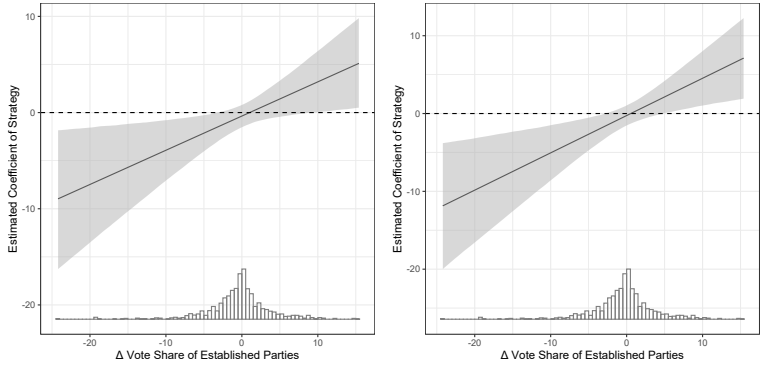
Table 6.5: Summary of Hypotheses and Results on Competitiveness

No.	Hypothesis	Supported	Rejected
5a	The effect of positional competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if the established party lost votes in the previous election.		X
5b	The effect of issue competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if the established party lost votes in the previous election.	X	

coefficient of -0.36 when the established party does not gain or lose votes. This means that avoidance of a new party's issues is associated with a low vote share of the new party at this point, but the effect is statistically not very pronounced.



(a) Nesting in Elections *(b) Nesting in Countries*

Figure 6.6: Marginal Effect Plots for the Moderation of Issue Competition Strategy by the Previous Vote Gains/Losses of Established Parties

The marginal effect plots (cf. Figure 6.6) allow a more detailed analysis. It becomes clear how important it is to look at the interaction terms over the entire range of values. In the case of electoral losses of the established party, there is a clear negative influence of the strategy on the electoral success of new parties. This effect is significant. In the range of small vote gains and losses, the estimated line crosses the zero line, i.e., the coefficient becomes positive, and the effect changes direction. Thus, in the case of vote gains, an avoidance strategy is associated with a vote gain for the new party. This effect is barely significant for vote gains of up to 10 percent if the nesting structure is based on elections. In the case of nesting in countries, however, the effect

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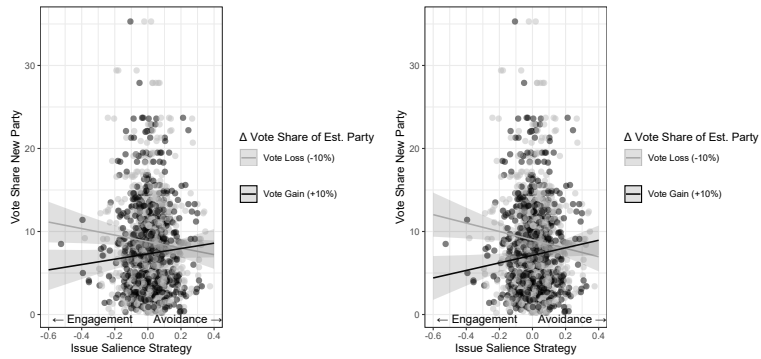
is more pronounced so that it exceeds the level of statistical significance even in the positive value range.



(a) Nesting in Elections *(b) Nesting in Countries*

Figure 6.7: Predicted Values for the Vote Share of New Parties Depending on the Issue Competition Strategy and the Previous Vote Gains and Losses of Established Parties

For the substantive interpretation, I use the predicted value plots (cf. Figure 6.7). Here I have set vote gains and losses at ten percentage points, as this corresponds to the limits of the value distribution. The substantive interpretation does not change if vote gains and losses are lower.

The predicted election results for the new party differ significantly when different election results of the established party are taken into account. For example, the engagement strategy would predict an election result for the new party of up to 12 percent in the case of a vote loss of 10 percent. In contrast, a vote gain combined with the engagement strategy would only result in a vote share of around 6 percent for the new party.

Results support hypothesis 5b, i.e., the effect of the issue competition strategy changes direction when the established party is likely to suffer vote losses in the next election. I interpret this as evidence that voters take the competitiveness of the established party into account in their voting decision: An established party that is likely to win has a better chance of enforcing its policies, so an engagement strategy may succeed in keeping voters away from the new party. Conversely, an established party that is likely to lose does not have this advantage, so the engagement strategy does not convince a significant number of voters to leave the new party.

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Chained Interaction Model

In the previous discussion, I have analyzed the linear-additive effect of each dependent variable in the base model and presented three linear-interactive models, each of which considers the interaction between the issue competition strategy and one of three theoretically justified potentially relevant moderators. In the full model, I combine all three interaction terms into a chained-interaction model to control the estimates for each interaction effect.

The most significant difference between the full model and the other three linear-interactive models is that the issue competition strategy has a higher positive coefficient in the case where the party system similarity score, ideological proximity, and competitiveness are zero. At the same time, the standard error is significantly higher, so this effect is not statistically significant.

The individual interaction terms show coefficients in the full model that point in the same direction as in the individual models. While the interaction of the issue competition strategy with the party system similarity score shows a slightly higher coefficient (and a higher standard error), the interaction of the strategy with the ideological proximity is smaller, with the same standard error. The interaction with competitiveness shows a higher coefficient and an unchanged standard error. Thus, the effect remains statistically significant. None of these marginal changes lead to a substantial change in the interpretation.

6.2 Model Comparison and Summary

In this section, I compare the goodness of fit of the different models based on a set of model goodness criteria and the observed effect sizes to assess the relative importance of the variables represented in the models. I then summarize the results of the analysis.

The presented models integrate several lagged dependent and lagged independent variables, which strongly influences the goodness of fit of the models. Based on the model performance parameters, it becomes clear that the differences between the models are minor. Differences are most apparent in the (weighted) AIC and BIC values. Depending on how strongly parsimony is used as a decision criterion, either the Full Model or the Competitiveness Model is the best data approximation. This result is also confirmed by considering effect sizes using predicted values.

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Table 6.6: Summary of Model Performance

Name	AIC	AIC_wt	BIC	BIC_wt	R2_conditional	R2_marginal	ICC	RMSE
Multilevel Models nested in Elections								
Base	7863.45	0.04	7965.96	0.10	0.81	0.66	0.44	2.37
Nicheness	7868.85	0.00	7965.96	0.10	0.81	0.65	0.44	2.39
Proximity	7872.83	0.00	7975.34	0.00	0.81	0.65	0.44	2.39
Competitiveness	7859.21	0.31	7961.72	0.81	0.81	0.66	0.44	2.37
Full	7857.76	0.65	7976.45	0.00	0.81	0.66	0.44	2.37
Multilevel Models nested in Countries								
Base	8167.92	0.00	8270.43	0.04	0.71	0.68	0.09	2.86
Nicheness	8177.26	0.00	8274.38	0.01	0.71	0.68	0.09	2.88
Proximity	8177.62	0.00	8280.13	0.00	0.71	0.68	0.09	2.88
Competitiveness	8161.65	0.09	8264.16	0.95	0.71	0.69	0.09	2.86
Full	8157.03	0.91	8275.72	0.00	0.71	0.69	0.09	2.85

Table 6.6 summarizes the root-mean-square error (RMSE), the interclass-correlation coefficient, Nakagawa's r-squared, the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian information criterion (BIC) for all models.[2]

The marginal r-squared is calculated based on the variance of the fixed effects. The conditional r-squared uses fixed and random effects. For the AIC and BIC, I also give the weighted values, which best are "interpreted as the probability that model i is the actual expected [...] best model for the sampling situation considered" (Burnham and Anderson, 2004, p. xxvi).

Concerning the r-squared statistics, the differences are only apparent after the second decimal place so that the proportion of explained variance can be considered identical for all models. This applies to both the fixed and the random effects.

There are differences between the models in the RMSE, whereby the nicheness and the proximity model have a poorer fit. However, the base, the full, and the competitiveness models have an advantage here.

The AIC and BIC also show differences between the models, most evident in the weighted values. Concerning the AIC, the full model can be considered the best of the models compared, regardless of the nesting structure chosen. Looking at the BIC, which takes the number of variables in the model more negatively into account, i.e., assigns a higher role to the parsimony of the model, the competitiveness model is the best model under scrutiny.

2 To calculate model performance and check robustness, I use the performance package (Lüdecke et al., 2021) for R.

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I come to the same conclusion when comparing the predicted values of the different models. This shows that competitiveness has the most significant effect, followed by ideological proximity. The moderating effect of nicheness is smaller so that we could speak of a zero result here.

The coefficients of the positional competition models (cf. section 8.6) range from about 0.01 for effect conditioned by nicheness, to about 0.006 in the proximity model, to -0.0125 for the competitiveness model. Thus, the competitiveness model also shows the most considerable effects here. Even with a significant policy move of 40 points on the RILE scale, the new party's predicted vote share only changes by 0.24 - 0.5 percentage points.

In the issue competition models, the effects are also small. However, the marginal effect plots show coefficients of -2 for nicheness, -2.5 for ideological proximity, and -10 for the interaction with competitiveness.

A change of 0.5 points on the issue competition scale scaled between -1 and 1 thus leads to a change of 1-5 percentage points in the expected vote share of the new party. Thus, the effect of issue competition is greater than the influence of positional competition by a factor of 4 to 10. Considering the average size of a new party is 7 percent, gains and losses of this magnitude can make the difference between being re-elected to parliament or sinking into irrelevance. Based on these results, the competitiveness model seems to be the most appropriate, followed by the full model, which takes all interaction terms into account but violates the parsimony principle.

Table 6.7: Summary of Hypotheses and Results

No.	Hypothesis	Supported	Rejected
1a	If an established party adopts a new party's position, the new party's vote share decreases.		X
1b	If an established party maintains its distance from the new party, the new party's vote share is not affected.		X
1c	If an established party confronts a new party's position, the new party's vote share increases.		X
2a	If an established party utilizes the engagement strategy towards the issues of a new party, the new party's vote share decreases.	(X)	
2b	If an established party is indifferent to the issues of the new party, the new party's vote share is not affected.	(X)	
2c	If an established party avoids the issues of a new party, the new party's vote share increases.	(X)	
3a	Parties' nicheness has no impact on the influence of positional strategies.	X	
3b	High degrees of nicheness boosts the the impact of issue competition strategies.		X
4a	Ideological similarity boosts the impact of positional competition strategies.		X
4b	The effect of issue competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if parties are ideologically close.	X	
5a	The effect of positional competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if the established party lost votes in the previous election.		X
5b	The effect of issue competition strategies on the vote share of new parties changes direction if the established party lost votes in the previous election.	X	

Note: Parentheses indicate a conditional result that is only true under certain moderating influences.

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Concerning the hypotheses, I summarize my findings in Table 6.7. The overall view of the results shows that my main hypothesis, according to which positional and issue competition strategies of established parties influence the vote share of the new party, is partly correct: Issue competition influences the vote share to a considerable amount, while positional competition does not. The coefficients estimated in the base model for the issue competition strategy contradict the directions formulated in the hypothesis. However, if additional interaction terms are taken into account, it becomes apparent that many of the observed effects fit the theory well. Therefore, I consider these hypotheses to be conditionally correct.

The linear-interactive competitiveness model shows pronounced effects in line with theoretical considerations. The same is true for the proximity model, but effect sizes are considerably smaller here.

For an established party, these results mean that it should keep the new party's issues in mind when choosing its strategy. Especially when the polls point to a victory, it may make sense to take up the new party's problems to keep its voters away from the ballot box. Ideological proximity to the new party should also be considered: Within the same ideological bloc, the avoidance strategy is associated with a smaller share of the vote for the new party, while the engagement strategy leads to a smaller percentage of the vote for the new party if the two are in different ideological blocs.

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7 Conclusion

In this final chapter, I summarize the key findings of this project by referring to the research question and the hypotheses developed. I then outline the implications for the theory developed here and the avenues I believe will emerge for future work.

The answer to the research question and thus the main result of this study turns out to be that established parties can indeed influence the electoral success of new competitors by making strategic changes in their election programs. Interestingly, however, there are significant differences in the effectiveness of changes to the election programs: While adopting or confronting the new party's positions has no impact on electoral success, it does when addressing or avoiding the new party's issues.

The direction and strength of this effect depend strongly on the concurrent competitive situation: Both ideological proximity and the expected election outcome play an essential role. Established parties successfully fight new parties with an engagement strategy if they act from a position of strength, i.e., if their vote gains are in prospect. Furthermore, the ideological proximity of the new party should be taken into account when choosing the strategy: within the same ideological bloc, an engagement strategy can be pretty successful; outside the bloc, this is rather not the case.

This result also calls for revising the theory developed here. Underlying this work is the idea that new parties pose a problem to their established contenders. The former equilibrium, the status quo of party competition, is challenged by their entry into parliament. Resources are redistributed, alliances are reconsidered, and issues that may not have mattered before are discussed.

I assume that the established parties adopt a strategic positioning vis-à-vis the new challengers for such a situation. On a theoretical level, I distinguish two ways in which established parties can influence the electoral success of new parties:

Based on spatial theory, positional competition is assumed to be the first path. Potentially, established parties influence voters' electoral decision by changing the ideological proximity assessment of voters. In short, an adoption of positions should reduce the electoral success of new parties because

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voters now get alternative offers. However, my work clearly shows that this assumption cannot be proven for positions located on the left-right dimension.

The second path is based on the salience theory. I assume that a differentiated emphasis on individual issues changes public opinion and voters' perceptions of issue ownership. In principle, an engagement strategy by the established party should pose a problem for the new party. By taking up issues of the new party, the established party attracts the new party's voters. As a result, the new party loses appeal.

My results conditionally support the theoretically assumed influence of the issue competition strategy: With the ideological proximity of the two parties as well as the competitiveness of the established party, two influential moderating variables should be considered.

An established party with good prospects for the next election can take the risk of taking up issues of the new party to convince its voters. Furthermore, the ideological proximity to the new party should be taken into account: An avoidance strategy toward the new party's issues will harm the new party if both parties belong to the same ideological bloc. However, if the two parties are in different blocs, which is likely to be the case most of the time, the engagement strategy should be chosen to reduce the electoral success of the new party. Surprisingly, the nicheness of the new party has no moderating influence.

With these results, this book contributes to the new party literature, the policy move research, and general spatial modeling approaches. First, I showed that Meguid's theory of party competition is a valuable tool for analyzing niche parties and new parties. Second, my conclusion that positional competition plays a secondary role for new parties sheds light on the importance of the left-right dimension in party competition: The left-right dimension is not as crucial for new parties as it is for established parties; instead, issue competition plays a more central role now (Green-Pedersen, 2007). Third, my analyses also confirm the results of Adams et al. (2011) and others, which showed that voters seem to ignore parties' policy moves.

Adams (2012) rightly asks whether voters read party programs at all. Following the idea of party cohesion research (Jahn and Oberst, 2012), I also think party programs really can be understood as "coagulated party discussions", giving an adequate picture of positions and issue emphasis as well as divisions within the party. As such, party programs are the basis for the political messages of party elites, interview statements, and legislative initiatives. If voters may not pay the perhaps desirable attention to manifestos, it can be assumed that at least some of these sources of information reach them.

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Therefore, I assume that it would be helpful to include these data sources even more in the research. This leads me to some of the methodological advances in my work.

Based on a discussion of existing measures of ideological position and salience of parties, I developed a novel measure based on a text-as-data approach that applies information retrieval techniques to political science. For validation, I conducted simulation experiments. The resulting multidimensional measurement of issue salience has proven its usefulness in this work. Furthermore, the simulation experiment shows the advantages over classical measurements such as the RILE. Based on cosine similarity, I have also developed and validated a new calculation of the nicheness of a new party. Both measurements allow conclusions based on the content of party programs even without data from manual content analyses.

Of course, the present work could by no means solve all the problems: The effects found are, not unusually in party research, relatively small. So, for a significant change in the electoral success of new parties, quite large changes in the election program of the established party are necessary. Another problem I faced is that the measure requires at least two elections to consider the established parties' strategies. Due to this problem, many dyads have fallen out of the analysis, which negatively affects the statistical certainty of the results and their substantive scope. One way to circumvent this problem in the future would be to collect additional election manifestos that are not yet available in the manifesto corpus.

The analysis of additional data sources, as mentioned above, is then also one of the future possibilities to analyze the question examined here in more depth: Interview statements by politicians, speeches in parliaments and at election campaign rallies, flyers, and television appearances are data sources that are still underused. In my opinion, it is these sources that voters primarily consume. Therefore, they would allow an even better understanding of the election campaign's dynamics and the changes in the issues emphasized. Moreover, media coverage, for example, also occurs between election dates, which would further improve the analyses.

I assume that the somewhat desperate "Is anyboding listening?" (Adams et al., 2011) can be answered with a resounding "Yes!" if new data sources are opened up for political science through the transcription of TV debates, speeches, and much more. With the text-analytical methods applied here, these are within reach of scholarly access, even though significant challenges to data collection and processing remain.

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The rapid development of machine learning in recent years has already shown which tools will be in the hands of scientists in the future. For example, the tedious transcription of audio sources can now be accomplished in seconds. I made use of this to retrieve the quote from Franz Josef Strauß in the introduction. The translation of the document-feature matrix for this work was also only made possible at low cost by machine learning. I am convinced that technological development and the creativity of researchers will not stop here: With the further development of language models such as Open AI's GPT-3, the door to artificially generated texts is wide open. This would take the simulation of election programs to the next level and allow political scientists to test the impact of specially crafted political messages with experiments. In addition, advanced word embedding techniques that go beyond the bag-of-words approach, as well as classifiers and supervised machine learning algorithms, are becoming more accessible to political scientists. This development will help extract information from political texts and make it useful for research.

On a more conventional basis, I see potential in the calibrated cosine measures I have developed here as a benchmark in the experiment: Comparing documents by means of an anchor document makes it possible to trace the development of particular issues or ideas through texts from different parties or at different points in time. This is an exciting approach to diffusion research because it allows us to analyze the interdependent relationship between party competition's local, regional, federal, and supranational levels.

The theoretical foundations of this work can be applied to the analysis of party competition on all these levels and among all parties in (or between) a party system. The organizational novelty of a party could then be one of many interesting party characteristics studied in a dyadic approach. Therefore, future work should focus on party characteristics beyond nicheness, organizational novelty, or competitiveness: These may involve past party mergers, leadership replacements, or the internal party organization.

As for the outlined possibilities for future research, I think that text-as-data approaches in general, and text similarity analysis in particular, will contribute much to a better understanding of party relations. In this sense, the new party research conducted here is a beginning rather than an end.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Corpus Data Availability

The following figures show the availability of corpus data at the party level for all countries in the sample over the entire available period. The illustration and explanation are based on the validation report for the paper by Düpont and Rachuj (2021).

Each line represents a party, where the name is composed of the Manifesto ID and the English party name. A dot indicates that a manifesto is available at the corresponding election time. The size of the dot reflects the vote share of the respective party, and the color represents the affiliation to the party family. Although many parties are covered in principle, election programs are occasionally missing from the time series. In order to have the longest possible time series for the multi-level analysis, I use the latest available manifesto to close the gap. This procedure is based on the assumption that the old manifesto is still valid.

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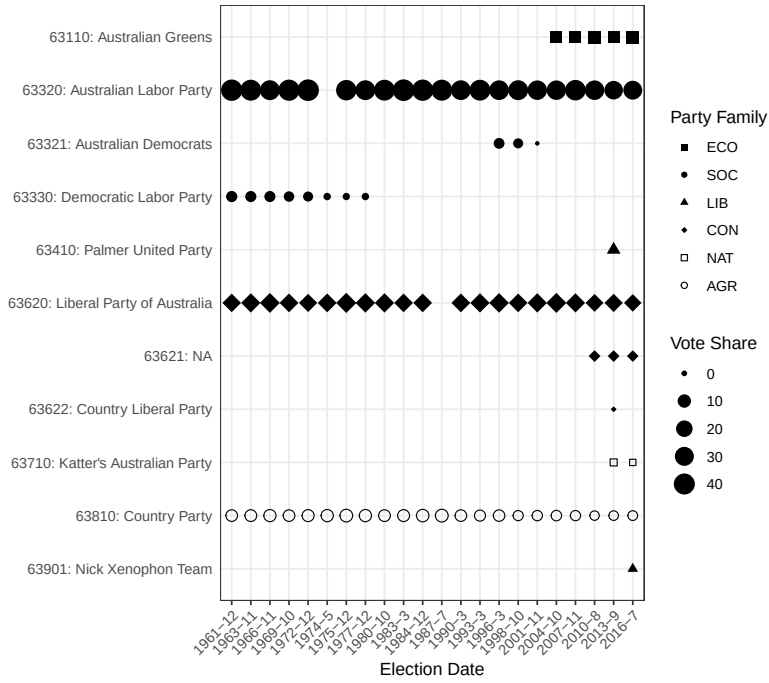

Figure 8.1: Australia: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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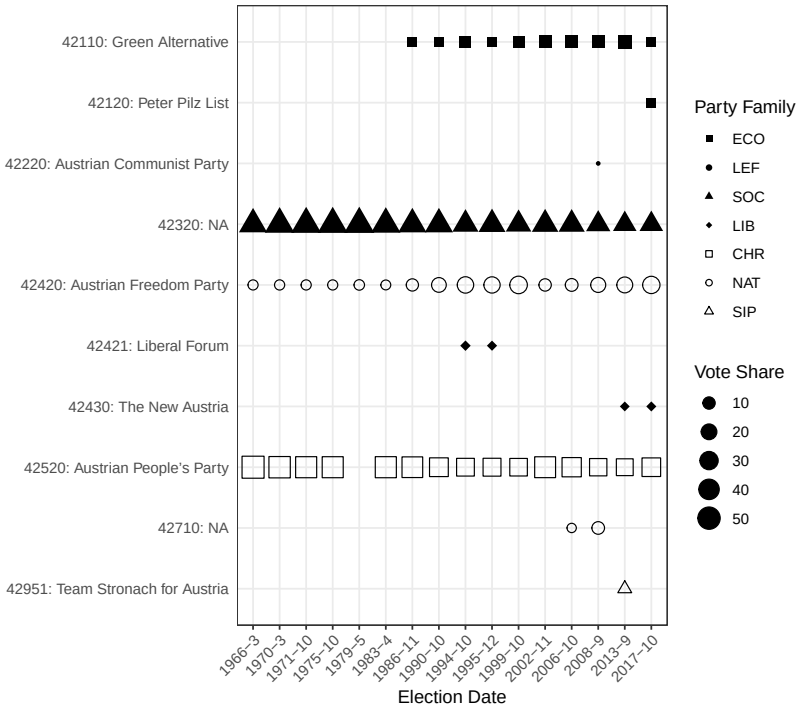

Figure 8.2: Austria: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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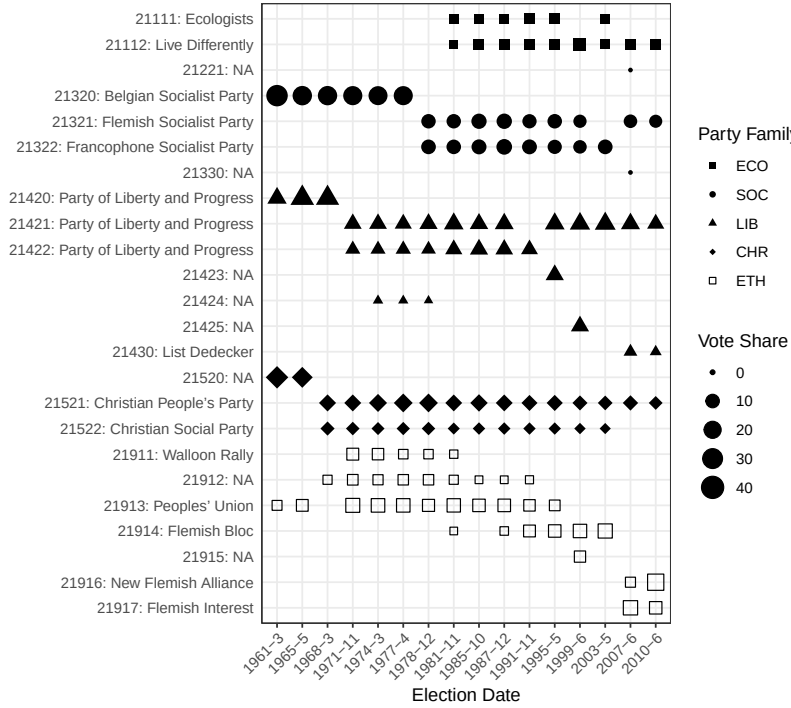

Figure 8.3: Belgium: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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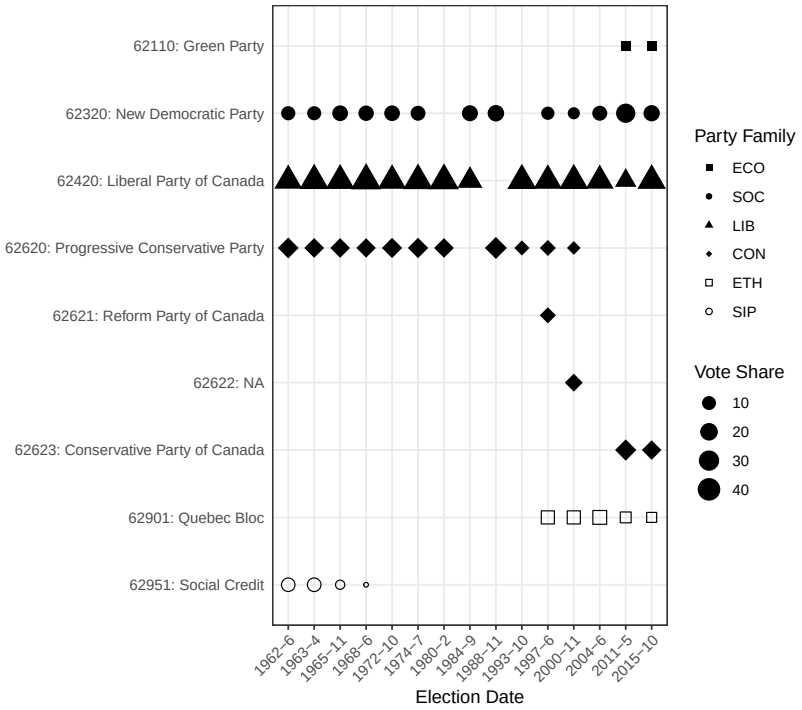

Figure 8.4: Canada: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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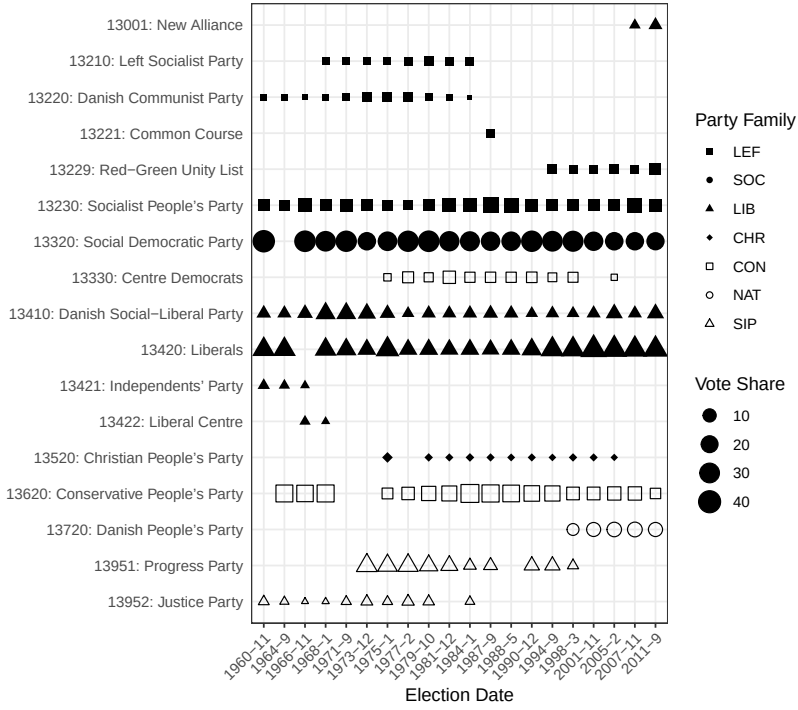

Figure 8.5: Denmark: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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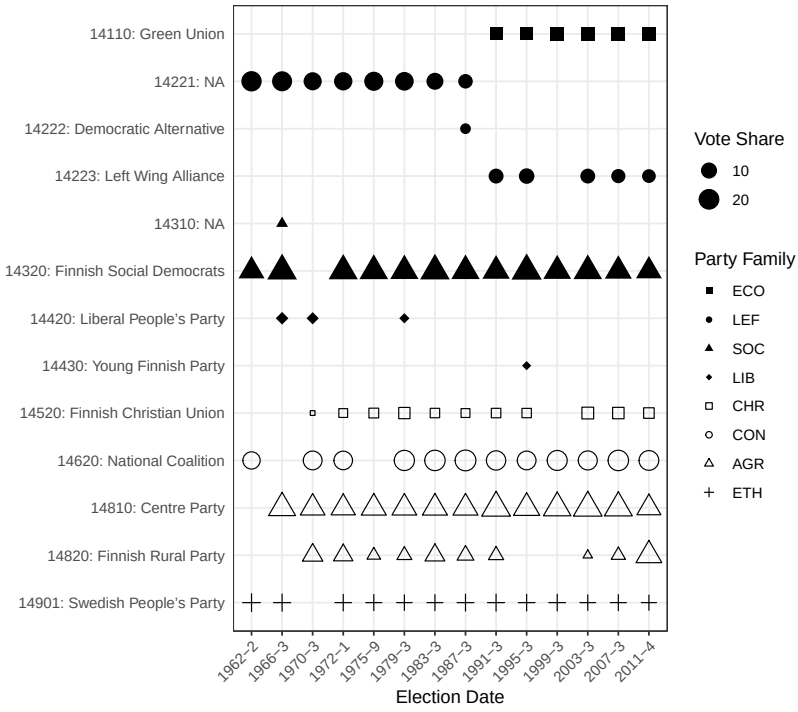

Figure 8.6: Finland: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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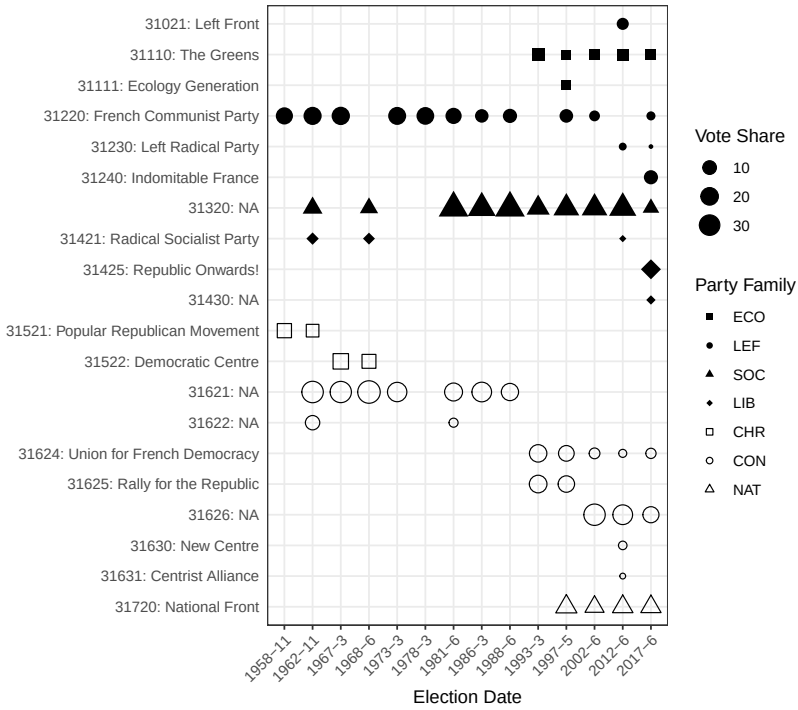

Figure 8.7: France: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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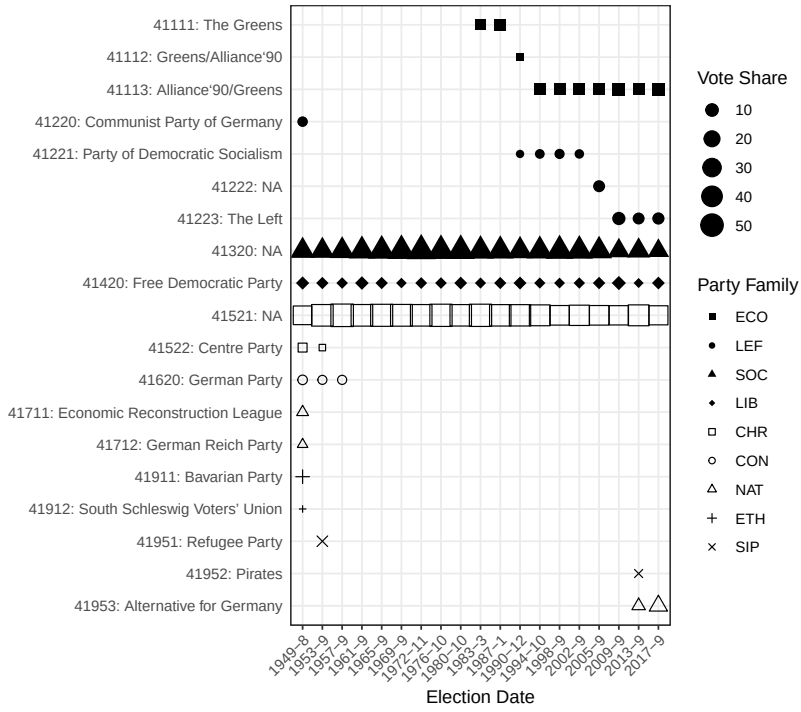

Figure 8.8: Germany: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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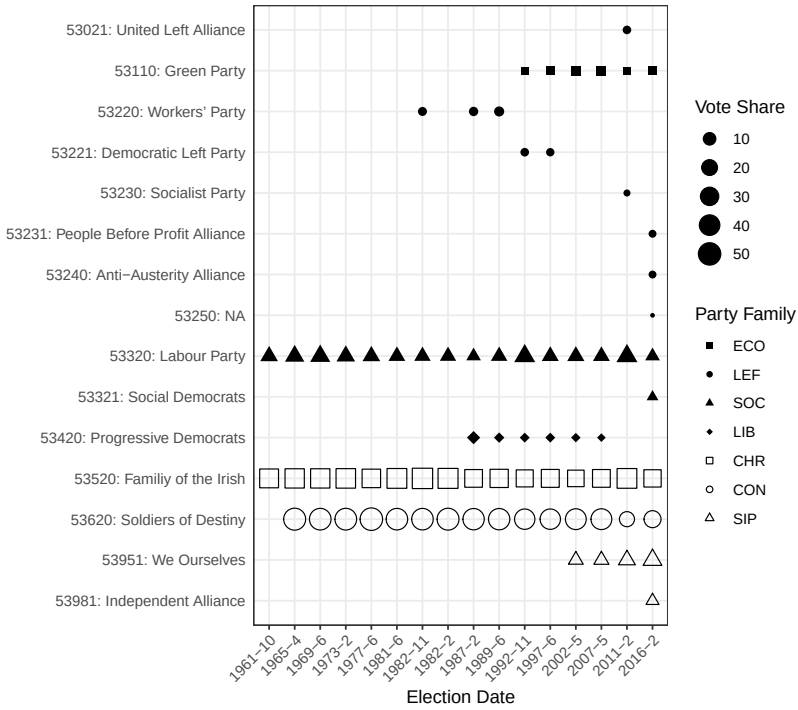

Figure 8.9: Ireland: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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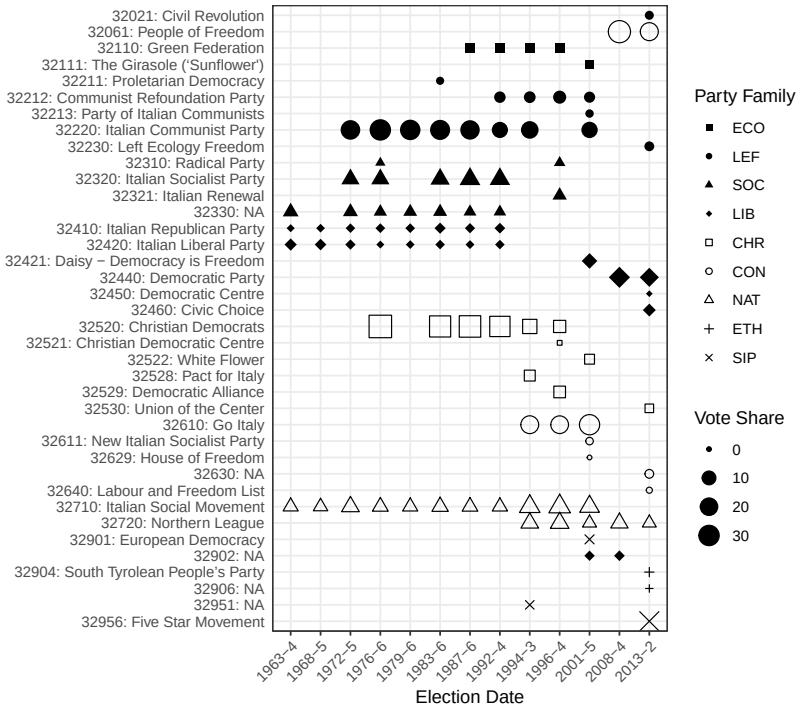

Figure 8.10: Italy: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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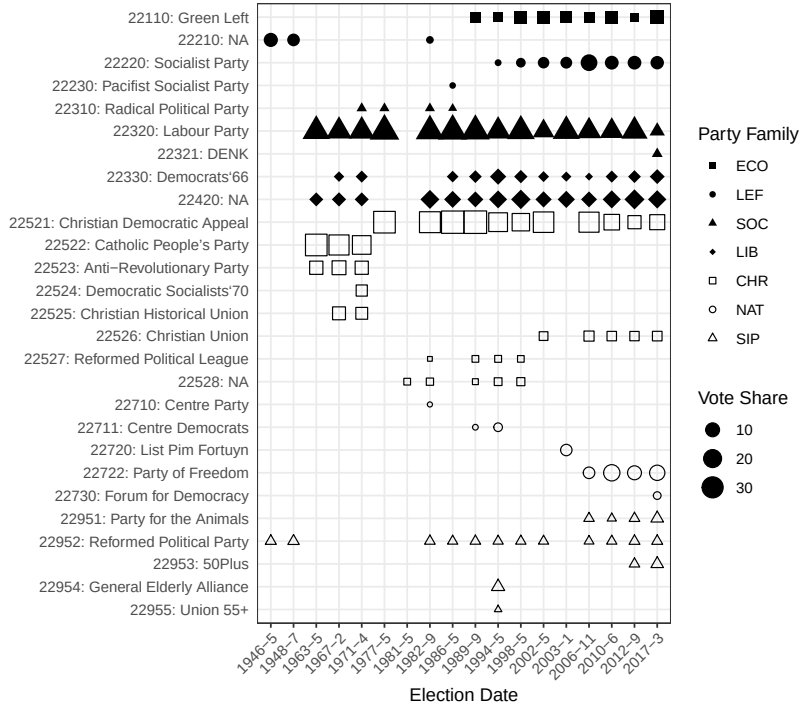

Figure 8.11: The Netherlands: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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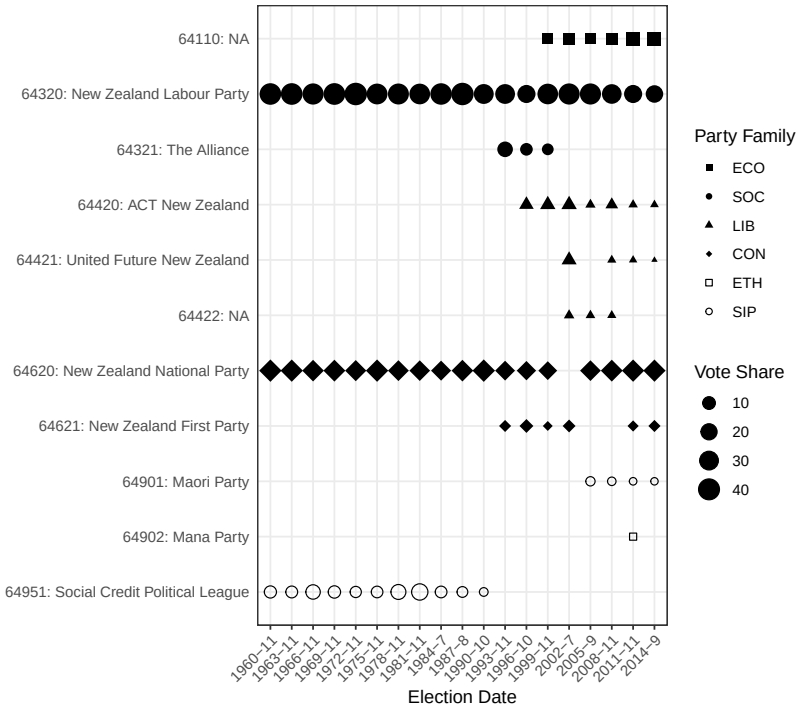

Figure 8.12: New Zealand: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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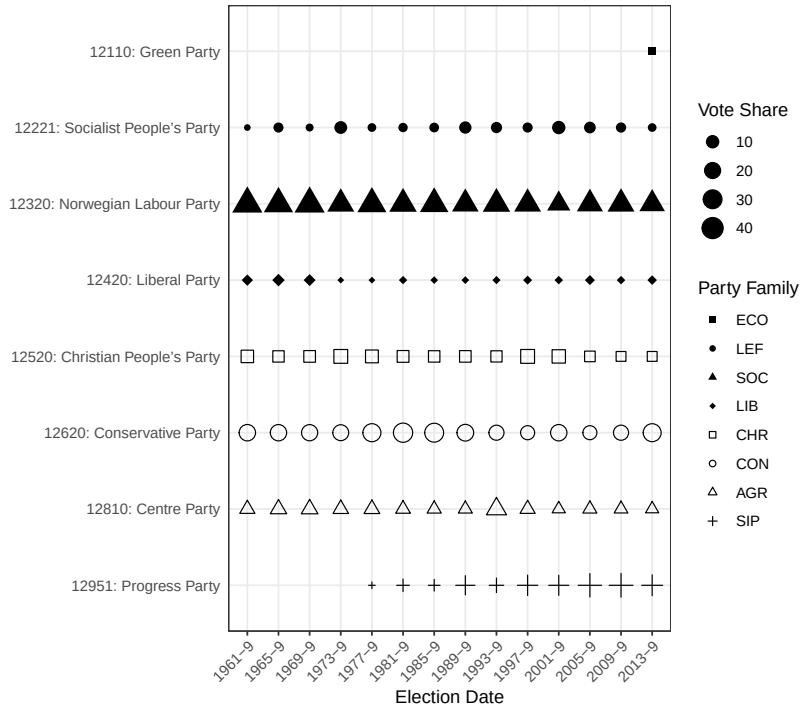

Figure 8.13: Norway: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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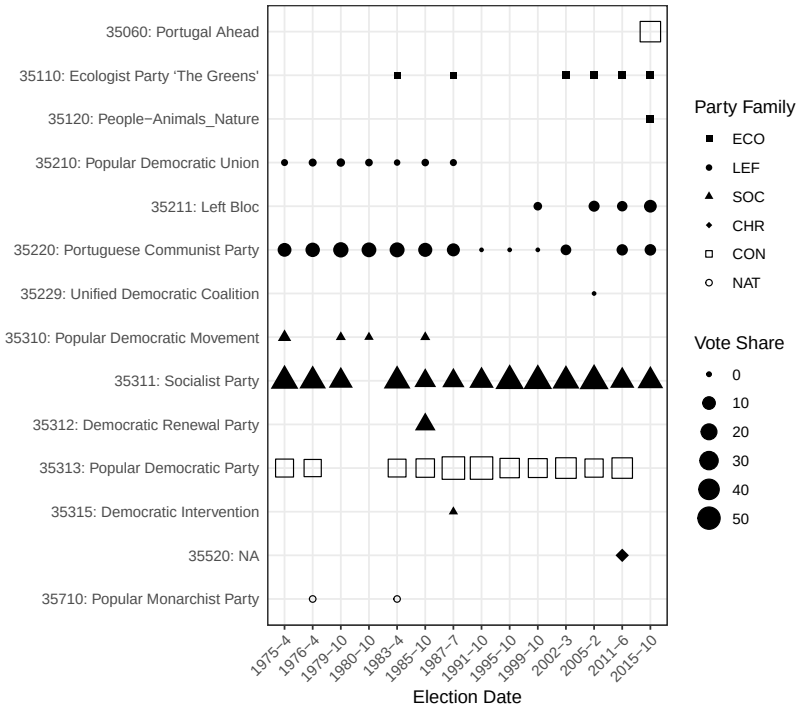

Figure 8.14: Portugal: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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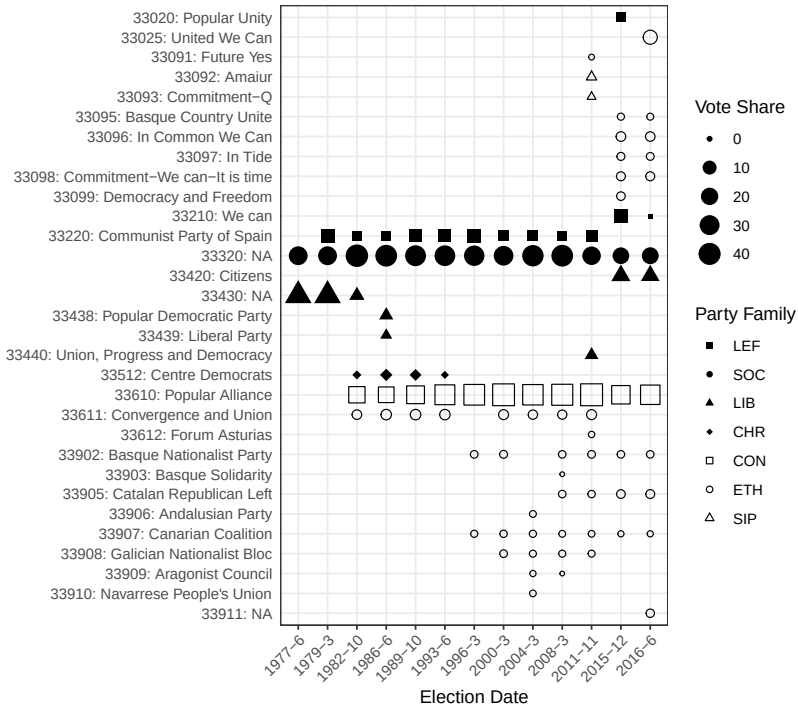

Figure 8.15: Spain: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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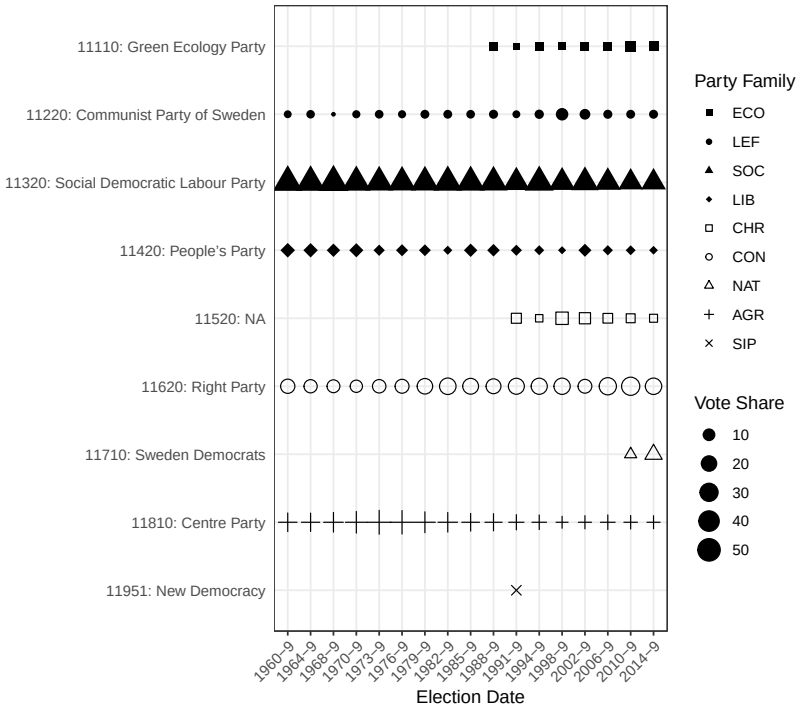

Figure 8.16: Sweden: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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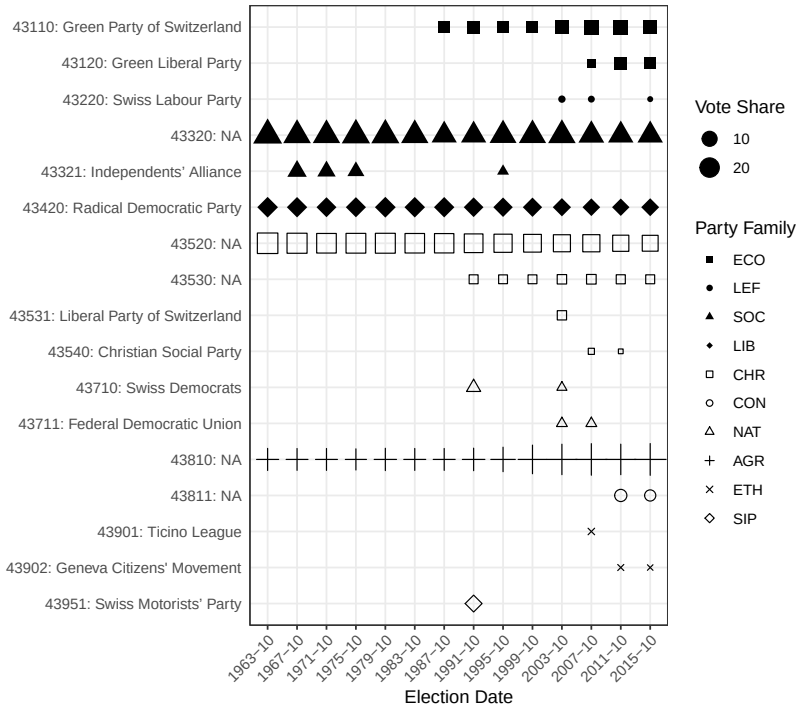

Figure 8.17: Switzerland: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

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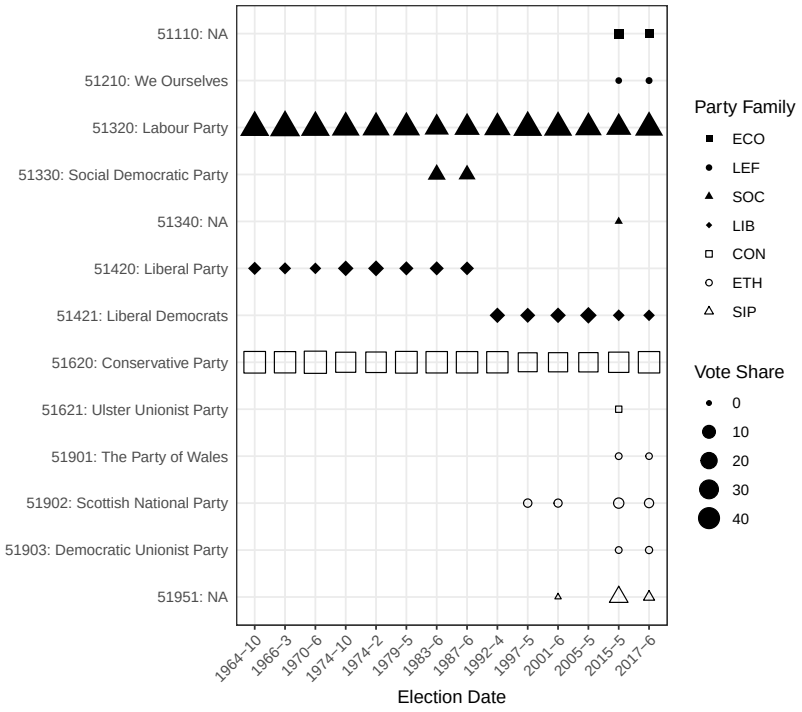

Figure 8.18: United Kingdom: Corpus Data Availability on Party Level

8.2 New Parties in the Sample

The table below lists all the new parties that I was able to identify based on the ”Parties, Institutions & Preferences” (Jahn et al., 2018a) dataset. The column ”First Election” indicates the year the party first succeeded in entering parliament. In contrast, the column ”Last Election” is the year in which the party last won at least one seat in parliament. I have left parties that emerged from a split in the analysis because the resulting organizations are not identical to the original party. This coding decision applies particularly to Belgium, where, for example, the Party of Liberty and Progress split into a Walloon and a Flemish party (Hecking, 2006, p. 54), which again managed to win seats in parliament. The Belgian Socialist Party underwent a similar development, so it appears twice in the list.

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Table 8.1: New Parties Included in the Analysis

Country	CMP Code	Party Name	Time		Vote Share		
			First Election	Last Election	Min	Max	Mean
Australia	63110	Australian Greens	2010	2016	8.70	11.80	9.97
Australia	63410	Palmer United Party	2013	2013	5.50	5.50	5.50
Australia	63710	Katter's Australian Party	2013	2016	0.50	1.00	0.78
Austria	42110	Green Alternative	1986	2013	4.80	12.40	8.42
Austria	42421	Liberal Forum	1994	1995	5.50	6.00	5.75
Austria	42710	Alliance for the Future of Austria	2006	2008	4.10	10.70	7.77
Austria	42430	The New Austria	2013	2017	5.00	5.30	5.15
Austria	42951	Team Stronach for Austria	2013	2013	5.70	5.70	5.70
Austria	42120	Peter Pilz List	2017	2017	4.40	4.40	4.40
Belgium	21912	Francophone Democratic Front of Francophones of Brussels	1965	1991	1.20	5.90	3.21
Belgium	21521	Christian People's Party	1968	2014	10.90	23.70	18.02
Belgium	21522	Christian Social Party	1968	2014	5.50	12.60	8.58
Belgium	21911	Walloon Rally	1968	1981	1.10	5.80	3.14
Belgium	21421	Party of Liberty and Progress	1971	2014	7.40	15.40	11.29
Belgium	21422	Party of Liberty and Progress	1971	1991	3.40	10.20	7.08
Belgium	21424	Brussels Liberal Party	1971	1978	0.30	1.60	0.91
Belgium	21321	Belgian Socialist Party	1978	2014	8.80	14.90	12.08
Belgium	21322	Belgian Socialist Party	1978	2014	10.20	15.60	12.95
Belgium	21914	Flemish Bloc	1978	2014	1.10	12.00	6.26
Belgium	21111	Ecologists	1981	2014	2.20	7.40	4.04
Belgium	21112	Live Differently	1981	2014	2.30	7.00	4.24
Belgium	21426	Liberal Reformation Party - Francophone Democratic Front	1995	2014	10.10	12.50	11.11
Belgium	21916	New Flemish Alliance	2003	2014	3.10	20.30	12.38
Belgium	21430	List Dedecker	2007	2010	2.30	4.00	3.19
Canada	62621	Reform Party of Canada	1993	2000	19.40	25.50	22.45
Canada	62901	Quebec Bloc	1993	2015	4.70	12.40	8.85

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Table 8.1: New Parties Included in the Analysis (continued)

Country	CMP Code	Party Name	Time		Vote Share		
			First Election	Last Election	Min	Max	Mean
Canada	62623	Conservative Party of Canada	2004	2015	31.90	39.60	35.75
Canada	62110	Green Party	2011	2015	3.40	3.90	3.65
Denmark	13230	Socialist People's Party	1960	2015	3.90	14.60	8.10
Denmark	13421	Independents' Party	1960	1964	1.60	3.30	2.38
Denmark	13422	Liberal Centre	1966	1966	2.50	2.50	2.50
Denmark	13210	Left Socialist Party	1968	1984	1.50	3.70	2.44
Denmark	13330	Centre Democrats	1973	1998	2.20	8.30	4.66
Denmark	13520	Christian People's Party	1973	2001	1.80	5.30	2.76
Denmark	13951	Progress Party	1973	1998	2.40	15.90	8.90
Denmark	13221	Common Course	1987	1987	2.20	2.20	2.20
Denmark	13229	Red-Green Unity List	1994	2015	2.20	7.80	3.93
Denmark	13720	Danish People's Party	1998	2015	7.40	21.10	13.05
Denmark	13001	New Alliance	2007	2015	2.80	7.50	5.10
Finland	14820	Finnish Smallholders' Party	1966	2015	1.00	19.10	7.07
Finland	14520	Finnish Christian Union	1970	2015	1.10	5.30	3.47
Finland	14110	Green Union	1983	2015	6.50	8.50	7.52
Finland	14222	Democratic Alternative	1987	1987	4.20	4.20	4.20
Finland	14223	Left Wing Alliance	1991	2015	7.10	11.20	9.49
Finland	14430	Young Finnish Party	1995	1995	2.80	2.80	2.80
France	31624	Union for French Democracy	1978	2017	1.80	19.10	7.98
France	31720	National Front	1986	2017	4.30	14.90	10.83
France	31110	The Greens	1997	2017	3.20	6.80	4.93
France	31230	Left Radical Party	2012	2017	0.40	1.60	1.00
France	31630	Democratic Movement	2012	2012	2.20	2.20	2.20
France	31631	Centrist Alliance	2012	2012	0.60	0.60	0.60
France	31240	Indomitable France	2017	2017	4.90	4.90	4.90
France	31425	Republic Onwards!	2017	2017	43.10	43.10	43.10
Germany	41113	The Greens	1983	2017	1.20	10.70	7.49
Germany	41221	Party of Democratic Socialism	1990	2017	2.40	11.90	6.96
Germany	41953	Alternative for Germany	2017	2017	12.60	12.60	12.60

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Table 8.1: New Parties Included in the Analysis (continued)

Country	CMP Code	Party Name	Time		Vote Share		
			First Election	Last Election	Min	Max	Mean
Ireland	53220	Workers' Party	1981	1989	3.10	5.00	4.05
Ireland	53420	Progressive Democrats	1987	2007	2.70	11.80	5.35
Ireland	53110	Green Party	1989	2016	1.40	4.70	2.82
Ireland	53221	Democratic Left Party	1992	1997	2.50	2.80	2.65
Ireland	53951	We Ourselves	1997	2016	6.50	13.90	9.90
Ireland	53021	United Left Alliance	2011	2011	1.60	1.60	1.60
Ireland	53230	Socialist Party	2011	2011	1.10	1.10	1.10
Ireland	53231	People Before Profit Alliance	2016	2016	1.90	1.90	1.90
Ireland	53240	Anti-Austerity Alliance	2016	2016	1.90	1.90	1.90
Ireland	53321	Social Democrats	2016	2016	3.00	3.00	3.00
Italy	32310	Radical Party	1976	1994	1.10	3.50	2.26
Italy	32211	Proletarian Democracy	1983	1987	1.50	1.70	1.60
Italy	32110	Green Federation	1987	2006	2.10	2.80	2.47
Italy	32212	Communist Refoundation Party	1992	2006	5.00	8.60	6.18
Italy	32720	Northern League	1992	2018	3.90	17.30	7.39
Italy	32951	The Network/Movement for Democracy	1992	1994	1.90	1.90	1.90
Italy	32528	Pact for Italy	1994	1994	4.60	4.60	4.60
Italy	32529	Democratic Alliance	1994	1996	6.80	6.80	6.80
Italy	32610	Go Italy	1994	2018	14.00	29.40	22.48
Italy	32321	Italian Renewal	1996	1996	1.90	1.90	1.90
Italy	32213	Party of Italian Communists	2001	2006	1.70	2.30	1.96
Italy	32421	Daisy - Democracy is Freedom	2001	2001	14.50	14.50	14.50
Italy	32530	White Flower	2001	2013	1.80	6.80	3.89
Italy	32611	New Italian Socialist Party	2001	2006	0.80	1.00	0.91
Italy	32440	Olive Tree	2006	2018	18.80	33.20	25.31
Italy	32902	List Di Pietro - Italy of Values	2006	2008	4.40	4.40	4.40
Italy	32904	South Tyrolean People's Party	2006	2018	0.40	0.40	0.40

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Table 8.1: New Parties Included in the Analysis (continued)

Country	CMP Code	Party Name	Time		Vote Share		
			First Election	Last Election	Min	Max	Mean
Italy	32061	People of Freedom	2008	2013	21.60	37.40	26.11
Italy	32230	Left Ecology Freedom	2013	2013	3.20	3.20	3.20
Italy	32450	Democratic Centre	2013	2013	0.50	0.50	0.50
Italy	32460	Civic Choice	2013	2013	8.30	8.30	8.30
Italy	32630	Brothers of Italy - National Centre-right	2013	2018	2.00	4.30	2.77
Italy	32956	Five Star Movement	2013	2018	25.60	32.60	27.93
Netherlands	22330	Democrats '66	1967	2017	2.00	15.50	7.52
Netherlands	22310	Radical Political Party	1971	1986	1.30	4.80	2.28
Netherlands	22524	Democratic Socialists '70	1971	1977	0.70	5.30	3.65
Netherlands	22521	Christian Democratic Appeal	1977	2017	8.50	35.30	22.93
Netherlands	22528	Reformatory Political Federation	1981	1998	1.00	2.00	1.57
Netherlands	22527	Reformed Political League	1982	1998	0.80	1.30	1.16
Netherlands	22710	Centre Party	1982	1982	0.80	0.80	0.80
Netherlands	22230	Pacifist Socialist Party	1986	1986	1.20	1.20	1.20
Netherlands	22110	Green Left	1989	2017	2.30	9.10	5.52
Netherlands	22711	Centre Democrats	1989	1994	0.90	2.50	1.83
Netherlands	22220	Socialist Party	1994	2017	1.30	16.60	7.95
Netherlands	22954	General Elderly Alliance	1994	1994	3.60	3.60	3.60
Netherlands	22955	Union 55+	1994	1994	0.90	0.90	0.90
Netherlands	22526	Christian Union	2002	2017	2.10	4.00	3.14

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Table 8.1: New Parties Included in the Analysis (continued)

Country	CMP Code	Party Name	Time		Vote Share		
			First Election	Last Election	Min	Max	Mean
Netherlands	22720	List Pim Fortuyn	2002	2003	5.70	5.70	5.70
Netherlands	22722	Party of Freedom	2006	2017	5.90	15.50	11.04
Netherlands	22951	Party for the Animals	2006	2017	1.30	3.20	2.12
Netherlands	22953	50Plus	2012	2017	1.30	3.10	2.28
Netherlands	22321	DENK	2017	2017	2.10	2.10	2.10
Netherlands	22730	Forum for Democracy	2017	2017	1.80	1.80	1.80
New Zealand	64951	Social Credit Political League	1966	1984	6.70	20.70	11.73
New Zealand	64321	The Alliance	1993	1999	7.70	18.20	11.13
New Zealand	64621	New Zealand First Party	1993	2017	4.10	13.40	7.31
New Zealand	64420	ACT New Zealand	1996	2017	0.50	7.10	3.25
New Zealand	64110	Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand	1999	2017	5.20	11.10	7.57
New Zealand	64421	United Future New Zealand	2002	2014	0.20	6.70	2.15
New Zealand	64422	Jim Anderton's Progressive Coalition	2002	2008	0.90	1.70	1.25
New Zealand	64901	Maori Party	2005	2014	1.30	2.40	1.82
New Zealand	64902	Mana Party	2011	2011	1.10	1.10	1.10
Norway	12221	Socialist People's Party	1961	2017	2.40	12.50	6.62
Norway	12951	Anders Lange's Party	1973	2017	1.90	22.90	12.45
Norway	12110	Green Party	2013	2017	2.80	3.20	3.00
Portugal	35110	Ecologist Party 'The Greens'	1983	2015	0.40	2.70	1.08

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Table 8.1: New Parties Included in the Analysis (continued)

Country	CMP Code	Party Name	Time		Vote Share		
			First Election	Last Election	Min	Max	Mean
Portugal	35312	Democratic Renewal Party	1985	1987	4.90	17.90	11.99
Portugal	35211	Left Bloc	1999	2015	2.40	10.60	6.73
Portugal	35120	People-Animals-Nature	2015	2015	1.40	1.40	1.40
Spain	33438	Popular Democratic Party	1982	1986	5.20	5.20	5.20
Spain	33512	Centre Democrats	1982	1989	2.90	9.20	7.10
Spain	33439	Liberal Party	1986	1986	2.70	2.70	2.70
Spain	33907	Canarian Coalition	1993	2016	0.20	1.10	0.59
Spain	33908	Galician Nationalist Bloc	1996	2011	0.75	1.30	0.87
Spain	33909	Aragonist Council	2004	2004	0.40	0.40	0.40
Spain	33091	Future Yes	2011	2011	0.17	0.17	0.17
Spain	33092	Amaiur	2011	2011	1.37	1.37	1.37
Spain	33093	Commitment-Q	2011	2011	0.51	0.51	0.51
Spain	33440	Union, Progress and Democracy	2011	2011	4.69	4.69	4.69
Spain	33612	Forum Asturias	2011	2011	0.40	0.40	0.40
Spain	33095	Basque Country Unite	2015	2016	0.80	0.90	0.85
Spain	33096	In Common We Can	2015	2016	3.60	3.70	3.65
Spain	33097	In Tide	2015	2016	1.50	1.60	1.55
Spain	33098	Commitment-We can-It is time	2015	2016	2.70	2.80	2.75
Spain	33210	We can	2015	2015	12.80	12.80	12.80
Spain	33420	Citizens	2015	2016	13.20	14.00	13.60
Sweden	11110	Green Ecology Party	1988	2014	3.40	7.30	5.33
Sweden	11520	Christian Democratic Community Party	1991	2014	4.10	11.80	6.90
Sweden	11951	New Democracy	1991	1991	6.70	6.70	6.70
Sweden	11710	Sweden Democrats	2010	2014	5.70	12.90	9.30
Switzerland	43530	Protestant People's Party of Switzerland	1971	2015	1.80	2.40	2.04
Switzerland	43710	National Action against Foreign Domination	1971	2003	1.00	3.40	2.26
Switzerland	43110	Greens	1979	2015	4.90	9.60	7.06

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Table 8.1: New Parties Included in the Analysis (continued)

Country	CMP Code	Party Name	Time		Vote Share		
			First Election	Last Election	Min	Max	Mean
Switzerland	43951	Swiss Motorists' Party	1987	1995	4.00	5.10	4.51
Switzerland	43220	Swiss Labour Party	1991	2015	0.40	0.90	0.68
Switzerland	43531	Liberal Party of Switzerland	1991	2007	1.80	2.20	1.98
Switzerland	43711	Federal Democratic Union	1991	2007	1.30	1.30	1.30
Switzerland	43120	Green Liberal Party	2007	2015	4.60	9.60	6.59
Switzerland	43540	Christian Social Party	2007	2007	0.40	0.40	0.40
Switzerland	43901	Ticino League	2007	2015	0.60	1.00	0.86
Switzerland	43811	Conservative Democratic Party of Switzerland	2011	2015	4.10	5.40	4.78
Switzerland	43902	Geneva Citizens' Movement	2011	2015	0.30	0.40	0.35
Great Britain	51330	Social Democratic Party	1983	1987	5.10	6.60	5.85
Great Britain	51421	Liberal Democrats	1992	2017	7.40	23.00	13.09
Great Britain	51621	Ulster Unionist Party	1992	2015	0.40	0.40	0.40
Great Britain	51902	Scottish National Party	1992	2017	1.50	4.70	3.03
Great Britain	51903	Democratic Unionist Party	1992	2017	0.60	0.90	0.73
Great Britain	51210	We Ourselves	1997	2017	0.60	0.70	0.64
Great Britain	51110	Green Party of England and Wales	2015	2017	1.60	3.80	2.82
Great Britain	51340	Social Democratic and Labour Party	2015	2015	0.30	0.30	0.30

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Table 8.1: New Parties Included in the Analysis (continued)

Country	CMP Code	Party Name	Time		Vote Share		
			First Election	Last Election	Min	Max	Mean
Great Britain	51901	The Party of Wales	2015	2017	0.50	0.60	0.56
Great Britain	51951	United Kingdom Independence Party	2015	2015	12.60	12.60	12.60

8.3 Validation for the Party System Similarity Score

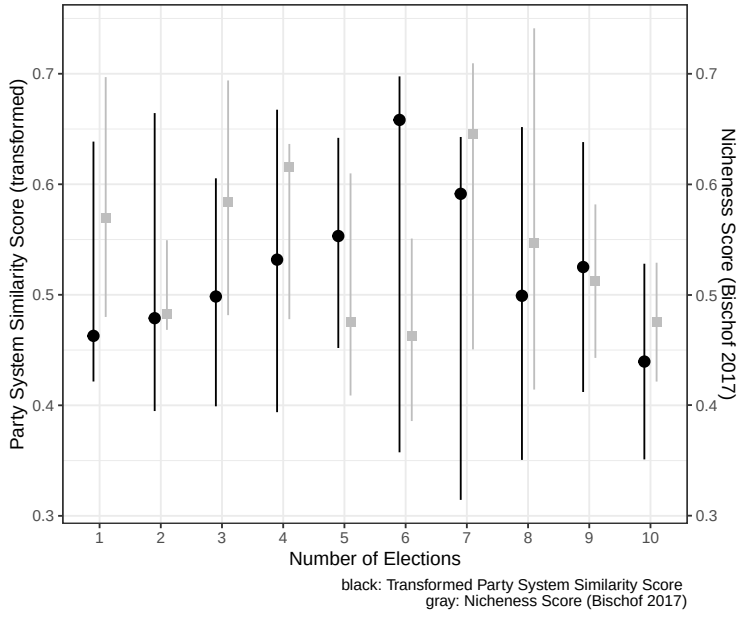

Figure 8.19: Nicheness Scores of Socialist New Parties

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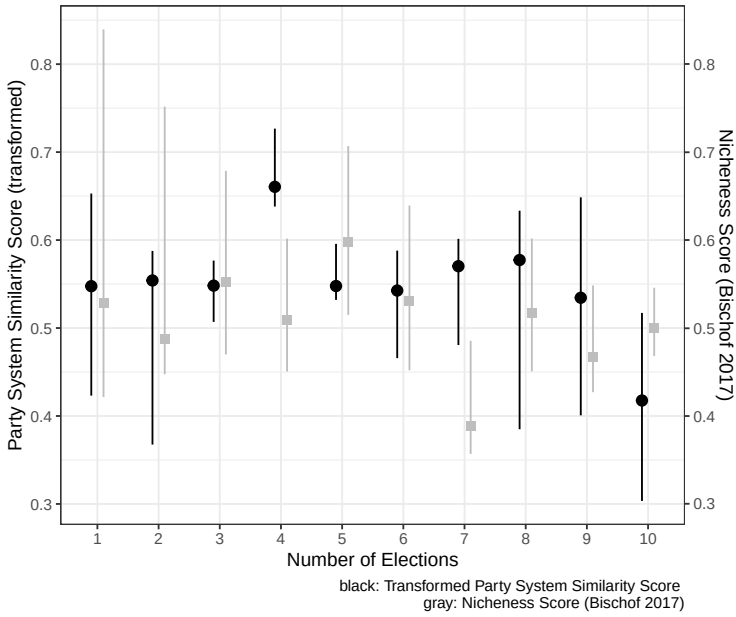

Figure 8.20: Nicheness Scores of Social Democratic New Parties

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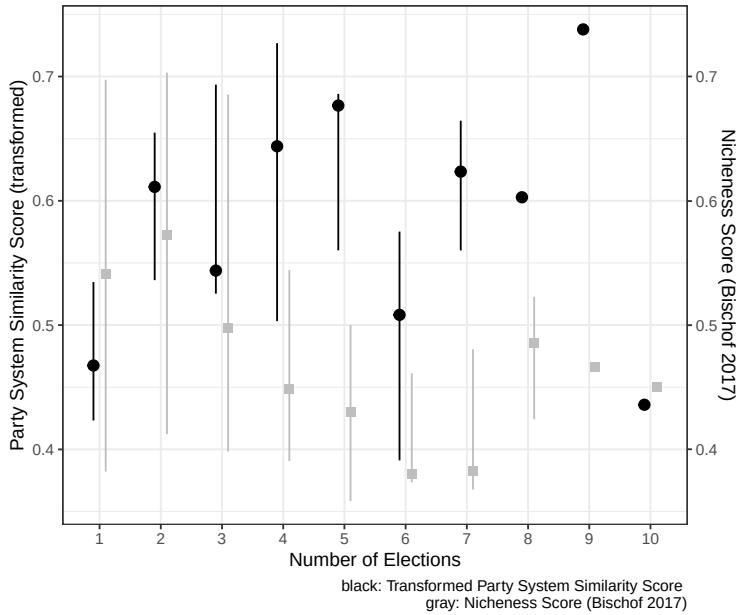

Figure 8.21: Nicheness Scores of Liberal New Parties

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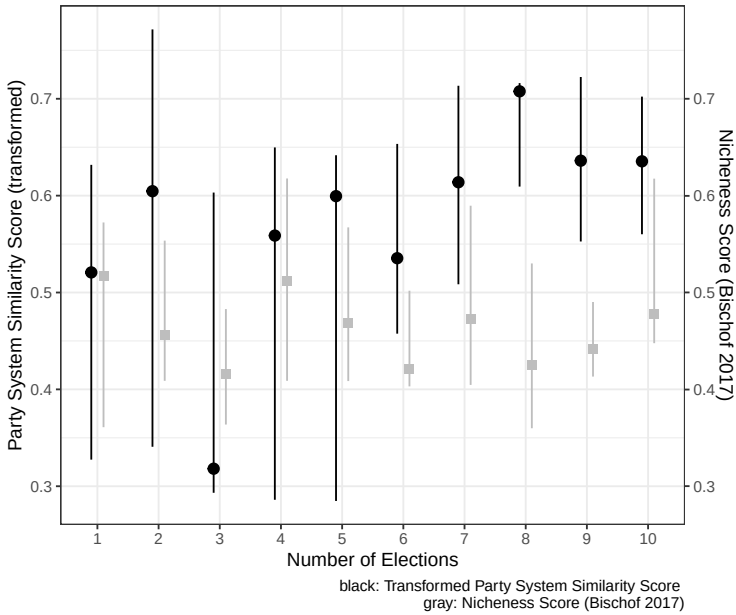

Figure 8.22: Nicheness Scores of Christian New Parties

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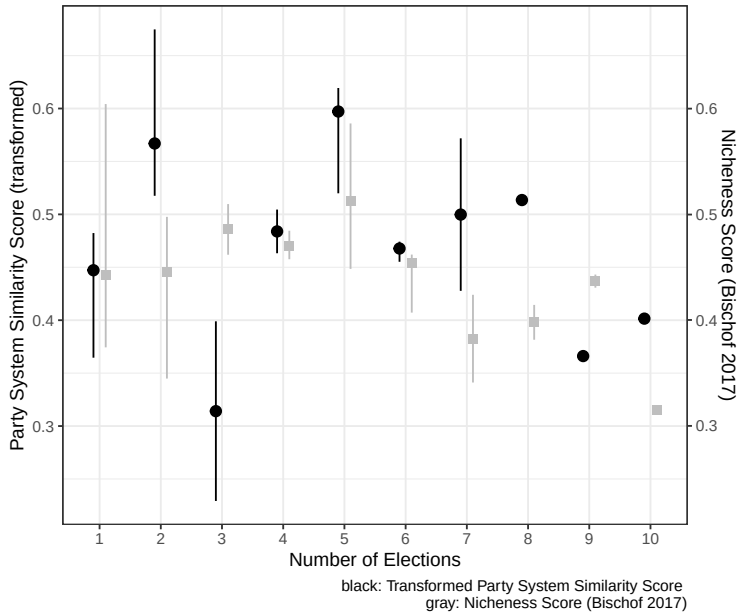

Figure 8.23: Nicheness Scores of Conservative New Parties

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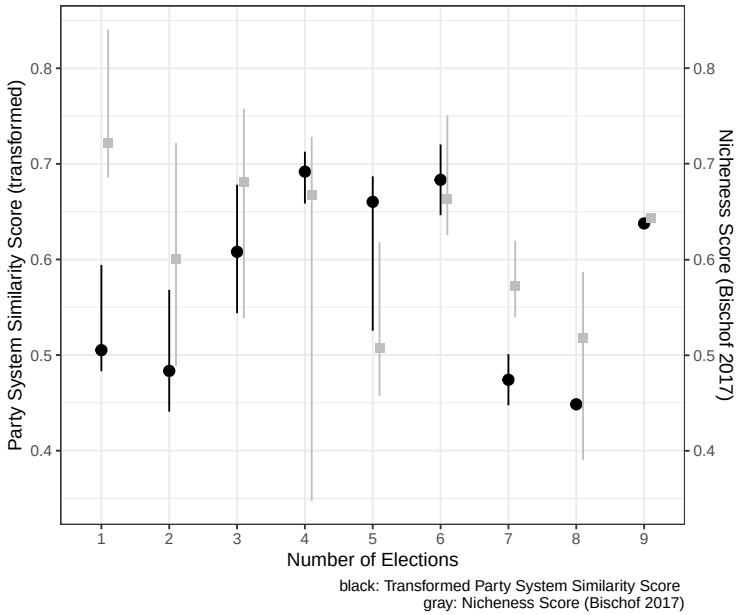

Figure 8.24: Nicheness Scores of Nationalist New Parties

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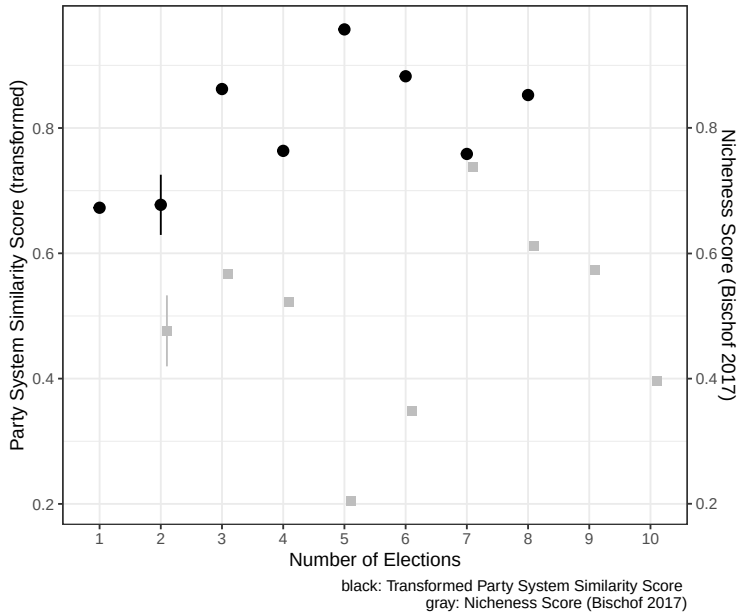

Figure 8.25: Nicheness Scores of Agrarian New Parties

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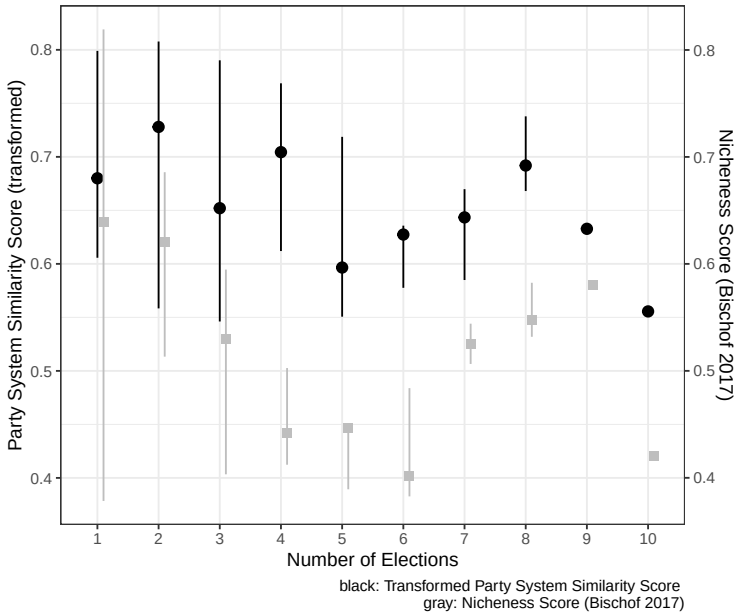

Figure 8.26: Nicheness Scores of Regional New Parties

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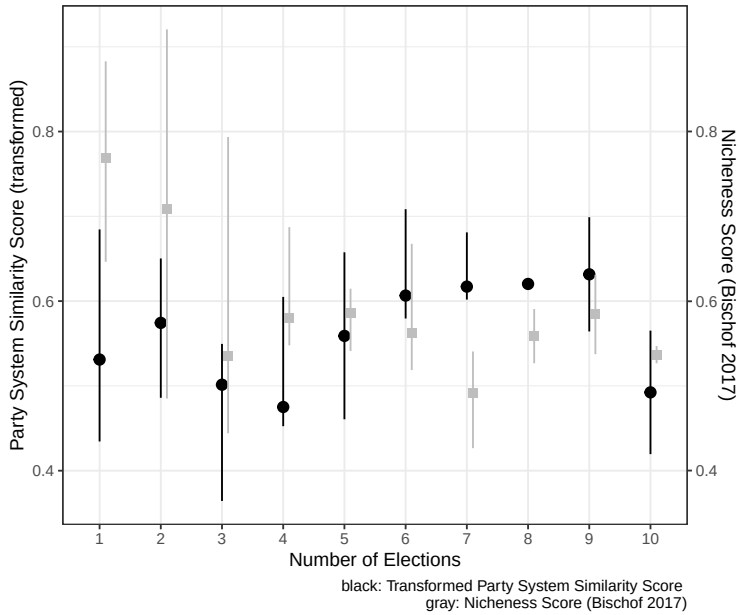

Figure 8.27: Nicheness Scores of Special Issue New Parties

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8.4 Robustness Check for Issue Competition Base Model

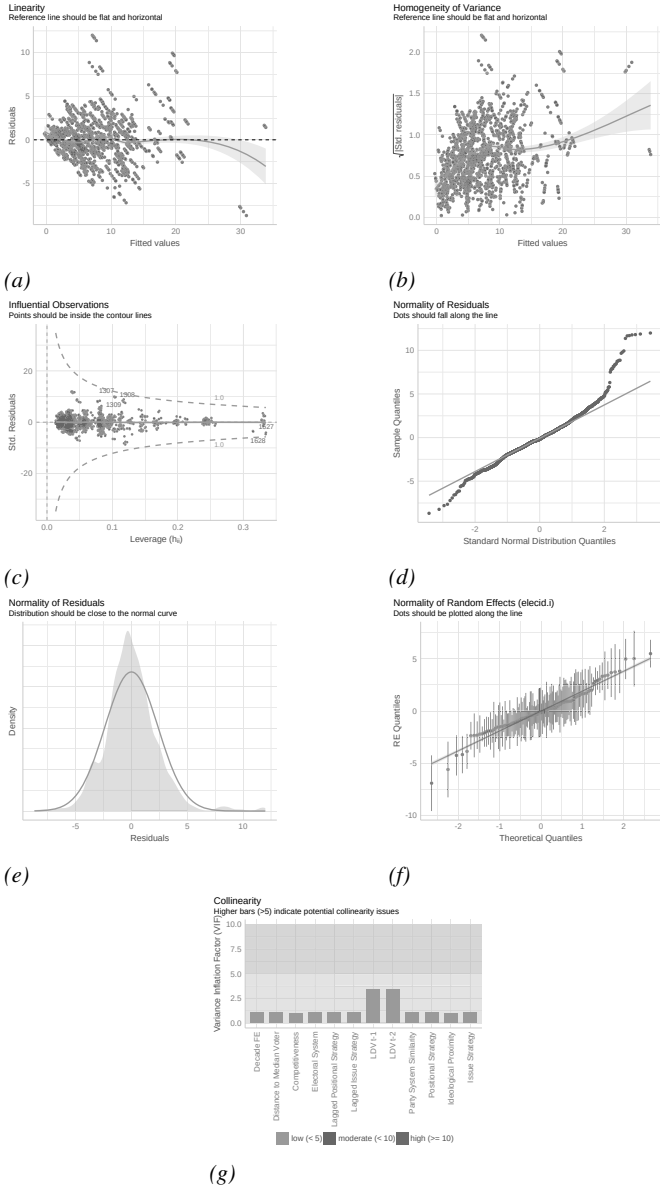

Figure 8.28: Robustness Checks for Issue Competition Base Models

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8.5 Binning Estimation of Linear-Interactive Moderation Effects

As discussed in section 6.1, I present here the result of a binning estimation for the interaction effect between the issue competition strategy and the party system similarity score, respectively, the competitiveness of the established parties. This allows the linearity of the interaction effect to be tested, as suggested by Hainmueller et al. (2019). However, I do not report the binning plot for the interaction effect of the party family because it does not make sense for a dummy-coded moderator to calculate other values of the moderator additionally.

The binning plots support the assumption of linear interaction effects because the separate estimation for low, middle, and high values does not deviate too much from the linear estimate.

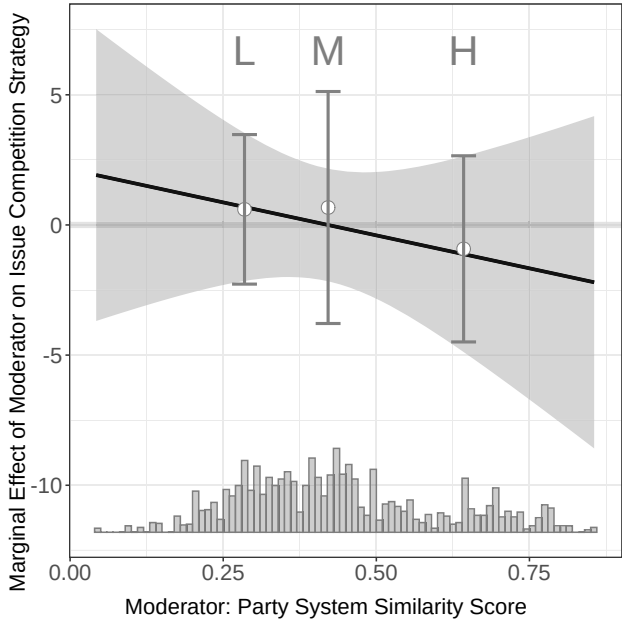

Figure 8.29: Binning Plot for the Party System Similarity Score Interaction

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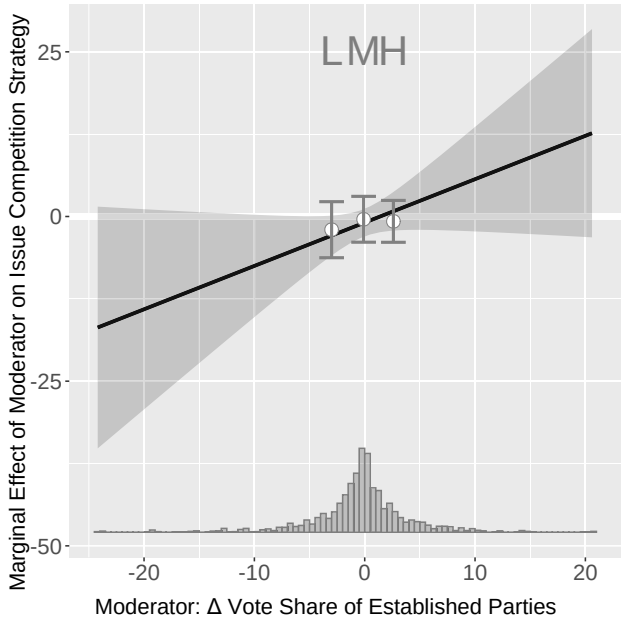

Figure 8.30: Binning Plot for the Previous Vote Gains/Losses of Established Parties

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8.6 Models for Positional Competition

Table 8.2: Multilevel Regression Models for the Vote Share of New Parties

	Base	Nicheness	Proximity	Competitiveness	Full
LDV t_{-1}	0.72***	0.72***	0.71***	0.71***	0.72***
	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02
LDV t_{-2}	0.12***	0.12***	0.12***	0.12***	0.12***
	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Issue Competition	−0.34	−0.34	−0.36	−0.36	−0.27
	0.71	0.71	0.72	0.72	0.71
Lagged Issue Competition t_{-1}	−0.49	−0.48	−0.63	−0.67	−0.50
	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73
Positional Competition	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Lagged Positional Competition t_{-1}	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Party System Similarity Score	−1.94**	−1.92**	−1.95**	−1.95**	−1.95**
	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81
Electoral System	−0.11	−0.09	−0.11	−0.10	−0.10
	0.42	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.42
Distance Median Voter New Party	−0.02***	−0.02***	−0.02***	−0.03***	−0.02***
	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
ΔVote Share Est. Party (Competitiveness)	−0.07***	−0.07***			−0.07***
	0.02	0.02			0.02
Dummy Ideological Proximity	0.06		0.06		0.05
	0.13		0.13		0.13
Positional Competition × Competitiveness		0.00			0.00
		0.00			0.00
Positional Competition × Ideological Proximity			−0.01		−0.01
			0.01		0.01
Positional Competition × Party System Similarity Score				−0.02	−0.02
				0.03	0.03
Intercept	3.22***	3.21***	3.28***	3.28***	3.21***
	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.00	0.99
Decade FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Var: elecid.i (Intercept)	4.77	4.76	4.87	4.86	4.75
Var: Residual	6.05	6.05	6.12	6.12	6.05
Num. groups: elecid.i	122	122	122	122	122
AIC	7863.45	7872.95	7883.63	7878.50	7891.51
BIC	7965.96	7975.46	7986.13	7975.61	8010.20
Log Likelihood	−3912.73	−3917.48	−3922.81	−3921.25	−3923.75
Num. obs.	1628	1628	1628	1628	1628

Note: Multilevel models with non-hierarchical random intercepts for elections; decade FEs included but not shown

Levels of significance: *** p < 0.01; ** p < 0.05; * p < 0.1

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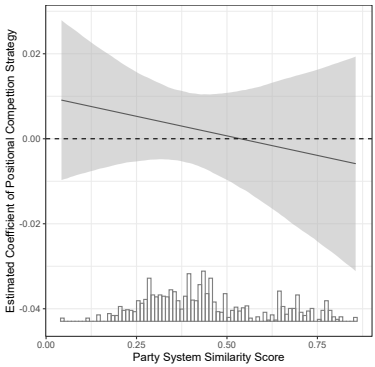
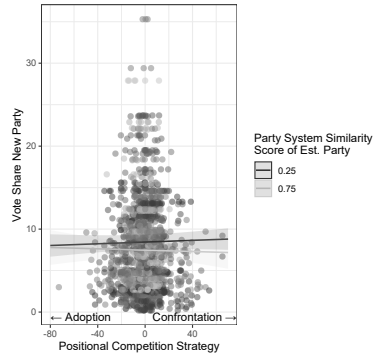
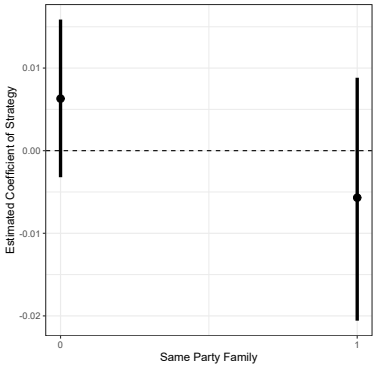


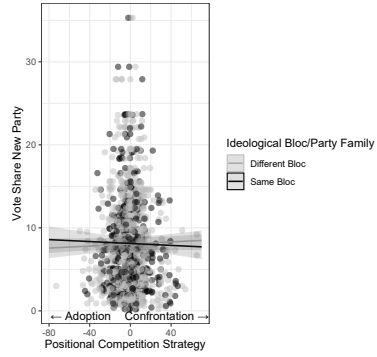
(a) Marginal Effect Plots for the Moderation of Positional Competition Strategy by the Nicheness of the New Party



(b) Predicted Values for the Vote Share of New Parties Depending on the Positional Competition Strategy and the Nicheness of the New Party



(a) Marginal Effect Plots for the Moderation of Positional Competition Strategy by the Affiliation in the Same Ideological Bloc



(b) Predicted Values for the Vote Share of New Parties Depending on the Positional Competition Strategy and the Affiliation in the Same Ideological Bloc

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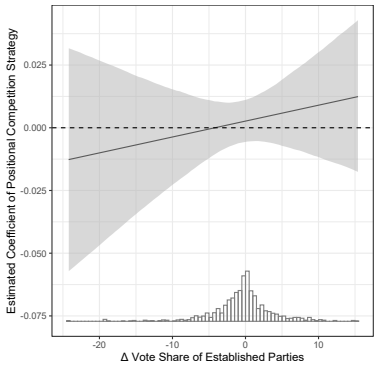
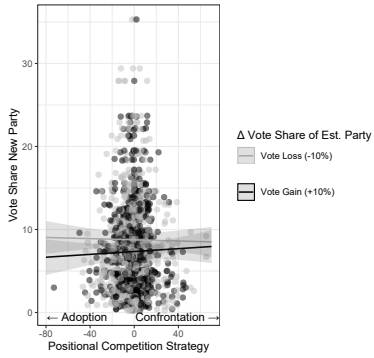


(a) Marginal Effect Plots for the Moderation of Positional Competition Strategy by the Previous Vote Gains/Losses of Established Parties



(b) Predicted Values for the Vote Share of New Parties Depending on the Positional Competition Strategy and the Previous Vote Gains/Losses of Established Parties

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