Appealing Broadly or Narrowing Down?
Explaining the Scope of Parties’ Issue Agendas in Election Campaigns†

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Abstract

Why do political parties in some election campaigns offer a broad and encompassing policy agenda to voters, whereas at other times they confine their policy appeals to a narrow agenda and focus on only a few issues? This paper aims to advance our understanding of the politics of ‘issue attention diversity’. It argues that parties’ issue agendas are informed by (1) their competitive position in the party system, captured by the distinction between mainstream and challenger parties, and (2) their internal organizational structure, captured by the balance of power between party leaders and activists. It shows that challenger parties, losers in the current system, seek to change the political status quo by focusing on a few issues only, thus presenting a confined agenda. Mainstream parties distribute their attention across a large range of issues. Moreover, mainstream parties change the scope of their agenda when they are confronted with electoral losses or when they are being excluded from office. However, the extent to which parties respond to these external stimuli depends on intra-party politics. Party leaders seek to satisfy vote- and office-seeking motivations and ‘appeal broadly’, whereas activist want the party to ‘speak to the base’ and narrow down its issue appeals. These theoretical expectations are tested using panel-data regression techniques on party-manifesto data, which allows for retrieving a measurement of the scope of parties policy agendas, and expert-survey data, indicating parties internal organizational structure. The results of analyses of parties’ issue agendas in 18 European democracies in the period 1950-2013 have important implications for our understanding of party strategy in the context of issue competition.

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Introduction

Although most research on party competition has been preoccupied with examining (changes in) parties’ policy positions (for an overview of recent studies see Adams, 2012), the study of issue competition has gained momentum in recent years (see for example Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010, 2014; Van de Wardt, de Vries and Hobolt, 2014). This view of party behavior posits that parties do not interact by taking different positions on a set of common issues, but rather that they compete for the attention of the public for their preferred issues. Traditional theories predict relatively stable issue profiles, as parties selectively emphasize only the issues they ‘own’ (Budge and Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996). As such, parties, in election campaigns, “do not talk about the same things” (Riker, 1993b, p.82).

The recent increase in scholarly attention for the issue competition perspective might be explained by findings that seem to contradict traditional theories: saliency strategies are said to be anything but stable and insulated, as parties respond to issues brought forward by ‘issue entrepreneurs’ (de Vries and Hobolt, 2012) and to issues featured prominently on the ‘party system agenda’ (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010), thereby creating occurrences of ‘issue convergence’ (Damore, 2005).

What explains the dynamics of parties’ issue saliency strategies? Most studies examine how increases or decreases in the saliency of specific (groups of) issues can be traced back to competitor party behavior (Meguid, 2005), focusing events (Walgrave and Varone, 2008) or public opinion (Hobolt and Klemmensen, 2008). This paper takes a different approach and considers parties’ entire issue profile by exploring how the dynamics of issue attention diversity can be explained. Issue attention diversity refers to the scope of parties’ policy agendas: do parties present a rather broad and encompassing agenda to voters, or do they narrow down their attention focusing on a few issues they deem important? This is an important question as the shape of an agenda influences the choices made from it (Riker, 1993a). Moreover, when a party distributes its attention over a large range of issues, it becomes, arguably, more difficult for voters to distill what the party actually stands for, especially given the limited information processing capacities of the electorate and the media. This then may affect accountability relations between voters and incumbent parties (Somer-Topcu, 2014).

Nevertheless, there has been only limited attention for issue attention diversity in empirical studies of party competition. Hobolt, Klemmensen and Pickup (2008) have studied ‘issue diversity’, but only in two countries (Britain and Denmark). Other studies perceive ‘issue diversification’ as a strategy for parties to increase electoral support. Thus, by increasing the scope of their agenda parties aim at appealing at a
broader electorate as to become more ‘catch all’ (Somer-Topcu, 2014; Lacewell, 2013). However, in some instances it might be rational for parties to decrease their issue diversity and pursue core vote strategies (Green, 2011). Hence, an assessment of the dynamics of issue attention diversity should take into account movement in both directions: increasing and decreasing the scope of the agenda. Greene (2015) presents evidence that issue diversity is linked to incumbency status in interaction with the state of the economy: government parties present broader agendas than do opposition parties to defend their record in office; but when the economy is performing well they narrow down their agenda to emphasize their performance.

This paper aims to contribute to our understanding of the dynamics of parties’ issue attention diversity. It departs from previous studies by highlighting two aspects. First, it argues that the crucial distinction is not between opposition and government parties, but rather between challenger and mainstream parties, as this latter distinction more adequately describes parties’ relative competitive positions in multi-party systems. Second, it stresses the role of intra party politics; more specifically, the balance of power between party activists and party leaders.

This first argument reflects the assumption that political losers, understood here as challenger parties, want to change the status quo of politics by actively seeking and promoting new lines of conflict (i.e. new issues) (Carmines and Stimson, 1986). As they need to focus most of their attention on these issues to move them to the top of the party system agenda, they will present more confined and specific policy agendas. The second argument incorporates the notion that there is a struggle over issue strategies within parties: party activists want the party to focus on its core issues, as this is in many cases the reason they joined the party in the first place. The leadership of the party, however, is tempted by the electoral consequences of a strategy of issue diversification that reaches out to many different constituencies (Somer-Topcu, 2014). Thus, parties in which the leadership is dominant should have a broader issue profile than parties in which activists have more of a say.

Pooled time series analyses of the issue attention diversity of parties from 18 European countries between 1950 and 2013 lend support to these theoretical propositions.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. First, the literature on issue-competition and party organization is briefly discussed after which hypotheses on issue attention diversity are derived. Second, data sources, operationalization of the variables of interest and the estimation technique are discussed. After presenting and discussing the empirical results the paper closes with implications of its findings and highlighting possible avenues for further research.
1 The Politics of Issue Attention Diversity

Not only what positions to take on issues, but also which issues to emphasize and which to ignore, and how many issues to address, are key decisions for partisan elites in election campaigns. Adjusting the saliency of an issue might even be a more attractive strategy for parties since positional changes come with costs: party supporters might be alienated, activists might disagree with the new policy course and voters might perceive it as opportunistic flip-flopping. Changing the saliency of an issue seems more straightforward and less likely to endanger a party’s reputation. Studies indeed show how parties downplay the saliency of an issue if, for example, the party’s base is divided on that issue (van de Wardt, 2014; Steenbergen and Scott, 2004). Issue saliency decisions are as much part of the strategic toolkit of parties as changing positions on issues (Meguid, 2005; Wagner and Meyer, 2014; Meyer and Wagner, 2013).

At the core of such saliency strategies lies the process of issue selection, that is: parties must decide (1) how many issues to select for the campaign and (2) which issues that will be (Aragonès, Castanheira and Giani, 2015). These questions are, arguably, interrelated and the literature suggests two alternative issue selection strategies.

First, parties may choose to present a specific and focused agenda, confining their attention to a few issues on which they have a clear advantage. This view is informed by salience theory, which argues that politicians ‘selectively emphasize’ issues that are favorable to them while deemphasizing issues that might harm them (Budge and Farlie, 1983; Robertson, 1976); a logic Riker (1993b) formalized in the principles of dominance and dispersion. A party stands to gain from a certain issue (it can dominate on an issue) when it succeeds to establish ‘ownership’, for example because it has a track record of successfully handling the issue when in government (Petrocik, 1996). Closely related to this is the ‘core vote strategy’, which in issue salience terms implies that parties focus on issues of interest to the party base rather than the electorate at large (Green, 2011, p.736).

Second, parties may broaden their focus and present a diverse agenda including many different issues, as they face incentives to go beyond addressing their core issues. Issue ownership is not fixed; it is a dynamic process rather than a stable condition (Seeberg, 2014; Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans, 2009) and politicians might thus attempt to ‘steal’ ownership from their competitors (Holian, 2004) or try to

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1 Moreover, a debate has emerged as to what extent voters actually perceive parties’ positional changes; see Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu (2011) and Fernandez-Vazquez (2014)

2 According to Riker (1993b, p.81-82), the principles of dominance and dispersion guide the rhetorical efforts of politicians. The dominance principle holds that when one side successfully wins the argument, the other side ignores the issue whereas the winner continues to exploit it. The principle of dispersion states that when both sides fail to win the argument on an issue, both sides will cease to discuss it and search for another issue.
claim newly politicized issues. More generally, a 'broad appeal' strategy, reaching out to diverse groups of voters, is attractive to parties as it brings electoral advantages (Kirchheimer, 1966; Somer-Topcu, 2014). One way of achieving this goal is for parties to moderate their policy positions as to approach the median voter position (Downs, 1957); another, less risky strategy, is to add more issues to the party agenda. In the latter case, the party diversifies hoping to appeal to a broader electorate. Strategies of diversification might also be informed by competitor behavior: if other parties act as issue-entrepreneurs (de Vries and Hobolt, 2012), that is: if they manage to politicize new issues and put them high on the party system agenda (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010), then other parties feel the urge to respond to this challenge (Meguid, 2005; Abou-Chadi, 2014; Spoon, Hobolt and de Vries, 2014), thereby engaging in issue trespassing (Aragonès, Castanheira and Giani, 2015; van de Wardt, 2015).

Issue salience strategies are thus characterized by a trade-off for parties between ‘speaking to the base’ by presenting a confined, focused and specific agenda which is limited in scope, and potentially expanding the base of electoral support by presenting a diversified agenda, broader in scope (cf. De Sio and Weber, 2014). To what extent parties prefer one strategy over the other depends, I argue, on two things. First, the competitive position a party occupies in the party system matters. In a two-party system, this reflects the difference between parties in and out of office; in a multi-party setting the crucial distinction is between mainstream parties and challenger parties. Second, intra-party politics, specifically the balance of power between party activists and the party leadership, inform issue salience strategies. In the following I develop these two arguments in more detail.

Challenger versus Mainstream & Activists versus Leaders

I assume that party competition in multi-party settings can be described as an iterated strategic game between challenger and mainstream parties, following the framework proposed by de Vries and Hobolt (2012). The basic insight is that multi-party system consist of mainstream parties that regularly participate in coalition governments, but that are sometimes also excluded from office, and challenger parties, that have not previously held office (and might never hold office in the future) (see also Hobolt and Karp, 2010). As such, one can distinguish between three types of parties: challenger parties, mainstream opposition parties and mainstream government parties (de Vries and Hobolt, 2012, p.250). There are two reasons why these different

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3 For arguments stressing the electoral costs of moderating policy positions, especially the risk for parties to alienate their core supporters and party activists, see Aldrich (1983); Karreth, Polk and Allen (2013)

4 Issue trespassing refers to a situation in which parties engage with issues that are associated with their rivals. Damore (2005) and Sigelman and Buell (2004) refer to this as ‘issue convergence’; Green-Pedersen (2007) speaks of ‘issue overlap’
types of parties would pursue different issue saliency strategies.

First, incumbent parties are tied to their record in office, which they need to defend as they are being held responsible for policy solutions by voters (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010). Government parties are expected to come up with solutions for the many policy problems that face contemporary societies, and an incumbent party that ignores issues for which it was (at least partly) responsible in office runs the risk of being perceived as trying to avoid accountability for its actions. Opposition parties are unconstrained in picking issues to attack the incumbent parties: “incumbents have a record, the opposition has only its words” (Klingemann, Hofferbert and Budge, 1994, p.28). Because of this, opposition parties are perceived to be especially influential in setting the political agenda (Seeberg, 2013; Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010); they are not forced to respond to all issues in the same way government parties are, they can focus more strongly on a couple of issues they deem favorable. Thus:

**H1:** Mainstream government parties present broader policy agendas than mainstream opposition parties

Second, the distinction between challenger parties and mainstream parties represents the divide between political losers and winners in multiparty systems (de Vries and Hobolt, 2012). According to ‘issue evolution’ theories, politicians who occupy losing positions in the system seek to advance their situation by promoting conflicts on new issues whereas political winners aim at maintaining the status quo (Carmines and Stimson, 1986). ‘Heresthetics’ is Riker’s (1986) label to describe the effort of political losers to select issues as to strategically manipulate the environment in which political preferences are coordinated into collective outcomes. In a multiparty setting, this implies that mainstream parties, who regularly alternate between opposition and government status, want to reinforce existing patterns of competition, whereas challenger parties, who have never gained access to office, want to upset the status quo by introducing new issues. As a result, mainstream parties can appeal broadly, distributing their attention across a range of issues, not wanting to politicize specific issues. They have an incentive to stabilize the political structure ‘as is’ as not to upset their (future) coalition partners. Challenger parties, on the other hand, need to confine their

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5 Riker (1986) makes an analytical distinction between ‘rhetoric’, as the art of arguing about political issues using persuasion, and ‘heresthetics’, as the art of selecting issues.

6 This conceptualization of challenger parties relates to the concept of ‘niche parties’ as those parties that raise issues that do not coincide with traditional lines of political conflict (Meguid, 2005). In this study, I opt for the concept of ‘challenger parties’ for two reasons. First, the challenger party concept is dynamic (challenger parties become mainstream parties once they enter a government coalition) whereas the niche party concept, at least in Meguid’s (2005) original conceptualization, is time-invariant. Second, even in ‘updated’ conceptualizations, niche parties are operationalized using issue salience information: Meyer and Miller (2013) define niche parties as parties that emphasize issues that are neglected by other parties and Wagner (2012) argues that niche parties put salience on non-economic issues. For the purpose of this study, it would be tautological to explain issue salience strategies (i.e. the scope of parties’ agendas) by a party type classification that is based on issue salience information.
issue appeals focusing on the issues that are being neglected by the mainstream as to change the current structure of political conflict. Thus:

**H2:** Challenger parties present agendas that exhibit less issue attention diversity than mainstream parties

So far, I have assumed that the behavior of political parties is informed by a similar goal (i.e. gaining access to office), and I have considered the extent to which they are likely to succeed in achieving that goal (captured by the distinction between challenger and mainstream parties). This is a restrictive assumption, as parties have different, and mutually conflicting, strategic goals (Müller and Strøm, 1999). The ‘broad appeal’ strategy with the aim of increasing electoral support and thereby the probability of getting into office is, arguably, an attractive strategy for parties that are driven by office- and vote-seeking motivations. However, parties differ in the extent to which they favor these objectives over other strategic goals, such as policy objectives.

Parties’ goals are the result of the considerations of strategic actors within parties and the balance of power between them, and, as such, there is a link between party behavior and party organization (Kitschelt, 1989; Pedersen, 2010, 2012; Ceron, 2012; Ware, 1992; Schumacher, de Vries and Vis, 2013; Wagner and Meyer, 2014). The critical actors are the party leaders and party activists. Party leaders are pragmatic ‘office-seekers’ who enjoy the private spoils of office, and party activists are ‘policy motivated’, rigid and less pragmatic; they would like to see their investment in the party be rewarded with changing public policy (Strøm, 1990; Müller and Strøm, 1999; Schlesinger, 1975; Aldrich, 2011). Panebianco (1988) refers to them in this context as ‘believers’. Party activists, rigid in their policy beliefs, would like to see the party not deviate too much from its original agenda. Pragmatic party leaders, on the other hand, have wider “policy limits” than the activists (Pedersen, 2012, p.901), and are tempted by the possible electoral consequences of an ‘appeal broadly’ strategy, as this is more likely to result in the private spoils of office. Therefore, I posit the following hypothesis:

**H3:** Parties in which the leadership is powerful present more diverse agendas than parties in which activists are powerful

When do parties change the scope of their agenda? Generally speaking, parties introduce changes in their policy platforms after experiencing negative ‘external shocks’, reflecting the assumption that parties do not just change their strategies for the sake of change but only when there is good cause (Harmel and Janda, 1994). This includes, most notably, losing elections (Somer-Topcu, 2009; Budge, 1994; Budge, Ezrow
and McDonald, 2010) and losing access to office (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis, 2013). In issue attention diversity terms, parties have after such a shock two possible options: decreasing or increasing the scope of their agenda.

The first refers to a strategy of mobilizing the party’s base, for example after a bad show at the polls or after losing access to office, to energize party supporters and lock in their vote. The British Conservative Party, condemned to a role in opposition in 1997 after eighteen years of governing, sought to ‘go back’ to its core vote base in the 2001 and 2005 election campaigns, focusing on issues of interest to conservative voters rather than to the electorate at large (Bale, 2011, p.11). This strategy ended with the leadership of David Cameron, who changed “the Conservative party’s image by focusing on new issues and by downplaying traditional issues such as Europe, taxation, immigration, law and order” (Green, 2011, p.737).

With the second strategy the party seeks to increase it’s electoral support by appealing to a more diverse electorate. When the Christian-Democrats in the Netherlands, another ‘natural party of government’, were in 1994 excluded from office for the first time in their history, the party set up an internal strategic advice group to draft a new programmatic manifest, which put more emphasis on previously neglected issues such as crime and security (Duncan, 2007, p.80). Thus, I put forward the following hypothesis:

**H4a:** Mainstream parties change the scope of their agenda after loosing votes and after being excluded from office.

Note that I do not explicate a directional shift, but rather an absolute shift in agenda scope, as both increasing and decreasing issue attention diversity are rational strategies for parties. Further, I only focus on mainstream parties. External shocks only function as stimuli for parties to change their strategy if it impacts their primary goal (Harmel and Janda, 1994). In the mainstream-challenger framework, challenger parties’ main goal is to change the structure of political conflict by concentrating on the issues neglected by the mainstream. Therefore, the external shocks as explicated above should not impact their agenda, as their narrow and confined issue strategy is already a response to their unfavorable position in the political system. Likewise, the impact of vote loss and office exclusion should be greater for by parties that are driven by vote- and office-seeking motivations. As such, I explicate a conditional relationship:

**H4b:** Mainstream parties are more likely to change the scope of their agenda after loosing votes and after being excluded from office if the internal balance of power favors the leadership.

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7Moreover, challenger parties cannot respond to the ‘shock’ of office exclusion as they never enjoyed the spoils of office.
Departing from traditional issue salience theories, recent work has emphasized how parties’ issue strategies are conditional upon other parties’ strategies (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2009; Meguid, 2005). Specifically, mainstream parties have an incentive to respond to the issues put forward by issue entrepreneurs (Spoon, Hobolt and de Vries, 2014; Rooduijn, de Lange and van der Brug, 2014; Bale et al., 2009; Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2014). This implies increasing the scope of their agenda.

However, mainstream parties have to take into account that their response may further legitimize an issue, as such boost electoral support for the challenger and unintentionally backfire at the party (Bale, 2003). Ignoring the challenge is thus an alternative strategy (Meguid, 2005; Abou-Chadi, 2014). If a mainstream party chooses this latter strategy, then it needs to find another way to neutralize the electoral threat posed by the challenger. Mainstream parties, who enjoy relative advantages over challenger parties because they are usually perceived by voters as being more credible and have better access to the media (Meguid, 2005), can then use their agenda setting power to try to influence the political agenda by diverting attention away from the challenger party’s issue. One way to do this is to confine their own agenda and focus on the issues on which they have had traditionally an advantage. This implies decreasing the scope of the agenda.

Taken together, it seems reasonable to expect mainstream parties to change their issue strategy in response to electoral successes of challenger parties. Hence:

**H5a:** Mainstream parties change the scope of their agenda when challenger parties gain more electoral strength

**H5b:** Mainstream parties are more likely to change the scope of their agenda when challenger parties gain more electoral strength if the internal balance of power favors the leadership

Here, I also specify a conditional relationship between the strength of challenger parties and mainstream parties’ agenda scope. Since the vote gains of competitors endangers mainstream parties’ vote- and ultimately office-seeking, motivations, the impact should be most pronounced for parties in which the leaders are relatively unconstrained.
2 Data and Methodology

To test the hypotheses spelled out above, I use a data set covering 259 political parties in 18 European democracies\(^8\) in the period 1950-2013.\(^9\)

To assess parties’ issue attention diversity, the dependent variable in this study, I use data from the Manifesto Project (MRG-CMP-MARPOR) (Volkens et al., 2014; Klingemann et al., 2006; Budge et al., 2001). The MRG-CMP-MARPOR project uses codings of party manifestos to categorize quasi-sentences in 56 issue categories. This allows for assessing parties’ relative emphasis on issues in their election manifesto. To date, the MRG-CMP-MARPOR project provides the only data set available that is suitable for measuring parties’ issue saliency strategies over a long period of time across a large number of parties. The manifesto data has been subject to a vivid methodological debate, but this mainly concerns inferring policy positions from the data (Gemenis, 2013). For the purpose of this study, I am only interested in the distribution of attention, that is: that is, how narrowly or widely attention is distributed across issues in the manifesto.

There are two ways to calculate issue attention diversity in party manifestos. First, one could calculate the ‘effective number of issues’ in a manifesto, similar to the calculation of the effective number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera, 1979). Lacewell (2013) opts for this approach. Likewise, Hobolt, Klemmensen and Pickup (2008) use the inverse (normalized) Herfindahl index, on which the formula for the effective number of parties is based, to measure issue diversity in political speeches. Here, I follow Greene (2015) who uses Shannon’s H to capture issue attention diversity. Recent work compares the inverse Herfindahl index and Shannon’s H as indicators of how attention is distributed across items and concludes that Shannon’s H outperforms the “less sensitive” inverse Herfindahl index (Boydstun, Bevan and Thomas, 2014, p.173).\(^10\) Shannon’s H is calculated as follows:

\[
\text{Shannon’s } H = - \sum_{i=1}^{n} (p(x_i)) \times \ln(p(x_i))
\]

where: \(x_i\) represents an item; \(p(x_i)\) is the proportion of total attention the item receives; and \(\ln(x_i)\) is the natural log of the proportion of attention the item receives (see Boydstun, Bevan and Thomas, 2014, p.182).

\(^8\)The following countries are included: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great-Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland; I select parties operating in western European party systems since varying patterns of issue diversification have been observed in these systems (Green-Pedersen, 2007)

\(^9\)For countries that have not been democratic during the entire period, the data starts with the first democratic election

\(^10\)The inverse herfindahl index and Shannon’s H as measures of attention diversity correlate strongly: Hobolt, Klemmensen and Pickup (2008) report a correlation of “above .9” between both indicators and Greene (2015) finds a correlation coefficient of .975
Following Greene (2015), I then transform Shannon’s H into a measure of issue attention diversity.\footnote{Issue Attention Diversity = exp(- \( \sum \limits_{i=1}^{n} (p(x_i)) \ast \ln p(x_i) \)); for a more extensive discussion of Shannon’s H, its tranformation and the advantages of this measure over the Herfindahl index see Greene (2015) and Boydstun, Bevan and Thomas (2014)}

\[
\text{Issue Attention Diversity} = \exp\left(- \sum_{i=1}^{42} (.25(x_1)) \ast \ln .25(x_1) + (.25(x_2)) \ast \ln .25(x_2) \right. \\
+ (.25(x_3)) \ast \ln .25(x_3) + (.25(x_4)) \ast \ln .25(x_4) \\
+ (0(x_5)) \ast \ln 0(x_5) + ... + (0(x_{42})) \ast \ln 0(x_{42}) \right)
\]

\[= 4 \tag{2}\]

Equation 2 shows the calculation of the issue attention diversity for a manifesto with four equally salient issues. The formula yields 4 in this hypothetical case.\footnote{The natural logarithm of zero is treated as 0} The MRG-CMP-MARPOR coding scheme includes 28 so-called ‘paired policy dimensions’, such as ‘European Integration: Positive (per108)’ and ‘European Integration: Negative (per110)’. In order not to overestimate issue attention diversity, and count similar issues twice, I collapse these 28 categories into 14 paired issues, following the recommendations by Lowe et al. (2011). Hence, the theoretical range of the issue attention diversity is between 1 and 42. The empirical range is 1.5-31.2 (see table 3 in the Appendix for descriptive statistics of the variables in this study).

Figure 1 displays the distribution of issue attention diversity by party type and by time period using box plots. It shows that parties seem to have increased their issue attention diversity over time (cf. Greene, 2015). This supports analyses of parties’ tendencies to become more ‘catch all’ (Kirchheimer, 1966) as well as descriptions of political agendas becoming more diverse (Green-Pedersen, 2007). Moreover, challenger parties consistently show more narrow issue profiles than do their mainstream counterparts.

Turning to the independent variables, I distinguish between challenger and mainstream parties based on past experiences in government, following the operationalization by de Vries and Hobolt (2012). Thus, a challenger party is defined as a party that has not previously held political office; a challenger party turns into a mainstream party once it enters a government coalition (see also Van de Wardt, de Vries and Hobolt, 2014; van de Wardt, 2015). Furthermore, I distinguish between mainstream government parties and mainstream opposition parties; the first type has governed in the past and enters the election as an incumbent whereas the latter type did govern in the past but is currently (i.e. the period previous to the election) in opposition. To assess the strength of challenger parties in a given election, I weigh these parties by their vote share in...
The intra party balance of power between the party leadership and party activists is less straightforward to measure as a result of data availability. Two frequently used data sources that include information on intra party politics are Laver and Hunt’s (1992) expert survey and Harmel and Janda’s (1996) party change project. The latter project includes only four countries, and thus I rely on data from the Laver and Hunt (1992) expert survey, which covers 25 countries. Specifically, I use the items from the expert survey that tap the power of the party leadership over party policy and the power of party activists over party policy.\textsuperscript{14} Schumacher, de Vries and Vis (2013) as well as Wagner and Meyer (2014) use these two questions to construct their measure of parties’ internal distribution of power and Pedersen’s (2012) ‘intra party democracy’ variable is also based on these items. The answers to both questions are scored on a scale ranging from 0 (no influence at all) to 20 (a very great influence).\textsuperscript{15} I subtract the score indicating the power of the activists from the score indicating the power of the party leadership. This results in an intra party balance of power scale measuring to what extent the leadership is unconstrained in deciding on the party’s policy.

\textsuperscript{13}Parties draft their election manifestos before an elections. Hence, they have to rely on past information when doing so, for example on the electoral strength of challenger parties in the previous election.

\textsuperscript{14}The exact wording of the questions is: “assess the influence that party leaders have over the formation of party policy” and “assess the influence that party activists have over the formation of party policy”

\textsuperscript{15}The correlation between the two scales is $-0.72$.
course. I rescale the index to run from 0 to 30, with higher scores indicating more power for the leadership. The measure is time-invariant, so the assumption is that parties do not change their organizational features dramatically over time. This seems a plausible assumption as parties are conservative organizations that generally resist changing their rules and structures (Harmel and Janda, 1994). Moreover, other aspects of party organization, such as the rules for candidate selection, also exhibit stability over time (Bille, 2001).

I control for vote loss as it is likely that parties who have suffered electoral defeat in the past present broader issue agendas as to make up for those losses and improve their position. The variable vote loss measures electoral defeat, and is estimated as the differences between vote shares in successive elections; positive differences (denoting electoral gains) are rewritten to 0, indicating that parties did not suffer vote losses. Information about vote shares is taken from the Manifesto Project data.

I also add party size (operationalized as a party’s vote share at the previous election) as a control variable since larger parties are expected to have a greater issue attention diversity in their manifesto. Large parties have more resources and are, as such, better able to pursue and maintain a broad issue profile distributing their attention broadly over multiple issues (Wagner and Meyer, 2014).

Further, I control for ideological extremity, as parties that take relatively extreme issue positions have an incentive to emphasize these issues as to differentiate themselves from competitors (Rovny, 2012; Wagner, 2012). As such, parties on the fringes of the ideological spectrum are expected to be less diverse in their issue attention, they rather emphasize heavily the few issues on which they take extremist positions. I use Franzmann and Kaiser’s (2006) transformation of the MRG-CMP-MARPOR data to infer parties’ ideological positions on the general left-right dimension. Debates on how to infer valid left-right estimates from the Manifesto Project data have been documented elsewhere (see for example Budge and Meyer, 2013). Here, it suffices to say that the Franzmann-Kaiser method represents a sophisticated attempt to estimate time- and country-specific positional data, incorporating arguments that the meaning of for example ‘left’ and ‘right’ varies across time and space (Benoit and Laver, 2006). The left-right scores, as taken from the data provided by Franzmann and Kaiser (2006), run from 0 to 10. Ideological extremity is then estimated as the absolute difference between a party’s position and the midpoint of the scale. The new measure runs accordingly from 0 to 5, with higher scores indicating more extreme left-right positions.

I treat my data as pooled time-series data with political parties being the cross-sectional units that vary over time (election years). Hence, the estimation technique should deal with the cross-sectional structure of the data as well as with the time-series structure. I use a party-election year set-up and add country

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16For a similar argument see Schumacher, de Vries and Vis (2013, p.470)
dummies to the right hand side of the equation to absorb unobserved differences between countries. Further, given the panel structure of the data, it is likely that problems arise related to panel heteroskedasticity (‘groupwise heteroskedasticity’) (i.e. variances in error terms differ across parties), serial correlation (i.e. the errors in subsequent election years within parties are dependent) and contemporaneous correlation (‘cross-sectional dependence’) (i.e. the errors of different parties in the same election year are dependent). A Wooldridge test (Wooldridge, 2002; Drukker, 2003) indeed indicates the presence of serial correlation in the data and a modified Wald test (Greene, 2000; Baum, 2001) suggests rejection of the null-hypothesis of no groupwise heteroskedasticity. To deal with the panel heteroskedasticity and possible cross-sectional dependence, I calculate panel-corrected standard errors (PCSEs). To deal with serial correlation, Beck and Katz (1995) recommend adding a lagged dependent variable to the equation. Here, however, I address the AR(1) error structure of the panels by using a Prais-Winsten feasible generalized least squares (FGLS) procedure. Plümper, Troeger and Manow (2005) prefer this option over the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable, as the latter can bias estimates (see also Achen, 2000). I use Fisher-type Phillips-Perron unit root tests (Choi, 2001) to ensure that the dependent and independent variables are stationary.

3 Results

The hypotheses posit expectations regarding both the level of issue attention diversity found in parties’ agendas as well as changes therein. In the first step of the analysis, therefore, I estimate models predicting the level of issue attention diversity (IAD). The first model includes all parties, as to assess the difference between mainstream and challenger parties (CP’s) (h2). The second model includes mainstream parties only, in order to evaluate the difference between mainstream opposition and mainstream government parties (MGP’s) (h1). The core models are specified as follows:

\[
IAD_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(CP_{i,t}) + \beta_2(Vote\ Loss_{i,t}) + \beta_3(Balance\ of\ Power_{i}) + \beta_4(Party\ Size_{i,t-1}) + \beta_5(Extremity_{i,t}) + \epsilon
\]

(3)

\[
IAD_{i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(MGP_{i,t}) + \beta_2(Vote\ Loss_{i,t}) + \beta_3(Balance\ of\ Power_{i}) + \beta_4(Party\ Size_{i,t-1}) + \beta_5(Extremity_{i,t}) + \epsilon
\]

(4)

17 The panels in the data are too unbalanced to perform a Pesaran test for contemporaneous correlation (Pesaran, 2004; De Hoyos and Sarafidis, 2006). Nevertheless, the estimation technique addresses this type of autocorrelation.

18 I resort to the Fisher-type tests since conventional unit root tests (for example the augmented Dickey-Fuller test) are unavailable for unbalanced panel data structures.
where subscript \( i \) denotes parties and \( t \) indicates time (election year). Table 1 reports the results of the regression analyses.

Table 1: Pooled Time Series Regressions of Political Parties’ Issue Attention Diversity, 1950-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>15.96***</td>
<td>16.76***</td>
<td>15.61***</td>
<td>15.76***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.96)</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
<td>(1.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger Party (CP)</td>
<td>-1.15***</td>
<td>-2.52***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.30)</td>
<td>(0.80)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Government Party (MGP)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.22)</td>
<td>(0.91)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote loss</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.07***</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party size</td>
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<td>0.03**</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological extremity</td>
<td>-0.70***</td>
<td>-0.70***</td>
<td>-0.43***</td>
<td>-0.44***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP+Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGP+Intra party balance of power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( N \)          | 999     | 999     | 717     | 717     |
Wald              | 4408.04 | 3791.80 | 4954.75 | 8638.76 |

Note: Prais-Winsten regression coefficients with panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses and country dummies (not shown in table). *** \( p < 0.01 \), ** \( p < 0.05 \), * \( p < 0.1 \) (two-tailed tests).

The variables vote loss, party size and ideological extremity are right-skewed and therefore I reestimate models 1-4 with logged transformations of these variables (Gelman and Hill, 2007). These models are reported in table 4 in the appendix. Since the results do not change substantively, I report the analyses of the original variables here as these are easier to interpret.

Model 1 and model 2 include all parties whereas model 3 and model 4 include only mainstream parties. Model 1 suggest support for the hypothesis that challenger parties’ issue agendas are more narrow in scope than the agendas put forward by mainstream parties: the estimated coefficient (\( \beta = -1.15 \)) is negative and statistically significant. The hypothesis that leadership-dominated parties appeal more broadly is not supported by model 1, as the estimated coefficient of the intra party balance of power variable is very small (\( \beta = .0004 \)) and statistically not significant.
However, model 2, which includes an interaction term between the intra party balance of power variable and the challenger party variable, does suggest support for the theory. The estimated coefficient for challenger parties is still negative and statistically significant, and indicates that when the balance of power within parties favors activists (i.e. when the intra party balance of power variable denotes 0), the difference between challenger and mainstream parties is on average about -2.5 in issue attention diversity, all else equal. It should be noted that the issue attention diversity variable has a standard deviation (SD) of around 6, and the estimated coefficient thus constitutes an effect of nearly half the SD. The positive, and statistically significant, estimated coefficient of the interaction term suggest that when we compare parties in which the leadership is more dominant, the difference between challenger and mainstream parties become less pronounced.

Figure 2: Marginal Effect Plot for Model 2

![Figure 2: Marginal Effect Plot for Model 2](image)

Note: The marginal effect plot is constructed using coefficient estimates from table 1, model 2. The y-axis depicts the marginal effect of the challenger party variable on issue attention diversity across different levels of intra-party balance of power, the shaded areas reflect 90% and 95% confidence intervals. The tick marks on the x-axis indicate individual observations for the intra party balance of power variable.

Figure 2 depicts the interaction effect graphically to aid its substantive interpretation (Brambor, Clark and Golder, 2006). When activists constrain party leaders in setting the party’s strategic course, then there is a negative, and statistically significant difference in issue attention diversity between mainstream parties and challengers. For parties with a score of about 22 or higher on the intra party balance of power variable, indicating strong dominance of leaders, the difference between the types of parties is no longer significant. In other words, if leaders are dominant, challenger parties and mainstream parties present issue agendas
similar in scope. It should be noted that the balance of power variable varies within the category of challenger parties as well as across mainstream parties. For mainstream parties, the average value is 18.59 (SD: 4.50), for challengers this is 17.75 (SD: 6.67).

Model 1 and 2 denote positive and significant, albeit small, estimated coefficients for party size ($\beta = .02; \beta = .03$), indicating that larger parties are somewhat more likely to present broad agendas. An increase in party size of 1 SD is associated with an increase in issue attention diversity of about 2.6. Moreover, ideological extremity seems to be negatively related to agenda scope ($\beta = -.7$): for each 1-point deviation from the center of the ideological 1-5 left-right scale, parties decrease the scope of their agenda with .70, on average and all else equal.

Turning to model 3, which include mainstream parties only, I find no support for the notion that mainstream parties in government present broader agendas than mainstream parties in opposition, contrasting hypothesis 1. The estimated coefficient for mainstream government parties ($\beta = .18$) is not statistically significant. Experience in government indeed impacts parties’ issue diversity strategies. However, the crucial difference seems not be between government and opposition parties, but rather between those parties that regularly participate in coalition governments (mainstream parties) and those that have never been rewarded with access to office (challenger parties).

Model 3, further, suggest support for the hypothesis that leaders, when unconstrained, push their parties to broader issue profiles: the estimated coefficient is positive and statistically significant, but rather small ($\beta = .07$). It suggests that when we compare mainstream parties in which activists are most powerful (a value of 4.1 on the intra party balance of power scale) with leadership-dominated mainstream parties (a value of 27.4), the model predicts an average difference of 1.6 in issue attention diversity. However, the estimated coefficient fails to reach statistical significance in model 4, in which an interaction term between the mainstream government party variable and the intra party balance of power is introduced. The interaction term is positive ($\beta = .03$) which suggests that the difference between mainstream parties in government and in opposition becomes more pronounced as leaders have more of a say, offering support for the theory. However, the interaction term is not statistically significant. All in all, model 3 and 4 provide modest support for a small, direct effect of intra party power relations on issue attention diversity across mainstream parties.

The negative effect of ideological extremity in models 3 and 4 ($\beta = -.43; \beta = -.44$) indicates that mainstream parties that are relatively extreme in terms of left-right positioning put forward more confined issues agendas. The effect is smaller compared to models 1 and 2, which included all parties, but statistically
significant. The analysis provides thus support for the notion that moderate parties appeal broadly while more extreme parties confine their issue appeals. The insignificant effects of the vote loss variable across all models suggests no support for the argument that parties that had a bad showing at the polls are broader in their appeal than parties that did better electorally. Party size does no longer denote a statistically significant effect in models 3 and 4: differences in size among mainstream parties do not seem to impact the scope of their agendas.

Turning now to the second step of the analysis, I estimate two models predicting absolute changes in mainstream parties’ issue attention diversity (as to evaluate h4 and h5). The models are specified as follows:

\[
|\Delta IAD_{i,t}| = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Office Exclusion_{i,t}) + \beta_2(Vote Loss_{i,t}) + \beta_3(Balance of Power_{i}) \\
+ \beta_4(Office Exclusion_{i,t} \times Balance of Power_{i}) \\
+ \beta_5(Vote Loss_{i,t} \times Balance of Power_{i}) \\
+ \beta_6(Office Exclusion_{i,t} \times Vote Loss_{i,t}) \\
+ \beta_7(Office Exclusion_{i,t} \times Vote Loss_{i,t} \times Balance of Power_{i}) + \epsilon
\]  

\[5\]

\[
|\Delta IAD_{i,t}| = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Office Exclusion_{i,t}) + \beta_2(Vote Loss_{i,t}) + \beta_3(Balance of Power_{i}) \\
+ \beta_4(Strength CP's_{i,t-1}) \\
+ \beta_5(Strength CP's_{i,t-1} \times Balance of Power_{i}) + \epsilon
\]  

\[6\]

I add interaction terms between the intra party balance of power variable and, respectively, the variables indicating office exclusion, vote loss and the strength of challenger parties. This allows for testing the conditional hypotheses that parties in which the leadership is dominant respond to worsening electoral conditions by changing the scope of their agenda more than do parties in which activists are powerful.

Since the first model (equation 5) includes two interaction terms with the same condition variable (balance of power), I follow Braumoeller (2004) and include an additional interaction between the remaining constituent terms (office exclusion * vote loss) and a three-way interaction between these two constituent terms and the conditioning variable (office exclusion * vote loss * balance of power).\(^\text{19}\)

Table 2 reports the results of the regression analyses. Because of the skewness of several variables, I reestimate models 5-6 using log transformation (see table 5 in the appendix).

The interactions between the intra party balance of power variable and, respectively, office exclusion

\(^{19}\text{see also Schumacher, de Vries and Vis (2013, p.471)}\)
Table 2: Pooled Time Series Regressions of Absolute Changes in Mainstream Parties’ Issue Attention Diversity, 1950-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 5</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.28***</td>
<td>4.38***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.55)</td>
<td>(0.57)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office exclusion</td>
<td>−0.46</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.38)</td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote loss</td>
<td>−0.46***</td>
<td>−0.05***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>−0.07***</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office exclusion* Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>0.04**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote loss*Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>0.02**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Office exclusion*Vote loss</td>
<td>0.53***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.20)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office exclusion<em>Vote loss</em>Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>−0.03***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength challengers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength challengers*Intra party balance of power</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>864</th>
<th>864</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wald</td>
<td>294.78</td>
<td>405.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Prais-Winsten regression coefficients with panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses and country dummies (not shown in table). ***, **, * indicate p < 0.01, 0.05, 0.1 (two-tailed tests).

(β = .04) and vote loss (β = .02) denote statistically significant coefficient estimates in model 5. This means that there is no direct effect of negative external shocks on mainstream parties’ issue attention diversity; intra party politics conditions the magnitude of the effects. The interaction between the intra party balance of power variable and the electoral strength of challenger parties is statistically significant but the effect seems to be rather small. To interpret these effects substantively, figure 3 depicts these marginal effects graphically.

Figure 3(a) shows the marginal effect of office exclusion on issue attention diversity across different levels of the intra party balance of power variable. Mainstream parties in which activists are powerful do not respond to the ‘shock’ of office exclusion. If leaders are more powerful, specifically when the balance of power variable exceeds the value of 18, office exclusion seems to have a positive impact on absolute changes in mainstream parties’ agenda scope. The effect is small but statistically significant, offering support for the effect of office exclusion being conditional (h4b).
Figure 3: Marginal Effect Plots for Model 5 and Model 6

(a) Marginal Effect of Office Exclusion
(b) Marginal Effect of Vote Loss
(c) Marginal Effect of Strength Challenger Parties

Note: The marginal effect plots (a) and (b) are constructed using coefficient estimates from table 2, model 5. Plot (c) is based on coefficient estimates from table 2, model 6. The y-axis depicts the marginal effect of office exclusion (a), vote loss (b) and the strength of challenger parites (c) on mainstream party issue attention diversity across different levels of intra-party balance of power, the shaded areas reflect 90% and 95% confidence intervals. The tick marks on the x-axis indicate individual observations for the intra party balance of power variable for mainstream parties.

I also hypothesized that vote loss would make mainstream parties change their agenda scope, especially when the leadership is unconstrained in deciding on the strategic course of the party. Figure 3(b) offers tentative support for this expectation. It shows the marginal effect of vote loss on issue attention diversity across the balance of power measure. If activists are powerful, vote loss has a negative effect on absolute changes in agenda scope. If leaders dominate, vote loss seems to have a positive impact; however, this effect is not statistically significant. Still, the variation in the impact of vote loss across activist-oriented parties (a negative and statistically significant effect) and leadership-oriented parties (no statistically significant effect) supports the hypotheses that vote loss influences mainstream parties conditional upon their intra party balance of power.

Model 6 explores the impact of the strength of challenger parties on mainstream parties’ issue agenda scope (h5). The direct effect of the strength of challengers is positive but small ($\beta = .03$) and not statistically significant. The conditional effect, indicated by the interaction term, is even smaller in magnitude.
(β = −.002). Figure 3(c) depicts the interaction term. Contrasting the hypothesis, the marginal effect of challengers on mainstream parties’ agenda scope across different levels of the balance of power variable is negative, which would indicate that parties are less inclined to change agenda scope when leaders become more powerful. However, as figure 3(c) shows, the effect is not statistically significant.

Taken together, the analysis supports the core expectations of this paper regarding the difference between challenger and mainstream parties and the conditional impact of intra-party politics. Government experience impacts the scope of issue agendas; the crucial difference is, however, not between parties currently in and out of office, as is suggested by other studies (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010; Greene, 2015). The evidence presented here seems to suggest that mainstream government parties and mainstream opposition parties present issue agendas similar in scope whereas challenger parties appeal more narrowly. Moreover, intra party politics is suggested to have a conditioning effect: challenger parties in which leaders dominate are not more confined than mainstream parties. Mainstream parties present, in general, broad agendas but introduce changes after negative shocks, most notably vote loss and office exclusion; these effects are however conditional upon the internal balance of power.

Discussion

This paper argues that parties’ issue attention diversity, that is: how narrow or how broad parties distribute their attention across policy issues, is influenced by their competitive position in the party system and by the balance of power between groups of actors within parties. The findings have several implications.

First, this paper speaks to an emerging literature on ‘issue appeal strategies’, ‘agenda scope’, and ‘issue diversity’ (Somer-Topcu, 2014; Greene, 2015; Green-Pedersen, 2007). It contributes to this literature in three ways. First, it goes beyond the government-opposition dichotomy (see also Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2010), and applies the mainstream-challenger logic. This latter typology seems better suited to describe the competitive structure in multi-party systems in which certain parties regularly switch between government and opposition status. This paper shows how this distinction also matters for issue attention diversity, and as such corroborates other studies that fruitfully analyzes party interaction in multi-party settings through the lens of the mainstream-challenger framework (de Vries and Hobolt, 2012; Van de Wardt, de Vries and Hobolt, 2014; van de Wardt, 2015).

Second, this paper not only examines differences in levels of issue attention diversity but also changes therein. As such, it goes beyond descriptions in which parties become evermore ‘catch-all’ by diversifying
their issue appeals (Kirchheimer, 1966; Somer-Topcu, 2014), and acknowledges that sometimes it is rational for parties to decrease the scope of their agenda and confine their issue appeals (Green, 2011).

Third, it relaxes the unitary actor assumption by considering intra-party politics and incorporating the notion that parties have diverging strategic goals dependent upon the actors within parties and the power relations between them. As such, this paper can be located within a literature that considers party organization to be an important conditional variable when it comes to parties’ issue strategies (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis, 2013; Wagner and Meyer, 2014; De Sio and Weber, 2014).

Moreover, this paper speaks to the literature on ‘issue competition’ and ‘issue politicization’. Typically, this literature assumes that mainstream parties respond to the ‘threat’ of issue entrepreneurs with a strategy of ‘accommodation’ (Meguid, 2005). Results presented in this paper seem to suggest that parties do not increase the scope of their agenda when confronted with increasingly strong challengers. This implies that the mainstream does not accommodate by diversifying its agenda, but for example by dropping issues and replacing them with the issues brought forward by challengers; the net result being stability in issue attention diversity. As such, the issue attention diversity perspective might open up new avenues for research on the the impact of challengers on patterns of party competition and on the politicization of new issues.

References

URL: doi:10.1017/S0007123414000155

URL: http://www.polmeth.wustl.edu/media/Paper/achen00.pdf


URL: doi: 10.1111/1467-9248.12121


URL: doi: 10.1177/1354068814567026


URL: http://ocsid.politics.ex.ac.uk/publications/


### Appendix

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All parties</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue attention diversity</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>15.457</td>
<td>6.025</td>
<td>1.532</td>
<td>31.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger party</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>0.431</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=1,079) (n=892)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote loss</td>
<td>1,433</td>
<td>1.368</td>
<td>2.491</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>18.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>18.306</td>
<td>5.357</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>29.630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party size, −1</td>
<td>1,636</td>
<td>15.808</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Ideological extremity</td>
<td>1,527</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>1.140</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>5.000</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mainstream Parties</th>
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<th>Sd</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Sd</td>
<td>Min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>∆Issue attention diversity</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>3.612</td>
<td>3.191</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>18.359</td>
</tr>
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<td>Office exclusion</td>
<td>1,079</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>0.494</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=625) (n=454)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Vote loss</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td>18.595</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.502</td>
<td>4.080</td>
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<td>Strength challenger parties, −1</td>
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<td>13.040</td>
<td>12.525</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>63.446</td>
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### Table 4: Model 1-4 re-estimated with log-transformations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>14.73***</td>
<td>15.58***</td>
<td>15.56***</td>
<td>15.67***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.03)</td>
<td>(1.13)</td>
<td>(1.11)</td>
<td>(1.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenger party (CP)</td>
<td>−1.10***</td>
<td>−2.52***</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>−0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.27)</td>
<td>(0.76)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream government party (MGP)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>−0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.22)</td>
<td>(0.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote loss (log)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>−0.10</td>
<td>−0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.10)</td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
<td>(0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>−0.01</td>
<td>−0.06*</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party size (log)</td>
<td>0.72***</td>
<td>0.72***</td>
<td>−0.03</td>
<td>−0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological extremity (log)</td>
<td>−1.45***</td>
<td>−1.45***</td>
<td>−0.70*</td>
<td>−0.71*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.36)</td>
<td>(0.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP*Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>0.08*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.04)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGP*Intra party balance of power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0.02</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald</td>
<td>12513.59</td>
<td>4929.30</td>
<td>2436.07</td>
<td>2607.44</td>
</tr>
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</table>

***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.1
Table 5: Model 5-6 re-estimated with log-transformations (including DV)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.74***</td>
<td>1.33***</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.11)</td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office exclusion</td>
<td>−0.25***</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.08)</td>
<td>(0.03)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vote loss (log)</td>
<td>−0.19</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.15)</td>
<td>(0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra party balance of power</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
<td>(0.01)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office exclusion*Intra party balance of power</td>
<td>0.02***</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
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<td>Vote loss (log)*Intra party balance of power</td>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
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<td>Office exclusion*Vote loss (log)</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>(0.16)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength challenger parties (log)</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>(0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intra party balance of power*Strength challenger parties (log)</td>
<td>−0.01*</td>
<td>(0.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 864 864
Wald 880.30 173.58

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