Abstract
Governments’ failure to produce policy responses commensurate with the challenge of climate change is at least partly due to policy positions adopted by political parties. This paper compares the climate policies of six parties in the UK, Italy and Denmark since 2001 through the lens of office-seeking, vote-seeking and cohesion-seeking behaviour. It combines a quantitative analysis of party election manifestos using an innovative coding scheme for categorizing climate mitigation policies and a qualitative analysis using documentary and interview evidence. The paper identifies several factors that help explain variation in parties' climate policies including key constraints on policy development. The approach provides new insights into the party politics of climate change and the capacity of democratically elected governments to make effective climate policy.
**Introduction**

Political parties’ climate policies are important for at least three reasons. First, parties can be catalysts for or obstacles to governments’ climate change mitigation policies (e.g., Harrison, 2010: 523; Jensen and Spoon, 2011; Harrison, 2012; Birchall, 2014; see also Knill et al., 2010; Schulze, 2014). National governments, in turn, remain central to the formulation and implementation of climate policy (Weale, 2009: 60–62; Schaffrin, 2013a). Second, parties have a unique role in shaping the attitudes of citizens and consumers (Steenbergen et al., 2007; Brulle et al., 2012; De Blasio and Sorice, 2013: 60, 61). This kind of leadership is all the more important in the face of public opinion that is slow to accept the science of climate change and slower still to accept behavioural changes needed to mitigate its effects (Eurobarometer 2014a). Third, if policy change of the magnitude that is required to mitigate the effects of climate change (Stern, 2006: Part IV; IPCC, 2014) is to occur, then parties will play a key role in linking citizens to these political decisions. Parties matter as policymakers, leaders and representatives and they are likely to continue to play an important role in determining society’s capacity to develop an adequate response to climate change.

This paper contributes to the nascent literature on parties’ climate policies by comparing six major parties in the UK, Italy and Denmark since 2001. We examine parties’ office-, vote- and cohesion-seeking behaviour to explain variation in the strength of their climate policy positions and to identify constraints on policy development. The empirical analysis takes two forms. First, the paper provides a descriptive comparison of party climate policies by applying an innovative coding scheme for categorizing climate change mitigation policy in party election manifestos. Second, these descriptive findings are explored further through detailed qualitative studies of the three countries based on documentary materials and a set of interviews with key actors. The paper provides new insights into the party politics of climate change and the capacity of parliamentary democracies to make effective climate policy.

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Political parties and climate policy

Attention to climate change has increased sharply in the social sciences since the late 2000s (Little and Torney, 2014) and recent work includes studies of governments’ climate policies (Christoff and Eckersley, 2011; e.g., EBRD and Grantham Research Institute, 2011; Bernauer and Böhme, 2013; Burck et al., 2013; Lachapelle and Paterson, 2013; Schaffrin, 2013b). Nonetheless, comparative scholarship of the domestic politics of climate change is relatively underdeveloped (Boasson, 2013: 5; Lachapelle and Paterson, 2013: 548) and attention to political parties’ climate policies remains sparse.

Most extant work focuses on individual countries. Båtstrand (2012) identifies differences between old and new politics parties and between left and right in Norway. De Blasio and Sorice (2013) compare the attention devoted to climate change by Italian parties in mid-2012. There are also case studies of individual parties’ strategies and policies on climate change (Carter, 2009; McDonald, 2012). In the special case of single-party governments, the analysis of government and party climate policies overlaps somewhat (Carter and Jacobs, 2013; Birchall, 2014). In a comparative study, Ladrech (2011) identifies conditions that have constrained climate policy development in social democratic parties in five West European countries including weak climate policy integration due to inter-ministerial competition and interest group lobbying; an inability to justify policies that lead to higher energy costs; and opposition from trade unions. The party leadership’s approach to mediating between interests was crucial, as were the initiatives of policy entrepreneurs within that leadership.

Parties’ environmental policy is a longer-established object of study with more readily-available metrics. Party policies vary with economic conditions and with public demand and political competition (Weale, 2000: 247–256; Meguid, 2008; Spoon et al., 2014), but mainstream parties continue to be constrained by their traditional ideologies (Carter, 2006). These parties have not fully integrated the environmental challenge (Spoon, 2009; Carter, 2013; see also Dalton, 2009) and some parties on the radical right have reacted against it (Gemenis et al., 2012). While studies of parties’ environment policies provide some points of departure for understanding their climate policies, the latter has received little attention and
comparative cross-national studies that aim to explain variation in parties’ climate policies have been especially rare.

**Framework, case selection and data sources**

We expect that the development of climate policy will depend on how it facilitates or obstructs the pursuit of party goals conceived of as votes, office and cohesion (Sjöblom, 1968; Harmel and Janda, 1994; Strøm and Müller, 1999) and that this will vary according to party characteristics and external conditions. Parties’ *vote-seeking* orientation suggests that they will take account of public demand for climate policy and competing climate policy offers from other parties. Where parties cannot obtain a majority in parliament, *office-seeking* involves compromises that make the party acceptable for coalition and perhaps to present a coherent alternative to the electorate. The responsibilities of office-holding may also influence party policy (Mair, 2009). Finally, *cohesion-seeking* involves the management of conflict within the party that may arise from members’ different interests and ideas, including their alignment with interests external to the party.

We examine parties in three rich, industrialised parliamentary democracies in the EU-15 – Denmark, Italy and the UK – from 2001 to the present. Each is characterised by a heavy dependency on fossil fuels (approximately 90% of total energy use in 2001), a well-established environmental policy arena and each made commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol. We focus on the two main ‘parties of government’ in each country, a decision informed by their importance for national climate policy, for communicating climate change and for structuring their respective party systems. Organisationally, these parties have more resources available to develop policy responses to emergent challenges than other, smaller, parties and their roles as the leaders of government and opposition suggest limited variation in their goal structures (Helboe Pedersen, 2012). The period covered encompasses several electoral cycles in each country, allowing us to study variation in climate policy within parties over time. It also allows variation on potential causal conditions: incumbency, leadership change and EU-level and international conditions (Groen, 2014).
In selecting countries from among established EU-15 member states, we adopt a *diverse cases* strategy, which improves, prima facie, the chances of identifying a wider range of pathways to the outcome, of generating hypotheses with wider application and, ultimately, of generalising findings to other countries (Seawright and Gerring, 2008: 300–301). Selecting Denmark, Italy and the UK provides diversity in relation to a number of potentially important conditions.

Some of these are relevant to national climate policy development (see Lachapelle and Paterson, 2013). Denmark is a coordinated market economy, while the UK is a liberal market economy, and Italy occupies an ambiguous position (Hall and Soskice, 2001: 19–21). In 2001, Denmark (and, to a lesser extent the UK) were net exporters of energy, while Italy imported 85% of its net energy consumption. They also vary in wealth: Denmark had the second-highest GDP per capita in the EU-15 in 2001, Italy had among the lowest (although considerably surpassing Portugal, Greece and Spain) and the UK was mid-way between them, slightly above the average EU-15 state (World Bank, 2014).

In the literature on national environmental policy, Denmark is viewed as a ‘leader’, Italy as a ‘laggard’ and the UK somewhere in-between. As of 2002, the projected policy effort required to reach their Kyoto target varied for each country: Italy required considerable additional effort (equivalent to 14.6% of its GHG emissions, above the EU-15 average of 12.4%); Denmark required some effort (3.5%), while the UK already appeared likely to overshoot its target by 1.4% with existing measures (Gugele et al., 2002). By the end of the Kyoto commitment period, they achieved different levels of domestic mitigation: Denmark intended to mitigate 3.5% of its emissions using flexible mechanisms; Italy 0.4% and the UK did not intend to use them (EEA, 2013: 59).

There are several factors that impinge directly on mainstream parties’ climate policies that vary across these systems. Denmark has one of Europe’s most successful Green parties in electoral terms (the Socialist People’s Party), while the UK has a much less successful Green party. Italy’s Green party is electorally very weak, but participated in government in 1996-2001 and 2006-2008. Public opinion on environmental protection in these three countries ranges widely: the Danish public is among the most concerned in the EU-15, the Italian public is among the least concerned, while the UK
public is close to the EU-15 average (Figure 1). Moreover, these countries’ party systems, electoral systems (including both Italian systems, pre- and post-2005) and predominant types of government differed markedly.

![Figure 1. Public opinion in Denmark, Italy and the UK, 2003-2013. Source: Eurobarometer 2014a.](image)

We focus on six parties (two in each country) at eleven general elections. We estimate parties’ positions on climate policy using their main pre-election policy documents as the principal source of data (for details of these documents, see the Appendix). These data sources have some limitations. They vary considerably in length and detail, with the Danish documents being particularly short: approximately 4,000 words on average, compared to 20,000 in the UK and Italy. While most documents represent individual parties, some represent electoral coalitions (see Appendix). We assume that these documents provide a good representation of the main party’s positions, although we do take into account the potential influence of partners in these electoral coalitions in
our analysis.\textsuperscript{2} We examine the conditions that led to variations in party climate policies using documentary and interview-based evidence. A set of semi-structured elite interviews was conducted in each country with politicians and officials in the parties of interest, as well as in other parties, business groups, trade unions and environmental NGOs (ENGOs).

\textbf{Comparing parties’ climate policies}

Climate policy includes all measures that influence emissions (EBRD and Grantham Research Institute, 2011: 60).\textsuperscript{3} To date, there is no coding scheme that compares comprehensively parties’ climate policies. Båtstrand’s (2012) coding scheme is not comprehensive as it ignores both policies that are not explicitly linked by the party to climate change and policies, such as public transport, renewable energy and forest protection, that cannot be classified as either ‘old’ or ‘new’ politics issues. De Blasio and Sorice’s (2013) analysis of party documents depends on a keyword search for ‘climate change’ and cognate terms, which is likely not to cover all climate policy-relevant texts.

Two major projects that code political texts cover environmental issues. The Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) identifies a broad set of environmental issues (category \textit{per 501})\textsuperscript{4} and other emissions-relevant categories such as ‘productivity’ (\textit{per 410}) (Volkens et al., 2013). The Comparative Agendas Project (CAP) uses a subcategory (#705) that includes climate policies and another subcategory (#1902) on global environmental problems. However, the former also includes a range of issues that is considerably broader than climate policy, such as noise pollution (e.g., Green-Pedersen and Mortensen, 2014). Perhaps more important than the degree of substantive ‘misfit’ between climate policy and these individual categories is the fact that both of these projects use mutually exclusive categories. A piece of text can only belong to one category (energy or environment or agriculture, for instance) which

\textsuperscript{2} Moreover, in the case of the Italian centre-left before the formation of the Partito Democratico in 2007, we treat electoral coalitions as if they were a party.

\textsuperscript{3} We do not focus on climate adaptation policy (see Javeline, 2014).

\textsuperscript{4} ‘Preservation of countryside, forests, etc.; general preservation of natural resources against selfish interests; proper use of national parks; soil banks, etc; environmental improvement’ (Volkens et al., 2013, codebook).
means that the salience of issues that cut across many sectors or categories may be underestimated (Guinaudeau and Persico, 2013).

In other respects, these projects provide a basis for important elements of our coding scheme. Like them, we use quasi-sentences as the unit of observation. A quasi-sentence is an argument: ‘the verbal expression of one political idea or issue’ (Klingemann et al., 2006: 165–166). Moreover, our cross-sectoral coding of climate policy is similar, in some respects, to the CAP project’s coding of EU issues (Guinaudeau and Persico, 2013).

Our first substantive concern is with ‘pro-climate’ content, specifically with the proportion of the text that suggests a positive attitude towards climate change mitigation (“a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases” (IPCC, 2014: 3)). Therefore, we identify climate policies that would, if implemented, have the effect of reducing net GHG emissions (see EBRD and Grantham Research Institute, 2011; Bailey and Compston, 2013 for examples). However, party documents are not simply lists of policy proposals: much text simply expresses a party’s general attitude or sentiment on an issue. Therefore, we also identify quasi-sentences that acknowledge climate change as a policy problem or that express support for taking action on climate change mitigation.

Of course, even where a party is strongly committed to mitigation measures, this work may be undone in practice if it is also strongly committed to increased air transport, new coal-fired power plants or increased support for meat production, to name but three examples. Therefore, building on Compston and Bailey’s work on anti-climate policy we identify anti-climate content: quasi-sentences that deny that climate change mitigation.

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5 This process was greatly aided by national CAP projects’ willingness to share with us the transcribed quasi-sentences that they have used for coding UK manifestos up to 2010 and Italian manifestos up to 2008. The Danish project did not transcribe the documents; therefore, we identified quasi-sentences ourselves, using the guidelines set out in a handbook developed for coding the UK manifestos (Froio, 2012).

6 Like Compston and Bailey (2013: 147), “We specify net emissions to exclude policies that simply shift emissions from one location to another.”

7 While we use Compston and Bailey’s (2013: 148) list of policies as a guide, we do not adhere to it for all purposes. For instance, we do not code ‘pro-natalist’ policies (e.g., childcare subsidies) as anti-climate policies. They are widely diffused in party manifestos and while their collective effect on emissions may be substantial, the effect of each individual proposal seems open to debate.
is a problem, that oppose climate change mitigation policies or that make specific policy proposals that would increase net greenhouse gas emissions (see Compston and Bailey, 2013: 147–148 for examples). We then subtract the proportion of quasi-sentences that indicate support for anti-climate policies from the proportion that indicates support for climate change mitigation policies to derive the party’s position on climate policy (see Weale, 2000: 247; Carter, 2006; Gemenis et al., 2012).

**Climate policy positions in Denmark, Italy and the UK**

In the 22 cases (parties-at-elections) covered by this study, 5.6% of the text of parties’ pre-election documents indicated support for climate change mitigation policies (i.e., it was ‘pro-climate’ content). Approximately two per cent of the text indicated support for ‘anti-climate’ policies. Therefore, the average climate policy position was 3.6 (s.d.=4.8; median=2.3). Pro-climate content correlates negatively and moderately with anti-climate content ($r=-0.46$), suggesting some degree of internal consistency with regard to climate policies presented in parties’ policy platforms.

In the period since 2001, Danish parties have presented both the highest proportion of pro-climate content (mean=7%) and the lowest proportion of anti-climate content (mean=1.4%) and therefore took the strongest climate policy positions, on average (mean=5.6, s.d.=6.5). They were followed by the British parties (mean=2.8, s.d.=3.8) and the Italian parties (mean=2, s.d.=2.8).

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8 In contrast with Compston and Bailey (2013), we do not insist that this should be a proposal for policy change. An affirmation that a party will stick with a status quo policy that will increase emissions is, for our purposes, just as significant as a policy change that would have this effect.
Figure 2. Parties’ climate policy positions and % pro-climate content
Five of the six parties’ positions are characterised by one distinct peak in the strength of their climate policy position in the period since 2001 (Figure 2). In Denmark, the peak for both parties occurred in 2007.⁹ In Italy, the centre-left presented a relatively strong position on climate policy in 2008 and in the UK the peak for both parties occurred at the 2010 election. In Denmark and Italy, parties returned to weak positions in the subsequent election. Indeed, Venstre moved from holding the strongest position in our data in 2007 to the weakest in 2011. Preliminary evidence from the UK (see below) suggests that something similar may have occurred in advance of the 2015 general election.

Parties of the centre-left (mean=4.7) have tended to hold stronger positions than parties of the centre-right (mean=2.5). Indeed, in three cases (in Italy and the UK in 2001 and in Denmark in 2011), centre-right party documents contained more anti-climate content than pro-climate content. There are also notable exceptions: at the peak elections in Denmark (2007) and the UK (2010), the centre-right appears to have presented stronger climate policy positions than the centre-left. This contributes to greater variation among cases of centre-right parties (s.d.=5.8) than among centre-left parties (s.d.=3.4).

Our measure of climate policy position correlates positively with other attributes of these party documents. Documents that mention climate policy prominently (i.e., in the table of contents, the foreword or the introduction) tend to present markedly stronger climate policy positions than documents in which climate policy is not prominently acknowledged (Figure 3).¹⁰ The general weakness of parties’ positions on climate policy, the general weakness of centre-right’s positions compared to centre-left, and the clearly identifiable peaks accord with existing case- and country studies (e.g., Bille, 2008; Pizzimenti, 2009; Carter, 2009; De Blasio and Sorice, 2013) and with accounts of policy development provided by interviewees.

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⁹ Although 2007 marked a clear peak in the Danish parties’ positions, these positions were already relatively strong in 2005: they are comparable with the peak positions in the UK in 2010.

¹⁰ Another crude indicator – the frequency with which “climate change” and “global warming” are mentioned divided by the number of words in the document – correlates positively and moderately with the strength of climate policy positions (r=0.49).
How do our measures compare with established quantitative measures of parties’ climate and environmental policies? Are they measuring something that is strongly correlated with these measures, or do they capture something distinct? For our cases, the correlations between climate policy measures and existing measures are positive, but they are moderate rather than strong. The correlation between climate policy position and the positional measure derived from the Comparative Manifesto Project data \((per501 – per410)\) (see Weale, 2000: 247; Carter, 2006) is 0.6. Measures of salience also correlate only moderately with pro-climate content for our cases: the Comparative Agendas Project climate policy category \((#705: ‘Air and noise pollution, climate change and climate policies’\)) correlates with pro-climate content at 0.59. Environment mentions in CMP \((per 501)\) and in CAP (major category 7) data correlate with pro-climate content at 0.42 and 0.24, respectively. In addition, across eighteen cases for which data were available,11 CAP data indicates that there are 129 pieces of text coded as 705, while we have coded 1,023 pieces of text as being ‘pro-climate’. While this is not a criticism of these extraordinarily useful data sets, it does suggest that, with the flexibility afforded by our focus on one dimension of policy, our measure serves a distinctive function.

\[N=22\] for correlations with CMP data; \[N=18\] for correlations with CAP data, as CAP data for the most recent elections in Italy and Denmark were not available.
Figure 3. The prominence of climate change in the text and climate policy position

Analysis
We analyse our cases through the lens of vote-, office- and cohesion-seeking incentives, which vary depending on party characteristics and external conditions. We pay particular attention to the factors that led to a) generally weak party positions on climate change; b) distinct peaks in parties’ climate policy positions; and c) the reversion to weak positions after these peaks. In addition, the case studies allow us to deepen our understanding of parties’ positions by taking into account data from beyond election manifestos.

Denmark
2001-2005
The 2001 election brought a right-wing government to power, as Venstre and the Conservative People’s Party (CPP) depended on support from the far-right Danish People’s Party (DPP), which remained outside government (Qvortrup, 2002). Climate policy had little support from Venstre and DPP, while the CPP, the junior coalition
partner, addressed the issue within a business-competitiveness frame. The government’s initial climate policies signalled a change from its Social Democrat-led predecessor: the Environment and Energy ministry was separated into environment, energy and transport, three offshore wind turbine projects were cancelled, and energy research and development funding was cut (Andreasen, 2007). An Environmental Assessment Institute was created, with the climate policy-sceptical Bjorn Lomborg as its director. The 2005 election returned the same parties to government: taxation and welfare policy reform were the leading issues; climate policy was not a prominent campaign issue for either Social Democrats (SD) or Venstre.

Public opinion polling (Eurobarometer 2014a and Danish Voters Study [DVS] 2011) reveals high scores for recognition of the seriousness of climate change and government policies to address the issue. The general left v. right division, with voters on the left supportive of tougher climate change policies than those on the right, limits the incentive for Venstre to compete over climate change. The 2001 general election campaign was dominated by immigration (and the rising popularity of the Danish People’s Party) and terrorism (the election was held two months after 9/11); climate change was not a salient issue. The DVS (2011) demonstrates that parties on the left – SD, Social Liberals (SL) and the Socialist People’s Party (SPP) – were identified as the most ‘green’ parties. The CPP maintained a slightly more ‘green’ public perception compared to Venstre, but still far from the average voter. The 2005 election again did not feature climate change, with immigration and taxation the main campaign themes.

Since 2001 government coalitions have been either left or right. With parties on the left, including SL, viewed as having the strongest ‘green’ credentials, there is an incentive to emphasise climate change. On the right, however, the low salience of climate change for both Venstre and the DPP has prevented any movement towards the ‘centre’ on this issue.

The success of Danish renewables technology has meant that climate-related energy business is promoted by both left and right. The Danish Industry confederation (DI) has cautiously supported climate policy, especially in boosting Danish renewables exports and green taxation. Trade unions see the green economy as creating jobs, so through to 2005 they were not a constraint on SD. The farmer’s union, the Danish
Agriculture & Food Council (DA&FC) on the other hand, is hostile to climate policy-related regulations, and does provide a constraint on Venstre as agricultural products are a significant export (World Factbook 2014). The tax-cutting instincts of Venstre and DPP meant that climate-related taxes and regulation were not on the agenda within government before 2005.

2007

The 2007 election campaign demonstrated a significant increase in pro-climate statements by both parties, but especially Venstre. According to Bille (2008), energy and environmental policy featured as one of the four main themes in the 2007 election campaign. The government then unveiled a taxation and energy and climate plan in January, which included a combination of income tax cuts and increased taxes on energy on explicitly environmental grounds (a ‘visionary climate and energy policy’ – Government Platform 2007). Several factors can explain this shift.

In May 2007 a new centrist party, New Alliance (NA), was created, ostensibly to break the influence of the DPP on government policy. Early opinion polls suggested no overall majority could be constructed without NA, which withheld an early commitment to support Venstre. This may explain a tempering of Venstre’s policy towards the political centre, including climate policy. The DVS (2011) shows that the gap between a SD-led or right-wing government as the best to safeguard the environment was at its narrowest at the 2007 election (since 1994). The government’s taxation and energy plan drew criticism from SD and SL, thereby raising the profile of climate policy and the competition for votes.

The junior coalition partner, the CPP, had increased its visibility in government especially on the environment and climate change. According to the DVS (2011), the 2007 election represents the apogee of ‘green’ public perception of CPP. This can be explained by the inclusion of Connie Hedegaard (CPP) as Environment minister in 2004. She was a very popular figure in Denmark (the equivalent of a ‘political rock star’ – interview), and by the time of the 2007 election, when it was clear that Denmark would host the UN international climate negotiations, her support for a more robust climate and energy policy was well known, and backed by the CPP party leader and deputy prime minister, Bendtsen (interview). With the government unveiling its new tax reform ahead of the election, the Opposition also evolved, with
SPP stating that it now wished to participate in a new government of the left, as opposed to simply supporting it in Parliament. Its climate policy positions were more pronounced than SD, but considering they would participate in such a left coalition government, this allowed SD to concentrate on other issues, thus explaining the lower number of climate references in 2007 compared to Venstre.

The DPP viewed with suspicion the new environmental tax reforms unveiled by the government and increased environmental regulations promoted by Hedegaard. But the popularity of Hedegaard benefited the government as a whole. Immediately after the election, the government combined the environment and energy ministries, as had been the case before 2001, with Hedegaard as the new minister for Climate and Energy.

2011 to present
The 2011 election returned the left to power, and included SD, SL and the SPP. SL took the Climate and Energy ministry, headed by Martin Lidegaard, a co-founder of a non-partisan green think tank, Concito. The economic crisis began to be felt in Denmark from 2008 onward, with economic matters and health care dominating the election campaign (Knudsen, 2011).

As in 2007, SD allowed its coalition partners to articulate climate issues in the campaign while it concentrated on economic questions. The fortunes of Venstre and CPP had changed since 2009. Venstre party leader and Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen departed to be replaced by his finance minister Lokke Rasmussen. Hedegaard and Bendtsen of the CPP left for the European Commission and European Parliament, respectively. NA had failed to change the party system in 2007, and in 2008 changed its name to Liberal Alliance (LA) and strategy to become an avowedly classical liberal party, resisting increased taxes and regulations, green or otherwise. Danish voters’ perceptions in 2011 put LA closest to DPP, that is, the furthest on the right from average voters on green positions (DVS 2011). Climate change subsequently became a low interest policy for Venstre (interview). The DVS (2011) shows that the gap between a Venstre-led or SD-led government as the best to safeguard the environment was at its widest at the 2011 election (since 1994). Eurobarometer (2014a) findings also show a decline from 2008 to 2011 on the question ‘is national government doing enough regarding environmental policy’. 
Climate change was no longer a mobilising issue for the government by 2011, and the departure of Hedegaard (and former PM Rasmussen, who admitted in late 2008 that he had been wrong in not taking climate change seriously for so long), together with the economic crisis, prioritised more classically liberal policies. On the left, the three-party opposition coalition had been stable and had agreed a climate and energy policy in 2009, the SPP moderating their positions in order to join government (interview).

The economic crisis in Denmark, though relatively benign compared to Italy and the UK, did have an effect. This was mostly manifested by the Finance Minister (SD) scrutinising climate and energy proposals for cost and competitiveness. Although this is expected in government, extra attention during the economic downturn was felt within SD (interview). In January 2014, SPP left the government over the issue of US foreign investment in the Danish company DONG Energy. Still, in June 2014 a Climate Change Act passed in Parliament, supported by the parties of the left and CPP. Venstre, DPP and LA voted against. Danish industry (DI) supported the legislation, while the farmer’s union (DA&FC) did not.

**Italy**

**Weak positions, 2001-2013**

Public demand for climate policy in Italy has been consistently weak during the past 15 years. Few Italians look to their national politicians for action on climate change and the economic crisis of recent years has seen the relative priority of climate change fall further (Eurobarometer 2014b; see also Figure 1 above; see also Pagnoncelli and Cristadoro, 2014). The mainstream press has not stimulated public demand for climate policy, largely ignoring it, and has lacked the capacity to interrogate party policies (interviews; De Blasio and Sorice, 2013: 63). Competition for voters concerned about climate policy has been consistently weak (Pagnoncelli and Cristadoro, 2014: 70). The Green party has suffered from disproportionalities in Italy’s electoral systems and the development of a bipolar party system and unlike in Denmark or the UK, the centre-right has not mounted a substantial challenge to the centre-left on climate policy.

The demand for and supply of environmental politics has been largely incorporated into the left-right divide. This ensures that the incentive for left-right competition on
climate policy is very weak and helps to explain the consistent gap between the centre-left and centre-right on climate policy. First, voters are divided on climate change along left-right lines (Eurobarometer 2014a; see also Pagnoncelli and Cristadoro, 2014: 66–67). Second, ENGOs have been strongly linked to either the centre-left or centre-right. Prominent environmentalists, such as Ermete Realacci and Edo Ronchi, amongst others, have moved between the PD and mainstream ENGOs. The centre-right, meanwhile, rejects ‘conformist environmentalism’ (Meneghello, 2008) and has developed its own ENGOs, closely linked to or ‘approved by’ the party (21mo Secolo, 2008). Consequently, mainstream ENGOs lack bargaining power (interview). Third, the main parties’ framing of climate policy is strongly infused with existing left-right divisions: the centre-right rejects climate change as ‘communist propaganda’ (De Blasio and Sorice, 2013: 66). This sentiment is reinforced by divisions on the EU: the centre-right has sought to identify global warming as a vehicle for advancing European bureaucratic dirigisme that, supported by the left, aims to reduce personal, economic and scientific freedom (Santoro, 2009), while the PD has highlighted Italy’s isolation within the EU resulting from Berlusconi’s climate policies (D’Argenio, 2008; La Repubblica, 2008).

The exigencies of gaining and holding office have influenced the centre-left and centre-right in different ways. Although electorally weak, the Greens exerted significant influence as coalition partners within the centre-left (interviews; Biorcio, 2002; Chaffin and Dinmore, 2008), strengthening the position of environmentalist factions within the larger centre-left parties (interviews). For the centre-right, the responsibilities of office, including international obligations, have obliged it to pursue some climate policy (see also Mair, 2009), including ratifying and overseeing the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol (ISPRA, n.d.; Hogan et al., 2012; see also OECD, 2013: 2–3).

Almost all of our interviewees underlined the role of industry and especially that of the large energy companies in shaping the main parties’ climate policies. The government’s large minority shareholding in these former monopolies presents conflicts of interest with regard to climate policy, as they are heavily invested in carbon-intensive energy production. The energy companies exert their influence through the energy ministry and through the parties, including through factions within the PD aligned with them (interviews). Their power is reflected in policy outcomes:
the tax burden on energy fell by a third between 1995 and 2009, while the tax burden on labour rose significantly (OECD, 2013: 4). It is also reflected in the policy process: in March 2012, a draft framework law on energy (including incentives for renewables), apparently written by the former state electricity company ENEL, was circulated on the ministry’s headed paper (Cianciullo, 2012b; QualEnergia, 2012; see also Gualerzi, 2012).

Within the centre-left, industry has allies in the PD’s communist tradition (see Giannetti and Laver, 2009: 152–154) and industrialist culture, which is associated with heavy industry and large infrastructure. This tradition appears to be the strongest constraint on the party’s climate policy. It has led to a cultural mismatch with environmentalists, with one complaining that they have been viewed as ‘extra-terrestrials’ in the party (interview). Trade unions and local party units also play a role in this complex of factions, resisting policies where they imply job losses. This powerful set of interests is pitched against considerably weaker environmentalist factions: environmentalists have never performed well in internal party contests and those with responsibility for environment policy (in both parties) have had low status (interviews; see also Druckman and Warwick, 2005: 40). Most interviewees acknowledge that portfolio allocation (within the party and in government) naturally leads to a certain degree of conflict, even within the centre-right. However, it appears to be the cultural and factional mismatches (which are sometimes aligned with these portfolio allocations) that lie at the root of climate policy conflicts in the centre-left.

The economic crisis saw retrenchment on climate policy in the centre-left. Under the leadership of Bersani (2009-2013) traditionalist factions asserted themselves strongly (interviews). The party continued, following Veltroni, to seek to reconcile environmentalism and economic growth under the slogan of ‘ambientalismo del fare’ (positive environmentalism), albeit consistently giving priority to the latter. Although M5S emerged in 2012-2013 and strongly emphasised climate policies, the view of PD politicians is that they win votes primarily on an anti-politics platform and coalition with the centre-right since 2012 has weakened environmentalists in the party (interviews).

In the centre-right, the role of industry has been particularly strong (e.g., Ignazi, 2002: 990). Initiatives on climate change and energy (e.g., the attempt to block the EU 2020
climate deal in late 2008; the ‘Patto per l’Ambiente’ voluntary agreement with industry in 2009; and the attempt to reintroduce nuclear power in 2011) showed considerable coordination with Confindustria and the main energy companies (Chaffin and Dinmore, 2008; Ministero Dell’Ambiente, 2009). Moreover, the centre-right has strongly emphasised the role of technological solutions to climate change (Cianciullo, 2012a).

The centre-right has had its own internal constituency of senior climate deniers, who twice – in March 2009 and February 2010, led by the Chair of the Senate Environment Committee – succeeded in passing Senate motions sceptical of climate science and opposed to climate policy (Senato, 2009, 2010). They have developed relationships with domestic and international climate sceptics (see e.g., 21mo Secolo, 2009). However, this climate sceptic group have been set at a distance by the leadership at times, such as during the G8 Environment Ministers’ meeting in Syracuse in April 2009, when Minister Prestigiacomo sought to portray a ‘balanced’ position between denial and ‘alarmism’ (Cianciullo, 2012a).

The PD in 2008
Why did PD take a stronger position on climate policy in 2008? Electorally, Veltroni recognised the need to modernise and widen the centre-left’s appeal and emphasising environmental issues formed part of this strategy (Andrews, 2007; interviews). Established environmentalist Ermete Realacci MP was one of his close advisors and his strategy convinced several other prominent environmentalists to run for the party in 2008. Moreover, the centre-left was so far behind the centre-right in opinion polls in 2007 (Termometro Politico, 2014) that it arguably had little to lose by trying new strategies. Although the Greens competed with the PD in 2008, their challenge was extremely weak, which enabled the PD to take on the mantle of political environmentalism: the new party incorporated olive leaves into its logo and Veltroni’s stated aim was to make the party ‘the largest green party in Europe’.

Although Veltroni was the political leader of the new party (formed in 2007 by the merger of the main centre-left parties), Prodi led the centre-left in government. This allowed the new leader more freedom in making party policy than he could as an incumbent. Moreover, the centre-left was so far behind in opinion polls that its chances of implementing Veltroni’s policies (and, thus, the stakes of party policy
formation) were low, thus muting internal conflict (interviews). The very newness of the PD, too, may have afforded Veltroni opportunities to bypass traditional factions, at least temporarily, as the party was officially launched only less than six months before the 2008 election. In time, however, his position on the environment was neutralised in a ‘cold war’ on environment policy pursued by traditionalist factions (interviews).

**UK**

**2001-2006**

Until early 2006 climate change was low on the domestic agenda of the Labour and Conservative parties (Carter 2006). The Labour Government had adopted a 2010 target of a 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions that was more ambitious than the UK's Kyoto target, but few new policy initiatives followed, beyond a Climate Change Levy (CCL) on businesses (2001) and a Renewables Obligation (2002) to stimulate electricity generation from renewable sources. A critical Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP 2000) report identifying ‘something of a hole in the government’s climate change programme’ eventually prompted the Government in 2003 to adopt a tougher 60% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050 target, but again few significant new measures followed. Yet Prime Minister Tony Blair began pushing climate change on the international stage, notably at the Gleneagles G8 summit in July 2005. This move was very much a personal crusade, partly to counter the negative publicity he received for the invasion of Iraq. Despite the obvious disjunction between Blair's diplomatic leadership and the inadequacies of UK domestic climate policy, Labour was given an easy ride by the Conservative Opposition, which showed very little interest in the issue until David Cameron was elected party leader in December 2005.

The absence of strong vote-seeking pressures was the main reason for the low priority given by both parties to climate change. In short, the issue received limited attention from the media, the public and the business community. Figure 4 shows that media coverage, measured by headline stories related to climate change, was generally low, only starting to increase noticeably in 2005. Similarly, although the public expressed broad concerns about the environment, it was not a politically salient issue: 2%-4% of
people regarded the environment as one of the most important issues facing Britain, rising slightly to around 6% in 2005 (Ipsos-MORI 2014; see also Figure 1). A key focusing event had occurred in September 2000, when fuel protests led by hauliers and farmers (and supported by the Conservative leader William Hague) had brought the country to a virtual standstill and briefly pushed the Conservatives ahead of Labour in opinion polls, indicating that climate mitigation policies, especially 'green' taxes, could be very unpopular. The episode left deep scars: Chancellor Gordon Brown was so wary of raising green taxes - especially on motorists - that their combined yield in real terms was 4% lower in 2007 than in 2000 (McLean 2008), yet Brown faced no criticism from the Conservatives for this timidity.

![Graph showing UK newspaper coverage of climate change or global warming 2000-2011](image)

Source: Boykoff and Mansfield (2012)

**Figure 4. UK newspaper coverage of climate change or global warming 2000-2011**

There were no significant divisions within either party over climate change. Both parties had well-established environmental groups, but these were minority factions with little influence over policy. Both parties retained strong links to producer groups, with the business lobby particularly hostile to new environmental regulations or taxes. For example, Brown's CCL was subjected to an extremely vocal, well-organised business lobby that successfully watered down his initial proposals. This was a bruising experience for a business-friendly Chancellor, which made him question the
political benefits to be gained from progressive climate mitigation policies. It also impaired his relationship with the green lobby: Brown felt it had given him little public support over the CCL so he effectively cut off communications with the lobby between 2000 and 2005 (Tindale, 2006).

2006-2010/11

During 2006 both major parties started treating climate change more seriously, initiating a four year period of intense party competition over the issue. The Labour Government, with cross-party support, launched a radical transformation of climate and energy policy, spearheaded by the pioneering Climate Change Act 2008, which set ambitious long-term emission-reduction targets underpinned by statutory law and five-yearly carbon budgets, with an independent Committee on Climate Change to advise the Government on achieving those targets. Both parties entered the 2010 election promising further substantial measures to implement the new climate strategy.

The media played a major role directing political attention onto climate change and stimulating public concern. As Figure 4 shows, press coverage increased significantly during 2005-2006, reflecting focusing events such as the Gleneagles G8 summit, the publication of the Stern Report (2006) and the Fourth IPCC (2007) reports and, later, the 2009 UN climate conference in Copenhagen. Climate change stories were deliberately highlighted by the liberal media, including the BBC and broadsheets (Ereaut and Segnit, 2006). This media frenzy contributed to growing public concern: the proportion of people at least ‘fairly concerned’ about climate change peaked at around 80% in 2005-2006, slipping only slightly to around 70% by 2010 (http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/articles/climate-change-still-high-on-public-agenda-4358.html, accessed 20 March 2013). Regular Ipsos MORI polling shows that political concern about the environment rose rapidly in 2006-2007 to peak at 19% in January 2007 (see also Figure 1). The media’s growing appetite for climate stories was fed by very effective ENGO campaigning. Notably, Friends of the Earth ‘Big Ask’ campaign for a Climate Change Bill scored a major political coup when David Cameron declared his support for the Bill in September 2006.

Cameron’s decision to make the environment the signature issue in his attempt to ‘modernise’ and 'detoxify' the Conservative Party was a critical factor in the party politicisation of climate change. By emphasising issues, such as the environment, that
Conservatives had previously not talked about and which might appeal to women, younger voters and Liberal Democrats in key marginal seats, Cameron was ‘repositioning the Conservative Party in the public’s imagination, about showing it was changing’ (Bale, 2010: 290). Cameron's interest in climate change was about winning votes indirectly by changing the party's image, rather than by attracting environmental voters directly. Labour and Liberal Democrat strategists were also concerned about the increasingly buoyant Green party (Carter, 2008).

All our interviewees identified a clear 'Cameron effect' on climate politics. Within six weeks of Cameron endorsing the Big Ask, David Miliband, Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, announced a Climate Change Bill, commenting privately that 'We cannot be seen to be the only party not supporting this idea' (several interviewees). This sentiment underpinned the period of 'competitive consensus', which saw all three major parties fighting to be greener than each other, particularly on climate change. Thus Cameron declared his opposition to building a third runway at Heathrow airport, which demonstrated just how far the party had changed under him, and exposed the Labour Government to attack from environmentalists for supporting the runway. Moreover, several Conservative proposals - air passenger duty reform, feed-in tariffs, smart meters and a high speed rail line - were all adopted by the Labour Government. By 2010 the parties were often more progressive than the public on climate change.

There was also a cohesion-seeking element to this party politicisation, reflecting the shift in business attitudes, particularly after the Stern Report introduced a new economistic discourse to bolster the scientific case for climate change mitigation (Strong 2010). The Corporate Leaders Group, representing several powerful corporations, wrote an open letter to Blair in June 2006 calling for tougher carbon reduction targets as a means of stimulating investment in low carbon technologies. The Confederation of British Industry signalled a new approach in its landmark report supporting action on climate change (CBI 2007). With trade unions increasingly engaged too (Farnhill 2011) and the green lobby exercising unprecedented influence, especially over Cameron, important political obstacles to progressive climate policy weakened or disappeared.
Post 2010

Although the 2010 party manifestos represented a peak in climate policy positions, the environment was virtually ignored in the election campaign (Rootes and Carter, 2010). Nevertheless the cross-party consensus on climate policy continued with the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Government coalition agreement, which outlined a set of policies designed to deliver a low carbon economy. However, from 2011 the political consensus started to break down as growing criticism of wind farms and green energy taxes became increasingly evident in the right wing press and on the Conservative backbenches - this growing climate-sceptic/go-slow tendency represented a new partisan divide over climate change.

Climate change had become less politically salient: public concern was much lower than in 2006-7, albeit holding steady rather than declining. Media coverage was lower but, significantly, there were sharp differences in reporting with the emergence of a distinctly sceptical perspective in the right-wing press. A right-wing discourse linking hostility to the EU, taxes, regulation and climate change became increasingly widespread. Chancellor George Osborne expressed reservations about climate policies that might damage his efforts to stimulate the economy, telling the 2011 Conservative Party conference that 'we're not going to save the planet by putting our country out of business'. The rise of the populist climate sceptic UKIP during 2013-14 encouraged Conservative critics to be more outspoken - the allocation of the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) portfolio to their Liberal Democrat coalition partner, probably made their criticisms feel less disloyal. When rising domestic energy prices became a major issue during 2013, green levies were widely blamed prompting Cameron (reportedly) to demand that 'we get rid of all the green crap'. Meanwhile the Labour leader Ed Miliband promised a freeze on energy prices, a populist measure that would be detrimental to an emissions reduction strategy. Otherwise Labour gave very little attention to climate change.

However, the Government has remained formally committed to the Coalition agreement, and has largely implemented its climate policy commitments. Thus unusually for British politics office-seeking motivations have played a role in ensuring that Cameron has stayed broadly loyal to the programme.
Discussion

There are several possible explanations for mainstream parties’ typically weak positions on climate change. First and foremost, weak competition and low public demand may explain why climate change does not feature regularly as a prominent issue of party competition. Indeed, it is notable that public opinion varies with party positions across countries and over time. Further, in each country climate politics appears to have been assimilated, to varying degrees, into existing political conflicts, on the part of voters and parties, so there is little incentive for a mainstream right-wing party to highlight an issue for which there would presumably be small electoral (or coalitional) returns.

Second, in Denmark and Italy, coalition incentives may play a role in party strategy, both allowing Green party partners to promote climate action on behalf of a left coalition and, where more climate policy-‘reticent’ parties exert influence, such as the DPP in Denmark and the Italian centre-left’s coalition with the centre-right in 2013, accommodation of partners contributes to a more passive position of the mainstream parties. Third, perhaps as a neutralising factor, the responsibilities of office towards inherited climate policies (e.g. fixed targets for CO2 reduction, etc.), such as the 2008 Climate Change Act in the UK, the 2008 Climate Agreement in Denmark, together with international agreements, contribute towards a ‘pause’ in parties attention to climate change as an issue for partisan competition.

Fourth, significant interest groups, notably trade unions and business associations, especially if they have long-standing ties to mainstream parties, may exert influence where they perceive their self-interest threatened by the costs of climate policy. For example, the Danish farmers’ association has taken a consistently critical line against climate policy proposals, while Danish trade unions have supported efforts which have stimulated ‘green jobs’. The pattern of interest group support or opposition to climate policy may vary from country to country, but remains everywhere an important factor in party strategy. Fifth, parties’ internal traditions also matter, and if we assume the strength or weakness of environmental positions serve as a proxy for climate change, we find no consistent pattern. Whereas the Danish SD historically may have developed a strong position on climate and environmental issues, the same is not the case in British Labour or Italian PD, and on the right it is even rarer to find environmental constituencies; although exceptional periods have occurred, the
environmental factions within mainstream parties and office-holders are generally weak. Lastly, and contributing to the ‘post-peak’ normal/weak position, an additional factor is the impact of the economic crisis, which has presented many party politicians with a trade-off scenario, i.e. subsidies for renewables versus traditional economic growth incentives such as cutting taxes and lessening regulations for business. The combination of all or some of these factors leads to the premise that strong positions on climate policy are the exception rather than the rule for mainstream parties.

What, then, explains these exceptions? Our analysis suggests that distinct peaks of strong party climate positions, at least within the time frame considered, have appeared only once out of three (UK) to four (Denmark and Italy) elections. This would suggest one or more factors account for mainstream parties – and in the case of Denmark and the UK, centre-right parties – to adopt more pronounced positions on climate change.

One factor is external events which impinge on domestic politics. The coincidence of the Stern report, the 2006 Ukraine gas supply crisis, increased media coverage of climate change, the IPCC report, and the approach of the 2009 Copenhagen international climate change negotiations, together generated an unusually high degree of public awareness of climate change and its related issues, such as energy security, making it difficult for mainstream parties to ignore or seem complacent. This period coincides with the peak elections of 2008 (Italy), 2010 (UK) and 2007 (Denmark).

Second, although external factors may provide an environmental stimuli, actual change is dependent on leadership strategic decisions. In Italy (PD) and the UK (Conservatives), new party leaders embraced a modernisation agenda and efforts to broaden the party’s appeal emphasised a positive embrace of environmental issues including climate change.

Third, strong policy entrepreneurship by key individuals can influence party positions. In the case of Denmark, the popularity of Hedegaard far beyond her party’s constituency (CPP) benefited Venstre, her party’s coalition partner, and her efforts to raise Danish leadership on climate change – in view of the 2009 international negotiations that Denmark was to host – provided a potential electoral opportunity.
The appointment of David Miliband as Environment Secretary provided a strong advocate for climate policy at the heart of party and government decision-making.

Lastly, the dynamics of coalition, both with other parties and within parties (factional rivalry), also help to explain the shifts of Venstre in 2007 (coalition with CPP/Hedegaard) and PD in 2008 (Veltroni in alliance with environmental factions). As we have noted, a key factor is the role of leadership, either in charting a new image for a party – suggesting that a new direction is required after a succession of electoral defeats (PD and UK Conservatives) – or else committed individuals in key positions to exercise influence (Miliband and Hedegaard). These factors came together in the period of strong climate policy positions, alluding to the contingency of party strategy regarding climate policy.

**Conclusion**

A recent IPCC report observes that our knowledge of climate change’s impacts on human systems (including political systems) is considerably weaker than for natural systems. If we can better understand key actors’ in relation to climate policy (“risks and uncertainties in . . . decision processes”), this can contribute to improved policy-making (IPCC 2014b: 5-6). This research forms part of that agenda. Politics is a major obstacle for effective climate policy (Compston and Bailey 2012: 7; Harris 2013: 2). Political parties must form part of that research agenda. A recent review on the related topic of the politics of climate change adaptation observes that, still, “Mitigation studies . . . could benefit tremendously from the involvement of political scientists with relevant expertise.” (Javeline 2014: 10). Our findings suggest that elections in which climate change becomes a high salience issue are due to a combination of external and internal factors, i.e. events and party political dynamics. One event in particular that may have had an effect was the approach of the 2009 IPCC international climate negotiations in Copenhagen. This type of negotiation involves an assortment of government ministries in addition to climate and energy, such as the foreign ministry and prime minister’s office. These negotiations are therefore highly visible, each one building upon the outcome of the previous negotiations in a background of scientific advances on climate change forecasting. One way forward in comparative party research and climate policy is therefore to establish how government and opposition parties mobilise in the run-up to such
international meetings (Paris in late 2015 is the next occasion) especially when it occurs near a forthcoming election.

Our research also contributes to an understanding of how the party dimension might influence effective climate policy development. Advances in domestic climate policy legislation can occur when key political parties raise the profile of climate change as an issue in the competition for votes. This competition may take place at election time, and our manifesto analysis identifies a small number of peak elections where this competition has taken place, although this is the exception rather than the rule. However, the UK case study, in particular, shows that real competition for votes may take place mid-term and exert a major impact on policy, notably 2008 Climate Change Act, with the 2010 election manifesto peak representing a legacy of that period of intense party competition. The question then, given that climate change is always likely to be overshadowed at election time by traditional economic, security and welfare issues, is how to ensure parties develop strong politically sustainable positions on climate policy. One area to consider is how the accumulation of legislation that creates mandated targets, programmes or indeed policy-specific agencies such as the UK Committee on Climate Change, whether inherited from previous governments or initiatives at the EU or international level, ‘raises the bar’ for parties’ positions on climate policy. Many EU member states now have a climate and/or energy ministry, and as the cases of Denmark and the UK illustrate, they are no longer ‘invisible’ from general media attention, politically or policy-wise, especially concerning decisions on domestic energy where the renewables v. fossil fuels or nuclear debate in terms of costs is fast becoming a permanent feature of the political landscape. Our research therefore focuses attention on the explicitly political factors that may be crucial in making climate policy an integral feature of centre-left and centre-right party electoral strategy.
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## Appendix

Table 1. Elections, parties, leaders and party documents in Denmark, Italy and the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Election</th>
<th>Centre-left</th>
<th>Centre-right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Social Democrats (Nyrup Rasmussen)</td>
<td>Mennesker Først: Fri og følles i det 21. Århundrede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Social Democrats (Lykkefoft)</td>
<td>Mærkesager: Her kan du læse om de områder, hvor Socialdemokraterne vil gøre en ekstra indsats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Social Democrats (Thorning-Schmidt)</td>
<td>Vi vælger velfærd: Socialdemokraternes grundlag for folketingsvalget d. 13. November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Social Democrats (Thorning-Schmidt)</td>
<td>Danmark skal videre**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>L’Ulivo* (Rutelli)</td>
<td>Rinoviamo l’Italia, insieme. Il programma dell’Ulivo per il governo 2001/2006**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes:*
- Denmark: Tid for forandring
- Denmark: Valglofter
- Italy: Piano di governo per un’intera legislature**
- Italy: Programma Elettorale**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party Name 1</th>
<th>Manifesto Title 1</th>
<th>Party Name 2</th>
<th>Manifesto Title 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Partito Democratico (Veltroni)</td>
<td>Un Italia moderna. Si puo' fare.</td>
<td>Popolo delle Libertà (Berlusconi)</td>
<td>7missioni per il futuro dell'Italia**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Party name in italics* indicates that the party was in government during the legislature that preceded the election.

* = electoral coalition, ** = programme of an electoral coalition