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FROM VOTES TO NICHENESS OR FROM NICHENESS TO VOTES? - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELECTORAL FORTUNES AND POLITICAL STRATEGIES IN SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

MA thesis

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I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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Abstract

Niche parties got an increasing popularity among the scholars of party politics. The studies especially targeted the electoral performance of niche parties. Previous studies in the field pointed out that electoral loss in the previous elections explained why niche parties went more mainstream (Meyer and Wagner 2013). The shift towards a more mainstream profile supposed that the platforms would meet the concerns of more people. Therefore, they would gain more support. Thus, nicheness change might also produce vote change. While the researchers analyzed the causal association between the past electoral performance and party nicheness, the reverse relationship was not tested. Moreover, previous works mostly employed the binary measurement of niche parties (Meyer and Wagner 2013, Adams et. 2006, Adams et. Al 2012). Consequently, the authors did not count the degrees of change illustrated in the niche profile of a party after the last two electoral results. Although, Han (2015) used the continuous measurement of party nicheness, the work only focused on specific party families like the greens and nationalists. It was found that right-wing populists cut their nicheness as a result of electoral defeat (Han 2015).

The current work studied the association between vote change and party nicheness change. It assumed that a party would decrease its nicheness because of electoral loss during the previous two elections. For electoral incentives the parties might include more mainstream topics in their platforms to reflect public opinion better. Thus, the party followed this shift to gain more votes for the next elections. Therefore, this study also targeted the inverse association between past nicheness change and electoral performance of a party. Aside from the central variables, the work also accounted for the impacts of party leadership change, change in cabinet position and party age. Moreover, different nicheness measurements (Miller and Meyer (2015), Bischof (2017) were used to compare their outcomes for the Scandinavian case. The latter would illustrate if various measures recorded the same results.

To evaluate the relations between nicheness change and vote change, the study focused on Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. The Scandinavian case was selected for several reasons. First, their political systems possessed all types of niche parties discussed by

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different authors. Moreover, in all the three countries niche parties were able to enter the coalition governments. In addition, Scandinavian party systems were popular with their stability. Thus, there were few cases when the life span of a party covered only one election. There were reference years to compare the differences in the values of the variables for two elections. Eventually, it was necessary to collect data on party leadership change and party age. That is why there was a need to narrow down the sample to Scandinavia.

To test the causal associations between vote change and nicheness change the work followed ordinary least squared regression. Vote change illustrated the relative difference of party vote shares during the past two elections. Nicheness change depicted the absolute difference again recorded for two consecutive elections. It was supposed that vote loss between time t-1 and t-2 will decrease party nicheness for the period of t and t-1. Moreover, the loss of nicheness at time t-1 and t-2 will lead to vote gains as a result of elections in t and t-1.

The work discovered that there were no substantial and compelling relations between vote change and nicheness change in Scandinavia. Ups and downs in the party vote shares did not explain the changes in party nicheness. Moreover, the shifts in party nicheness did not cause vote change. The absence of associations could be connected to the fact that there were a lot of disagreements in the outcomes of different measurements of party nicheness. Since they estimate the same concept, these differences advance the question about the validity of these measurements. Moreover, the estimates only focused on party platforms and did not take into consideration other ways or tools that a party could use for expressing its nicheness. All these may identify why there is no association between vote change and party nicheness change. The findings of the current thesis have implications for the understanding of party nicheness, party and voters' responsiveness.

Contents

1. Introduction

When Anders Lange's newly established party participated in the Norwegian parliamentary elections of 1973, it managed to cut the threshold and enter Storting. However, the phenomenon of Anders Lagen's party was connected not only with the fact that their first electoral success coincided with the year of their establishment. It was also associated with the exceptionally specialized essence of the party platform. Issues related to less state intervention, lower taxes were at the center of the party program (Bjerkem 2016). Their competitors ignored these issues. That made Lange's party more distinct. However, during the next elections the party, which was renamed to Progress Party of Norway (FrP) broadened their program and started to cover more mainstream issues. These dynamics coincided with the better electoral performance of Progress Party.

On the one hand, Progress Party of Norway managed to get more votes over time. On the other hand, their party program lost its distinctiveness. The concept of party nicheness expresses that distinctiveness. Niche party usually covers the issues that are under-discussed by their competitors (Miller and Meyer 2015). The parties with niche profiles are more focused on their policies (Adams et al. 2006) than their mainstream competitors. The example of Norwegian Progress Party illustrates the interconnection and sometimes the contradiction between the principal goals of political parties. Political parties seek to develop policy with which they will influence politics. Moreover, they try to get representation in government to gain control over political dynamics. Eventually, political parties aim at vote-maximization (Müller, Strom 1999). Indeed, a party should not necessarily follow all these goals. However, more effective implementation of party policy requires parliamentary representation. That is why even policy seeking parties will try to attract more votes. For instance, Moderate Party in Sweden initially advocated for less state intervention in the economy. Nevertheless, over time the party started including welfare issues. It was done to reflect public opinion better (Lindbom 2008).

Generally, in Scandinavia, the welfare state was a mainstream issue that had an essential role in the electoral success of a party.

That can explain the long lasting electoral dominance of social-democrats. However, these parties were challenged by new issues like immigration or environment.So, they were required to accommodate both mainstream welfare issue and new niche issues. If the party gives almost the same weight to the topics in the manifesto then, the party is more mainstream than niche. However, when niche issues are covered by other parties as well, they are becoming less niche and more mainstream.

It was found that a niche party could adopt a mainstream profile if it lost votes during the past elections (Meyer and Wagner 2013). Generally, poor electoral performance was considered to be one of the main reasons related to the changes in party platforms (Janda et. al). Some evidence was found that right-wing populist parties would decrease their nicheness if they lost votes during the last two elections. The shift towards a more mainstream profile supposes that the platforms will meet the concerns of more people. Therefore, they will better reflect the public opinion. The latter presumes more electoral gains. It also hints about the inverse association between vote change and nicheness change. It can be assumed that less nicheness will guarantee more votes.

While the previous studies reflected the relation between past electoral performance and party nicheness, they either employed binary measurement of niche parties, or focused only on specific party families, such as green and nationalist (Han 2015). Moreover, the works did not test the inverse association either. In addition, the earlier researches did not employ different measures of party nicheness for the sake of comparison.

Therefore, focusing on the Scandinavian case, this work argues that there is an association between party nicheness and their vote shares. In other words, fewer votes will make a party decrease its nicheness. The latter will be done in an expectation that, less nicheness will bring more votes in coming elections. The study hypothesizes causal associations between these variables considering the temporal precedence. Thus, the vote loss during the past two elections is considered to explain the decrease in party nicheness score. Moreover, the study targets also the opposite associations. It is assumed that if a party cut the nicheness score during the past elections, they will increase their electoral gains.

The sample is narrowed down to Scandinavia for several reasons. Firstly, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway have all types of parties that are labeled niche by initial studies of the field. Moreover, some of those parties managed to enter the government. It can be supposed that they might change their niche profile during the political bargains with the

coalition members. Mainstream parties might also modify their nicheness to meet the challenges of new parties. Thus, the work also accounts how the change in the governmental position has impacted party nicheness and vote shares in Scandinavia. Party leadership change and party age are also included in the models. The panel data cover 281 observations clustered by country and political party.

The work employs ordinary least squared regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The models include change scores. They encounter the associations between the relative vote change and absolute party nicheness change. Relative vote difference expressed in ratio better illustrates if a party has doubled its votes or it has registered just an incremental change. Analyzing differences removes the serial correlation and resolves the problem of potential unit effects (Wooldrigde 2016, Chapter 13).

The study will use two different continuous measurements of party nicheness because they encounter changes in the niche profile of the parties over time and from country to country. In contrast, categorical measurements are time blind. The measures advanced by Miller and Meyer (2015) and Bischof (2017) share many differences. For instance, they focus on a different number of topics. Moreover, Bischof's measurement is an index consisting of market share and specialization. Market share illustrates how much weight party gives to niche segments. Specialization defines how broad the party platform is (Bischof 2017). The current study will also measure party nicheness by market share and specialization. Unlike Bischof, Miller and Meyer also counted party size in their measure (Miller and Meyer 2015). Therefore, the study follows two objectives. It aims at testing if there are any causal associations between party nicheness and electoral performance in Scandinavia as well as comparing the measures of party nicheness through that testing.

The work is structured as follows. The first chapter discusses the principal goals of political parties and how they can explain party niceness change. Then it presents and compares various definitions of niche parties. Most of the studies in the field also analyzed the electoral behavior of niche parties. So, the last section of the chapter reviews the works that have studied the associations between the niche profile of parties and their electoral behavior.

The second chapter elaborates on the peculiarities of the Scandinavian system. It gives a quick historical overview of the electoral success of main Scandinavian political parties. Moreover, the chapter presents the new parties that have been mainly established over

the issues of environment and immigration. Eventually, the work attempts to classify Scandinavian political parties by their niche and mainstream profiles based on the different definitions of niche parties. The next chapter advances two central hypotheses about the association between vote share and party nicheness. Moreover, it will present the theses concerning the influence of shifts in cabinet position, party leadership change and party age on the central variables of the study. Then the chapter will elaborate on the measurements of the variables included in the work. The sections will separately discuss different measurements of niche parties to present the shift from party family approach to continuous measurement of party nicheness. Eventually, the research will introduce the models to evaluate the relation between party nicheness change and vote change in Scandinavia. The result of model evaluation will illustrate if there is any relation between party nicheness and vote share. It will also give the general picture of party nicheness in the Scandinavian context. Eventually, the chapter will compare the results obtained by different measurement of party nicheness for the Scandinavian case. Then the work will advance the main conclusions retrieved from the study and developed some recommendations for further studies.

2. Party politics and niche parties

The role of political parties in modern democracies is vital. They are one of the chief guarantors of democratic representation. Parties aggregate and represent public opinion. However, they can also change it. If a party is more attached to its policies, it will be less accommodative to the shifts in society. At the same time, the party will want to acquire more representation in the political system to live up their policies (Müller, Strom 1999). Thus, in any circumstances, parties need to take into account people's demands and opinions because they are their voters. However, if parties change their policies or the attributes of their policies quite often, they lose their credibility among their electorates. Party behavior is mostly related to their vote seeking and policy seeking objectives. On the way to achieving these goals, parties can make some changes to their profiles. For instance, they can include more issues in their programs. Also they can cut the number of topics giving more weight to a small range of political dimensions. In this way, parties will modify their nicheness. So, nicheness is about how much weight is given to this or that topic of party platform (Miller and Meyer 2013). Party profiles can become less niche and more niche.

Political parties were considered stable organizations. However, in practice, the parties changed over time. This change affected the party manifestos, through which parties participated in election campaigns (Janda et al., 1995). It was found that the changes in the parties were mainly related to external factors. The electoral defeat was one of those significant external problems that usually led changes in the policies of political parties (Mair 1983). In their work, Janda et al. stated that "... defeat is the mother of changes in the party" (Janda et al. 1995, p.173). Changes to party policies might include modifications of niche or mainstream profiles. Electoral loss could make the party to take less niche profile to attract more votes in the next elections. Thus, the party expected that giving equal weight to more issues of public concern would appeal more voters.

This chapter firstly discusses the principle goals of political parties in general. It indicates how policy seeking and vote seeking objectives are connected to the niche profile of a party. Then, the next section presents various definitions of niche parties. Eventually, the

chapter reviews the works that have analyzed the electoral performance of niche parties and the impact of elections on the niche party profile.

2.1 Parties and politics

The behavior of political parties is determined by their objectives. The parties may reflect or shape the public opinion. Accordingly, they will follow either reflective or integrative behavior (Heywood 2007). The strategy of the party depends mainly on its principle goals.

Coalition theories identified three main objectives of the party: office, policy, and votes. The parties adapt their behavior to these aims. The office seeking goal relates to the maximization of control over the executive branch. Although the end of the office seeking strategy is obvious, the motives behind it can be both individual and instrumental (Müller, Strom 1999). For instance, it can be the personal goal of a party leader and their members to be in the cabinet. In addition, it may be an instrumental objective. Being in government means more influence on politics and guarantees more opportunities for the next electoral victory (Ibid). The latter relates to the fact that governmental parties usually have more knowledge about different practical aspects of public policy, since they are direct executors. Moreover, they are given the opportunity to demonstrate their political capacities to voters. Indeed, this also means that the ability of governmental parties to win in the next elections will be low if they do not justify the voters' expectations.

As for the policy seeking objective, it aims at maximizing the party influence on public policy (Müller, Strom 1999). However, when making political trade-offs with other possible coalition partners, the parties may modify their policies to remain in the coalition. For example, the Swedish Green Party was part of the Red-Green minority government, who voted toughen the laws on granting asylum in Sweden. But they were supporters of the integration of immigrants into Sweden. However, they had to ease their positions as a member of the coalition. The Green party representative noted, it was a "painful but necessary move" (Radio Sweden 2016, "Greens swallow hard and vote for stricter immigration laws," para1). This sacrifice can either be a gain or a loss for a policy seeking party. Voters can decide this by rewarding or punishing that party during the next elections.

Therefore, the influence of a party on public policy will be stronger in the government than in the opposition. At the same time, it means that the policy seeking party is making a "policy sacrifice" (Müller, Strom 1999, p. 7). So, the results of the following polls will test if the alteration of party policy has been a right or wrong step according to their party supporters.

To achieve their goals, the parties therefore need votes. The latter is their next objective. The parties try to maximize their votes and, consequently their representation. It can be assumed that for vote maximization, the parties are ready to periodically change their policies or some aspects of their policies (Müller, Strom 1999).

All three goals are interrelated. In order to better influence politics, the party must be in the office. In addition, to be in the office, the party must have a sufficient number of votes. Thus, the implementation of party goals is mediated by voters. Therefore, the parties need to communicate with the electorate. A party manifesto or program is one way of bridging the parties with their voters. The central document of a party sums up the main issues and corresponding positions that the party holds (Eder et al. 2017). In addition, party platforms also indicate how distinct the party is. In other words, manifesto depicts party nicheness. Party nicheness refers to the "distribution of emphasis in their/parties/ policy programmes" over the issues parties cover (Bischof and Wagner 2017, p. 2). So, the niche party platform includes topics that are ignored by their competitors (Miller and Meyer 2015, Meyer and Wagner 2013). However, there are various definitions of niche parties that also focus on the characteristics of the niche party and underline the segments that the niche party should or should not cover.

The studies have found that niche parties were policy seeking parties that did not concentrate much on short term electoral gains. They had a long-standing goal to reach the objectives of their policies (Adams et al. 2006). Therefore, they are not responsive to the shifts in public opinion (ibid). It does not mean, however, that they do not seek votes. Niche parties can also refer to "policy sacrifices" for more influence on public policy. Since nicheness can be considered an attribute of party policy, they can change their nicheness to expand the number of their supporters. Therefore, the party nicheness can shift over time. The latter equally refers to all parties irrespective of party family affiliation and niche or mainstream profile. With regard the latter, two questions may

arise. What can cause the change of party nicheness? How will the voters react to those changes?

Janda et al. (1995) found that past "poor election results" associated with the change in the party manifesto. The parties might start to cover more mainstream issues. Or, they would make their profiles more distinct including under-discussed topics. By these shifts, they would shift their nicheness.

A party can assume that a strong focus on specific dimensions attracts only supporters of those issues. Therefore, to gain more electorate, they need to integrate equally other topics. The latter also supposes that parties with less nicheness will win more votes because their party platforms reflect more topics of public concern. Moreover, they will get a relatively equal distribution of attention on   key topics of public opinion.

To sum, political parties seek for more votes, greater policy control and more control over the executive branch. For effective implementation of their goals, they need voters' support. Therefore, when they lose this support, they can change their niche profile in order to get more votes for the next election. It is believed that the maximization of votes will occur at the expense of party nicheness. When encountering these associations, it is also important to think more carefully what is understood by party nicheness and niche parties. So, the next section compares different definitions of niche parties

2.2 Conceptualizing Nicheness

The concept of a niche party has increased its popularity among researchers of party politics. Studies on niche parties cover a wide range of issues related to their characteristics and electoral behavior. However, the authors used different definitions and measurements for niche parties. One thing that unites most definitions is that a party has a niche if it emphasizes problems that are not covered or underlined by their competitors (Meguid 2005, Miller and Meyer 2015). Definitions vary mainly because the authors try to apply some features to niche parties (Meguid 2005). In addition, there is a disagreement over the number and nature of the problems that the niche party should cover (Bischof 2017, Miller and Meyer 2015, Wagner 2012).

For instance, in work by Adams et al. (2006) the Communists were defined as niche parties. Meanwhile, for B. Meguid (2005) Communist parties did not fulfill the characteristics indicated in her definition. The diversity of conceptualizations complicated the interpretation of findings got from different works on niche parties. Their generalizability required some specifications.

The following section introduces different approaches that have been used by scholars to conceptualize niche parties. One group of scholars heavily relied on the party family approach. Others argued that the latter did not illustrate how niche parties changed with time. This part also included the definitions put forward by the authors of the continuous concept of niche party. Moreover, the section notes the main points over which the scholars' views have contrasted.

2.2.1 Niche party definition: Party Family approach

The original definition of niche parties belonged to B. Meguid (2005). In her work titled "Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success," the author studied the "the new competitors" of political parties and put forward the "niche party phenomenon" (Meguid 2005, p. 347). However, Meguid did not classify all new competitors as niche parties. Three characteristics differed niche parties from other "neophytes" (Ibid). Firstly, niche parties did not prioritize economic issues. They covered the issues that were out of the political discussion or had not received much attention before. Secondly, the issues advanced by niche parties were new and sometimes they cross-cut traditional political divisions. Thirdly, they deliberately avoided the political appeals of their peer mainstream parties focusing on a limited number of issues (Meguid 2005). Most often, niche parties were single issue parties. Despite the fact that they could add more political appeals into their party programs, they remained single issue parties in the voters' mindset. According to Meguid's work, the ethnoterritorial, environmental and radical right parties fit into the definition of niche parties (Meguid 2005, p.347). For Meguid, niche parties were often new single issue parties. However, her interpretation lacked some clarity concerning the age of niche parties and the novelty of political appeals they advanced. According to her conceptualization, the issues did not need to be new. They could simply be "under-discussed" (Meguid 2005, p.347).

However, in addition, the author mentioned in the text that niche parties are those that bring new political dimensions (Meguid 2005).

Following Meguid's definition, Jensen and Spoon considered niche parties to be "new politics parties" that possessed different behavior in the European Parliament (Jensen & Spoon 2010, p. 176). Most of the niche parties were formed on the basis of new social movements. That iswhy some scholars put them in one party family called "New Politics" (Taggart 1996). However, Wagner further criticized Meguid's definition arguing that the age of the party and the novelty of the question should not be of importance for specifying niche parties. The old party could raise question that had been under-discussed for a long time (Wagner 2012).

Adams et al. (2006) further analyzed niche-mainstream differences concerning the dynamic representation of parties. Dynamic representation meant that parties responded to the changes in public opinion (Stimson, Mackuen, & Erikson, 1995). Adams et al. (2006) defined niche parties differently. According to them, niche parties occupied extreme right, extreme left and niche non-centric positions in the right-left spectrum. Consequently, these were communist, green and nationalist parties. Other catch-all parties like social-democrats or liberals were the mainstreams (Adams, Clark, Ezrow, & Glasgow 2006, p. 513). Therefore, if the party referred to one of those three party families, it was considered to be niche. Their conceptualization did not concern the features of niche parties. However, their hypotheses about dynamic representation of niche/mainstream parties were obtained from three ideas, which could be considered as internal characteristics of niche parties. Firstly, the authors assumed that niche party elite highlighted the party policy objectives more than mainstream parties. Secondly, niche parties relied on long-run support of people, rather than short-run gains. Therefore, they are more stable (Adams et al. 2006, p. 515).

To summarize, the definitions of niche parties put forward by Meguid (2005) and Adams et al. (2006) shared similarities and differences. A significant similarity was in the fact that both approaches relied on party family approach when determining niche parties. However, Meguid's method was "more inductive" because the parties had to perform several functions that should classify them as niche (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 265).). Meanwhile, for Adams et al. (2006), niche specification was directly related to party affiliation. In other words, a "niche" was defined as extreme or non-centric. These

differences were the primary rationale behind different outcomes of mentioned two approaches. As it was indicated above, according to Meguid (2005), the issues of niche parties should be novel and out of political contestation. Therefore, the author did not specify communist parties as a niche (irrespective of their extreme stance on the right-left spectrum). Thus, the inclusion of the communists into the niche party category mostly related to the debate if the political appeal of niche parties should be new or it could be a new interpretation of an old issue. The latter was further discussed by Meyer and Miller (2015) and Bischof (2017).

In addition, some scholars criticized party family approach in general. It was believed that not all environmental, nationalist or other niche parties could have the same origin, ideology or even party name. There was a suggestion to take into account the parties' origin and ideologies together when making classifications of party families (Mair, P., & Mudde1998). The latter would check if the parties changed over time. Party family based definitions of niche parties met the same criticism. They were considered to be time-blind. Moreover, these conceptualizations did not account for the differences among the countries (Bischof 2017; Meyer & Miller 2015; Wagner 2012).

2.2.2 Refining niche party concept

Markus Wagner considered that party family approach ignored party profiles, therefore the ideological policies of the parties. His definition of niche parties was supposed to be a simplified version of Meguid's conceptualization. According to Wagner's definition, niche parties "compete primarily on a small number of non-economic issues" (Wagner 2012, p. 3). Thus, niche parties did not prioritize economic appeals. Moreover, the range of their selected non-economic issues was limited. Niche parties should equally fulfill these two criteria. For instance, the party was not a niche if it similarly prioritized economic and environmental issues. According to Wagner, his definition improved the vague conceptualization of niche parties in three ways. Firstly, it was based only on party programs. Then, it considered the possible variability of party programs and ignored the party family affiliation (Wagner 2012). Therefore, Wagner's definition did not exclude niche/mainstream shifts of parties. As the work mentioned, "… being niche party…is

also a matter of degrees" (Wagner 2012, p. 6). However, there was a mismatch between how the author defined niche parties and how he measured it. Though Wagner defined niche parties as a "matter of degrees," his measurement still divided the parties into binary categories, placing some threshold. Depending whether the party score of niche profile was below or above than the threshold, it was marked either niche or mainstream. Though Bischof (2017) criticized this contradiction, giving a dichotomous measurement to the continuous concept, there was some justification for the binary approach. According to Wagner, the specification of niche and mainstream categories was necessary for the studies aimed at illustrating how different party strategies were based on the type of parties (Wagner 2012). To further clarify the conceptual background of niche parties, Wagner pointed out how small, single issue and New Politics parties differed from each other and how they were connected to niche parties.

As a rule, the size of the parties was assessed by votes. In this sense, niche parties can be considered small, since their political appeals were often distinct. Thus, the electorate was also assumed to be small. However, the reality depicted that niche parties (e.g., UKIP in 2004 European elections) could be successful with respect to vote shares (Wagner, 2012, p. 7). Thus, the small party size was not a necessary characteristic of niche parties.

Considering Mudde's definition of single-issue parties, Wagner found much in common with the Meguid's conceptualization of niche parties. However, Mudde's definition excluded nationalist parties (Wagner 2012). Meanwhile, the right-wing populist parties were mostly seen as niche by the scholars of the field (Adams et al., 2006; B. M. Meguid, 2005). Therefore, Wagner believed that single-issue parties could be a subtype of niche parties that focused only on one issue. According to Wagner's definition, niche parties could stress more than one non-economic topic. Therefore, the single issue parties were assumed to be the "extreme" subtype of niche parties (Wagner 2012, p. 7).

Eventually, niche parties were usually associated with New Politics parties. However, making an equation line between them would not be proper. Firstly, according to Wagner's definition, a niche party could focus on any non-economic appeal, regardles of its novelty. Secondly, New Politics parties were usually associated with some specific historical period because they were the results of different new movements. Meanwhile, the niche concept was not tied to a particular period (Wagner 2012).

Hence, Wagner managed to simplify the conceptualization of niche parties, and to improve the theoretical framework that distinguished the concept from other related categories. Moreover, he admitted possible shifts between the niche and mainstream profiles of parties. Moreover, he recognized the possible shifts between the niche and the main profiles of the parties. In his further work with Meyer (2013), the authors linked the changes in the niche profile to the vote-seeking goals of parties. The work defined niche parties as "those parties that emphasize issues neglected by their rivals" (Meyer & Wagner 2013, p.1249). Although their conceptualization did not specify whether the questions should cover the economic dimension, they applied Wagner's approach (2012) in the measurement of niche parties. The latter meant that non-economic issues should prevail in the niche party profiles.

Meyer and Miller used the same minimal definition (Meyer and Wagner 2013) of niche parties in their work titled "The niche party concept and its measurement" (2015). They illustrated that the theoretical core of niche party concept was defined by how much weight they gave to this or that issue in their manifesto (Meyer & Miller, 2015). According to their definition, niche parties should focus on distinct topics. However, they could not completely ignore other dimensions promoted by the parties of the same system. That was why the authors developed a continuous concept of party nicheness. The latter was designed to illustrate the distinctiveness of the party.

The definitions of niche parties advanced by Meyer and Miller (2015), and Meyer and Wagner (2013) were mostly the same. However, their implications somewhat differed. The significant difference was that Miller and Meyer (2015) included economic niche as a separate political issue that could be neglected by other parties. Meanwhile, for Meyer and Wagner (2013), niche parties de-emphasized economic dimension in their political platforms. Two factors validated the inclusion of the economic niche. Firstly, economic issues were not always highlighted by political parties. Secondly, non-economic issues can sometimes be envisaged through the economy. The authors brought the example of Norwegian Progress Party (FRP) during 1970-80s. The party interpreted the issue of immigration through economic lens. Thus, without looking at the economic dimension, the FRP would seem to be a mainstream party (Meyer & Miller, 2015, p. 261).

At the same time, Miller and Meyer contested Meguid's idea concerning the novelty of niche issue. For example, Swedish Christian democrats entered the political arena,

fighting for Christian values in the 1960s. Religious themes at the time were not new in Europe. However, the party got a distinct niche on that dimension (Miller and Meyer 2015). Thus, the authors illustrated that some characteristics of niche parties mentioned in the previous studies (Meguid 2005) could change over time. Therefore, the minimum definition stating that niche parties stressed political appeals ignored by their rival peers, best depicted the conceptual core of niche parties (Meyer & Miller, 2015).

However, the conceptualization of Miller and Meyer was challenged by Bischof for several reasons. Bischof agreed that party family approach was not sufficient to determine niche parties. However, it was an important source for defining the niche segments on which the parties were competing. The author mentioned market theories to illustrate party competition over the mainstream and niche segments. According to Bischof, traditional or mainstream issues were spread among political parties. Parties possessed different offers for the same dimensions. Meanwhile, niche segments belonged to specific party families. That is why he relied on party families (which were listed as niche by previous scholars) to identify niche segments. So, unlike Miller and Meyer (2015) who studied party nicheness considering almost all political dimensions (indicated by Bäck et al. 2011), Bischof selected five segments. The latter covered "ecological, agrarian, regional, extreme right and eurosceptic" issues (Bischof 2017, p. 224). Bischof justified his approach by the fact that extreme parties could get a low nicheness score measured by Miller and Meyer because the method covered almost all dimensions. Moreover, Bischof criticized Miller and Meyer's definition for ignoring the narrowness of issue appeals raised by niche parties. The author considered the latter as an important definitional criterion that was previously advanced by Meguid (2005) and Wagner (2012).

Usually, niche parties were not rich, so they preferred to not focus on a broad spectrum of issues (Bischof 2017). To improve the mentioned gaps in conceptualization, Bischof defined nicheness as a strategy of a party that was "a) predominantly competing on niche market segments neglected by their competitors; (b) not discussing a broad range of these segments" (Bischof 2017, p. 223). It could be considered that this definition relied on previous conceptualizations proposed by Wagner (2012) and Miller and Meyer (2015). It contained references to marker theories, spatial theory, and party family approach.

Summarizing all the definitions of the niche party concept, three main conclusions can be drawn. First, the analysis of niche parties and party nicheness is relevant in multi-party systems. Indeed, in a bipartisan system, the parties can have different programs and stress different problems. Nevertheless, the dimension cannot be marked niche because there is no "objective reference" and "the single interaction constitutes party system mainstream" (Miller and Meyer 2015, p.261). Thus, everything they emphasize will continue to be mainstream.

Then the party niche depends on other political parties of the same system. The party can maintain its status as a niche, while its rival parties do not embrace or give the same emphasis to the respective topics. Thirdly, almost all definitions (except Adams et al. 2006) of niche parties and party nicheness focus on a supply side (Miller and Meyer 2015), therefore on a party, not the voters.

This research will refer to the conceptualizations advanced by Miller and Meyer (2015) and Bischof (2017). Both approaches allow the change of party nicheness over time and across countries. Therefore, they are best suited for studying the associations between party nicheness and vote shares in political systems.

2.3 Electoral performance and party profiles

Almost all approaches to the definitions and operationalization of niche parties considered the electoral performance as a factor affecting the party profile. The core of Meguid's (2005) modified salience theory meant that the electoral success of a niche party depended on the strategies of mainstream parties. A niche issue got popularity among the voters only if it was also covered by mainstream parties (Meguid 2005). Another study conducted by Adams et al. (2006) found that for extreme right-wing, extreme left and environmental parties, a change in niche party profile in accordance with public opinion led to a loss of votes. This section is devoted to previous works, which studied the relationship between the niche profile of parties and their electoral activities.

To illustrate party competition between mainstream and niche parties, Meguid referred to a modified spatial theory (B. M. Meguid, 2005). Spatial theories explained the rational strategies of parties to minimize the distance between them and voters. Meguid's modified

spatial approach argued that the decision about the strategic behavior of a niche party depended on the responses of mainstream parties to niche issues. Thus, mainstream and niche parties could use party position, issue salience and ownership as tools of electoral competition. The latter could happen, even when parties had different political ideologies. So, the "ideological proximity" among parties was no longer a precondition for manipulations over the given issues (B. M. Meguid, 2005, p. 350). Meguid introduced three mainstream strategies that could pre-determine the electoral performance of niche parties. If mainstream parties did not react in any way to the niche party issue, then the voters did not get any hints that the topic was relevant (dismissive/DI strategy). Thus, niche parties would lose votes because people would cast ballots for that issue. If mainstream parties increased the salience and adopted the same party position with a niche party (accommodative strategy/AC), voters would prefer mainstream parties in that contest. At last, if mainstream parties got different position on that issue (adversarial strategy/AD), then niche parties would have successful electoral performance (Meguid 2005, p. 354, Table 3). These strategies composed the core of Meguid's modified spatial model.

At the same time, Meguid analyzed if the socio-institutional factors affected the electoral trajectories of niche parties. It was pointed out that in more centralized states, niche parties have better chances to get into power. As for social variables, they have had a different impact on specific types of niche parties. But in general, their role was insignificant (Meguid, 2005).

According to Wagner, through modified spatial theory, Meguid admitted the scenario of a niche-mainstream shift (Wagner 2012). If the mainstream parties could change their salience and position, it meant that niche parties could also act in that way. However, Meguid considered that the change in the niche party profile was not made voluntarily but under pressure from mainstream parties. Though modified spatial theory emphasized the issues of immigration and environment, it did not exclude any new themes that could rise on the political agenda and get the ownership of a niche party. These assumptions about niche-mainstream strategies were proved to work for green, ethno-territorial and right-wing populist parties (categorized as niche by Meguid) in Western Europe. Further, Abou-Chadi (2016) revealed differences in the mainstream party strategies in response to the specific type of the niche party. It was found that mainstream parties considered

greens as the owners of the ecological issue (Abou-Chadi 2016). Therefore, they did not change their stance regarding the environmental dimension. However, mainstream parties were changing salience and party position towards immigration. They did not counter the nationalist parties as the issue owners of immigration (Abou-Chadi 2016).

Based on Adams et al. (2006) definition of niche parties and Meguid's logic of adversarial strategy, Ezrow proved that niche parties with extreme issue emphasis got more support than more moderate niche parties. So, the "issue differentiation" was a guarantor of more votes for niche parties (Ezrow 2008, p. 207). Referring to the work by Andrews and Money (2005) Ezrow (2008) drew parallels between niche parties and party challengers as well as mainstream parties and party champions. Similarly, Andrews and Money proved that challengers tried to follow extreme stances to gain more votes, while champions usually moderated their policies for the same goal. Mainstream parties moderated their policies according to the mean voter position, but they did not make adjustments towards the changes in their electorate. Meanwhile, niche parties were responsive towards the shifts in their voters' right-left positions. However, they did not respond mean voter position (Ezrow, De Vries, Steenbergen, & Edwards 2011). The work by Bischof and Wagner (2017) also confirmed this argument. However, here the authors calculated nicheness according to Bischof's continuous measurement. They concluded that parties that put more emphasis on niche topics did not modify their programs according to "mean-voter preferences"(Bischof and Wagner 2017, p. 6). Following the definition by Adams et al. (2006), it was also studied if there were indications for partisan sorting among the supporters of mainstream and niche parties (green, communist and radical right). In this context, partisan sorting meant if the moderations of party programs towards right-left positions affected the right-left positions of their supporters (Adams, Ezrow, & Leiter 2012). The analysis found compelling evidence about partisan sorting for supporters of niche parties. The latter registered a significant shift in their mean right-left position. Moreover, the authors illustrated that partisan sorting required "significant time lags" (Adams et al. 2012, p. 1276). However, the same findings were not applicable to mainstream parties.

To conclude, public opinion did not moderate the niche profiles of parties. However, the shifts in niche party programs affected their voters' right-left position. But what if the

modification in party programs was generated because of a vote loss in previous elections?

Meyer and Wagner (2013) studied this relation. They concluded that niche parties were more likely to switch into the mainstream profile if they registered losses in previous elections. They used binary definition and measurement of niche parties advanced by Wagner (2012). The authors also indicated that young, small parties and latecomers were more likely to follow niche-mainstream shifts. Moreover, there was more probability that oppositional parties would change their profiles more often. Nevertheless, this finding did not get high significance. There was 10% risk that this association would be absent (Meyer & Wagner 2013, p. 1262). However, this study did not indicate "the degree to which a party pursues a niche strategy" (Meyer & Wagner, 2013, p. 1266).

To fill that gap, Kjung Joon Han (2015) studied if past electoral defeat influenced party nicheness. In spite of the fact, that Han measured nicheness according to Miller and Meyer, niche parties were selected based on Wagner's definition. Among all niche parties, the author picked the ones that "competed on the limited number of issues" (Han 2015, p. 15). As a result, green and extreme-right parties were selected.

As in the case of Meyer and Wagner (2013), vote change was counted for t-1 and t-2. Moreover, the author used the same control variables as Meyer and Wagner (2013): party size, age, and governmental position (Han 2015). Two more control variables were added to this list. It was believed that niche parties were supported by those who previously had "abstained from voting" (Han 2015, p.15). That is why the author also included a variable about the change in voter turnout. Then, because the economic difficulties could provoke class-based voting and make niche parties broadly cover economic topics, GDP growth was also considered in the model (Ibid).

Han found out that different party families had different attitudes towards the loss of votes. While the electoral defeat in past elections made the radical right parties reduce their nicheness, the results were not significant for green parties (Han 2015). At the same time, the variables on governmental position and party age had a significant influence on the model. The turnout variable was significant only for the extreme right parties. When turnout was changing by one unit, the radical right-wing parties were losing 0.36% votes (Han 2015, p.28, Table 1).

To sum, the author used a continuous measurement of nicheness to analyze its dependence on past vote shares. However, the work focused only on two niche party families. Consequently, the author did not test if electoral defeat could also impact the nicheness of mainstream parties. Indeed, Meyer and Wagner (2013) found out that past electoral failure did not have a significant influence on mainstream-niche shift. Notwithstanding the application to party nicheness score would perhaps identify how nicheness scores of mainstream parties varied (increased or decreased) based on past electoral loss. Therefore, the present study attempted to find the association between vote change and change in party nicheness for all parties, regardless of their niche and mainstream profile.

3. Scandinavian party systems and niche parties

The Scandinavian party model was distinctive for its stability and class-based voting. These features were especially apparent after the end of the Second World War until the 1970s. However, the "earthquake elections" of 1973 challenged some scholars' perceptions about the stability of Scandinavian party systems (Arter 2008, p.57). Two shifts characterized party systems of the post-1970 period. Firstly, the domination of social-democratic parties decreased. However, that did not concern all three countries to the same extent. While the decline was evident in Denmark and Norway, the Swedish Social-Democrats (SAP) continued getting electoral majority. Secondly, according to some studies, there was a shift from class-based voting to issue-voting in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (Blomqvist & Green-Pedersen 2004). Thus, voters started to give more importance to the issues covered by this or that party. Consequently, they also tracked the changes in the platforms of parties. It could be assumed that party nicheness became a relevant factor for a Scandinavian voter when evaluating the candidates. Moreover, Scandinavian countries were popular with their minority governments. As it was discussed in the chapters above, the coalition parties could modify their policy stances during the political bargains (Strom 1990). It can be assumed that they will not sharply change their position, but will consider other issues that were not covered in their programs. If Scandinavians turned to issue-voting, they should respond to those changes during the elections.

This chapter spells out the peculiarities of Scandinavian party systems. It elaborates on the historical developments of the Scandinavian five-party model and illustrates how the popularity of pole parties has challenged over time. The latter paves the way for new parties both in the parliaments and in the governments. Pole parties mostly shared mainstream profile while new parties were niche. These dynamics are expressed through the comparison of the combined vote shares of core parties with the combined vote share of their competitors in three countries. Pole parties were still dominant, but new parties

also improved their positions. It could be assumed that dominance of pole parties and the growing success of few new parties coexisted because both modified their platforms to meet public concerns. As new parties were considered to be more niche and pole parties were more mainstream, the modification of platforms might relate to the changes in niche-mainstream party profiles. The niche-mainstream changes could be both the result of past electoral performance and the event that would lead to better electoral performance.

The chapter also introduces new Scandinavian parties that have been formed at the end of the 1900s.In Sunberg's work, they were clustered in the category of "other" parties (Sundberg 1999). Another class combined the cleavage-based parties of Scandinavia. Liberals and Communists were put together in a separate cluster (Ibid). To illustrate niche and mainstream picture of Scandinavian party systems, this part interprets Sundberg's three categories of political parties through the lens of various definitions of niche parties.

3.1 Peculiarities of Scandinavian Party Systems

According to general party-building model, Western European parties were the results of four revolutions: religious, national, industrial and proletarian. These revolutions created conflicting lines around which the political parties were founded (Arter 2008). Arter added Bolshevik revolution to this list to explain the emergence of communist parties. The famous "Scandinavian five-party model" mainly covered labor-capital and urban-rural cleavages (Sundberg 2002, p. 181). The principal actors of this model were social-democrats, liberals, agrarian-centrists, conservatives, and communists (Ibid).

The classical five-party model existed only in Sweden. The significant features of Swedish model were its "unidimensionality…and…resilience" (Arter 2008, p. 56). The former meant that all parties in the system could be placed in the right-left dimension. Moreover, until 1988, the parliamentary parties did not change. The latter indicated the resilience of the system (Arter 2008). This "frozen" period of Swedish party system was characterized by the dominance of social-democratic party and by the changing success of three non-socialist parties (Ibid). Danish party system shared that stability until 1973. Though there were more than five parties, it was still considered as a five-party model (with some deviation) because all parties could be located in the right-left scale (not

considering Slesvig party) (Ibid). Unlike Sweden and Denmark, Norway did not fit the Scandinavian model. The traditional economic factors were not enough to define party competition there. In Norway, the socio-cultural issues played an important role in drawing the lines of rural-urban cleavage. The latter consisted of linguistic and religious conflicts. Moreover, it was accompanied by an active counter-action against the anti-alcoholic movement. All these issues were embraced by Christian People's Party of Norway (Arter 2008, p. 67). Therefore, it could be concluded that Scandinavian five party model had different manifestations in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

The emergence of new ethnic and Christian Democratic parties, as well as ecological and far-right parties, shook the durability of the five-party model (Sundberg, 2002). The advancement of niche issues that were ignored by existing parties challenged the latter. One example was the changing dominance of social-democrats. Among three Scandinavian countries, Danish Social-Democrats had the most volatile position after the Second World War. The Danish elections of 1973 were some opposition to the stable party system. They led to the decline of social-democratic power. However, later in the 1970s, social-democrats regained their strength as they were considered to deal with economic shortcomings better than right-wing parties (Blomqvist & Green-Pedersen 2004). But this success was not long lasting. During the whole 1980s, Danish government was ruled by the non-socialist rule of Social-Liberals. However, later Danes again turned to Social-Democrats during the 1998 elections. Social-Democrats managed to keep their power until 2001. For the 2001 electoral campaign, the issue of immigrants and refugees got broad resonance in the Danish political agenda. As right-wing wing parties demonstrated more competence in dealing with the immigration issue, the voters turned to their side. Moreover, they also seemed more competent over the welfare issue (Blomqvist & Green-Pedersen 2004, pp. 599–600). It could be assumed that the right-wing party integrated mainstream issues related to the welfare state to meet the needs of people and get their support. However, Social-Democrats again gained power after the 2011 elections without highlighting immigration issue. But they failed to succeed in 2015 when right-wing parties won more support due to their stance on the immigration issue (Laursen et al. 2016).

In Norway, the increasing volatility of social-democratic success was apparent in 1973, 1989 and 2001. In 1973, a new issue of European integration entered into the Norwegian

political agenda (Blomqvist & Green-Pedersen 2004, pp. 599–600). Defense of common market decreased the votes of the party during the election (Ibid). In 1989, the ecological issue challenged the position of social-democrats. Aside from new appeals, social-democrats also lost their ownership of welfare issue that resulted in a sharp decline in votes during the 2001 election (Blomqvist & Green-Pedersen 2004). Thus, the defeat of social-democrats was related to the fact that other parties extended their issue appeals by more emphasizing welfare state issue in line with environmental topics. Thus, social-democrats lost their nicheness on the welfare state. Meanwhile, the Swedish Social-Democrats were comparatively stable during the period following the Second World War. They lost their dominant power to right-wing parties and stayed in the opposition during 1976-82, 1991-1994, and 2006-2014 (Tengdahl 2015).

The whole 1980s were quite unstable for the Swedish party. They turned to more liberal economic policies during this period. However, the voters punished them for this right-wing shift in 1991. The turbulence of the 1980s gave a room for the electoral success of new parties (Green, New democracy) (Blomqvist & Green-Pedersen 2004). The decline of Swedish Social-Democrats for 2006-2014 was the longest. However, they managed to gain power in 2014 (Tengdahl 2015).

To sum up, it would be more accurate to speak about the growing volatility of the social-democratic success in Scandinavia rather than about its decline. However, as it was illustrated above, the changing social-democratic victory and defeat were associated with the ability of those parties to maintain the ownership of welfare issue and to accommodate new niche topics (Blomqvist & Green-Pedersen, 2004).

The establishment of new parties followed the emergence of new issues. At the same time, social-democrats that were mostly focused on welfare issues managed to keep their position to a more significant extent. The duality of this picture made Arter further study if "the enduring Scandinavian party system" (Sundberg 1999) was relevant in the 2000s (Arter 2012).

3.2 The enduring popularity of pole parties in Scandinavia

Jan Sundberg contested the idea that the stable Scandinavian system was no longer a reality. He focused on three Scandinavian "pole parties" (Social-Democrats, Centre Party, and Conservatives) and found out that the "Scandinavian party system is still frozen" as the support for pole parties was still persistent (Sundberg 1999, p.221). However, the growing support for other parties in the system and the establishment of New Politics parties challenged the persistence of Scandinavian model.

According to Arter, the system passed several "Big Bang elections" that could change its stability (Arter 2012). To check the existence of possible change, Arter followed Sundberg's party categorization. The author studied how the combined votes of three party categories changed over time. The pole parties were combined into one category. The second category consisted of the Liberals and Communists (non-cleavage parties). The remaining parties were clustered in the category titled "Other" (Arter 2012, pp. 828–829). The results of Arter's work illustrated that pole party support was high in Denmark during the 1960s. It fell in the 1970s due to the "big bang" elections and increased aftermath. Average combined vote share was 69.1% (Arter 2012 p. 830). However, the combined vote of pole parties dropped in the 2000s. The period of 1945-2011 was characterized by the success of the Danish Social-Democrats and the adjustability of the Agrarian Liberals (Venstre). The latter was able to change its positions in the right-left dimension according to the challenges advanced by other non-socialist parties. As a result, Venstre was the largest non-socialist party in Scandinavia for 2001-2011. Eventually, the Danish Conservative party registered moderate success for the post-WW2 period (Arter 2012). Norwegian pole parties also had some peculiar trends for the period of 1945-2011. Firstly, there was a decline in an average Labor Party vote, but still, the Norwegian Labor Party was the largest of its type in the region. Then, the Agrarian-Centre party of Norway was quite small taking into account its vote shares. The latter indicated that pole parties were not necessarily significant. At last, in comparison to Denmark, the Norwegian Conservative party was the most successful non-socialist party in the country. However, later it was challenged by the radical-right. The combined vote for Norwegian pole parties declined in the 2000s. On average, the post-war pole party vote was 67.5 (Arter 2012, p. 830). Sweden shared the highest average vote share for pole

parties during 1945-2011. It reached 74.4 % (Ibid). The Swedish system was considered to be the most persistent one. However, there were several changes in pole party votes for the given period. The electoral demand of the Social-Democrats declined. The ballots of the Agrarian-Centre party also dropped. Unlike them, this period was marked by increasing popularity of the Moderate party (Conservatives) (Arter 2012).

Given the performance of Scandinavian pole parties, it could be deduced that up until 2011, more than 60% of votes belonged to them. The latter hinted about the "core persistence" of Scandinavian party systems (Arter 2012, p. 837). Unlike the stability of pole parties, the combined votes for Liberals and Communists declined over the studied period. As for the category titled "others," the results were quite diverse for three countries. The post-war average combined votes were 21, 5% in Denmark and 24, 3% in Norway (Arter 2012, p. 838). In comparison to the 1980s, the countries respectively got decreasing and increasing trends. Meanwhile, the case of "other parties" in Sweden diverged sharply. The average vote share was only 6, 5% that almost coincided with the combined vote share of Danish "other parties" at the end of the 1940s (Ibid).

Therefore, it could be deduced that new parties in Scandinavia followed integrative behavior. They shaped public opinion, especially about the issues like immigration, environment. At the same time, their electoral support was related to the fact, that they did not ignore welfare issues. Scandinavian pole parties mostly managed to face the challenges of their new competitors. However new parties were able to shake their electoral preeminence and enter the political system. Thus, the policy seeking parties became more mainstream, and mainstream parties accommodated niche issues. Therefore, the Scandinavian context has high relevance to study whether these shifts between niche and mainstream profiles happened due to past vote loss and also if they led to electoral gains. To that end, the next sections further discuss which Scandinavian countries can be classified as more niche and which ones share mainstream features.

3.3 New Party Families in Scandinavia

Most of the "other parties" mentioned above were new party families in Scandinavia. Arter clustered new parties into four families: "eco-socialist, greens, Christian-democrats

and radical right-wing populist" (Arter 2012, p. 840). The eco-socialist parties were positioned to the left from labor party. Their platforms were socialist. At the same time, they shared features of environmentalism and feminism. The Socialist People's Party in Denmark and Socialist lefts in Norway fit this new party family. In Sweden, they were the Lefts (Arter 2012). It could be assumed, that the Danish Red-Green electoral alliance also corresponded to the features of the eco-socialist family.

As far as the eco-socialists were active in Denmark and Norway, they blocked the possible political success of green parties in these countries. Meanwhile, the failure of Centre party to better advocate for the anti-nuclear energy policy opened a room in Sweden for the establishment and electoral success of an ecological party. The Green party was established in 1981 as an alternative movement for the environmental protection. During the first years of its establishment, it failed to get into the parliament (1982, 1985) (Sundström 2011). The success was registered in 1988. Since 1994 and up until the last elections (2014), the popularity of Greens was high. Moreover, for the first time, they entered into the Red-Green coalition government led by the Social-Democrats (Berg & Oscarsson 2015). When it comes to the Christian Democrats, they were new phenomena in Sweden and Denmark. The Norwegian Christian People's party was founded before 1970 and had secured a place in the party system (Arter 2012, p. 842). Initially, the Christian parties were supporting religious people, but later they expanded their electorate towards those who were not religious but advocated for Christian values (Arter 2008).

The radical right-wing populist parties were also a new phenomenon in Scandinavia. The Norwegian Progress Party, Danish People's party and Sweden Democrats were the examples of this party family. Though there were other radical right-wing parties in Scandinavia (e.g., New Democracy in Sweden), they had a very short life to influence the political agenda. These parties were mostly anti-establishment and euro-skeptic. They supported the ideas for homogenous society and traditionalism (Arter 2012, p. 842). They also managed to enter the governments. In Denmark, the right-wing Populist Party became a part of minority government (Mudde 2013). Progress party in Norway made that breakthrough in 2013 (Bjerkem 2016). At the same time, the Sweden Democrats were still ostracized by peer parties and were not included in the coalition government despite their electoral success (Berg & Oscarsson 2015).

Given the recent developments in Scandinavia, a feminist party group could also be added to the list of new parties. Sweden, having the most developed state feminism, the highest issue salience on feminism among the political parties, was the cradle of the first Scandinavian Feminist Initiative party in 2005. The latter had a snowball effect in Norway and Denmark (Cowell-Meyers 2017).

Thus, all three Scandinavian countries experience the establishment of these new party families. However, depending on the internal dynamics of each party system, the popularity of new parties varied from one country to another. Moreover, almost all new party families (except for eco-socialists and to a lesser extent, Christian Democrats) were classified as niche by the scholars of niche party concept. Thus, the next section addresses these similarities between new parties of "other" category and niche party families that are famous in the literature. The chapter also includes pole category into this comparison in line with the non-cleavage parties.

3.4   The niche-mainstream picture in Scandinavia

Sundberg's three categories of political parties (pole parties, communists, liberals, and others) shared some similarities with niche-mainstream discussion mentioned in previous chapters. The members of pole party category were mostly considered mainstream by several authors (Adams, Clark, Ezrow, & Glasgow, 2006; Meguid, 2005). However, these authors assumed that liberal parties were also mainstream. As for the communists, the opinions were different. Moreover, some of "other parties" were defined in the literature as niche or the ones with high nicheness.

According to Meguid's definition (2005), pole parties in line with liberals and communists could be considered as mainstream parties of the system. Together they represented Scandinavian "three plus two" model. Niche parties that fulfilled Meguid's conceptualization were clustered in "other" category. The latter were Swedish Green party and radical right-wing parties of the region (Norwegian Progress party, Danish People's party and Sweden Democrats). It would be difficult to interpret the role of feminist parties in niche/mainstream discourse. According to Meguid, women's parties

were also niche (Meguid 2008). However, in this context, it should be studied if the Scandinavian feminist parties could be understood as just women's parties or they went above the protection of women's rights.

The Christian parties of Denmark and Sweden as well as eco-socialist parties would most probably be interpreted as "neophytes" by Meguid (Meguid 2005, p. 347). They were new but lacked the characteristics of niche parties. However, the latter was not applicable to the Norwegian Christian People's Party because it was older than other Christian Parties of the region. For Adams et al. (2006) all Christian parties, as well as pole parties and liberals, were marked as mainstream because they did not own extreme or non-centric/niche position in the right-left dimension. Thus, eco-socialist parties were also considered mainstream for them. Communists occupied an extreme stance, so, according to Adams et al. (2006), they were niche parties of Scandinavia. Communist parties in Scandinavia were durable but small. The communists of Norway and Denmark were challenged by "new left parties" (Arter 2008, p.80). In Sweden, the Communist party was renamed to the Left-Communists, but it did not affect their electoral performance (Ibid). As for the Swedish Greens and Scandinavian right-wing populist parties, they were considered niche also according to Adams et al. (2006).

Wagner's approach, which was also based on the expert surveys, illustrated a different picture of niche parties in Scandinavia. While the experts unanimously agreed to define Swedish Greens as niche, their opinions diverged about Christian parties and radical-right parties. According to Wagner, Scandinavian Christian parties could be considered niche because they did not have a catch-all profile like German parties (Wagner 2012, p. 11). Moreover, unlike Meguid (2005) and Adams et al. (2005), the expert surveys used by Wagner did not consider Danish and Norwegian right-wing parties as niche. Meanwhile, for them, the Agrarian-Center parties of Norway and Sweden as well as Norwegian Venstre had niche profiles (Wagner 2012).

Furthermore, the calculations of party nicheness illustrated that Greens had the highest score among all other party families. The nationalist parties were also comparatively high in this score whereas social-democrats and liberals had the least score (Meyer & Miller, 2015). The "non-cleavage" liberal parties were less niche than Agrarian-Centrist pole parties (Ibid). The latter in line with communists were called "undecided" parties by

Bischof (Bischof 2017, p. 230). Based on author's calculations, niche parties mostly belonged to "special issue, ecological and nationalist families" (Ibid).

Therefore, the juxtaposition of Sundberg's categorization of Scandinavian parties with the central conceptualizations of niche parties revealed some possible patterns of Scandinavian parties in niche-mainstream context. Already at this stage, it could be mentioned that the electoral dominance of a party did not guarantee its mainstream profile as it was put by Meguid (2005). Next, Swedish Green party was univocally accepted as a niche party by all authors or a party with high nicheness. Except for Swedish Green party, the scholars' opinions varied about other niche parties of the region. Most of the authors also mentioned about nationalist niche parties. It was especially confusing to get general depiction about niche/mainstream profile of Christian parties, Communists, and Centre parties. Moreover, the electoral progress and niche patterns of the same party family representatives varied over time and from country to country. Thus, an application to the party family approach to check the association between niche profiles of Scandinavian political parties and their electoral success would ultimately lead to distorted results. It required a continuous measurement that would reveal the variations in party nicheness and depict its causal relations.

The next chapter talks about the causal association in general. Then it out forward the hypotheses that assume about causality between vote change and nicheness change. Moreover, the chapter elaborates on different measurements of party nicheness and validates the selection of continuous measure for this study.

4. Design of analysis and operationalization

Previous researches confirmed the link between past electoral performance and party platforms in general and its niche or mainstream profile in particular. Moreover, the authors also pointed out that the influence of previous electoral defeat on party policies depended on party family affiliation and its niche or mainstream profile. Most of the works measured niche parties in a binary way. They concluded that niche-mainstream shifts were more likely in the event of a previous loss of votes (Meyer and Wagner 2013). The work, which included party nicheness into the analysis, showed that right-wing parties changed their nicheness because of the past electoral defeat (Han 2015). However, the author did not study how previous election results influenced other parties than the greens and nationalists.

At the same time, the inverse association might also work. According to the spatial theory, the candidates would try to narrow the distance between them and their electorates for the vote-seeking purposes (Ezrow 2008). For parties, this could mean losing their distinctiveness and getting more centrist. As mentioned above, party nicheness was one of the ways to illustrate how distinct the party was. Therefore, it could be assumed that there was some relation between low nicheness and more votes.

In addition, almost all previous studies, which analyzed the electoral performance of niche parties, focused on causal associations between the vote shares and niche profiles of the party. For instance, Meyer and Wagner indicated how past electoral defeat produced higher likelihood of changing the niche party profile. Moreover, Adams et al. (2012) concluded that voters needed some time before reacting to shifts in party profiles. In other words, authors considered time lags between cause and effect in analyzing the electoral behavior of niche parties and the voters' responses. Therefore, this chapter elaborates more on causality. Then, it puts forward the hypotheses of the study that reflect the association between party nicheness and vote shares. Eventually, it introduces the operationalization of the variables included in the research.

4.1 Causality

Causation stays at the core of the explanatory research. It mostly explains the changes, and makes predictions for further developments. Causality refers to the relations of at least two events. One of them is considered the cause and the other is the consequence or the effect. Direct and intervening factors or causes can influence the outcome. The latter was called "Causal nexus" (Simeonova et. al 2014, p. 342). Therefore, the cause stands as an independent variable and the effect is the dependent variable in this relation. Researchers usually follow five criteria that help to correctly design and interpret causal relations. First, it is the correlation between the dependent and independent variables. The latter means as one variable changes another one changes as well (Simeonova et.al 2014). Secondly, the causal relations take into account temporal precedence. The latter implies that the independent variable should change first. Then, this change will produce shifts in the dependent variable. In other words, the cause comes first then the effect. In this sense, it is essential for a researcher to ensure that the particular event has happened before the impact. That is why the causality is usually tested with longitudinal data where the changes of variables were registered for each period. Therefore, it is easy to track the time sequence (Ibid).

Thirdly, the causality also accounts for the criterion of "Nonspuriousness" (Simeonova et.al 2014, p.343). It means that there can be a possibility of the third factor that may cause changes in the dependent and independent variables. So, researchers should mention which elements are going to be analyzed in their studies (Ibid). Next, the causal mechanism should be set. In other words, the study should indicate if there is any causal association between the given variables. Lastly, the data and findings should be interpreted given the observed context. The contextual effect will help to better substantiate the deviations or differences recorded by the study.

In the following chapter, the work introduces the assumptions about the causal relationships between vote change and party nicheness change. The latter means that the study compares nicheness and vote shares of two consecutive years. Thus, the time order is encountered for causality. The study also included other factors like party leadership

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change, change in cabinet position and party age. Hence, the frames of the present research included only the indicated causes.

4.2 Hypotheses

The primary objectives of political parties were interrelated. To influence public policy, the parties needed to register electoral success and get representation. Therefore, they would not be ignorant of the electoral losses. It is assumed that political parties will respond to the past electoral defeat by changing their niche party profile. Adams et al. (2006) and Bischof and Wagner (2017) indicated that niche parties did not react to the changes in public opinion in comparison to mainstream parties. The idea about the stability of niche parties was tested by measuring niche parties in both binary and continuous ways. Instead, there was a high probability that niche parties would shift to a mainstream profile if they registered a vote loss in the previous elections (Meyer and Wagner 2013). It was also tested that radical right-wing parties could decrease their nicheness in case of vote loss in past elections (Han 2015).

From the one hand, unlike their mainstream competitors, niche parties were more stable because they were assumed to be policy seeking parties (Adams et al. 2006). From the other hand, niche parties were more likely to change their profiles if they recorded poor electoral performance (Meyer and Wagner 2013). Therefore, the earlier studies found evidence that vote loss in past elections produced changes in the niche profile of a party. If parties fail in past elections, they will try to go more mainstream in order to gain greater support during the next elections. However, this finding was applicable only to niche parties.

Thus, the reviewed works either measured niche parties in a dichotomous way (Meyer and Wagner 2013) or focused only on specific families of niche parties (Han 2015). Moreover, they did not consider how these causal associations between vote change and nicheness change would vary for different measurements of party nicheness. To fill that gap, this study analyzes causal relations between vote change and nicheness change for all parties without dividing them into the niche and mainstream categories and without considering their party family affiliation. The rationale behind this approach is that party nicheness changes over time. Therefore, party family affiliation is not a valid justification

for the niche status of a party. Secondly, the continuous measurement of party nicheness did not provide a threshold that would classify parties between niche and mainstream. It just indicates if a party is more niche or more mainstream. Based on these assumptions, the study hypothesizes:

H1: if a party loses votes in the previous election, it will become less niche for the current election

Thus, the cause is the vote loss registered between the elections in periods t-1 and t-2. The effect is nicheness change between t and t-1. If a party decreases its nicheness because of the vote loss, it expects that less nicheness will bring more votes. The vote-seeking objective of a party is related to this assumption. Thus, the party is ready to sacrifice its policy for electoral success. Based on the spatial theory of voting, the nominees or parties will try to accommodate their policy to public opinion to gain more votes. At the same time, voters cast ballots for the parties that are nearest to them by their offered policies (Enelow and Hinich 1984). Therefore, it can be assumed that the parties will try to cover more issues (the ones that are already covered by their competitors) and equally distribute the attention over those issues to reach more voters. In other words, they will become more mainstream. When the platform reflects public opinion, more voters will find themselves closer to that party and will cast ballots for them. The latter supposes a reverse association between vote change and nicheness change. Moreover, the work by Adams et al. (2012) found that "time lags intervene" when voters perceived the modifications made in party policies (Adams et al. 2012, p.1282). Therefore, it can be assumed that loss of nicheness during the past elections of t-1 and t-2 will increase the vote shares of party during the next election. Thus, the study also tests the inverse relationship:

H2: if a party loses nicheness during the past election, then the vote share of that party will increase in the current election

To test the hypotheses, the study targeted Scandinavian parliamentary parties. The Scandinavian case was selected because it included all types of party families that were discussed by the authors of the niche party concept. Furthermore, the scholars of the field extensively applied to the empirical cases from Scandinavia substantiating their positions. For instance, it was considered that Agrarian/Centre parties of Scandinavia broadened

their party programs. The latter challenged their niche profile (Bischof 2017; Meyer & Miller 2015). Moreover, not all Scandinavian radical right-wing populist parties were considered niche (Wagner, 2012). In addition, although the Scandinavian Christian parties became more mainstream over time, they were established to advocate for religious issues. Thus, at some point in time, they could be considered a niche (Ibid). Perhaps those shifts could be explained by vote changes of parties in the elections. Moreover, Scandinavian party system was distinct because of its durability. Though the number of new parties joined the parliament was not significant, and their mortality rate was high, they managed to influence the political agenda of targeted countries. Furthermore, in all three countries niche parties (ecological and right-wing populist) were able to enter into the minority coalition governments. Coalition making supposed some adjustments of party policies. It could be assumed that niche parties were obliged to shift their party nicheness to stay in the minority governments. Eventually, this study required data about party leadership and age that were not available. It was needed collect information about the given variables. Therefore, the sample was narrowed down to Scandinavia, which best fit the current analysis.

The study also accounted the impact of the following factors on the central variables of the study: change of cabinet position, change in party leadership and party age. Parties try to maximize their control over the government. Parties in the cabinet possessed more information about the executive branch. Moreover, they had the opportunity to implement their policies and demonstrate their capacities to potential voters (Strom 1990). The governmental participation was a control variable for the study by Meyer and Wagner (2013). They pointed out that the governmental parties changed their niche profiles less often than the oppositional parties (Meyer and Wagner 2013). Moreover, that parties sacrificed their policies in the coalitions might also work in this case (Strom 1990). In the government, parties might become more mainstream and decrease their nicheness for general policy goals. Consequently, they would cut their nicheness for the upcoming elections if they previously made a shift from Opposition to Government. It could also be hypothesized that:

H.1.1. if a party has shifted from opposition to government during the previous two elections, it will cut its nicheness for the upcoming election

The office seeking objective also implies that   governmental parties have more chances to remain in power (Strom 1990). The voters possessed more information about Cabinet parties as they could judge their implemented policies. Therefore, it could be assumed that people would give their votes to the candidates they knew better. So, the next hypothesis is the following:

H.2.1. if a party has shifted from opposition to government during the previous two elections, it will increase its votes for the upcoming election

Party leadership referred to the possible shift of party authority for the periods preceding the elections. The consideration of party leadership variable was also proposed by Meyer and Wagner (2013). However, the authors did not include it in their model. The latter could be related to the unavailability of such dataset. So, this work collected data for that variable and included in the models.

It was assumed that the change of the party leader would increase the "credibility" of the issues the party covered (Fernandez-Vazquez and Somer-Topcu 2017, p.4). In other words, party policies would become stronger. At the same time, the "credibility" over some issues of party policy could be achieved if those issues were more distinctively underlined. Thus, it could be hypothesized that,

H.1.2. if party leadership changes, the party nicheness will increase in the upcoming election

Moreover, it turned out that the personality of the party leader could affect the voter's choice in the elections. The study by Amanda Bittner (2011) illustrated that party leaders could decide the electoral success of a party. Furthermore, "party campaigns can have an important impact on voter perceptions, but only as long as a 'new face' is leading the party" (Fernandez-Vazquez and Somer-Topcu 2017, p. 16). Therefore, if a party authority changed before the election, the vote share of the party would also change for the upcoming election. It was found that, especially for the oppositional parties, a new party leader increased the trustworthiness of party policies and positions. The latter might also mean suppose a distinct approach to some policy areas (Fernandez-Vazquez and Somer-Topcu 2017). With the established credibility the voters would consider themselves closer to that party. Hence, they would cast ballots for them. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H.2.2 if party leadership changes, the party will increase its votes for the upcoming election

The next variable was party age. It illustrated how old the party was (in years) during the electoral year. According to some authors, niche parties were new parties (Meguid 2005). Therefore, they were young. Thus, the following hypothesis could be advanced:

H.1.3 the older the party is, the less it will change its nicheness

4.3 Measuring party nicheness

In this work, I measure party nicheness based on continuous estimations advanced by Miller and Meyer (2015) and Bischof (2017). But before elaborating on them, it was necessary to get acquainted with the initial measurements of niche parties. The latter woul validate why the continuous measure is better than the categorical one. The general justification for the continuous measurement was that it counted variations recorded over time and from country to country.

Different conceptualizations of niche parties implied different measurements. The concept was characterized either as a dichotomous or continuous category. The dichotomous approach related to party ideology and the party family (Adams, Clark, Ezrow, & Glasgow 2006; Meguid 2005). More recent studies used continuous measurement of the concept that illustrated the distinctiveness of party profiles (Bischof 2017; Meyer & Miller 2015). The latter referred to party nicheness. Nicheness indicated how much weight the parties gave to this or that political dimension. Authors that advanced a continuous measure for niche parties criticized the binary approach for being time and country blind (Bischof 2017; Meyer & Miller 2015; Wagner, 2012).

The present section compares and contrasts different methods that measure the niche profiles of political parties. It discusses the shortcomings of the initial dichotomous measurement. The latter did not consider time-based and country based variations in the niche profiles of parties. These gaps were covered by the continuous measure of party nicheness. Since this work employs a panel data for three Scandinavian countries, it uses continuous measurements of party nicheness to depict the possible changes. Moreover, the study also aims at comparing different approaches of continuous measurements. To that end, it refers to the measures by Miller and Meyer (2015) and Bischof. As well, it

splits Bischof's measure into its components of market share and specialization and tests the hypotheses for each of them separately. Market share counted the distribution of issue emphases in five niche segments defined by Bischof (2017). The specialization score depicted how narrow or wide the range of covered issues in the party platforms (Ibid)

4.3.1 Dichotomous   measurement of niche concept

Dichotomous measurement of niche parties supposed that political parties affiliated to particular party families were classified niche. However, even the authors of a dichotomous approach thought about possible variations and changes in party profiles (Adams et al. 2006; Meguid 2005; Wagner 2012). As indicated by Meguid, party programs were not stable. Though Meguid conceptualized niche parties based on their party ideologies or families, she underlined the influence of issue salience and position for a party to get its niche stance in the system. It was the issue salience of a mainstream party and the mainstream party position that pre-defined the role of a niche party related to a particular political appeal. If they did not increase their salience on an issue raised by a niche party, that issue would not get popularity among the voters. To define the type of parties, the author also referred to the experts' (Castles and Mair (1984, 83) and Laver and Hunt (1992)) classifications (Meguid, 2005, p. 352). Therefore, instead of blindly referring to party families, Meguid also took into account expert opinions to classify niche and mainstream parties.

 Adams et al. (2006) identified the niche and mainstream profiles of a party based on their position in the RILE (Right-Left) index. So, if parties did not affiliate with ecological, extreme right or left party families, they were not considered niche (Adams et al. 2006). Unlike Meguid, this approach excluded the parties that were neither extreme nor non-centric/niche. Moreover, they did not measure how much radical or how much non-centric the party should be to be called "niche." Therefore, it was confusing to understand how they would locate a new party family in RILE score.

Therefore, both approaches (Meguid 2005 and Adams et al. 2006) limited niche parties to specific party families. As well, they did not take into account that the party platforms of the same families could vary from country to country. For instance, Green party in

Germany differed from Swedish Green party in their ideological distinctiveness (Wagner 2012).

To fill this gap, Wagner advanced a more precise measurement of niche party status. To be called a niche, the party should fulfill two criteria. Firstly, the issue emphasis of a party on economic topics should be low. At the same time, the focus on a "small number of non-economic issues" should be high (Wagner 2012, p. 16). Wagner applied to both expert surveys and MARPOR dataset for information about the issue salience of parties. MARPOR quantified the texts of party platforms to reveal their stances on this or that issue. According to the fifth revised edition of Manifesto Coding instructions, 56 standard categories were clustered in seven policy areas. Some categories may have its subcategories. The coders were dividing the texts into sentences and the sentences into quasi-sentences. Each quasi-sentence corresponded to one category or subcategory (Werner et al., 2015). Surveys by Laver and Hunt (1992) and by Benoit and Laver (2006) indicated about the "relative importance" of the issues for given parties (Wagner 2012, p. 8). In the case of MARPOR dataset, Wagner identified ten issue dimensions (one economic and nine non-economic) from 56 categories. As far as the MARPOR was criticized for "much noise" in the dataset, for his measurement, Wagner considered the average score of manifestos at time t and t-1 (Ibid). Moreover, MARPOR data preceding the year 1970 were found to be unreliable (Ibid). So, the author excluded them from the analysis.

For each party, Wagner calculated its issue salience on one economic and nine non-economic categories. Then the author compared those scores with mean issue emphasis of all other parties on respective economic and non-economic categories. The niche party should be one standard deviation lower than mean issue emphasis on economic dimension and one standard deviation higher than mean issue salience on non-economic appeals. Moreover, there was one more criterion for a party to be considered niche. It should have a more significant emphasis on a non-economic issue than their rival parties (Wagner 2012, p. 9). To that end, Wagner defined 10% threshold. If a party dedicated at least 10% of its quasi-sentences to that particular issue, it could be identified as niche. For the expert surveys, they measured mean salience of party programs on all themes. So, the party issue emphasis should be one standard deviation higher than the general mean salience of other parties (Ibid).

Party size weighted Wagner's measurement of niche party status. Party vote share defined the latter. The calculations indicated that there was a higher probability for ecological, ethnoterritorial and nationalist parties to be niche. Christian Democrats also got a comparatively high number of niche parties, especially in expert surveys. Meanwhile, the communists were not considered niche parties (Wagner 2012). The latter was indicative of the fact that the party family approach maintained many miscalculations and bias. At the same time, Wagner mentioned it would be difficult to aggregate all these scores in one value of party nicheness (Wagner 2012, p. 10). The latter should combine the issue emphasize scores for both economic and non-economic categories as well as the length (10% or one SD above the mean) of issue salience (Ibid).

The author also illustrated the features that described niche parties. Firstly, they were usually new parties. Then, in the countries, where niche parties existed, the effective number of parties was at least four (Wagner 2012, p. 13). Moreover, Wagner found out that the distinction between niche and mainstream parties in RILE index was not that big. Indeed, niche parties had an extreme stance on the issues they advocated for, but it did not make them "less centrist" than mainstream parties (Wagner 2012, p. 13).

To summarize, unlike other binary approaches, Wagner measured niche party profile with three criteria, and for each, he defined a cut-off point. The niche status of a party was determined by its location either above or below that cut-off point. Simultaneously, the introduction of a cut-off point resulted in a binary category of niche and mainstream. The latter was validated by the impossibility to put the party scores on three criteria into one combined measure. Wagner's measurement illustrated that the affiliation to a specific party family did not grant a party a niche status. While the author was criticized for still sticking to dichotomous categories, his approach was essential for continuous measurement of a niche party profile (Bischof 2017; Meyer & Miller 2015).

4.3.2 Calculating party nicheness scores

To calculate party nicheness, the study referred to the measurements advanced by both Miller and Meyer (2015) and Bischof (2017). Moreover, it was also interesting to consider the components of Bischof's additive index of nicheness separately. The latter referred to the scores of market share and specialization.

Miller and Meyer (2015) considered all previous measurements of niche party profiles (Adams et al. 2006, Meguid 2005, Wagner 2012) imprecise. So, they started to operationalize the distinct essence of party profiles through party nicheness. It was a rank that began with an entire niche party and ended with completely mainstream one. In between these ideal types, the real cases were distributed (Meyer & Miller 2015). The authors considered four requirements that their concept should meet. Firstly, it should illustrate the issue emphasis of a party. Secondly, the score should encounter the changes registered over time. These two requirements coincided with Wagner's measurements. However, Miller and Meyer assumed also that the measure should be continuous and it should go beyond particular policy appeals that were defined niche by previous studies (Meyer & Miller 2015). So, they disagreed with Wagner and included economic topics in their list of political dimensions. To specify issue dimension, Miller and Meyer also applied to the MARPOR dataset and aggregated 56 issues into categories following Bäck et al., 2011 approach (Meyer & Miller 2015, p. 264). The number of relevant dimensions ranged from nine to twelve. Bäck et al. (2011) suggested connecting MARPOR categories to ministerial portfolios (Bäck, Debus, & Dumont 2011, pp. 454–455).

As Wagner, Miller and Meyer calculated mean weighted average for each issue and compared the issue emphasis of a given party with that. The closer the nicheness score was to the average issue emphasis, the more mainstream the parties were. According to Miller and Meyer, the nicheness score "adds up the deviations on all relevant policy dimensions and divides by the total number of policy dimensions" (Meyer & Miller 2015, p. 262). This measurement was more useful for the comparisons of party nicheness among different party systems. If analyzing parties in the same system, the authors suggested using standardized nicheness score. The latter meant that the weighted issue emphasis of a particular party was compared with the weighted mean issue salience of other parties of the system (Meyer & Miller 2015, p. 263). According to the measurement by Miller and Meyer, green and special issue parties followed by ethno-regional and nationalist parties shared the highest nicheness score. Thus, their estimation shed light on parties attached to special issue family. The latter was ignored by previous measurements (Meyer & Miller 2015). However, the authors considered that possible bias could be related to some characteristics of nationalist and ethnoterritorial parties. When cross-checking MARPOR data with the similar data from Benoit-Laver (2006) survey, it was found out that not all

attributes of those parties were captured by MARPOR dataset (Meyer & Miller 2015, p. 264). Therefore, the reference to the expert survey identified that unlike other parties, the nicheness score for the nationalists was higher. Miller and Meyer also illustrated if a party was young and small, it got more probability to gain higher nicheness score (Ibid).

Therefore, Miller and Meyer covered all relevant, salient categories and considered the size of a party in their measurement. This approach was contested by Bischof (2017) who used market theory to build his analysis of party nicheness. Instead of using Bäck. et al. method (2011) like Wagner (2012) and Miller and Meyer (2015), he included only five niche segments (issues). The selection of those issues ("ecological, agrarian, regional, extreme right and eurosceptic segments") pertained to the previous studies and public perceptions (Bischof 2017, p. 224). These non-economic dimensions were related to specific party families that focused on novel issues in the party systems. According to market theory, a newcomer should put forward a new market segment that had not been discussed by the parties before to gain votes in the elections (Ibid). Thus, he shared Meguid's approach that niche parties were new.

Bischof criticized Wagner (2012) and Miller and Meyer (2015) for adding party size in their measurements. According to the author, small parties in line with others could have an essential impact on party politics (Bischof 2017). Thus, their score should not be weighted by party size. Secondly, as far as many authors would like to study the relationship between party nicheness score and vote share, the measurements by Wagner and Miller and Meyer would lead to the problems of endogeneity (Bischof 2017, p. 227). Thirdly, Bischof claimed that previous measurements did not calculate issue narrowness of party programs (Ibid). However, it should be mentioned that Wagner indicated that niche parties should emphasize "narrow range of non-economic issue" (Wagner 2012, p. 3). One way to measure this was a 10% cut-off point introduced by Wagner when estimating how much emphasis was put on this or that economic issue in the party platforms (Wagner 2012, p. 10). However, that 10% point was subjective because it was not justified why precisely he chose 10 %.

Bischof's nicheness score is an additive index combining two separate components: market share and issue specialization (issue narrowness). Market share indicated how much a party focused on five niche segments in their platforms. The specialization score illustrated how focused the scope of covered issues was for a given party. Market share

was calculated in the same way as nicheness in the cases of Wagner (2012) and Miller and Meyer (2015). The author measured how distinct the party was over those five dimensions in comparison to mean emphasis of all other parties (Bischof 2017, p. 226). Unlike the previous authors, Bischof did not weight his measurement. Similar to Miller and Meyer (2015), Bischof calculated standardized market share. The second component of the index figured how broad or narrow the party programs were across those five niche segments. To that end, Bischof used Shannon's entropy to measure diversity (Bischof 2017, p. 227). The higher the entropy score was, the more diverse the programs were. Thus, by inverting that score, Bischof was able to indicate how narrow the platforms were. For both components, Bischof also used MARPOR dataset (Ibid).

As a result, nationalist, special issue and agrarian party families got comparatively higher market share followed by ethnic-regional and green parties. At the same time, special issue and nationalist parties got the highest specialization scores. Ethno-regional and communist parties followed them in that rank. Therefore, even if the market share of the communists was low (most probably because the economic segments were not counted), the issue narrowness of their platforms was high (Bischof 2017, p. 228, Figure I). The combination of mentioned two scores in the additive index gave high nicheness scores to nationalist and special issue parties (Ibid).

Bischof's measurement correlated with the one by Miller and Meyer. However, unlike them, Bischof considered only niche segments but did not mention anything about their relative salience. It could be assumed that according to Bischof all five dimensions always had high relevance. Moreover, if a party presented a new interpretation of an old issue, it would be defined as issue differentiation and would not be included in the list of niche segments. As well, Bischof counted only non-economic dimensions. If following Wagner's approach, the author should also measure how much the parties (de) emphasize economic issues or traditional market offers.

To conclude, both Bishcof (2017) and Miller and Meyer (2015) advanced measurement of nicheness score that would let the researchers track the fluctuations of party nicheness (Table I, Appendix 2). They both mentioned about special issue parties that had been ignored by previous authors who studied niche parties. Both measurements gave a high nicheness score to nationalists. However, the authors shared different scores for ecological and agrarian parties as well as for Christian Democrats. According to the

measurement by Bishcof (2017), Agrarians got higher nicheness than Greens. Meanwhile according to Miller and Meyer (2015), in comparison to Agrarian party, the average nicheness score of Green party family was higher by two points high. As well, Christian Democrats were considered to be mainstream according to Bischof (2017).

In summary, not all binary measurements of niche parties had the same outcomes. Wagner's approach drastically differed from the pioneering measurements of Meguid (2005) and Adams et al. (2006). The latter could be considered as "almost" continuous if the cut-off points would not classify the party scores. But the exclusion of those thresholds would not give the comparison between the issue emphasis of the parties on economic and non-economic dimensions. And this was the core of Wagner's measurements. Miller and Meyer (2015) were able to measure the score of nicheness as they considered that economic dimension could also be niche. So, there was no need to add a component that would identify the de(emphasis) of economic appeals in the party programs. Though Bischof relied on non-economic niche segments and excluded economic part, the outcomes of his measurement were closer to the previous ones. The use of both nicheness measures will identify their differences illustrated in the findings of a Scandinavian case.

So, to study the association between niche profile of the parties and their electoral performance, the work measures party nicheness according to Miller and Meyer (2013), Bischof (2017). Moreover, it also encountered market share and specialization separately. Thus, the work uses four measurements of party nicheness to depict possible differences in results. For all measures, change of nicheness covered the nicheness score between current and previous elections. The data about nicheness scores were employed to estimate the changes in nicheness for two time periods (between t-1, t-2 and t, t-1).

The data on party nicheness were retrieved from the Comparative Manifesto Project Dataset (MARPOR), version 2017b. Nicheness scores by Miller and Meyer and Bischof were calculated through the functions of ManifestoR package. There was some limitation concerning MARPOR dataset. The project covered only those parties that passed the threshold and entered parliament. Therefore, the parties that did not match these requirements stayed out of this study. There were some singular cases (for instance Swedish Green Party in 1985 and 1991) when MARPOR included parties that did not

clear the threshold. However, for the sake of consistency, they were removed from the dataset.

4.4 Operationalization of vote change, change of cabinet position, party leadership change and party age

The variable of vote change expressed the shifts in the vote shares of a party for two consecutive elections. However, compared to party nicheness, the work counted the relative change in vote share to indicate how much party gained or lost. In this very case, the relative difference, apparently, was a better way to compare the party vote shares of two consecutive elections. For instance, if the party X got five votes in one election and ten in the next election, the absolute difference would register plus five more votes. However, the same change would be recorded if the proportion of votes for two consecutive elections were fifteen and twenty. But the picture would slight change when counting the same difference in relative terms and expressing them as a ratio. Consequently, in the first case, the party X increased its votes by 100%. Therefore, the votes were doubled. Meanwhile, in the second case, the party raised its shares by almost 33%. Thus, the relative difference would better depict the drastic changes of votes. The ratio of vote change was estimated for the elections in t, t-1, and t-1, t-2. The data was taken from the MARPOR dataset version 2017b.

Change in cabinet position was a categorical variable. It indicated if a party shifted from opposition to government between the periods between t and t-1. Data on governmental participation were taken from the Parliament and Government database (ParlGov), Stable version 2018(Döring and Manow 2018).[1]

Data on party age were obtained from the official webpages of political parties. The age was calculated since the establishment of a party. There was some deviation concerning the Norwegian Socialist Left Party. Though it was officially founded in 1975, it participated in the parliamentary elections of 1973 as the Socialist Electoral League ("SV Sin Historie" n.d.). Thus, the calculation of its age started from 1973.

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[1] Change in Cabinet Position was coded in the following way: opposition to government=1, government to opposition=2, other cases were coded 0.

Change in party leadership (Changed/Not changed)[2] applied to the party authority shift for the periods between t and t-1. These data were mostly retrieved from the official websites of observed parties. However, it was not possible to get that information for all electoral years. That is why the dataset included only those observations for which data were collected (18 cases were missing).

Since the study examined the change scores, it removed the observations for the parties that entered the electoral competition for the first time and if they did not participate in the previous election. Moreover, it did not count the cases when the party did not join the parliament after the previous election. However, the removed cases were encountered when describing the overall dynamics in Scandinavia.

The research covered the elections from 1957-2014 as the earlier information about parties in MARPOR dataset was considered unreliable (Wagner 2012). Moreover, MARPOR dataset did not include more recent elections in Denmark.Overall, the dataset encompassed three Scandinavian countries and included 281 observations on the analysis of the associations between vote change and nicheness change. However, when analyzing party nicheness scores (not the change scores) in Scandinavia across the years, the work also included those cases that were removed to test hypotheses. The latter was done to illustrate the most extreme cases of party nicheness scores recorded in Scandinavia. In that case, the dataset consisted of 380 observations. Thus, a total of ninety-nine cases were removed from the database, first, due to the lack of a reference year for calculating the change, or because of the inaccessibility of data about party leadership. It could be assumed that in the case of less stable party systems, the number of removed instances would be much more.

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[2] There were cases when the party authority was shifted for more than one time. These cases were also coded under the category labeled "Changed". Moreover, if a party had two leaders, change was recorded if even one of them shifted.

5. Analysis and Results

Studies that covered the electoral performance of niche/mainstream parties, as well as parties in general, showed that the loss of votes could cause the parties to change their positions and profiles. Moreover, it was studied that the latter was mainly employed by those political parties that shared niche profiles. They tended to go more mainstream in case of vote loss (Meyer and Wagner 2013). This research hypothesized that vote change and nicheness change could be causally related. Vote loss in past elections was considered to explain the loss of party nicheness. At the same time, it was supposed that the reduction of party nicheness in previous elections would bring more votes for the party. In addition to the results of regression models, descriptive statistics revealed several contradictory findings. It was found that different measurements of the same case could indicate opposing effects. Moreover, high scores of party nicheness were not necessarily registered by those parties that were categorized as a niche according to party family approach. Hence, this chapter firstly elaborates more on the specification of regression models. It presents the results of model evaluation and gives general trends of party nicheness in Scandinavia. Furthermore, the chapter separately discusses two measurements of party nicheness based on the results of the analysis.

5.1 Model Specification

To investigate the relationships between vote change and party nicheness change, the study used panel data of 281 cases, where the observations are clustered bypartiesand countries. Differencing or employing change scores allows for using cross sectional methods (pooled OLS) for panel data as well as eliminating or minimizing the risk of serial correlation and time constant effects (Wooldrigde 2016, Chapter 13). The following model of multiple regression was specified for the hypothesis about past electoral defeat and nicheness change (Appendix 1, Diagram 1):

$$\Delta nicheness_{t,t-1}$$
$$= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta vote_{t-1,t-2} + \beta_2 \Delta leader_{t,t-1} + \beta_3 \Delta cabinet_{t,t-1} + \beta_4 age$$

Where:

$\Delta nicheness_{t,t-1}$ = the difference of party nicheness between current (t) and previous elections (t-1)

$\Delta vote_{t-1,t-2}$ = the relative change of party vote shares between the elections in t-1 and t-2

$\Delta leader_{t,t-1}$ = the change of party leader between the elections in t and t-1

$\Delta cabinet_{t,t-1}$ = the variable indicated if a party shifted from opposition to government for the period in t and t-1

age = the age of a party during the given electoral year

To test if party nicheness influenced party vote shares, the work referred to the model below (Appendix 1, Diagram 2):

$$\Delta vote_{t,t-1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta nicheness_{t-1,t-2} + \beta_2 \Delta leader_{t,t-1} + \beta_3 \Delta cabinet_{t,t-1}$$

Where:

$\Delta vote_{t,t-1}$ = the ratio of party vote shares between current and last elections

$\Delta nicheness_{t-1,t-2}$ = difference of party nicheness between the electoral years of t-1 and t-2

Therefore, while the meaning and measurement of control variables were almost the same for the second model (H2), the time intervals of central variables were changed to test the causal association. Moreover, the second model did not include the variable of party age. Positive and negative values corresponded respectively to the increase and decrease of party nicheness and vote change.

5.2 Results

The results illustrated that nicheness score measured by Miller and Meyer (MM score) and Bischof's additive index of nicheness (B score) significantly correlated in Scandinavia. As one increased, another score increased as well. Taking into account that

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MM score and B score measured the same concept, it could be assumed that they should strongly correlate. However, the correlation was quite weak (R=0.21). MM score also registered significant but not strong positive linear relationship with the market share component of B score (0.26). Moreover, there was no correlation between MM score and party specialization. Weak evidence or lack of evidence on the relationship between the measurements already hinted at possible differences in results depended on the type of assessment.

As it was mentioned above, when Miller and Meyer score increased, Bischof's index and market share component also tended to increase. In the same way, party nicheness change measured by Miller and Meyer correlated with the changes in B score and market share (for the period of t and t-1). When it comes to the extreme cases of nicheness change, there were two trends. The number of instances when parties drastically modified their niche profiles from one election to another was high in Sweden. The second conclusion pertained to the higher number of outliers when measuring the change of specialization score.

As for Sweden, it was found that between the Swedish Parliamentary elections of 1970 and 1968 People's Party in Sweden (current Liberal People's Party) illustrated the most drastic decrease of party nicheness score measured by MM. (-10.61). The same party also registered the highest positive change of MM score during the elections of 1964 and 1968. These extreme changes towards more and less niche profiles covered three consecutive Swedish parliamentary elections including the electoral years of 1964, 1968 and 1970. According to Sanandaji (2012), this was the period (the late 1960s) when Sweden started to significantly increase the role of the state in the economy and made a significant shift to the left in their politics. The latter could shed light on a substantial decrease of Liberal party nicheness. Moreover, the link between the general turn to the left and the decline of Liberal's party nicheness could also be justified by the fact that Miller and Meyer considered the economy as a separate niche issue.

The causal associations hypothesized in this work also covered three consecutive elections. That is to say, the change in past two elections would impact the upcoming elections. Figure 1 and 2 envisages how MM score and vote share were changing over time for the particular case of People's Liberal Party in Sweden.

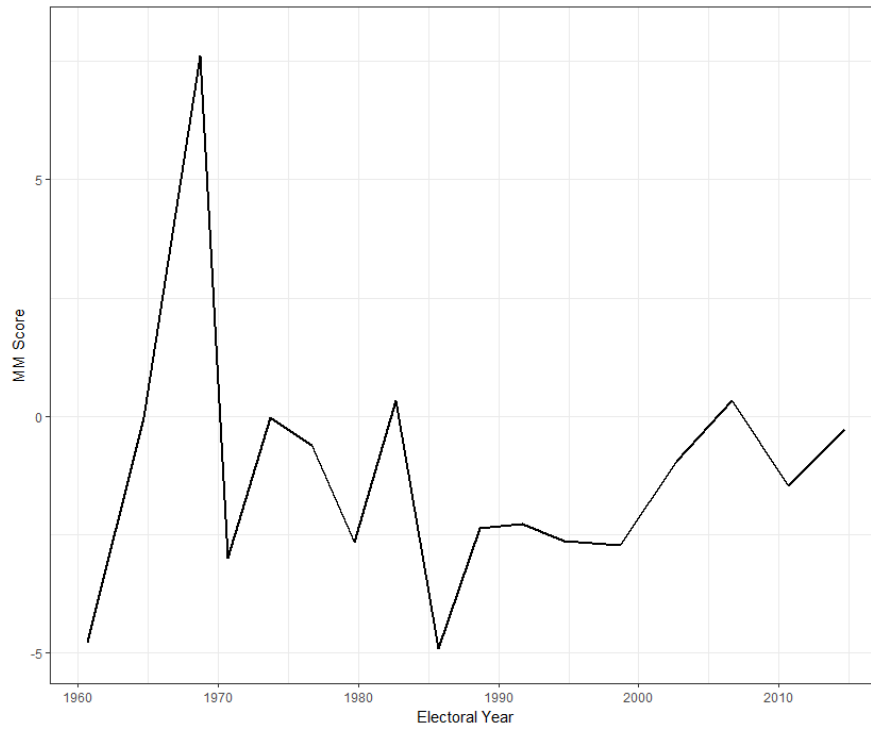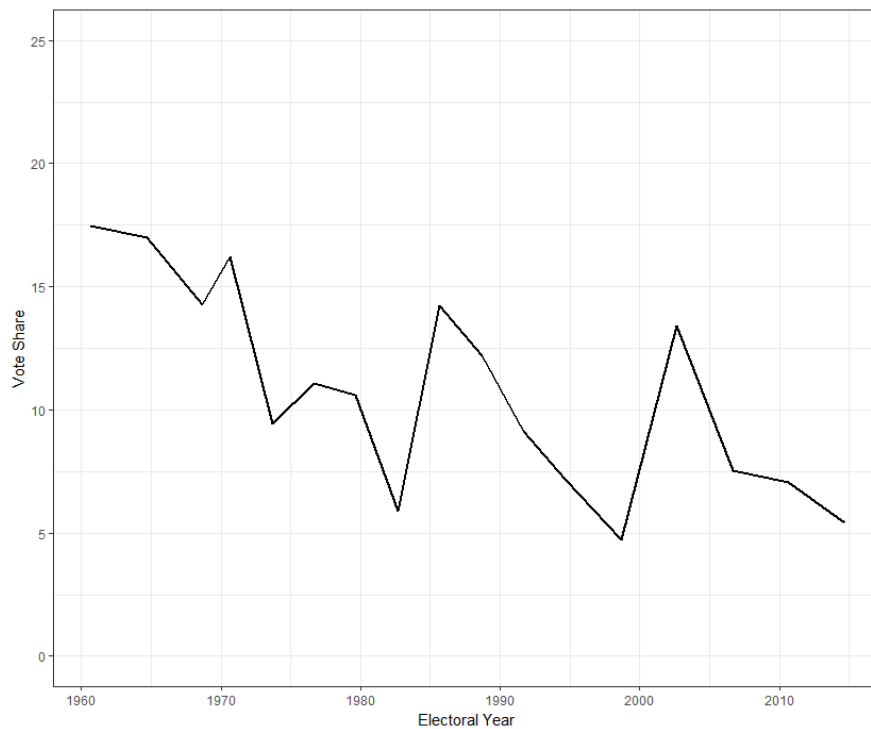Figure 1.MM score from1960 to 2014: People's Liberal Party of Sweden

Figure 2. Vote Share from 1960 to 2014: People's Liberal Party of Sweden

According to H2 if MM score declined during the past elections, the vote share should increase for the next election. For Swedish Liberal Party, when MM score increased from 1964 to 1968, the vote share also rose from 1968 to 1970. That is to say, when the Liberal party became more niche in past elections of 1968 and 1964, it also got more votes in 1970 than in 1968. At the same time, the Figure 1 and 2 illustrate when considering simultaneous changes in both variables the picture was different. When nicheness increased from 1964 to 1968, vote share decreased for the same period. Moreover, when vote share rose from 1968 to 1970,

MM score drastically fell as a result of those elections. Furthermore, the figure also depicted that the trend for Swedish Liberals was almost like that. However, when one increased during the past elections, another variable also rose for next elections.

Bischof's additive index recorded different outcomes for the extreme cases of nicheness change in Scandinavia. The Swedish Social-Democrats significantly cut their B score between the elections of 1991 and 1988 (by – (0.80) points). Moreover, the same party got the maximum increase of B score (by 0.79 points) between 1976 and 1973. These were respectively the maximum negative and positive changes registered by B score in Scandinavia. Figure 3 and 4 below illustrate when B score of the Social-Democrats increased between the elections of 1976 and 1973, so did the vote share from the elections of 1976 to 1979. However, when B score decreased from 1988 to 1991, the vote share increased from 1991 to 1994.

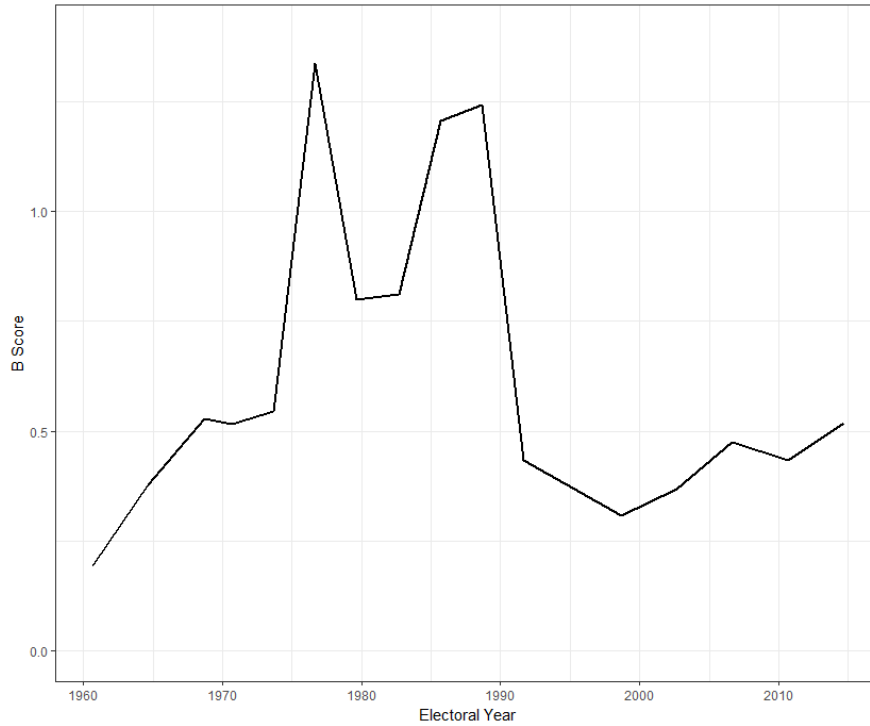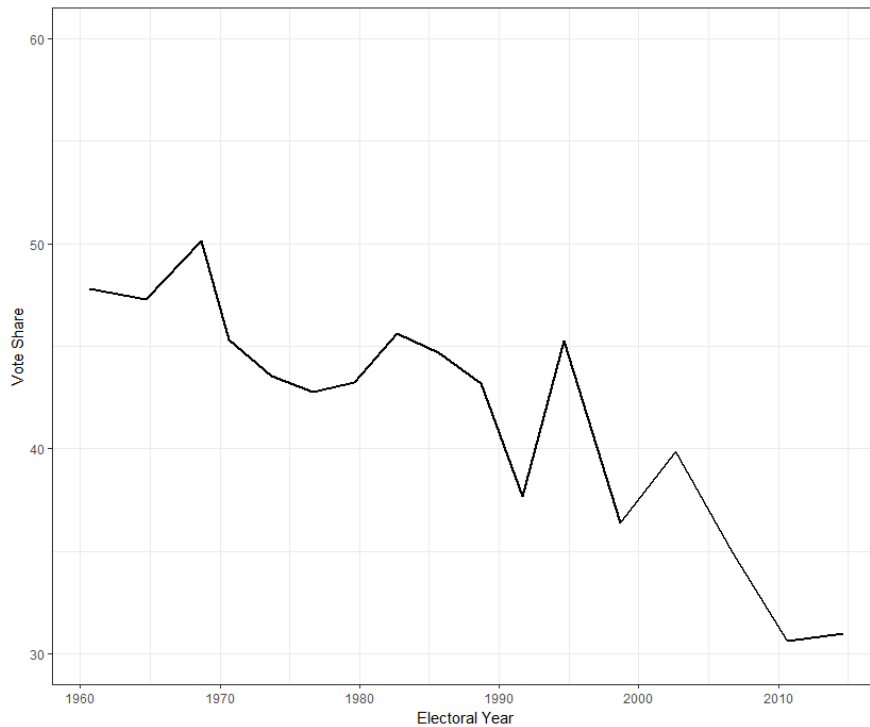Figure 3. B score from 1960 to 2014: Swedish Social-Democrats

Figure 4. Vote share from 1960 to 2014: Swedish Social-Democrats

When considering the components of the index, the Danish Social Liberal party was championing with its maximum shift of market share as a difference between 2011 and 2007 elections. Moreover, Denmark also registered the maximum negative change, when

Conservative party decreased the emphasis on five niche segments between 1973 and 1971.

Also for the Danish Conservatives when nicheness dropped from 1971 to 1973, the vote shares also fell from 1973 to 1975. So, here again, the variable changed in the same direction. As for specialization, the most significant shift (0.82) towards a narrower profile was again exercised by Danish Conservative party between 1960 and 1957. The same positive change referred to their vote share from 1960 to 1964.

Hence, the Swedish Social-Democrats and Liberals took the highest points of change in absolute terms. Overall, it was depicted that the most drastic changes happened either in Sweden (by MM and B score, negative specialization shift by the Swedish Social-Democrats) or in Denmark. Moreover, in the case of drastic changes of party nicheness between the periods in t-1 and t-2, vote share also changed in the same direction between time t and t-1.

It was not surprising that so-called niche parties did not register drastic shifts in Scandinavia. The radical cases of mainstream parties were justifiable. It could be assumed that mainstream parties usually had "catch-all" nature, so they would deviate much to maximize their votes. These results somehow supported Adams et al. (2006) and Bischof and Wagner (2017) argument that niche parties were more stable and resistant to changes. The latter was primarily a case in Sweden and Denmark if considering only drastic changes.

Based on this, it could be thought that nicheness change might have associations with vote change. However, the correlation analysis illustrated that there were not any trends of relations between vote change and party nicheness change. Specialization score registered the only weak evidence of positive association. The linear association was not compelling as it could be assumed from the figure below (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Linear relations between Vote Change and Specialization Change in the period of t-1 and t-2
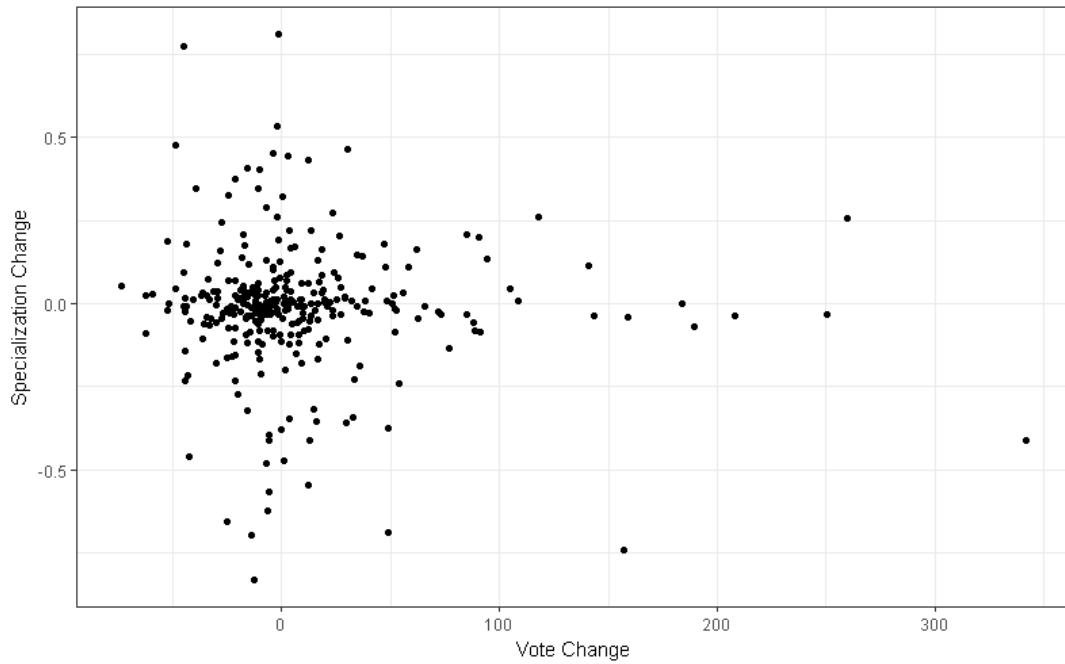
As for the vote change variable, the observations were spread equally above and below – (2.50) % of relative vote difference. Danish Center Democrats got the highest ever positive vote change of 259.51% between the elections of 1977 and 1975.The Norwegian Liberal Party recorded the highest negative decrease of – (73.67) % between 1973 and 1969. The latter was the only negative outlier whereas vote change got some extreme positive cases that added positive skewness to the distribution of vote change variable (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Distribution of Vote Change
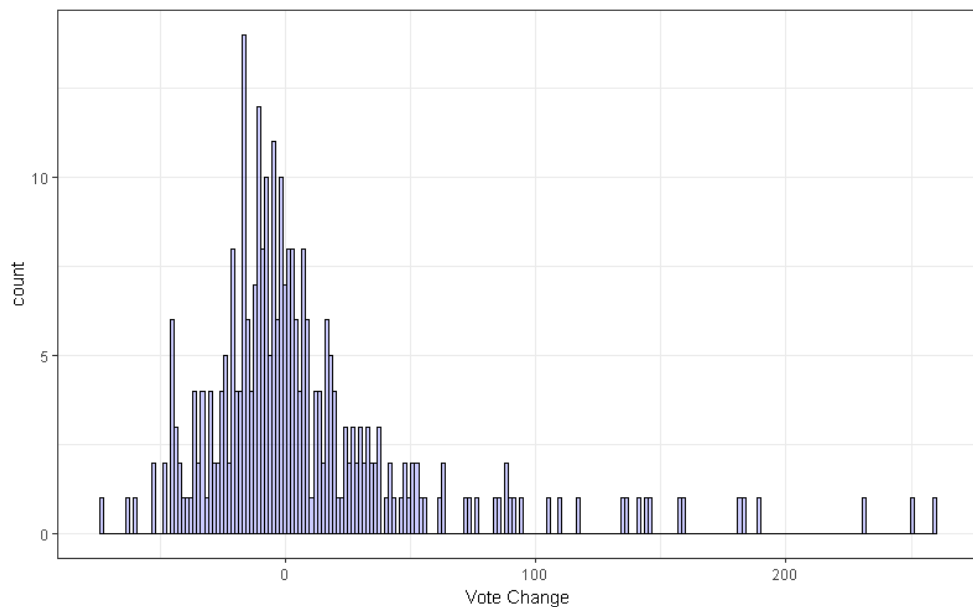
Moreover, the correlation test confirmed a significant but not strong negative association between vote change and party age. These associations did not work for the nicheness change and party age (when nicheness change is taken in absolute values).

To sum up, the review of descriptive findings put forward some considerations for the analyses of two specified regression models. The absence of correlation between vote change and nicheness change hinted of the possible lack of predictive power of two models. Next two sections depict the results of regression tests that investigate the causal associations between vote change and nicheness change in Scandinavia.

5.2.1 Past electoral defeat and nicheness change

The results of linear models illustrated that change in votes did not show a causal relationship with party nicheness (Table 1, p.63). As well, almost all other variables also did not indicate any associations. However, party leadership change got significant impact at 0.01 level. There was significant but considerably weak evidence when party authority changed, the market share of a party reduced. It could be, therefore, assumed that new leadership decreased the distribution of issue emphasis on five niche segments covered by the Scandinavian political parties. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that this association became significant only when removing all other independent variables from the analysis (Model 3.1). As for the specialization change, there was a significant association with vote change in Model 4. But the overall model was not significant. However, when excluding the control variables from Model 4, not strong but significant evidence depicted that more votes made party programs narrower. Thus, when adding the controls (cabinet change, leadership change, country and electoral year) into the model with specialization change (Model 4), the model lost its significance. Therefore, neither of the measurements and neither of the models envisaged strong evidence of associations between the vote change and nicheness change in Scandinavia.

Figure 6 indicated that there were several cases when several parties more than doubled their votes during the past two elections. So, the work removed the extreme cases and checked these models without them (Table II, Appendix 3). In that case, the model with specialization (4) lost its significance. Meanwhile, it was found that more votes decreased

market share of a party. Still, the association was not compelling. Party leadership change significantly related to the changes in market share also for the models without the extreme cases of vote change. New party authority caused lower market share of the party platform. However, the model (Table II, Appendix, Model 3) explained only 0.2% variance in the dependent variable.

Moreover, the study separately tested how the association between the past electoral defeat and nicheness change work only for those parties that recorded vote loss (Table IV, Appendix 3). In this case all models indicated significant but weak associations except the model with B score (Model2). The latter did not record any significance. The model with MM did not possess high significance. According to that model, if a party became governmental, it decreased its MM score. The model measured by market share again indicated that change of party authority before the election decreased party nicheness. Moreover, loss of votes in past elections significantly but weakly related to more specialized party platform.

The research also tested the associations between vote change and party nicheness only for those parties that increased their votes during the past two elections (Appendix 3, Table VI). However, there were not any models with strong explanatory power. The model with Bischof's additive index showed that more votes caused higher B score. The same positive and significant association was recorded between vote gains and more specialized party platform.

Therefore, none of the models indicated any strong association between past vote change and party nicheness change. It could be deduced that electoral losses during the past elections did not explain the variations in Scandinavian party platforms. All associations were not convincing because of very low R squared results. The components of Bischof's additive index illustrated some level of significance more often than the other measures. The most striking case was that the model with MM score was significant for the parties that lost votes (but MM score itself did not have a significant relation). Meanwhile the model with B score was significant for parties that gained votes. Thus, different measurements of the same concept of party nicheness got different levels of significance for the same cases. The latter can question the validity of the measurement. The estimations of the models indicated even contradictory outcomes for MM score, B score and its components. With regard to control variables, weak and negative association was

registered mostly with party leadership. Party age did not register any significant association with the dependent variable. Meanwhile, shift to the cabinet had significant but weak relation with MM score for the parties that lost votes in the last elections.

			Dependent variable: Party Nicheness$_{t,t-1}$			
	Miller and Meyer	Bischof	Market Share Market		Specialization	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(3.1)	(4)	(4.1)
Vote Change	0.0002	0.0003	-0.00001		0.001**	0.0005**
	(0.004)	(0.0002)	(0.0003)		(0.0003)	(0.0003)
Cabinet Change (Gov)	-0.522	0.001	-0.021		0.021	
	(0.476)	(0.031)	(0.032)		(0.034)	
Cabinet Change (Opp)	-0.180	0.016	-0.014		0.036	
	(0.500)	(0.032)	(0.034)		(0.036)	
Leadership Change	-0.552	-0.033	-0.055**	-0.053**	-0.006	
	(0.353)	(0.023)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.025)	
Party Age	0.003	0.0003	0.0003		0.0003	
	(0.005)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)		(0.0003)	
Constant	-0.029	-0.024	-0.001	0.015	-0.046*	-0.017
	(0.376)	(0.024)	(0.026)	(0.014)	(0.027)	(0.012)
Observations	281	281	281	281	281	281
R^2	0.014	0.021	0.023	0.019	0.024	0.014
Adjusted R^2	-0.004	0.004	0.005	0.015	0.006	0.010
Residual Std. Error	2.708 (df = 275)	0.176 (df = 275)	0.185 (df = 275)	0.184 (df = 279)	0.192 (df = 275)	0.192 (df = 279)
F Statistic	0.803 (df = 5; 275)	1.203 (df = 5; 275)	1.289 (df = 5; 275)	5.273** (df = 1; 279)	1.366 (df = 5; 275)	3.899** (df = 1; 279)

Note:
*$p<0.1$,**$p<0.05$,***$p<0.01$

Table 1. Linear Model results with an independent variable of Vote change$_{t-1, t-2}$

5.2.1 Nicheness change and electoral performance

In the inverse association, the relation between nicheness change and vote change was absolutely absent (Table 2, p.65). Only market share in Model 3 (when accounting also for the party age, cabinet change, leadership change) indicated significance at 0, 1 level. However, the model itself was not significant. The exclusion of other variables out of the model did not anyhow improve the significance and strength of relations between vote

change and change in market share. Moreover, the control variables also did not anyhow explain vote change. The work also tested the model only with market share and cabinet change but did not get any convincing results.

Hence, the models that covered associations between past nicheness change and current vote share were weak enough for making inferences.

Like in the previous association, the work also tested the models without the extreme cases of vote change registered between t and t-1. However, none of the models recorded significant or strong explanatory power (Table III, Appendix 3). The models were also evaluated only for those parties that cut their niche score during the past two elections. The results were considerably weak (Table V, Appendix 3). The first model illustrated that more loss of MM score caused more votes. Though this finding fit the Hypothesis (1) the model explained only 0.3% of variations in vote change. Moreover, the same model envisaged significant but not strong link between vote change and shift to cabinet. The parties that became governmental lost votes in comparison to the parties that did not change their cabinet position. However, this finding could not be generalized as well because the model possessed no strength. Furthermore, the work tried to find association between vote change and nicheness change encountering only those parties that gained nicheness during the past two elections. However, again no significant and strong model was found (Table VII, Appendix 3).

 Thus it could be concluded, when a Scandinavian party decreased its nicheness score it did not cause changes in its vote share in the upcoming election. As in the previous case, here again changes in different nicheness measures had different significance in the association with vote change. The testing of inverse relations also revealed the differences between the measures of party nicheness. As for the control variables, only cabinet change indicated significant but weak association with vote change.

To sum up two models, the change of party nicheness did not explain the vote change in Scandinavia. As well, change of party nicheness was not impacted by vote change. However, the evaluation of the models exposed differences and disagreements between the nicheness measures. Thus, the next sections spell out how those measures vary in Scandinavia.

	Miller and Meyer	Bischof	Market Share		Specialization
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(3.1)	(4)
Nicheness change	0.420	-18.158	-22.309*	-23.371*	-14.755
	(0.980)	(13.903)	(13.391)	(13.393)	(12.690)
Cabinet Change Gov	-14.193*	-14.394*	-13.805*	-13.838*	-14.396*
	(7.535)	(7.516)	(7.504)	(7.507)	(7.522)
Cabinet Change Opp	0.506	0.954	(0.671)	-0.3624 *	0.971
	(7.844)	(7.831)	(7.806)	(7.756)	(7.839)
Leader Change	-6.587	-6.090	-6.184		-5.826
	(5.535)	(5.511)	(5.497)		(5.532)
Constant	9.918***	9.732***	9.701***	7.730**	9.519***
	(3.524)	(3.514)	(3.507)	(3.040)	(3.527)
Observations	281	281	281	281	281
R^2	0.018	0.024	0.027	0.011	0.022
Adjusted R^2	0.004	0.010	0.013	0.007	0.008
Residual Std. Error	43.576 (df = 276)	43.457 (df = 276)	43.373 (df = 276)	43.507 (df = 279)	43.484 (df = 276)
F Statistic	1.286 (df = 4; 276)	1.673 (df = 4; 276)	1.945 (df = 4; 276)	3.033* (df = 1; 279)	1.583 (df = 4; 276)

Note:

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

Table 2. Linear Model results with the independent variable of nicheness change_{t-1, t-2}

5.3 Niche parties in the Scandinavia context: Contradictions between the measurements

The models above indicated that changes in party nicheness and vote shares did not have any associations in the context of Scandinavia. It could be also related to the fact that Scandinavian case challenged the prior findings related to party nicheness. The highest niche scores were usually registered by the parties that were mainstream for the authors of party family approach and even for the authors of party nicheness concept. Moreover, descriptive analysis of data illustrated that the results of different measures could sharply contradict at least in the Scandinavian context. This section spells out the cases where mainstream parties got extremely high nicheness scores and when the results of two measurements (MM score and B score) opposed each other.

The highest score of party nicheness by all measurements (including market share and specialization) was registered in Norway by Anders Lange's Party in 1973. The latter was a new anti-establishment right-wing party fighting for less state intervention. It was renamed to Progress Party of Norway and got the right-wing anti-immigration profile. The party was established in 1973 and managed to get four representatives in the Parliament during the same year (Bjerkem 2016). However, after the Lange's death party nicheness dropped by more than half during the next elections. For instance, in 2005, Progress party got MM nicheness score of 0.53 when in 1973 it was 8.64. This drastic decrease (in comparison to 1973) was also reflected in the additive nicheness score by Bishcof and its components of market share and specification. The observation related to Anders Lange party in 1973 was removed from the regression analysis because it was their first election.

Party nicheness by Meyer and Miller: MM score in Scandinavia did not depict any increasing or decreasing trends over time. Instead, there were several differences based on a country. Party nicheness score of Norwegian political parties registered the highest median point (among the observed cases) of 0, 02. In line with the elections of 1973, Progress Party was an outlier also for 1981, but it halved its issue emphasis on the relevant political dimensions specified by Miller and Meyer (2015). Thus, the extreme cases of Norway fulfilled the assumption of party family approach that right-wing populist parties usually got higher party nicheness.

The second highest MM score after Andres Lagen's party in 1973 was registered in Sweden by Right Party during the election of 1964. The latter was the current Moderate party of Sweden that had central right positioning. It was found out that over time, the party was pushed to pass a "generational change" and adapt its platform to the welfare state. The ideas which they were initially fighting against became a part of Moderates profile (Lindbom 2008). In the elections of 1973, the party got its lowest nicheness score. Another significant decrease of party MM nicheness score was especially vivid during the 2000s.

Moreover, the People's Party of Sweden in 1964 and the Swedish Social-Democrats in 1960 also significantly emphasized several issues in their platforms. Over time, the nicheness score of People's party that was further renamed to People's Liberal Party decreased and did not register any drastic changes. As for the nichenesss of Social

Democratic party, it was quite volatile. Moreover, Centre Party of Sweden got the lowest nicheness score in Scandinavia (-7.55) during the elections of 1960. However, afterward, their nicheness score increased with some fluctuations and reached its peak during the elections of 2014.

Therefore, in case of Sweden, all parties that were considered outliers because of comparatively higher nicheness scores belonged to the party families that were signified as mainstream by the authors of the field (Meguid 2005, Adams et al. 2006). Indeed, a high nicheness score of Moderates, Liberals, Social-Democrats and a low nicheness score of Centre party in Sweden was not a trend pertinent to the analyzed period. However, it was in contradiction to previous findings where the maximum and minimum values of nicheness were registered by those Swedish parties that were defined as respectively mainstream and niche (Wagner considered Scandinavian Agrarian parties as niche).

Danish picture of party nicheness for the period of 1960-2011 had the smallest median value in the region (-0.43). However, they did not have outliers with significantly low scores. All the extreme cases were the parties with considerably high positive ratings for Danish system. The Christian People's Party in 1998 got the most niche party profile in Denmark. Moreover, it also registered a comparatively high score in 1975. However, the ups and downs of the nicheness score were quite evident in case of the Danish Christian party. After a high score in 1975 and before its peak in 1998 (7.65), the party drastically decreased nicheness score to -4.05 in the elections of 1984. The general picture of its nicheness score was volatile with drastic increases and decreases.

Following the Christian People's party, the Social-Democrats of Denmark were also in the group of outliers with a relatively high nicheness score in 1979 (6.18462). However, this was a singular case for that party as before and after 1979, the nicheness rating of the party was significantly lower and volatile. The volatility was especially apparent in the period following the elections of 1984. Moreover, the party registered its minimum nicheness score (-4.07) during the 2011 elections. Another outlier was Conservative Party of Denmark in 1988. However, it did not possess any specific trend of party nicheness either. Similar to Social-Democrats, Conservatives also maintained the nicheness score of almost -5 in the elections of 1979 and 2001.

To sum up, the calculation of nicheness score by Miller and Meyer illustrated several exciting results for Scandinavia. The highest ever nicheness score was registered in

Norway and the lowest score belonged to Swedish Center party. When considering the outliers, only Norway fit the findings of previous studies concerning party families. Interestingly enough, all highest nicheness scores in Denmark and Sweden pertained to the parties affiliated with liberal, conservative and social-democratic families. The Scandinavian case also supported Wagner's finding of Christian Parties being niche parties (if taking only the extreme cases). Though the dataset also covered ecological party of Sweden and other populist right-wing parties, they did not possess comparatively higher nicheness scores by Miller and Meyer's measurement.

Party nicheness by Bischof: The additive score of nicheness advanced by Bischof did not have strong but a significant negative correlation with electoral years (the latter applied to the specialization component of the score). It was particularly evident for the period following the 2000s.

As time passed, the nicheness score decreased. It should be mentioned that the measurement of Miller and Meyer did not register this trend. Moreover, the lowest B score (0.19) was recorded by the Swedish Social-Democrats in 1960. It was in principal contradiction to the Miller and Meyer's measurement because in 1960 SAP was an outlier in Sweden for its high MM nicheness score.
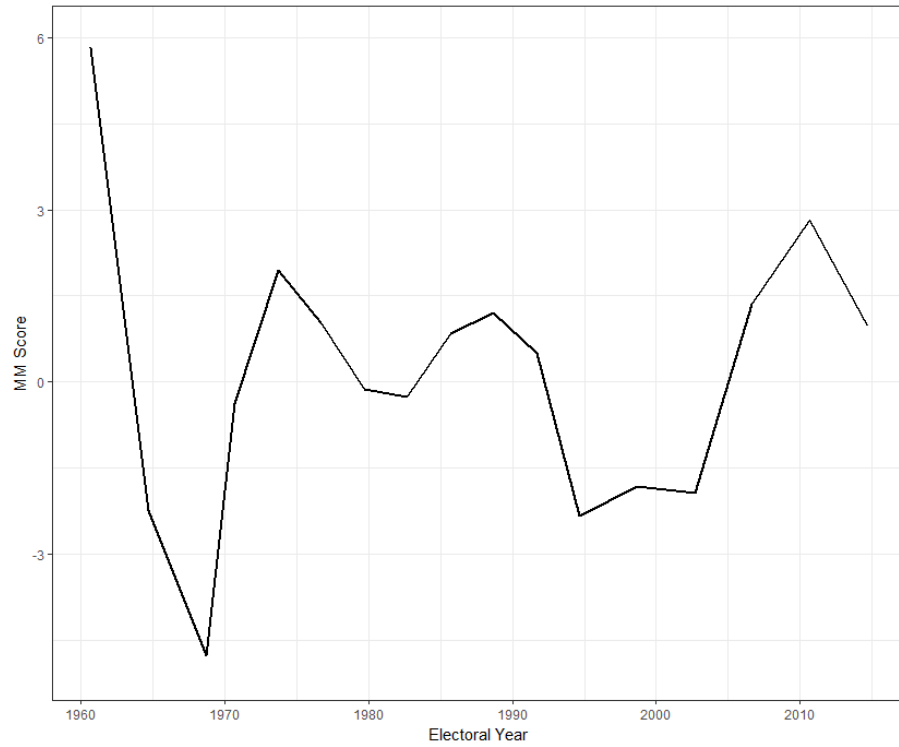
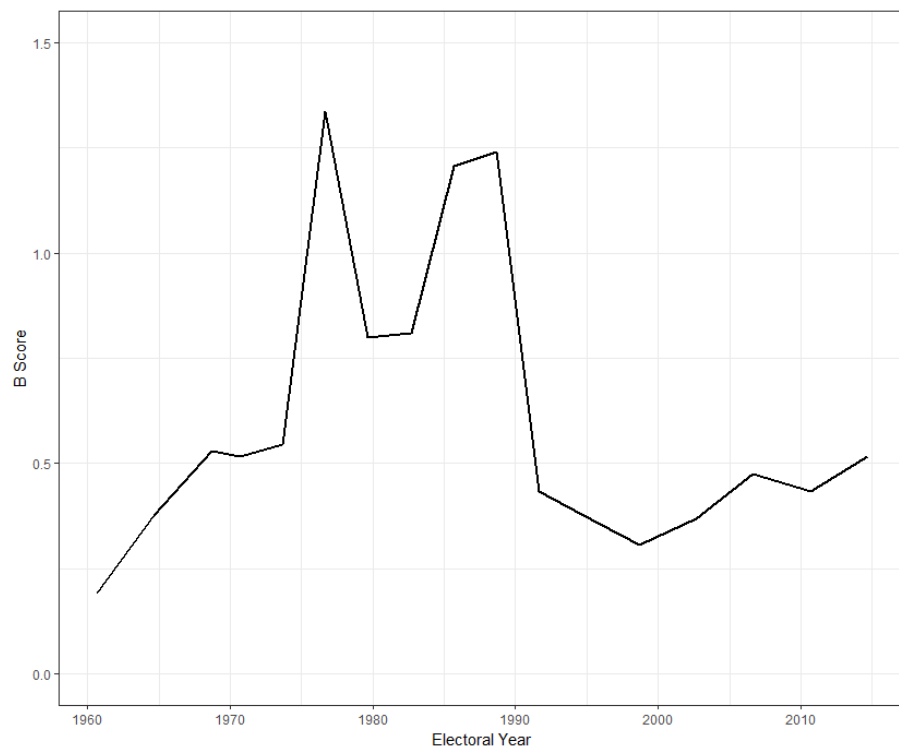Figure 7. MM score for Swedish Social-Democrats

Figure 8. B score for Swedish Social-Democrats

It could be assumed that this contradiction was connected to the inclusion of the economic issues in the measurement of MM. Danish Social Liberal party registered the second highest Bischof score (1.42) in Scandinavia for the period of 1960-2014. The latter could

relate to the fact that the environmental issues got prominence in the 1970s and Danish Social-Liberal party was "one of the most outspoken environmentalist parties" (Madsen 2007, p.23). The party also covered the issues about immigration, human rights. As these topics corresponded to the basis of Bischof's measurement, the party got high B score. However, after that peak in the 1970s, party decreased B score during the next elections. Following the year of 1987, the party nicheness was falling for the next elections excluding the years of 2001 and 2011.

Furthermore, the analysis depicted that, on average, Danish parties got higher B score followed by Sweden and Norway. It was another inconsistency with the results of MM score where Norway got the highest average MM score, and Denmark had the lowest one. A more detailed look at each country revealed more differences between the two measurements.

In Denmark, where the equal number of observations laid below and above 0,59 points of Bischof's nicheness score, there were two more outliers in line with Danish Social-Liberals in 1977: Liberals in 2001(1.28) and Centre Democrats in 1979(1.27). Liberals raised their nicheness already in 1998 and got their maximum in 2001. In the same year, they managed to form liberal government defeating the Social-Democrats (Munkøe 2011). However, after that B score of Liberals was decreasing almost. For Central Democrats, the highest score of 1.27 was a singular case. The average nicheness rating of the party was mostly close to the country average for the period of 1960-2011. Since 1988 it started to decrease reaching almost zero in 1998. Nevertheless, already in the elections of 2005, it came close to the country average again.

During 1960-2014, Sweden got four extreme cases of B score. Out of all four cases, three were registered by the Swedish Social-Democrats in 1976, 1985 and 1988. The latter meant that the mainstream Social-Democratic party was more niche than Green party during the elections of 1988. And the forth outlier was Green party in 1998. The case of Green party was understandable in a sense that ecology was one of the themes of Bischof's measurement. As the chart illustrated, Greens, increased their B score after the first elections. Despite its high ratings in 1994 and the peak in1998, the party registered a drastic decrease of B score for next elections. During the recent elections, it got its least niche profile according to Bischof's index.MM score also registered that significant fall after the election of 1998. However, in comparison to B score, the measurement of Miller

and Meyer indicated some increase in Green party nicheness in the elections of 2010 (Figure 9 and 10).
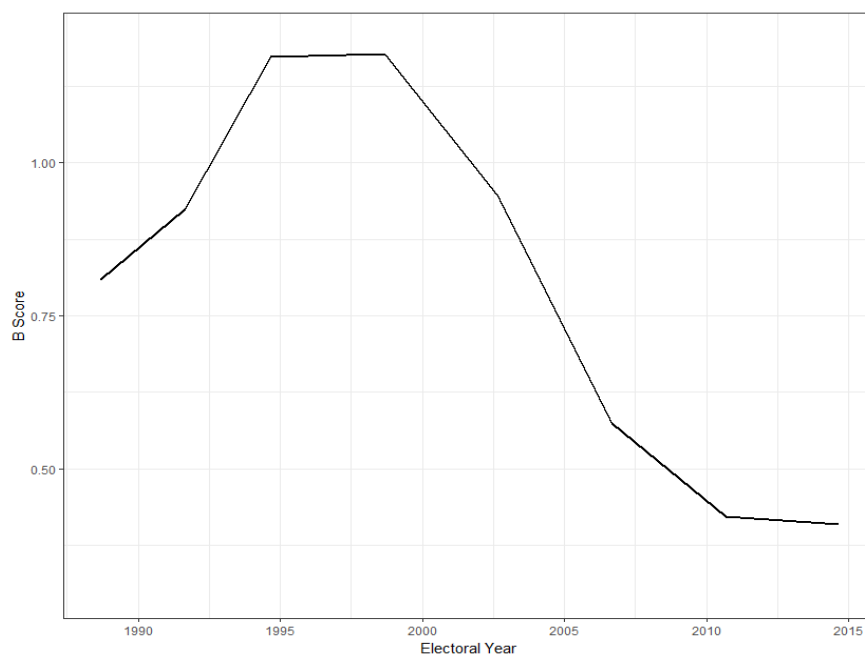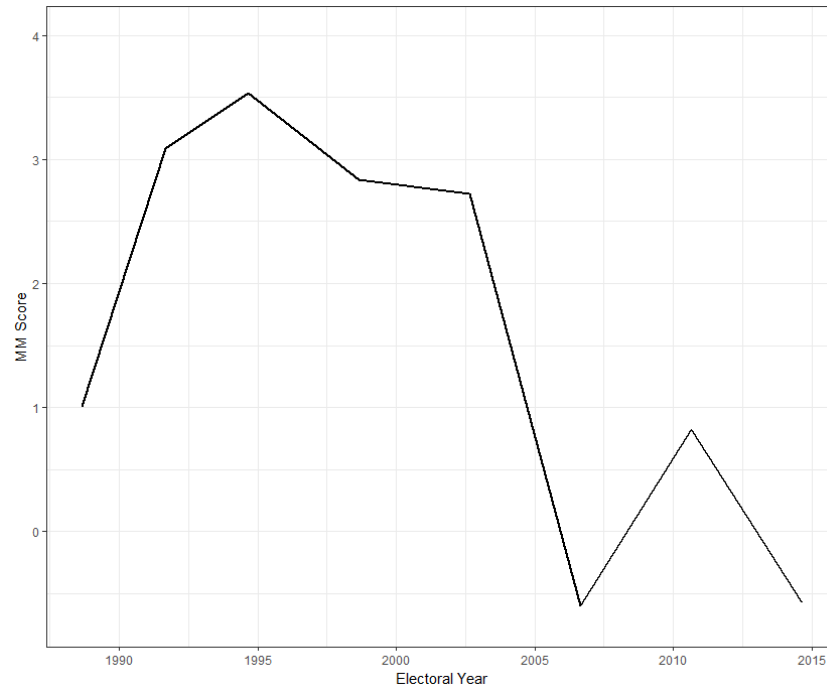
Figure 9. MM score for Swedish Green Party

Figure 10. B score for Swedish Green Party

This difference could be related to the number of issues covered by the measurements. It could be particularly associated with the coverage of economy in the estimation by Miller

and Meyer because the election of 2010 happened after the Global Economic crisis in 2008.

In comparison to Denmark and Sweden, Norway did not get many radical cases. Moreover, the difference between two outliers was quite significant. As it was mentioned above, the Anders Lagen's party in 1973 reached the score of two that still remained the highest B score in Scandinavia. The B score of Christian People's Party that was an outlier in 1961 was 0.83.

The components of Bischof's additive score of nicheness also illustrated a diverging picture. It was found out that market share did not increase or decrease throughout the electoral years. The average scores for market share put countries in a similar order as B score did. Norway received the lowest and Denmark got the highest median score. Nevertheless, the parties that registered radically high market share mostly did not coincide with the ones that were outliers for the additive measurement. The only coincidence applied to the Ander's Lagen party in 1973 and Swedish Social-Democrats in 1976.

As for the specialization score, the Christian Party of Norway in 1961 was also an outlier due to its narrow party manifesto. In Denmark, the Danish Social Liberal party got the most specialized program from 1973 to 1977. Moreover, as in case of the additive index, the Swedish Social-Democrats were the outliers for the specialization score for the same electoral years (1976, 1985 and 1988).

Furthermore, the relations between the measurements of nicheness and party age were also investigated. The latter would illustrate how Meguid's argument about niche parties being new (therefore young) worked in Scandinavia. Market share score got significant, although not strong negative correlation with party age (Appendix 2, Figure 11)

The latter supposed that when parties were getting older, they were decreasing their issue emphasis on five niche segments. Other measurements did not anyhow associate with party age. Moreover, neither of the measurements of nicheness correlated with the vote shares of the parties acquired during the parliamentary elections

To sum up, the findings of two measures of nicheness did not mostly coincide with each other for the case of Scandinavia. Additionally, the analysis of data indicated that extreme positive scores of nicheness were more registered by the parties that were classified as mainstream according to the party family approach.

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5.4 Comparison of two measurements

The analysis of data gathered for three Scandinavian countries indicated how different measurements of party nicheness registered significantly different results.

The results indicated that in Scandinavia MM score correlated with B score and with its market share component. The correlation with market share component can be explained by the fact that market share is counted in the same way as MM score. However, it covered only five issues and did not include the size of the parties. But the latter did not hinder its linear relationship with MM score. At the same time, MM score did not have any association with the specialization score. The specialization indicated weak negative correlation with electoral dates. So did the Bischof score. As for the correlation with the electoral years, MM score and market share had some commonalities. They both did not illustrate any decreasing or increasing trends over time.

Moreover, Miller and Meyer considered the relevance of the issues when measuring party nicheness for the given period. So, those issues that were not applicable were removed and the score was adjusted to the given period. Moreover, MM score and other measurements did not relate to the age of a party either. However, when a Scandinavian party got older, it reduced its market share.

These two measurements also differed because Bischof did not weight the market share by party size in comparison to Miller and Meyer's estimation. However, the extreme cases of party nicheness in Scandinavia illustrated that big parties registered most radical cases by both approaches. Indeed, Bischof's score somehow sheds light on small parties that were outliers for Bischof but were ignored by MM measurement. Overall, as a result of both measurements, bigger parties possessed more extreme cases. However, the aspect of party size should not be ignored when explaining striking differences in outcomes. For instance, Green party in Sweden was an outlier by B score because market share component was focused on just five segments that included ecology as well. It could be assumed that Green party should have high salience on environmental issues. But their low MM score and high B score in 2010 could be also explained by the fact that MM score encountered party size. So, it would be wrong to say that the inclusion or exclusion of party size did not play any role in different results registered by both measurements. For a case of Scandinavia, it was equally important as the number of issues covered by

each measure. Furthermore, it could also be mentioned that nicheness score could better explain the dynamics related to mainstream parties because their scores changed much drastically.

 Moreover, when dividing the additive nicheness score of Bischof, it was found out that specialization score had a significant but weak correlation with vote change. At a glance, it can be easily thought that an ideologically niche party should also be ideologically narrow. However, when analyzing the relation of party nicheness with other variables, these two components indicated different results. Therefore, when working with Bischof's score of nicheness, it is needed to analyze the elements separately to understand which one caused the association. The models that tested relations between vote change and nicheness change were more often significant for the elements of Bischof's index than for the MM or B scores.

Thus, one of the arguments of weak associations between party nicheness vote shares was the contradictions in the measurements. Other factors could also explain weak or no association between these two variables. For instance, the nicheness score was only focused on issue salience. Perhaps the outcomes would be different, if the models included party position instead of nicheness. The thing is that the party could talk too much or too less about the problem in the platform. But it could be assumed that it is the position of the party that will affect voters' choice. Indeed, it can also be thought that parties will change their nicheness more frequently than position because they are conservative organizations. At the same time, the previous studies that analyzed the electoral success of the party (Meguid 2005, Abou-Chadi 2016) revealed some strong associations between the change of party position and vote shares. In other words, it can be assumed, that from a demand side, nicheness or issue salience is less visible than the ideological position. And any association with vote shares, firstly, relates to the demand side.

Moreover, party nicheness scores were based only on the party platforms. However, the party representatives may give more weight to this or that issue during different events that are available for their electorate. The media interviews can be one way of doing that. Thus, only party platform may not be sufficient or the only source for a voter to make judgments about the nicheness of a party.

6.Conclusion

Previous researches in the filed illustrated that electoral incentives of political parties could lead to the changes in their policies. One of the primary reasons for the shifts was past electoral loss. Moreover, it was found that poor electoral performance could explain the variations in the niche profiles of parties. To get more votes during the next elections, parties would try to cover more mainstream issues. However, the study by Meyer and Wagner (2013) did not consider party nicheness but measured niche parties in a categorical way. Thus, current study hypothesized if there were any associations between vote shares and party nicheness. More specifically, the work argued the more votes party lost during the past elections; the more it would cut its nicheness for coming election. Moreover, the opposite relation was also encountered: the more a party cut its nicheness during the previous elections the more votes it would get in current elections. The study also tested if changes in the cabinet position, party age and party leadership change could predict the shifts in party nicheness and in the proportion of their votes.

To operationalize party nicheness, the study used the measures by Miller and Meyer (2015) and Bischof (2017). Moreover, nicheness was also estimated through the components of Bischof score. There were market share and specialization. Many approaches were selected to indicate how the measurements of the same concept could result in different outcomes.

To test the hypotheses, the research covered the elections in Denmark, Norway and Sweden from 1960 to 1964. When testing these hypotheses for 281 cases in Scandinavia, no substantial evidence of causal relations was illustrated.

Hence, the work concluded that there was no strong evidence that vote change could explain party nicheness change in Scandinavia. Moreover, the inverse association failed to work as well. Furthermore, the study results demonstrated that the components of the Bischof index could have different predictive power than the index. The latter meant that if a party was ideologically niche, it did not say that it would also focus only on a narrow range of issues in their platforms. Aside from central variables, significant but weak evidence was found indicating that change of party leadership could broaden party programs.

The study also indicated how MM score and Bischof's measurement sometimes pointed contradictory results for the Scandinavian case. Moreover, the parties that got more nicheness according to these measurements belonged to the party families that were mainstream in the initial works of the authors. The results indicated that the measures should be further developed or they should reformulate their conceptualizations and go beyond minimal definitions. Perhaps the conceptualization of a niche party could also include some features like in case of Meguid's interpretation. As for the measurements, there is still no agreement in the literature why the economy should not be one of those niche dimensions. Currently, at least in the Scandinavian context one party could be niche by one measurement and mainstream by others. Thus, the latter rises some doubts about the validity of both measurements.

Moreover, it could be thought if the present work encountered party position instead of party nicheness, the picture might be different. Party position seems to be a more obvious factor for a voter than the niche profile of a party. Therefore, the voters might respond to the changes of party position. However, party nicheness could also be more visible for the voters if the measurements would cover more sources than the party platform.

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Diagram 1. **(H1)** Past electoral defeat and party nicheness
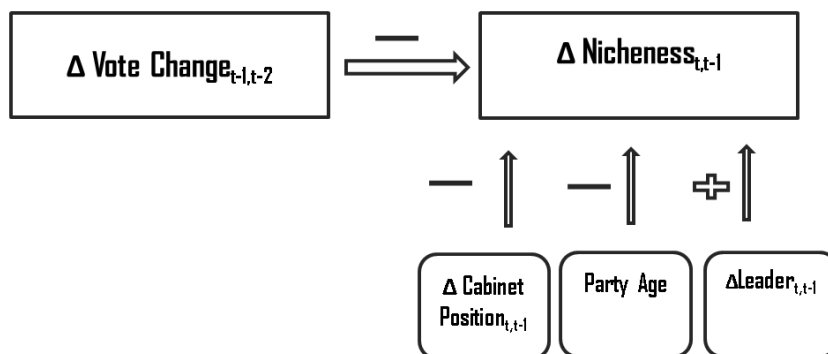
Diagram 2 **(H2)** Past nicheness loss and vote change
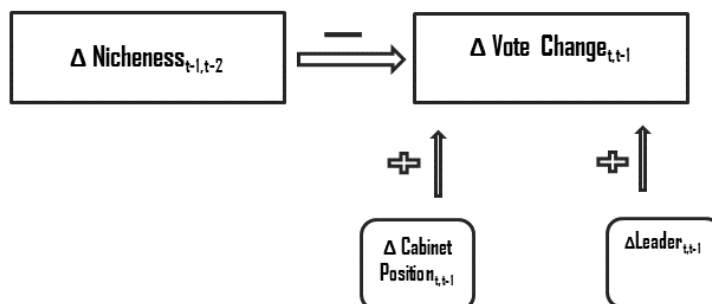
Table I. Measurements of party nicheness by Miller and Meyer and Bischof

Measurement	Niche Dimensions	Economic Dimension	Relevance of niche dimesnion	Party size	Range of dimensions (specialization score)	Theories
Miller and Meyer (2013)	9-12 dimension following Bäck et al., 2011).	Included	Counted	Weighted	Not Counted	Salience Theory
Bischof (2017)	5 dimensions following past studies and expert interviews	Not included	Not counted	Not weighted	Counted	Salience Theory Market theory

Figure 11 Linear Relation between Party Age and Market Share
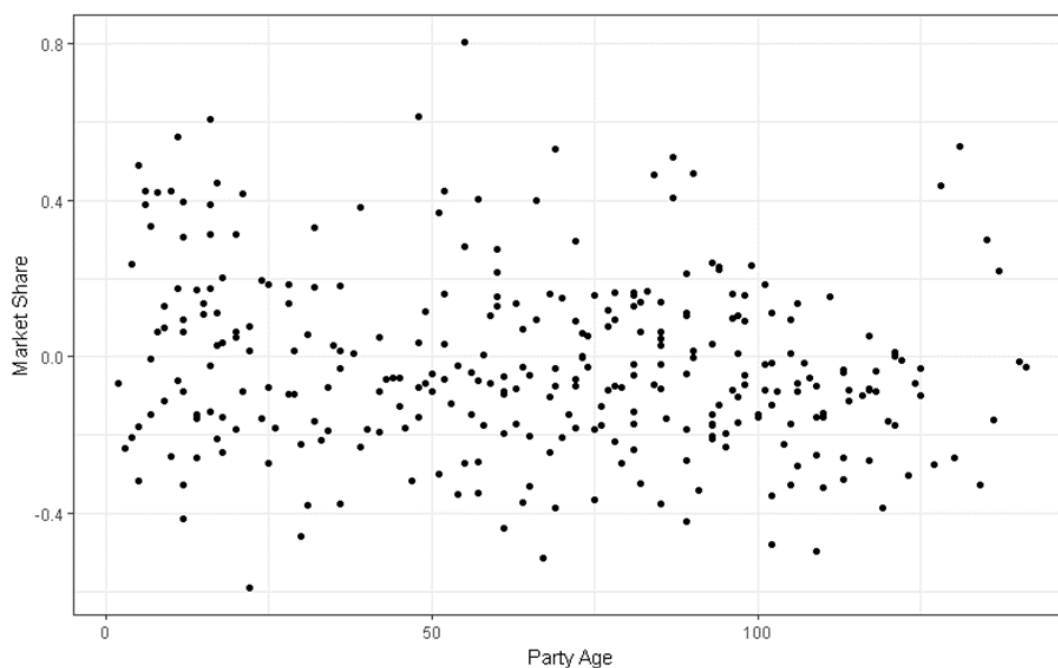
Table II. Model testing. Past vote change and party nicheness without the extreme cases of vote gains.

	(1) MM	(2) B	(3) Market Share	(3.1)	(4) Specialization
			Dependent Variable Nicheness Change		
Vote Change	-0.002	-0.0003	-0.001**		0.0001
	(0.006)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)		(0.0004)
Cabinet Change(Gov)	-0.644	-0.003	-0.027		0.021
	(0.490)	(0.032)	(0.032)		(0.034)
Cabinet Change(Opp)	-0.248	0.013	-0.022		0.037
	(0.511)	(0.033)	(0.034)		(0.036)
Leader Change	-0.651*	-(0.023)	-0.065***	-0.053**	-0.011
	(0.359)	0.041*	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.025)
Party Age	0.004	0.0004	0.0005		0.0004
	(0.005)	(0.0003)	(0.0003)		(0.0003)
Constant	-0.026	-0.029	-0.010	0.012	-0.048*
	(0.385)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.014)	(0.027)
Observations	268	268	268	268	268
R²	0.020	0.020	0.042	0.019	0.013
Adjusted R²	0.001	0.001	0.024	0.015	-0.006
Residual Std. Error	2.717 (df = 262)	0.175 (df = 262)	0.184 (df = 262)	0.184 (df = 266)	0.189 (df = 262)
F Statistic	1.073 (df = 5; 262)	1.045 (df = 5; 262)	2.326** (df = 5; 262)	5.127** (df = 1; 266)	0.702 (df = 5; 262)
Note: *p<0.1,**p<0.05,***p<0.01					

Table III. Model testing. Past nicheness change and party vote shares without the extreme cases of vote gains.

	(1) MM	(2) B	(3) Market Share	(3.1)	(4) Specialization
Nicheness Change	-0.134	-15.193	-10.343	-10.411	-11.003
Cabinet Change(Gov)	-7.562 (5.077)	-7.739 (5.055)	-7.408 (5.068)	-7.404 (5.060)	-7.711 (5.064)
Cabinet Change(Opp)	-2.795 (5.407)	-2.246 (5.388)	-2.510 (5.395)	-2.773 (5.354)	-2.231 (5.404)
Leader Change	-1.671 (3.771)	-1.442 (3.746)	-1.663 (3.750)		-1.284 (3.765)
Constant	1.713 (2.426)	1.606 (2.414)	1.682 (2.419)	1.139 (2.082)	1.453 (2.428)
Observations	271	271	271	271	271
R^2	0.010	0.019	0.014	0.013	0.015
Adjusted R^2	-0.005	0.004	-0.001	0.002	0.0004
Residual Std. Error	29.264 (df = 266)	29.130 (df = 266)	29.196 (df = 266)	29.152 (df = 267)	29.182 (df = 266)
F Statistic	0.646 (df = 4; 266)	1.265 (df = 4; 266)	0.959 (df = 4; 266)	1.217 (df = 3; 267)	1.026 (df = 4; 266)
Note: *$p<0.1$,**$p<0.05$,***$p<0.01$					

Table IV. Model testing. Past vote loss and nicheness (only for the parties that recorded vote loss)

	Dependent Variable *Nicheness Change*					
	(1) MM	(2) B	(3) Market Share	(3.1) Leader	(5) Specialization	(5.1)
Vote Change	-0.004	0.001	-0.001		0.002	0.002[*]
	(0.015)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)
Cabinet Change(Gov)	-1.364[*]	-0.021	-0.072		0.025	
	(0.735)	(0.049)	(0.051)		(0.052)	
Cabinet Chage(Opp)	-0.475	-0.002	-0.053		0.036	
	(0.566)	(0.038)	(0.040)		(0.040)	
Leader Change	-1.083[**]	-0.060[**]	-0.087[***]	-0.083[***]	-0.025	
	(0.447)	(0.030)	(0.031)	(0.030)	(0.031)	
Party Age	-0.0005	0.0002	0.0003		0.0001	
	(0.006)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)		(0.0004)	
Constant	0.429	0.019	0.012	0.035[*]	0/012	0.021
	(0.589)	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.019)	(0.041)	(0.023)
Observations	156	156	156	156	156	156
R^2	0.062	0.035	0.073	0.048	0.030	0.020
Adjusted R^2	0.031	0.003	0.042	0.042	-0.002	0.013
Residual Std. Error	2.624 (df = 150)	0.176 (df = 150)	0.183 (df = 150)	0.183 (df = 154)	0.185 (df = 150)	0.183 (df = 154)
F Statistic	1.998[*] (df = 5; 150)	1.092 (df = 5; 150)	2.372[**] (df = 5; 150)	7.725[***] (df = 1; 154)	0.926 (df = 5; 150)	3.064[*] (df = 1; 154)
Note: **p<0.1,**p<0.05,***p<0.01*						

Table V. Model testing. Past nicheness loss and vote change (only for the parties that recorded nicheness loss)

	(1) MM	(2) B	(3) Market Share	(3.1)	(4) Specialization
Dependent Variable *Vote Change*					
Nicheness Change	3.730* (1.989)	-0.636 (32.111)	-17.783 (33.188)	-13.338 (33.065)	-28.137 (25.990)
Cabinet Change(Gov)	-23.095** (10.404)	-20.533* (11.884)	-5.632 (11.837)	-5.185 (11.857)	-17.117 (12.291)
Cabinet Change (Opp=	-12.587 (10.468)	7.376 (13.239)	14.303 (12.473)	12.618 (12.425)	8.630 (12.768)
Leader Change	-5.377 (7.800)	-11.858 (8.938)	-10.962 (8.789)		-5.471 (8.989)
Constant	19.750*** (6.795)	18.282** (7.019)	9.999 (7.324)	7.610 (7.083)	8.755 (6.823)
Observations	142	153	137	137	153
R^2	0.056	0.033	0.024	0.012	0.029
Adjusted R^2	0.029	0.006	-0.006	-0.010	0.003
Residual Std. Error	43.039 (df = 137)	50.636 (df = 148)	46.112 (df = 132)	46.208 (df = 133)	50.69 (df = 148)
F Statistic	2.050* (df = 4; 137)	1.246 (df = 4; 148)	0.811 (df = 4; 132)	0.560 (df = 3; 133)	1.114 (df = 4; 148)
Note: *p<0.1,**p<0.05,***p<0.01					

Table VI. Model testing. Past vote gains and nicheness change (only for the parties that recorded vote gain)

	(1) MM	(2) B	(3) Market Share	(4) Specialization	(4.1)
Dependent Variable *Nicheness Change*					
Vote Change	-0.0003 (0.005)	0.001** (0.0003)	0.0004 (0.0003)	0.001** (0.0004)	0.001** (0.0004)
Cabinet Change(Gov)	-0.165 (0.656)	0.018 (0.041)	0.008 (0.043)	0.024 (0.048)	
Cabinet Change(Opp)	1.554 (1.089)	0.064 (0.069)	0.109 (0.072)	0.019 (0.079)	
Leader Change	0.471 (0.596)	0.014 (0.038)	0.001 (0.039)	0.026 (0.043)	
Party Age	0.004 (0.008)	0.001 (0.0005)	0.0004 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	
Constant	-0.426 (0.658)	-0.091** (0.042)	-0.059 (0.043)	-0.113** (0.048)	-0.048** (0.023)
Observations	125	125	125	125	125
R^2	0.031	0.063	0.042	0.062	0.040
Adjusted R^2	-0.010	0.024	0.001	0.023	0.032
Residual Std. Error	2.768 (df = 119)	0.175 (df = 119)	0.183 (df = 119)	0.201 (df = 119)	0.201 (df = 123)
F Statistic	0.754 (df = 5; 119)	1.606 (df = 5; 119)	1.034 (df = 5; 119)	1.585 (df = 5; 119)	5.089** (df = 1; 123)
Note: *$p<0.1$,**$p<0.05$,***$p<0.01$					

Table VI. Model testing. Past nicheness change and vote change (only for the parties that recorded nicheness gain)

	(1) MM	(2) B	(3) Market Share	(3.1)	(4) Specialization
	Dependent variable *Vote Change*				
Nicheness Change	-2.213 (2.217)	42.494** (19.678)	-18.552 (27.434)	-18.391 (27.321)	22.936 (17.981)
Cabinet Change(Gov)	-7.953 (10.942)	-4.428 (8.252)	-22.192** (9.903)	-22.269** (9.858)	-9.145 (8.154)
Cabinet Change (Opp)	12.377 (11.968)	-3.156 (7.822)	-10.393 (9.850)	-10.584 (9.745)	-6.960 (8.468)
Leader Change	-10.285 (7.870)	1.255 (5.832)	-1.138 (7.030)		-6.184 (6.125)
Constant	13.747** (6.839)	-7.655 (4.931)	9.138 (6.431)	8.711 (5.845)	2.973 (4.634)
Observations	139	128	144	144	129
R^2	0.031	0.043	0.039	0.039	0.037
Adjusted R^2	0.002	0.012	0.012	0.018	0.006
Residual Std. Error	43.769 (df = 134)	31.364 (df = 123)	40.766 (df = 139)	40.624 (df = 140)	32.75 (df = 124)
F Statistic	1.065 (df = 4; 134)	1.393 (df = 4; 123)	1.419 (df = 4; 139)	1.897 (df = 3; 140)	1.184 (df = 4; 124)
Note: **p<0.1,**p<0.05,***p<0.01*					

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FROM VOTES TO NICHENESS OR FROM NICHENESS TO VOTES? - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELECTORAL FORTUNES AND POLITICAL STRATEGIES IN SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

(Martin Mölder)

Tartu (21.05.2018)

_____ (signature)