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It Sounds Like They are Moving: Understanding and Modeling Emphasis-Based Policy Change*

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Position change is an essential feature of political competition. Implicitly, policy change on an issue dimension is often equated with opinion change on specific issues within that dimension. However, in addition to opinion-based policy change, we highlight that parties and candidates can change their overall position by increasing their emphasis on certain opinions within that issue dimension (emphasis-based policy change). Using party manifesto data, we find that parties differ in their use of each type of policy change based on aspects of party organization, particularly the relative power of leaders and activists. Leader-dominated parties are more likely to engage in opinion-based policy change, also in reaction to systemic policy shifts. In contrast, activist-dominated parties tend to change their overall position in reaction to systemic shifts by emphasizing certain positions more. Our approach links salience-based to spatial models of party competition and has broader implications for how we study party competition.

Spatial models are a major paradigm for scholars analyzing political competition. Based on Hotelling's (1929) spatial model of market competition, Downs (1957) argues that parties and candidates choose positions in an ideological "policy space". Parties thus compete in an electoral market by choosing and adapting policy positions that maximize their vote-, office- or policy-seeking goals. Researchers have built on this model to study how political actors adapt their political views in response to electoral incentives and changes in their environment (e.g., Kollman, Miller and Page 1992; Harmel and Janda 1994; Janda et al. 1995; Adams et al. 2004; Laver 2005; Meguid 2005; Adams et al. 2006; Somer-Topcu 2009; Budge, Ezrow and McDonald 2010; Adams 2012).

However, this research often gives little consideration to *how* parties and candidates alter their policy platforms. Implicitly, these policy shifts are often treated as changes in specific policy opinions expressed by a political actor. For example, a party could move to the right on the economic dimension by changing its stance on the minimum wage or on tax rates on businesses. On a law and order dimension, a party could move to the right by promising more lenient gun control and tougher sentencing laws. Hence, political actors can change their position on an overall issue dimension by altering their stances on individual policy issues that fall within that dimension. Such *opinion-based policy change* is arguably the predominant, yet mostly implicit, understanding of policy change.

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In this paper, we highlight another way in which political actors can move on an issue dimension: by altering the emphasis they put on different issues within the dimension (*emphasis-based policy change*). To move right on a dimension, they can simply talk more about specific policy issues where they have a relatively right-wing stance and less about issues where they have a left-wing stance; the opposite is true if actors wish to move left. This is the type of policy shift implied by Budge's claim that "[p]olicy change consists in de-emphasizing previous priorities and taking up new ones" (1994, 454; see also Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1977).[1] For example, political actors who want to be seen as more pro-business can talk more about economic topics where they already take a free-market stance, such as specific regulations and tax measures. They could also move to the right on a law and order dimension by talking less about their positions on civil rights, gun control and prison reform and more about their already tough positions on tougher sentencing laws and police numbers. Hence, parties can create the appearance of substantive policy change at higher-level issue dimensions by rearranging the relative emphasis they place on different issues that are part of that dimension. Put simply: if voters focus on higher-level issue dimensions, it will sound like political actors are moving, even if the underlying positions of the political actor remain unchanged.

One recent real-world example of such emphasis-based policy change is Mitt Romney's strategy in 2012. *The Economist* noted: "Since clinching the nomination, Mr Romney has moved back to the center in some respects. He *has spent most of his time and advertising budget talking about the economy, rather than the more polarising social issues* that often arose in the primaries" (emphasis added).[2] Similarly, van der Brug (2004, 226) argues that several European social democratic parties managed to move to the right on the overall left-right dimension by placing greater emphasis on already conservative positions, for example, on law and order: "The Dutch PvdA, the British Labour Party and the German SPD […] have *moved to the political center by stressing topics* that were formerly 'owned' by centrist parties" (emphasis added).

By adding emphasis-based to opinion-based policy change, we show that it is possible to integrate the key rival to the Downsian perspective, the salience model of political competition (Budge and Farlie 1983), into a more comprehensive model of position change (Budge 1994): altering issue emphasis on lower-level policy issues can be used to shift positions on an aggregated issue dimension. Modifying policy agendas can therefore lead to policy shifts if parties stress those issues more where they already have liberal (or conservative) views. Salience shifts and agenda manipulation are not just strategies that complement policy change (see e.g., Meguid 2005), they are also essential components of positional accounts of issue competition.

The distinction between the two sources of policy shifts is also important because each mechanism of position change has unique costs and benefits to political actors. Opinion-based policy shifts can be an effective mechanism if actors want to reach the public as such change may be noticed even by inattentive citizens. At the same time, this mechanism carries political risks as it may alienate supporters and dilute a party's brand (Lupu 2014) and signal a lack of ideological principles and conviction (Enelow and Hinich 1984; Tomz and van Houweling 2012). However, political actors may be able to use emphasis-based policy change to minimize these risks: they can shift their stance without changing their views on any issues, avoiding the potential costs of "flip-flopping" (Jones 1994). Yet, emphasis-based policy change may be less likely to be noticed by many voters, potentially reducing its electoral benefits.

[1] This argument is often neglected in recent research based on saliency theory, which mostly focuses on "selective emphasis" (e.g., Klüver and Spoon 2014; Wagner and Meyer 2014).

[2] *Economist*, "The changing man," 25 August 2012, available at http://economist.com/node/21560858

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We argue that the way parties weight these costs and benefits vary based on party organization, in particular the relative power of leaders and activists (Lehrer 2012; Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013; Meyer and Wagner 2014). Leader-dominated parties face fewer risks in terms of alienating supporters and activists, so they should be more likely to embrace opinion-based policy change. In contrast, activist-dominated parties will pay closer heed to their core supporters and members, increasing the costs of shifting positions. As a result, activist-dominated parties will be more likely to use emphasis-based policy change.

Below, we first describe emphasis-based policy change and then present an integrated empirical modeling approach, building on Lowe (2013), that separates the two types of policy shifts. Next, we implement this modeling approach using the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP/MARPOR) data (Volkens et al. 2015). Our empirical application examines how leader- and activist-dominated parties in ten countries use both types of policy change on economic policies. We find that leader-dominated parties are more likely to engage in opinion-based policy change than activist-dominated parties, while there is no statistically significant difference between leader- and activist-dominated parties in the overall tendency to engage in emphasis-based policy change. We also consider how parties react to party system policy change on economic policies (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Williams 2015). We find that leader-dominated parties are more likely to react by engaging in opinion-based policy change, while activist-dominated parties tend to adapt their policy stances by using emphasis-based policy change. These results highlight the limits of our current understanding of how political actors adapt their policy positions. We discuss some potential routes to overcoming these limitations in future research in the concluding section.

POLICY STATEMENTS AND POSITIONS ON ISSUE AREAS

Our approach to understanding how parties and candidates alter their policy platforms is based on three assumptions. First, we assume that the way in which the policy program of political actors becomes visible is through public statements: as Grimmer and Stewart (2013, 291) note, "nearly all political actors speak" (see also Laver 2014, 215 f.).[3] Making statements about policy is a possibility open to incumbents and challengers, government and opposition, and actors within and outside of parliament. The political text containing these statements is a natural by-product of actors' activities (Lowe et al. 2011).[4]

Second, we assume that policy positions can be summarized using a two-level approach. At the higher level, there is an aggregate issue dimension, and at the lower level are more specific issues. The higher-level dimension can be very abstract such as the left-right dimension (Budge and Laver 1992) or well-known two-dimensional spaces (e.g., Kitschelt 1994; Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002); in this case, the lower-level issues can themselves be quite broad, such as environmental, foreign or economic policy. However, we can also think of a single issue area as the higher-level dimension, with more specific issues at the lower level. For instance, researchers who aim to measure party policy positions on economic policy often record specific party stances on issues such as individual taxes, welfare state spending or trade agreements. Policy positions on issue areas are therefore generally recovered from policy positions on specific policies within that issue area.

[3] Other ways of estimating parties' policy positions include mass surveys, expert surveys, roll-call votes and bill sponsorship (Benoit and Laver 2006).

[4] Statements can be extracted from many documents and venues, for example, manifestos, speeches, press releases or media reports (Grimmer and Stewart 2013; Laver 2014).

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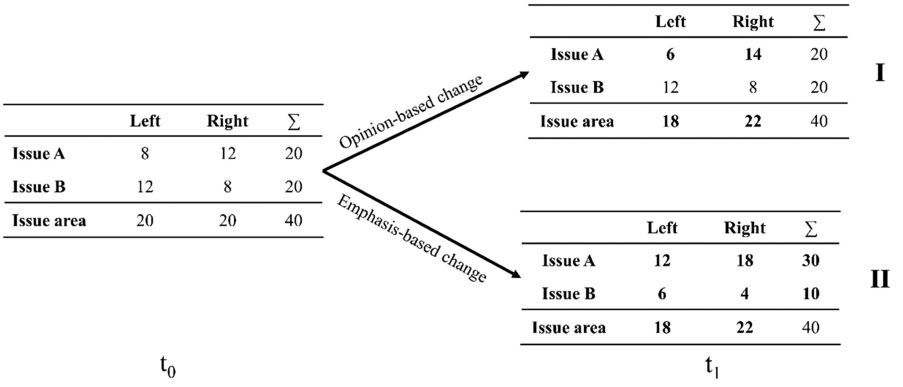


Fig. 1. Example: party statements on an issue area made up of two issues
Note: Changes in the number of statements between t_0 and t_1 are highlighted in bold.

Third, we assume that the higher-level issue dimension is one-dimensional.[5] In particular, this implies that the higher-issue area has two poles, so there are differences and disagreements concerning the goal to be achieved, making policy change fundamentally possible. In other words, the higher-level issue areas we consider are not valence issues. However, it is consistent with our theory if a lower-level issue is a one-sided valence issue, with only positive or negative statements feasible.[6] Positions on individual policies (e.g., for or against certain taxes) are assigned to one of the poles of the broader, higher-level issue area scale (e.g., economic policy).[7]

To illustrate how opinion-based and emphasis-based policy change can take place within this framework, consider the hypothetical example in Figure 1. The panel on the left in Figure 1 shows policy stances for an issue area with 40 statements. These statements are made on two specific issues, A and B, where the policy position is somewhat to the right on issue A (i.e., more right than left statements) and somewhat to the left on issue B (i.e., more left than right statements). The policy position on the issue area is centrist, based on 20 left and 20 right statements; note that we assume that the only relevant information about each statement is whether it is right or left, so statements are treated as fundamentally exchangeable apart from their *R* or *L* content (Lowe et al. 2011, 126).

Scenarios I and II on the right of Figure 1 exemplify the two types of policy change in an ideal-typical way. The key point here is that the overall policy shift on the issue area is identical (i.e., a slight change to the right), while the nature of this policy shift is fundamentally different in the two scenarios.

Panel I in Figure 1 exemplifies *opinion-based policy change*. It occurs when a political actor changes the relative number of *R* and *L* statements on a specific policy issue. Compared to the situation at t_0, the party or candidate now makes 14 right statements on issue A, two more than before. The political actor now also makes two fewer left statements on issue A, leaving a total

[5] In this, we follow many expert surveys (e.g., Benoit and Laver 2006; Bakker et al. 2015), which place parties on one-dimensional scales such as taxes versus spending or civil liberties versus law and order, and many analyses using manifestos, where issue statements are assigned to one side of an issue (e.g., Bakker and Hobolt 2012; Abou-Chadi 2016).

[6] The most extreme case would occur if all lower-level issues were valence issues. In such a case, all higher-level policy movement would be emphasis-based.

[7] We also assume that, in the time period examined, (1) issues are consistently matched to the same issue areas and (2) issue positions are assigned to the same issue area poles.

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of six left statements. The overall position has moved slightly to the right, with 22 right and 18 left statements. The change therefore occurs in the columns, while the row totals are maintained.

Emphasis-based policy change occurs when a political actor changes the proportion of statements on the different issues. In terms of our example (Figure 1, Panel II), the change now occurs in the row totals, so in how attention is divided between the different issues that make up the issue area. The party or candidate increases emphasis on issue A by ten statements and decreases emphasis on issue B by ten statements. Note that the position on each individual issue, measured as the relative emphasis of left and right statements, remains the same. Overall, as with opinion-based change the party moves slightly to the right, now simply by changing emphases over issues. However, the extent of effort in terms of sentences that need to be changed for a policy shift with similar magnitude is far greater than for opinion-based change.[8]

PARTY ORGANIZATION AND TYPES OF POLICY CHANGE

The preceding section naturally raises the question of why parties choose one type of policy change over the other. We suggest that party organization is an important predictor of this decision. Party organization can generally explain variation in party strategies (Lehrer 2012; Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013; Wagner and Meyer 2014), with the key distinction being whether parties are dominated by their leaders or by their activists (Panebianco 1988). Parties with significant activist control are less likely to be vote-maximizing, office-seeking outfits (Ezrow et al. 2011; Pedersen 2012). Activists are less likely to sacrifice policy positions in the pursuit of office, and greater activist influence also increases the number of potential veto points in pursuing policy change (Giger and Schumacher n.d.). Moreover, parties dominated by members may be more likely to choose party leaders that themselves value policy over votes. Hence, standard spatial models that assume vote-maximization and office-seeking may apply less to activist-oriented parties. Based on this key insight, we can formulate expectations as to how parties choose between types of policy change.

First, activist-dominated parties should be less likely to engage in opinion-based change. This is because policy change can entail negative consequences, in particular with regards to internal harmony and support among activists (Robertson 1976; Janda et al. 1995; Adams et al. 2004; Tavits 2007; Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013). In activist-dominated parties, leaders will find it difficult to push through opinion-based shifts (Giger and Schumacher n.d.; Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013).

In contrast, activist-centered parties should be more likely to engage in emphasis-based policy change. All parties will face some pressure to adapt their programs to changing national circumstances or popular opinion. Activist-centered parties will tend to prefer to react using emphasis-based change. Emphasis-based shifts enable political actors to adjust their position without necessarily changing their position on any specific issue (Jones 1994). Such changes may therefore be attractive to leaders of activist-dominated parties as they not require the explicit assent of party activists since no specific position is changed. Even if party activists do need to be convinced, this may be easier since emphasis-based change is based only on the reallocation of salience *within* one policy area. For example, changing a party's economic policy appeal can occur via higher emphasis on their welfare state position and less emphasis on their views on market regulation; the salience and issue positions for other policy areas (e.g., environment) are not affected. This more subtle type of policy change may be more suitable for

[8] Political actors can also add and/or discard issues between t_1 and t_0. We treat this as an extreme form of emphasis-based change.

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parties where party leaders are heavily constrained by their activists. An alternative expectation may of course be that activist-dominated parties engage less in both types of policy change. Given the influential role of policy-seeking party members and activists, any change should be difficult to carry out for the party leadership in such parties. Nevertheless, our hypotheses are:

HYPOTHESIS 1a Leader-dominated parties should be more likely than activist-dominated parties to engage in opinion-based change.

HYPOTHESIS 1b Activist-dominated parties should be more likely than leader-dominated parties to engage in emphasis-based change.

These first hypotheses only concern the general way in which parties carry out policy change. However, we are also interested in party strategies, specifically in how parties respond to changes in their competitive environment. Recent research has shown that parties adapt their policy platforms to past election results, evolving public opinion and in response to policy shifts of rival parties (Adams 2012). Party organization also affects how parties respond to such changes in their environment (Lehrer 2012; Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013; Meyer and Wagner 2014).

Following this line of research, we study party policy shifts as a result of the parties' incentives and constraints (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013). Thus, parties should shift their policy platforms when they have incentives to do so *and* are not constrained in their pursuit of these incentives. In terms of constraints, we focus again on differences in party organization. With regard to the parties' incentives, we consider party responses to a specific type of change in the external environment: overall position changes by the party system as a whole (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Williams 2015). The average position change of all other parties in the party system is an information shortcut that carries a lot of information: for example, other parties may be responding to changing economic conditions (Adams, Haupt and Stoll 2009) or public opinion shifts (Adams et al. 2004), and thus, parties should adapt their policy position in the same direction as their competitors (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Williams 2015).

Our two hypotheses are:

HYPOTHESIS 2a Leader-dominated parties should be more likely to react to systemic policy change using opinion-based change than activist-dominated parties.

HYPOTHESIS 2b Activist-dominated parties should be more likely to react to systemic policy change using emphasis-based change than leader-dominated parties.

MODELING THE TWO MECHANISMS OF PARTY POLICY CHANGE

Empirically, parties often mix emphasis-based and opinion-based policy change, so the ideal types discussed above often overlap. The major challenge is to separate the two types of position change exemplified in Figure 1 to gain estimates of how these types of change affect party policy shifts at the level of issue areas.

For any issue area, a simple approach to recovering positions from R and L statements is to use the (log-transformed) ratio of R and L statements, that is

$$\ln \frac{R}{L}. \tag{1}$$

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This is known as the log-scale scale approach (Lowe et al. 2011). To compare policy positions at two points in time, t_0 and t_1, one can simply take the difference between the position of party on the issue area at time t_0 and that at time t_1:

$$\ln\frac{R_1}{L_1} - \ln\frac{R_0}{L_0}. \tag{2}$$

Values larger than zero indicate shifts to the right, values smaller than zero shifts to the left.

Yet, we can gain a better understanding of policy shifts on issue areas when we explicitly consider policy positions as *an aggregation of policy positions on specific issues*. Here, we draw directly on Downs: "each party takes stands on many issues and each stand can be assigned a position on our left-right scale. Then a party's net position […] is a weighted average of the positions of all particular policies it upholds" (1957, 132). This means that the log-scale for issue areas can be disaggregated into specific issues. The formula for K issues that make up an issue area is then as follows:

$$\ln\frac{\sum_1^K R_k}{\sum_1^K L_k}. \tag{3}$$

We follow Lowe (2013) in modeling party issue stances using a row and column effects association model (Goodman 1979; Agresti 2013).[9] Lowe (2013) shows that this model can be used to derive policy positions for texts (i) based on word (or sentence) frequencies coded in issue categories (j). We adapt this approach to our data structure and distinguish "left" from "right" issue stances for individual issues. Thus, our categories distinguish "left" and "right" stances (j) on policy areas nested in an issue dimension (i). Assume that our data are given in a data matrix as in Figure 1 where each row represents issue emphasis on a particular issue at a given election and two columns that contain the number of right (R) and left (L) statements. Following Lowe (2013), cell entries μ_{ij} of row i and column j can be modeled as

$$\ln(\mu_{ij}) = \lambda + \psi_i + \eta_j + \beta\varphi_i\nu_j. \tag{4}$$

The association model specifies the joint distribution of variables cross-classified in contingency tables and how expected cell counts are associated to other cells in the table (Agresti 2013; Lowe 2013). The intuition is simple: each cell count is a function of four parameters: a constant, row and column totals, and an interaction term. The row parameter ψ_i indicates the (expected) sum of cell counts in row i, that is the expected counts of the "$\sum$" column in the tables shown in Figure 1. Column parameter η_j is an estimate for sums over column j, that is the overall number of "left" and "right" statements on the economy across parties and time. If the interaction term $\beta\varphi_i\nu_j$ is set to 0, cell entries thus only depend on the row and the column they are in, and the two variables shown in rows and columns are independent of each other (independence model; see Agresti 2013). The term $\beta\varphi_i\nu_j$ captures associations and interactions across columns and rows.

This approach allows us to separate emphasis-based and opinion-based change with parameters ψ and φ, respectively (Lowe 2013). As detailed in the Online Appendix A, Lowe (2013) shows that for an issue i at time t, changes in policy positions between t_0 and t_1 can be expressed as

$$\Delta position_i = position_{it_1} - position_{it_0} = \beta(\nu_R - \nu_L)\left(\varphi_{it_1} - \varphi_{it_0}\right). \tag{5}$$

[9] We are indebted to Will Lowe for pointing our attention to his approach.

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Furthermore, changes in issue salience between t_0 and t_1 are simply the differences in the column parameters:

$$\Delta salience_i = \ln\left[\frac{salience_{it_1}}{salience_{it_0}}\right] = \psi_{it_1} - \psi_{it_0}. \tag{6}$$

Note that $\Delta position_i$ describes opinion-based changes on specific policy issues as a function in φ (with parameters β and v), while $\Delta salience_i$ captures changes in salience, given specific issue positions φ, for individual policy issues as a function in ψ. This helps us to describe combined changes on specific policy issues in terms of opinion-based and emphasis-based changes. In the Online Appendix A we use the example in Figure 1 to illustrate this approach in greater detail.

We use this information to understand how parties shift their positions on broader issue areas. Assume that a party talks about issues k ($1 \leq k \leq K$) at both t_0 and t_1, then *opinion-based change* in an issue area is measured by the average change across all specific issues

$$\sum_{k=1}^{K} \frac{\Delta position_k}{K}. \tag{7}$$

Similarly, *emphasis-based policy change* is the average of salience changes on issues addressed at both t_0 and t_1. Here, however, we also need to consider that changes in issue salience hinge on a party's or candidate's policy position on that issue: The effect of increasing issue salience is positive (i.e., shifting the policy position to the right) if the policy position on that specific issue is on the right, while it is negative if the party or candidate holds a left-wing policy position. Therefore, we measure *emphasis-based policy change in an issue area* using

$$\sum_{k=1}^{K} \frac{\Delta salience_k \cdot position_{k,t_0}}{K}. \tag{8}$$

EMPIRICAL IMPLEMENTATION USING MANIFESTO DATA

While the approach outlined above can be applied to various data sources, we illustrate it using CMP/MARPOR data (Volkens et al. 2015). The CMP/MARPOR hand-codes parties' election manifestos by matching quasi-sentences with 56 issue categories. The coding scheme is primarily designed to measure party issue attention but can also be used to study policy positions (e.g., Adams et al. 2004; Somer-Topcu 2009; Budge, Ezrow and McDonald 2010; Ezrow et al. 2011).

The empirical analysis is based on party manifesto data from ten West European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) from 1975 to 2003. We use economic policy as it is a key dimension for conflict in most party systems; at the same time, parties can stress very different aspects (i.e., issues) such as trade or welfare policy within that rather broad issue area. Using the CMP/MARPOR coding scheme, we distinguish six economic issues: free trade versus protectionism; demand-led versus austerity-led growth; employer power versus union rights; free markets versus state intervention; increases versus decreases in welfare state spending; and increases versus decreases in education spending. To each issue, we assign CMP/MARPOR categories that reflect favorable emphasis for the left and the right pole of each scale (see Table B.1 in the Online Appendix B).

We transform the data from percentages to sentence counts. Before running the model, we calculate the total number of statements on economic policies per manifesto. A common problem with manifesto data is the large number of categories with no statements (Lowe et al. 2011). To mitigate this problem, we exclude manifestos with less than 14 quasi-sentences on the economy (i.e., 10 percent of our sample) from the analysis. For the remaining manifestos, we

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standardize the text length so that the number of left and right statements on economic issues is the same for each party and election. We also need to deal with the remaining "0" cells in the data. Because the logarithm of 0 is not defined, we estimate the model in (4) by replacing all 0 counts with one statement.[10] Dropping "estimated" party policy programs and linking these data with our covariates (see below) leaves us with 261 observations of party policy change. Further details on the data and descriptive statistics are presented in the Online Appendix B.

The key independent variable is *Party system policy change* (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Williams 2015), measured using the average shifts of all rival parties (but excluding the focal party) in the party system. Thus, positive values indicate a shift in the party system to the right, while negative values indicate a party system shift to the left.[11]

We use two Laver and Hunt (1992) question items to measure a party's internal distribution of power (see also Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013).[12] Respondents are asked to assess the influence of party leaders and party activists have over the formation of party policy (1 = "have no influence at all"; 20 = "have a very great influence"). To assess *Leader-centeredness*, we compare the experts' assessment of the power of party activists to the perceived power of party leaders: a party is leader-centered ("1") if the party leadership is judged to be more powerful (i.e., has a higher score) than party activists, and a party is activist-centered ("0") if party activists are seen to have a higher say in party decision-making.[13]

In all our models, we control for *past electoral performance* as it is one of the most important causes of policy change (Kollman, Miller and Page 1992; Budge 1994; Harmel and Janda 1994; Laver 2005; Budge, Ezrow and McDonald 2010). Specifically, parties that gained votes in the last election should shift less than parties that lost votes (Somer-Topcu 2009); moreover, electorally successful parties should continue to shift in the same direction, while those that lost votes should shift their policy platform in the opposite direction to that of their previous move (see Kollman, Miller and Page 1992; Budge 1994; Laver 2005).

In our models predicting the direction of party policy shifts (Hypotheses 2a and 2b), we also control for two other potential confounding variables. First, we use the replication material by Schumacher, de Vries and Vis (2013) to include *mean voter change*, that is, changes in the mean voter's policy position from the last to the current election. Second, we control for changes in the economic environment. In particular, we study whether changes in unemployment from the previous to the current election affect party position change.[14] Unemployment is a major economic indicator, and arguably the one voters know most about (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000). Robustness checks using alternative economic indicators are presented in the Online Appendix C.

[10] We also ran the models using 0.1 instead of 1 to deal with "0" cells. The results (not shown) remain substantively similar. Moreover, some policy changes are as follows: a party increases or decreases the number of "left" statements while the number of "right" is 0 both at t_0 and t_1 (or vice versa). Since our data adjustment (replacing 0s with 1s) is vulnerable to this kind of policy change, we treat these cases as pure emphasis-based change and set $\varphi_{it_1} - \varphi_{it_0}$ to 0.

[11] Note that we do not distinguish between opinion-based and emphasis-based changes of rival parties. The reason is that we expect parties' to respond to the rival parties' overall change of party positions, irrespective of *how* these parties managed to shift their platforms.

[12] One could also use organizational characteristics as a proxy for leadership dominance. These two approaches yield broadly correlated measures (Pedersen 2012), and expert surveys arguably provide more accurate estimates of leadership domination (Giger and Schumacher n.d.).

[13] The results using a continuous measure for party leader-centeredness are similar to the ones presented here (see the Online Appendix F).

[14] Data on (yearly) unemployment figures are obtained from the European Commission's AMECO database and the International Labour Organization.

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RESULTS

First, we argued that how parties organize should affect the extent to which parties shift their policy positions via opinion-based and emphasis-based policy change (Hypotheses 1a and 1b). To test these expectations, we estimate two regression models using the magnitude of each type of policy shift as the dependent variable, using |*Policy change*| to denote the absolute value of opinion- and emphasis-based policy change:

$$|Policy\,change_t| = a_0 + a_1 \cdot Leader\text{-}centeredness + a_2 \cdot |Policy\,change_{t-1}| + a_3 \cdot Vote\,change_{t-1} + Country\,fixed\,effects.$$

We are primarily interested in the effect of *Leader-centeredness*, but also account for the potential impact of electoral defeat in the previous election, *Vote change*$_{t-1}$ (Somer-Topcu 2009). Like Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu (2014) and Fernandez-Vazquez and Somer-Topcu (Forthcoming), we use linear regression models with standard errors clustered for parties, capture serial correlation using the lagged dependent variable, and include country dummies to capture institutional differences across countries. The results are shown in Table 1.

The positive and significant effect of *Leader-centeredness* in Model 1 supports our Hypothesis 1a: leader-dominated parties are more likely than activist-dominated parties to engage in opinion-based change. The size of the effect (0.40) is about one-third of the dependent variable's SD (1.15), and thus substantial in substantive terms. In contrast, we find no evidence that activist-dominated parties are more likely than leader-dominated parties to engage in emphasis-based change (Hypothesis 1b). The effect of *Leader-centeredness* in Model 2 is positive, indicating that the magnitude of emphasis-based policy change is higher, not lower, for leadership-dominated parties than for activist-dominated parties. Yet, the coefficient does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance and is also substantively weaker than the one in Model 1: the coefficient (0.88) is about one-fifth of the dependent variable's SD (4.44). Thus, we have no clear evidence that party organization affects the magnitude of emphasis-based policy change. Overall, we have more evidence that activist-dominated parties simply move less than leadership-dominated parties, both in terms of opinion-based and emphasis-based policy change.

TABLE 1 *Explaining the Magnitude of Policy Change by Party Organization*

	(1)	(2)
	Opinion-Based Policy Change	Emphasis-Based Policy Change
Leader-centeredness	0.399*	0.879
	(2.50)	(1.03)
|Policy change$_{t-1}$|	0.108	0.116*
	(1.22)	(2.28)
Vote change$_{t-1}$	0.001	0.043
	(0.08)	(0.81)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Constant	0.324	4.470*
	(1.20)	(2.46)
Observations	261	261
Log likelihood	−387.2	−736.7

Note: *t* statistics in parentheses; country fixed effects not reported. Model estimates based on a linear regression model with standard errors clustered by parties.
$^{+}p < 0.1$, $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$.

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TABLE 2 *Explaining Why and How Parties Adapt Their Positions to Rival Parties*

	(1)	(2)
	Opinion-Based Policy Change	Emphasis-Based Policy Change
Party system policy change	−0.087	1.224*
	(−0.68)	(2.46)
Leader-centeredness	−0.204	1.151
	(−1.52)	(1.51)
Party system policy change × Leader-centeredness	0.336*	−1.324^{+}
	(2.42)	(−1.94)
Mean voter change	0.459	−5.370**
	(0.79)	(−3.41)
Policy change$_{t-1}$	−0.260***	−0.192***
	(−5.80)	(−3.52)
Vote change$_{t-1}$	−0.009	0.135^{+}
	(−0.48)	(1.83)
Policy change$_{t-1}$ × Vote change$_{t-1}$	0.042**	0.006
	(2.76)	(0.39)
Change in unemployment	0.121**	0.103
	(2.84)	(0.65)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes
Constant	0.553*	−4.737*
	(2.14)	(−2.30)
Observations	261	261
Log likelihood	−444.0	−828.2

Note: *t* statistics in parentheses; country fixed effects not reported. Model estimates based on a linear regression model with standard errors clustered by parties.
$^{+}$p < 0.1, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.

Next, we use two regression models to study how party organization affects reactions to party system policy change using opinion-based and emphasis-based policy change (Hypotheses 2a and 2b). Using *Policy change* to denote opinion- and emphasis-based policy change, we test the following model:[15]

$$\begin{aligned} \textit{Policy change}_t = {} & a_0 + a_1 \cdot \textit{Party system policy change}_t \\ & + a_2 \cdot \textit{Leader-centeredness} \\ & + a_3 \cdot \textit{Party system policy change}_t X\ \textit{Leader-centeredness} \\ & + a_4 \cdot \textit{Mean voter change}_t + a_5 \cdot \textit{Policy change}_{t-1} \\ & + a_6 \cdot \textit{Vote change}_{t-1} + a_7 \cdot \textit{Policy change}_{t-1} X\ \textit{Vote change}_{t-1} \\ & + a_8 \cdot \textit{Change in unemployment} + \textit{Country fixed effects}. \end{aligned}$$

We again use linear regression models with standard errors clustered for parties, a lagged dependent variable and country fixed effects. As shown below, our major conclusions are robust to different model specifications.

The results of the empirical analysis are shown in Table 2 and the corresponding marginal effects in Figure 2. Both models show that activist- and leader-centered parties differ

[15] We also estimated models with lagged values for systemic policy change (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Williams 2015). The effects are in the same direction but weaker than those for concurrent shifts, suggesting that parties have more incentives to follow concurrent than previous shifts (see Online Appendix E).

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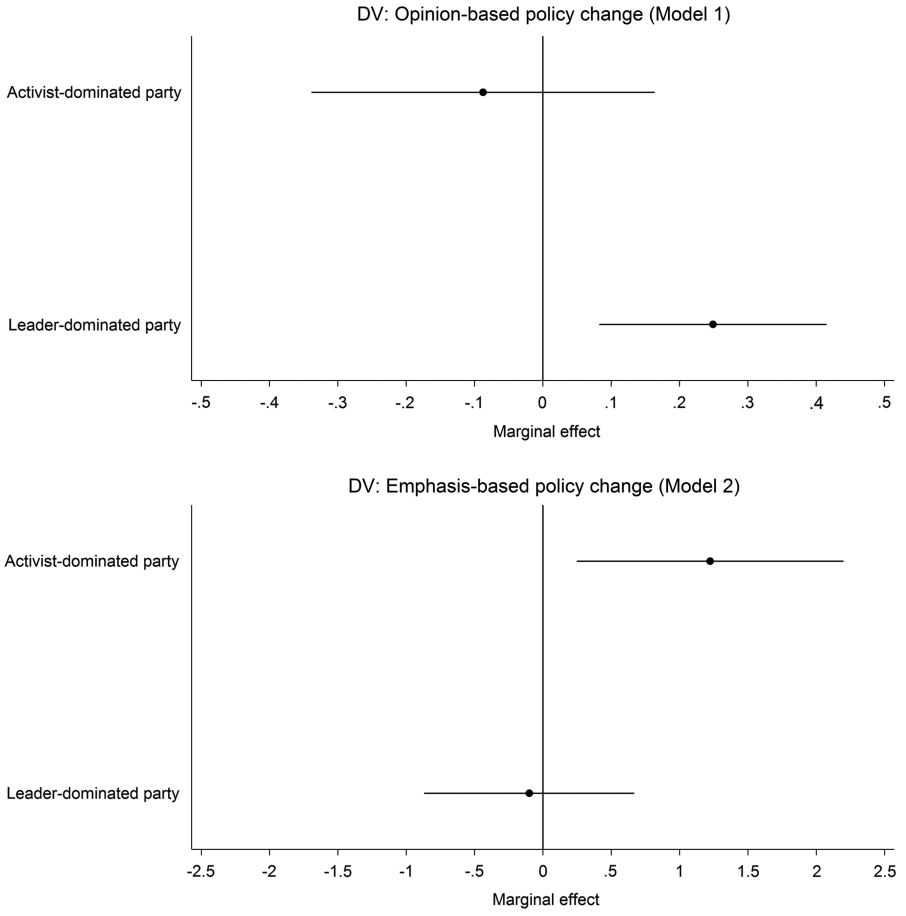


Fig. 2. Marginal effect of party system policy change on policy change
Note: Estimates based on Models 1 and 2 in Table 1. All remaining covariates held constant at their mean (continuous variables) or mode (categorical variables).

substantially in how they respond to party system changes. Leader-centered parties mainly shift their policy platforms using opinion-based policy change (Model 1), while activist-centered parties adapt their policy platforms using emphasis-based policy change (Model 2). The effect of *Party system policy change* in Model 1 is small and not statistically significant for activist-dominated parties. In contrast, the same effect for leader-centered parties is substantially larger and statistically significant at conventional levels (Figure 2, upper panel). This suggests that, compared to leaders of activist-centered parties, leaders with more power within their organization have more room for maneuver on party policies and can shift stances in line with other parties. Yet, activist-centered parties are not necessarily immobile. For emphasis-based policy change, the results in Model 2 show that activist-centered parties are in fact more likely to respond to changes in rival parties' policy platforms: if rival parties shift to the right, activist-centered parties put more emphasis on issue where they have right positions, de-emphasizing those where they have positions on the left. In contrast, the effect is weaker and not statistically significant for leader-dominated parties (Figure 2, lower panel).

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Turning to the control variables, we also see important differences in how parties react to other changes in their environment. Changing voter preferences affect emphasis-based but not position-based policy changes. Interestingly, the negative effect in Model 2 suggests that parties react to voter shifts to the right by talking more about issues where they have a relatively left-wing stance. What also differs is how parties react to their electoral performance. In Model 1, the interaction with changes in vote share is positive and statistically significant, while there is no such effect for emphasis-based policy change in Model 2. These results suggest a refinement of the general expectation that parties shift policy positions in response to past election results (see Kollman, Miller and Page 1992; Budge 1994; Laver 2005): parties do react to their electoral performance, but the mechanism of doing so is opinion-based policy change. Finally, the economic environment affects opinion-based, but not emphasis-based policy change. Thus, increasing unemployment makes parties take up more right-wing stances (Model 1), perhaps because government parties may have to defend austerity in hard economic times.

We use several tests to evaluate the robustness of our findings. First, existing research has used different model specifications to account for the time-series cross-sectional data structure. Schumacher, de Vries and Vis (2013) use panel-corrected standard errors (Beck and Katz 1995; Beck and Katz 1996), while Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009) use standard errors clustered by elections. Our substantial conclusions do not change when we use these alternative model specifications (Online Appendix D). Second, we estimate models that include controls for the rival parties' policy changes in the previous election (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Williams 2015). As shown in the Online Appendix E, the effects are in the same direction but weaker than those for concurrent shifts, suggesting that parties have more incentives to follow concurrent than previous shifts.

Third, a crucial assumption in the analysis above is that the main difference between party organizations is whether parties or activists dominate within parties. We test this assumption using a continuous measure for party leader-centeredness. Following previous research (Schumacher, de Vries and Vis 2013; Wagner and Meyer 2014), we use the Laver–Hunt expert survey data and subtract the experts' assessment of the power of party activists (1 = "have no influence at all"; 20 = "have a very great influence") from the perceived power of party leaders. The empirical range of this continuous measure is from −12.4 to +14.1. In the Online Appendix F, we use interactions with this continuous measure, its squared term and party system policy change to test whether the interaction effect for party organization is indeed non-linear (see also Giger and Schumacher n.d.). As expected, the main distinction is between party organizations where activists dominate (negative values) compared to those where leaders dominate (positive values). Especially for Hypothesis 2b (emphasis-based policy change), the marginal effect plots are almost flat for all values in the positive range. These results support the conclusion that the main distinction is between two party organization types: activist- and leader-centered parties. Fourth, we also test whether our findings could be explained by other party characteristics. While party organization is a relatively exogenous measure, activist-centered parties such as Green parties differ in other ways from their rival parties. Therefore, we control for party size and the emphasis on economic policies (both at the previous election). The results (see Online Appendix G) are robust to this model specification. Finally, we use different indicators to capture the state of the economy. In the Online Appendix C we show regression models using the average gross domestic product growth in the inter-election period and inflation as indicators for the state of the economy. Our main conclusions do not change.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While most studies implicitly assume that opinion change underlies policy change, we have argued that parties can also shift policy positions on issue areas via emphasis-based change on

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specific policy issues within that policy dimension. This type of policy change has so far been relatively neglected, even though early proponents of saliency theory noted its relevance (Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1977). We apply our approach to party manifesto data and find that parties' internal organization affects how they enact policy change and how they react to rival parties' policy shifts: leader-centered parties are more likely to engage in opinion-based policy change, also in reaction to systemic policy shifts; in contrast, activist-centered parties are more likely to change their emphasis on existing positions as a reaction to party system policy change. Thus, analyzing *how* parties move provides a more nuanced explanation for differences in party behavior.

Our framework is important because it does more than just add emphasis-based policy change as a way for parties to look like they are moving: we open up the black box of policy change. Hitherto, researchers have tended to disregard the question of *how* political actors carry out policy shifts. We have shown that emphasis-based change is a key mechanism by which parties can move, in addition to opinion-based change. Importantly, our approach invites researchers to consider the two types of policy change in their theoretical and empirical accounts of the causes and consequences of party policy shifts. In particular, we think our framework provides six key avenues for future research to explore.

First, there is already rich body of research that explains variation in issue emphasis (see e.g., Budge and Farlie 1983; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Sigelman and Buell 2004; De Vries and Hobolt 2012; Wagner 2012; Klüver and Spoon 2014). This research has tended to portray salience change has an alternative to position change. However, our framework implies that changes in issue emphasis may also affect parties' policy positions if certain party positions become more prominent within the party's overall program (see also Feld, Merill and Grofman 2014). Our approach will enable researchers to use insights from studies of salience-based issue competition (e.g., Budge and Farlie 1983; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Sigelman and Buell 2004) to gain a better understanding of how and why parties and candidates engage in policy shifts. For example, parties adapt their issue priorities in response to changing issue concerns of voters (Klüver and Spoon 2014; Wagner and Meyer 2014). A direct implication for spatial models is that changing voter policy concerns should result in emphasis-based policy change, but not necessarily opinion-based policy change. By establishing these mechanisms, we can learn more about how parties respond to demands to adapt their policy profiles. Future research in this field should therefore examine whether and under what conditions changes in issue emphasis also affect position change.

Second, previous research has shown that not all issue dimensions are the same: some dimensions are generally principled issues (Tavits 2007), while others may form a party's core issues (Green 2011). Future work should consider whether the relevance of the two types of position change is likely to differ across policy areas. For example, opinion-based change may be less likely on core and principled issues.

Third, we also know that the extent of policy change depends on the competitive context, for instance, the emergence of new rivals (Meguid 2005). Future research should examine whether the use of the two mechanisms exhibits contextual variation. For instance, it may be that opinion-based change is more likely in contexts of deeper electoral volatility and serious competitive threats.

Fourth, recent research has established the importance of issue evolution and issue entrepreneurship for understanding party competition (Carmines and Stimson 1989; De Vries and Hobolt 2012). This means that issues can emerge on or disappear from party system agendas, with important consequences for parties' ideological positions and electoral success. Such issue change should also have consequences for party position shifts. In our framework, we treat issue change as an extreme form of emphasis-based policy change; however, discarding "old" and

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emphasizing "new" issues may actually differ in important ways from other types of policy change. On the one hand, issue change may present an opportunity for parties. They can choose new issues where constraints are relatively low, and the pool of potential new issues is likely to be large. On the other hand, issue change may also be a challenge for parties. New issues may in part be forced on a party by the media or by rival parties (e.g., Meguid 2005), and on some new issues the party will be bound by existing positions on linked issues. For example, parties chose how to position themselves on European integration based on their other ideological stances (Marks and Wilson 2000). So, there are still limits to the range of positions a party can take on a new issue if it wishes to remain credible.

Fifth, our account may explain why previous research reaches differing conclusions about the frequency of policy shifts. For example, Page (1978, 110) notes that "instances of outright variation in policy stands are rare", while research using party statements in manifestos finds that substantive policy shifts are frequent (e.g., Budge 1994; Budge, Ezrow and McDonald 2010). This discrepancy may be the result of different understandings of what policy change is. Researchers focusing on opinion-based policy change may stress the rarity of such change, while those who also take into account emphasis-based shifts may find policy change to be a normal part of party competition. Hence, our approach suggests that the empirically determined frequency of position shifts may depend on what kind of shifts we examine. Future research should further explore this possibility.

Finally, recent research has presented diverse findings on whether voters actually notice changes in policy positions of political actors (Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu 2011; Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu 2014; Fernandez-Vazquez 2014; Fernandez-Vazquez and Somer-Topcu Forthcoming). These analyses have not distinguished between types of policy change. Hence, future research should consider whether the way parties and candidates adapt their policy positions affects how voters react to these changes. While we argue that opinion-based policy change is more likely to be noticed by voters, endanger credibility, and enrage activists, we have not tested this assumption empirically. Distinguishing between types of policy change may help to explain why some studies find evidence that voters perceive policy shifts of political actors, while other studies find no such effect. In sum, our framework therefore provides important avenues for future research on the causes and consequences of party policy shifts that may help us to find new answers to old questions.

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