Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Party Competition in Western Europe
Issue Competition

Mirko Wegemann

Universität Münster
Institut für Politikwissenschaft

21 May 2025

Universität
Münster

Interim Evaluation

Generally, you seem to be satisfied with how the seminar proceeds.
There were some open comments asking for...

- more clarity for group tasks $+$ essay task
- less reading
- more on how to write a term paper
- coding practices

Introduction
●○

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Interim Evaluation

My **suggestion**:

- second essay task is clearer, better embedded in prior session
- I will try to make the reading exercise more practical-oriented, with units on what you could get out of it for your own work
- there will be another, swift, data session today
    - on top, we could: drop the final session on legislatures and instead do a hands-on coding session (Daan and Alexander could briefly summarize the reading for us or switch to another session)
    - beforehand: I upload a crash course on how to work with R + some related tutorials

Any thoughts?

Introduction
○●

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Plan for today

- We'll debate whether and how parties compete for issues
- For your own term paper, we will discuss how you could approach the questions raised in the empirical readings differently
- Introduce the Manifesto Project which allows us to trace issue competition

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
●○○○○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Why focussing on political parties?

"[e]verything changes once a conflict gets into the political arena"
(Schattschneider 1960, p. 36).

- demand side may articulate specific beliefs
- but: these are shaped by the political elite, their communication and behavior
- to understand political competition, we need to zero in on political parties, their strategic communication and the resources which are at their disposal

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
●○○○○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Why focussing on political parties?

Established approaches:

- salience theory Budge and Farlie (1983) → attention
- spatial models Downs (1957) → position
- issue ownership Petrocik (1996) → competency
- issue yield De Sio and Weber (2014)

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
●○○○○○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Why focussing on political parties?

FIGURE 1. Support-partisanship diagram for 12 policy statements: *Partido Popular* (Spain). *Data source*: EES 2009.
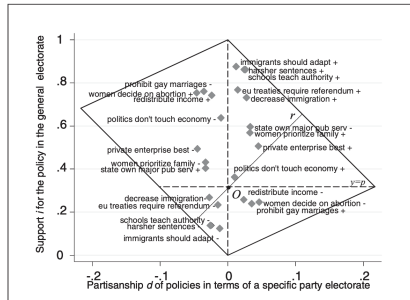
The signs (+) and (–) indicate *agreement* or *disagreement* with the statement, respectively.

Figure: The 'issue yield' framework by De Sio and Weber (2014, p. 873)

Introduction
OO

Issue Competition
O●OOOOOOO

Data snack
OOO

Outlook
OO

References

Universität
Münster

Survey on the readings

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○●○○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Mainstream parties and global warming

- **Research Question**: Under which conditions do mainstream parties talk about climate change?

- **Main Argument**:

- **Data and Method**:

- **Results**:

- **Implications**:

Introduction
00

Issue Competition
000●00000

Data snack
000

Outlook
00

References

Universität
Münster

Argument

Climate change becomes increasingly salient. Are established parties responsive to the issue?

- rooted in the idea of issue competition, niche parties (here: the *Greens*) put forward previously ignored issues; mainstream parties react

Question by Leyla: Are there any other contexts known where a political party, although it is regarded as the "issue owner", is not the driving force for new policy development?

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○●○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Argument

Schwörer (2024) argues that there is a number of factors that might shape issue engagement of mainstream parties with climate change issues

- success of the Greens

- their own ideology

- their government participation

- public opinion

- protests by climate movements

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○●○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Data and Methods

What's the main issue Schwörer (2024) encounters when trying to measure salience of climate change issues?

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
oooo●oooo

Data snack
ooo

Outlook
oo

References

Universität
Münster

Data and Methods

There is no established measure available. The Manifesto Project
only has a measure on *environmental protection*

Environmental Protection

General policies in favour of protecting the environment, fighting climate change, and other "green" policies. For instance:

- General preservation of natural resources;

- Preservation of countryside, forests, etc.;

- Protection of national parks;

- Animal rights.

May include a great variance of policies that have the unified *goal* of environmental protection.

Figure: Coding instruction for environmental issues by Lehmann et al. (2024)

What's the issue with this measurement?

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○●○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Data and Methods

1. only positive category (is this an issue after all?)
2. wide spectrum, not necessarily targeted towards climate change mitigation/adaptation but environmental protection for the reason of conversation, health etc.

Introduction
00

Issue Competition
000000000

Data snack
000

Outlook
00

References

Universität
Münster

Data and Methods

Schwörer (2024) creates a multilingual dictionary that measures
the salience of election manifestos on a quasi-sentence level

- combined with data on Green party polling
- party-level variables (e.g. government participation)
- Eurobarometer data on salience of climate change among the
  public

How does he measure the role of climate movements? If you wrote
a follow-up term paper, what could be a better approach?

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○○●○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Findings

Table 2. Multiple linear regression model estimating the causes for parties' climate agenda

	(1)	(2)
Green party success	0.246**	0.063
	(0.075)	(0.11)
Public salience environment		0.082*
		(0.036)
Incumbent status	0.067	0.164
	(0.285)	(0.335)
Lib	0.576	1.173**
	(0.331)	(0.408)
Social Dem	0.872**	0.972*
	(0.319)	(0.388)

Figure: Main results from Schwörer (2024)

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
oooooo●oo

Data snack
ooo

Outlook
oo

References

Universität
Münster

Follow-up research

What are missing parts in the overall story you could imagine to study?

Question by Lennart: How could quasi-experimental or natural-experimental designs be used to test (some) of his hypotheses?

Follow-up research

- who influences whom? are parties following public opinion or the other way around?
- missing explanations?
  - Green party success may influence parties differently depending on their ideology
  - Role of Green party government participation
  - Climate change vulnerability
- wrong outcome variable?
  - is the dictionary used to measure climate change salience valid?
  - is salience of the issue that important or is it just cheap talk? $\rightarrow$ why not focusing on legislation on climate change after Green party entry?
- better causal framework to identify effect of Green parties? $\rightarrow$ e.g. Bischof and Wagner (2019)

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○●○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

It's a wrap…

- **Research Question**: Under which conditions do mainstream parties talk about climate change?
- **Main Argument**: Political parties are responsive to their surroundings.
- **Data and Method**: Descriptive analysis with new dictionary-based measurement of climate change salience
- **Results**: Green party success increases salience mainstream parties dedicate on climate change, but confounded by public opinion salience
- **Implications**: Mainstream parties mainly respond to public (or vice versa?) in climate change issues

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
oooooooo●

Data snack
ooo

Outlook
oo

References

Universität
Münster

Natural disasters and climate change issue attention

Adding to the debate, Wappenhans et al. (2024) analyse whether extreme weather events trigger elite attention to climate change.

- **data**: party press releases from 9 countries (2010-2020)
- **method**: difference-in-differences estimator with extreme weather event as main independent variable and climate change salience as dependent variable

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○○●

Data snack
ooo

Outlook
oo

References

Universität
Münster

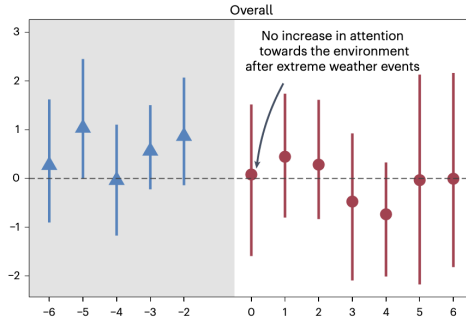# Natural disasters and climate change issue attention

Figure: Null effect of extreme weather events on climate change salience

Question by Fabian:: Why is there no immediate discussion of climate change after these events?

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○○●

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Natural disasters and climate change issue attention

- As they mention, European public has already been sensitivized, → potential ceiling effect of climate change communication

- Press releases not the only imaginable outcome measure, what else could be relevant to measure politicians' attention to climate change after a disaster?

- Disasters often unfold locally, maybe local party associations more vocal about it?

Universität
Münster

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○○○

Data snack
●○○

Outlook
○○

References

Types of data

What kind of data could we use to analyse parties?

- organizational data (e.g., how are parties structured, which resources do they have, how do they select candidates)
  - V-Party
  - Political Party Database
- policy positions and agendas
  - Manifesto Project
  - Chapel Hill Expert Survey
  - Comparative Agendas Project
- data on party behavior, including its candidates
  - ParlSpeech (parliamentary speech data)
  - Comparative Candidate Survey

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
oooooooooo

Data snack
o●o

Outlook
oo

References

Universität
Münster

The Manifesto Project

Today, we are using the We are using the Manifesto Project, one of the most renowned datasets on party's policy agendas.

- the data can be downloaded here (requires free login)
- API access (which allows the download of textual data directly in R) can be requested for free here
- you can use their exploration and visualization tool online

Introduction
OO

Issue Competition
OOOOOOOOO

Data snack
O●O

Outlook
OO

References

Universität
Münster

The Manifesto Project

The Manifesto Project is based at the WZB in Berlin. They
provide...

- data on the policy positions on numerous domains for more
  than 1,000 parties in over 50 democracies, starting from 1945

- their procedure is based on human annotations, the highest
  standard of data quality

- you can track party positions over time or compare party
  families in different electoral systems

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○○○

Data snack
○○●

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

In R...

Let's switch to R

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
ooooooooo

Data snack
ooo

Outlook
●o

References

Universität
Münster

To prepare for next week…

- Next week, we will talk about how parties can target social groups other than with their policy promises
- **Main reading**:
  - **Huber LM** (2022) Beyond Policy: The Use of Social Group Appeals in Party Communication. *Political Communication* **39** (3), 293–310. ISSN: 1058-4609, 1091-7675. DOI: 10.1080/10584609.2021.1998264
  - **Costa M and Pereira MM** (2025) Why Parties Can Benefit from Promoting Occupational Diversity in Legislatures: Experimental Evidence from Three Countries. *American Journal of Political Science* **n/a** (n/a) (). ISSN: 1540-5907. DOI: 10.1111/ajps.12951

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
oooooooo

Data snack
ooo

Outlook
●o

References

Universität
Münster

To prepare for next week...

- **Complementary readings**
  - **Erfort C** (2023) *Gendered Targeting: Do Parties Tailor Their Campaign Ads to Women?* DOI: 10.31219/osf.io/5vs9b

Thank you for your attention!
Any further questions?

Introduction
○○

Issue Competition
○○○○○○○○○

Data snack
○○○

Outlook
○○

References

Universität
Münster

Literature

📄 **Bischof D and Wagner M** (2019) Do Voters Polarize When Radical Parties Enter Parliament? *American Journal of Political Science* **63** (4), 888–904.

📄 **Budge I and Farlie D** (1983) *Explaining and Predicting Elections: Issue Effects and Party Strategies in Twenty-Three Democracies*. Taylor & Francis, 1983.

📄 **Costa M and Pereira MM** (2025) Why Parties Can Benefit from Promoting Occupational Diversity in Legislatures: Experimental Evidence from Three Countries. *American Journal of Political Science* **n/a** (n/a) ().

📄 **De Sio L and Weber T** (2014) Issue Yield: A Model of Party Strategy in Multidimensional Space. *American Political Science Review* **108** (4), 870–885.

Universität
Münster

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
oooooooooo

Data snack
ooo

Outlook
oo

References

Literature

📄 **Downs A** (1957) An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy. *Journal of Political Economy* **65** (2), 135–150.

📄 **Erfort C** (2023) *Gendered Targeting: Do Parties Tailor Their Campaign Ads to Women?* 2023.

📄 **Huber LM** (2022) Beyond Policy: The Use of Social Group Appeals in Party Communication. *Political Communication* **39** (3), 293–310.

📄 **Lehmann P et al.** (2024) *Manifesto Project Dataset*. 2024.

📄 **Petrocik JR** (1996) Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study. *American Journal of Political Science* **40** (3), 825–850. JSTOR: 2111797.

Introduction
oo

Issue Competition
oooooooo

Data snack
ooo

Outlook
oo

References

Universität
Münster

Literature

📄 **Schattschneider EE** (1960) *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. [Nachdr.] Boston: Wadsworth, 1960.

📄 **Schwörer J** (2024) Mainstream Parties and Global Warming: What Determines Parties' Engagement in Climate Protection? *European Journal of Political Research* **63** (1), 303–325.

📄 **Wappenhans T et al.** (2024) Extreme Weather Events Do Not Increase Political Parties' Environmental Attention. *Nature Climate Change* **14** (7), 696–699.