

Chapter 6: United or Divided? Preferential Agreement among Party Members in Scandinavia

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Abstract

In chapter 6, Jupskås, Blombäck, and Hinnfors map the extent to which ordinary party members of the Scandinavian parties agree on key issues that play an important role in shaping party competition, including the economy, immigration, the environment, law and order, and the European Union. The analysis shows that most parties have relatively high levels of agreement on most issues. Moreover, there are small differences between the three Scandinavian countries and small differences between old and new parties. As regards differences between party families, we find ample support for the argument that parties are quite united on issues that they care about and that they struggle more with issues that have been or still are of less importance. In particular, the social democrats and the conservatives seem to have some difficulties with the immigration issue. Overall, our findings bode well for the ability of Scandinavian party elites to represent their members, since it is easier to be a good representative if those represented agree on what they want. In addition, it could be argued that it also bodes well for a party linkage that members are not marching in line to such an extent that there is no room for disagreement.

In most contemporary democracies, not least in ‘party democracies’ such as the Scandinavian countries (Demker and Svåsand 2005, 40), parties perform several crucial tasks. One of these tasks is to aggregate and articulate political interests (Almond and Powell 1966). By representing certain interests, parties provide a linkage between the citizens and the political system (Lawson 1980). However, if parties are internally divided, the processes of aggregating and articulating interests become far more difficult, which in turn might affect how parties function in the electoral, organizational, and governing arenas. Party elites may have a hard time knowing which issues to prioritize and which positions to communicate. Members who disagree with the party’s position might be less willing to participate.¹ And divided parties might be unreliable coalition partners or fail to enter government in the first place (Bäck 2008). Moreover, from the perspective of representative democracy, divided parties might be problematic because voters need not only *different* alternatives, but also *clear* alternatives (den Ridder 2014). If party positions are blurry, contradictory, or non-existent, voters simply do not know what they are voting for and it becomes difficult to hold elected representatives accountable in elections.

In contemporary Western democracies, party unity – and thus the character of citizen-party linkage – seems to be under pressure due to a more complex cleavage structure and a more fragmented party system. The Scandinavian countries are by no means an exception to this general trend towards a new political landscape (Aylott 2011; Jupskås 2018). In fact, from a comparative perspective, party system change and electoral volatility have been relatively high in the Scandinavian region – in Denmark and Norway since the 1970s and in Sweden since the late 1980s (Chiaromonte and Emanuele 2017, 378; Emanuele and Chiaromonte, 2018). The emergence of new political issues and the rise of new parties mean that established parties may eventually have to deal with issues where they are less internally united. At the same time, it might be difficult for new parties to deal with issues that existed long before they were founded.

In this chapter, we study internal divisions of parties by looking at *preferential agreement* among ordinary party members in the three Scandinavian countries: Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. Preferential agreement refers to the extent to which members agree on normative

statements about different policy-related issues. It differs from cohesion, which often refers to behavioural aspects, such as voting in parliament. It also differs from *perceptual agreement*, which is concerned with the extent to which people agree on statements about how the reality *is* as opposed to how it *should be*.

The question of preferential agreement – or similar aspects – is far from new among party scholars (e.g., Janda 1980) but is rarely addressed by looking at ordinary members. Most research tends to look at the elite level, such as voting patterns in parliament (see Close and Gherghina [2017] for a comprehensive review). And although there are a few exceptions to this rule, they are all single-case studies (e.g., Heidar and Saglie 2002, 128–34; den Ridder 2014; Kosiara-Pedersen 2017). Our study is heavily inspired by den Ridder’s (2014) analysis of Dutch members, but the comparative perspective allows us to gauge whether patterns of preferential agreement are similar or different across different contexts.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, we discuss some tentative expectations about why preferential agreement among members would be higher or lower. Second, we elaborate upon how we measure preferential agreement, including the issues we focus on, how they are operationalized, and the method we use to calculate levels of preferential agreement. As in other chapters in this edited volume, the data come from party membership surveys in Denmark (2012), Sweden (2015), and Norway (in 2017). Third, we present the empirical results – first within each country and then across countries, the old/new divide and party families. Towards the end, we summarize key findings and discuss some of the implications, including possible effects on party membership linkage.

Drivers of Preferential Agreement: Country-Specific Issue Competition, Party Age, and Party Family

Why would we expect differences among the Scandinavian countries in terms of whether the various parties’ members are more or less in agreement? Parties have been exposed to new inter-party competition logics (Chiaromonte and Emanuele 2017; Emanuele and Chiaromonte 2018), not least through the emergence and consolidation of populist radical right parties (Jupskås 2018). This change has exposed the established parties to tremendous pressures in

terms of whether or not to adapt to a new issue agenda (Bale et al. 2010). However, the parties have reacted differently, in the sense that, while the Sweden Democrats are still a stigmatized and politically isolated party, the Norwegian Progress Party was invited to join a centre-right government in 2013. In Denmark, the Danish People's Party became accepted as a viable cooperation partner by the Conservative Party and the Liberals after the Social Liberals had left the previous non-socialist bloc and sided with the Social Democrats in the mid-1990s (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008). In comparison, the previous Swedish two-bloc format is about to be 'dismantled' into a centre-left, a centre-right, and a populist right bloc (Aylott and Bolin 2015, 738). Further, the Swedish Green Party has been in parliament since the 1990s, two decades earlier than its Norwegian cousin. There, and in Denmark, where there was no green party in parliament until 2015, green issues were co-opted by other parties (Bjørklund and Hellevik 1988; Tonsgaard 1989).

Yet another potential reason why parties might encounter different levels of internal agreement is suggested by Önnudóttir (2014, 549): 'Party age can be expected to influence policy congruence as older parties would have a clearer policy position than younger and less established parties. Older parties have had a longer time to establish themselves and mobilize voters.' Although focusing on a slightly different aspect of agreement, Dahlberg (2009, 272) also suggests that '[p]arty age should thus have a positive impact on' the degree of agreement between voters and their parties regarding policy positions. The main reason would be down to the propensity of younger parties to change (parts of) their policies and ideological profiles, which in the end will be confusing for the voters (van der Brug, Franklin, and Tóka 2008) – and by inference, for the members. The more stable the party's overall policy positions, the more likely members are to know and agree with the full set of positions. A less ideologically clear party might instead attract members with more divergent policy preferences. In the following, we will expect older parties to display higher levels of preferential agreement among their members than younger parties do.²

Finally, the different ideological roots of political parties have always provided a mobilizing logic (Mair and Mudde 1998, 223). In general, some party families tend to be more ideologically homogeneous than others (social democratic parties more; liberal parties less;

Carroll and Kubo 2017, 7 f.; Ennser 2012, 162, 167; Marks and Wilson 2000, 452). Prima facie, there is as yet little to indicate theoretically why the degree of preferential agreement among party members would change when we move from one party family to another. However, according to Blondel (1978, 142), parties belonging to ‘extreme’ party families often prefer to ‘give unity precedence over size’. Moreover, some parties tend to present themselves to the voters via a more pronounced ‘nicheness’, that is, a narrower ideological frame (Meyer and Miller 2015, 265). While ‘mainstream’, ‘extreme’, or ‘niche’ are rather nebulous as concepts, we have reason to believe that, following Rokkan, parties do not present themselves *de novo* to their voters and members (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, 2). They have histories of prioritizing certain issues and certain ideological dimensions over others. Some party families share a historically defined logic rooted in clashes over traditional class politics concerned with economic issues. Others are rooted in ‘new’ cultural politics concerned with identity, values, and norms (Dalton 2009; Bakker et al. 2015). In contemporary European politics, new parties have tended to focus on libertarian (e.g., green parties) and authoritarian (e.g., radical right parties) issues, whereas the established parties have tended to be more concerned with traditional economic left/right issues (Koedam, 2017, 6 f.). Potentially, ideological dimensions can develop into ‘first-’ and ‘second-order’ status. Still, although parties belonging to the traditional ‘five-party model’ (see chapter 1) might historically focus on state/market issues, there are clear exceptions to this pattern. In Denmark, for example, liberal parties began to be concerned with libertarian issues decades ago (e.g., Knutsen, 1990).

On the one hand, assuming that the historically rooted ideological profile of the party might impact upon the recruitment of members and the attitudes of those already in the party, members would be likely to hold relatively more cohesive views on certain issues. On the other hand, ‘in competitive democracies, parties cannot simply focus only on their most favoured issues, as they do not control the political agenda’. Potentially, internally divided parties ‘lose credibility and voters sooner rather than later’ (Kitschelt 2007, 1182), which will therefore force the parties to manage the internal arena in such a way as to boost preferential agreement. Thus, whether different party families manage to develop more or less internal preferential agreement on different types of issues is an empirical question, but since the

parties have different origins, some parties are probably going to be more successful than others.

To sum up, in the following, we will map the degree of party member preferential agreement among Scandinavian political parties in relation to potential explanations based on differences/similarities between (1) countries, (2) party age, and (3) party family.

How to Measure Preferential Agreement: Issues, Operationalization, and Calculation

In this section, we discuss in detail the issues we focus upon in the study, including how important they are in contemporary Scandinavian politics and how we have operationalized them. We analyse levels of preferential agreement on five issues: economy, immigration, environment, the European Union, and law and order.³ With the exception of the law and order issue, which we included for reasons of comparability (see below), these issues ‘have come to play an important role in shaping the party competition and voting behavior’ in the Scandinavian region (Bengtsson et al. 2014, 33).⁴ They also reflect both traditional (i.e., economy) and more recent (i.e., immigration, environment and the EU) political conflicts.

The economy has been important for almost a century and constitutes the key conflict dimension for the ‘old parties’, and it continues to be important to voters (Stubager and Hansen 2013; Bergh and Karlsen, 2017; Oscarsson and Holmberg 2016, 177). Due to a limited number of comparable items across the three surveys, we cannot aim for a comprehensive and nuanced operationalization of ‘the economy’ in our study. In fact, there are no questions about the economy that are identical or even similar across all three surveys. Instead, we first compare Norwegian with Danish members by analysing whether members support or oppose progressive taxation. Then we can compare Norwegian and Swedish members by focusing on attitudes towards economic redistribution. The Norwegian survey asks whether members agree or disagree that ‘income and assets should be reallocated to the benefit of ordinary people’, whereas the Swedish survey asks whether members agree or disagree that ‘the state should take measures to reduce income disparities’. Although the exact wording in the Norwegian and Swedish surveys is not identical on this topic, the mean

position of the members within each party suggests that the questions largely measure the same underlying concept, that is, of economic redistribution.

The other issues included in this study have emerged more recently. The environmental issue was brought into politics in the 1980s and advocated by new green parties (as in Sweden) or left-wing and liberal parties (as in Norway and Denmark). Again, the surveys have no question about the environment that is identical across all three countries. The Norwegian and Swedish surveys include a question on what we refer to as ‘environmental protection’, namely, whether stronger measures should be taken to protect the environment. The Danish survey, however, only includes a question which contrasts environmental efforts with business activity.⁵ This seems to make a real difference, as the Danish survey indicates much larger interparty conflict – and thus most likely, larger intraparty conflict – than the valence issue in the other surveys. Fortunately, a similar question tapping into what we call ‘environmental priority’ is also included in the Norwegian survey, though the greener policies are instead contrasted with lower personal consumption for the individual. Mean positions of the parties suggest that the two items are largely comparable.

The immigration issue became important for voters somewhat later, in the 1990s in Norway and Denmark and about a decade ago in Sweden, linked to the rise of a new party family, the radical right (Andersen and Bjørklund 1990; Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008). As in the case of the two previous issues, we need to measure attitudes toward immigration using two different items. In the Norwegian and Swedish surveys, members are asked about their views on assimilation. More specifically, they are asked whether they agree or disagree that it is important for immigrants to adapt to Norwegian/Swedish customs and values. The Danish and Norwegian surveys include a more controversial topic, namely, whether immigration represents a serious threat to the national identity.

The European Union is also a more recent political issue in Scandinavian politics, first appearing on the agenda in the 1970s when Norway and Denmark organized national referendums on whether or not to join the European Economic Community. While this issue is generally characterized by low salience in recent elections, voters do seem to care strongly about the issue when it is put on the agenda, which happened in both Norway and Sweden in

the early 1990s due to national referendums. In the membership surveys, the questions about the EU are far from identical, partly because Norway is still not a member, whereas the two others are. Not surprisingly, the main question for Norwegian party members is whether Norway should join the union or not. This framing of the issue makes it more likely that members will choose an extreme position, which in turn might have an impact on levels of preferential (dis)agreement, compared with the Swedish question, namely, whether European integration should go further or if it has already gone too far. Not only does this capture a more general feeling about European integration, it also allows for a more nuanced response compared to the Norwegian question. In Denmark, members are not given a general statement on which to agree or disagree. Instead, the members need to choose between four scenarios. Although phrased differently (compared to Sweden), the distribution of views within each party suggests that this item also effectively captures attitudes toward European integration. The main challenge to keep in mind, however, is that levels of agreement tend to be higher when we have four response categories (in Denmark) compared to five categories (in Sweden and Norway).

The final issue we focus on is law and order. While this issue does not seem to play a major role in contemporary Scandinavian politics (Bergh and Karlsen 2017), it is often used as an indicator of the emerging libertarian-authoritarian cleavage (Møller Hansen and Stubager 2017, 403; Oscarsson 2017, 421; Aardal 2015, 56). Perhaps more importantly, this is the only issue for which we can make direct comparisons across the three membership surveys. All three surveys ask the respondents about the extent to which they believe that those who commit violent crimes (in Denmark) or people who break the law (in Norway and Sweden) should be punished more severely.

As in previous research on preferential agreement among party members (see den Ridder 2014), we measure levels of (dis)agreement by calculating Agreement scores – or A-scores (van der Eijk 2001).⁶ We use this measurement for two reasons. First, and most importantly, this approach is able to cope with scales with a fixed number of categories, a skewed distribution, and clear peaks. Other common measures are problematic because they are either unable to distinguish between those that (dis)agree somewhat and those that (dis)agree

completely (e.g., opinion balance) or are heavily influenced by the extent to which the ‘mean of a distribution is located near one of the end-poles of a rating scale’ (e.g., standard deviation) (van der Eijk 2001, 327).

While some other measures are difficult to interpret and depend on the number of categories, A-scores have fixed upper and lower bounds (−1 and +1, respectively) and are intuitively easy to interpret. A score of −1 refers to a situation in which half of the members disagree completely and the other half agree completely, that is, a much polarized party. When the score is 0, members are not polarized but still quite divided: there is an equal share of members in each category (in our study based on five-point Likert scales, this means 20 per cent of the members). A score of +1 is the result of a distribution where all members hold the same position, regardless of which position this is. This is obviously a very united party.

Table 6.1: List of issues and items used to measure preferential agreement among party members in Scandinavia.

Items/Countries	Norway	Sweden	Denmark
Progressive taxation	High income should be taxed more heavily than today		High income should be taxed more heavily than today
Redistribution	Income and assets should be reallocated to the benefit of ordinary people	The state should take measures to reduce income disparities	
Immigration assimilation	It is important for immigrants to adapt to Norwegian customs and values	Immigrants should adapt to Swedish customs and traditions	
Immigration threat	Immigration represents a serious threat to our national identity		Immigration represents a serious threat to our national identity
Environmental protection	We should introduce stronger measures to care of the environment	Stronger measures should be taken to protect the environment	
Environmental priority	Where would you place yourself on the scale below, where 0 represents the view that environmental protection should not be taken so		Efforts to improve the environment must not go so far as to damage business

	far that it affects our standard of living, and 10 represents the view that we should do more for environmental protection, even if it means considerably lower personal consumption for the individual?*		
EU	Norway should become a full member of the European Union	Some think European integration should go further, others think it has already gone too far. What do you think?*	Which of the following four statements about EU cooperation do you agree with most? (1) The EU should eventually evolve into United States of Europe with a joint government, (2) Individual EU countries should increasingly leave decisions to the EU and join the community, (3) In EU cooperation, individual member states should maintain full autonomy and have the right to veto EU decisions, or (4) Denmark should withdraw from the EU.
Law and order	People who break the law should be given tougher sentences than today	People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences	Violent crimes should be punished far more severely than they are today

*Two items – environmental priority in Norway and EU in Sweden – have been recoded from an 11-point scale into a 5-point scale in order to be able to compare with other countries and other issues.

Scandinavian Party Members: Often United but Sometimes Divided

The overall finding is that party members in Scandinavia are united. This is important to keep in mind when we highlight some of the differences within and across parties on different

issues. Even if they are notable and, in some cases, may explain why some parties are struggling more than others in the public debate, no parties, with the single exception of the Liberal party in Norway on the EU issue, seem to be profoundly polarized on any of the issues we study.

Norwegian Members

The empirical results suggest that party members in Norwegian parties are quite united (A-score across all parties and issues is 0.60). All parties receive A-scores above zero with the single exception of the EU question for the Liberal Party. In fact, the A-scores are above 0.5 on a majority of the seven issues covered for all parties except for the Conservative Party (which receives an A-score above 0.5 on three of the seven items). However, if we zoom in on the different issues, there are important differences between parties regarding levels of agreement.

Table 6.2: Summary of A-scores per party and issue for Norwegian party members 2017.

	SV	AP	MDG	SP	KRF	V	H	FRP	Mean
Progressive taxation	0.84	0.65	0.66	0.55	0.42	0.40	0.47	0.19	0.52
Redistribution	0.80	0.56	0.58	0.43	0.36	0.50	0.31	0.07	0.45
Immigrants assimilate	0.54	0.55	0.53	0.61	0.60	0.51	0.68	0.92	0.62
Immigration threat	0.78	0.55	0.59	0.26	0.48	0.56	0.26	0.68	0.52
Law and order	0.45	0.42	0.52	0.49	0.51	0.47	0.51	0.66	0.50
Environmental protection	0.89	0.54	0.96	0.51	0.53	0.77	0.52	0.41	0.64
Environmental priority	0.61	0.49	0.82	0.53	0.50	0.61	0.52	0.38	0.56
EU	0.75	0.13	0.35	0.92	0.67	-0.21	0.17	0.61	0.42
Mean	0.72	0.49	0.60	0.54	0.51	0.43	0.42	0.50	0.60

Source: Norwegian membership survey 2017. See table 1 for the exact wording of the questions for each issue.

On economic issues, both progressive taxation and redistribution, centre-left parties tend to be more united than centre-right parties. In fact, the only exception is the Liberals, which are slightly more united than the agrarian Centre Party on the issue of redistribution. The Socialist

Left Party is particularly united. However, with the exception of the Progress Party, the centre-right is also rather united. The rather low agreement score for the Progress Party is somewhat surprising given its origins as an anti-tax party. However, over the years, the party has become proletarianized with increasing support among the working class, resulting in ideological tensions between ‘authoritarian social democrats’ and ‘libertarians’ (Jupskås 2016).

As regards new issues, levels of agreement depend very much on which issue we focus on. On the item measuring attitudes to immigration assimilation, Norwegian members are – perhaps somewhat surprisingly – quite united. Although there are important differences as regards *the extent to which* they agree that immigrants should adapt to Norwegian culture, very few members in any party disagree with the statement. The item tapping into more xenophobic aspects of immigration policies produces more intra-party tension. While the Progress Party obviously remains united (in favour of the statement) and the Socialist Left Party is much more united (against the statement) than it was on assimilation, both the Conservatives and the agrarian Centre Party seem characterized by lower levels of agreement, probably reflecting a not entirely unknown division between national conservatives on the one hand and liberals (in the Conservatives) and left-leaning farmers (in the Centre Party) on the other hand. However, it is important to note that there are no signs of polarization (i.e., A-score below zero) in either of the two parties.

On environmentalism, parties with a green profile – the Socialists, the Liberals, and the Greens – are more united than the others on both environmental protection and environmental priority. The difference between these three parties and the other parties is bigger for protection compared to priority for the simple reason that members in green parties agree completely with the need for stronger protection but are divided between those who agree completely and those who agree somewhat when they need to prioritize between the environment and other benefits such as the living standard. Among the parties, the Progress Party is most divided internally.

As noted previously, the EU issue is not particularly salient in contemporary Norwegian politics, but it tends to generate strong feelings whenever it emerges on the political agenda.

This was evident both in 1972 and 1994, when Norway had referenda on EU membership. In both these referenda, some parties suffered from profound internal disagreement. The Liberals actually split in 1972 due to the EU question, while Labour had organized factions both in favour of and against Norwegian membership in the EU. Today, the issue continues to be a challenge for these two parties, the Liberals in particular. In fact, on this issue, the Liberals, as the only party in this study, receive a negative A-score, suggesting a polarization tendency. In Labour, on the other hand, 29 per cent of the members oppose the dominant view, which is to remain outside of the EU. Somewhat surprisingly, given its previous profile as a pro-EU party, this is the case also with the Conservatives. In this party, too, 29 per cent of the members oppose the dominant view of being pro-EU.

Regarding the final issue in the Norwegian survey – law and order – there are, with the exception of the Progress Party, small differences between the parties. The A-score varies between 0.42 for the Labour Party and 0.52 for the Greens. In the Progress Party, which – at least in recent decades – is the only party that has explicitly campaigned on law and order, most members (81%) support stricter sentences.

Swedish Members

Swedish members are also quite united (A-score across parties and issues is 0.50). Again, and this time without any exceptions, all parties receive A-scores above zero on all five issues included in this study. Furthermore, all parties have A-scores above 0.3 with the exception of the Social Democrats on immigrant assimilation. As in the case of Norway, however, there are a number of important differences regarding levels of agreement between parties when we look more closely at each issue (see table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Summary of A-scores per party and issue for Swedish party members 2015.

	V	FI	S	MP	FP	KD	M	Mean
Redistribution	0.91	0.73	0.68	0.67	0.37	0.32	0.39	0.58
Immigrants assimilation	0.31	0.41	0.28	0.31	0.40	0.50	0.52	0.39
Law and order	0.40	0.36	0.33	0.34	0.43	0.46	0.57	0.41
Environmental protection	0.83	0.87	0.60	0.92	0.60	0.54	0.53	0.70
EU	0.53	0.33	0.39	0.39	0.49	0.34	0.39	0.41
Mean	0.60	0.54	0.45	0.53	0.46	0.43	0.48	0.50

Source: Swedish membership survey 2015. See table 1 for the exact wording of the questions for each issue.

With few (but significant) exceptions, the issue of economic redistribution has been at the forefront of Swedish political debate. Among party members we find a high degree of unity among the leftmost parties. Virtually all Left Party members and most Feminist Initiative members agree that redistribution is a very good proposal. The other centre-left parties are somewhat less united, but it should be noted that this is the issue where the Social Democrats are the most united. Echoing the Norwegian results, the parties on the centre-right are less united, with A-scores ranging from the Christian Democrat’s 0.32 to the Moderate Party’s 0.39. In all three parties, roughly a third of the members opted for the ‘neither good nor bad’ option. Both the Liberals and the Christian Democrats then split fairly equally among the two remaining non-extreme options, while the remaining Moderates mostly opted for the ‘fairly bad’ or ‘very bad’ options.

Immigration is the issue that most divides the Swedish parties, even though only the less controversial issue of assimilation was included.⁷ This is especially true for the Social Democrats, but only the Moderates have an A-score of more than 0.5. When it comes to law and order, the parties on the left are somewhat less united than the parties on the right. Again the Social Democrats are the most divided, closely followed by the Greens. The issue that most unites the party members is by far environmental protection. Unsurprisingly, the Green Party is most strongly in favour of the proposal and is also the most united. Nine out of ten

members are strongly in agreement with proposals to increase environmental protection. For most of the other parties, members are split between the two most positive responses.

As was the case in Norway, the EU issue is not usually at the forefront of the political debates. Around the two EU-themed referenda, however, several parties experienced internal tensions (Jahn and Storsved 1995, 29). Looking at the party members today, the most united are the ones that are most in favour and most opposed to European integration; the Liberals and the Left Party respectively.

Danish Members

The empirical pattern of preferential agreement among members in Danish parties is similar to that in Norwegian and Swedish parties (A-score across all parties and issues is 0.53). All the A-scores are above zero, but unlike in Sweden we find a handful of cases with A-scores below 0.3. This is displayed in table 6.4.

Table 6.4: Summary of A-scores per party and issue for Danish party members 2012.

	EL	SF	S	RV	KD	V	KF	LA	DF	Mean
Progressive taxation	0.86	0.64	0.56	0.37	0.40	0.51	0.66	0.90	0.16	0.56
Immigration threat	0.84	0.72	0.45	0.75	0.42	0.28	0.24	0.19	0.82	0.52
Law and order	0.38	0.30	0.27	0.38	0.48	0.50	0.53	0.45	0.83	0.46
Environmental priority	0.69	0.50	0.43	0.47	0.42	0.56	0.49	0.47	0.49	0.50
EU	0.60	0.56	0.56	0.57	0.70	0.58	0.60	0.58	0.69	0.60
Mean	0.67	0.54	0.45	0.51	0.48	0.49	0.50	0.52	0.60	0.53

Source: Danish membership survey 2012. See table 1 for the exact wording of the questions for each issue.

On the economic issue of progressive taxation, we see large differences in the degree of agreement. The Liberal Alliance and the Red-Green Alliance both have their highest A-score on this issue, albeit reflecting diametrically different policy preferences. The Liberal Alliance members are firmly against the proposal, while the Red-Green Alliance members are equally firmly in favour of it. This reflects these parties' position at the wings of the economic dimension of Danish politics. The Danish People's Party, on the other hand, has the lowest A-

score by far, reflecting the fact that economic issues are not the priority of the party and not the primary reason for joining it, and that they have moved along the economic dimension towards the centre.

This impression is reinforced when we look at the first of the newer issues, immigration. Here, most Danish People's Party members agree that immigration is a threat, giving a high A-score of 0.82. Again, the Red-Green Alliance members are also in agreement with each other, but in their case it is because they disagree with the statement. The Red-Green Alliance and the Danish People's Party occupy either end of the new politics/value dimension of Danish politics, which is made up of immigration, law and order, and environment policies. The Liberal Alliance, on the other hand, has its lowest A-score for this issue, as do the two other more established right-wing parties, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party.

When it comes to law and order, the Danish People's Party is by far the most united. The lowest level of agreement is found among the Social Democrats, closely followed by the Socialist People's Party (SF). In the final two issues, there are smaller differences in the level of agreement between the parties. On the environmental issue the parties' A-scores range from 0.42 (Christian Democrats) to 0.69 (Red-Green Alliance). The issue with the highest overall preferential agreement among Danish party members is the EU, where all parties have A-scores well above 0.5. In all parties except for the Social Liberals, the plurality of members support the same option – all countries retaining their autonomy – suggesting that there is preferential agreement not only within each party but within the society at large.

Differences between Countries, Old and New Parties, and Party Families

Preferential Agreement – Country by Country

Are there any differences between the three countries if we look at the mean score of preferential agreement across all parties? Due to different items in the different surveys, we first compare Norway and Denmark and then Norway and Sweden. While we should emphasize that differences between the countries are small, some differences are worth noting. On average, Danish parties are slightly more united on taxation (0.04 higher A-score)

and slightly less united on law and order (0.04 lower A-score) and the environment (0.06 lower A-score) compared to Norwegian parties (see table 6.5). This is partly related to the existence of a libertarian party in Denmark, the Liberal Alliance, which is extremely united in its opposition towards any kind of taxation. Without this party, there are no differences between the two countries. Similarly, the higher level of agreement on the environmental issue in Norway is (at least partly) due to the existence of a green party, which is obviously profoundly united on this particular issue.⁸ With regard to law and order, centre-left parties in Denmark are systematically less united compared to the centre-left in Norway, whereas the radical right in Denmark is more united than in Norway. These observations might reflect the higher salience of the so-called ‘value dimension’ in Danish politics in recent decades, on which right-wing parties tend to be more united than left-wing parties. On the EU question, Norwegian parties seem to be much more divided, although the difference might be due to a methodological effect (i.e., quite different wording of the question and different numbers of response categories). However, the difference might also reflect the fact that the question of membership for a non-member country (Norway) is more polarizing than the question of various forms of commitment for a member country (Denmark).

Table 6.5: Preferential agreement across the Scandinavian countries.

	Norway	Denmark	Sweden*
Progressive taxation	0.52	0.56	
Redistribution	0.45		0.58
Immigration threat	0.52	0.52	
Immigrants assimilation	0.62		0.39
Law and order	0.50	0.46	0.41
Environmental protection	0.64		0.70
Environmental priority	0.56	0.50	
EU	0.42	0.60	0.43

*The Centre Party and the Sweden Democrats are not included. The A-scores are largely the same if we exclude the Feminist Initiative, which is not in parliament, from the Swedish figures, but Swedish parties become somewhat less united on redistribution (−0.02) and environmental protection (−0.03).

If we compare Norwegian and Swedish parties, there is virtually no difference on the EU question, but it seems as if the Swedish parties are somewhat more united on redistribution and the environment and more divided on immigrant assimilation and law and order. This might be due to the relative importance of different cleavages. Compared to Norway (and also Denmark), Swedish politics was dominated by the traditional class cleavage much longer and, since the 1980s, by the green dimension, while immigration and law and order have emerged more recently (Bengtsson et al. 2014, 33; Oscarsson and Holmberg 2016, 372). However, we should keep in mind that a direct comparison between two countries is problematic. After all, the Swedish survey does not include two parties – the radical right Sweden Democrats and the liberal (but former agrarian) Centre Party – which would have significantly affected the average scores of preferential agreement.⁹ Yet if we exclude Norwegian parties for which there are no Swedish equivalents, the pattern is quite similar, although less clear. In fact, the only exception is the EU question, on which there is less agreement in Norway when the agrarians are not included.

Preferential Agreement – Old vs. New Parties

Turning to differences between types of parties, we begin by looking at the average preferential agreement within old and new parties respectively on the different issues. We expected older parties to have higher overall levels of preferential agreement than newer parties, since they will have had a longer time to become ideologically stable and members can thus have a better idea of where their party stands, even before joining. The scores are displayed in table 6.6 below.

Table 6.6: Preferential agreement in ‘old’ and ‘new’ parties.

	Old	New*	Countries included
Progressive taxation	0.52	0.57	NO & DK
Redistribution	0.50	0.53	NO & SE
Immigration threat	0.46	0.61	NO & DK
Immigrants assimilation	0.50	0.53	NO & SE
Law and order	0.44	0.49	All
Environmental protection	0.60	0.77	NO & SE
Environmental priority	0.51	0.55	NO & DK
EU	0.45	0.54	All

*SF is, as suggested in the introductory chapter, counted as an old party. Excluding the Feminist Initiative, which is not in parliament, from the calculation does not change the general pattern, but new parties become more divided on the environment (−0.13) and redistribution (−0.04) and somewhat more united on assimilation (+0.03), law and order (+0.02), and EU (+0.01).

This turns out not to be the case, however. For all the issues we study, average preferential agreement is higher among the new parties than among the old parties. On the economic issues, the differences between the old and new parties are modest. This is particularly surprising since all of the old parties were formed when economic issues dominated all the Scandinavian party systems, while several of the new parties were formed around newer issues, such as environment and immigration. This has not translated into the newer parties’ members being less in agreement on economic issues. It seems that they have united in their views on both economic and other types of questions.

Among the newer issues we find some larger differences between old and new, most clearly for the environmental protection issue (0.17 difference in A-score). As we have previously seen, the green parties have exceptionally high levels of agreement when it comes to the environment, which partially explains this difference. There is no corresponding gap between old and new parties on the other, more controversial, issue of environmental priority (0.04 difference). For our two immigration issues we find the opposite pattern. The more controversial issue of immigration as a threat divides members in both new and old parties, and the average degree of agreement does not differ much between the two groups (0.03 difference). The average level of agreement among the new parties for the less controversial

question about assimilation is substantially larger than among old parties, however (0.15 A-score difference).

Preferential Agreement for Different Party Families

Finally, we look at differences in average preferential agreement among different party families (see table 6.7). Here we tentatively expected party families ideologically rooted in the traditional class cleavage to be more united on economic issues and less united on newer issues such as immigration, the environment, and the EU. Conversely, we expected parties rooted in the (more recent) libertarian-authoritarian cleavage to be more united on new issues and less united on old issues such the economy.

Table 6.7: Preferential agreement across party families.

	Left Socialist*	Social democrats	Greens	Agrarians	Countries
Progressive taxation	0.78	0.60	0.66	0.55	NO & DK
Redistribution	0.81	0.62	0.62	0.43	NO & SE
Immigration threat	0.78	0.50	0.59	0.26	NO & DK
Immigrants assimilation	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.61	NO & SE
Law and order	0.38	0.34	0.43	0.49	All
Environmental protection	0.86	0.57	0.94	0.51	NO & SE
Environmental priority	0.60	0.46	0.82	0.53	NO & DK
EU	0.57	0.37	0.39	0.92	All
Countries	All	All	NO and SE	Only NO	
Parties	SV, SF, EL, FI, V (SE)	AP, S, S	MDG, MP	SP	

	Chris. Dem	Liberals**	Conservative***	Radical Right	Countries represented
Progressive taxation	0.41	0.39	0.55	0.17	NO & DK
Redistribution	0.34	0.44	0.35	0.07	NO & SE
Immigration threat	0.45	0.66	0.26	0.75	NO & DK
Immigrants assimilation	0.55	0.45	0.60	0.92	NO & SE
Law and order	0.48	0.43	0.53	0.74	All
Environmental protection	0.53	0.69	0.52	0.41	NO & SE
Environmental priority	0.46	0.54	0.52	0.44	NO & DK
EU	0.57	0.27	0.43	0.65	All
Countries	All	All	All	NO and DK	
Parties	KrF, KD, KD	V (NO), RV, FP	H, KF, M, V (DK)	FrP, DF	
<p>*We include two Danish parties in the left socialist party family even if the Unity List is perhaps best seen as a far left party, being more radical on the economic dimension as well as on other issues. Excluding the Feminist Initiative from the left socialist party family has very little impact on the A-scores, though this party family becomes slightly more united on redistribution (+0.05) and more divided on the environment (−0.14) and the EU (−0.04).</p> <p>**In Denmark, we classify the Social Liberals as liberals but not the libertarian Liberal Alliance or the liberal-conservative Liberals. The latter is included as part of the conservative party family.</p> <p>***V (DK) is classified as conservative.</p>					

Starting with the families on the left, we see that left socialist parties tend to have high levels of internal agreement, with the exceptions of law and order and assimilation of immigrants. The high level of internal unity is particularly pronounced on the economic issues, in line with our expectations. The social democrats have lower overall average A-scores; these parties also conform to our expectation that they agree most on economic issues. We only have one

agrarian party in our sample, the Norwegian one, which does not conform to the expectations. It has high levels of agreement on several newer issues, including assimilation and in particular the EU. Green parties, unsurprisingly, have high levels of preferential agreement on both of the environmental issues that we study, most pronounced on the environmental protection issue.

Among the families on the right, the radical right stands out due to their low average level of preferential agreement on economic issues and their high levels on law and order and immigration-related issues. This is in line with the expectations, but also a clear indication that not all of the newer issues are the same; the radical right is not particularly in agreement on environmental issues.

Conservative parties seem to have much higher levels of agreement on the immigrant assimilation issue than on the immigration as threat issue, possibly an indication that the latter is more controversial. The comparisons need to be made with care, however, since the two measures do not include the same set of parties. It should also be noted that while Christian democrats, liberals, and conservatives all have higher levels of preferential agreement on economic issues than the radical right, they are still substantially lower than among party families on the centre-left, and in many cases lower than for one or several of the newer issues. In fact, the only case of average A-scores of more than 0.5 is conservatives on progressive taxation. The most agreed-upon issue for Christian democrats is the EU (A-score 0.57); for Liberals, environmental protection (0.69); and for Conservatives, assimilation (0.60).

New and Old Issues as a Potential Threat to Party Unity and Linkage

We have studied the extent to which Scandinavian party members are in agreement on a range of issues, comparing levels of preferential agreement across countries, parties of different ages, and different party families. Overall, most parties have relatively high levels of agreement on most issues, and there is only one party on one issue that can be considered polarized (i.e., the Liberals in Norway on the EU issue).

On average, there are small differences between the three Scandinavian countries, and our ability to draw strong conclusions is somewhat limited by the lack of comparable items in all three surveys. However, it seems like Swedish parties are slightly more divided on immigration and law and order, but slightly more united on environmental and economic issues compared to Norwegian and Danish parties. This might reflect the extent to which these various issues have been salient in the political discourse of the three countries in recent decades. Indeed, immigration and law and order have been part of the Danish and Norwegian political debate since the late 1980s (partly due to the presence of successful radical right parties), whereas environmental issues have been more important in Sweden (partly due to the existence of a successful green party). Given that the party system differences between the three countries seem to decrease, levels of preferential agreement on each issue may converge in the coming years.

Overall, there are also small differences between new and old parties. However, in contrast to our expectation, new parties are actually somewhat more united than old parties on both newer issues (in particular immigration and the environment) and older issues. Part of the explanation is that several new parties in Scandinavia are actually rooted in an ‘old issue’ (i.e., the economy), including the neoliberal Liberal Alliance and left-socialists in Denmark (EL) and Norway (SV). But part of the explanation is also that other new parties – most notably the greens – have developed a quite united stance on the historically dominant left-right dimension, which they were initially less interested in.

As regards differences between party families, we argued that parties are likely to be more in agreement on issues that they care about, that is, those in which they are ideologically rooted. We find ample support for this argument, though with the exception of the conservatives. Left socialists and to some extent the social democrats are united on economic issues and more divided on immigration, law and order, and the EU. The radical right and the greens are extremely united on their key issues – immigration and the environment, respectively – and less so on other issues. This is particularly the case with economic issues for the radical right. The only agrarian party – the Norwegian Centre Party – is extremely united on an issue (the EU) that reflects its position as a party consistently defending the interests of the periphery.

Among the other centrist parties, the pattern is less clear. However, the Christian democrats are, as expected, a bit more united on non-economic issues compared to economic issues. Furthermore, the social liberals are – in line with this party family’s increasing emphasis on new issues – most united on environmental protection and immigration, particularly against xenophobia. The only party family that does not follow the general pattern of high levels of agreement on core issues is the conservative party family. Although strongly associated with right-wing economics, they are actually more divided on these issues than most other non-economic issues with the notable exception of xenophobia, which is also somewhat divisive. The lack of consensus on economic issues among conservative members may reflect the position of the social democrats in the Scandinavian region, which gradually pushed (parts of) the conservative parties towards accepting most of the Scandinavian welfare state.

Concluding Remarks

We offer some tentative conclusions. First of all, the newer issues, immigration and the EU in particular, are a potential source of trouble for the dominant party families in Scandinavia: social democrats and conservatives. Members do not hold (as) unified views on these issues, which in turn could mean that they are a latent source of intra-party conflicts and will pose a challenge to the parties regarding the nature of the link between parties and their core electorate. Thus far, these two party families have responded to the increased saliency of the immigration issue by co-opting parts of the radical right agenda (Bale et al. 2010; Jupskås, 2018). However, as shown in this chapter, moving further in that direction would most likely be organizationally costly and strategically difficult. Given that the two dominant parties are divided on (different aspects of) the immigration issue, adopting a (even more) restrictive position (for the social democrats) or campaigning on xenophobia (for the conservatives) might very well upset a significant part of the membership.

Second, our findings shed light on the parties’ possibilities of representing their members’ opinions and hence also on the character of party membership linkage. The good news is that, overall, the Scandinavian party members do not display anything that could be called extreme disunity, even taking into account that most parties are more internally united on some issues than on others. Moreover, new parties are actually more united than old parties – not only on

new issues, but also on old issues. In other words, by having a more fragmented party system, the voters are actually offered more distinct policy positions on several issues. This bodes well for representativeness, since it is easier to be a good representative if those represented agree on what they want. However, in itself, members' ideological agreement is not a guarantee of well-functioning representation by the party leadership, since the leadership must also take the party voters' wishes into account – which might be somewhat different (e.g., May 1973). In addition, it could be argued that it also bodes well for a party linkage that members are not marching in line to such an extent that there is no room for disagreement.

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Appendix

<<Table A6.1 about here>>

¹ However, this does not seem to be case in Scandinavia (see chapter 9)

² Blondel (1978, 142) suggests that ‘the size of the party affects its unity and dynamism. Members of large parties are unlikely to agree on all aspects’. However, party size does not seem to co-vary with the degree of ideological cohesiveness among elected party representatives (Carroll and Kubo 2017, 7). We take this as a strong indicator that the relationship between party size and levels of member preference agreement is rather weak as well.

³ For an overview of how important these issues are to voters, see appendix 6.1.

⁴ Bengtsson et al. (2014) also include moral issues in their list of important dimensions in Scandinavian and Nordic politics, but there is a lack of suitable and comparative items tapping into this dimension in the membership surveys.

⁵ There is also one question asking about whether members want green policies or not. However, this question is not comparable to any questions in the Norwegian and Swedish surveys.

⁶ The actual calculation of A-scores is somewhat technical (see van der Eijk 2001). The principle is to give numeric expression to the patterns of similarity in the individual answers to policy questions within the group of party members. First, we decompose the empirical distribution of observations in the five categories into layers. Second, these layers can then be represented by (ordered) patterns consisting of 0’s (if there are no observations in this category) and 1’s (if there are observations in this category) with associated weights (the share of observations constituting this layer). These patterns in each layer correspond to specific measures of agreement (i.e., the number of 1’s in each layer) and unimodality (i.e.,

the distance between those 1's). Third, we multiply these two measurements in order to calculate the agreement for each layer. Finally, the degree of overall agreement (on the item) can be described as the weighted average of these (layer-specific) agreement scores.

⁷ It should be noted that the Sweden Democrats are not included in the survey, and it is likely that their members are more united on this issue compared to other parties.

⁸ While the Red-Green Alliance (EL) in Denmark also has a green profile, it is primarily a Left Socialist party, and we treat it as such here and in the subsequent analyses.

⁹ Most likely, these parties would have significantly affected the mean score of agreement on almost all the issues: SD being united in favour of assimilation of immigrants and opposed to further EU integration and somewhat divided on economic redistribution (see Jylhä, Rydgren, and Strimling [2018] for a summary of the position of the voters). The Centre Party, on the other hand, would likely have less preferential agreement on the EU issue, which has traditionally been problematic for the party but more in agreement on environmental and economic issues (see Sundström and Sundström [2010] for an overview of the party's ideological development).

Table A6.1: Share of voters mentioning the issues as important for their vote choice at the time of the membership surveys.			
	Norway (2017)	Denmark (2011)	Sweden – 2014
Economy ¹	23%	26%	26%
Immigration	28%	6%	23%
Environment	20%	6%	20%
European Union	-	3%	1%
Law and order	-	-	0%
Note: Economy in Denmark and Sweden includes two categories, namely taxation and ‘economy’, but not employment. In Norway, the economy only includes taxation.			
Sources: Møller Hansen and Stubager (2017, 25), Oscarsson and Holmberg (2016, 177), Bergh and Karlsen (2017).			