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DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Do parties converge?

Evidence from Europe (1970-2020)



Outline

1. Concepts and definitions
2. Research Questions
3. Method
4. Results
5. Discussion



1. Concepts and definitions

“A political party is a **group organized** to gain control of government in the name of the group by winning election to public office”

- Schlesinger (1991)

1. Concepts and definitions

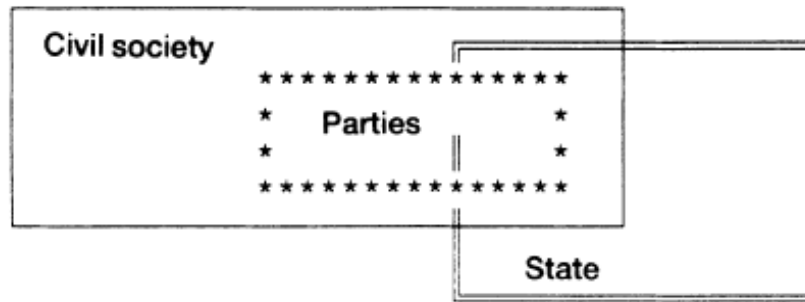


Figure 1. Parties of the cadre or caucus type.

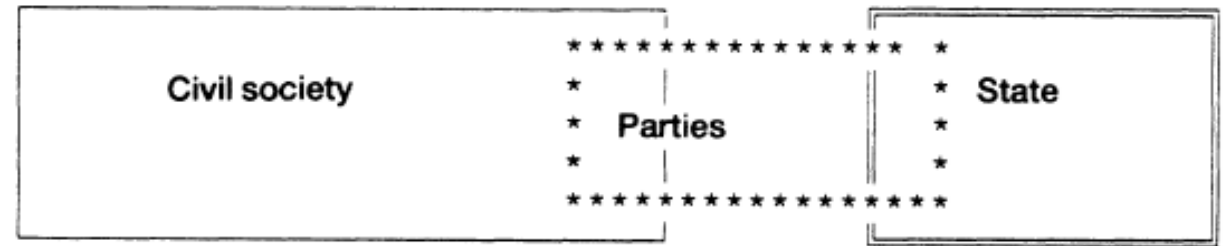


Figure 2. Mass parties act as links between the state and civil society.

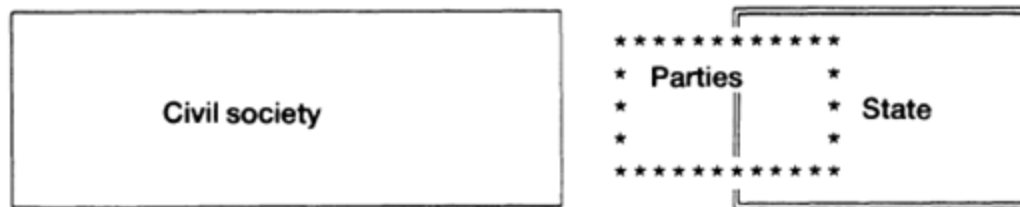


Figure 3. Parties act as brokers between the state and civil society.

Cartel party



1. What constitutes a party organization?



Scansiona the QR code

or

visit [menti.com](https://www.menti.com)

and write the code

1666 5968



What constitutes a party organization?

Join at menti.com | Use vote code 1666 5968

Mentimeter

What constitutes a party organization?

bold leader
creative
fast focus
transpiration inspiration

Menti
BIP 2025

Choose a slide to present

What constitutes a party organization?



What constitutes a party organization?

- Members, leaders, structures, relationships, resources, strategies
- Three faces: Party On the Ground (POG), Party in Public Office (PPO), Party in Central Office (PCO)
- Goals? Environment?



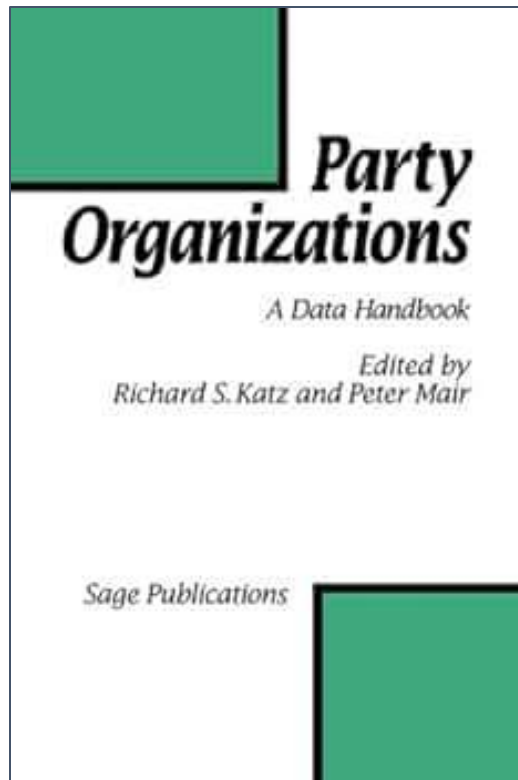
2. Research Questions

1. How do parties organize? How similar are party organizations?
2. How did they change in time?
3. How relevant are environmental factors in shaping them?
4. What about strictly political factors?
5. Is there a relationship between organizational and policy convergence?



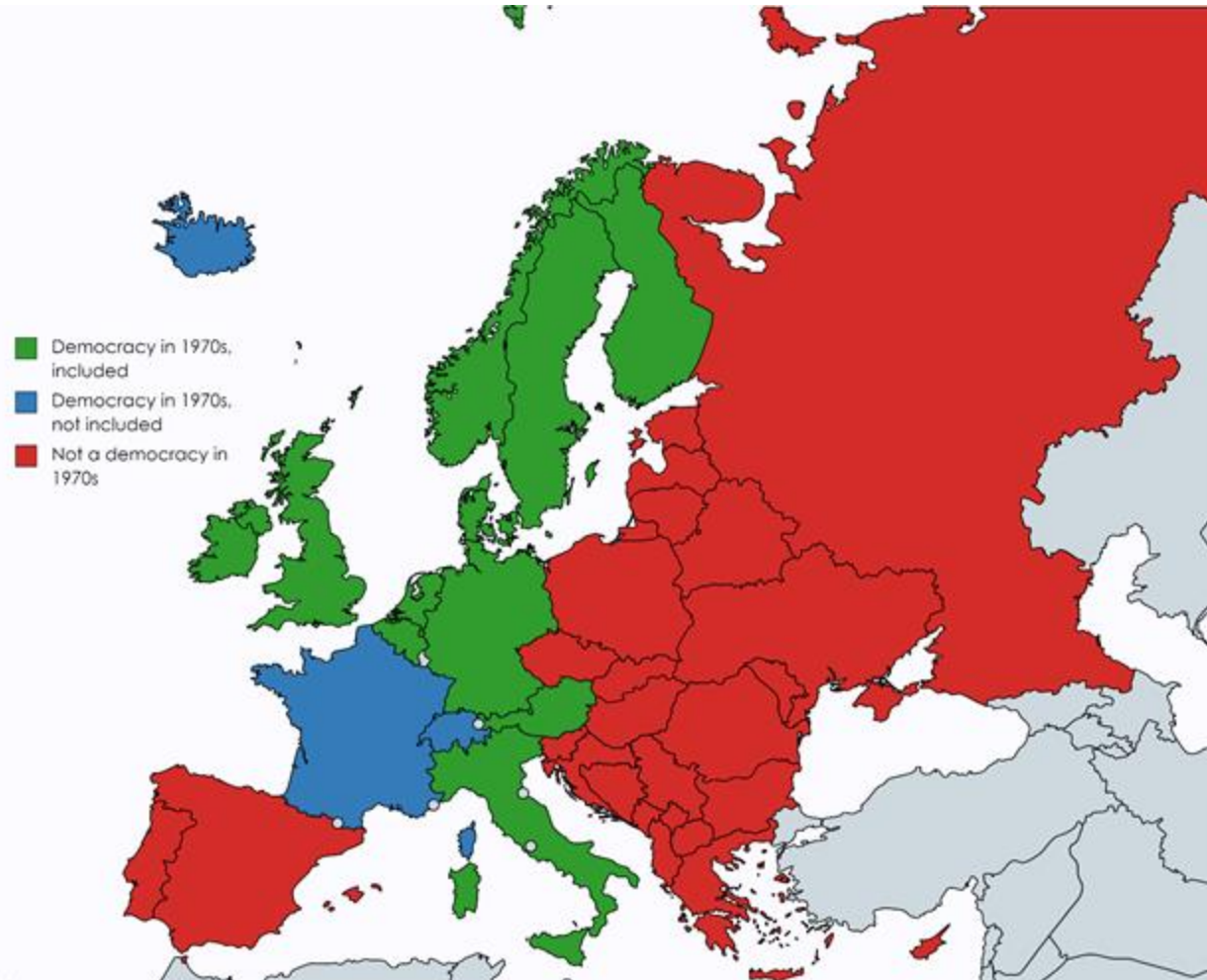
3. Methods

Data



POLITICAL PARTY
DATABASE PROJECT

3. Methods



Three observations
per case:

- '70s
- '90s
- '10s



3. Methods

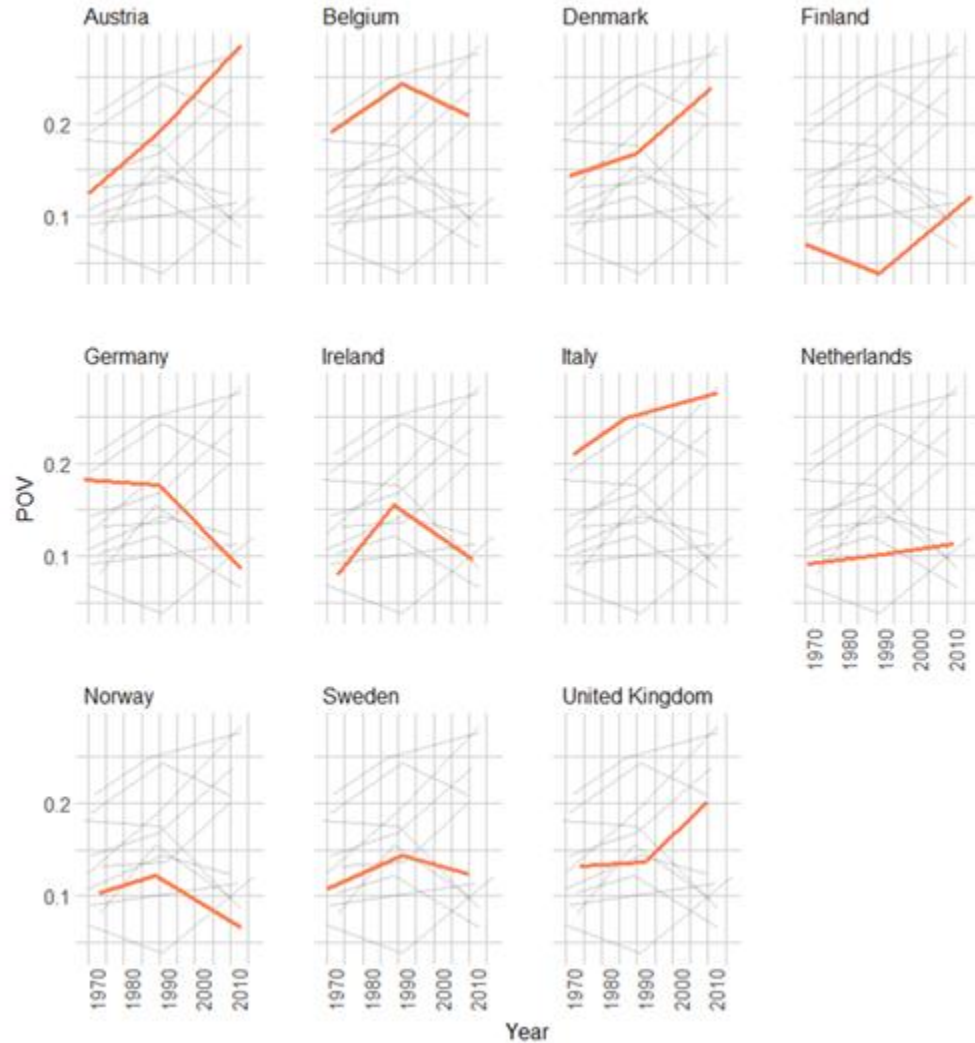
Convergence

$$POV_{resources, strategies, structures} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \sigma_i}{n}$$

$$POV = \frac{POV_{resources} + POV_{strategies} + POV_{structures}}{3}$$



Party Organizational Variance

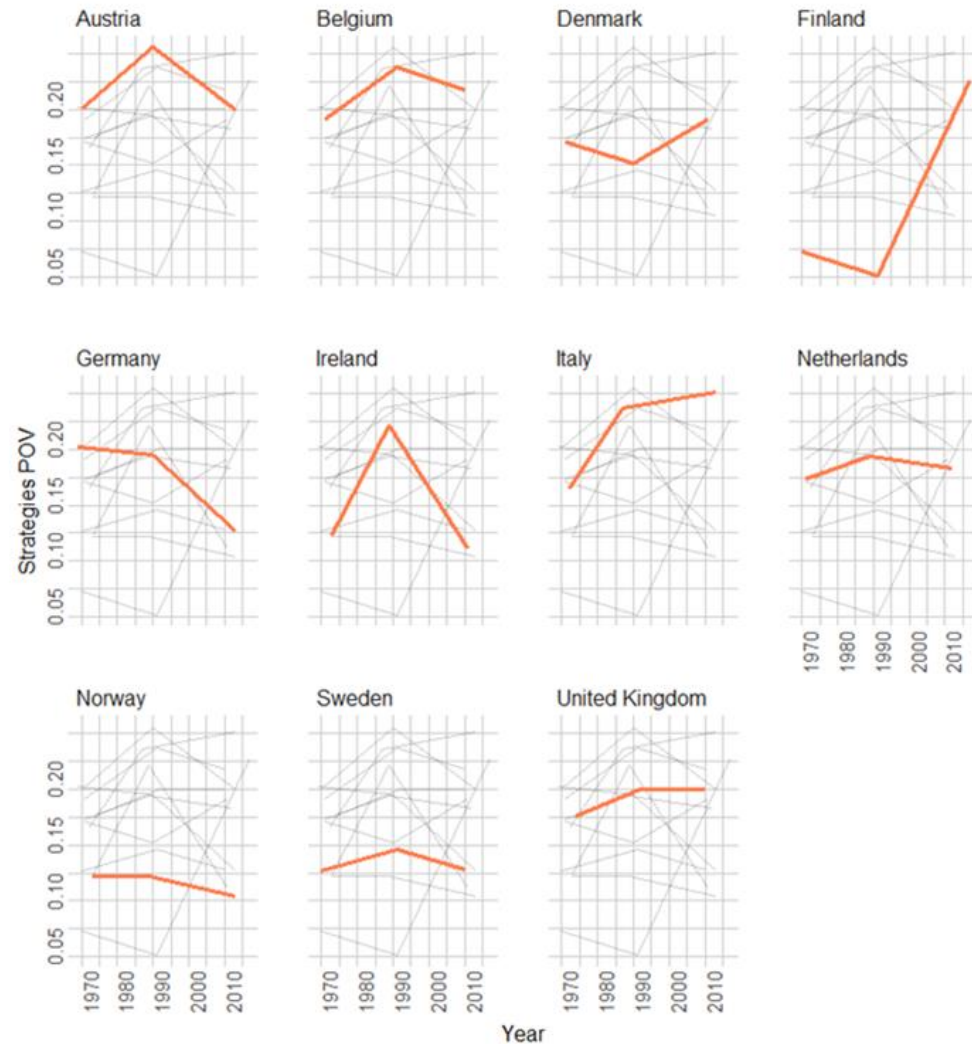


RQs 1-2

Do party organizations look similar to each other? Did they converge over time?



Party Organizational Variance (only rep. strats)

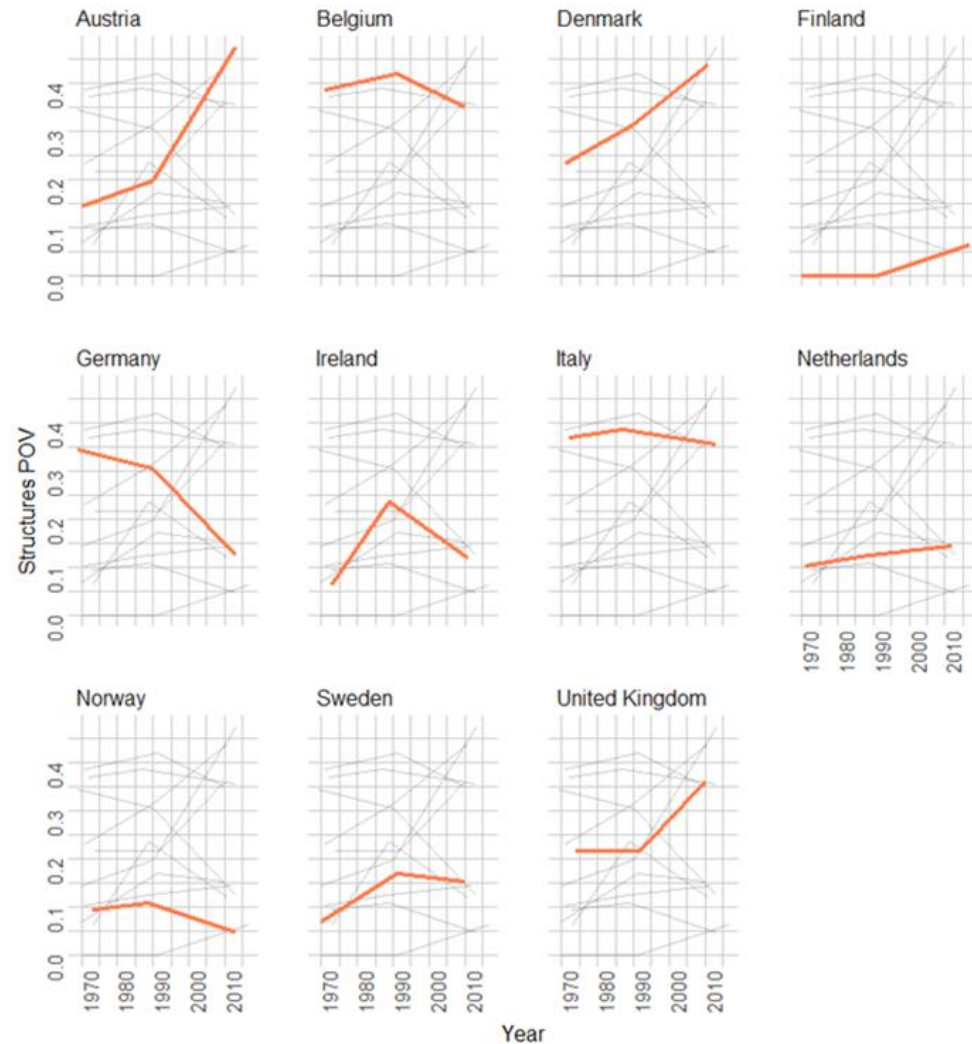


RQs 1-2

Do party organizations look similar to each other? Did they converge over time?



Party Organizational Variance (only structures)

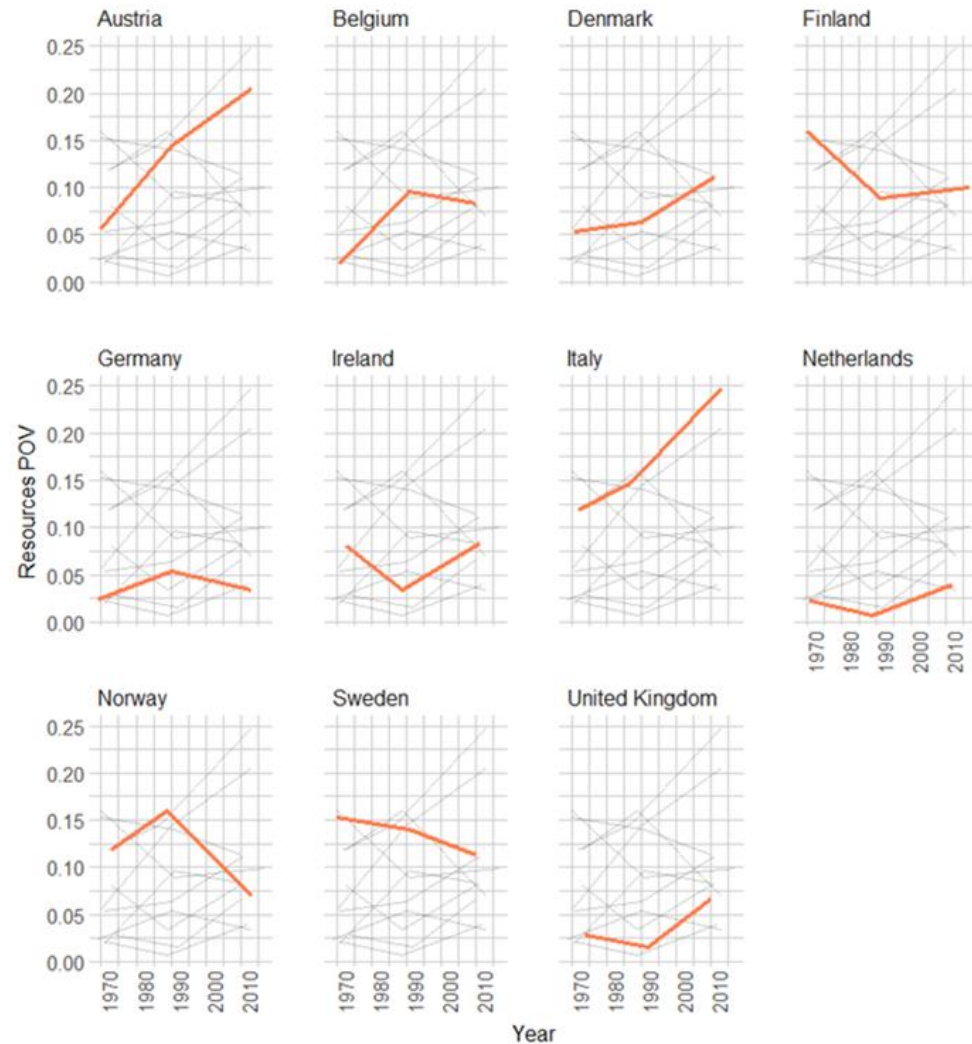


RQs 1-2

Do party organizations look similar to each other? Did they converge over time?

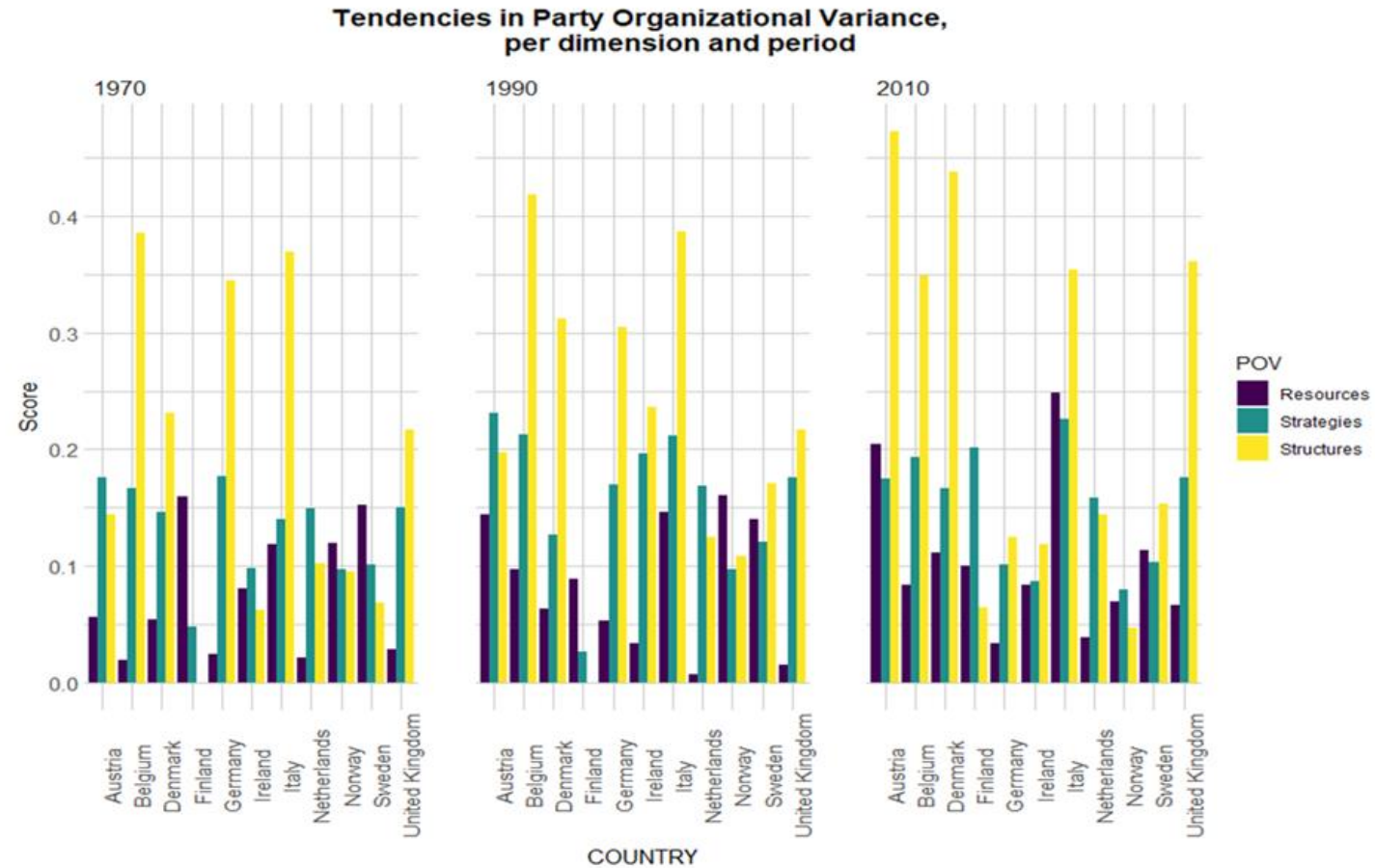


Party Organizational Variance (only resources)



RQs 1-2

Do party organizations look similar to each other? Did they converge over time?



Over which dimension parties converge more?

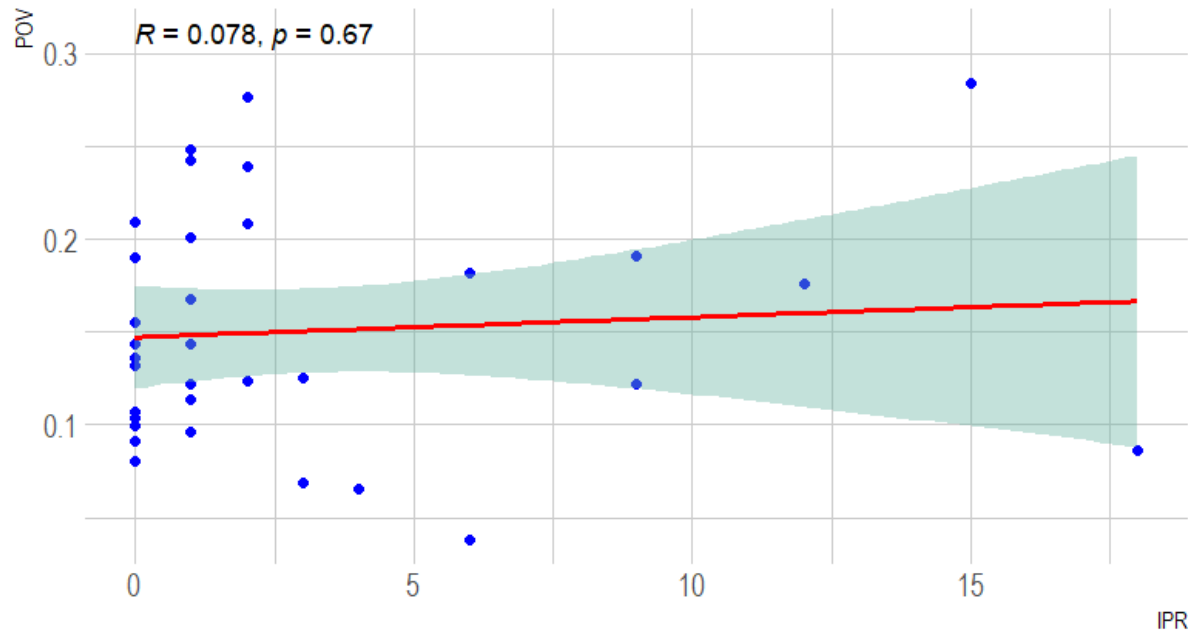


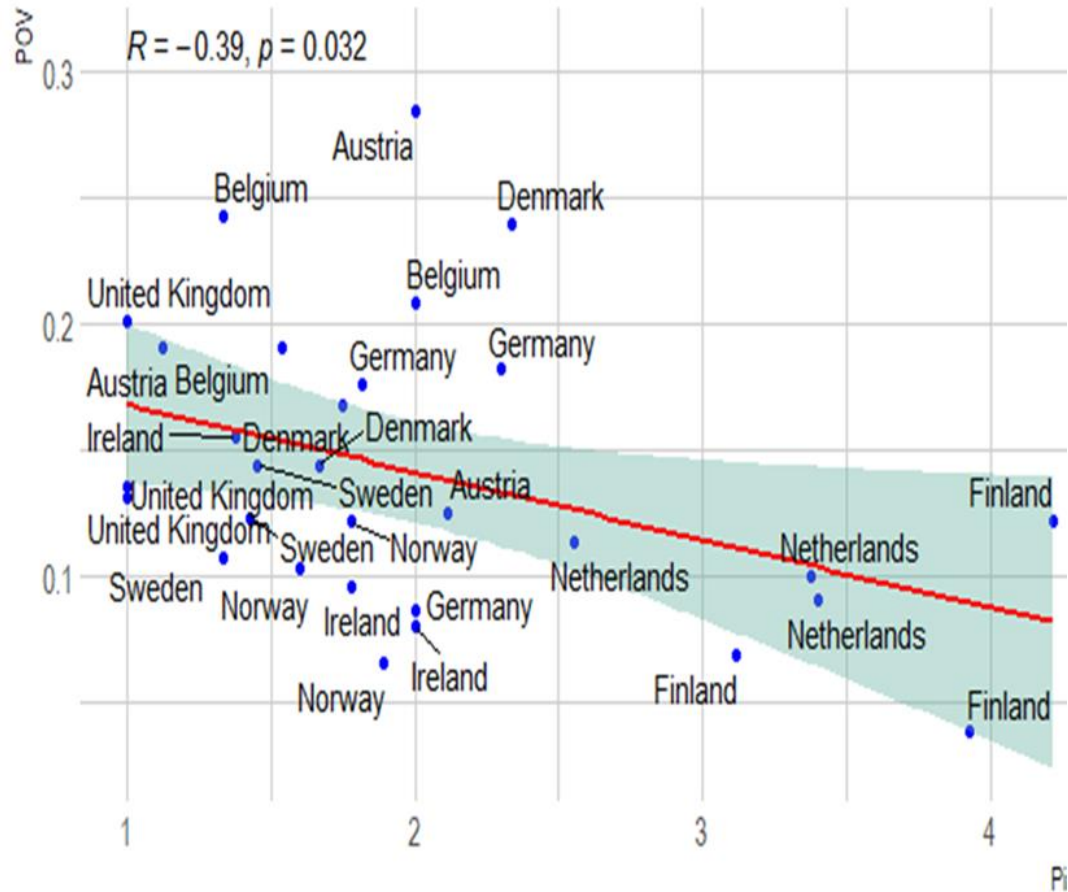
	POV	Resources	Structures	Strategies
(Intercept)	0.102 **	0.036	0.140 *	0.129 ***
Trade	0.022	0.001	0.049	0.017
AgeDepOld	0.040 *	0.020	0.073 †	0.028 †
GovSpending	0.002	-0.000	0.012	-0.005
AvgYrSchool	-0.071 **	-0.054 *	-0.131 *	-0.027
Time_1990	0.056 †	0.049	0.088	0.032
Time_2010	0.091 †	0.110 *	0.140	0.021
N	33	33	33	33
R2	0.394	0.300	0.267	0.192

All continuous predictors are mean-centered and scaled by 1 standard deviation. The outcome variable is in its original units. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; † $p < 0.1$.

RQ 3

What is the role of environmental factors (economic, demographic, cultural)?





RQ 4

What is the role of
political factors?



Table 2 The predictive capacity of party system parameters

	Model 1 Political	Model 2 Cultural	Model 3 Socioeconomic	Model 4 Supranational
(Intercept)	0.19 *** (0.02)	0.13 *** (0.02)	0.11 ** (0.03)	0.15 *** (0.03)
EFRG	0.07 * (0.02)			
P15V	0.05 * (0.02)			
DISP	0.02 (0.01)			
SR1:2	- 0.00 (0.01)			
2PGS	0.07 * (0.02)			
MINISTERS	0.05 * (0.02)			
time	- 0.09 * (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.07 (0.05)	- 0.02 (0.04)
Less emphasis on money and material possessions		0.05 * (0.02)		
Interest in politics		0.06 ** (0.01)		
Freedom or equality		- 0.00 (0.01)		
GDP per capita			- 0.01 (0.02)	
Services			- 0.01 (0.02)	
Average years of schooling			- 0.03 (0.02)	
Trade in goods and services				0.02 (0.02)
Years since EU member				0.00 (0.02)
Terms of trade				0.00 (0.02)
N	14	14	14	14
R ²	0.86	0.77	0.39	0.09
Adj. R ²	0.55	0.66	0.11	- 0.31

RQ 4

What is the role of
political factors?

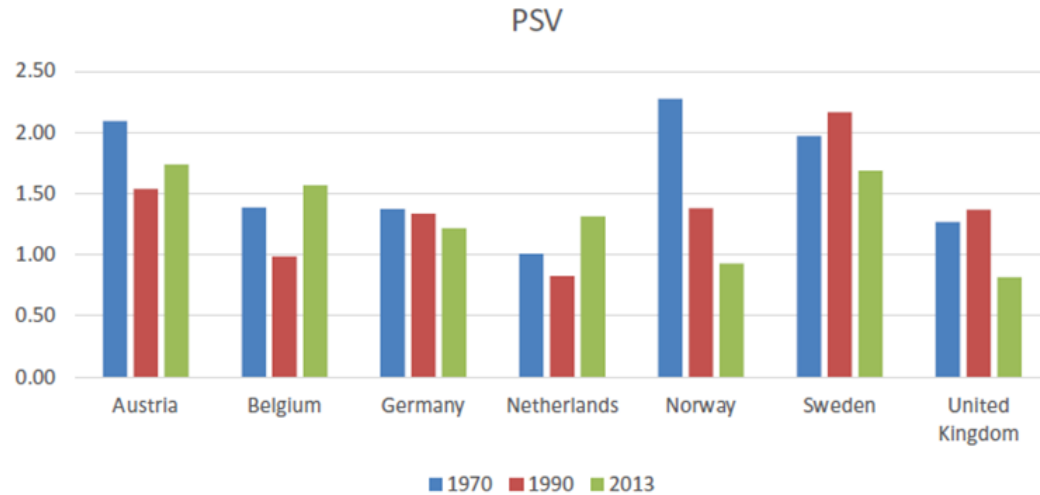


Figure 1. Policy saliency variance per country and per period.

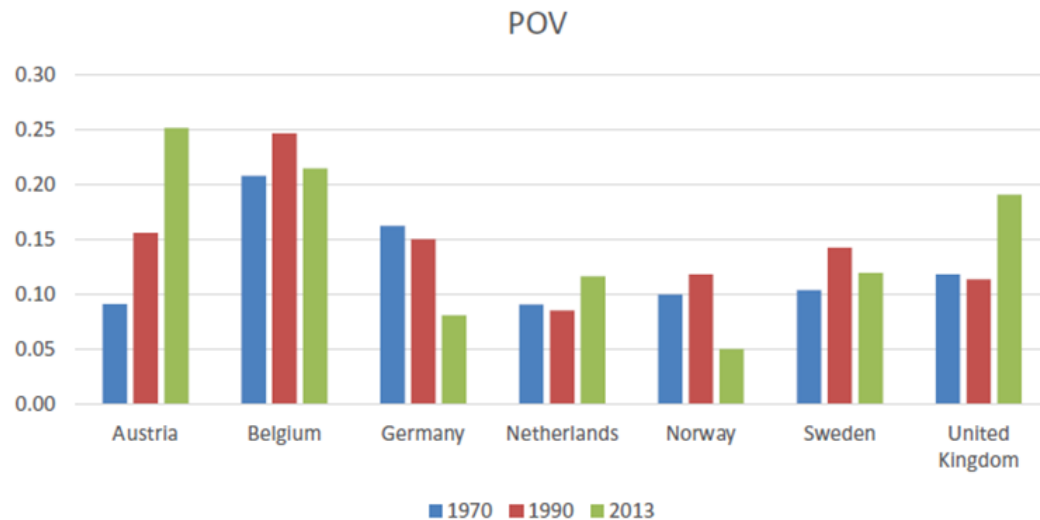


Figure 2. Party organizational variance per country and per period.

RQ 5

Is there a relationship
between
organizational and
policy convergence?



Discussion

- Generally speaking, parties do not resemble each other very much in terms of organization.
- There appears to be no clear evidence of cartelization processes.
- There are substantial differences from country to country.
- The environment is relatively unimportant.
- Policy and organization do not appear to be closely linked.



Suggested readings

- Katz, R. S., & Mair, P. (1995). Changing models of party organization and party democracy. *Party Politics*, 1(1), 5-28.
- Katz, R. S., & Mair, P. (2018). *Democracy and the cartelization of political parties*. Oxford University Press.
- Masi, B., & Pizzimenti, E. (2022). The political foundations of party organizational variance. *Comparative European Politics*, 21(1), 1-22.
- Pizzimenti, E., Calossi, E., Cicchi, L., & Masi, B. (2022). Do parties converge? An empirical analysis of party organizational and policy issue saliency change in Western Europe (1970–2010). *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 32(1), 1-19.
- Pizzimenti, E., Piccio, D. R., & Masi, B. (2024). Does regulation matter? Trajectories of party organizational change in Western Europe (1970-2010). *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 32(3), 803-821.
- Rahat, G., & Kenig, O. (2018). *From party politics to personalized politics?: Party change and political personalization in democracies*. Oxford University Press.
- Scarrow, S. E., Webb, P. D., & Poguntke, T. (2017). *Organizing political parties: Representation, participation, and power*. Oxford University Press.



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