

The effect of party system polarisation on positive and negative partisanship in Western Europe

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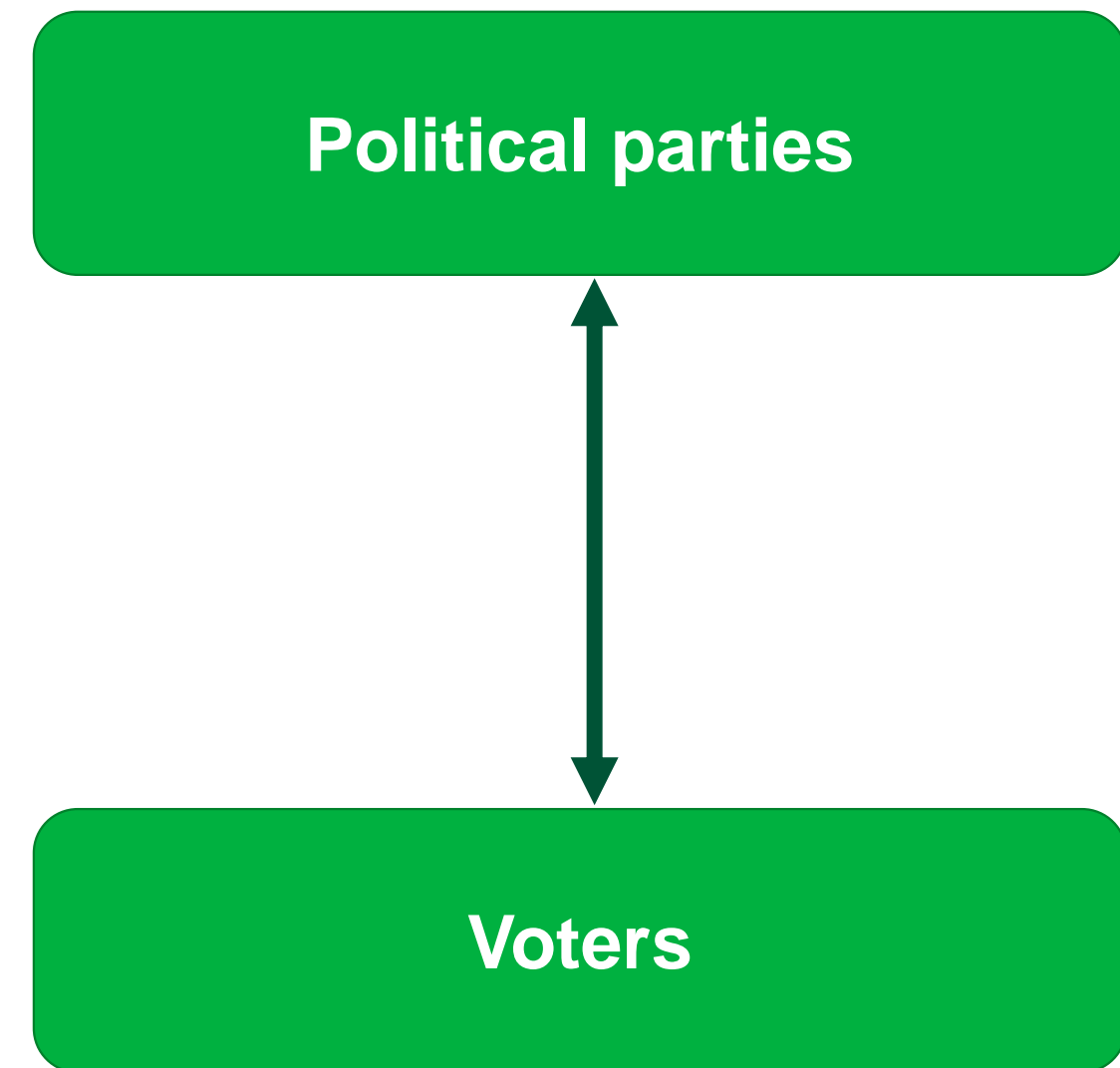
Summary

- **Background: Why study partisanship in the era of dealignment?**
- **The causal link between polarisation and partisanship**
- **Hypotheses**
- **Methodology**
- **Descriptive analysis**
- **Research plan**



The centrality of partisanship in research on representative democracy

- **Party and system levels**
Party competition, typologies, political communication
- **Party-voter linkage**
Congruence, partisanship, membership
- **Electoral behaviour (voters' level)**
Turnout, Perception of ideologies, political sociology, political psychology



The “most controversial concept in all of electoral research”

- **Broad definition:** an attachment to a political party

Two components

Direction

Strength

- **Measured** by asking whether the respondent usually “feels close to a particular party” + how close
- Normative value of partisanship for the stability of democracy

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- → Emerging literature on Negative Partisanship, a disdain towards a political party
 - → Distinction between positive and negative partisanship (PPID and NPID)

Two paradigms assign partisanship (positive or negative) a different meaning and origin

→ Expressive

→ Instrumental

Expressive (Social Identity theory)

(Campbell et. al 1960, Green et. al 2004)

Instrumental (Rational Choice theory)

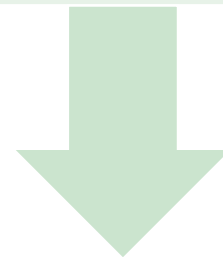
(Downs 1957, Fiorina 1981)

Enduring socio-psychological attachment with fellow partisans (including the leader)

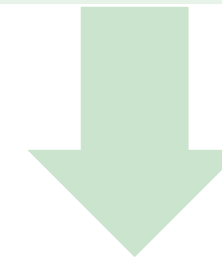
Affiliation guided by the “basket of goods” offered by parties (Achen 1992)

Stable in direction

Unstable in strength and direction



Consequences



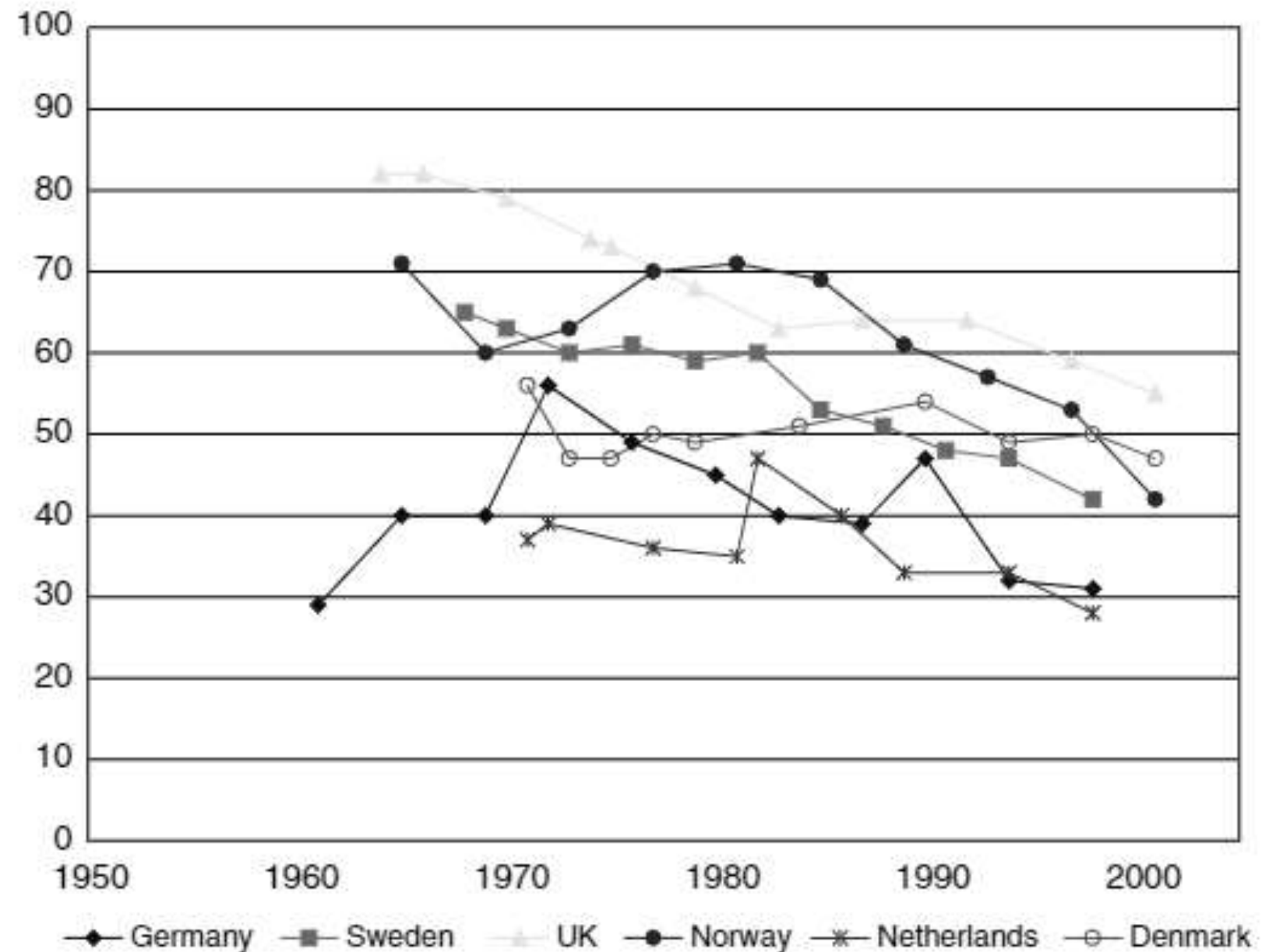
**‘us’ and ‘them’ view of the world
Electoral mobilisation (“we feeling”)**

Party switching, policy-driven voters

PPID and NPID have an independent effect on electoral behaviour

A “Cognitive Mobilization”?

- The trend is down in Western Europe from the 1970s: **dealignment**
 - **Prominent explanation:**
 - “Cognitive Mobilization” (Inglehart 1977, Dalton 1984)
- Rise of mass media and education removes the functional value of partisanship
- → But trend is not linear !



Source: Berglund et al. 2005

A tumultuous political context 2007-2016

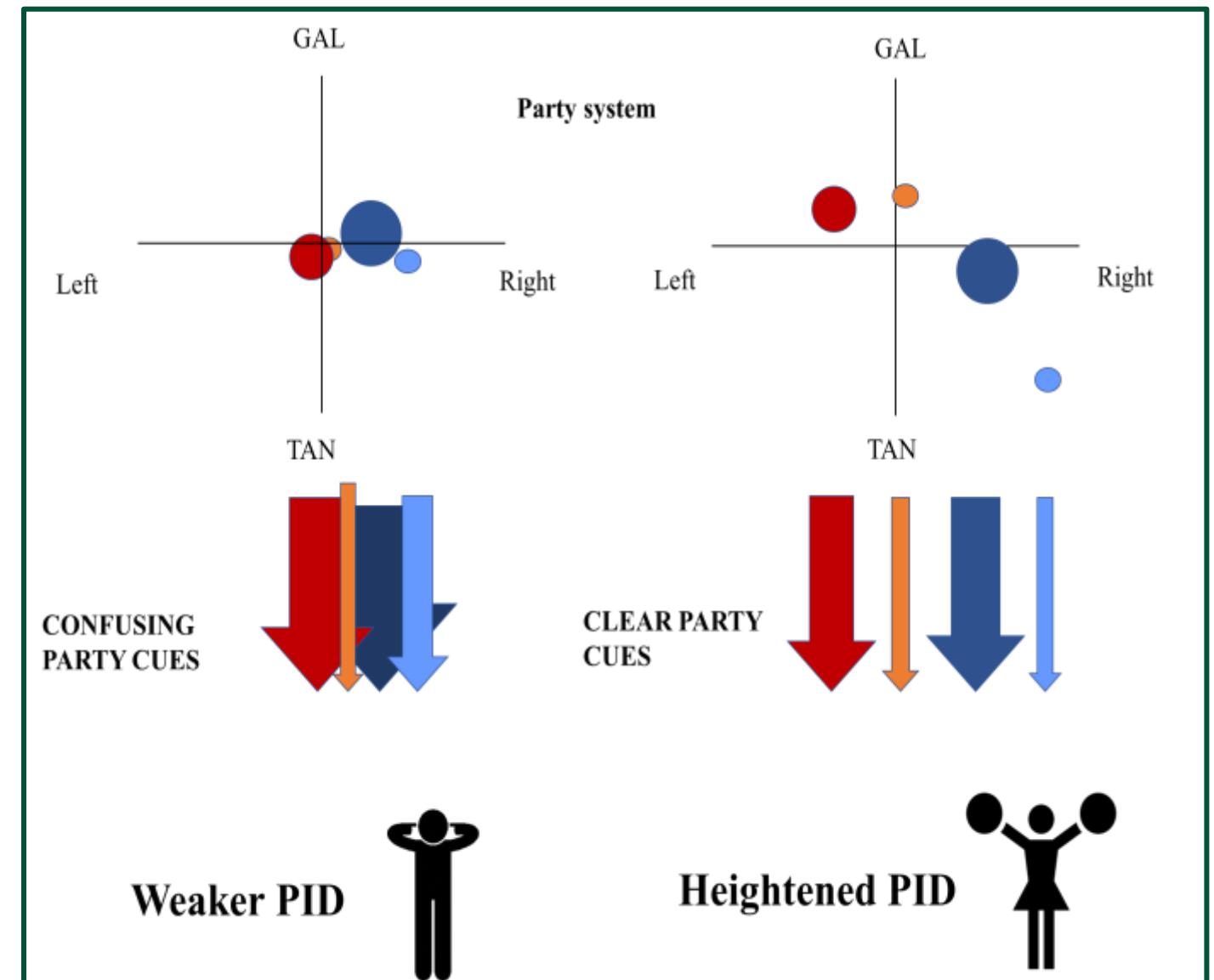
- **Party system level**
- Great Recession and Migration crisis spurred a polarizing dynamic in Western Europe
- Entrenchment of the Populist far-right family
- Emergence of a new dimension of competition in its own right: The cultural dimension (GAL-TAN)

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- **Voters' level**
 - Opinion change on new issues
 - Some speak of a realignment (i.e. Krisi et al. 2008)
 - Increased negativity towards traditional parties
 - → Negative Partisanship?



Politics is back!

- Causal effect of party system polarisation on the strength of partisanship (Costello 2018 , Iupu 2015, Hetherington 2001)
- **Instrumental paradigm**
- Voters are guided by short-term factors (e.g. ideology)
- Need clarity to navigate the landscape
- **Expressive paradigm**
- Voters guided by the desire to protect their identity in the face of increased competition



In WE, the strength of PPID increases as a result of polarisation on the Left Right dimension

Main hypotheses

- H1: An increase in party system polarization on the LR and GALTAN will lead to an increase in positive partisanship.
- H2: An increase in party system polarisation on the LR and GALTAN will lead to an increase in negative partisanship
- H3: polarisation will lead to an increase of ideological homogeneity within partisan groups

Methodology

- Case study design – 5 or 6 countries (guided by Polarisation levels and data availability)
 - Rich and varied data sources (survey and panel)
 - Early 2000s - now (no GALTAN prior)
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- Party system polarisation measured from expert data (CHES) on LR and GALTAN dimension
- (+ alternative dimensions?)

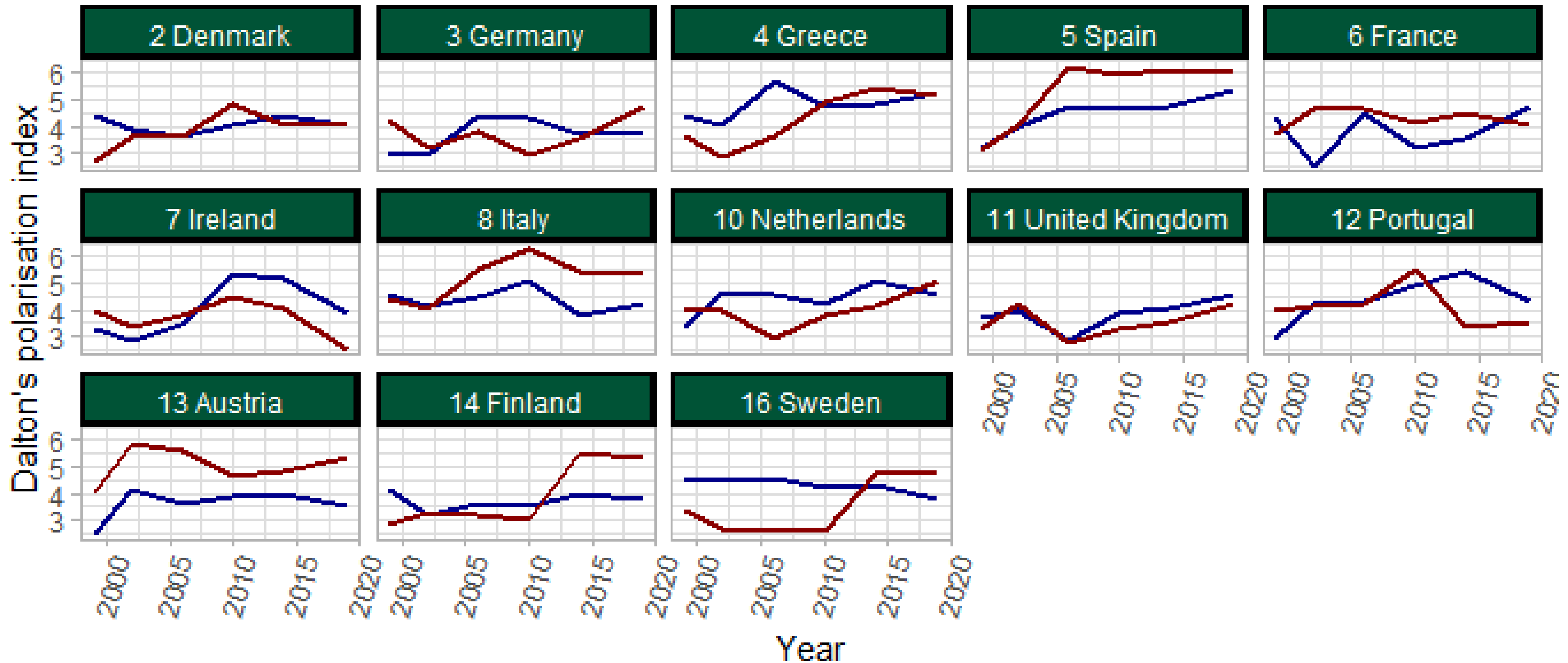
- PPID measured using the traditional 2-4 questions
- NPID measured using two different methods:
 - Like-dislike scale (11-points)
 - Propensity to vote (11-points, or binary)

Descriptive analysis

Party system polarisation on the LR and GALTAN dimensions

Western Europe between 1999-2019

— GALTAN — LR Econ

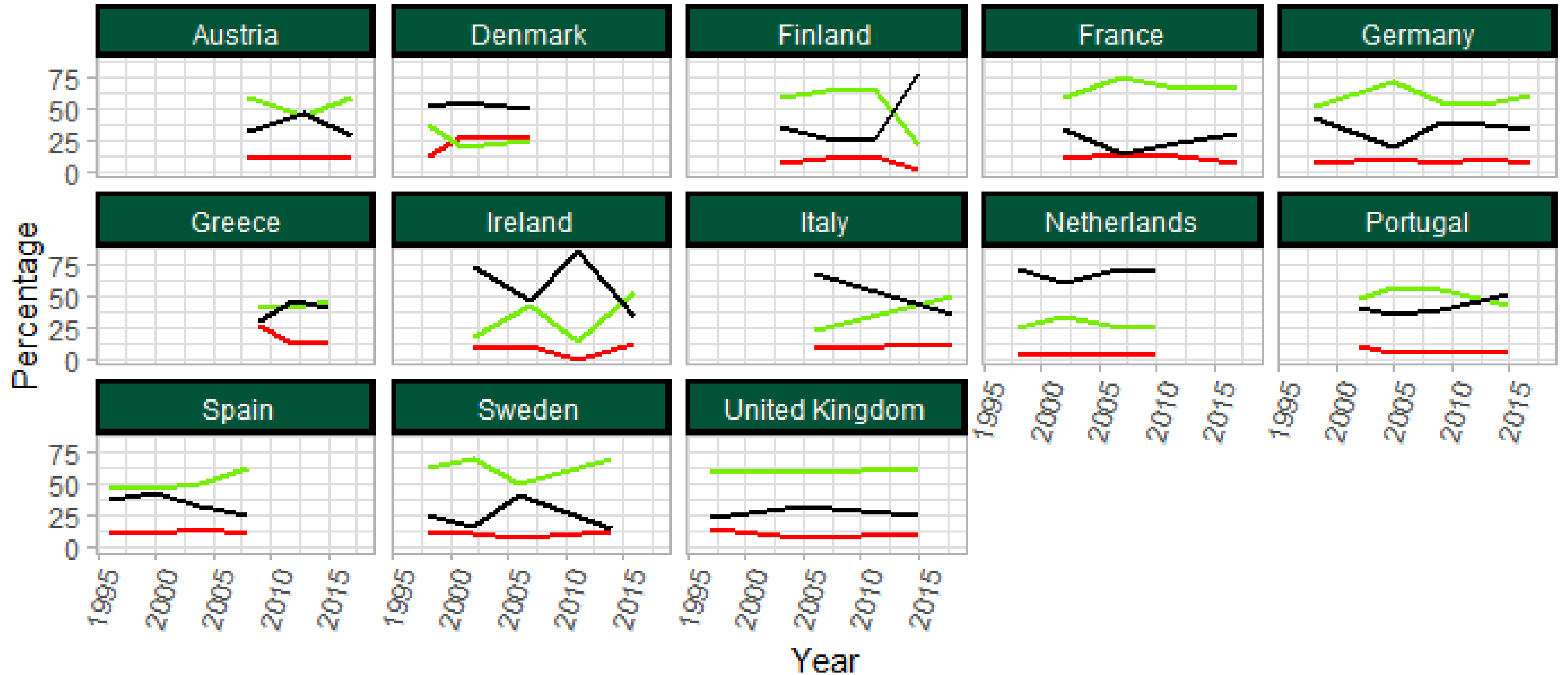


CHES data, 65 parties removed (NA)

Levels of PPID in Western Europe

PPID between 1996-2017

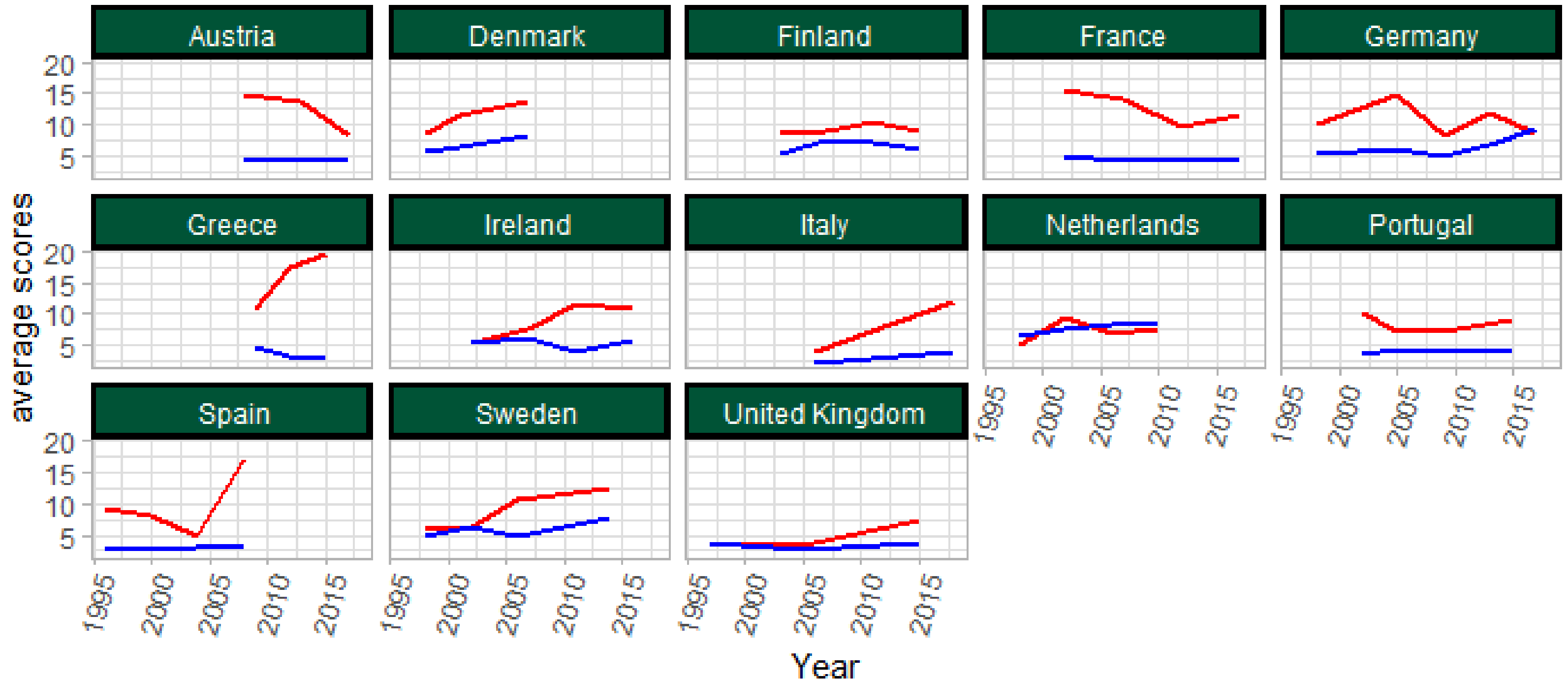
— No PID — Strong PPID — Weak PPID



Average strength of responses on the like-dislike scale

Unweighted scores between 1996-2017

— Negative — Positive



Research plan

- **Exploratory** cross-country analysis (aggregated CSES, EES)
 - **Validation** of PPID and NPID measures
 - Measure party system polarisation on older expert surveys (Inglehart, Huber, Mair)
 - + GALTAN scaling from MARPOR + validation
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- Case selection for single country analyses
 - Richer data → Deeper understanding of the party-voter linkage, and sources of NPID