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Elections in the European Multi-Level Electoral System

Europeanization of Parties? Evaluating Policy Convergence and Divergence of Europarties' Members, 1979–2019

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This paper assesses Europeanization of political parties on the programmatic level, measured through qualitative content analysis of party manifestos. In contrast to the Euromanifestos project, it looks at national manifestos (Manifesto Project, i.e. the CMP dataset) and tries to detect patterns of convergence and divergence in key policy areas among members of the four main European transnational party federations, i.e. Europarties (ALDE, EGP, EPP, and PES). Existing literature emphasizes that Europarties have become more diverse since the Eastern enlargements and speaks about the impact of Europarties on national parties in those member states. This paper wishes to expand on that and test for points of convergence and divergence both before and after the great enlargement in order to detect long-term trends. The analysis has shown that Europarties do possess a certain level of cohesiveness, yet that there are few trends to be observed and that the purported differences between parties from old and new member states cannot truly be detected. In addition, the levels of policy cohesiveness vary from issue to issue, with the lowest levels achieved on the (socio)economic axis of party competition.

Key words: Europeanization, electoral manifesto, policy convergence, political party, Europarties, Manifesto Project, CMP

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1. Introduction: Europeanization and Political Parties

“Europeanization”, a concept that denotes the impact of the European Union as an intergovernmental and supranational, multi-level political system *sui generis*, as well as of European integration as a multifaceted process of adaptation and change of political forms, processes and contents has become one of the key features of contemporary literature about the European Union (Ladrech, 2002, pp. 389-390). One of the key questions permeating research marked by the notion of “Europeanization” is whether there is and what kind of transformation power the European Union possesses in its interplay with the domestic (i.e. national) arena (Exadaktylos & Radaelli, 2015, pp. 206-207).

Despite the well-established argument that contemporary political parties are in decline (Blomgren, 2015, p. 266) and that they no longer serve the role of representation and interest aggregation that they used to serve during their heyday in post-World War II Europe (Mair, 2013), this paper “reclaims” parties as key actors in European democracies and as crucial actors within the framework of the European Union. In addition, one should note that some authors have clearly stated that “EU politics is party politics” and that “(...) party organizations, labels, ideologies, policies, coalitions and interests take centre stage” (Hix, 2005, p. 180). In other words, despite the argument, heard both in academic and non-academic circles, that the European Union fosters a system of technocratic, post-political and thus post-partisan governance, political parties are and remain key elements of politics within the institutional architecture of the European Union. The crucial role parties play in the European Union is further reinforced by Art. 10 § 4 of the Lisbon Treaty: “Political parties at European level contribute to forming European political awareness and to expressing the will of citizens of the Union” (Official Journal of the European Union, 2016, p. 21).

Regarding the Europeanization of parties, Ladrech has suggested five areas where we can investigate the impact of Europeanization on political parties: “(1) policy/programmatic content; (2) organizational; (3) patterns of party competition; (4) party-government relations; and (5) relations beyond the national party system” (Ladrech, 2002, p. 396). This paper deals with the first area, i.e. policy/programmatic content, assessed through quantitative analysis of electoral manifestos.

When discussing different approaches to research about Europeanization of parties, Peter Mair has identified three main fields – studies dealing with European party federations (i.e. Europarties), analyses of the party system emerging inside the European Parliament, as well as the impact of “Europe” on national party politics (Mair, 2007, pp. 154-155).

The approach used in this paper seeks, in a certain way, to merge these fields, as it deals with the (expected) transformation of national political parties, assessed through party manifesto content, in the context of membership in four biggest Europarties, since the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979.

2. Research Framework

As noted by Ladrech, it is rather difficult to establish causality of party change regarding the role of the European Union when using a large *n* cross-national framework (Ladrech, 2012, p. 192). However, in this case, we are trying to infer whether one can speak about Europeanization when looking at the similarities of national party manifestos within the framework of formal

membership in Europarties. Whether our findings can be used for conclusions about causal relationships between Europarty membership and policy change is another question. One could claim that like-minded parties tend to work together in transnational party federations (Europarties) or infer that Europarty membership transforms individual parties, which is, then, evident from their manifestos. Finally, one could draw a conclusion that individual parties belonging to the same broad party families (which may or may not be congruent with actual Europarties) already have a long history of policy similarities (Caramani, 2015). Caramani's analysis of policy homogeneity and convergency among European parties according to Comparative Manifesto Project/Manifesto Project data, presented in chapter six of his seminal 2015 book, speaks about already high levels of policy cohesiveness from the onset (1945), so that "one does not see a pronounced trend towards Europeanization" (Caramani, 2015, p. 213). However, this paper argues that Europeanization, understood as influence of the European Union on the national political arena, can only be properly analyzed if we classify national party manifestos and thus national parties according to their formal Europarty membership, and not according to the more general typology of party families.

An assessment of the differences between political parties from old member states (EU15) and new member states (i.e. those that joined after the 2004 Eastern enlargement), measured through data obtained by the Euromanifestos Project (EMP), has highlighted divergence in a couple of policy areas (morality and environment) (Bressanelli, 2014, pp. 102-103). In addition, on average, they were situated more to the right on the left-right scale and less keen on EU integration in comparison with their fellow parties in ALDE, EPP, and PES respectively (Bressanelli, 2014, pp. 103-106). Differences between parties in old and new member states were confirmed by other studies as well, yet these studies dealt more with party system change in the western and eastern parts of the continent, and less with the actual policy trends observable over time and space (Ladrech, 2008). Further, some older comparisons of cleavages, patterns of party competition, and the role of Europarties in new (at that time still candidate states) and old member states, have uncovered difficulties in applying the usual left-right scheme to political parties in Central and Eastern Europe (Delsoldato, 2002, p. 283).

Therefore, one still needs to test whether there are visible differences between political parties from old and new member states if we look at the national arena of party competition, i.e. if we assess policy coherence in national party manifestos. In other words, one of the tasks of this paper is to test whether ALDE, EPP, Greens, and PES member states from Central and Eastern Europe show great divergence in policy positions, measured through national manifestos.

While some authors emphasize the importance of European Parliament groups in the legislative process and state that they "have become increasingly cohesive and powerful over time" (McElroy & Benoit, 2007, p. 6), the approach used in this paper sees parties outside the European Parliament, i.e. the work of Europarties on the ground (in this case, in the respective national political arenas), as more important for the study of Europeanization of political parties. Namely, MEPs already act inside an European framework, i.e. in the European Parliament, and coherence and cohesion are paramount for successful work of any parliamentary group, be it a national one, or a transnational one, as the parliamentary groups in the European Parliament are. Thus, if we wish to analyze policy cohesion of Europarties, and consequently the process of Europeanization of national political parties through Europarties, we should focus on policy content its member parties offer in their respective national political arenas.

One should note that research on the Europeanization of political parties often deals with European elections as its starting point. This emphasis on European elections, either through

the usage of the EMP dataset (Bressanelli, 2014) or the employment of the euandi and EU Profiler data (voting advice applications) (Lefkofridi & Katsanidou, 2018) is a very interesting and fruitful approach, yet the examination of the interplay between the European and national in terms of party politics should rather include manifestos for national elections.

This paper deals with only four Europarties – the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), the European Green Party (EGS, Greens), the European People’s Party (EPP), and the Party of European Socialists (PES). It treats them as the biggest and most important Europarties. One might argue that there are other Europarties to be included, which are or might become (after the May election for the new European Parliament) more important. Yet, since my research framework draws a strict distinction between Europarties and MEP groups in the European Parliament, the choice of only these four Europarties makes sense. Further, these four parties possess the longest continuity and strongest organizational structure, as they go back to party groupings and pan-European party federations from the time of the first two direct elections for the European Parliament (1979, 1984). ALDE has its origins in the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties in the EC (established in 1976), the Greens represent a continuation of the 1984 European Coordination of Green Parties, EPP was established in 1976 as the European People's Party: Federation of Christian Democratic Parties of the EC, while PES had its precursor in the Confederation of the Socialist Parties of the EC, 1974 (Hix & Lord, 1997, pp. 171-177).¹ The manifesto dataset used in this paper assigns Europarty membership to each party for the given year, i.e. it considers that some parties may have changed their allegiance either between these four Europarties, or have joined other or established new Europarties.²

In the literature on transnational federations, i.e. Europarties in the sense presented in this paper (Europarties on the ground, expressed through national member parties), one can often find arguments that the two largest Europarties – EPP and PES – are less cohesive and that certain policies on the European level (European parliament arena) are sometimes ‘hard to sell’ for individual member parties in their national arenas, as well as the notion that the EPP has become less cohesive since the inclusion of national member parties which have more of a Conservative, and less of a traditional Christian Democratic policy profile (Bardi, 2004, p. 20).³ Other authors have provided evidence that Europarties have “exported the West European model of party politics” (von dem Berge & Poguntke, 2013, p. 18) and thus integrated Central and Eastern European parties in European party politics and subsequently contributed to the (re)shaping of national parties and party systems in new member states. This was confirmed by research on Central and Eastern European parties which has demonstrated the influence of Europarties on their new member parties, which has prompted them to “orient themselves towards one of the

¹ Other researchers have also highlighted these four Europarties as the “four main transnational federations” (Bardi, 2004, p. 19).

² Europarty membership was assigned according to official national party and/or Europarty records (official web sites). Of course, in this working paper phase, errors in membership assignment may well be possible. Parties such as the British Conservative and Unionist Party (Conservatives) and the Danish Conservative People’s Party (DKF) are treated as EPP member parties for the period starting in 1992, when the European Democrats become a subgroup of the EPP, and ending in 2009, with the establishment of the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (ACRE) (originally called Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (AECR)).

³ Even authors writing from the EPP's own perspective, such as its former Secretary General (1983-1994) Thomas Jansen, have reflected on the challenging of expanding the European People's Party to include new parties in Central and Eastern Europe (Jansen, 1998). However, some authors claim that already with the inclusion of the Greek New Democracy (*Nea Dimokratia*, ND) in 1981 the EPP has demonstrated its tendency to expand its membership beyond traditional Christian Democracy (Hanley, 2008, p. 90).

standard European families” (Enyedi & Lewis, 2007, p. 236), and thus refashion its content and profile as to conform to blueprints adopted from Western European sponsors and models.

This paper seeks to test whether there are tangible differences in the overall levels of cohesion between the four largest Europarties and whether the EPP indeed shows less cohesion, especially after the Eastern enlargement. Further, it tries to find out whether Central and Eastern European political parties stand out from the Europarties they are members of, on one or several policy issues.

To sum up, this paper tries to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Are there observable policy trends (increase/decrease in cohesion, left-right movement) among member parties of ALDE, EPP, PES, and the Greens?
2. Has there been a shift in the level of cohesion of ALDE, EPP, PES, and the Greens after the Eastern enlargement?⁴

Although the concluding findings of the analysis presented in this paper may serve for extrapolations about processes evident in national party systems in EU member states and the wider implications for the purported European party system (Lefkofridi & Katsanidou, 2018, p. 1478), they are primarily concerned with policy trends (convergence and/or divergence, hence implying cohesion and Europeanization of party manifestos) within individual national political parties, with their membership in Europarties as a (potential) factor contributing to observed policy trends.

3. Data and Methods

This analysis uses the most current version of the Manifesto Project (formerly and still widely known as CMP) dataset (Volkens, et al., 2018a). Although this paper states that its timeframe is 1979-2019, since it wants to emphasize forty years of direct European Parliament elections as the context in which policy convergence/divergence of national political parties, which are members of the four largest Europarties, occurs, a glance at the current version of the aforementioned dataset, officially labeled Version 2018b, reveals that the last electoral manifestos covered are actually from the end of 2017. One can only hope that the dataset will soon receive an update which will enable an extension of the timeframe to 2019.

The manifestos encompassed by this analysis include all national election manifestos available in the Manifesto Project dataset for parties that were members of four Europarties (ALDE, EPP, Greens, PES) in the 1979-2019 timeframe. National manifestos in years when the respective country was not a member of the European Union were excluded. This amounts to a total of 727 cases, i.e. 727 data points, each corresponding to a single manifesto for a national election.

The original dataset values were rescaled using log transformation (Lowe, Benoit, Mikhaylov, & Laver, 2011). Further, the variables used for assessment of policy convergence/divergence of member parties of the four biggest Europarties are confrontational, i.e. they operate with distinct ‘left’ positions that can be juxtaposed to ‘right’ positions in party manifestos (Lowe, Benoit, Mikhaylov, & Laver, 2011, pp. 135-136). This paper adheres to the proposals of transformation/expansion of the original CMP logic and analytical framework made by Lowe et al. in 2011 for three reasons. First, it agrees that policies, and thus manifestos do, indeed,

⁴ One might also speak of three Eastern enlargements – 2004, 2007, and 2013.

possess a confrontational nature and that only through such an appraisal of party policy can we clearly situate both individual member parties, as well as Europarties in political space. Second, it acknowledges the argument that log transformation enables analysis of CMP data that is more fine-tuned to detect both small and large policy shifts evident in changes in variable values ‘superimposed’ on manifesto content. Finally, this paper arises from the hope that the log transformation of CMP data and the subsequent confrontationalist approach party policy and policy shifts in electoral manifestos can overcome the concerns raised by some authors (Zulianello, 2014) about the theoretical (saliency theory and placing of parties in commons space on one or several competition axes) and methodological (cross-country coding issues of detectability and comparability) shortcomings of quantitative content analysis, as enabled by the CMP dataset.

Out of a total of 13 new scales proposed by Lowe et al. in their 2011 paper, this analysis uses 11 of them: *logrile* for the general assessment of ideological positioning of parties; *logeu* and *internationalism* for positioning on European and foreign policy; *nationalism*, *multiculturalism*, *morality*, and *libcons* for the sociocultural dimension of party positioning; *freemarket*, *stateeconomy*, and *logwelfare* for the socioeconomic dimension of party positioning; as well as *environment*, a variable that measures policy content that has both a sociocultural (postmaterialism) and a socioeconomic character (sustainability).⁵ While *logrile* represents just a log transformed version of the same RILE index originally used by CMP (i.e. Manifesto Project) (Volkens, et al., 2018b, p. 29); *logeu*, *internationalism*, *nationalism*, *multiculturalism*, *morality*, and *logwelfare* are based on confrontational pairs, i.e. the log ratio of ‘left’ and ‘right’ positions on each of these issues (Lowe, Benoit, Mikhaylov, & Laver, 2012, p. 5). Finally, *freemarket*, *stateeconomy*, *environment*, and *libcons* are additive variables. Whereas the first three are self-explanatory, the *libcons* variable ought to be clarified. It is a measure of social liberalism (‘left’ position) vs. social conservatism (‘right’ position), calculated from the addition of a range of variables concerning imperialism, militarism, internationalism, traditional morality etc. (Lowe, Benoit, Mikhaylov, & Laver, 2012, p. 6).

The analysis of each of the dimensions/variables is structured as following. First, we look at central tendency descriptives, where we focus on standard deviation as an indicator of the overall ideological spread of each Europarty. In other words, we presume that a lower standard deviation for a given variable implies that manifestos of member parties of a given Europarty are more similar, hence pointing to a greater level of policy cohesion. Second, we look at boxplots overlaid with stripcharts. This will enable a closer look at the cohesion of each Europarty, including the inspection of their median positions, as well as the shape of their quartile distributions. These figures also open possibilities for comparison of distributions between the four observed Europarties. Finally, we look at scatterplots that depict change over time. The scatterplot visualization includes a LOESS (locally estimated scatterplot smoothing) line, complete with a shaded area indicating a 95% confidence interval.⁶ The observation of the LOESS line will enable easier detection of possible trends (collective shifts to the ‘left’ or to the ‘right’), while the size of the confidence interval can be used as an indicator of cohesion, ie.

⁵ The *environment* variable juxtaposes the *501 Environmental Protection: Positive* and *416 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive* CMP variables as ‘left’ with the *410 Productivity: Positive* variable as ‘right’ (Lowe, Benoit, Mikhaylov, & Laver, 2012, p. 139), thus combining two economic variables with one variable purely concerned with the environment. All variables retain their original names provided in Lowe et al., 2011.

⁶ LOESS is based on local regression and serves as a visual remedy for potential overplotting, i.e. enables easier observation of possible trends in a scatterplot.

a ‘wider’ interval will point towards less cohesion and more policy divergence.⁷ In addition, the scatterplots include labels of parties whose manifestos have extreme values, i.e. greatly differ from the bulk of other members of the same Europarty. Labels include party abbreviations in the original languages, as well as the names of member states. In this regard, we do not use the term ‘outlier’, as this would imply a strict calculation (e.g. detection of all values two standard deviations removed from the group mean),⁸ but rather highlight examples of party manifestos that we have observed as far removed from other parties in their Europarty (and hence the LOESS line). When assessing these extreme examples, we shall try to ascertain whether certain parties or certain member states feature more often and whether we can observe differences between old and new (after the 2004 Eastern enlargement) member states. Lastly, we shall try to determine whether party manifestos with extreme values appear at or after watershed events (e.g. 1989 (Berlin Wall), 1992 (Maastricht), 1999 (euro), 2001 (9/11), 2003 (Iraq War), 2008 (Great Recession), 2009 (sovereign debt crisis), 2015 (migrant/refugee crisis)). In both the stripcharts and the scatterplots, the values above 0 (positive part of the scale) represent ‘right’ positions, while values below 0 (negative part of the scale) represent ‘left’ positions.

The descriptive statistics tables were produced in SPSS 20 (IBM Corp., 2011), while the plots were made with R (R Core Team, 2018) and the *ggplot2* (Wickham, 2016) and *ggpubr* (Kassambara, 2018) packages.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The starting point of our discussion of Europeanization of political parties begins with the log transformed left-right index (*logrile*) as a meta-level variable. The standard deviation, as an indicator showing the ideological spread of positions between member parties’ manifestos, yields the lowest levels, both for each of the four Europarties, as well as for the total for all four analyzed transnational party federations (**Table 1**). In other words, the differences on the left-right scale between parties in the same Europarty are rather low. We can observe especially low levels of ideological spread for EPP and PES members (0.24 and 0.23 respectively).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics: *logrile*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-.654	1.297	.01970	.300455
EPP	234	-.455	.755	.06805	.245908
Greens	101	-1.742	.759	-.34031	.336688
PES	195	-.847	.346	-.27755	.234575
<i>Total</i>	727	-1.742	1.297	-.09448	.321804

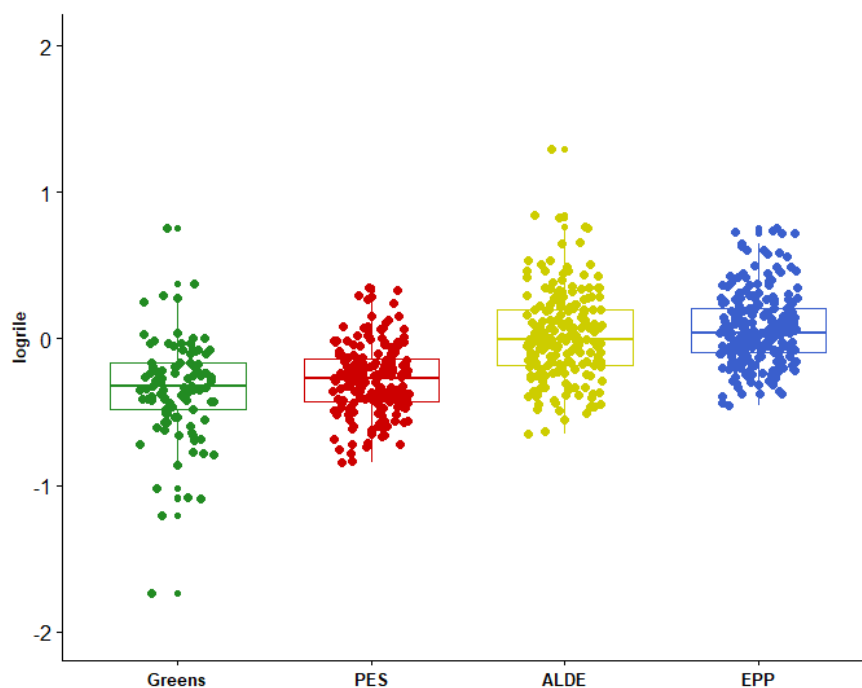
⁷ However, one should note that a ‘wider’ interval band at the beginning or end of the regression line might simply indicate that there are not enough data points to make a certain enough prediction which underlies the smoothing process.

⁸ The mentioned criterion for the detection of outliers is by no means the only one, yet can be deemed as a very useful and common one.

The ideological cohesiveness of EPP and PES is confirmed by the stripchart as well (**Figure 1**), as it shows a very compact structure. A closer look at Figure 1 shows, as expected, the Greens and PES slightly to the left and ALDE and EPP slightly to the right of the rile scale. The scattering of the stripcharts reveals a much lower level of cohesion for the Greens, with several outliers on both sides of the scale. Outliers are visible for ALDE as well, yet only in one direction (right part of the scale). If we take into account the size of the boxplots in the same figure, as well as the positioning of the median lines for all four parties, we can conclude that there are minimal differences in median left-right positions for members of the Greens and PES, just as there are minimal differences between ALDE and EPP members in this regard. These differences in median values are much lower than differences in the mean values, presented in **Table 1**.

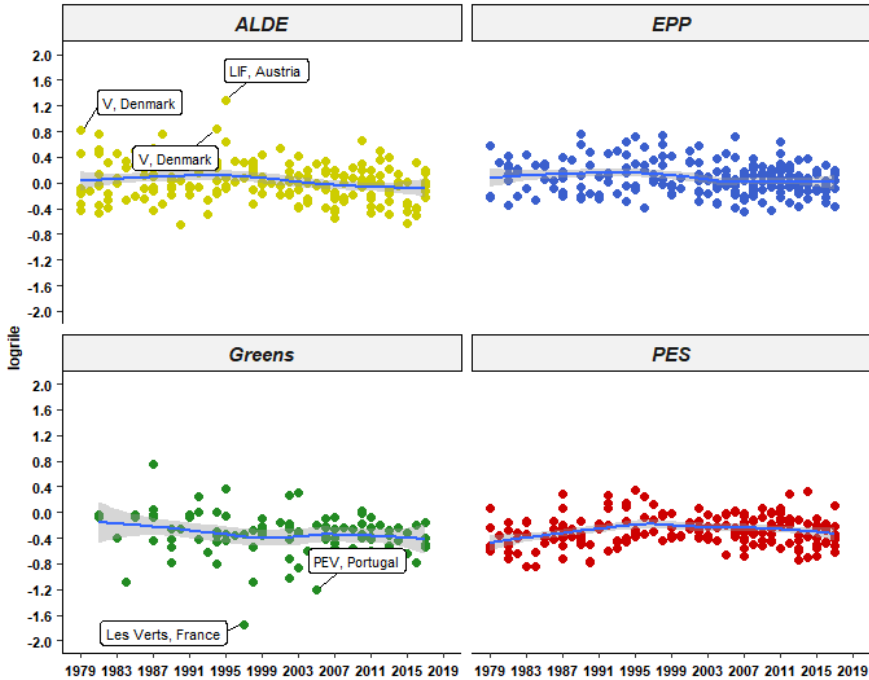
Table 2 enables an observation of long-term trends in left-right positions for the four analyzed Europarties. The examination of the LOESS lines in all four cases shows that we might state that there is somewhat of a trend towards more left-wing positions, i.e. a very slight move towards negative ('left') values on the rile scale. As already shown in **Table 1**, **Table 2** reveals several cases with extreme values among ALDE members and the Greens. For ALDE, we find three cases that are closer to the right-wing part of the scale than the bulk of members of this party – two manifestos by the Danish Liberals (*Venstre*, V) and one manifesto by Austrian Liberals (*Liberales Forum*, LIF).⁹ Among the Greens, the French *Les Verts* (LV) and the Portuguese PEV (*Partido Ecologista "Os Verdes"*) were closer to the left-wing part of the scale than the rest of the European Green Party members. Contrary to expectations and existing literature, none of the observed odd cases were from new member states.

Figure 1. *logrile* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019



⁹ In 2014, this party merged with the New Austria party (*NEOS - Das neue Österreich*) to become the *NEOS - Das neue Österreich und Liberales Forum* party, also an ALDE member.

Figure 2. *logrile* scatterplot, 1979-2019



Yet, one should not forget that *logrile* is a highly composite variable – its values might mask deeper, underlying differences among member parties, as well as between Europarties.

Table 2, which sums the central tendency values for the variable measuring the stance towards European integration, shows a very large standard deviation for the Greens, with very similar (albeit higher than in the case of *logrile*) values for the other three Europarties encompassed by this analysis.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics: *logeu*

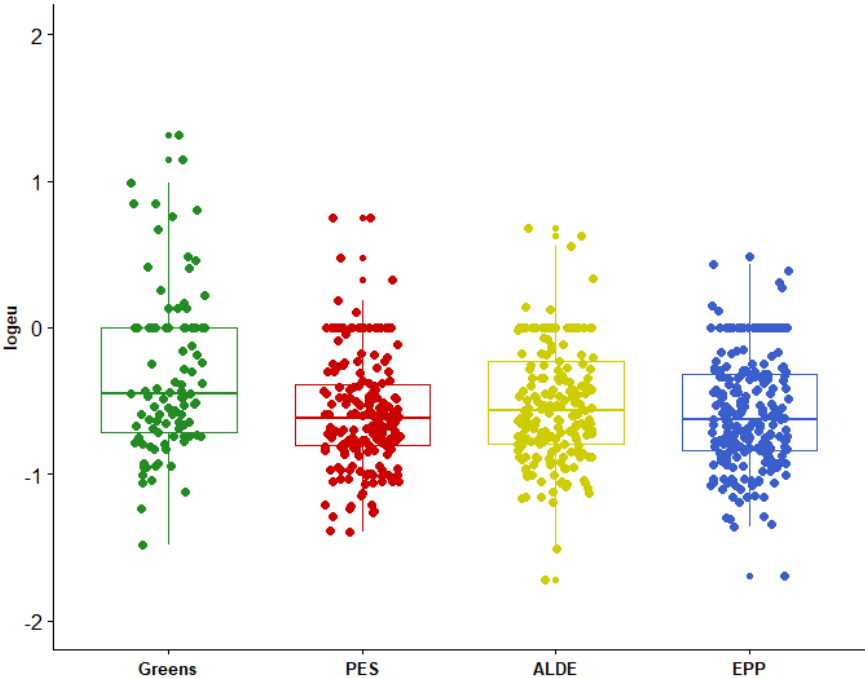
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-1.719	.679	-.51777	.393348
EPP	234	-1.694	.487	-.57664	.381221
Greens	101	-1.480	1.311	-.31612	.545011
PES	195	-1.394	.748	-.57834	.382099
Total	727	-1.719	1.311	-.52495	.419581

Figure 3 further highlights these findings – the Greens show the highest spread, as well as a tall boxplot, with the median line more to the ‘right’ (i.e. less pro-EU) than is the case for the other three Europarties. PES has the shortest boxplot, as well as the shortest inter-quartile range, thus exhibiting more cohesiveness regarding the stance on European integration than other Europarties. The median values, just like the mean values (**Table 2**) for PES and EPP are almost the same, while ALDE appears just slightly more to the ‘right’. One should note that, since the dataset used here relies on the confrontational, and not the saliency nature of party manifestos,

the numerous zero values observed in **Figure 3** are a consequence of mutual cancelling out of positive and negative mentions of European integration in certain party manifestos, and not an indicator of middle-ground positions.

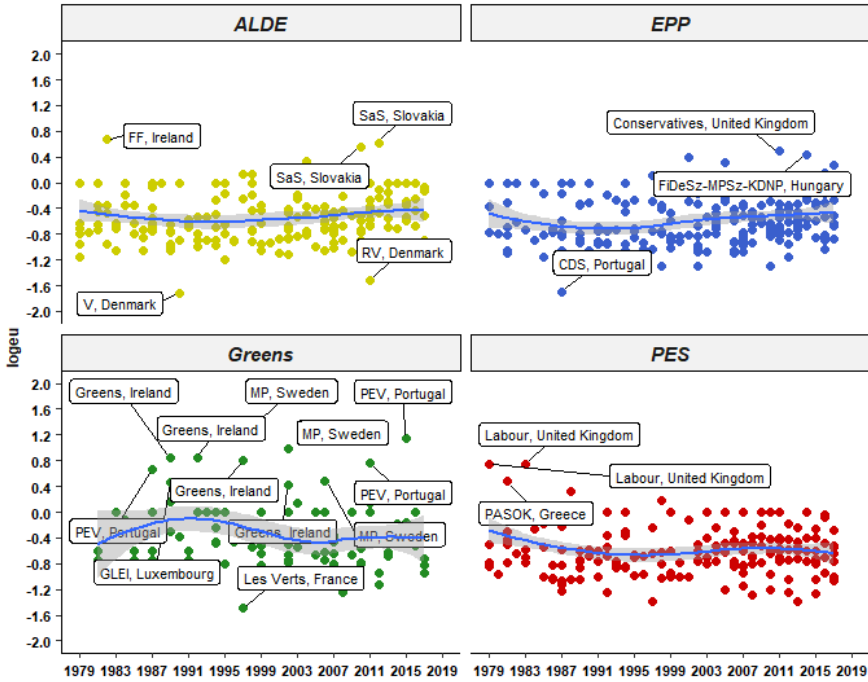
The LOESS lines in **Figure 4** do not allow for conclusions on any significant trends, while the 95 percent confidence interval around the LOESS line for the Greens is much wider than for the other three Europarties, further confirming the already established fact that the Greens show greater variation in their opinions about European integration. Cases with extreme values that are especially less pro-EU than other members of the Greens include party manifestos from Ireland, Sweden (*Miljöpartiet de gröna*, MP), and Portugal (PEV). Among ALDE members, *Fianna Fáil* (FF) during the early 1980s and the Slovak Freedom and Solidarity (*Sloboda a solidarita*, SaS)¹⁰ stand out rather Eurosceptic when compared to the rest of ALDE. In early 1980s, we can also observe somewhat Eurosceptic cases among PES members, namely two Labour Party manifestos and one from PASOK. Among EPP members, two somewhat Eurosceptic manifestos are to be found in late 2000 – one by the British Conservatives and another by a coalition led by *Fidesz*. The British Conservative and Unionist Party has since left the EPP, while *Fidesz* was suspended from full membership at the time of writing of this paper. Although we have found some odd cases from Central and Eastern Europe, we could not observe a clear east-west divide, nor could we detect a change of trends after the Eastern enlargement.

Figure 3. *logeu* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019



¹⁰ In 2014, SaS has left ALDE to join ACRE.

Figure 4. *logeu* scatterplot, 1979-2019



The descriptives for *internationalism* show relatively moderate ideological variation, measured through standard deviation (Table 3). Yet, again, the Greens stand out as the most ideologically diverse regarding foreign policy and the interplay between sovereignty and global governance.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics: *internationalism*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-1.374	.778	-.55641	.383060
EPP	234	-1.465	.657	-.58162	.360897
Greens	101	-1.306	.672	-.67202	.416262
PES	195	-1.422	.731	-.62569	.354568
Total	727	-1.465	.778	-.59917	.374699

Figure 5 shows outlier cases for all four parties, while boxplot is the shortest for the Greens. In addition, the Greens are the most ‘left’ (i.e. the most committed to multilateralism and global governance) of the four Europarties analyzed in this paper. Again, we can see a lot of zero values for cases in all four parties.

Figure 5. *internationalism* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019

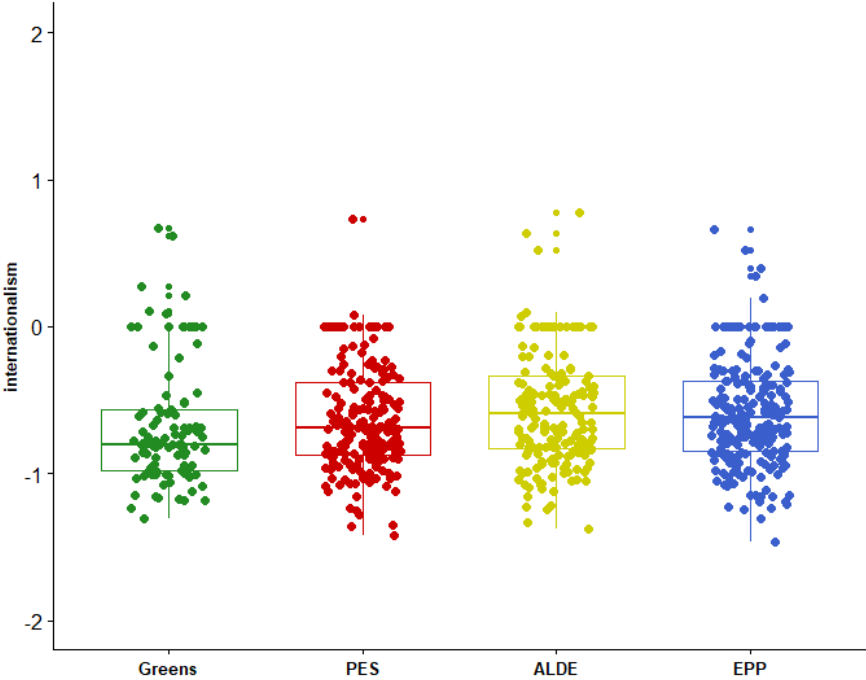


Figure 6. *internationalism* scatterplot, 1979-2019

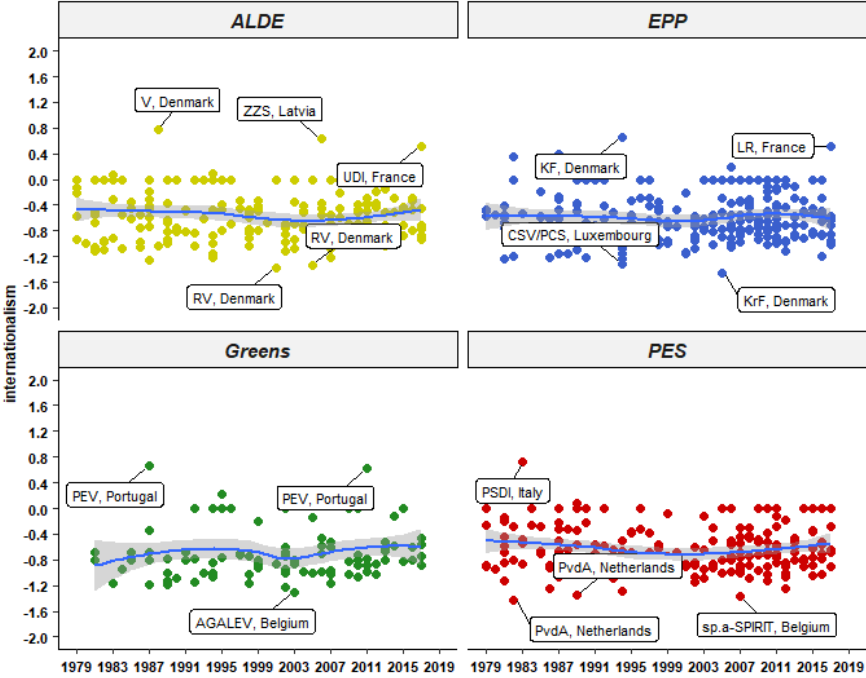


Figure 6 shows a plethora of different parties that have values which greatly differ from those of their fellow member parties. However, some parties are repeatedly present, if we consider

the findings from previous variable. The Portuguese Greens (PEV) show much lower levels of commitment to multilateralism than other Green member parties. Danish Liberals in mid-1980s were much less keen to support global governance than the rest of ALDE members, while the most recent manifesto of the French Republicans (LR) shows a case of least commitment to internationalism by an EPP member party. The agrarian Union of Greens and Farmers (*Zaļo un Zemnieku savienība*, ZZS) in Latvia, an ALDE member, is the only party from a new member state that has shown divergence regarding the internationalism topic. The LOESS curves do not point to any significant trends, while the 95 percent confidence interval is, again, much wider in the case of the Greens.

Regarding *nationalism*, ALDE and EPP show almost identical, rather high levels of ideological spread (SD = 0.418 and 0.411, respectively) (Table 4). Again, the Greens stand out, this time with a much higher level of ideological cohesion, i.e. a much small standard deviation.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics: *nationalism*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-1.153	1.562	.24085	.418181
EPP	234	-.771	1.550	.44777	.411767
Greens	101	-.894	.793	.06175	.288648
PES	195	-.982	1.091	.25345	.316707
<i>Total</i>	727	-1.153	1.562	.28595	.395189

As presumed, **Figure 7** shows that Green member parties are the least nationalist, while EPP are the most nationalist, with the tallest boxplot. Outlier cases are evident for all four parties. There are no observable trends visible in **Figure 8**, although one might argue that EPP is becoming more cohesive on nationalism over time and that it is, indeed, becoming somewhat more nationalistic. Within ALDE, we can find right-wing (more nationalist) outliers, again from the same countries – *Venstre* in the 1980s and Latvian ZZS, joined by the Estonian Reform Party (*Eesti Reformierakond*, ER). Conversely, among EPP members, the Greek New Democracy (ND) stands out in the 1980s and early 1990s, followed by the Estonian Pro Patria (*Isamaa*, IRL) party and the Democratic Rally (*Dimokratikós Sinagermós*, DISY) from Cyprus.

Figure 7. *nationalism* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019

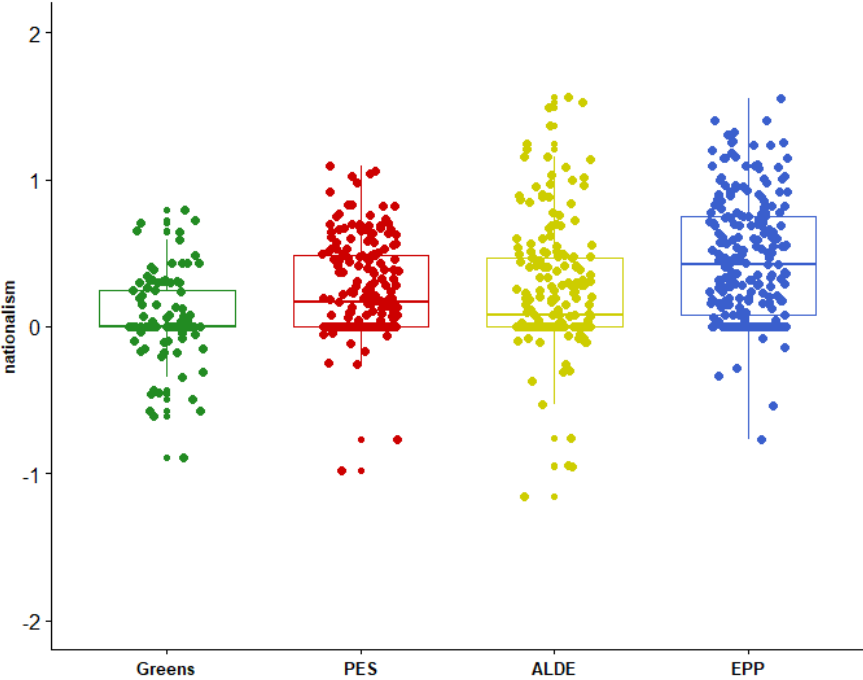
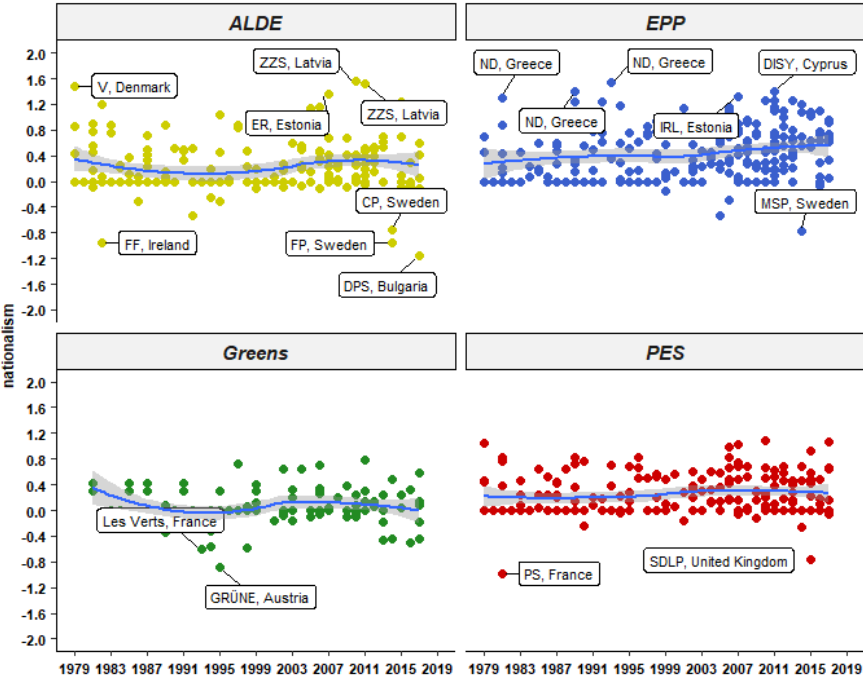


Figure 8. *nationalism* scatterplot, 1979-2019



Regarding multiculturalism, we can observe the lowest levels of ideological variation (SD = 0.29) among PES members, with ALDE showing the highest ideological spread (0.40) (Table 5).

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics: *multiculturalism*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-1.616	1.082	-.14596	.407580
EPP	234	-1.636	1.004	-.09850	.360778
Greens	101	-1.032	1.064	-.25001	.336141
PES	195	-1.078	.806	-.15216	.293935
<i>Total</i>	<i>727</i>	<i>-1.636</i>	<i>1.082</i>	<i>-.14680</i>	<i>.357091</i>

Higher levels of ideological spread are visible from the stripchart as well (Figure 9). While the median values for ALDE and EPP are almost identical, the Greens stand out with more ‘leftist’, i.e. more positive stances towards multiculturalism, which fits with the general academic and non-academic perception of this Europarty and its member parties. In addition, the boxplot for the Greens is somewhat taller than for the other parties, which would indicate greater variation.

In Figure 10, we can see an almost flat trend for all Europarties save for the Greens. For them, the 95 percent confidence interval seems to be narrowing, while the LOESS curve is tipping down, i.e. over time, the Greens are becoming more ‘left’ on the multiculturalism. Again, we can find outlier parties coming mostly from Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Finland). In addition, the Portuguese PEV is once again a divergent case in comparison with the Greens. Finally, one should note that left-wing outliers on this variable could be somewhat misleading, as most of them are cases of parties of ethnic minorities. Thus, the most left-wing values obtained by EPP members were by two ethnic Hungarian parties, one from Slovakia, another from Romania.

Figure 9. *multiculturalism* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019

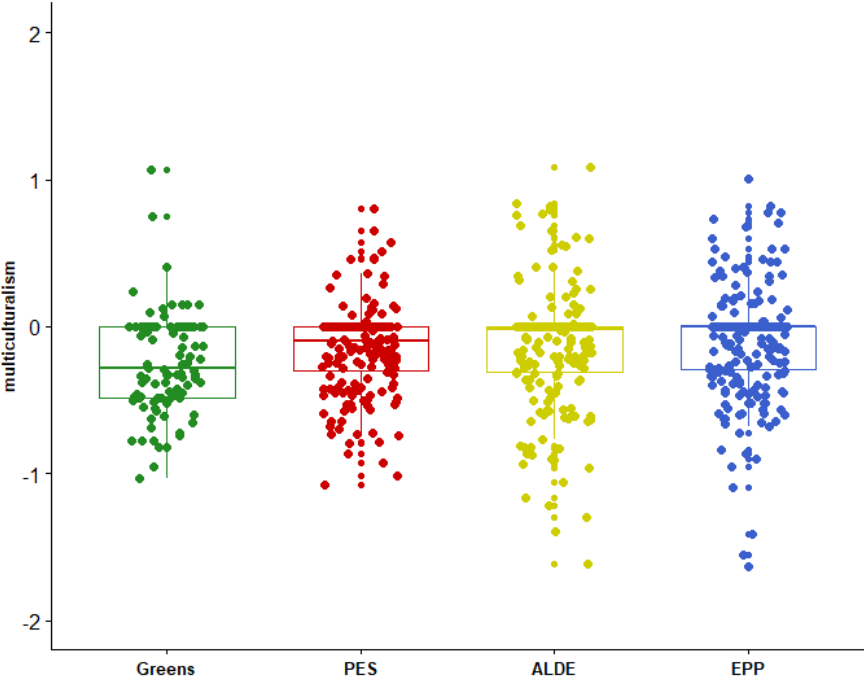
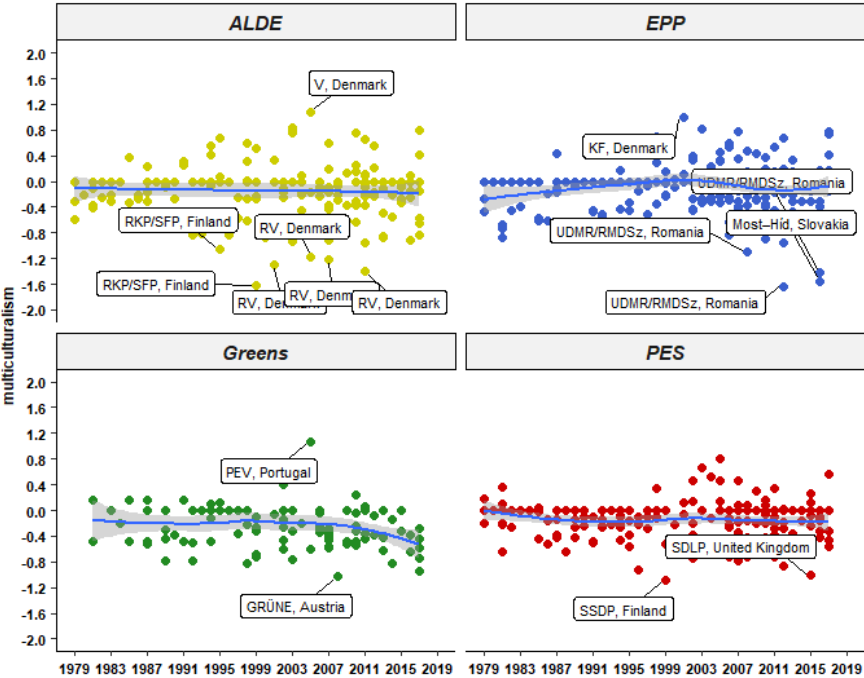


Figure 10. *multiculturalism* scatterplot, 1979-2019



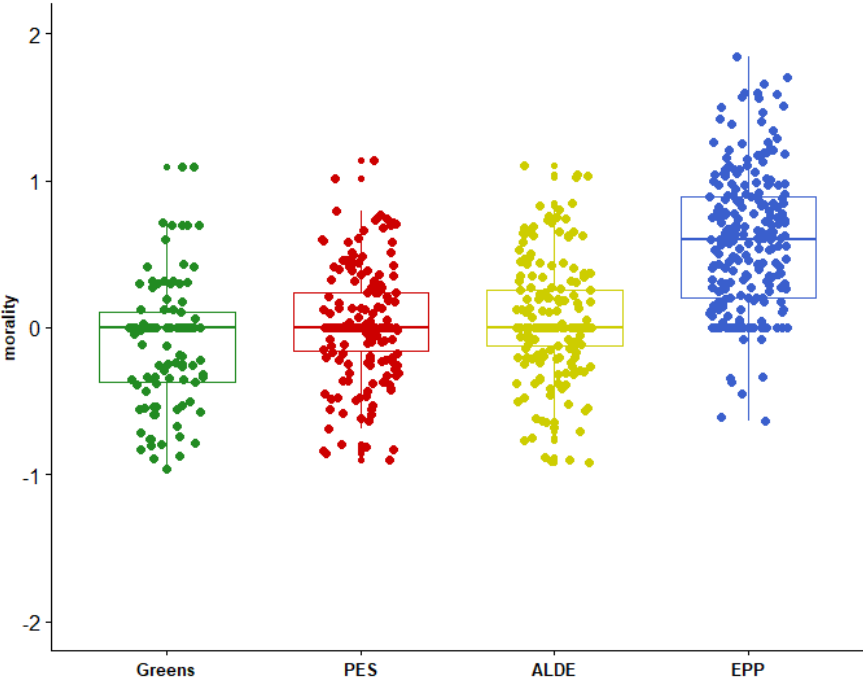
On morality, both EPP and the Greens show great ideological variation, with standard deviations of 0.46 and 0.42, respectively (Table 6).

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics: *morality*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-.916	1.106	.05199	.386667
EPP	234	-.637	1.846	.57875	.467999
Greens	101	-.961	1.094	-.10841	.429279
PES	195	-.897	1.137	.02467	.360454
<i>Total</i>	727	-.961	1.846	.19193	.494330

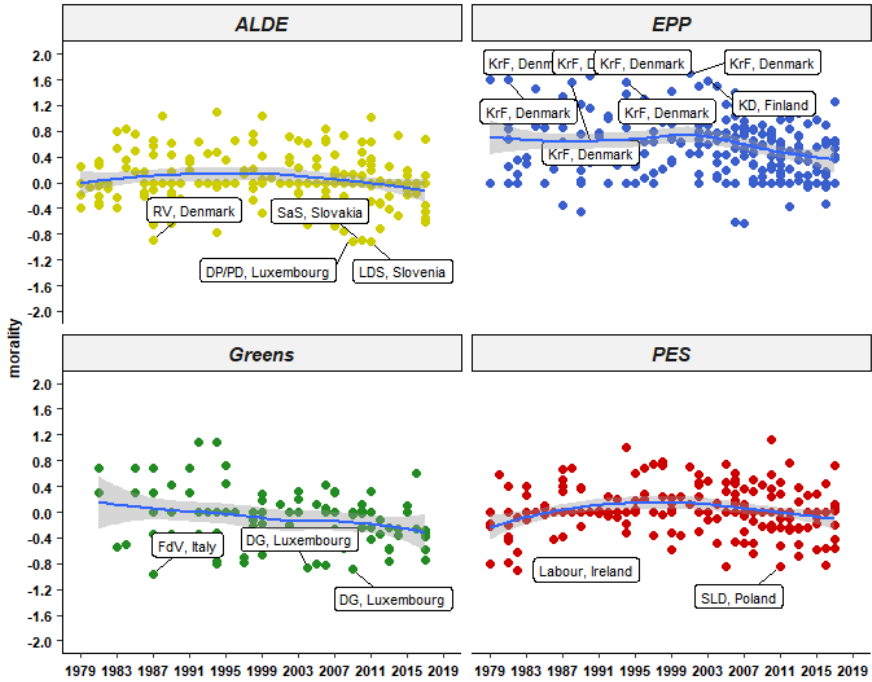
As expected, EPP member parties are much more right-wing regarding the morality topic than the Greens, PES, and ALDE, which have almost identical median values, hovering around the zero mark (**Figure 11**).

Figure 11. *morality* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019



A closer look at **Figure 12** reveals several things. First, none of the four parties is truly coherent regarding protection/rejection of traditional morality. Second, the EPP is, indeed, much more traditional on this issue than other Europarties. Third, among the Greens, there is a trend towards less acceptance of traditional morality and less ideological variance. Among EPP members, it seems the levels of ideological variance have decreased, yet seem to have started increasing again in the last couple of years. Most of the outlier cases are party manifestos which are more right-wing than the bulk of EPP member parties. Again, we are talking about Scandinavian parties, the Danish Christian Democrats (*Kristendemokraterne*, KD; formerly the Christian People's Party (*Kristeligt Folkeparti*, KFP)) and the Finnish Christian Democrats (*Kristillisdemokraatit*, KD).

Figure 12. morality scatterplot, 1979-2019

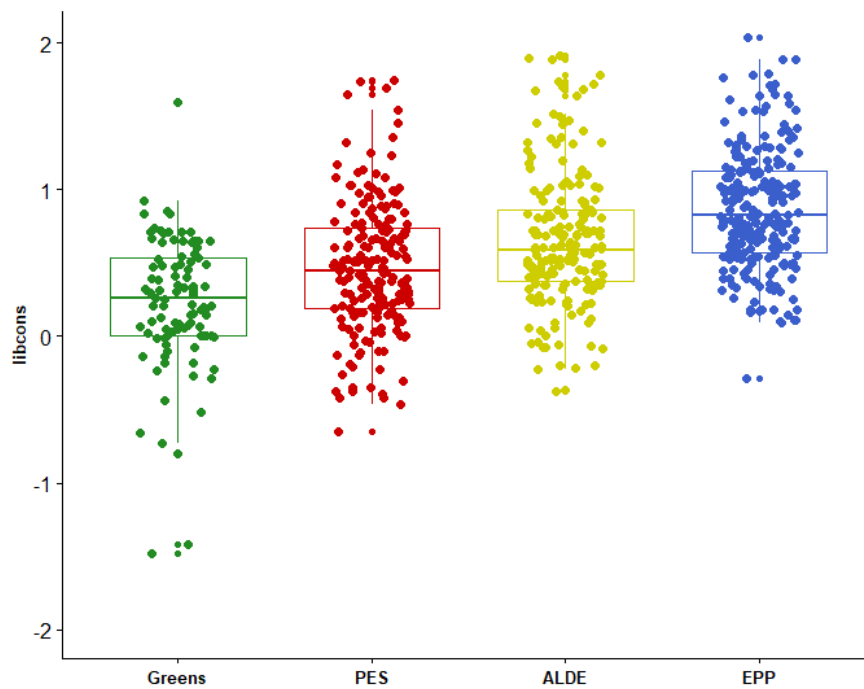


The distinction between social liberalism and social conservatism, captured by the libcons variable, shows great ideological variance among all four observed Europarties (Table 7). All four boxplots are rather tall, with visible outliers and a somewhat greater level of cohesion for the European People’s Party (Figure 13). As expected, EPP is the most socially conservative, while the Greens are the most socially liberal of the four analyzed Europarties. What is curious, is the fact that even in the case of the Greens the median value is positive, i.e. on the right-hand side of the spectrum.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics: libcons

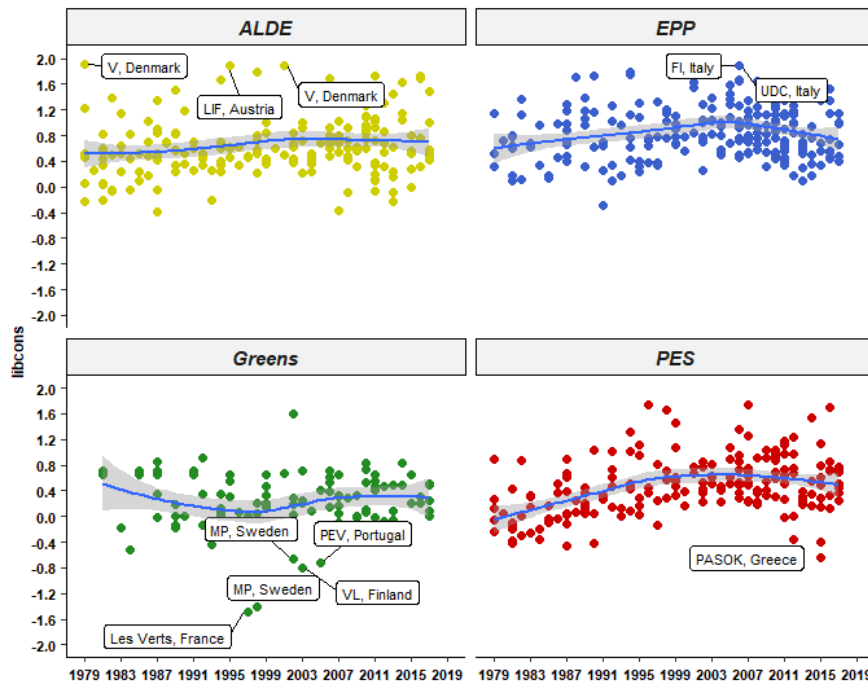
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-.379	1.913	.65429	.459695
EPP	234	-.286	2.040	.86835	.411812
Greens	101	-1.480	1.599	.23156	.448306
PES	195	-.648	1.742	.47091	.442170
Total	727	-1.480	2.040	.61528	.488409

Figure 13. *libcons* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019



The scatterplots presented in **Figure 14** show slight trends towards more social conservatism for both EPP and PES. However, these trends seem to have changed direction around 2007, the time of accession of Bulgaria and Romania. The scatterplots witness the greatest ideological variation among the Greens, coupled with a slight trend towards more social liberalism, which seems to have stopped in 2000. For ALDE, the outliers, which are more socially conservative than other member parties, are, once again, *Venstre* and LIF. On the contrary, the most socially liberal manifestos among the Greens are to be found with the Green member parties from Sweden and Finland.

Figure 14. *libcons* scatterplot, 1979-2019



Now let us look at some of the economic variables. On free market, all four Europarties show very high levels of ideological variance, with ALDE achieving the highest standard deviation (0.52) (Table 8). Figure 15 confirms expectations – ALDE and EPP are more to the ‘right’ on the free market issue, while the Greens and PES espouse more left-wing positions. Further, there is a slight, barely observable, difference in the median positions of ALDE and EPP, with ALDE less pro-market than EPP. This, together with the high ideological spread, can be explained by the rift within ALDE between social liberals and classical liberals.

The scatterplots in Figure 16 confirm great ideological variance in all four parties, with the Greens having a somewhat greater level of ideological cohesion regarding the free market issue. Again, most of the outlier cases, especially those that are more ‘right-wing’, i.e. more pro-market, come from Scandinavian member states (e.g. *Venstre*). Among the Greens, the Portuguese PEV again stands out, yet as a much more ‘left-wing’ party than the rest of its fellow Greens. In addition, the LOESS curve seems to indicate that the Greens are becoming more anti-market over time. For other Europarties, not significant trends could be observed. This finding is especially interesting in the case of PES. Namely, ever since the onset of Third Way politics, epitomized by Anthony Giddens in academic and Tony Blair in political terms, one could hear academic and non-academic assertions that European Social Democracy has abandoned Keynesianism and adopted strong pro-market positions (Hanley, 2008, p. 72). However, this analysis does not confirm that. Yet, it also reveals a very low level of cohesion among PES members regarding the free market issue.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics: *freemarket*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-1.275	1.695	.37256	.524781
EPP	234	-.803	1.614	.33760	.462294
Greens	101	-1.592	.636	-.36613	.425521
PES	195	-1.595	1.366	-.10808	.467796
Total	727	-1.595	1.695	.12976	.552882

Figure 15. *freemarket* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019

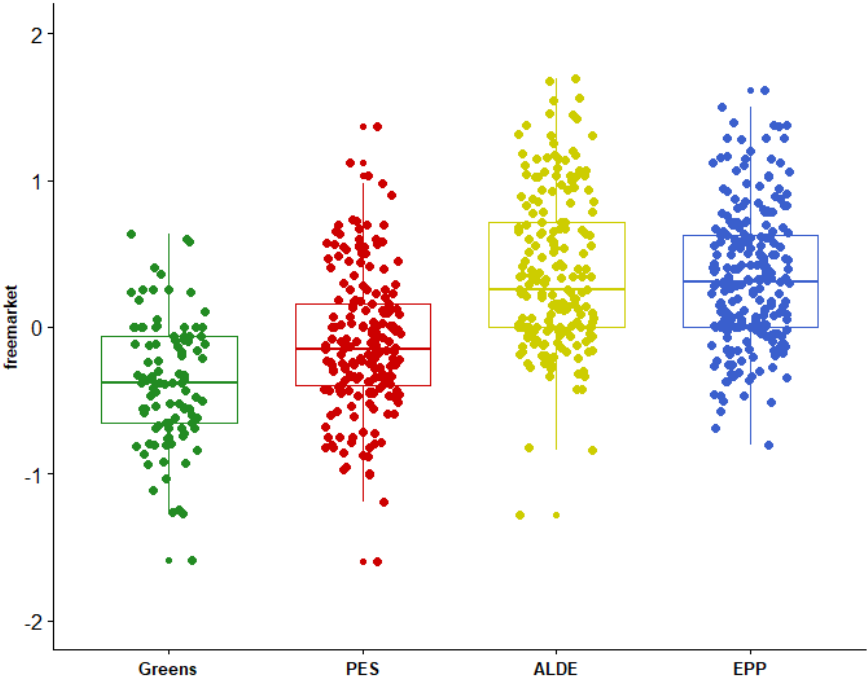
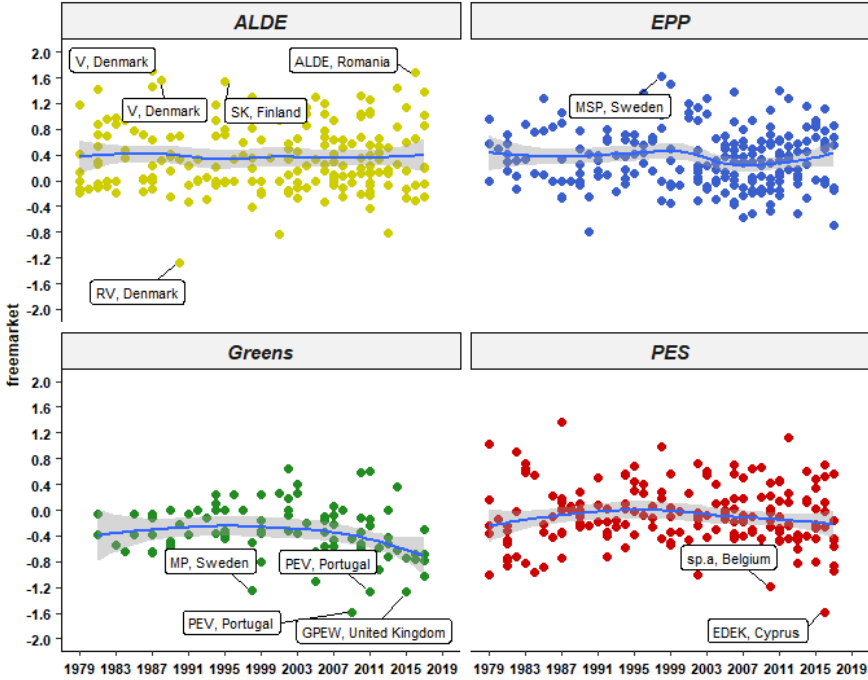


Figure 16. freemarket scatterplot, 1979-2019



On the role of the state in the economy, members of the Greens have shown the greatest deal of ideological similarity (SD = 0.29), while ALDE members, just like in the case of the free market, showcased the least levels of cohesion (Table 9). Such findings are confirmed by the stripchart presented in Figure 17. The median value for ALDE is somewhat more ‘right-wing’, i.e. less pro-state than for EPP, while PES and the Greens express clear pro-state values.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics: *stateconomy*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-1.838	.978	-.28998	.416574
EPP	234	-1.288	.749	-.34639	.331274
Greens	101	-1.639	-.071	-.92918	.295457
PES	195	-1.981	.115	-.72757	.349691
Total	727	-1.981	.978	-.51431	.430900

The scatterplots (Figure 18) show slight ‘left-wing’ drifting of ALDE and EPP, as well as a more pronounced ‘left-wing’ trend among the Greens in recent years. Once again, most of the outliers, especially on the ‘right-wing’ side of the spectrum, come from Scandinavian parties (especially *Venstre*). The most pro-state manifestos come from the Irish Labour Party, the French Socialist Party (PS) and the Flemish Social Democrats (*Socialistische Partij Anders*, sp.a). Again, contrary to popular wisdom, PES does not exhibit a ‘right-wing’ turn in its economic policy.

Figure 17. *stateconomy* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019

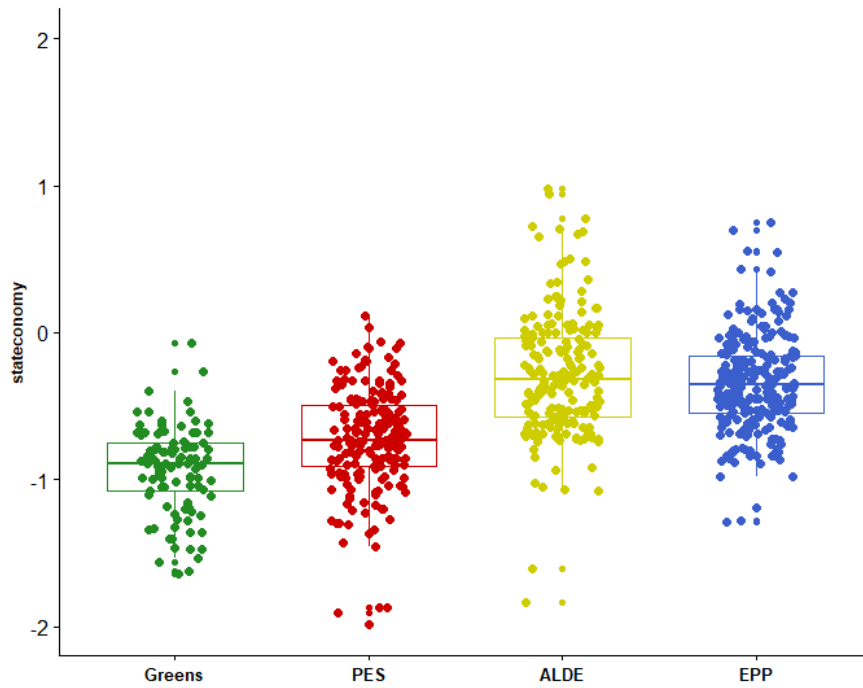
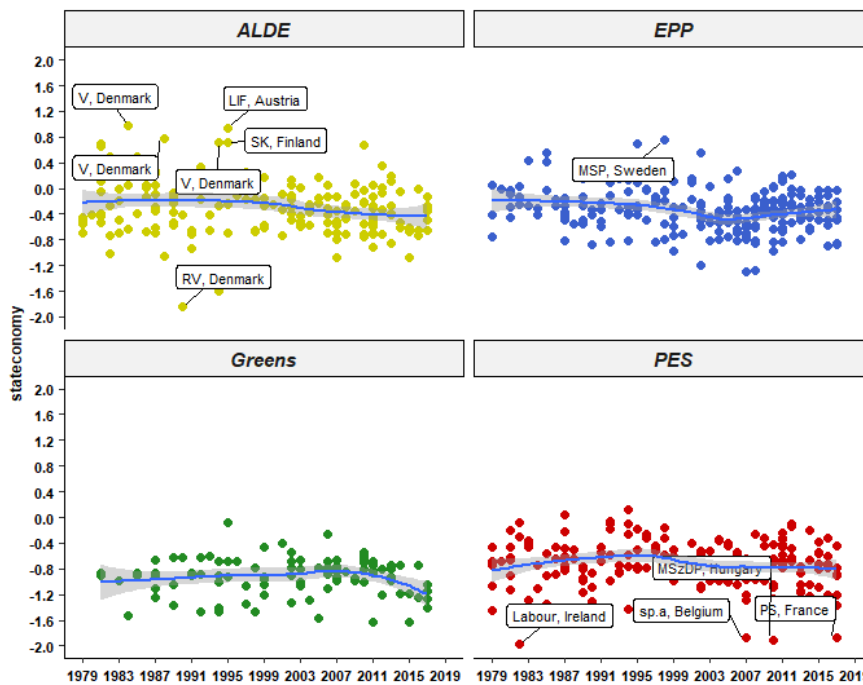


Figure 18. *stateconomy* scatterplot, 1979-2019



The *logwelfare* variable shows a very large ideological spread, both for individual Europarties, as well as for the whole dataset, whereas ALDE achieved the highest levels of ideological variance, with a standard deviation of 0.62 (**Table 10**).

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics: *logwelfare*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-1.756	1.140	-.68614	.622776
EPP	234	-1.690	1.036	-.88927	.473805
Greens	101	-1.582	.000	-1.06273	.315291
PES	195	-1.743	1.013	-1.14855	.391634
<i>Total</i>	<i>727</i>	<i>-1.756</i>	<i>1.140</i>	<i>-.92787</i>	<i>.513206</i>

Figure 19 confirms expectations, with the most ‘right-wing’ median values for ALDE and the most ‘left-wing’ one for PES. A very tall boxplot for ALDE underlines the already mentioned high ideological spread, i.e. low cohesion regarding the topic of the welfare state. This is further shown by the scatterplots in **Figure 20**, with a wide 95 percent confidence interval for ALDE. For ALDE and EPP one can detect a slight ‘left-wing’ trend, i.e. movement towards greater acceptance of the welfare state and its expansion. As has been the case throughout the whole dataset, Scandinavian parties seem to stand out on this issue. Namely, *Venstre* in the 1980s and 1990s had much more ‘right-wing’ opinions about the welfare state than other ALDE members. However, among EPP members, in recent years, we have witnessed a dramatic ideological shift of the Danish Conservative People’s Party (*Det Konservative Folkeparti*, DKF),¹¹ from a party strongly advocating reduction in the size of the welfare it become an outlier among EPP members as one of the parties favoring an expansion of the welfare state. This observation, of course, might be a product of some underlying manifesto coding error. Further analysis should deal with this outlier and try to detect its true origins.

¹¹ In **Figure 20**, the KF acronym is used instead of DKF.

Figure 19. *logwelfare* stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019

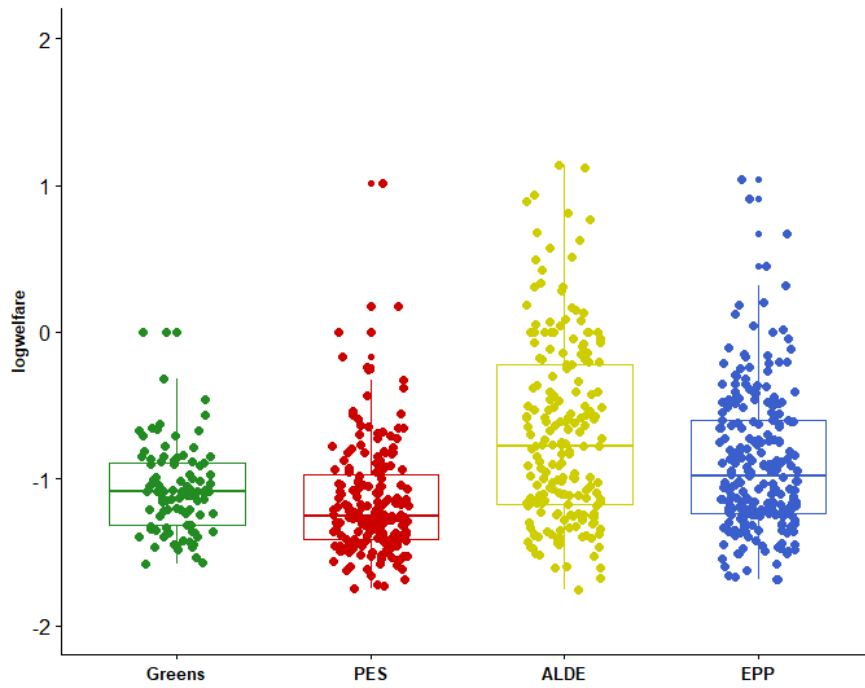
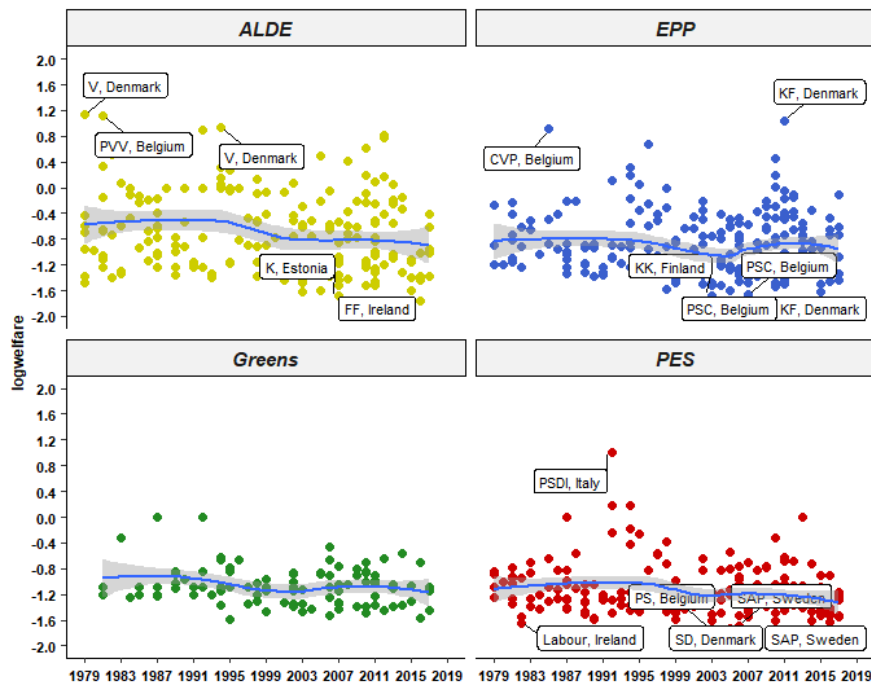


Figure 20. *logwelfare*, 1979-2019



The total values for the environment variable, i.e. the total scores for all four Europarties, show the greatest ideological spread ($SD = 0.61$) of all the variables used in this analysis (**Table 11**). Naturally, the Greens show a (somewhat) lower level of ideological variance and thus exhibit greater ideological cohesion regarding this issue. The fact that the Greens are defined by this topic and the insistence of environmental protection even when it clashes with other economic considerations, is well reflected in the results shown in **Figure 21**, where we can see that the median values of ALDE, EPP, and PES are very close to each other, while the Greens stand out, with their clearly pro-environmental stance. For PES, we can detect several clear outliers.

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics: *environment*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ALDE	197	-1.596	1.207	-.43497	.534749
EPP	234	-1.606	1.378	-.33457	.544715
Greens	101	-2.033	.024	-1.27777	.483635
PES	195	-1.669	1.751	-.33274	.534367
<i>Total</i>	727	-2.033	1.751	-.49232	.618489

In **Figure 22**, we can observe a downward (i.e. ‘leftward’) trend among the Greens, and somewhat of a parabolic trend for the other three parties. This is one of the few variables analyzed that indeed show differences between parties from old and new member states. Among the outliers on the environmental issue, there are a few party manifestos, most of them belonging to parties from Central and Eastern Europe. Among ALDE members, the Bulgarian Movement for Rights and Freedoms (*Dvizhenie za prava i svobodi*, DPS) stands out with a very ‘right-wing’ (i.e. does not put environmental protection before economic benefits). The same is the case for two Latvian parties – the EPP member Unity party (*Vienotība*) and the PES member Social Democratic Party "Harmony" (*Sociāldemokrātiskā Partija "Saskaņa"*, SDPS).

Figure 21. environment stripchart with boxplot, 1979-2019

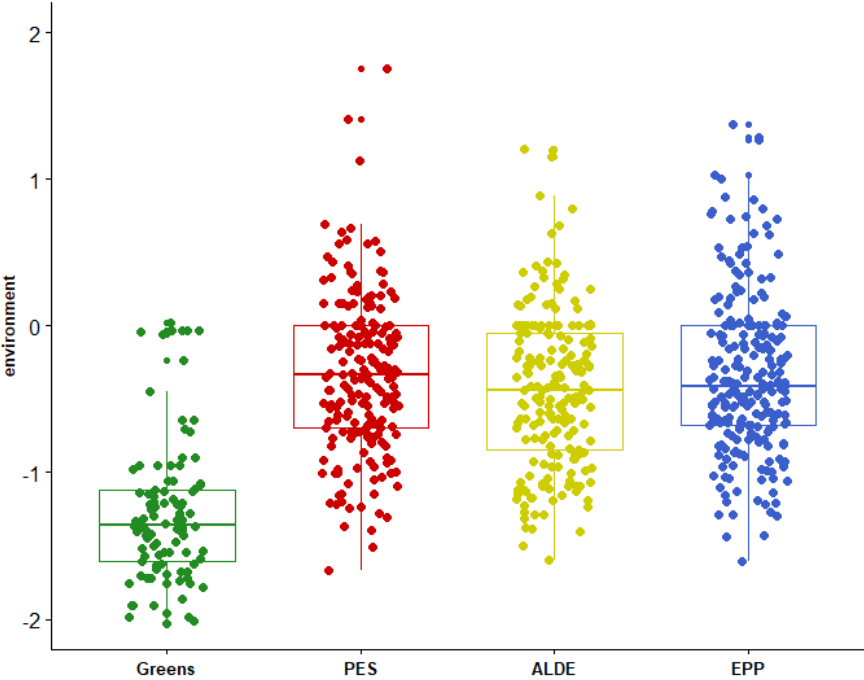
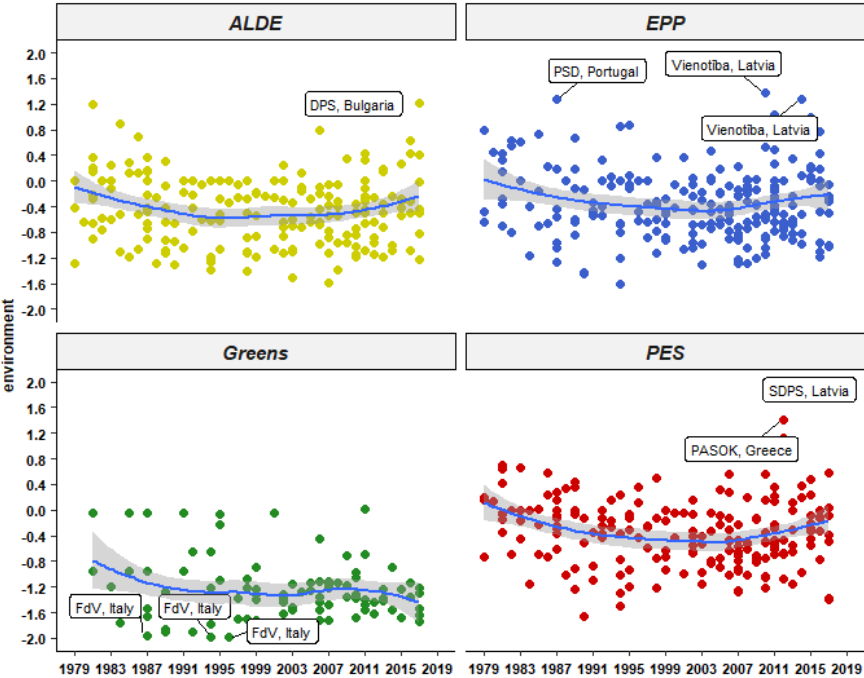


Figure 22. environment scatterplot, 1979-2019



5. Conclusion

An analysis of policy cohesion, and trends of policy divergence and convergence among members of ALDE, EPP, the Greens, and PES has shown greater policy cohesion in the bigger Europarties (EPP and PES), than in smaller Europarties (ALDE and the Greens). The ideological variance was especially pronounced in the case of the Greens. This variance among the Greens is rather interesting in the case of the *logeu* variable, as it shows that not all Green parties are that keen on European integration. There was much greater variance, for all four parties, on (socio)economic issues, than on the foreign policy or the cultural/moral axes of party competition. The analysis could not confirm the conventional wisdom about the ‘right-wing’ economic shift of European Social Democracy. On the contrary, one could observe a greater acceptance of the expansion of the welfare state on the behalf of ALDE and EPP members. Generally, on economy, ALDE members show the much ideological variance. The lowest level of policy cohesion could be achieved for the environment variable, the Greens excluded. This shows that the environmental movement has not (yet) been able to impose this issue as a post-political issue on which all parties could (or should) agree. Further, the findings in this paper do not support arguments about greater ideological variance and lower policy cohesion due to the Eastern enlargement. They also do not support arguments about the loose ideological makeup of EPP due to its expansion and inclusion of political parties which are not traditional Christian Democratic parties. Finally, we might argue that, indeed, political parties in the European Union which are members of the four biggest Europarties have experienced some level of Europeanization; the Europarties have achieved a certain level of ideological cohesiveness, yet this cohesiveness is not evident in all policy areas, with especially low levels of cohesion on the (socio)economic axis of party competition.

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