

Is the left-right alignment of parties outdated? The German case

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Introduction





The advocates of modern democracy promote the viewpoint that the class division of the society is becoming outdated.

We attempt to disprove this statement with an example of 28 German parties who participated in the 2013 federal election

The official party positions on 38 policy issues are considered and the parties are associated with vectors of their policy profiles in the corresponding 38-dimensional political space

The statement that there is no predominant political axis implies that the parties are scattered homogeneously, making a ball-shaped cloud of `observations'. However, the Prime Component Analysis (PCA) shows that the parties constitute a thin ellipsoid whose two longest diameters explain 83.4% of the total variance, and the consequent party ordering is the left–right axis rolled in a circumference, making the far-left and far-right ends meet

Data and representativeness indices

Questions	Question weights				Public opinion		Party positions				
	Un-weighted (u)	Google hits (g) $\log_2 K$	1nd expert B Unger 0 – 3	2nd expert A Graef 0 – 3	Pro- tago- nists %	An- tago- nists %	 CDU 41.6	 SPD 25.8	 Linke 8.6	 Grüne 8.4	...
Minimul wage	1	10.980	3	3	86	12	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	...
Compensation for parents	1	9.980	2	3	20	77	Yes	No	No	No	...
Speed limit on Motorways	1	8.697	2	1	53	45	No	No	Yes	Yes	...

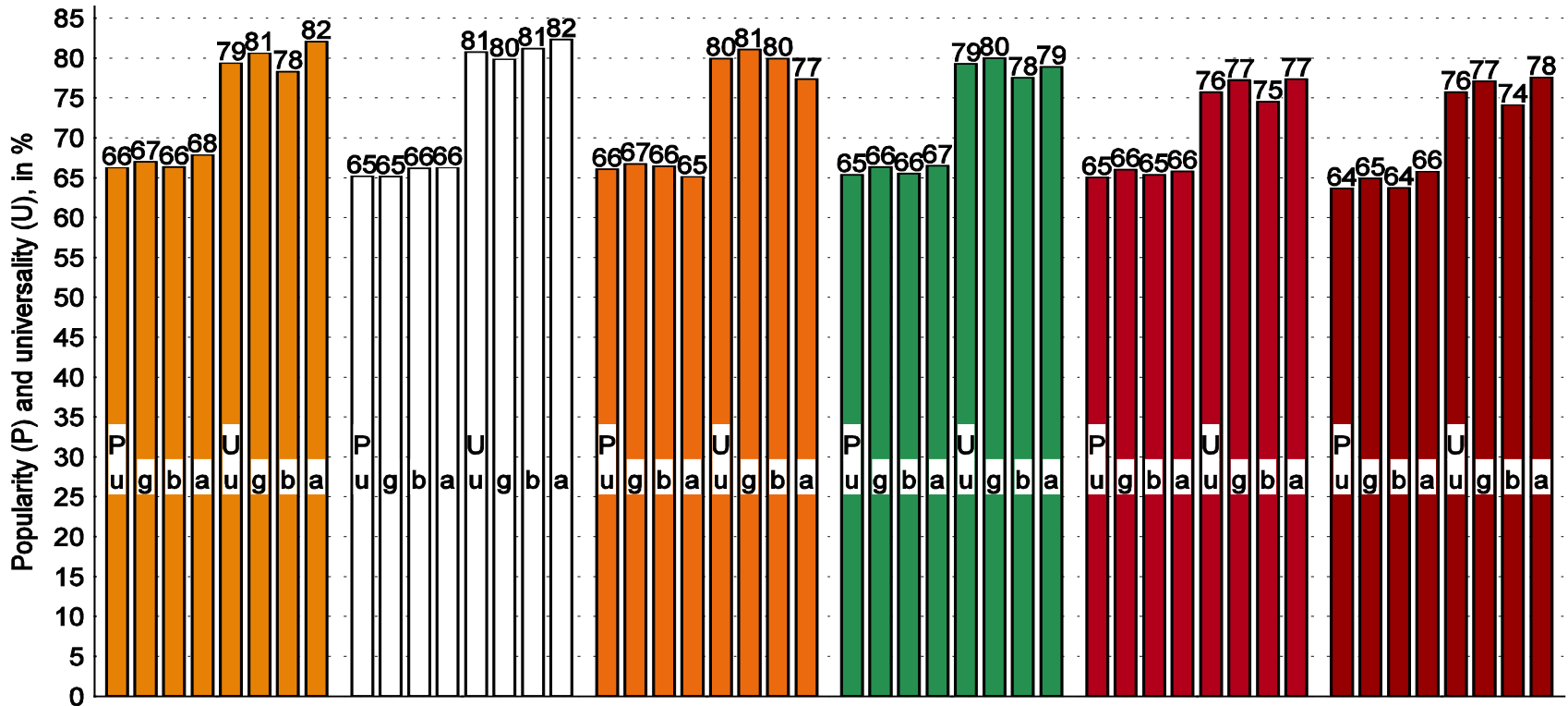
.....
Popularity: weighted average % of the electorate represented

Universality: weighted frequency of representing a majority

Four versions of each index, depending on weighting:

- u** – unweighted (all weights = 1)
- g** – \log_2 thousand Google hits
- b** – Brigitte Unger’s weights (0 – 3)
- a** – Anne Graef’s weights (0 – 3)

Indices 1-6



Bündnis 21/RRP
 Mean index: 73.51
 Mean P: 66.89
 Mean U: 80.12
 Votes: 0.02%

Volksabstimmung
 Mean index: 73.40
 Mean P: 65.74
 Mean U: 81.07
 Votes: 0.07%

Nichtwähler
 Mean index: 72.88
 Mean P: 66.14
 Mean U: 79.63
 Votes: 0.03%

DIE FRAUEN
 Mean index: 72.46
 Mean P: 65.96
 Mean U: 78.96
 Votes: 0.03%

Die PARTEI
 Mean index: 70.92
 Mean P: 65.59
 Mean U: 76.26
 Votes: 0.18%

DIE LINKE
 Mean index: 70.36
 Mean P: 64.56
 Mean U: 76.15
 Votes: 8.59%



PARTEI DER NICHTWÄHLER
 DIE ALTERNATIVE ZUR STIMMENHALTUNG



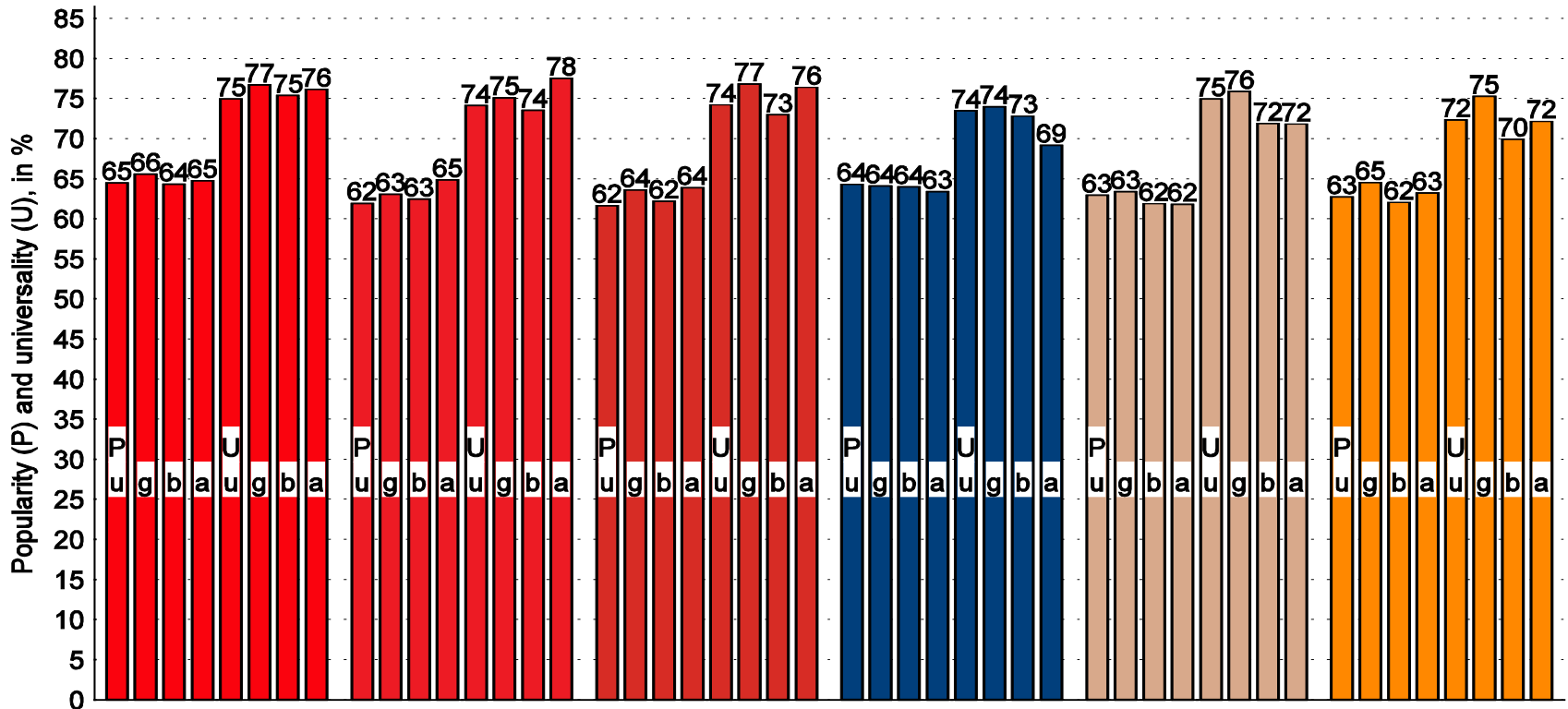
Feministische Partei
DIE FRAUEN



Die PARTEI

DIE LINKE.

Indices 7-12



NPD
 Mean index: 70.35
 Mean P: 64.85
 Mean U: 75.85
 Votes: 1.28%

MLPD
 Mean index: 69.14
 Mean P: 63.14
 Mean U: 75.13
 Votes: 0.06%

PSG
 Mean index: 69.03
 Mean P: 62.89
 Mean U: 75.17
 Votes: 0.01%

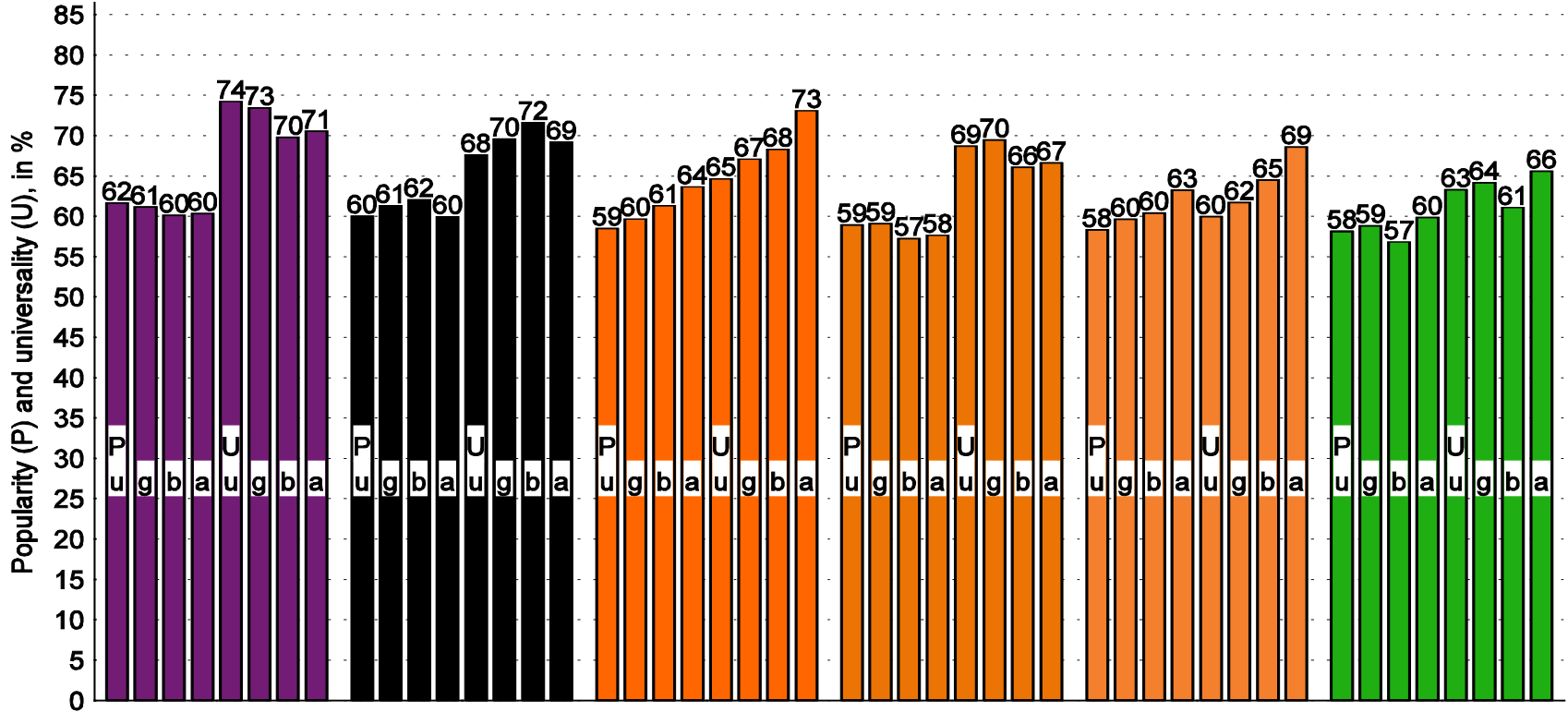
Tierschutzpartei
 Mean index: 68.22
 Mean P: 64.01
 Mean U: 72.43
 Votes: 0.32%

FAMILIE
 Mean index: 68.13
 Mean P: 62.57
 Mean U: 73.69
 Votes: 0.02%

PIRATEN
 Mean index: 67.84
 Mean P: 63.19
 Mean U: 72.50
 Votes: 2.19%



Indices 13-18



DIE VIOLETTEN
 Mean index: 66.46
 Mean P: 60.87
 Mean U: 72.05
 Votes: 0.02%

pro Deutschland
 Mean index: 65.21
 Mean P: 60.88
 Mean U: 69.54
 Votes: 0.17%

RENTNER
 Mean index: 64.58
 Mean P: 60.83
 Mean U: 68.33
 Votes: 0.06%

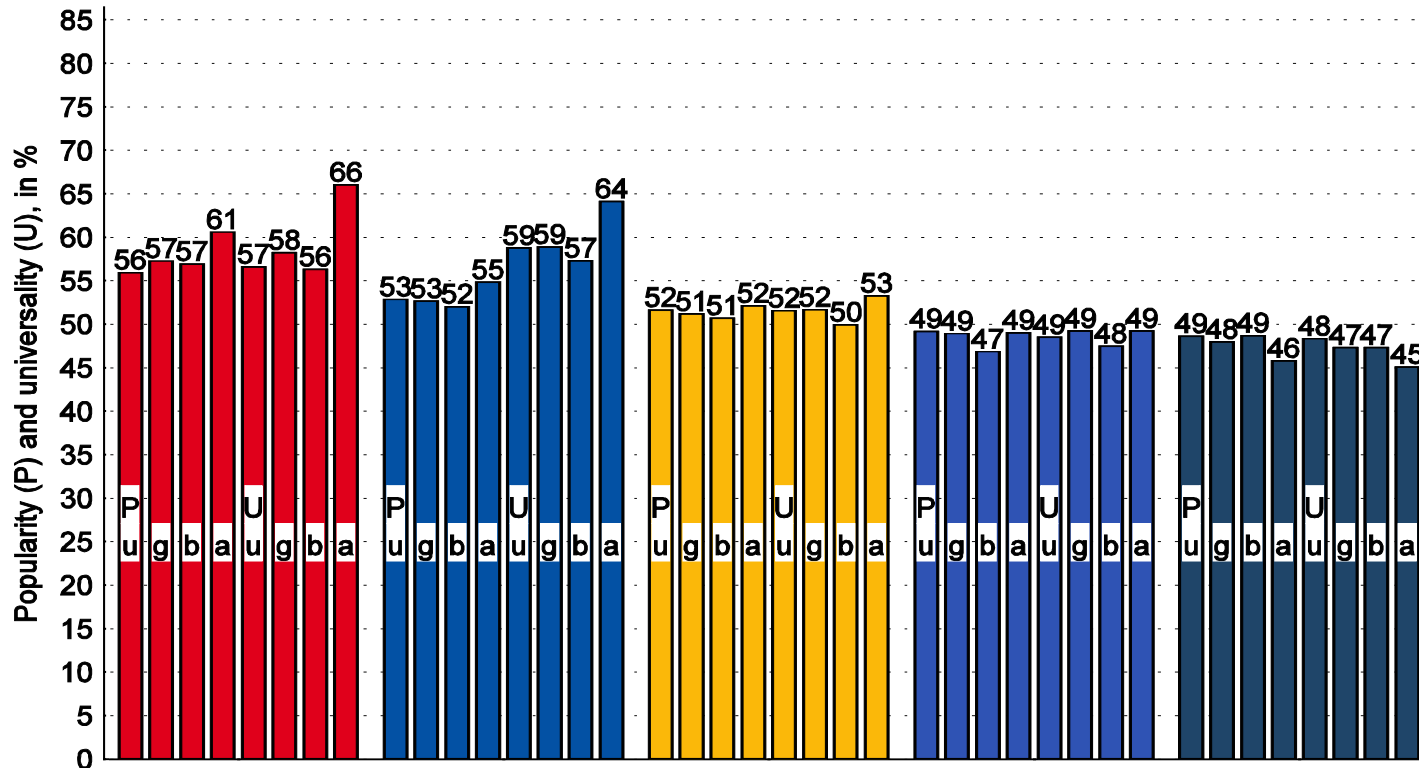
ÖDP
 Mean index: 63.02
 Mean P: 58.27
 Mean U: 67.76
 Votes: 0.29%

BIG
 Mean index: 62.08
 Mean P: 60.44
 Mean U: 63.73
 Votes: 0.04%

GRÜNE
 Mean index: 61.02
 Mean P: 58.46
 Mean U: 63.57
 Votes: 8.44%



Indices 19-23



SPD
 Mean index: 58.55
 Mean P: 57.75
 Mean U: 59.36
 Votes: 25.74%

FREIE WÄHLER
 Mean index: 56.49
 Mean P: 53.16
 Mean U: 59.83
 Votes: 0.97%

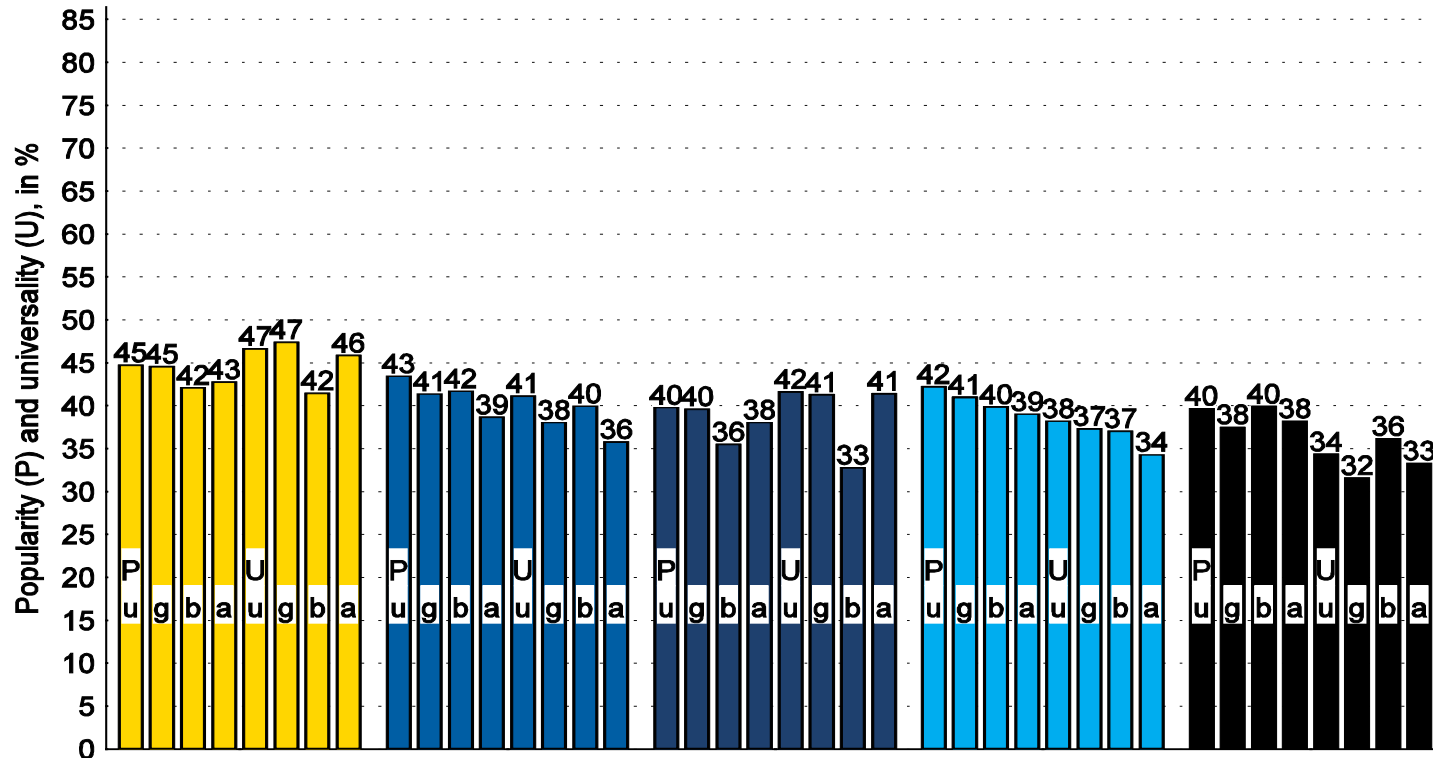
PBC
 Mean index: 51.57
 Mean P: 51.47
 Mean U: 51.67
 Votes: 0.04%

BP
 Mean index: 48.61
 Mean P: 48.56
 Mean U: 48.67
 Votes: 0.13%

BüSo
 Mean index: 47.46
 Mean P: 47.84
 Mean U: 47.07
 Votes: 0.03%



Indices 24-28



FDP
 Mean index: 44.47
 Mean P: 43.57
 Mean U: 45.38
 Votes: 4.76%

REP
 Mean index: 40.05
 Mean P: 41.33
 Mean U: 38.77
 Votes: 0.21%

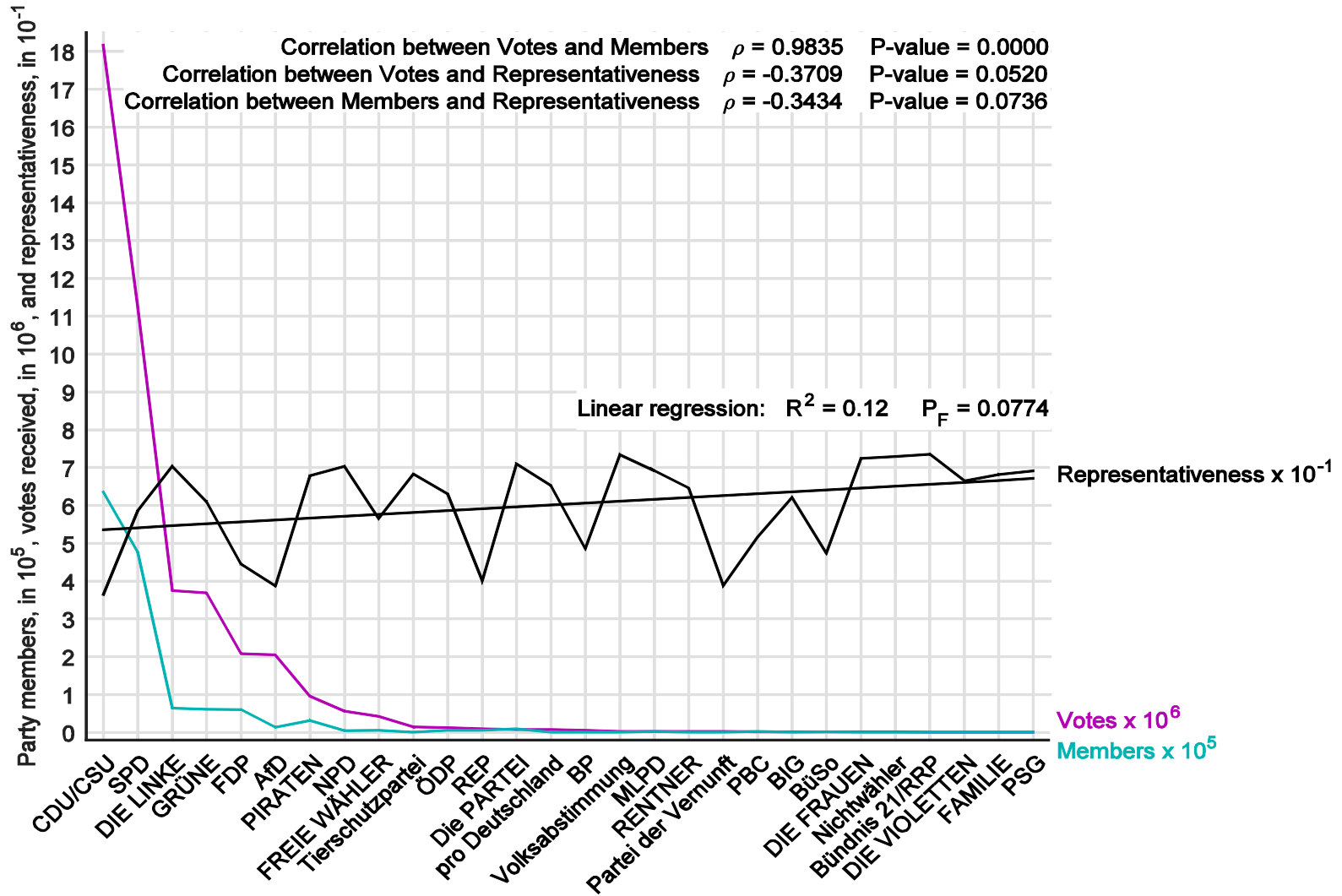
Partei der Vernunft
 Mean index: 38.79
 Mean P: 38.27
 Mean U: 39.31
 Votes: 0.06%

AfD
 Mean index: 38.65
 Mean P: 40.55
 Mean U: 36.75
 Votes: 4.70%

CDU/CSU
 Mean index: 36.37
 Mean P: 38.86
 Mean U: 33.88
 Votes: 41.55%

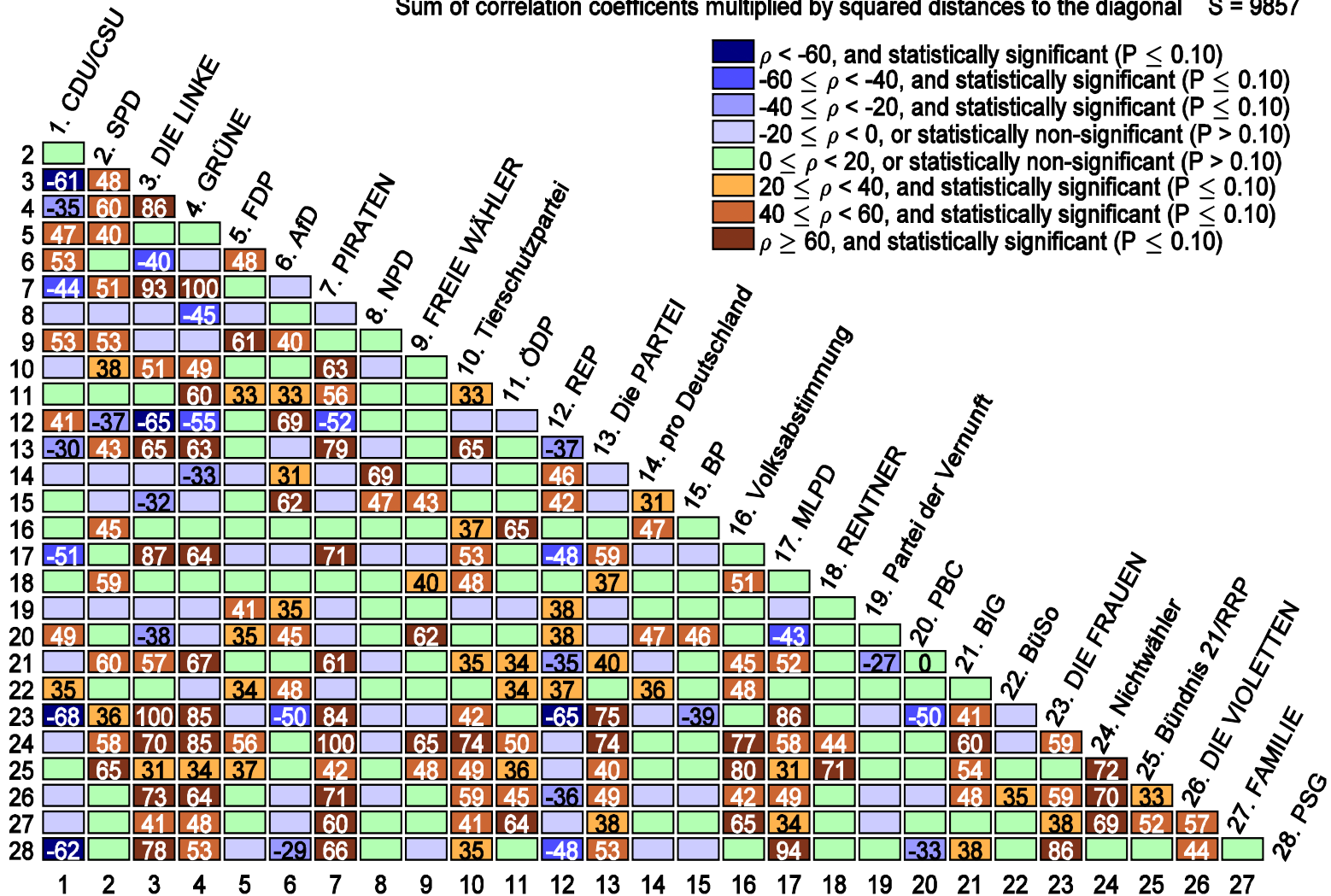


Party sizes, votes received, and representativeness of parties

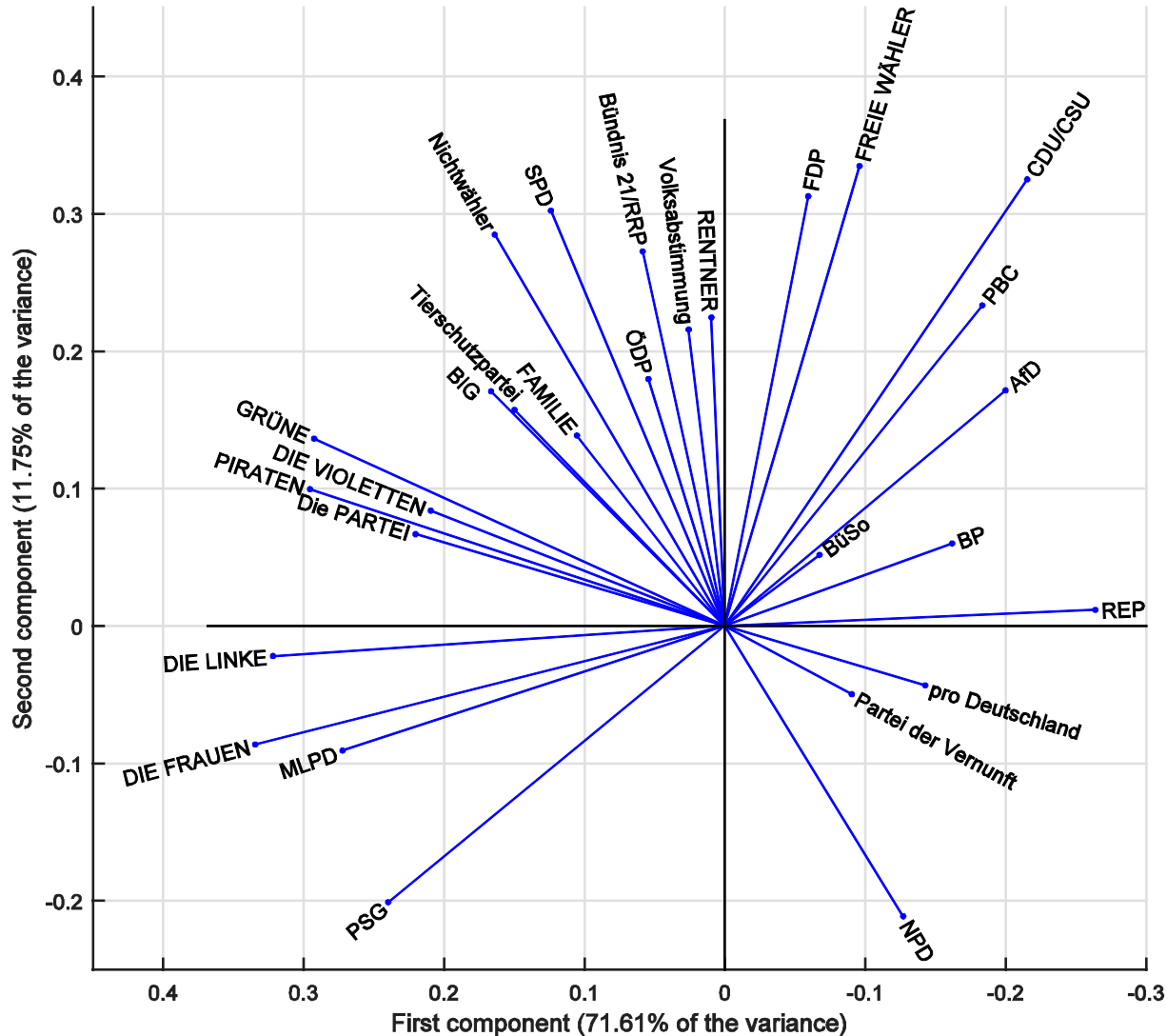


Triangle of party profile correlations in %; parties ordered by votes

Sum of correlation coefficients multiplied by squared distances to the diagonal S = 9857

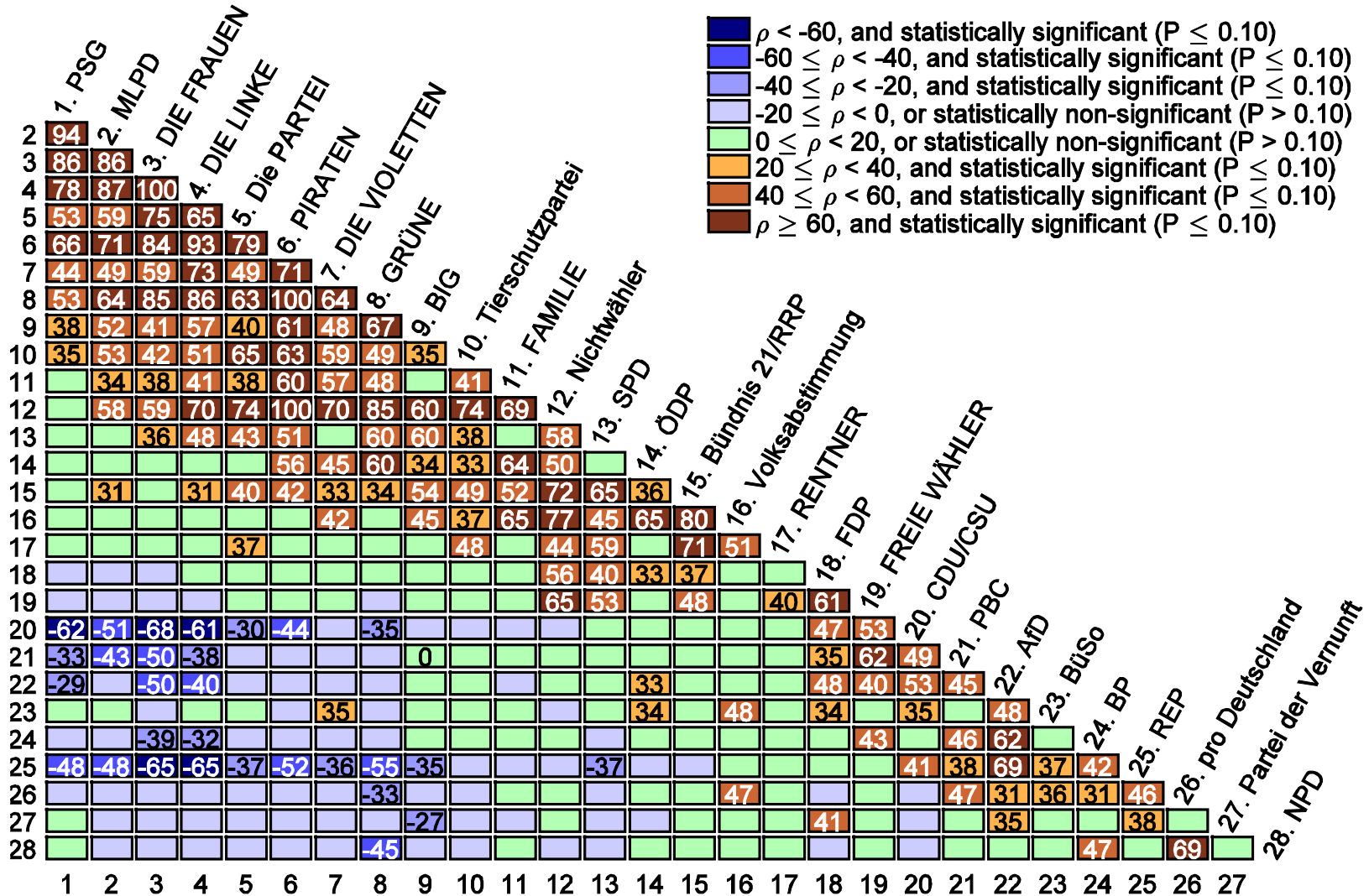


PCA: Eigenvector plot for the correlation matrix

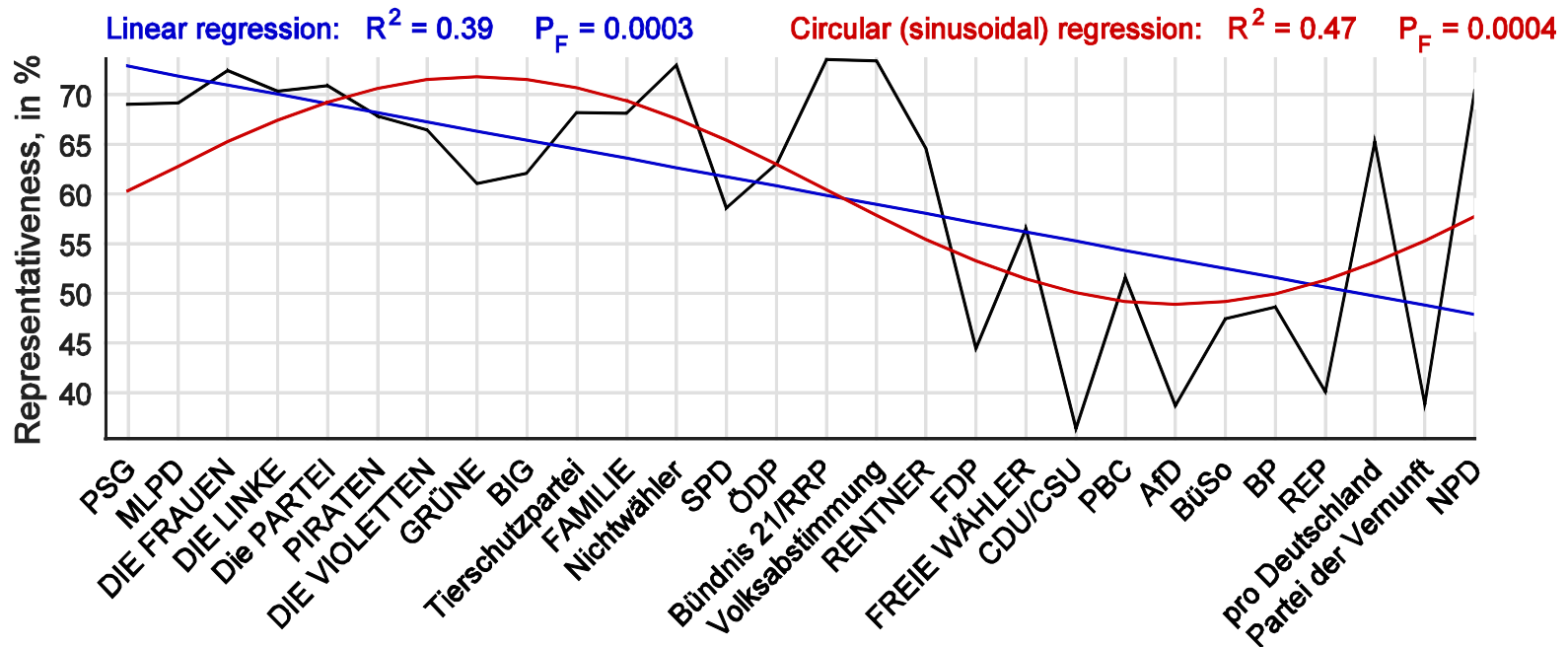
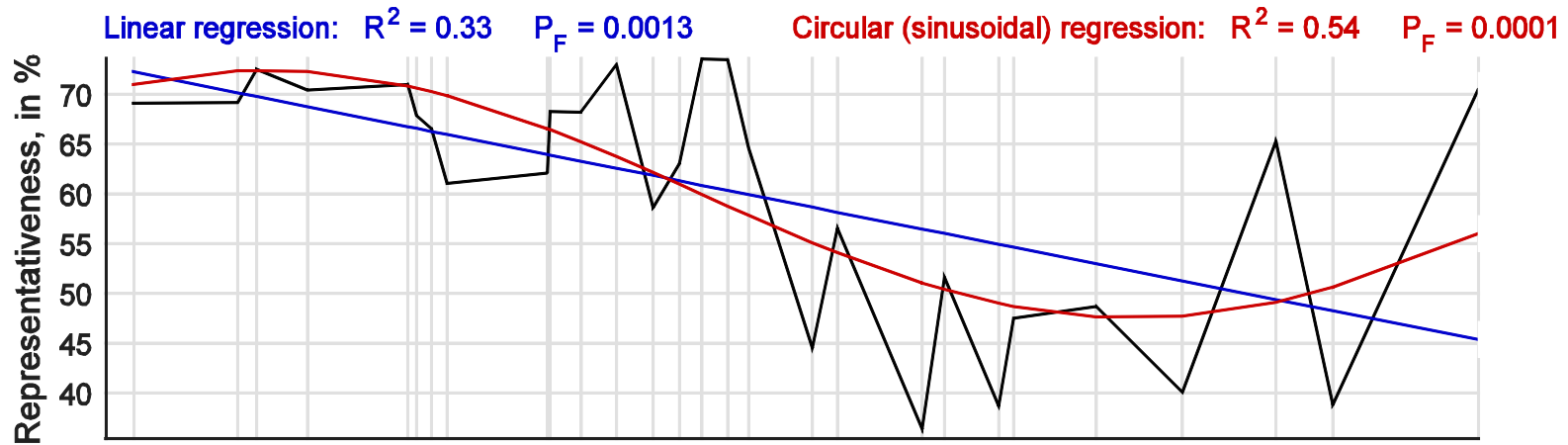


PCA ordering: Correlation triangle

Sum of correlation coefficients multiplied by squared distances to the diagonal S = -3592

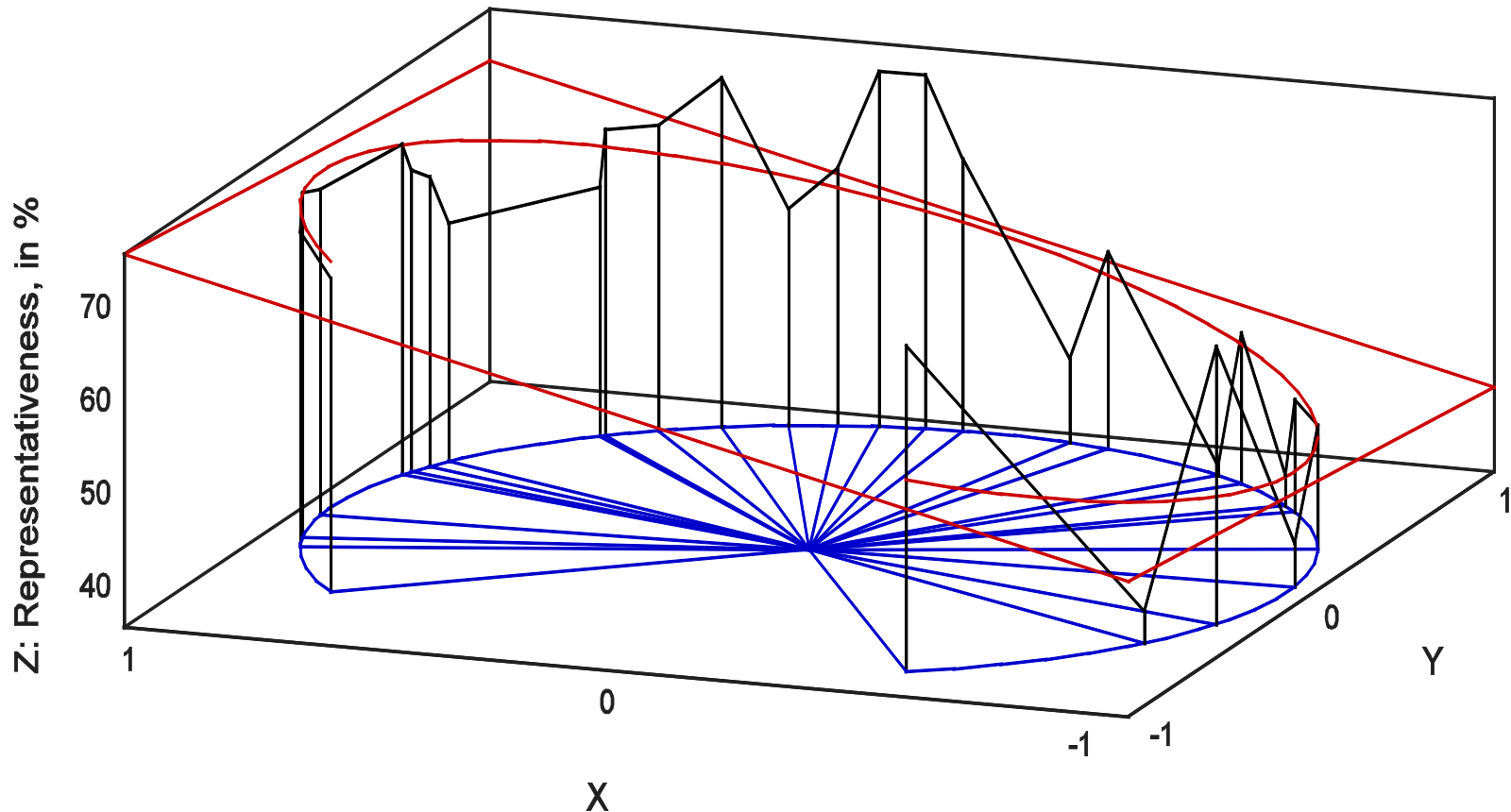


PCA: Representativeness trends

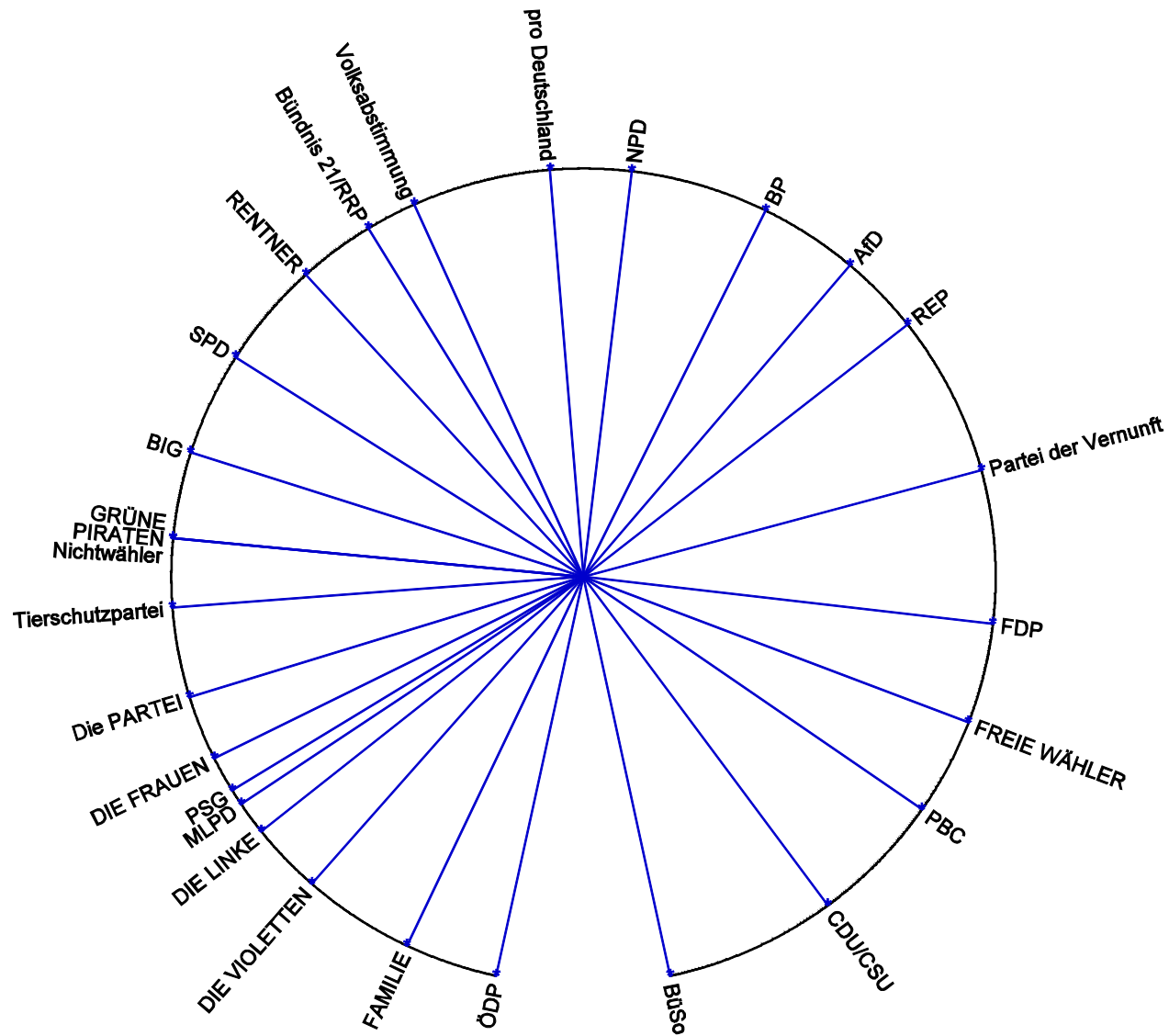


PCA: Circular (sinusoidal) regression

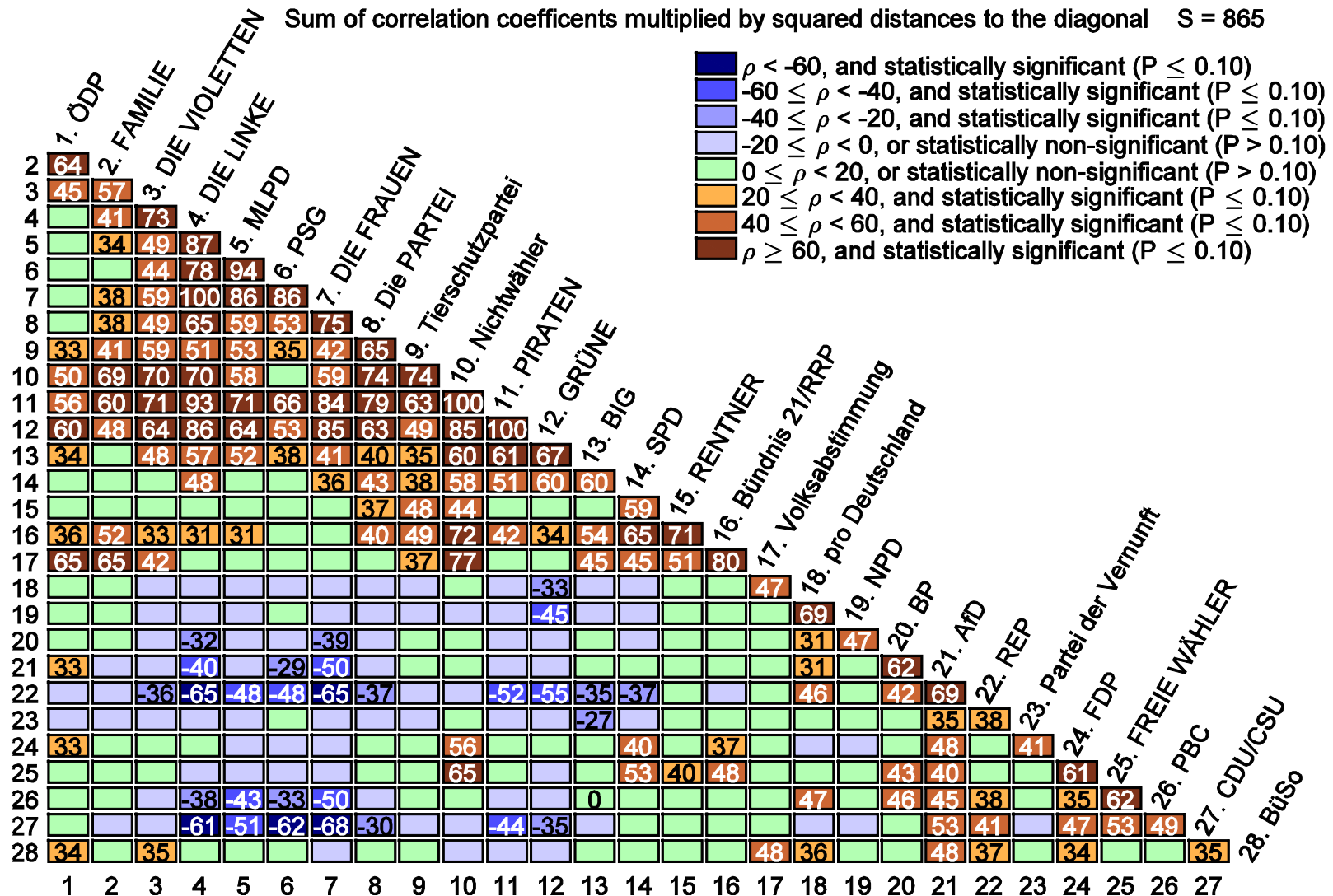
$$Z = 59.93 + 12.15 * X - 2.64 * Y \quad R^2 = 0.54 \quad P_F = 0.0001$$



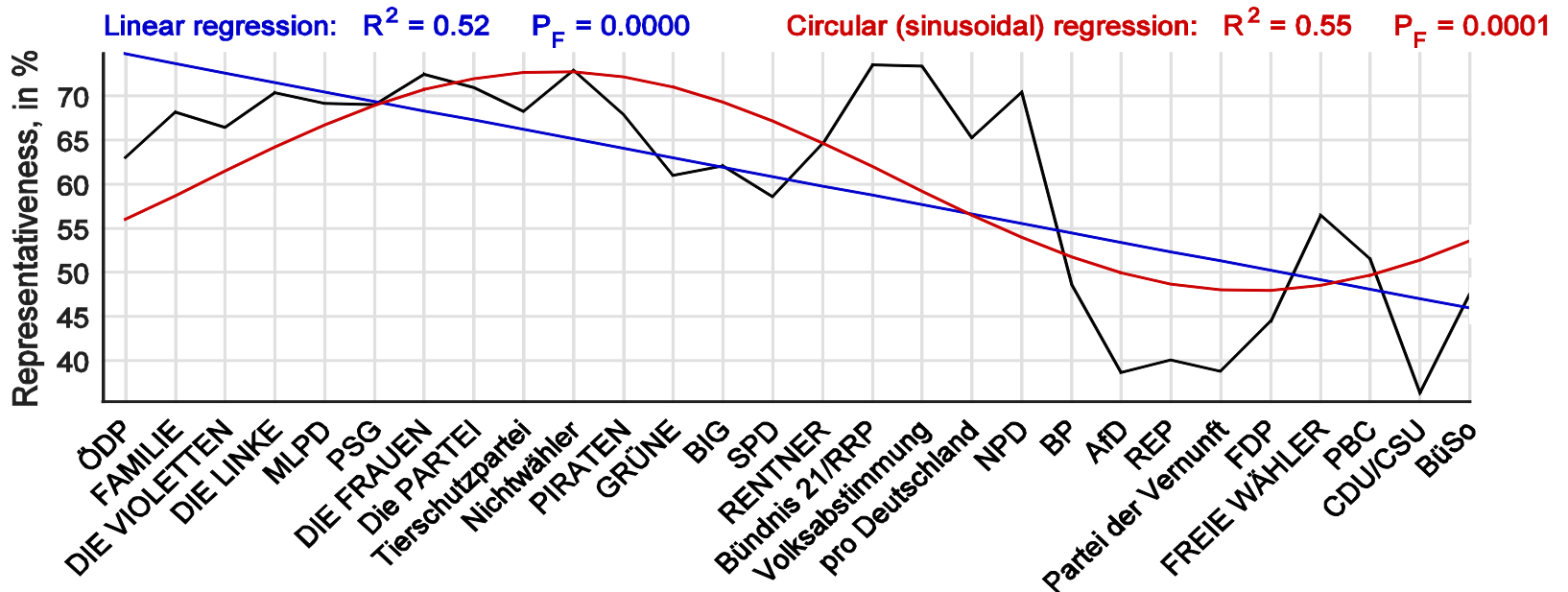
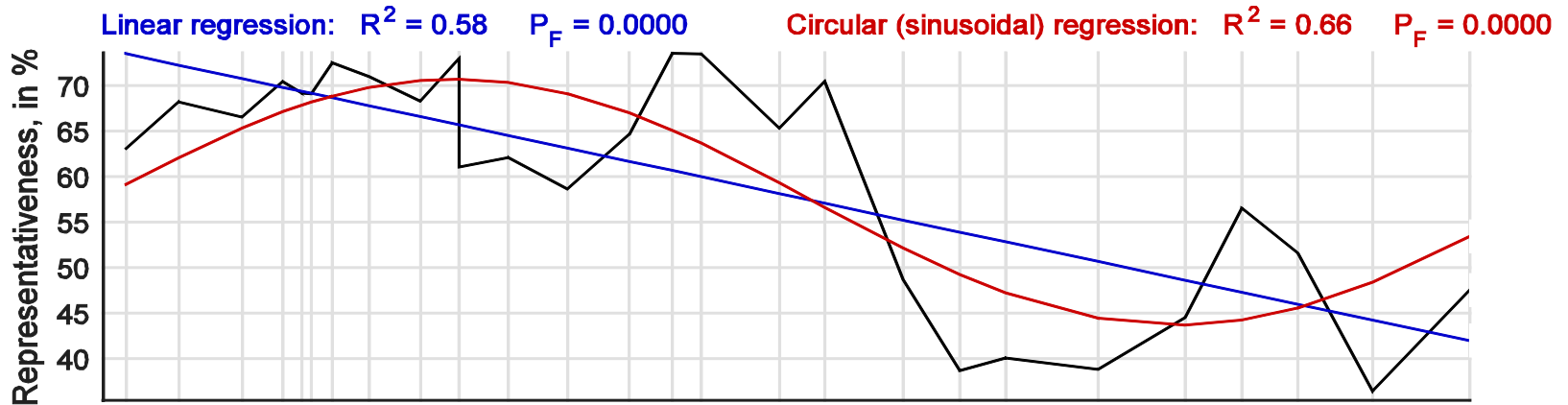
Traveling salesman solution



TSS ordering: Correlation triangle

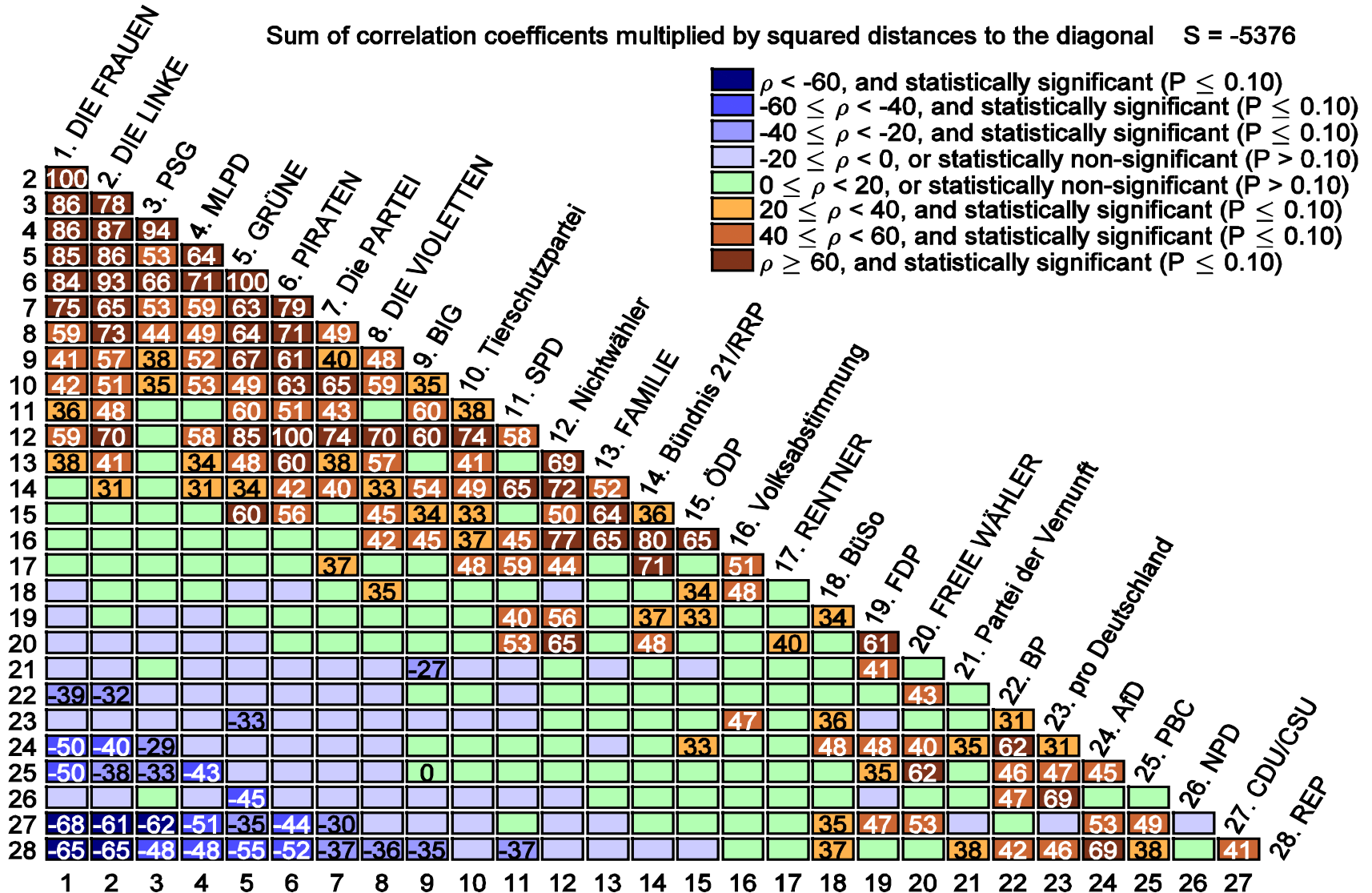


TSS: Representativeness trends

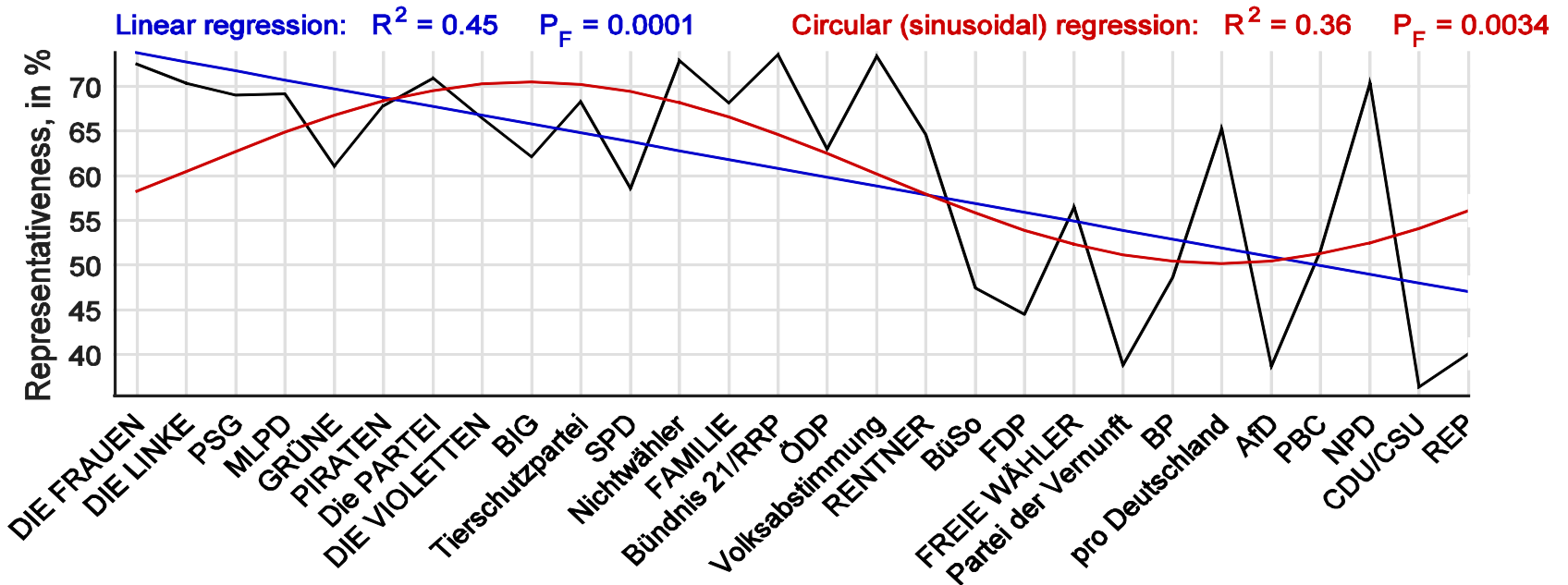
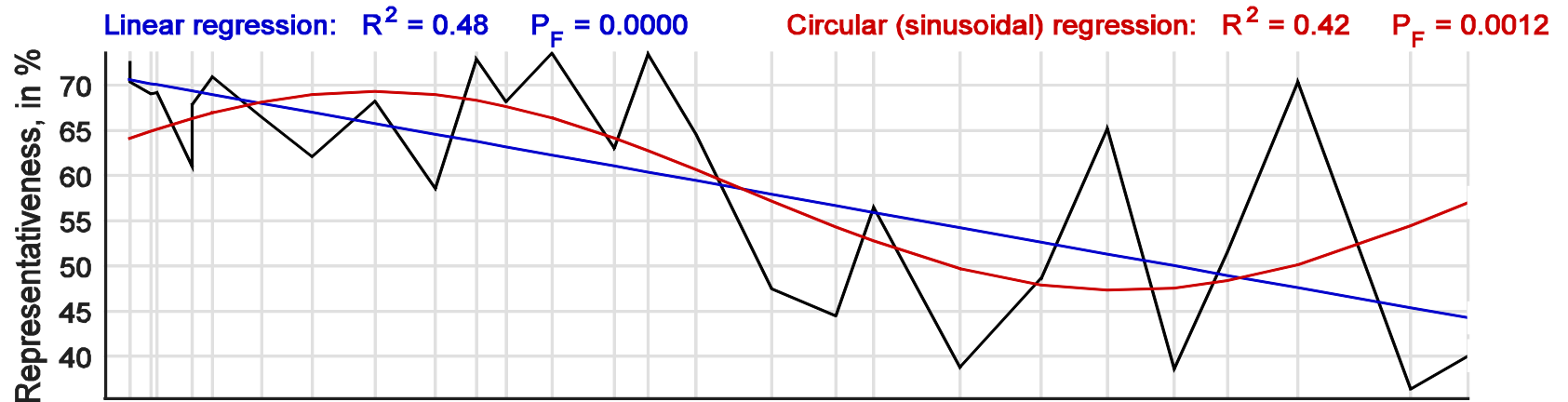


WLS □ ordering: Correlation triangle

Sum of correlation coefficients multiplied by squared distances to the diagonal S = -5376

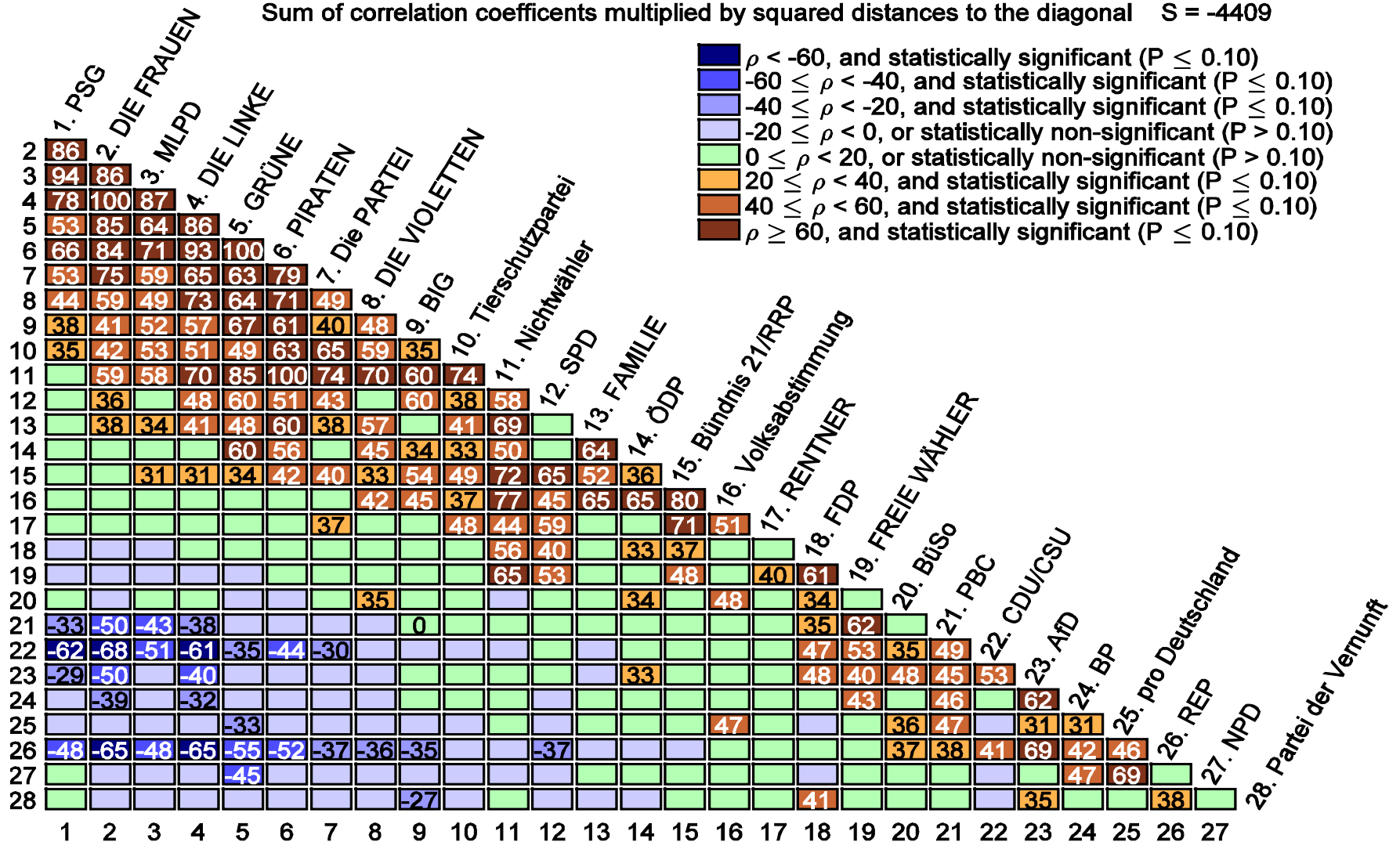


WLS□: Representativeness trends

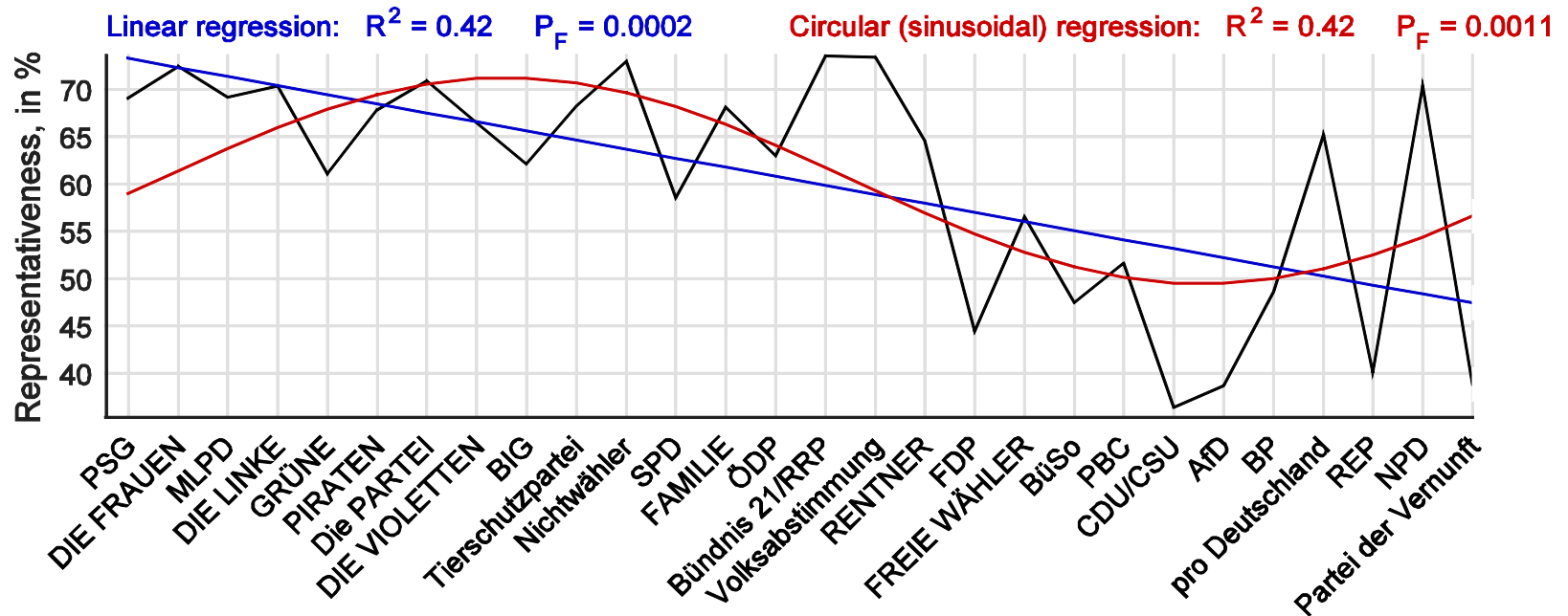
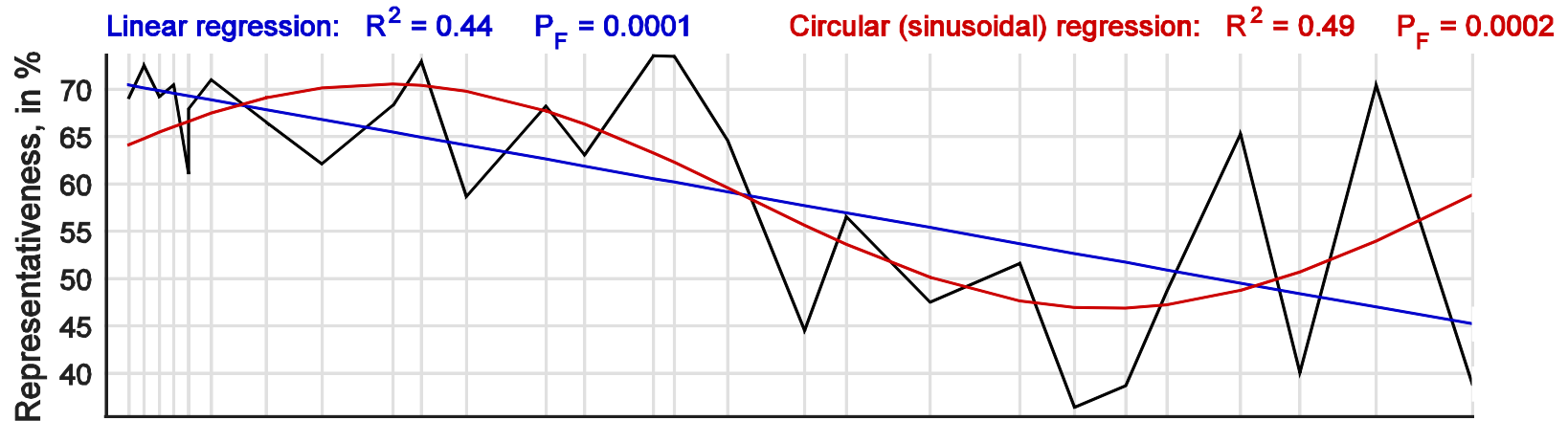


WLR \square ordering: Correlation triangle

Sum of correlation coefficients multiplied by squared distances to the diagonal $S = -4409$



WLr□: Representativeness trends



Conclusions 1

The „objective“ ordering of 28 German parties, obtained formally without any normative assumption, gives the left–right ideological axis rolled in a circumference, making the extreme left-hand and right-hand ends meet

The most convincing result is obtained by dimensionality reduction of the policy space with PCA

The consequent party ordering exhibits a statistically highly significant dependence between the party’s ideological platform and its representativeness, with the left parties being more representative than the right ones

The circular representation demonstrates that the extreme left parties tend to be less representative than moderate left parties, and the far-right parties tend to be more representative than moderate right (conservative) parties

Conclusions 2

Basing on this empirical evidence, we conclude that the left–right characterization of parties which reflects the class opposition remains valid, being in no case outdated

The given study also indicates at the raising far-right wing, whose representativeness already surpasses that of the conservative party that has won the 2013 election

As for the moderate left parties, it looks that their superior representativeness can help to restore their influence, which sharply declined after the collapse of communism in the end of the 20th century

References on the methodology

