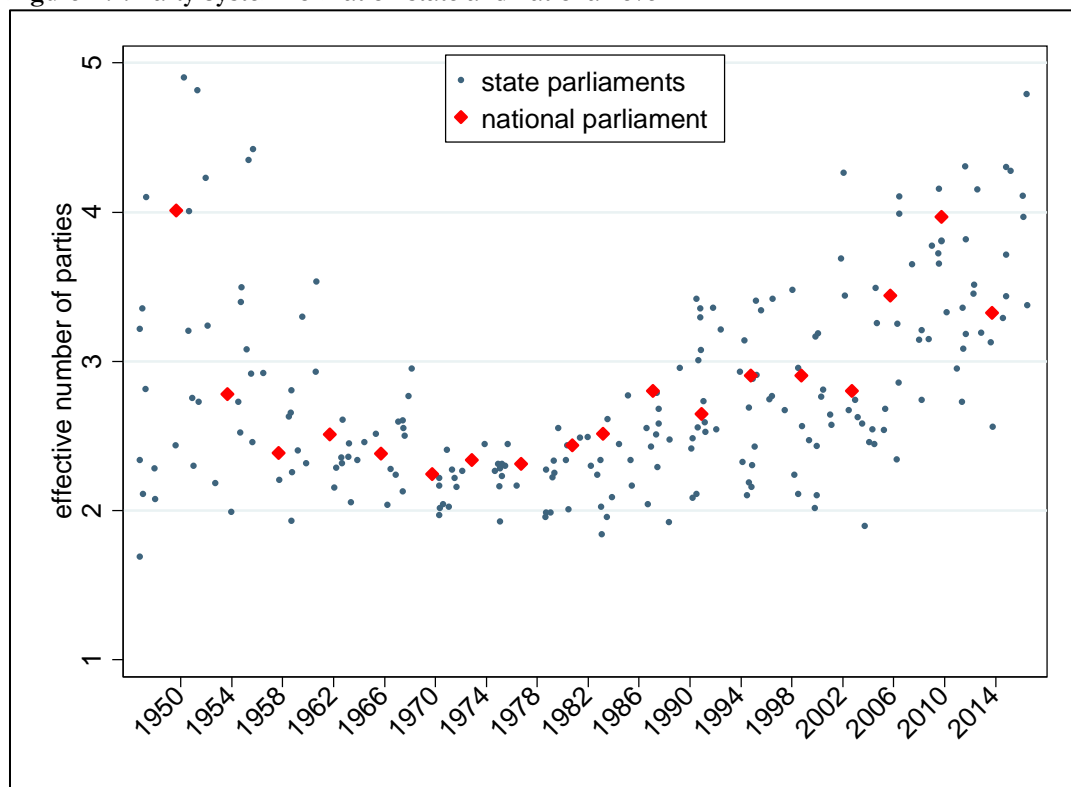


Appendix A: Background Information on German State Legislatures

We are confident that our results are generalizable to the national level in Germany (and other countries) as the makeup of party competition is sufficiently similar on both levels. To begin with, although the party systems in Germany have changed considerably over the course of history, these changes have affected both state and national level equally. This is visualized in figure A1 that shows the effective number of parliamentary parties in all 242 elections on state and national level between 1946 and 2016. As can be seen the early postwar period was marked by a high degree of party fragmentation on both levels. Yet, a swift process of party system concentration around the two catch-all parties, Christian Democrats, the (CDU), and Social Democrats, SPD, (CDURudzio 2015: 107-128) lead to an increasing similarity across states and increased the congruence of party competition on the federal and regional level (Renzsch 1999, Detterbeck 2012). With the emergence of the Greens in the 1980s and the Left Party after reunification in 1990 party system fragmentation has reached new heights on both levels.

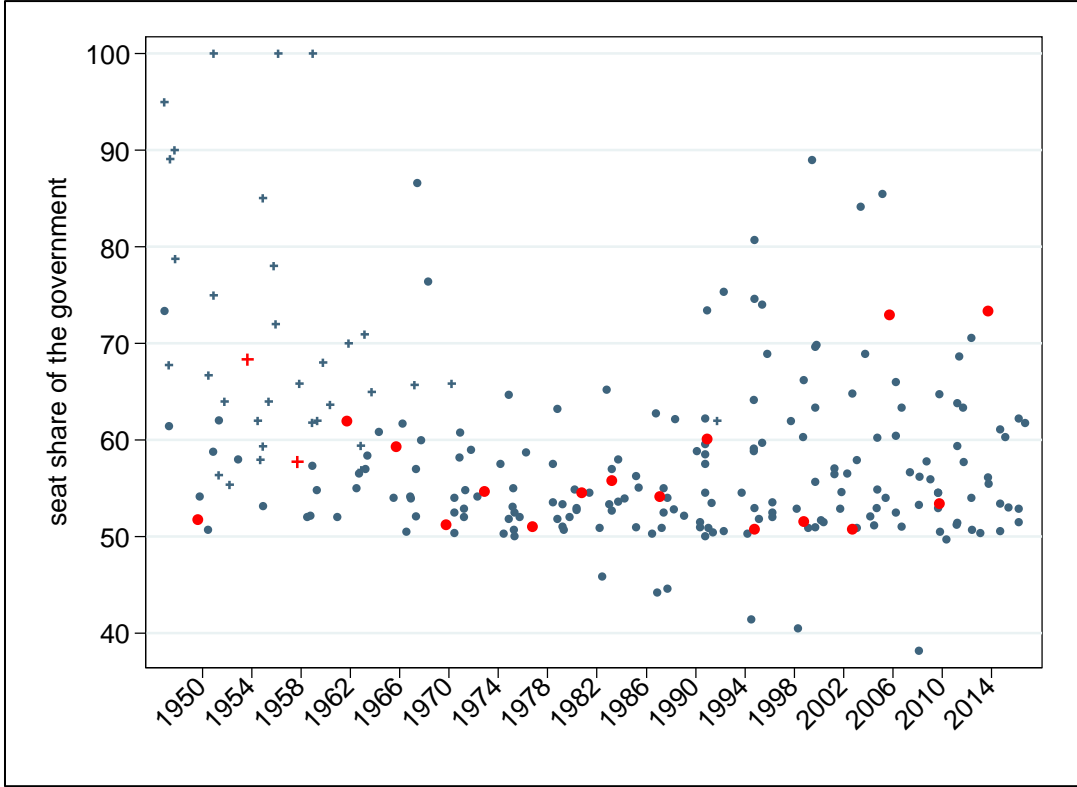
Figure A.1: Party System format on state and national level



Admittedly, temporal strongholds of individual parties on the state level such as North-Rhine-Westphalia for the Social Democrats or Baden-Württemberg (CDU) and Bavaria (CSU) for Christian Democrats (see Hepburn und Hough 2012) occasionally created more distinct configurations of party competition. Yet, overall figure A1 highlights the close covariation of the

party systems of the states and the national level. Moreover, minor regional deviations notwithstanding the same parties compete for votes on both levels.

Figure A2: Government format on state and national level



This similarity also holds when we look at government types and the related conditions for the competition between government and opposition parties in parliament (Debus 2008). Figure A2 plots the seat share of all cabinets that were formed after all 242 elections on state and national level between 1946 and 2016. In addition, a “+” indicates an oversized coalition, blue markers represent cabinets in the states and red markers cabinets on the federal level. It can be seen, that following a short dominance of oversized coalitions in the post-war period, parties on both levels usually form non-oversized coalitions. More specifically, 32 per cent were single-party cabinets and 68 per cent coalitions containing two (54 per cent of all cabinets) or more parties. The increase in seat-shares of the government in the period 1992-2006 is due to so-called “Grand coalitions” of the SPD and CDU as the two major state-level parties. These coalitions were typically formed in states where neither of these two parties held a majority together with a smaller, ideologically closer party (the Greens with a view to the SPD, the liberal FDP with a view to the CDU). The two major parties have been confronted with this situation also at the federal level in 2005, and 2013.

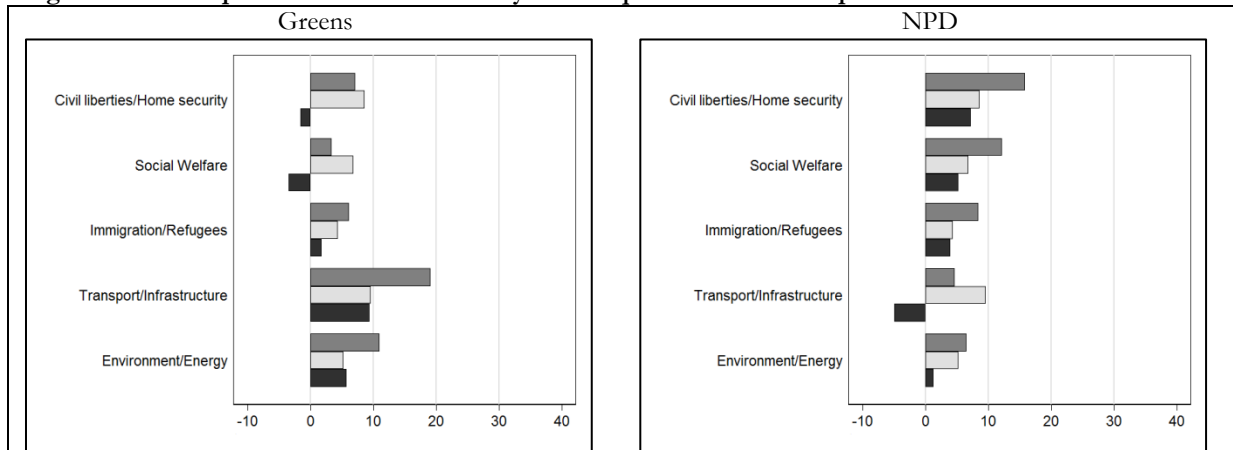
There is also ample evidence that recorded votes are used along the logic of issue competition that we suggest in the article. To begin with, institutional rules on RCV requests are almost identical across state parliaments. Every parliamentary party group and every group of members of parliament representing at least as many MPs as required to form a PPG (five percent of the mandate total) are allowed to request an RCV on everything but procedural issues. Since the electoral systems in all states are variants of proportional representation with a five-percent hurdle, practically every party gaining parliamentary representation is, thus, also able to request an RCV. With a view to our dataset this concerns an exception from the five-percent hurdle, introduced in 1958, for representatives of the Danish minority in Schleswig-Holstein that received between one and three (of 69-89) mandates in the period under study; two legislative periods in Lower Saxony, 1951-1959, where there still was no five-percent hurdle and where five and three parties respectively attained parliamentary representation; and two legislative periods in Bavaria, 1958-1966, where the FDP (both terms), and the BP (1962-66 term) held less than five percent of mandates. There are no formal requirements on when a request can be made, other than that it cannot be issued once voting has started. In practice, individual MPs either request an RCV during their speech, or immediately before the related vote is due. At times, requests are made in advance of the plenary session of the related vote, and the speaker announces that an RCV has been requested, and, with very few exceptions, by whom. MPs practically always request RCVs in the name of their PPG.

Furthermore, that parties conceive of recorded votes as an attractive tool for issue competition is backed by evidence. Interviews conducted with parliamentary leaders suggest, that RCVs are often used to force opponents “publicly justify their voting behavior” (Könen 2009, S. 135-140, own translation) with regard to specific strategically chosen issues. Moreover, the rhetoric of party leaders when requesting an RCV corresponds to the strategic calculus we suggested. A Liberal MP in the state of Berlin, to give just one example, emphasized, in November 1958 the “importance of this law” when requesting an RCV on a bill on the establishment of a teacher training college (MdL Hoppe (FDP), Berlin, 2nd LP, 94th session, p.652). This law may indeed have been important for the FDP as a party specifically representing higher public employees at that time. But its adoption did not affect the fate of this city more than, say, the Berlin crisis that was just unfolding.

In line with this, the pattern of issues subject to RCV requests reflects issues tied to parties in the literature. To take two “niche parties” as an example – the Greens, and the rightist NPD – the issues tied to these parties in the literature are very clearly over-represented in their “issue portfolio” as observed in RCV requests (see figure A.3). The Greens emphasize issues

concerning (public) transport, and the environment/energy (Carter 2013). These two issues account for a third of all their requests, as compared to their overall share of 15 percent) And so does the NPD with its focus on security, social welfare, and immigration (Golder 2016). These three issues account for more than 40 percent of their requests, as compared to their overall share of only 18 percent.

Figure A.3: Examples of issues addressed by RCV requests of two niche parties



Dark-gray: Share of issue tapped by RCV request of PPG; Light-gray: Share of issue tapped by all RCV requests; Black: Difference

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