# Lexical convergence and divergence in Austrian parliamentary debates:

# a network-based approach

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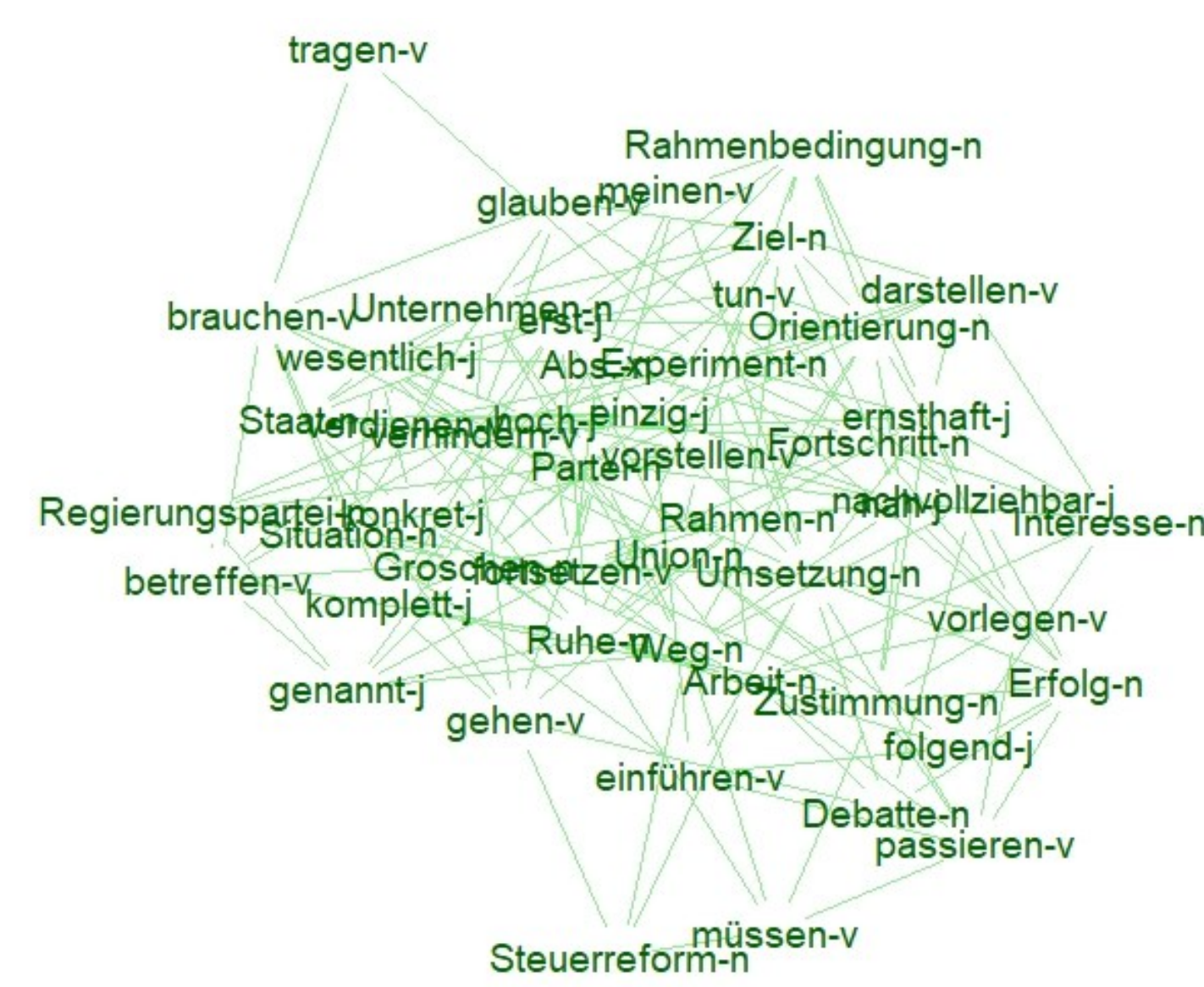
## Parliamentary discourse

Debates play an important role in **positioning a party or politician** in contrast to their political opponents.

We explore **topical and discursive unity and divergence** within and across parties.
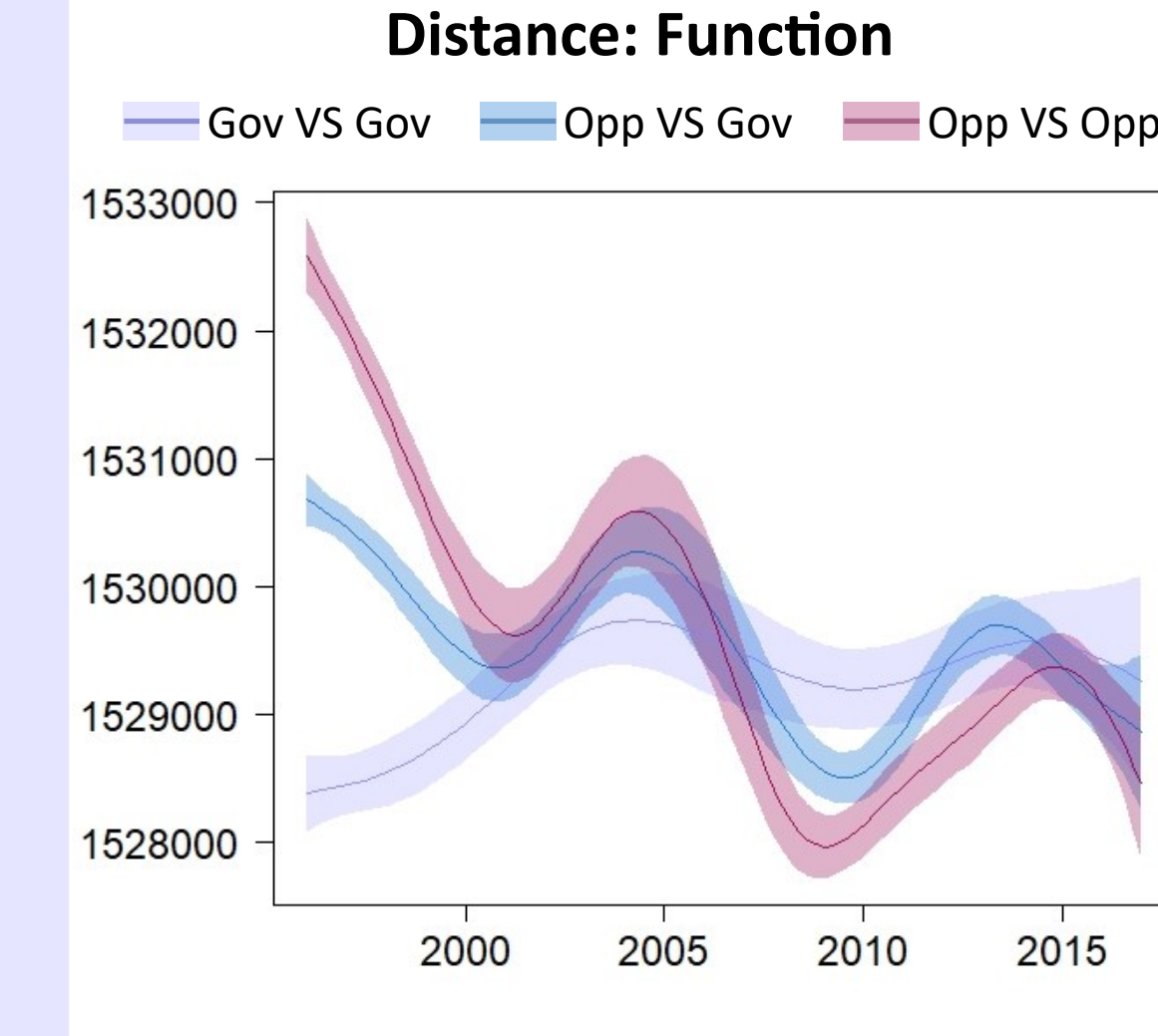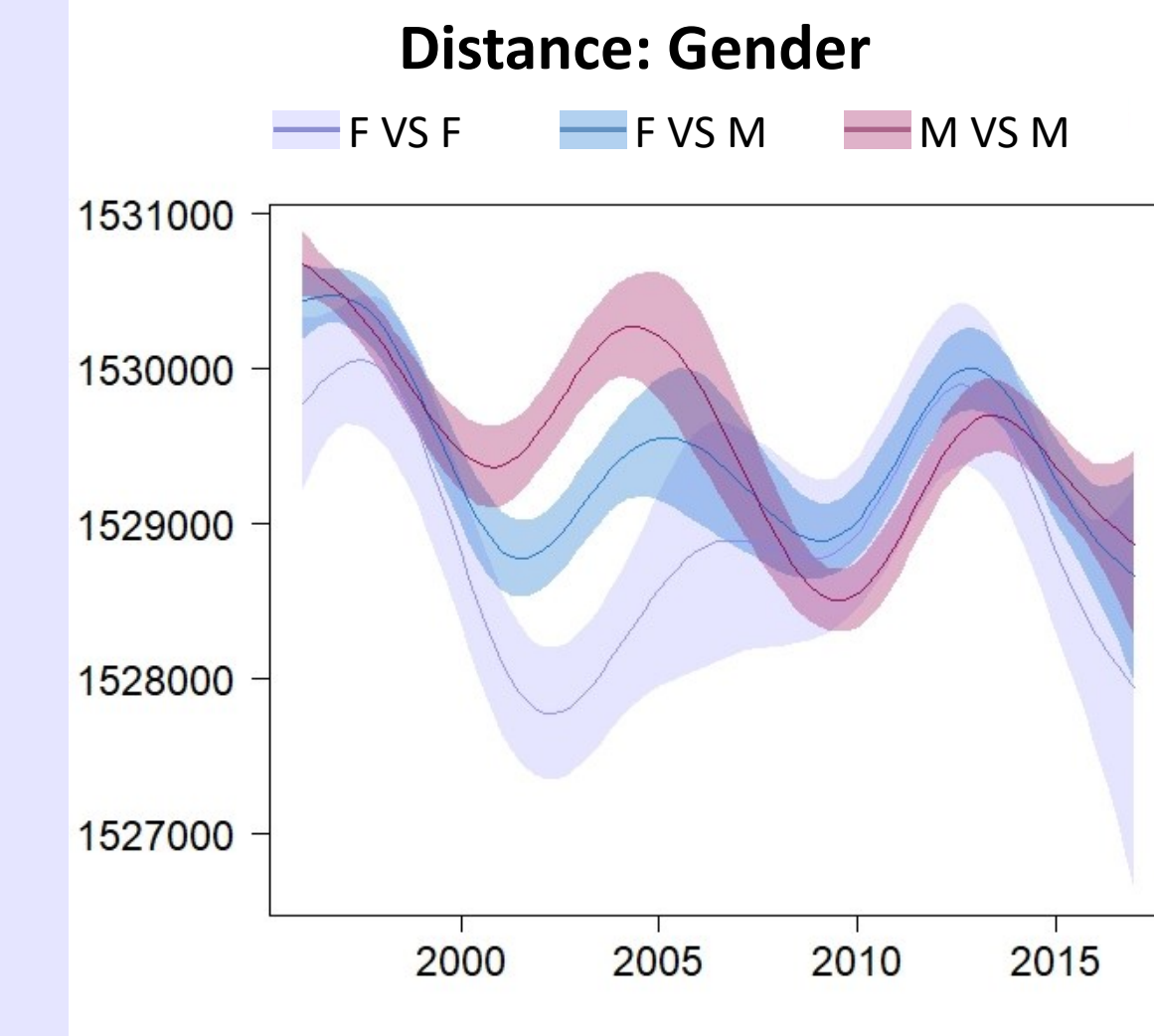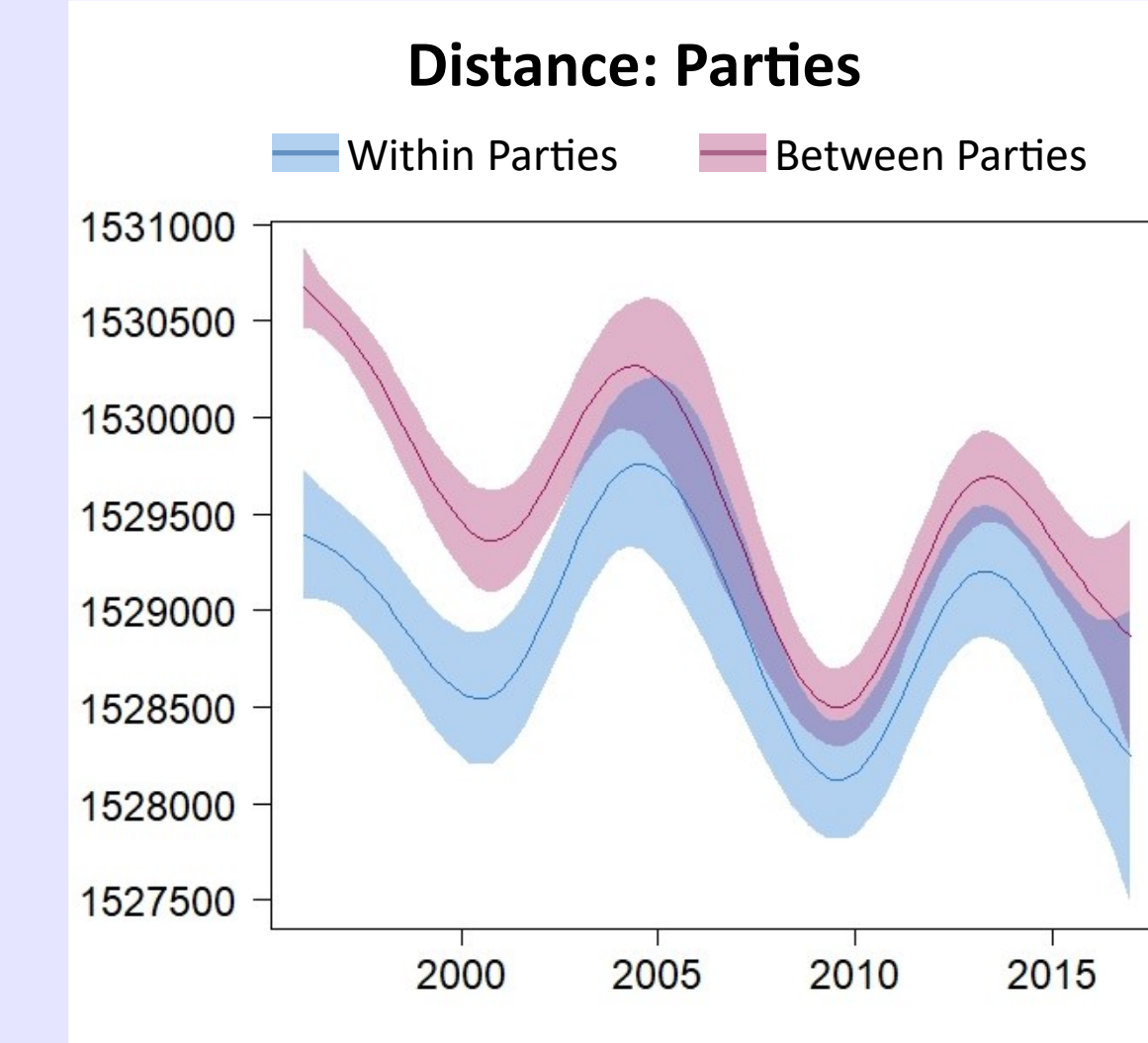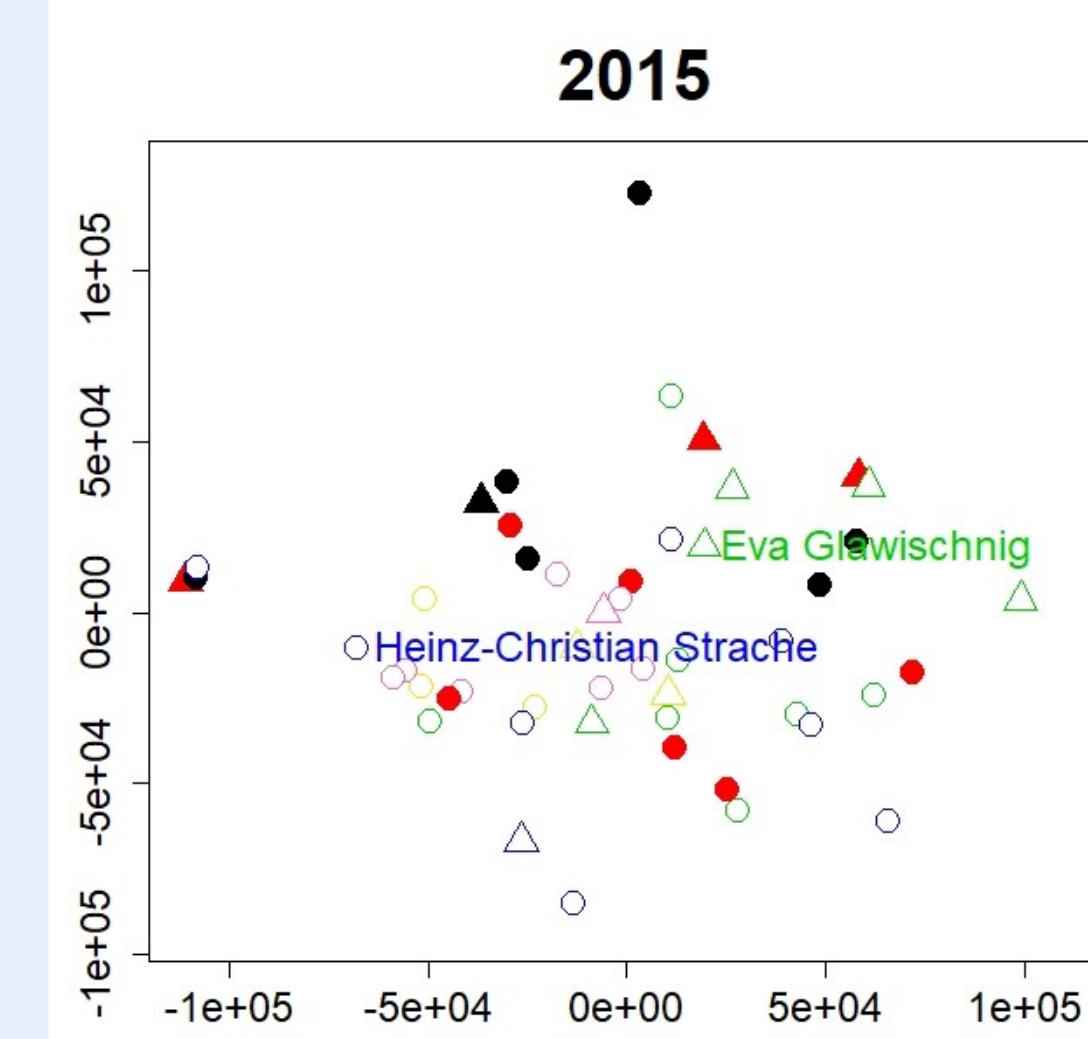
We base our analysis on the **Corpus of Austrian Parliamentary Records** (ParlAT), 1996-2017.

## Constructing networks

We construct **similarity-based network representations** of speaker's typical **lexical repertoire** in every year to model the topical and discursive patterns in their speeches.

We rely on adaptations of the **skip gram algorithm** for network construction.



Heinz-Christian Strache
(FPÖ, 2009)



Eva Glawischnig
(Grüne, 2015)



1996

2009

2015



Distance: Parties

Distance: Gender

Distance: Function
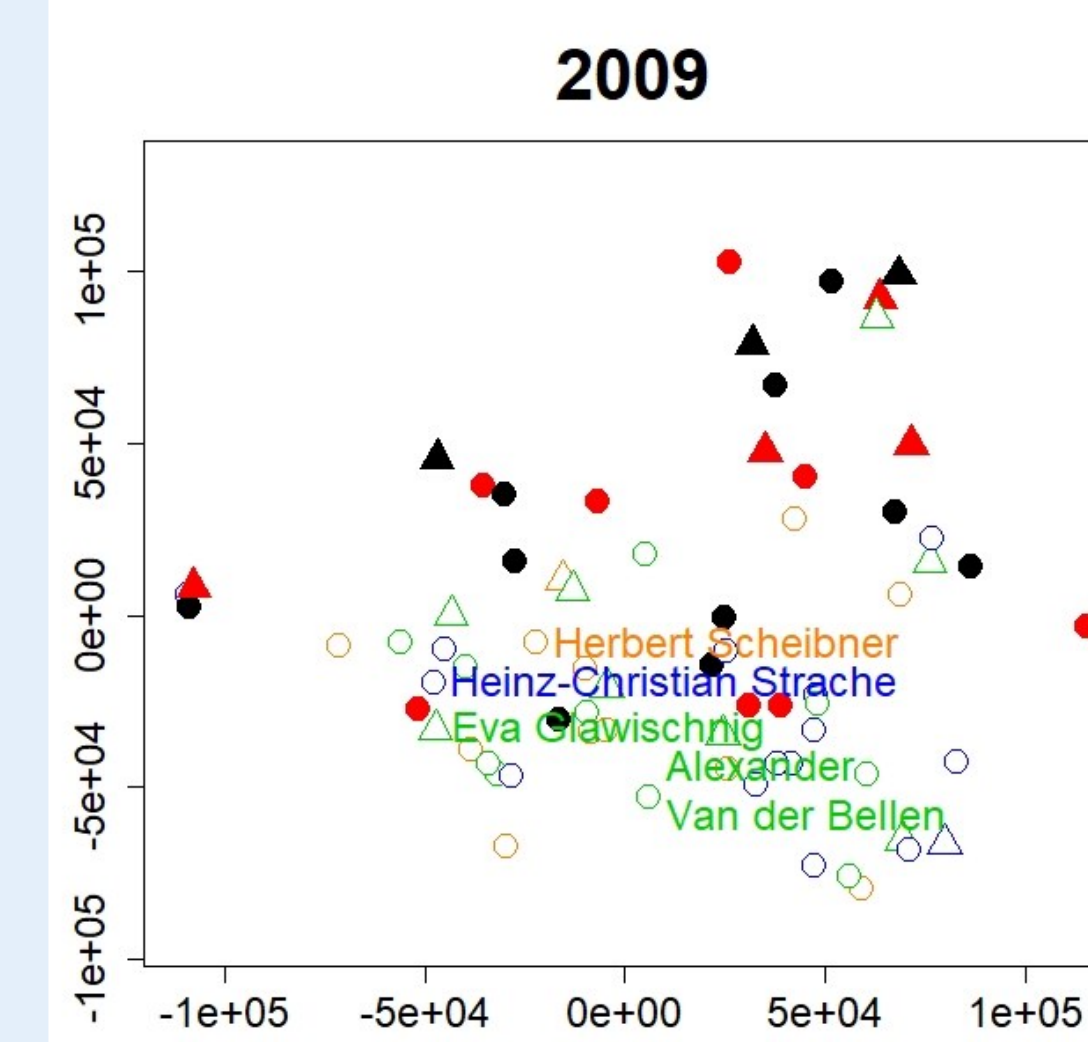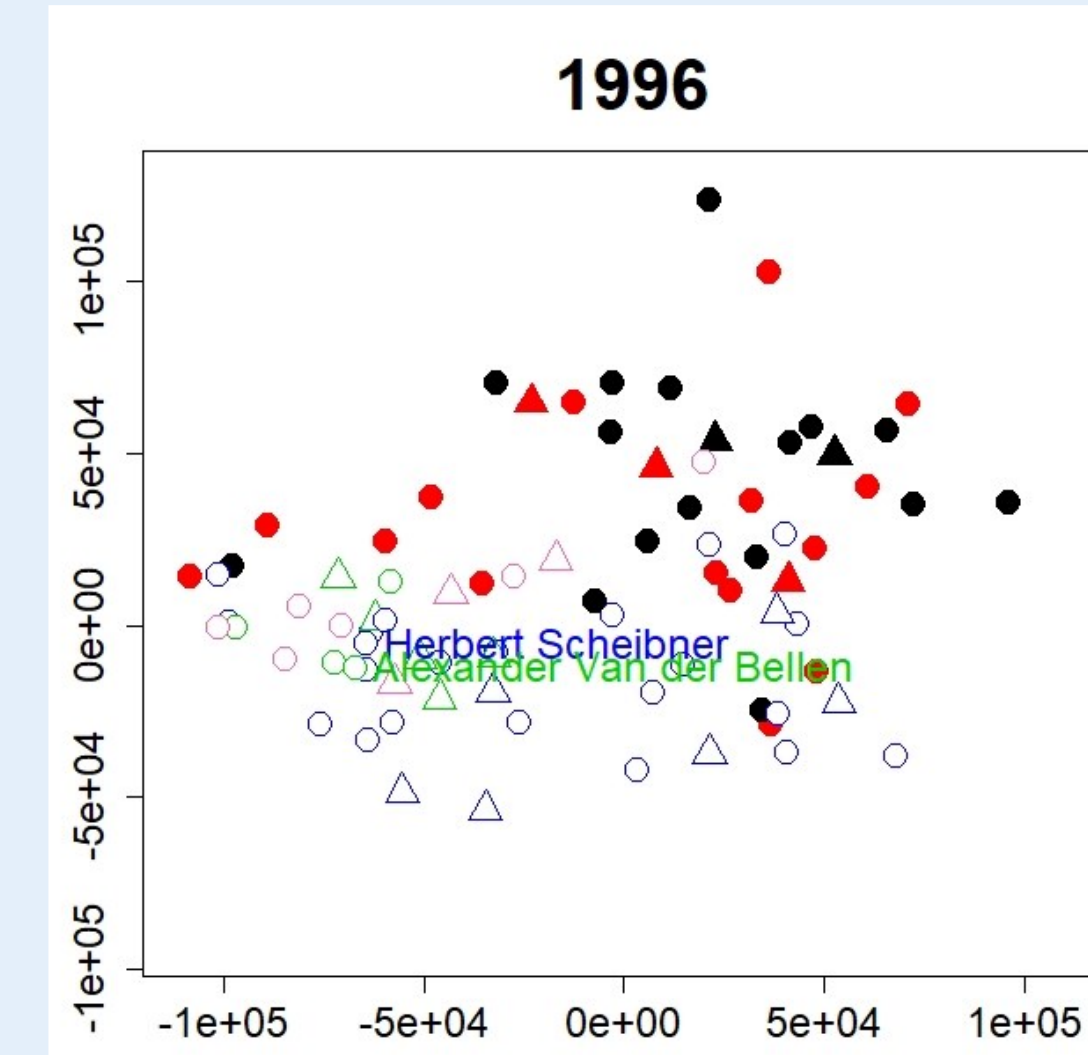
## Multidimensional Scaling

We use **Canberra Distance** to determine the similarity/distance between politicians' networks in consecutive years.

We use **Multidimensional Scaling** to visualize the similarity/distances among networks.

## Generalized Additive Models

Similarity between politicians' discourse patterns **fluctuates over time**.

There is a slight overall trend towards **more convergence,** between and within parties.

Distance between **opposition parties decreased**; distance between **government parties increased**.

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