

Where Has Voting Behavior Nationalized? Evidence from Election Results and Surveys in Eleven Countries*

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Abstract

In recent decades, U.S. voting behavior has nationalized: vote choice in subnational elections increasingly reflects national allegiances. Such nationalization can undermine political accountability, with particular consequences in decentralized/federalist countries. But to understand the causes of nationalization, it is critical to study multiple democracies. We link subnational and national election returns in ten European and American democracies with varying levels of centralization. We then develop a novel measure of nationalization based on correlations in party support across governmental levels. In most countries, cross-level nationalization has been steady for decades, often at high levels. The nationalization of American voting behavior has reached comparably high levels, meaning that America is no longer an outlier. Coupled with twelve surveys in eight countries, these findings challenge monocausal explanations of nationalization, including those emphasizing changing media markets. However, within countries, both lower subnational authority and broadband penetration are associated with heightened electoral nationalization.

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1 Introduction

In democracies, political parties play a central role in structuring choices for voters (Key, 1966). Given the variety of issues that could animate a country's politics at any point in time, parties organize politics by foregrounding a small number of divisions while minimizing others (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Scholarship often contends that parties facilitate accountability by providing voters with a streamlined set of heuristics about candidates' policy positions (Downs, 1957; Popkin, 1994; Sniderman and Stiglitz, 2012).

Still, a critical difference across party systems is the extent to which parties and voting behavior are nationalized. While nationalization of voting behavior has multiple definitions, they all emphasize the level of congruence in parties' electoral support, whether across subnational units or levels of government (Bartels, 1998; Caramani, 2004; Holliday, 2023; Hopkins, 2018; Morgenstern, 2017; Stokes, 1967).

The impacts of nationalization are likely to depend in part on a state's organization and its formal political institutions. In a highly centralized state, a nationalized party system that focuses citizens' attention on national-level issues may facilitate accountability and representation, as the national level has the authority to enact citizens' preferences (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004). However, in a decentralized and/or federalist state, nationalized voting is potentially more troublesome, as it may decouple the level of the system at which voters have well-formed preferences from the level most able to address those preferences. For example, if a party system is highly nationalized but state authority is decentralized, political debates may focus on symbolic issues unlikely to tangibly affect most voters (Hopkins, 2018; Rogers, 2023). At the same time, nationalization changes the actors involved in a political conflict, meaning that political outcomes are likely to differ when issues are nationalized as opposed to being more localized (Schattschneider, 1960).¹

By one definition, many European party systems had become thoroughly nationalized

¹What's more, the interplay of federalist institutions and nationalized political behavior has been implicated in democratic backsliding (Grumbach 2022; but see Kaufman, Kelemen and Kolcak 2022).

by the early decades of the twentieth century, with most parties competing in all parts of the country so as to maximize their seat share (Caramani, 2004). In this view, the logic of democratic competition fosters nationalization. But in other cases, nationalization has been more limited, or else it has been halted or even reversed (Johnston, 2017; Jones and Mainwaring, 2003; Morgenstern, 2017). Focusing on Canada, Levy (2007) details how a single subnational unit with a distinctive identity can anchor a less nationalized system characterized by substantial regional variation in its political divisions. At the same time, the U.K. became less nationalized in the wake of its devolution of political power in the late 1990s (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004). Likewise, Jeffrey and Middleton (2015) observe that party system and electorate incongruence between the subnational and national arenas in Germany has increased since 1994. The U.S. is also an atypical case: American political parties were not highly nationalized as late as the 1960s, although they have nationalized rapidly in the decades since (Bartels, 1998; Grumbach, 2022; Hopkins, 2018; Stokes, 1967; Warshaw and Caughey, 2022). Nationalization appears to vary both over time and across countries in ways suggestive of a complex causal story.

When explaining nationalization, some have pointed to shifts in governmental authority, noting that centralized political authority increases the incentives to compete nationally (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004). Others focus instead on technological shifts such as the changing news media, which allow for the dissemination of information over broader areas (e.g. Darr, Hitt and Dunaway, 2021; Hayes and Lawless, 2018; Hopkins, 2018; Moskowitz, 2021; Stokes, 1967). Nations' political institutions and their political parties may also influence the extent to which voting is integrated across the levels of a system (Cox, 1987; Samuels and Shugart, 2010). Still others point to underlying regional divisions and identities (Bélanger et al., 2018; Henderson and Jones, 2021; Levy, 2007).

But it is difficult to test multiple causal hypotheses with just one case. To better understand contemporary nationalization and its causes, this paper examines the trajectories of several democracies simultaneously, as some nationalizing factors may be country-specific

while others are likely to act across countries. We chose ten countries—Argentina, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States—which vary in their levels of decentralization/federalism as well as their national-level political institutions (presidential versus parliamentary), and the politicization of issues related to ethno-national minorities. For an eleventh country, Greece, we have survey data but not election returns.

We also develop a novel approach to measuring nationalization. To date, the nationalization of political systems has been measured primarily via spatial variation in voting for national offices such as president or parliament (Bartels, 1998; Caramani, 2004; Jones and Mainwaring, 2003). Using such measures, political systems are more nationalized when the major political parties run candidates nationwide or have similar levels of support across the regions of a country. But if our motivation in studying nationalization is understanding the possible disconnect between governmental authority and the focus of parties' attention, it is critical to measure the integration of vote choice *across the different levels of a political system* as well as over time (see also Hopkins, 2018).

Accordingly, we develop a new measure of nationalization that considers the connection between national and subnational voting patterns. Rather than focusing exclusively on the national level, our measure tracks the extent to which party support is consistent across the major levels of the political system. Specifically, we measure nationalization as the correlation between subnational and national vote shares. Voting is defined as nationalized if party support at the subnational level can be easily predicted from national-level party support. This measure necessarily requires us to compare different types of subnational units, including states, provinces, cantons, autonomous communities, and local authorities.

However, election-based measures are only available periodically, and leave key questions about the relationship between voting and other facets of public opinion unanswered. Thus, we supplement our analyses of election results with results from twelve surveys conducted in eight countries between 2019 and 2023. These results improve our understanding of the

attitudinal correlates of nationalization while also deepening our knowledge of the new, cross-level nationalization measure we propose. XXXXXX

Certainly, although our cases are all middle- or high-income democracies, we do not assume that subnational elections are of equal importance or that subnational units have comparable authority. In fact, the Appendix includes a discussion of the division of authority across levels in each of our cases. But by providing new measures of cross-level nationalization, we aim to facilitate cross-country comparisons, and in doing so deepen our understanding of recent trends—or the lack thereof.

Overall, we find that most of our European cases have had high levels of nationalization for decades, and that the U.S. has recently converged to similar levels. Canada, however, has maintained a lower level of nationalization, and Argentina has experienced a meaningful decline. Such results defy monocausal explanations: presidential systems are not always those with lower levels of nationalization, but nor are federalist systems (such as Germany) or multi-national states (such as the U.K.). However, within-country analyses indicate that growing regional authority is associated with reduced nationalization, while broadband penetration may have the opposite relationship. The patterns also indicate the ongoing importance of party systems in facilitating or retarding nationalization (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

2 Conceptualizing and explaining nationalization

Party systems are vital to functioning democracies, as they channel the interests of complex societies into meaningful but circumscribed choices for voters (Achen and Bartels, 2016; Aldrich, 1995; Downs, 1957). Yet party systems can only represent a small fraction of the social divides that are potentially relevant, making the question of *which* divides they do or do not represent crucial (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Schattschneider, 1960). Some party systems may foreground ideological debates over the role of government, for example, while others may instead emphasize conflicts between religious denominations, regions, or linguistic

groups.

A closely related question is about the geography of the parties' electoral support. Systems in which parties are competitive only in specific regions are likely to foreground different issues or cleavages than those in which parties compete nationally (Levy, 2007). For that reason, scholars of comparative politics have long defined party system nationalization as the extent to which support for political parties in national elections is geographically concentrated or more uniform across the country (Bartels, 1998; Caramani, 2004; Chhibber and Kollman, 2004; Jones and Mainwaring, 2003; Stokes, 1967). But even within national (most commonly legislative) elections, there are multiple ways to measure nationalization—one might measure nationalization at a single point in time, or else as the extent to which over-time swings are common across jurisdictions (Morgenstern, 2017). Nationalization can also refer to either vote choice or patterns of participation across levels of government (Hopkins, 2018; Horiuchi, 2005).

To date, research on nationalization in the U.S. has proceeded separately from research on nationalization in other high- and middle-income democracies. In part, there is an institutional reason for that separation: In federalist political systems such that of the U.S., nationalization takes on particular importance, as it can influence not only national-level representation but subnational representation as well. For example, the contemporary U.S. features both federalist institutions and increasingly nationalized voting patterns (Grumbach, 2022; Hopkins, 2018), a combination which can threaten accountability in subnational elections and policymaking (Rogers 2023; but see Warshaw and Caughey 2022). The dominance of the two nationalized parties in all 50 U.S. states homogenizes political competition, even in cases where the issues dividing the two parties are a poor fit for a state's underlying challenges.² Thus, recent research on the U.S. has focused squarely on the interplay of nationalized voting and federalist institutions (Grumbach, 2022; Hopkins, 2018; Rogers, 2023; Stokes, 1967). Unlike key studies of other countries (e.g. Caramani, 2004; Chhibber and Kollman, 2004),

²In this respect, the U.S. stands in sharp contrast to Canada, another federalist system in which subnational politics often has successfully parties which do not compete nationally (Johnston, 2017).

research on the U.S. often measures nationalization as the relationship between party support across the levels of the federalist system.

2.1 Explaining nationalization

Another consequence of the separation between nationalization research focusing on the U.S. and that focused elsewhere is in the variation being explained. While U.S.-focused research often seeks to explain the over-time trends in nationalized voting behavior (e.g. Bartels, 1998; Grumbach, 2022; Hopkins, 2018; Stokes, 1967), research on other countries also seeks to explain cross-national differences in levels of nationalization at the national level (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004; Johnston, 2017; Jones and Mainwaring, 2003; Morgenstern, 2017). Thus, when it comes to explaining the causes of nationalization, the two literatures have diverged as well. With evidence from the Canadian case, Levy (2007) demonstrates how a single, provincially concentrated minority can anchor a less nationalized party system (see also Bélanger et al., 2018; Henderson and Jones, 2021). For Chhibber and Kollman (2004), however, nationalization ebbs and flows with state authority, as parties seek to control the level of government at which power is concentrated. In this account, the New Deal in the U.S. expanded the authority of the federal government, and so gave parties and politicians heightened incentives to compete for power in districts across the country.

More generally, political institutions may help explain levels of nationalization: systems with a unified legislative and executive may increase parties' incentives to coordinate relative to presidential systems (Cox, 1987; Samuels and Shugart, 2010). In Japan, candidates in districts with fewer seats or in centralized party organizations sometimes make more cross-level appeals (Hijino and Ishima, 2021). The stability of the party system and the number of parties may be important factors as well, as new parties may build strength in specific regions before competing nationally. For example, in Caramani (2004)'s comprehensive 17-country account of the nationalization of European voting patterns for national legislatures, the imperatives of building coalitions nationally encouraged parties to compete nationwide soon

after the extension of the franchise. In Caramani's words, "the results presented in this work attest to a general process of national political integration, that is, an evolution toward the nationalization or homogenization of politics" (5). With some exceptions, Caramani observes that the nationalization of European democracies often took place before World War 1. Thus, it was complete before broadcast communications such as the radio or television, and often complete before the widespread adoption of proportional representation, the political incorporation of the working class, and the growth of social democratic parties.

But that characterization of early nationalization does not extend across the Atlantic, as Jones and Mainwaring (2003) find persistent variation in nationalization in recent years, with Argentina and Canada among their low-nationalization countries as of 2001. Relatedly, Hopkins (2018) finds that the integration of voting patterns across the federal system is a more recent phenomena in the U.S. (see also Grumbach, 2022; Rogers, 2016), and connects the post-1980 nationalization with changes in the information environment. One claim is that as local newspapers and television broadcasts have lost audiences to national cable television and online sources, the information that voters need to differentiate candidates has become less available (Darr, Hitt and Dunaway, 2021; Martin and McCrain, 2019; Moskowitz, 2021). Such changes may be amplified by declines in social capital and civic engagement (Putnam, 2000), which reduce alternative mechanisms through which local politicians may connect with citizens outside their partisan labels. But it is also possible that Caramani (2004) and Hopkins (2018) differ because they measure nationalization differently. In the former case, nationalization is within national politics, while in the latter case, it is across the levels of a federal system.

Still, changes in the information environment or to civic engagement have not been restricted to the U.S., raising questions about trends in nationalization in other high- and middle-income democracies. Nor is the U.S. the only federalist or presidential system, making it valuable to assess cross-level nationalization elsewhere. It is possible that other federalist democracies have been nationalizing in recent decades, too. It's also possible that the U.S.'s

recent period of nationalization has belatedly brought it in line with other large, middle- and high-income democracies, and so closed a period of American exceptionalism (see also Taylor et al., 2014).

3 Measuring nationalization

We obtain data for ten countries from Europe, North America, and South America: Denmark, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, Canada, Mexico, the US, and Argentina. This diverse group of high- and middle-income democracies varies with respect to key geographic, institutional, economic and cultural characteristics, making them collectively valuable in studying nationalization. Countries including Argentina, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Switzerland, and the U.S. have formally federalist institutions while several others are unitary states or hybrids (on Spain, see Moreno 2013). Some of these countries hold their subnational elections at the same time as their national elections (e.g. Sweden) while the timing is staggered elsewhere (e.g., Denmark); some are presidential systems (the U.S., Mexico, Argentina), while others are parliamentary. Taylor et al. (2014) note that Argentina and Mexico are among those whose institutional mix is most similar to that of the U.S. (pg. 40). The countries also differ in their party systems and in the extent to which those party systems politicize subnational divisions (e.g. Bélanger et al., 2018). Moreover, these countries vary in the extent to which they have underlying ethnic, linguistic, and/or regional cleavages, with Switzerland, the U.S., the U.K., and Germany displaying more regional differentiation than Sweden or Denmark (Bensel, 1984; Kriesi and Trechsel, 2008; Levy, 2006)—and with some of these countries (Canada, Spain, the U.K.) constituting multinational states (Basta, 2021). The U.K.’s devolution of authority in 1997 makes it a valuable case as well (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004).

Even so, data availability constrains which countries we are able to include. For each country, we must obtain election results for subnational elections—which are far less commonly accessible compared to national-level results—as well as national-level results for those same

units. In each of the ten countries in our sample, we are able to obtain historical election returns for the subnational units as well as national election returns for those same units and time periods. Table 1 summarizes the units, parties, and time span for each country. Here, we describe the country-level data sources as well as some key analytical decisions made in developing the full cross-country data set.

Table 1: Overview of cases and units of observation.

Country	Unique Units	Unique Parties	Min. Year	Max. Year
Argentina	24	1239	1983	2019
Canada	4	33	1997	2018
Denmark	299	13	1981	2017
Germany	16	273	1972	2013
Mexico	32	89	1970	2018
Spain	20	1452	2011	2019
Sweden	295	10	1976	2018
Switzerland	11	31	1971	2015
UK	592	5	2002	2019
United States (gubernatorial)	55	3	1976	2018
United States (legislative)	47	2	1976	2018

3.1 Country-specific data sets

For brief summaries of the division of authority across the levels of government in each case, see the Appendix and (Hooghe, Marks and Schakel, 2010).

For *Argentina*, we scrapped data sets posted via Andy Tow at <https://www.andytow.com/access/index.php>. We include observations since the fall of Argentina’s military dictatorship in 1983.

For *Canada*, we obtained election returns via Elections Canada.

For *Denmark*, we obtain data on municipal elections, the most significant subnational election, going back to 1970. Using the *Danish Election Database*³, we obtain national election vote shares at the municipal level. Because the data spans Denmark’s 2007 municipal reform, the data contains observations for 317 unique municipalities.

³Available at <https://valgdatabase.dst.dk/?lang=en>.

For *Germany*, we obtain data from Schakel (2013) on election returns for state (*Länder*) elections going back to 1946. In Germany’s federalist system, the *Länder* have substantial authority, making them the logical choice for this analysis (Conradt and Langenbacher, 2013). The data are highly detailed, providing electoral returns for a total of 395 unique parties. To render the results for Germany more comparable with the remaining cases, we limit the analyses to post-1970 observations.

For *Mexico*, we obtained data on presidential and gubernatorial voting by state via Eric Magar (see also Magar, 2012).

For *Sweden*, we obtain data on municipal and local elections from the *Swedish National Data Service*.⁴ At the municipal level the data contain election returns for more than 200 local parties, but since most of these parties do not compete nationally, we focus here on 10 parties for which we have observations at both levels.

For *Switzerland*, we obtain data on cantonal legislative elections as well as national election returns at the cantonal level from the Swiss *Bundesamt für Statistik* going back to 1971.⁵ As with the German *Länder* and the American states, cantons are empowered subnational governments with broad authority within a federalist system (Kriesi and Trechsel, 2008).

For the *United Kingdom*, the data pose the unique challenge that election returns for local council elections are tallied at the ward level, whereas national parliamentary elections are tallied at the level of parliamentary constituencies. Because the boundaries of wards as well as constituencies change over time, we need time-specific merger files to aggregate local election returns from wards to parliamentary constituencies. These merger files are only available alongside ward-level local council election returns for recent years, so we are able to analyze local election returns for 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019 and general election returns for 2015 and 2017. We obtain 2015 local election returns and merger files from the UK’s *Office*

⁴Available at <https://snd.gu.se/en>.

⁵Available at <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/politik/wahlen/kantonale-parlamenswahlen.assetdetail.6266208.html>.

for *National Statistics*,⁶ post-2015 local election returns from the website *Britain Elects*,⁷ and general election returns from the *UK Data Service*.⁸ While U.K. local councils vary somewhat in their responsibilities, they typically oversee services including housing, policing, and education.

For the *United States*, we obtain data from Hopkins (2018) on state-level presidential and gubernatorial election returns from 1968 to 2018. We employ state-level data to enhance comparability across countries, although the trends are broadly similar to those at the county level.

3.2 Measuring nationalization

With the country-specific data sets in hand, we need to resolve two additional measurement issues. Prior research has focused on the spatial variation in national election results (Caramani, 2004), and so has not had to contend with asynchronous elections. However, our methodology must first address the differential timing of national and subnational elections. To see why this issue matters, consider Figure 1, which illustrates the issue using data from the electoral record of the Danish People’s Party (DPP) in Vejle Municipality, Denmark. In this specific case, support for the DPP fluctuates considerably over the course of just a few years, making the issue of asynchronous elections particularly acute.

One way to assess how closely local election results track national results would be to correlate each subnational result with the most recent national result for the same party in the same geographical unit. In Figure 1, this is represented by the dashed lines connecting the subnational observations (squares) with the national observations (triangles). The weakness in this approach is that when national trends fluctuate, national and subnational trends can misleadingly appear divergent, as illustrated in the last set of observations in Figure 1. Moreover, the unequal spacing of elections means that the time interval between subnational

⁶ Available at <http://geoportal1-ons.opendata.arcgis.com/>

⁷ Available at <http://britainelects.com/results/>.

⁸ Available at <https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/>.

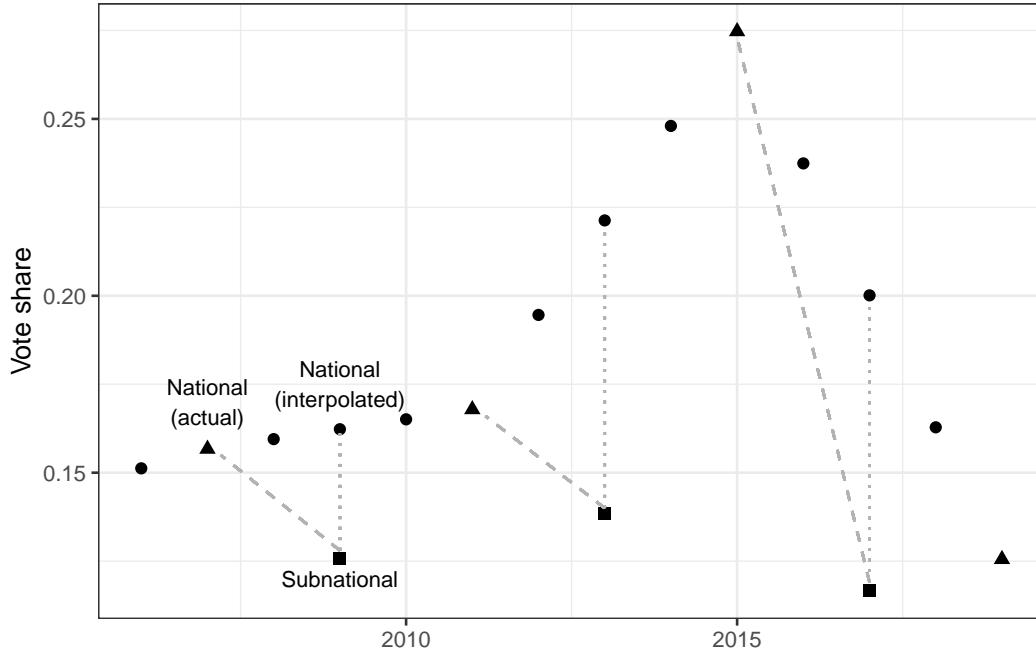


Figure 1: Visualization of method matching subnational (squares) and national (triangles) party vote share observations, based on the electoral record of the Danish People’s Party (DPP) in Vejle Municipality. When subnational and national elections do not co-occur, rather than matching subnational vote shares with the most recent national vote share (dashed lines), we match subnational vote shares with interpolated values of national vote shares (dotted lines, circles).

elections and the most recent national election varies between countries and over time, introducing varying degrees of measurement error.

To capture trends in parties’ national support more accurately given this issue, we instead interpolate national-level vote shares, shown as circles in Figure 1, and then match subnational vote shares to interpolated national vote shares when the two do not naturally align (shown as dotted lines). In some cases, this affects the estimated level of nationalization considerably. In the example shown in Figure 1, the bivariate correlation when matching to the most recent national election is -0.75 . With our preferred method of matching to interpolated national vote shares, however, the correlation becomes 0.57 , indicating that subnational and national vote shares do in fact move in tandem in this case.

A separate question is how to handle parties running only in subnational elections. Some

parties in our data receive votes at the subnational level but never at the national level. For example, Denmark’s *Slesvigsk Parti*, which represents the German minority population in South Jutland, runs only in local elections. Since observations at the national level are missing, these cases are omitted from correlations between subnational and national vote shares. Given that this type of party is by definition not a national party, omitting these observations risks overestimating the level of nationalization. To include exclusively subnational parties in our data, we set national-level vote shares to zero for these parties. When examining nationalization at the party level, we set the correlation between subnational and national vote shares for these parties to zero.

The combined data set contains 66,443 observations of subnational vote shares at the unit-year-party level matched to corresponding national-level vote shares.

4 Results

We consider three sets of results here. First, we present an overall assessment of nationalization across all countries and elections in the data. Second, we present measures of nationalization for each party in our data. Lastly, we show how nationalization in each country has changed over time.

4.1 Overall nationalization

We begin by characterizing the overall association between subnational and national vote shares, shown in Figure 2. To minimize overplotting, we present a binned scatterplot.

Figure 2 foreshadows a key finding from our analyses, namely that subnational voting behavior is highly nationalized in general. Across all observations, national and subnational vote shares are very strongly correlated ($r = .85$, $t = 414$, $p < .001$). In other words, party performances at the national and subnational levels in a given period of time are on average very closely linked. If a party does well in a national election in a specific jurisdiction, it is likely to do well in a temporally proximate subnational election. The vertical column in

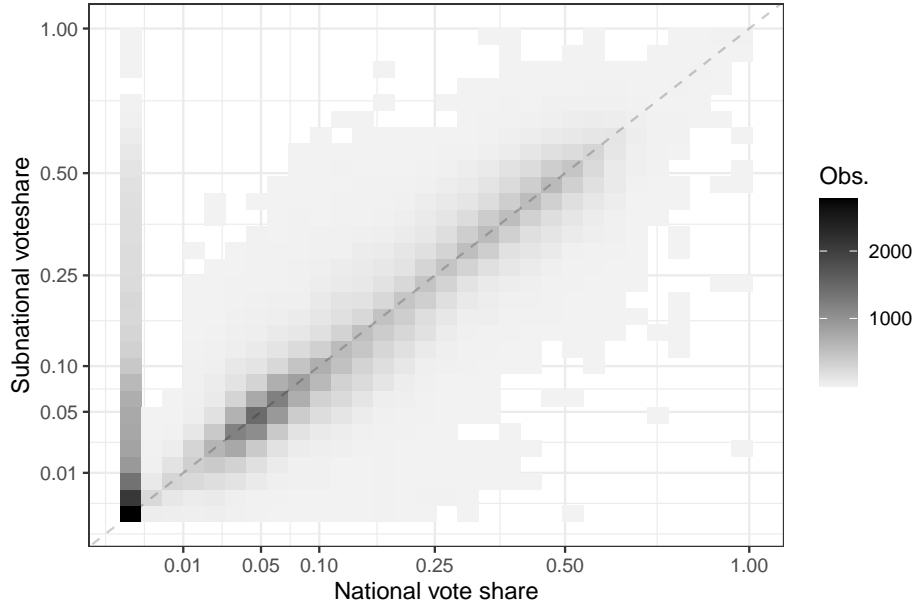


Figure 2: National and subnational vote shares across the entire data set.

the leftmost side of Figure 2 reflects parties running only subnationally. If we exclude these parties, estimating nationalization only for parties running nationally, the correlation rises to $r = .91$.

4.2 Nationalization at the party level

Morgenstern (2017) illustrates the importance of considering nationalization at the level of parties, as even within a given country, some parties can be more nationalized (say, Canada’s Liberal Party) while others are not (Canada’s Bloc Quebecois). Figure 3 presents measures of nationalization for each party in the data. As shown, subnational and national vote shares are strongly positively correlated for most parties in the data. Confidence intervals are narrower towards the top end of the distribution, indicating that parties with a long electoral history tend to be more nationalized. This finding is consistent with extensive research indicating that periods of initial party formation are often less nationalized, as nascent parties often establish themselves in part of the country before expanding nationwide (Caramani, 2004; Ford and Goodwin, 2014; Glaser, 1994; Johnston, 2017; McCormick, 1973)

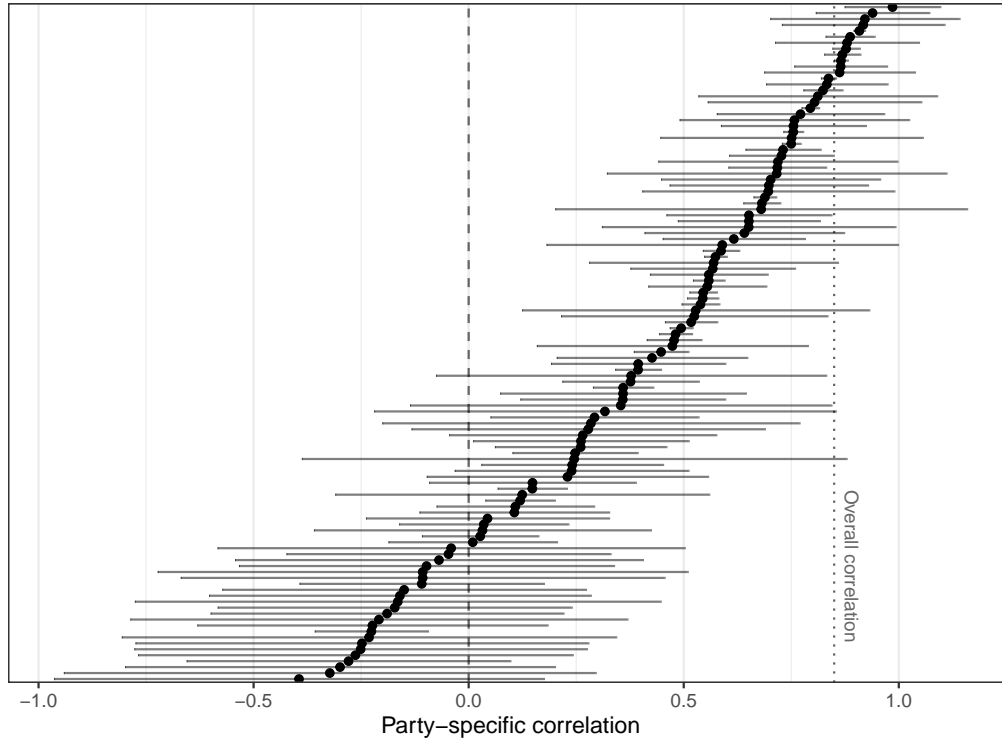


Figure 3: Party-specific correlations between subnational and national vote shares.

By this measure, the most nationalized party in our data is Germany’s *Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern* (CSU), whose subnational and national vote shares are correlated at $r = .99$. Ironically, then, the most nationalized party in our data is not a national party per se, as the CSU operates only in Germany’s Bavaria region. This illustrates the distinction between our measure of nationalization and the system-wide measure used by Caramani (2004) and others: although the CSU does not operate nationally, regional electoral support for the CSU is nevertheless nationalized in the sense that it is highly predictable based on information about national-level support. The only party for which subnational and national level vote shares are significantly negatively associated is Switzerland’s Liberal Party.

4.3 Country-level trends in nationalization

Figure 4 presents correlations between national and subnational vote shares by country and year; Table 7 provides basic descriptive statistics by country. The figure reveals that temporal

trends in nationalization vary substantially between countries.

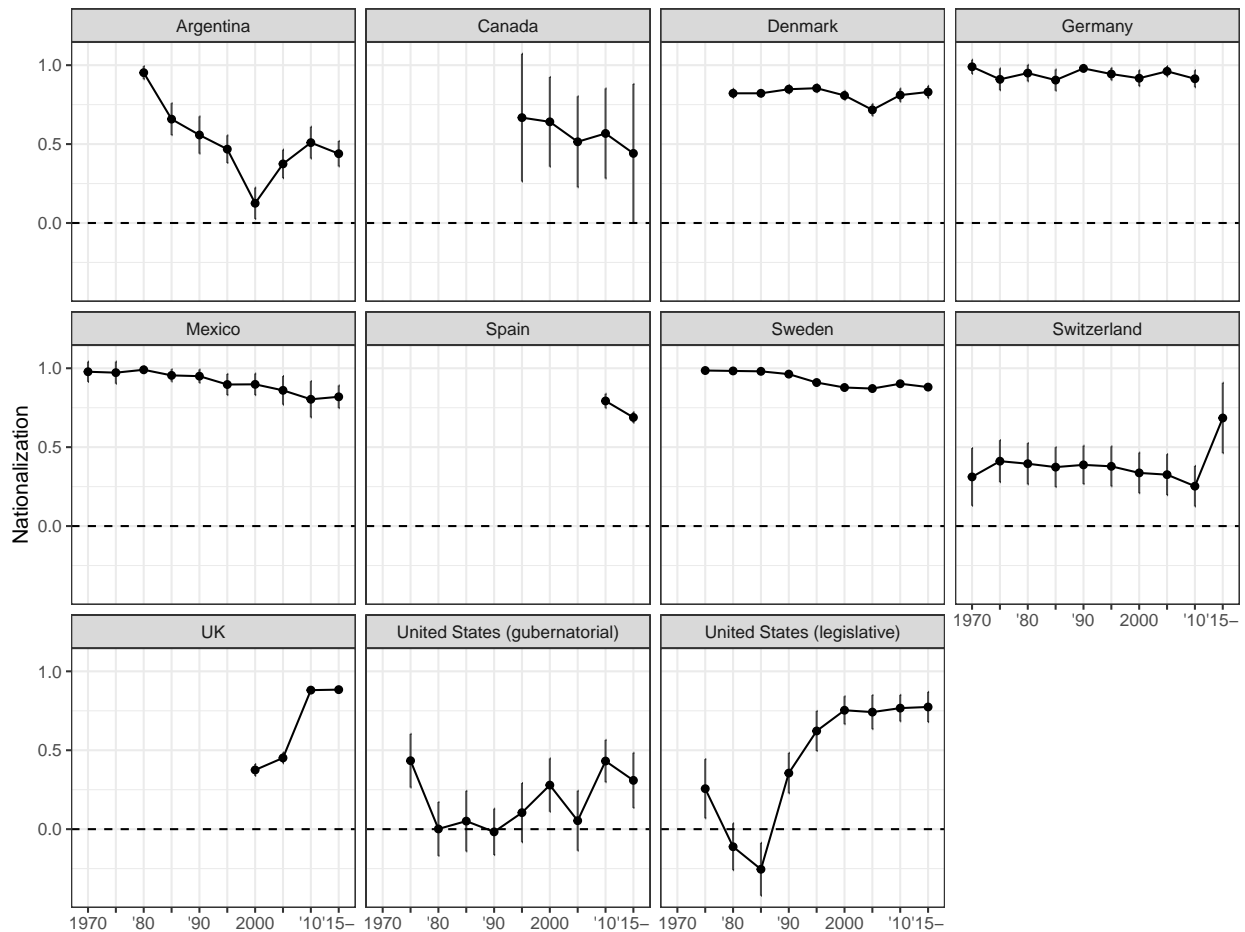


Figure 4: Bivariate correlations between subnational and national vote shares by country and year. Error bars represent 95 pct. confidence intervals.

The clearest temporal trend in Figure 4 is the pattern documented in Hopkins (2018) toward increasingly nationalized gubernatorial and state legislative elections in the U.S. As late as the early 1990s, the correlation between state legislative and national elections in the U.S. was just 0.36, but it grew to 0.77 by the late 2010's. By contrast, the trends in other countries are relatively muted. Compared to the U.S. case, subnational elections in most other countries in our data are persistently highly nationalized during this period, a result that is broadly consistent with Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and Caramani (2004) despite using a different measure. In most countries for which we have extended time-series data,

cross-level nationalization is relatively stable across years, and so appears to be an attribute of the system. While countries clearly vary somewhat in their levels of nationalization, the U.S. is an outlier in the extent of its growing nationalization. Argentina, the U.K., and Switzerland do exhibit some changes, but not on the scale of those in the U.S. In Canada, nationalization is lower but appears relatively stable.

Still, these ten countries differ in their baseline levels of nationalization as well as their trajectories. For example, the Swiss case shows somewhat lower levels of nationalization as well as relatively high levels of over-time volatility, while the Swedish and Mexican cases show a slight downward trend in recent years from a very high baseline.

The consistent and often high levels of nationalization we uncover are especially striking given the institutional variation across our cases. For example, subnational voting behavior is about as nationalized in Mexico and Germany's federal systems as it is in Denmark and Sweden's unitary states. One way to characterize these results, then, is that the US has historically exhibited an exceptional degree of independence between subnational and national politics. But over time, that exceptionalism has waned.

4.4 Predicting Nationalization

With only 10 countries and XXXX observations of subnational elections across those countries, we have limited statistical power to analyze country-level factors, even those with over-time variation. Still, to provide a preliminary evaluation of a few of the broad explanations for nationalization, we next use multi-level models with country-level random effects to analyze how dynamic, country-level measures of decentralization, broadband penetration, and internet access are associated with the cross-level, electoral measure of nationalization developed above.

Chhibber and Kollman (2004) contends that nationalization is partly driven by governmental authority. To test that prospect, the first two models in Appendix Table 12 employ the updated measure of regional decentralization from Hooghe, Marks and Schakel (2010) to

predict levels of nationalization⁹, with the units of observation being either all subnational elections separately (left; n=202) or subnational elections averaged in five-year increments (right; n=74).

In both cases, we see a meaningful and significant negative relationship. For example, if the regional authority measure increases by one standard deviation in the all-election data set (0.22), given the coefficient of -0.556 (SE=0.23), we should expect the nationalization measure to decline by -0.11 on average.¹⁰

Employing a similar strategy alongside World Bank data, we can also test the prospect that nationalized elections are associated with internet access (the percentage of the population using the Internet) or broadband penetration (the number of fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 people; World Bank 2023).¹¹ Given the limited sample sizes and the coarse available country-level measures, this test is far from a comprehensive evaluation of the claim that changing media markets drive nationalization. With country-elections as the unit of observation, there is a significant positive relationship between broadband penetration and nationalization: a one standard deviation increase in broadband penetration (of 14.4 subscriptions per 100) is associated with a 0.056 increase in electoral nationalization (p=0.005).¹² Substantively, the relationship is of a similar magnitude when analyzing five-year averages, but the reduced sample size and increased standard error render the effect insignificant. By contrast, the percentage of adults using the internet is not meaningfully associated with nationalization in either data set.

For more countries, the overall story is one of stability (see also Appendix Table 7)—most of these countries had high levels of nationalization even at the beginning of the time period, and none has experienced the growth of the U.S. Still, there are factors that are associated with growing within-country nationalization, including centralization and broadband penetration.

⁹Appendix Tables 8 and 9 provide descriptive statistics on the measure.

¹⁰This relationship also holds when estimated via fixed-effects models.

¹¹These variables are summarized in Appendix Tables 10 and 11.

¹²This relationship holds when estimated with country fixed effects.

5 Survey Evidence

The evidence from elections shows that even in recent years, differences in cross-level nationalization have persisted in many places. Countries like Spain and especially Canada have markedly lower levels of nationalization than Denmark, the U.K., or even federalist Germany or Mexico. But those observations raise other questions about nationalized voting behavior, questions which we cannot answer with election data alone.

For example, to what extent do less nationalized systems have distinctive patterns of public opinion, either because nationalized party systems are in part a product of voter demand or else because voters' attitudes have been shaped by the system? In answering those questions, we can also begin to assess claims by Levy (2007) and others about the role of regional identity attachments in sustaining de-nationalized systems. At the same time, we can also better understand the correlates of the novel cross-level nationalization measure employed here.

To do so, we draw upon a variety of surveys summarized in Table 2. We conducted novel, online surveys with convenience samples in Germany (in 2020, 2022 and 2023), Spain (2022), and Switzerland (2022). In addition, we added questions to modules of the Canadian Election Study (2019, 2021 and 2023), the British Election Study (2021), and separate surveys of Denmark (2021) and Greece (2022). Where possible, we assessed several attitudes that could plausibly relate to nationalization, from identity attachments at the state and national levels to constructs including trust in multiple levels of government, perceptions of the impact of different governmental levels on citizens' lives, and assessments about the relative importance of respondents' preferred parties controlling national versus subnational executives.

Table 5 summarizes the results from the surveys—and to enable comparisons with the election results, it includes the average cross-level electoral nationalization measure post-2015 in its final column. In broad strokes, elections in Canada, Switzerland, and Spain show low levels of nationalization while those in the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Germany were

Survey	Mode	n	Start Date	End Date
CA19	Online, opt-in sample	1141	October 3, 2019	October 20, 2019
CA21	Online, opt-in sample	1009	September 9, 2021	September 20, 2021
CA23	Online, opt-in sample	999	May 2, 2023	May 11, 2023
DK	Online, opt-in sample	1515	March 26, 2021	March 31, 2021
GER20	Online, opt-in sample	1923	December 22, 2020	January 3, 2021
GER22	Online, opt-in sample (panel)	2986	June 9, 2022	July 15, 2022
GER23	Online, opt-in sample (panel)	1831	March 1, 2023	March 23, 2023
GR	Online, opt-in sample	1204	February 1, 2022	February 18, 2022
SP	Online, opt-in sample	2376	February 4, 2022	February 22, 2022
SWL	Online, opt-in sample	2679	May 26, 2022	June 16, 2022
UK	Online, opt-in sample (panel)	8105	December 13, 2019	December 23, 2019
UK-SW	Subset of UK survey	1291	December 13, 2019	December 23, 2019

Table 2: This table lists the surveys and sample sizes. “GER” refers to Germany and “SWL” to Switzerland.

high. Table 5’s second column presents the country-level averages for respondents asked about their attachment to the country as a whole, measured via an index constructed from six standard identity strength items (Mael and Tetrick, 1992). (For example, respondents are asked true or false questions such as, “when someone criticizes [country], I don’t take it as a personal insult.” See the Appendix for question wording.) The third column presents the averages of a similar battery of questions assessing attachment to subnational units, whether that means provinces, cantons, land/states, autonomous communities, municipalities (Denmark), or nations (England, Scotland, and Wales) within the U.K. The fourth column indicates the difference. For most countries, respondents report being more attached to the country than the lower-level unit, with Spain a notable exception: Spanish respondents report stronger attachments to their autonomous communities (4.23) than to Spain as a whole (4.01). Yet, although Canadian elections evinced low levels of nationalization, Canadians as a whole report higher levels of attachment to Canada than to their provinces. Likewise, Swiss respondents report greater attachment to Switzerland (3.74) than to their cantons (3.05).¹³ It is clear that patterns of attachment differ among our Spanish respondents—but also that

¹³And in the U.K., national attachment (3.59) just barely outpaces subnational attachment (3.52), although this likely reflects factors specific to English identity (Henderson and Jones, 2021).

countries can have relatively low levels of electoral nationalization without high levels of attachment to subnational units.

The results are broadly similar for a separate question measuring identity via the “Moreno” question, which asks respondents (for example) if they identify more as British or Scottish (Moreno, 2006). In every country, respondents report more attachment to their national identification than any subnational identification, although the surplus is lowest in the United Kingdom and Spain. This question, too, doesn’t cleanly separate countries with more or less nationalized voting patterns.

Trust across the levels of government may also provide an indication of nationalization (?), as the correlates of trust at the local and national levels can differ (Fitzgerald and Wolak, 2016). The sixth, seventh, and eighth columns report levels of trust in national and subnational government, respectively, and their difference. Levels of trust vary cross-nationally but are actually higher in subnational governments in most places, with highly decentralized Switzerland (Barber, 1974) as the lone exception. That is consistent with prior findings (see OECD, 2022). Here, too, the average responses to survey items do not cleanly separate countries based on their levels of electoral nationalization. Respondents were also asked which level of government provides the best value for their money (Kincaid and Cole, 2011), with centralized Greece atop the list with 56% saying the national level (column nine). These results do track electoral nationalization to some degree, but there is also substantial within-country variation: Germany in 2020 falls on the higher side, with 35.6% of respondents saying the federal government, while in 2022 that figure dropped to 22.5%. This drop may reflect partisan developments within Germany, as the 2021 federal elections shifted government control to a coalition of new parties.

Survey	Natl Athmt (6)	Subn Athmt (6)	Diff Natl-Sub (6)	Natl Athmt (4)	Subn Athmt (4)	Diff Natl-Sub (4)	More Natl	Trst Natl	Trst Subn	Diff Trstb	Natl Value	Prefer Natl	Election Corr.
CA19	3.84	4.18	-0.34	3.29	2.99	0.30	40.21	26.46	31.93	-5.47	27.84	64.11	0.44
CA21	4.23	4.16	0.07	3.05	2.93	0.12	37.53	31.14	38.07	-6.93	28.16	61.38	0.44
CA23							29.23	44.53	41.87	2.66			
DK	4.41	2.81	1.60	3.09	1.80	1.29	86.67						0.83
GER20	3.42	3.35	0.07	2.24	2.18	0.06	34.60	38.69	41.49	-2.80	35.63	25.59	0.91
GER22	3.30	3.04	0.26	2.24	1.95	0.29	35.04	25.85	33.01	-7.16	22.49	37.71	0.91
GER23				2.34	2.08	0.27	40.95	25.81	32.23	-6.42	39.09	35.21	0.78
GR											56.28		
SP	4.01	4.23	-0.22	2.75	2.86	-0.11	17.38	18.54	26.48	-7.94	31.77	19.68	0.69
SWL	3.74	3.05	0.69	2.69	2.11	0.58	32.53	50.00	42.82	7.18	28.68	22.67	0.68
UK	3.59	3.52	0.07	2.44	2.34	0.10	25.26	16.51			35.97		0.88
UK-SW	3.00	3.82	-0.82	2.05	2.59	-0.54	22.32	15.93	31.04	-15.11	32.73	65.36	

Table 3: This table presents country-level averages. Note that the * indicates that respondents to this question did not have a “both equally” reply option.

Survey	Natl Athmt (6)	Subn Athmt (6)	Diff Natl-Sub (6)	Natl Athmt (4)	Subn Athmt (4)	Diff Natl-Sub (4)	More Natl	Trst Natl	Trst Subn	Diff Trstb	Natl Value	Prefer Natl	Election Corr.
CA19	4.62	4.18	0.44	3.29	2.99	0.30	40.21	26.46	31.93	-5.47	27.84	64.11	0.44
CA21	4.23	4.16	0.07	3.05	2.93	0.12	37.53	31.14	38.07	-6.93	28.16	61.38	0.44
CA23							29.23	44.53	41.87	2.66			
DK	4.41	2.81	1.60	3.09	1.80	1.29	86.67						0.83
GER20	3.42	3.35	0.07	2.24	2.18	0.06	34.60	38.69	41.49	-2.80	35.63	25.59	0.91
GER22	3.30	3.04	0.26	2.24	1.95	0.29	35.04	25.85	33.01	-7.16	22.49	37.71	0.91
GER23				2.34	2.08	0.27	40.95	25.81	32.23	-6.42	39.09	35.21	0.78
GR											56.28		
SP	4.01	4.23	-0.22	2.75	2.86	-0.11	17.38	18.54	26.48	-7.94	31.77	19.68	0.69
SWL	3.74	3.05	0.69	2.69	2.11	0.58	32.53	50.00	42.82	7.18	28.68	22.67	0.68
UK	3.59	3.52	0.07	2.44	2.34	0.10	25.26	16.51			35.97		0.88
UK-SW	3.00	3.82	-0.82	2.05	2.59	-0.54	22.32	15.93	31.04	-15.11	32.73	65.36	
US	3.53	2.96	0.57	2.45	2.04	0.41	48.14	13.86	28.38	-14.52	39.04	19.42	

Table 4: Comparative Nationalization Questions Across Surveys, Modified Attachment Variables

Survey	Natl Athmt	Subn Athmt	Diff Natl-Sub	More Natl	Trst Natl	Trst Subn	Diff Trstb	Natl Value	Prefer Natl	Election Corr.
CA19	3.84	4.18	-0.34	40.21	26.46	31.93	-5.47	27.84	64.11	0.44
CA21	4.23	4.16	0.07	37.53	31.14	38.07	-6.93	28.16	61.38	0.44
CA23				29.23	44.53	41.87	2.66			
DK	4.41	2.81	1.60	86.67						0.83
GER20	3.42	3.35	0.07	34.60	38.69	41.49	-2.80	35.63	25.59	0.91
GER22	3.30	3.04	0.26	35.04	25.85	33.01	-7.16	22.49	37.71	0.91
GER23				40.95	25.81	32.23	-6.42	39.09	35.21	0.78
GR								56.28		
SP	4.01	4.23	-0.22	17.38	18.54	26.48	-7.94	31.77	19.68	0.69
SWL	3.74	3.05	0.69	32.53	50.00	42.82	7.18	28.68	22.67	0.68
UK	3.59	3.52	0.07	25.26	16.51			35.97		0.88
UK-SW	3.00	3.82	-0.82	22.32	15.93	31.04	-15.11	32.73	65.36	

Table 5: This table presents country-level averages. Note that the * indicates that respondents to this question did not have a “both equally” reply option.

Survey	Natl Athmt	Subn Athmt	Diff Natl-Sub	More Natl	Trst Natl	Trst Subn	Diff Trstb	Natl Value	Prefer Natl	Election Corr.
CA19	4.62	4.18	0.44	40.21	26.46	31.93	-5.47	27.84	64.11	0.44
CA21	4.23	4.16	0.07	37.53	31.14	38.07	-6.93	28.16	61.38	0.44
CA23				29.23	44.53	41.87	2.66			
DK	4.41	2.81	1.60	86.67						0.83
GER20	3.42	3.35	0.07	34.60	38.69	41.49	-2.80	35.63	25.59	0.91
GER22	3.30	3.04	0.26	35.04	25.85	33.01	-7.16	22.49	37.71	0.91
GER23				40.95	25.81	32.23	-6.42	39.09	35.21	0.78
GR								56.28		
SP	4.01	4.23	-0.22	17.38	18.54	26.48	-7.94	31.77	19.68	0.69
SWL	3.74	3.05	0.69	32.53	50.00	42.82	7.18	28.68	22.67	0.68
UK	3.59	3.52	0.07	25.26	16.51			35.97		0.88
UK-SW	3.00	3.82	-0.82	22.32	15.93	31.04	-15.11	32.73	65.36	
US	3.53	2.96	0.57	48.14	13.86	28.38	-14.52	39.04	19.42	

Table 6: Comparative Nationalization Questions Across Surveys

Table 5’s penultimate column presents the results to a novel question in which respondents were asked to indicate whether control of the national executive or the subnational executive was more important. For example, in Germany, the question read: “What is more important? Having the minister of the [Sub-national region] government come from the political party I prefer or having the chancellor of the German government come from the political party I prefer.” Here, too, we see a substantial shift in Germany between early 2020 and 2022, with the fraction preferring the chancellor increasing from 25.6% to 37.7%. Despite their denationalized elections, Canadian respondents prefer that their preferred party control the federal prime minister by between 61.4% and 64.1%.¹⁴

The results from these surveys demonstrate that traces of low nationalization are evident in public opinion, especially in Spain. But no one survey measure effectively separates countries that demonstrate high cross-level nationalization from less nationalized countries. Canada and Switzerland have low levels of electoral nationalization but respondents in those countries express nationalized attitudes in response to key questions. By contrast, Germany and the United Kingdom have seen high levels of nationalization in recent elections but have

¹⁴Appendix 15 provides results for yet another question that was asked in four countries, this one about the level of government that has the biggest impact on respondents’ day-to-day lives. We have data for only four surveys in three countries, with Spain having the lowest fraction of respondents reporting that the national government has the most impact on their daily lives.

strong attachments to subnational identities.¹⁵

6 Discussion

Writing about trends in the first half of the 20th century, Stokes (1967) attributed nationalization in the U.S. partly to shifts in the mass media which were serving to integrate that country. In more recent decades, technological shifts including cable and satellite television and the extension of broadband internet have the potential to foster nationalization across countries, as these transformations may be reducing the amount of regional and local information available to citizens. That, in turn, may reduce subnational parties' ability to distinguish themselves and citizens' ability to distinguish the parties across the levels of government. If the changing information environment is a straightforward driver of nationalization, such trends should be evident across high- and middle-income democracies, all of which have undergone such transformations to varying degrees (Boxell, Gentzkow and Shapiro, 2022).

While there is compelling evidence that shifting media markets are having a nationalizing influence in the U.S. (Hayes and Lawless, 2018; Hindman, 2009; Hopkins, 2018; Martin and McCrain, 2019; Moskowitz, 2021), the broader pattern of results uncovered here indicates that pronounced nationalization in recent decades has largely been specific to the U.S. Yes, broadband penetration is positively associated with nationalization at the country level, and countries which centralize (or decentralize) authority do see concomitant changes in nationalization (Chhibber and Kollman, 2004). But the broader theme is of stability, with most countries achieving relatively high levels of nationalization from the earliest elections we observe. That suggests that the transforming media environments of other countries are not having a broad, nationalizing impact across countries. In part, that is because countries like Sweden and Denmark were already highly nationalized prior to shifts in their media markets. Perhaps, then, America's increasingly nationalized media environment is simply bringing it

¹⁵With so few country-level surveys, and with only a few countries with multiple surveys, the amount that we can learn from country-level analysis is quite limited. Nonetheless, Appendix Table 13 provides regressions of the various survey-level measures on country-level predictors such as regional decentralization.

into line with the largely nationalized nature of voting in most other countries.

Considered jointly, these results instead suggest that various European countries have long been relatively nationalized, with even Switzerland showing reasonably high levels of integration between cantonal and national voting patterns. Still, there are clear country-level differences in the trends in nationalization over time, differences which are likely to be explained by country-specific factors inherent to the party systems and patterns of political cleavages. Nationalization in Canada remains low, and in Argentina it has been mostly declining since the end of military dictatorship in the 1980s.

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Appendix (for online publication only)

A Division of Authority

Below are short summaries of the division of authority in all the countries present in the analysis.

Argentina. The Constitution of Argentina reserves all powers not delegated to the federal government to the provincial governments. As such, provincial governments have considerable policy-making authority. That includes authority over secondary education, electoral rules, and implementation of national social welfare programs. The federal government retains exclusive sovereignty over foreign affairs, as well. The federal and provincial governments share authority over healthcare, housing, higher education, and energy policy. Municipalities share the responsibility of delivering primary education, primary healthcare, regional road maintenance, and sewage with the provincial governments. Municipalities also have exclusive control over public transportation, markets, cemeteries, and waste management.

Canada. The Parliament of Canada has an array of enumerated powers, including in areas such as taxation, defense, regulating trade and commerce, currency, citizenship, criminal law, and marriage/divorce. The powers of provincial governments include control over taxation within provinces, education, prisons, hospitals, natural resources, property and civil rights, and the administration of civil/criminal justice. Concurrent powers that are specified in the Constitution as being shared between the federal and provincial governments include immigration, agriculture, and old-age pensions. In general, all powers not explicitly enumerated to the provinces reside with the federal government, provided that they are of a general, as opposed to local, in nature.

Denmark. Denmark is a unitary state wherein municipal governments share a critical role in administering government services. The central government has powers regarding defense, foreign affairs, the administration of justice, policing, education, and social services like sick pay, pensions, and unemployment insurance. Since a 2007 reform which overhauled territorial organization, there are now five distinct regions in Denmark whose authorities are responsible for healthcare services, regional transportation, and environmental policy. Municipalities are sub-regional authorities that administer support services, social welfare, healthcare, and education. They also manage the integration of immigrants, spatial planning, and sports and recreation.

Germany. The Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany states that all power is reserved to the Länder – Germany’s 16 regional authorities – unless stated otherwise. In particular, the Länder have power over education policy, healthcare, cultural policy, construction planning, environmental law, and law enforcement. The German federal government wields similar authority to the US federal government, including power over the currency, the postal service, foreign trade, foreign affairs and defense, regulating asylum seekers, and regulating political finance. A unique aspect of the German federal system is the Bundesrat, a federal legislative body that represents the governments of the Länder. Some bills (such as amendments to the Constitution and bills impacting the finances of the Länder) require the Bundesrat’s consent, meaning the Bundesrat (and, in effect, the Länder) can veto certain federal legislation.

Greece. Besides the central government, the Greek political system comprises of two major levels of sub-national governance: The regions and the municipality. Currently, there are 13 regions in Greece, and 325 municipalities. Prior to the introduction of the Kallikratis Plan in 2011, an additional tier of government – the prefecture – was prominent. Among the areas the prefecture shared jurisdiction over were social work, agricultural policy, social welfare and urban planning, though decision-making was largely concentrated with the central government and the prefecture was relegated to the role of an executor. Since 2011, Greece underwent an administrative overhaul which sought to decentralize fiscal responsibilities. Notably, the reforms empowered the regional tier and rendered the prefectural level obsolete. It also consolidated Greece’s many municipalities, bringing the number of municipalities down from 1,034 to its current number. The newly-empowered regional authorities oversee regional planning and development, as well regional programs organized by the European Union. The reforms also empowered municipalities, further devolving to them certain responsibilities in areas such as child protection, elderly care, education and employment.

Mexico. The Mexican federal system comprises of 31 state entities, as well as Mexico City, defined as a Federal District. According to the Mexican Constitution, any powers not explicitly delegated to the federal government are left to the states. Despite that, the federal government has extensive powers. The federal constitution dictates how state government can be structured, making Mexico a fairly centralized federal system. The central government can levy taxes, approve the federal budget, regulate commerce, and control foreign affairs. States share certain responsibilities with the federal governments, such as in the fields of healthcare, education, and poverty-reduction. States also have control over regional transportation and spatial planning. Municipal governments are also a crucial component of Mexican federalism, particularly since the 1990s when the federal government began to further decentralize decision-making. Municipalities are responsible for providing utilities, maintaining local roads and parks, among other issues. They can also share some responsibilities with the states. For instance, the constitution stipulates that municipalities are free to administer their finances, though they are not free to determine their taxes; that power is reserved to the state legislatures.

Spain. Spain has 17 self-governing regions, 2 autonomous cities, 50 provinces, and over 8000 municipalities. It has been classified as both a decentralized unitary state and a quasi-federal state by the European Committee of the Regions, with some scholars describing it as a federation outright (see Sala, 2014). At the national level, one of Spain’s two legislative chambers is the Senate, which represents the territories—its members are elected through a combination of direct elections and appointments by the regional assemblies. The Senate reserves the authority to seize power from the Autonomous Communities. However, it should be emphasized that the other chamber in Parliament—the proportionally elected Congress of Deputies—is the more powerful of the two chambers. The central government has exclusive control over immigration, foreign policy, foreign trade, defense, the monetary system, and supra-regional public works projects, and transports like airports and railways of supra-regional interest.

The Constitution explicitly guarantees the autonomy of the autonomous communities, provinces, and municipalities. By explicitly describing the central government’s powers, the Constitution also leaves the residual powers to the autonomous communities to assume in their statutes. These powers include authority over planning/urban development/housing,

agriculture, the environment, regional transportation, public order, health, and public works of regional interest. The provinces generally coordinate municipal services, particularly by providing legal and economic assistance to smaller municipalities. The municipalities are required to provide public services like waste collection, sewage, and road maintenance. Larger municipalities accrue greater responsibilities, including public parks, public libraries, and fire-fighting services. Education is split between the central government, autonomous communities, and municipalities.

Switzerland. A key feature of the Swiss political system is its separation of powers between cantons and the federal governments. As is stated in the Swiss Federal Constitution, the cantons are granted a high degree of autonomy, wherein they are responsible for many policy areas such as education, health care, and law enforcement. On the other hand, the federal government handles issues such as foreign policy, monetary policy, and defense, while maintaining the overall stability of the country and ensuring cantons are compliant with federal laws. As a result of this balance of powers, Switzerland benefits from a decentralized government where cantons are able to directly make decisions tailored to their specific needs, while still being under the umbrella and accountable to the federal government.

England. The UK is a unitary state, though significant powers are devolved to lower levels of government. The central/national government has a wide range of powers, including levying and collecting taxes, administering the National Health Service and other state benefits (tax credits, state pensions, unemployment benefits), and providing for the security of the UK. England is composed of 333 local authorities that are split between single-tier areas, where one local authority manages all local services, and two-tier areas, where county councils and district councils share local government functions. In two-tier areas, county councils control some aspects of education and transportation and are themselves split into district councils, which manage waste collection and other neighborhood services. England also has thousands of parish and town councils that oversee services like the maintenance of playgrounds, cemeteries, bus shelters, and recreational facilities. Finally, it is important to emphasize that, even in the context of all of these subnational/local authorities in England, Parliament remains the supreme law of the land, with the power to create or end any law that it desires.

The United States. In addition to the federal government, territorial organization in the United States contains three additional levels of subnational authority: states, counties and municipalities and townships. Per the American Constitution and Bill of Rights, any powers not explicitly granted to the federal government are up to the discretion of the 50 states. Due to the great executive and legislative autonomy of the states, the level of devolution within the states varies. States generally responsible for higher education in the state, economic development on the state level, transportation, healthcare in the form of Medicaid and more. The 3031 counties across the United States (as of 2016) are often responsible for public hospitals, income support and county roads. Municipalities, which number in different states wield vastly different powers. In general, municipalities – and in certain states where they exist townships – have managerial control over areas such as zoning, sanitation, local police and local land use.

B Robustness checks

B.1 Results with parties weighted by size

Figure 5 presents the main results with observations weighted by party size.

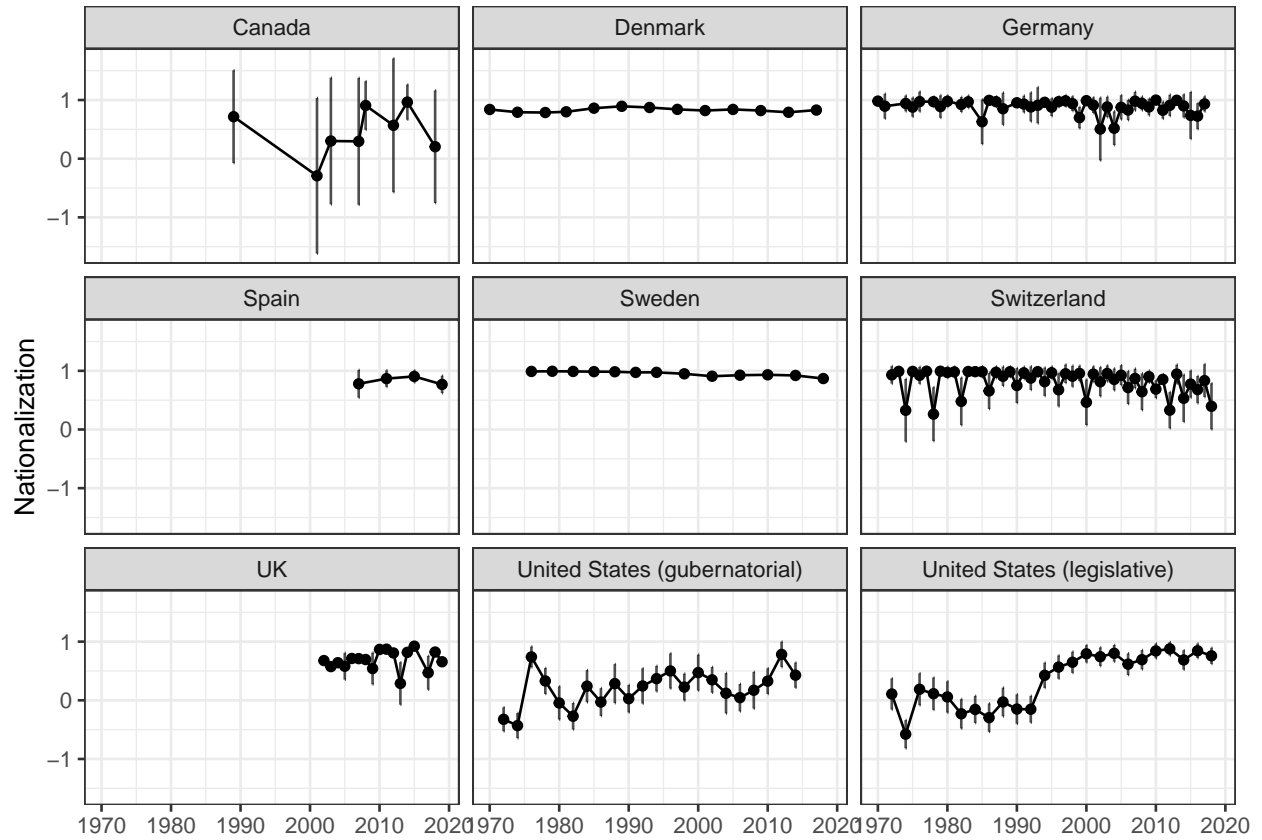


Figure 5: Bivariate correlations between subnational and national vote shares by country and year with observations weighted by party size. Error bars represent 95 pct. confidence intervals.

B.2 Results with top two national parties only

Figure 6 presents the main results based only on the top two parties by national vote share within each country-year.

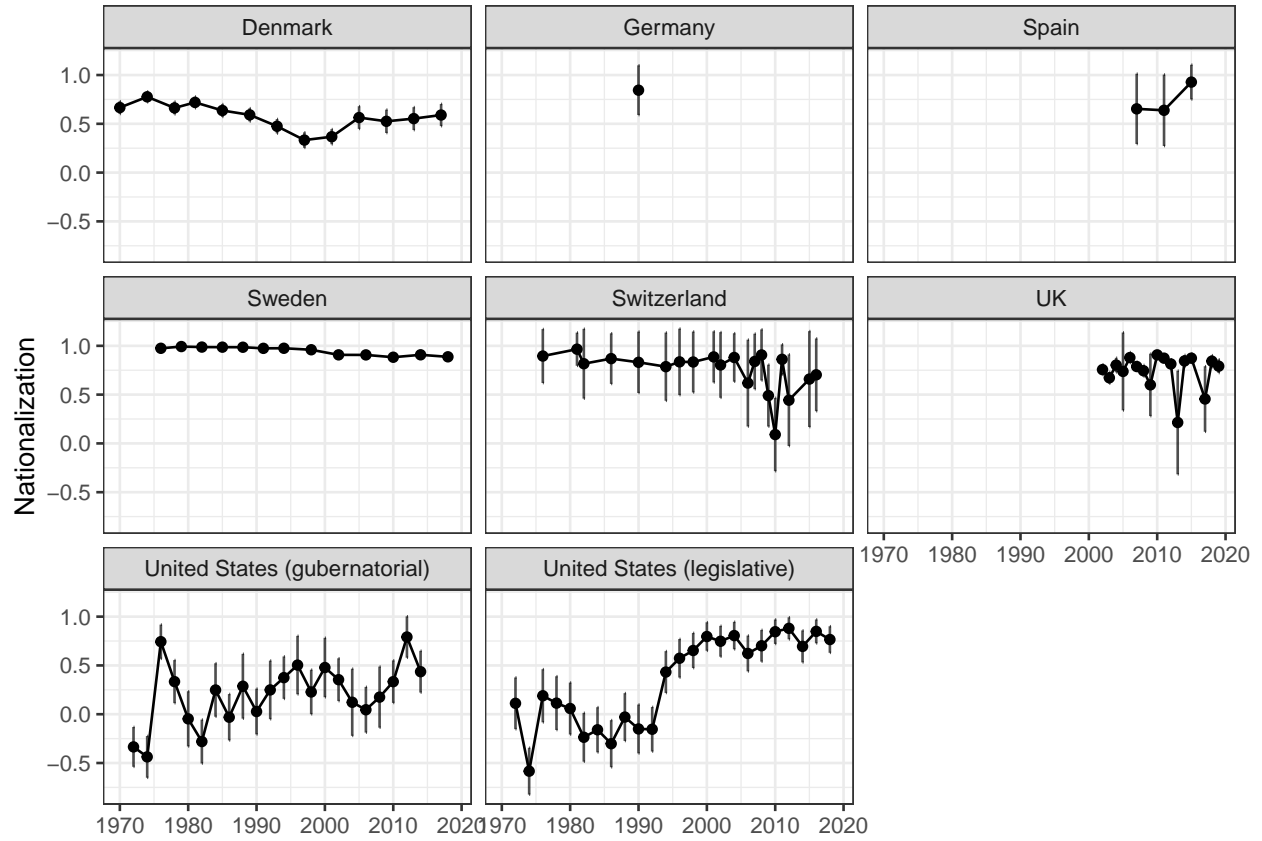


Figure 6: Bivariate correlations between subnational and national vote shares by country and year including only the top two parties by national vote share within each country-year. Error bars represent 95 pct. confidence intervals.

B.3 Results using dissimilarity index as nationalization measure

Figure 7 presents the main results using a nationalization measure based on a 'dissimilarity' index calculated as:

$$\frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^N |Sub_i - Nat_i| \quad (1)$$

where Sub_i is the subnational vote share for party i in a given unit and Nat_i is the national vote share. To keep the measure bounded between zero and one, we average the dissimilarity index across units within each country-year. In Figure 7 we show the dissimilarity index subtracted from 1 on the y-axis such that higher values imply higher levels of nationalization.

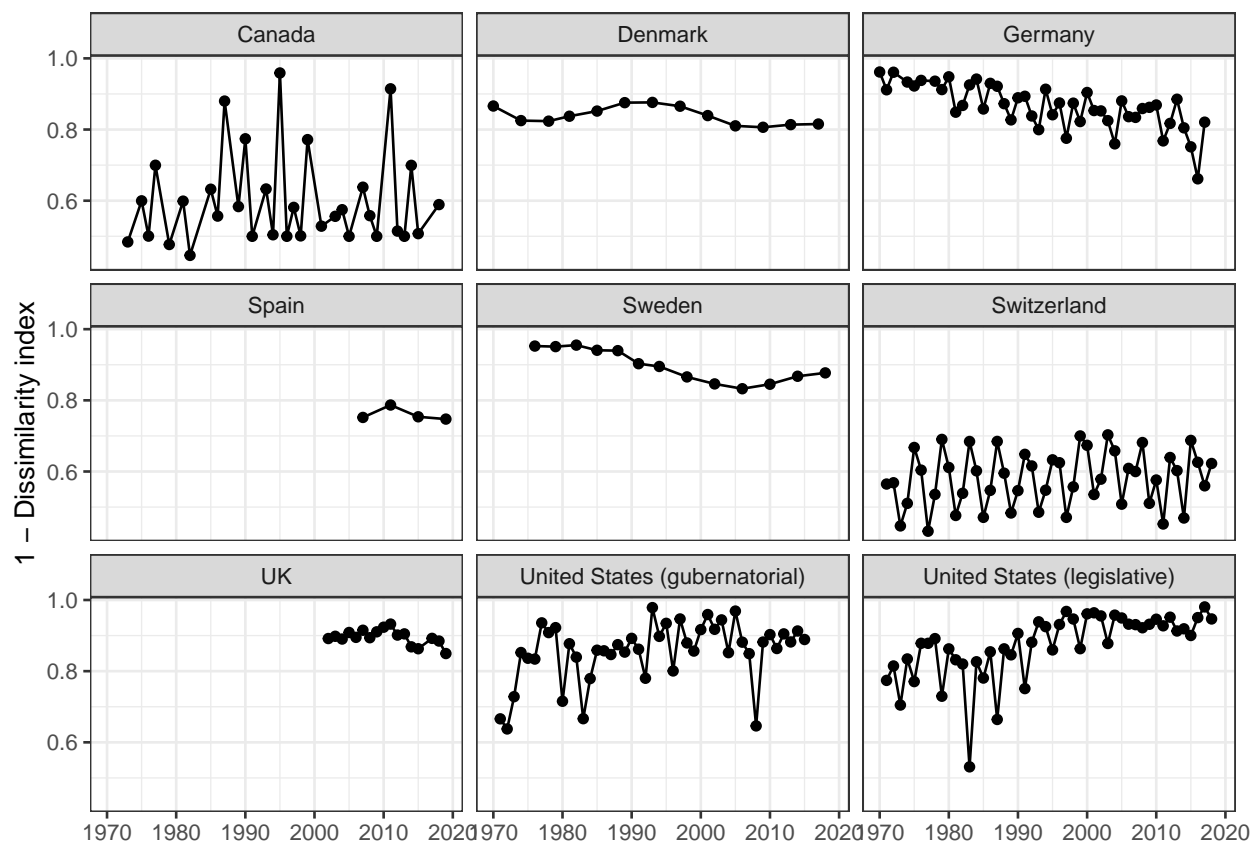


Figure 7: Bivariate correlations between subnational and national vote shares by country and year including only the top two parties by national vote share within each country-year. Error bars represent 95 pct. confidence intervals.

B.4 Results with only parties running both locally and nationally

TK

B.5 Results with sister parties coded as single parties

TK

B.6 Survey Questions

Attachment items

- When someone criticizes [Country/Sub-national region], I don't take it as a personal insult.
- I'm not very interested in what others think about [Country/Sub-national region].
- When I talk about [Country/Sub-national region], I usually say "they" rather than "we."
- (Country/Sub-national region's) successes are my successes.
- When someone praises [Country/Sub-national region], it feels like a personal compliment.
- I act like a person from [Country/Sub-national region] to a great extent.

Other items

- How much of the time do you think you can trust the Government of [Country] to do what is right?; Just about always; Most of the time; Only some of the time; Hardly ever
- What is more important to you? Having the minister of the [Sub-national region] government come from the political party I prefer; Having the chancellor of the [Country] Government come from the political party I prefer
- Which of the following statements best describes how you see yourself? Only [Sub-national region demonym]; More [Sub-national region demonym] than [Country demonym]; Equally [Sub-national region demonym] and [Country demonym]; More [Country demonym] than [Sub-national region demonym]; Only [Country demonym].
- Thinking about different levels of government, which decisions do you think have the most impact on your day-to-day life? Decisions made by the EU (Only an option in Spain); Decisions made by the [National government]; Decisions made by the government of your [Sub-national region]; Decisions made by the government of your municipality.

section*Election-Level Analyses

Country	Mean	SD	Min.	Max.
Switzerland	0.372	0.144	0.104	0.685
Mexico	0.910	0.080	0.674	0.998
Germany	0.949	0.053	0.796	0.996
Sweden	0.937	0.047	0.871	0.987
US	0.259	0.304	-0.336	0.777
Denmark	0.808	0.066	0.627	0.854
Argentina	0.409	0.301	-0.079	0.952
Canada	0.658	0.096	0.557	0.813
UK	0.621	0.234	0.324	0.946
Spain	0.806	0.019	0.793	0.820

Table 7: This table summarizes the correlation-based nationalization measure by country.

Country	FIP	OECD*	RAI
Argentina	1.00		24.50
Canada	1.00	0.00	27.77
Denmark	0.00	0.00	7.34
Germany	1.00	0.00	37.67
Mexico	1.00	0.50	21.41
Spain	0.50	0.00	35.60
Sweden	0.50	0.00	12.00
Switzerland	1.00	0.00	26.50
UK	0.50	0.50	9.59
US	1.00	0.00	29.61
Greece	0.00	1.00	9.00

Table 8: This table reports the scores for each country for three measures of decentralization. * denotes the fiscal decentralization indicator.

country	RAI	RAI	RAI	RAI
	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Switzerland	24.977	0.792	24.500	26.500
Mexico	17.431	3.116	12.791	21.410
Germany	36.257	0.908	35.258	37.722
Sweden	12.662	0.546	12.000	13.087
US	29.660	0.046	29.597	29.712
Denmark	11.720	3.113	7.343	14.136
Argentina	23.088	0.820	20.889	23.892
Canada	27.964	0.357	27.336	28.231
UK	10.300	1.393	7.841	11.607
Spain	35.515	0.000	35.515	35.515

Table 9: This table summarizes the regional authority measure from Hooghe, Marks and Schakel (2010) by country.

Country	Broadband Mean	Broadband SD	Broadband Min	Broadband Max
Switzerland	27.086	15.295	0.786	44.683
Mexico	6.924	5.594	0.015	14.804
Germany	19.335	13.266	0.325	35.066
Sweden	28.235	11.292	9.411	38.791
US	20.008	12.336	0.256	33.346
Denmark	29.987	15.990	4.440	43.782
Argentina	7.347	6.592	0.251	15.849
Canada	26.981	11.174	9.148	39.005
UK	26.531	12.158	2.285	40.021
Spain	26.533	3.725	23.899	29.168

Table 10: Broadband subscriptions per 100 people. Source: World Bank

Country	Internet Mean	Internet SD	Internet Min	Internet Max
Switzerland	49.459	34.697	0.596	87.479
Mexico	20.069	21.083	0.006	59.540
Germany	40.778	34.511	0.126	84.170
Sweden	58.517	39.724	1.161	92.520
US	47.377	32.885	0.785	88.499
Denmark	59.461	40.817	0.578	97.099
Argentina	19.668	24.283	0.000	68.043
Canada	77.009	12.317	60.200	94.640
UK	79.700	11.437	56.480	92.000
Spain	72.890	8.202	67.090	78.690

Table 11: Percentage using the Internet. Source: World Bank

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.98804*	1.13446*	0.55793*	0.57408*	0.66265*	0.63285*
	(0.15832)	(0.14996)	(0.08640)	(0.08605)	(0.08489)	(0.08635)
Regional Auth.	-0.55636*	-0.83181*				
	(0.23213)	(0.21031)				
Broadband			0.00385*			
			(0.00139)			
Broadband (Avg.)				0.00317		
				(0.00193)		
Internet %					-0.00009	
					(0.00051)	
Internet % (Avg.)						0.00027
						(0.00059)
N	202	74	98	36	142	52
# Countries	10	10	10	10	10	10
Var: Country	0.07273	0.08020	0.06175	0.04902	0.06156	0.06109
Var: Residual	0.02747	0.01389	0.02482	0.01643	0.03013	0.01644

* $p < 0.05$

Table 12: Multilevel models of electoral nationalization as a function of regional authority, broadband penetration, and internet access. Even columns report all available country-election observations; odd columns report models on five-year averages.

Survey Results

	RAI			OECD			FIP		
	β	SE	p-value	β	SE	p-value	β	SE	p-value
Nat'l Attach	-0.064	0.620	0.920	-0.486	0.496	0.356	-0.220	0.513	0.680
Subnat'l Attach	0.239	0.654	0.725	-0.276	0.549	0.628	0.164	0.548	0.772
Diff Attach	-0.303	0.750	0.697	-0.210	0.636	0.750	-0.384	0.619	0.552
Nat'l Attach (4)	-0.170	0.450	0.715	-0.238	0.391	0.558	-0.172	0.387	0.667
Subnat'l Attach (4)	0.071	0.474	0.884	-0.113	0.416	0.792	0.156	0.406	0.709
Diff, Attach (4)	-0.237	0.503	0.648	-0.126	0.446	0.783	-0.326	0.425	0.463
More Nat'l	-18.630	18.870	0.347	-15.991	16.417	0.353	-20.690	15.400	0.209
Trust Nat'l	14.220	15.220	0.374	9.102	11.557	0.451	30.098	14.029	0.061
Trust Subnat'l	0.342	9.793	0.973	6.090	5.784	0.323	14.930	8.351	0.112
Diff, Trust	7.802	11.013	0.499	7.904	6.586	0.264	14.685	10.209	0.188
Nat'l Best Value	5.606	11.124	0.626	-4.962	8.646	0.580	2.323	12.682	0.859
Prioritize Nat'l	-51.290	26.460	0.094	-3.172	20.824	0.883	-9.014	33.273	0.794
Elect. Natzn	-0.035	0.237	0.887	0.027	0.197	0.896	-0.149	0.184	0.444

Table 13: This table presents country-level regression models of the variables listed at the top on the survey items listed in the rows.

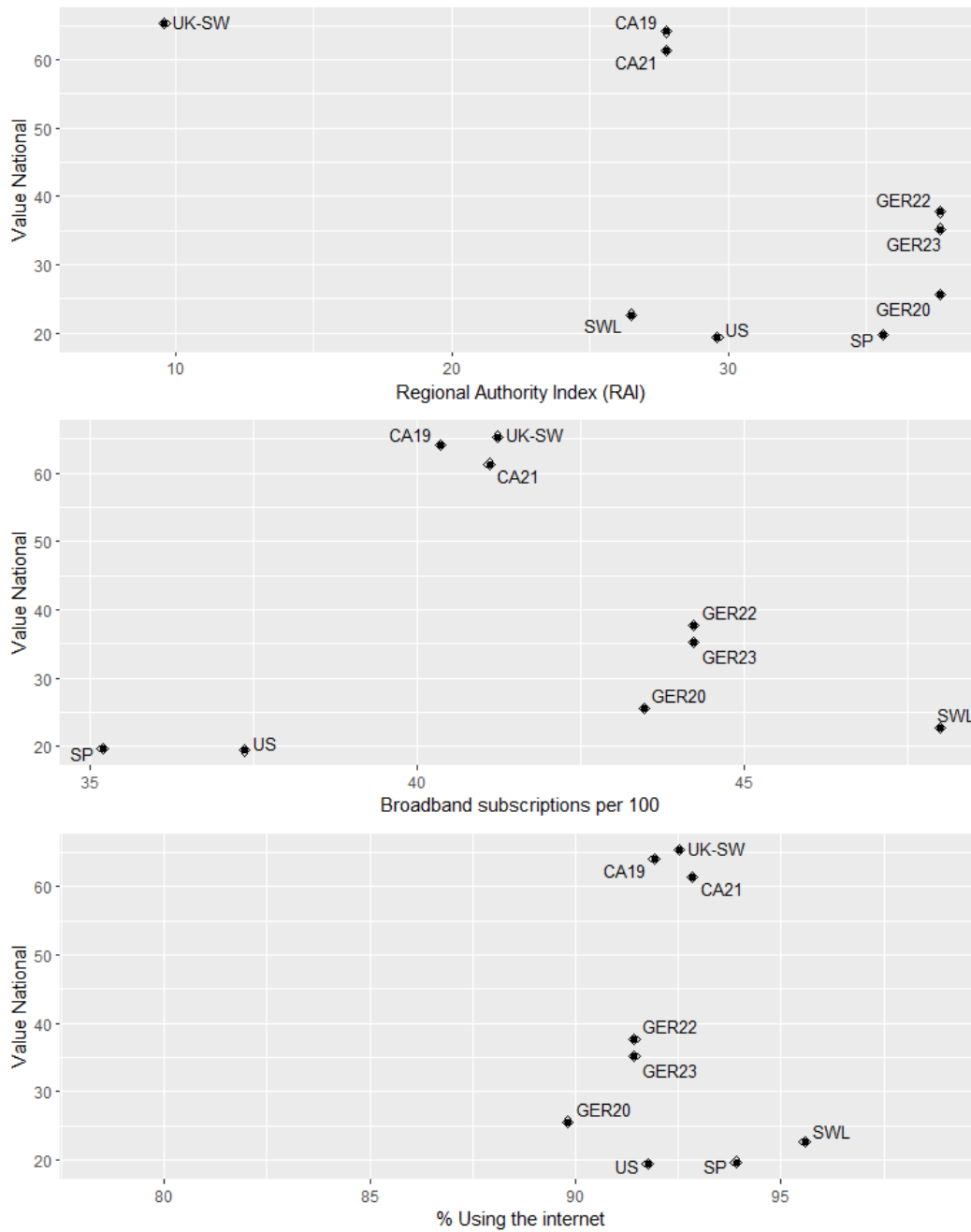


Figure 8: Portion of respondents who prefer having the head of the national government come from their party over head of sub-national unit by Regional Authority Index (RAI), broadband subscriptions and internet usage measures.

Survey Items	Electoral Nationalization	Broadband	Gini	Trade	RAI	Internet
Nat'l Attach	-0.74	-0.09	-0.29	0.18	-0.04	0.46
Subnat'l Attach	-0.72	-0.56	0.10	-0.39	0.13	-0.29
Diff, Attach	0.10	0.41	-0.33	0.49	-0.14	0.64
Nat'l Attach (4)	-0.79	-0.10	-0.22	0.15	-0.12	0.51
Subnat'l Attach (4)	-0.80	-0.56	0.19	-0.43	0.05	-0.22
Diff, Attach (4)	0.13	0.44	-0.37	0.53	-0.16	0.66
More Nat'l	0.09	0.32	-0.42	0.33	-0.30	0.58
Trust Nat'l	-0.09	0.65	-0.44	0.60	0.30	0.27
Trust Subnat'l	0.10	0.69	-0.49	0.43	0.01	0.11
Diff, Trust	0.06	0.60	-0.43	0.68	0.24	0.41
Nat'l Best Value	0.31	-0.08	0.26	0.03	0.17	-0.83
Prioritize Nat'l	-0.72	0.02	-0.44	-0.24	-0.59	-0.11

Table 14: Pearson's correlations for survey-measures with country-level variables.

Survey	Natl has More Impact
GER20	53.27
GER22	59.58
SP	41.58
SWL	47.79

Table 15: This table reports the fraction of each survey's respondents who indicate that the national level of government has the most impact on their daily lives.