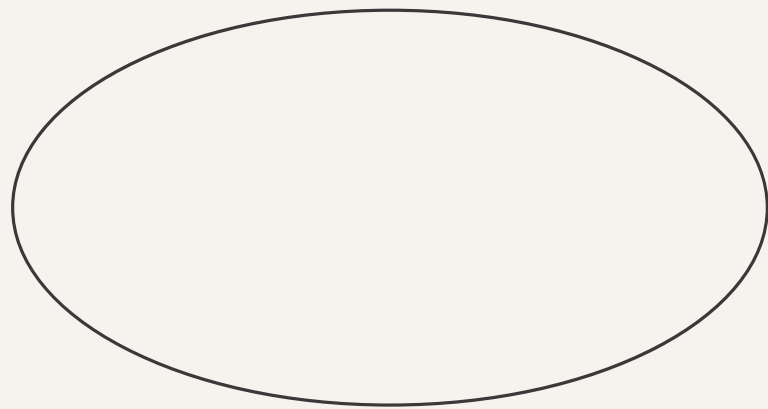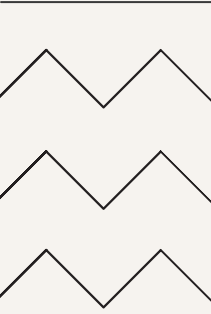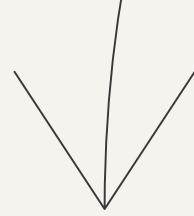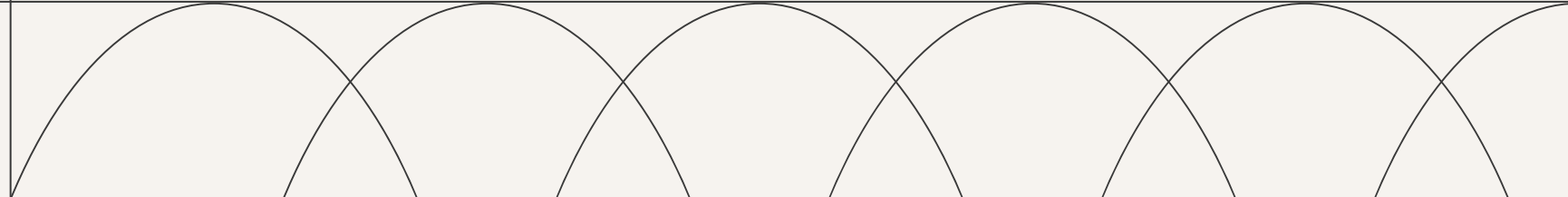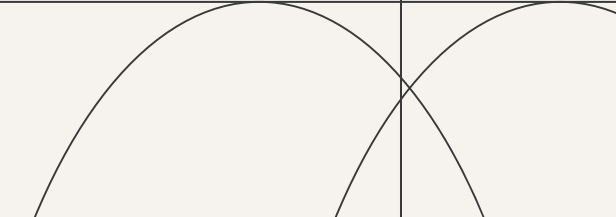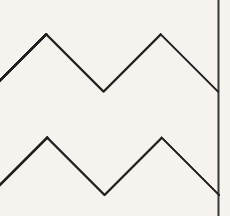# Varieties of political regimes in CEE across time

Why is democracy so hard to study?

- Type or degree?

- How to aggregate indicators?

- One theory for democracies and non-democracies?

- The primacy of time or space?

- How many types in a good typology?

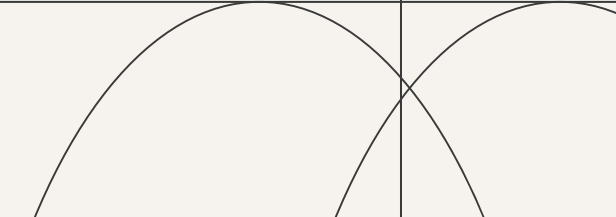# What is to be done?

- Approach the classification of political regimes in an agnostic manner.

- Recognise the limitations of theory-driven aggregations formula and typologies.

- Recognise the variation in the main characteristics of different regimes types.

- Acknowledge that, ideally, designing a classification of political regimes would allow comparison across space, time and type of regime.

Projected clustering (I)-general methods

- Grouping data points in groups such that points in one group are more similar to each other than points in other groups.

- Pick variables that are indeed relevant for a specific group, while isolating the ones with no predictive power.

Projected clustering (I)–examples
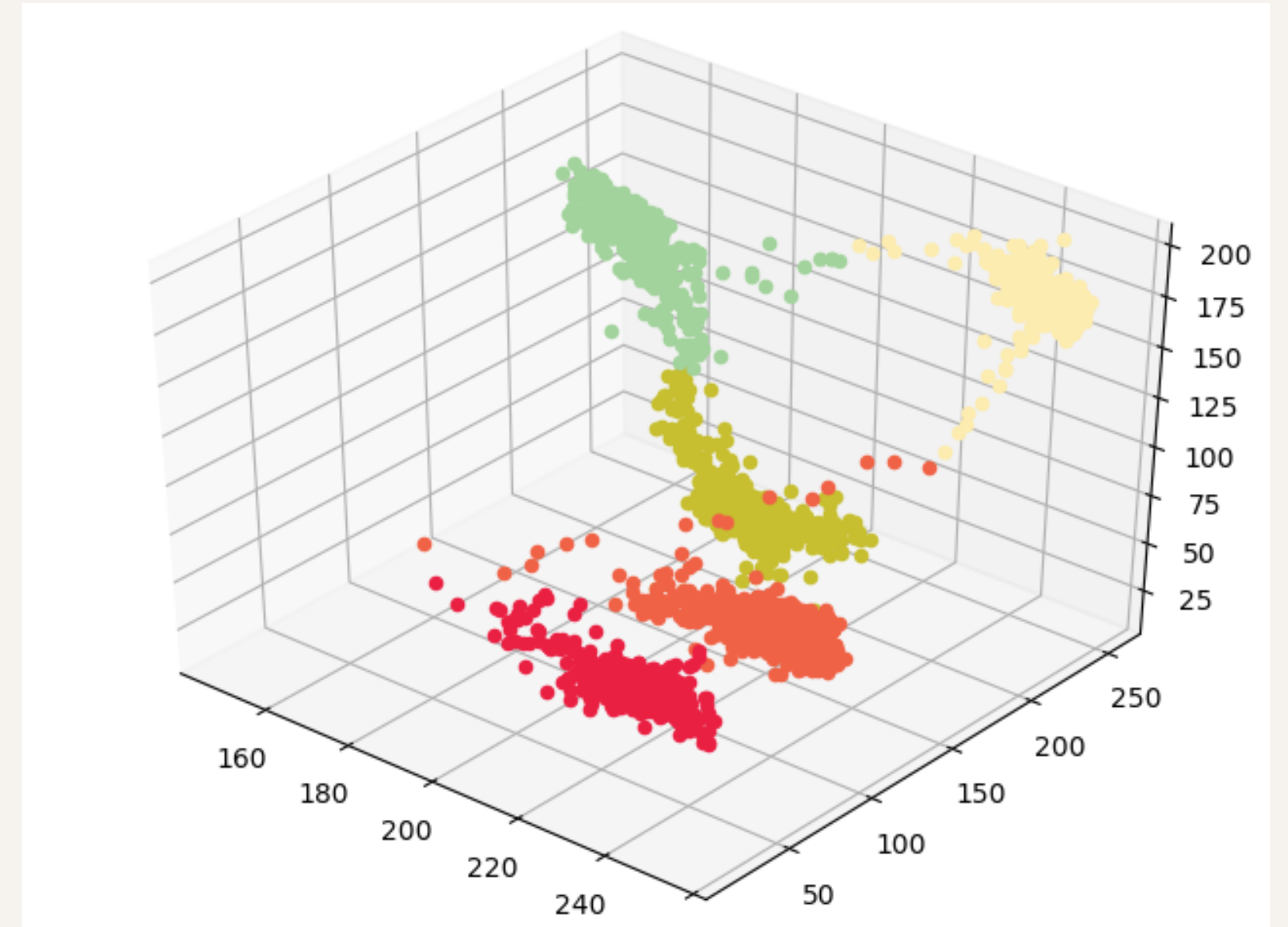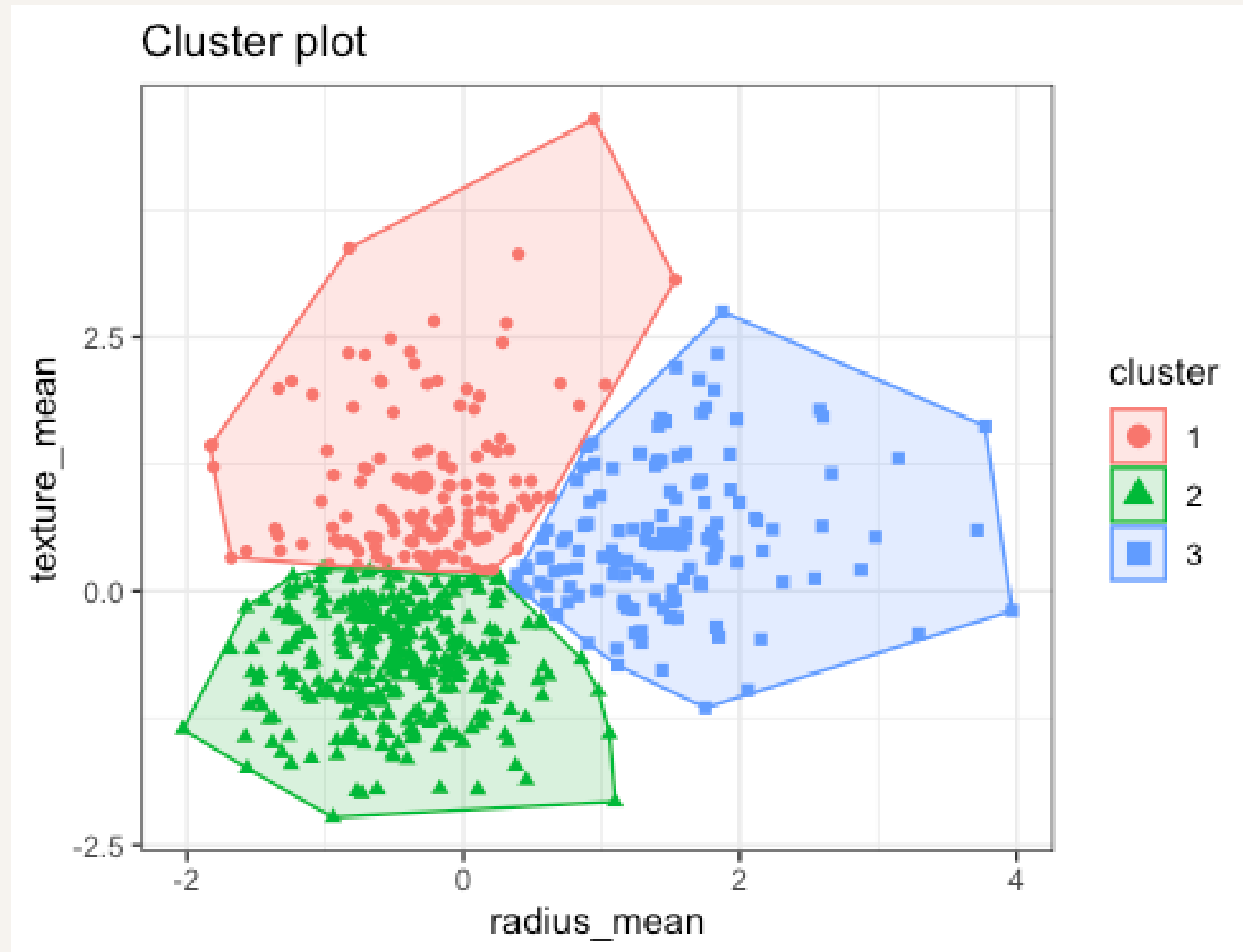
Projected clustering (I)-high-dimensional data
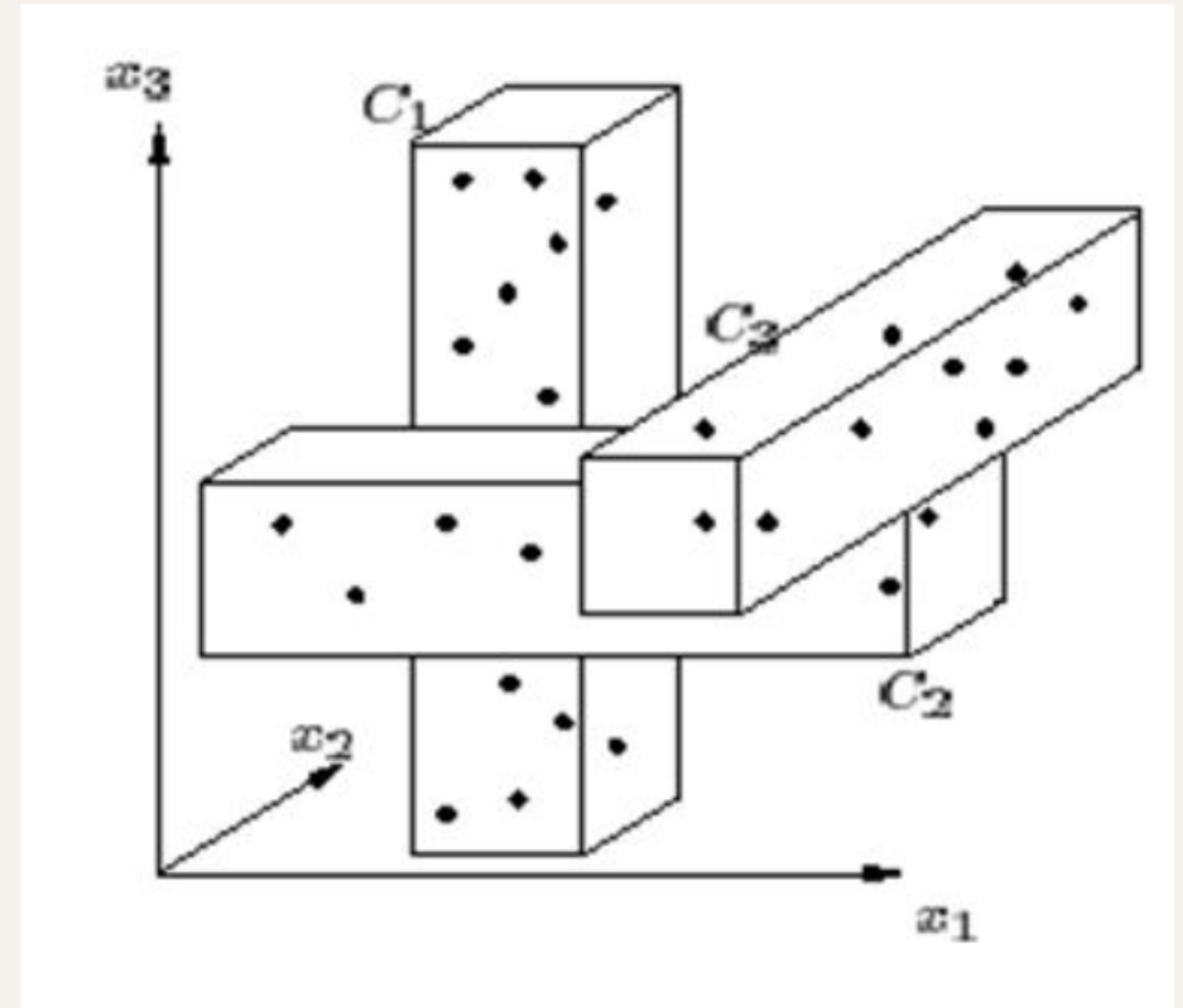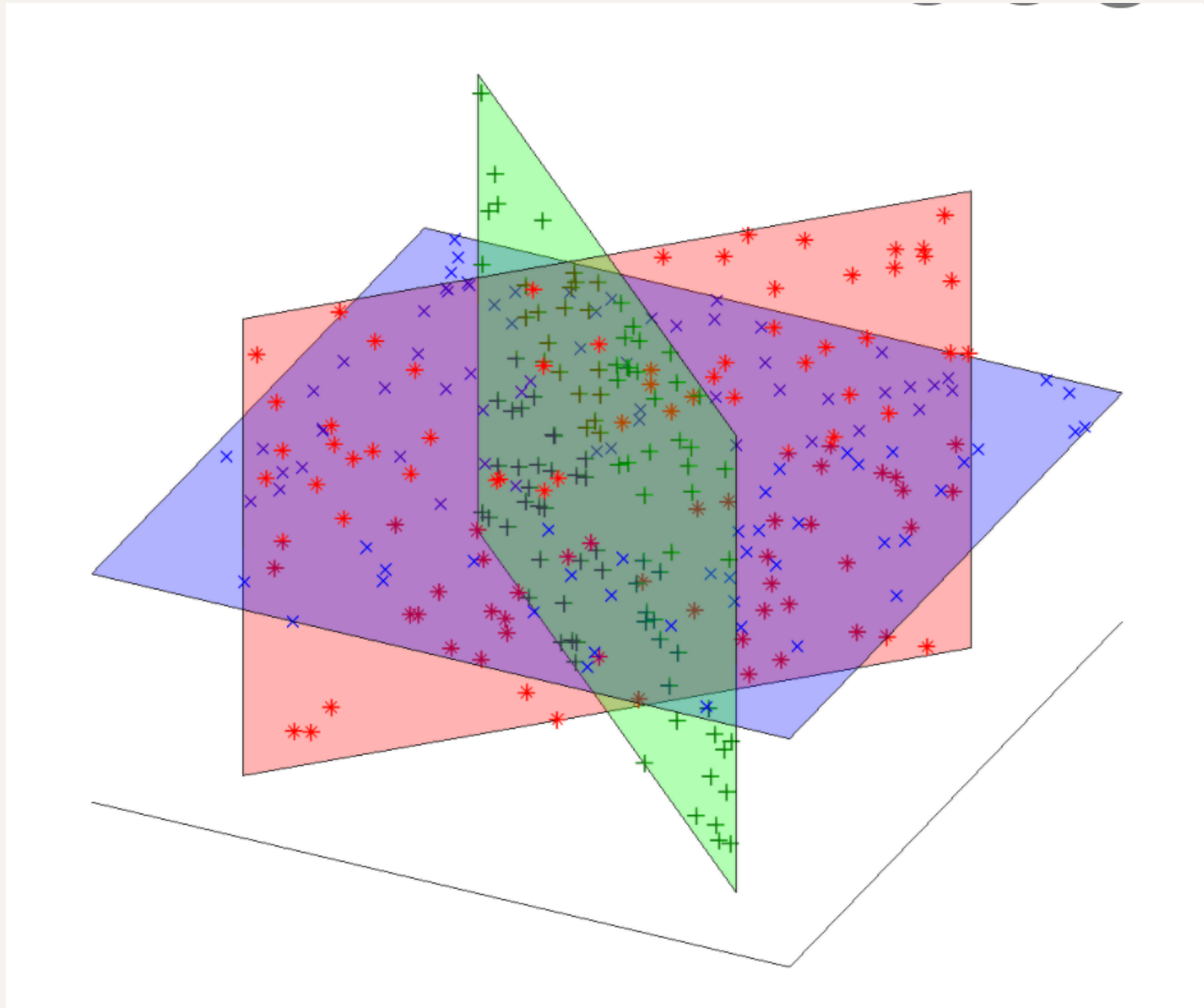
- Projected clustering assigns points in clusters that exist across different subspaces.

- Identify groups that are most likely to determine certain regime types, then fit data points into these groups.

- Design clusters in different subspaces, determined by the most relevant variables for each type.

Projected clustering (II)–examples

Projected clustering (II)–what does it mean for political regimes?

- Identify the types of political regimes that best suit countries from 1789 to 2020.

- Allow different characteristics to define these types.

- Create groups for within-which it makes sense to compare and contrast.

- Create groups that can be meaningfully contrasted.

Dataset

- Varieties of Democracy data, version 11.1

- Run with the 21 components of democracy indices, which means a theoretical potential of 2907152 clusters.

- The problem of retroactive coding remains.

- The problem of the meaning of some variables in context remains.

Results (I)—Types of political regimes

- Globally, from 1919, we identify 16 types of political regimes.

- The same country can be part of different political regimes in different years.

- Types of political regimes vary across world regions.

- Countries from Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, etc. can be part of the same type

  —there is no unifying geographically determined cultural map.

Results (II)—CEE-relevant clusters

- Cluster 12: the USA since 1919, Sweden since 1922, Japan since 1952, India 1991-2013, Canada since 1921, Australia since 1902.

- Cluster 11: Russia 1919-1986, Afghanistan 1978-1991, North Korea since 1949.

- Cluster 8: Albania 1946-1990, Haiti 1958-1985, Indonesia 1983-1990, Iraq 1996-2001, GDR 1950-1990;

- Cluster 10: Russia 1992-1999, Albania 1994-2020, India 1952-2020, Zambia 1992-2015, Hungary since 2016;

- Cluster 14: Uruguay 1943-2004, Switzerland until 1945, Slovakia 2006-2018;

- Cluster 9: Laos 1961-1974; Rwanda 1961-1994; Kenya 1963-1991; Hungary 1965-1988
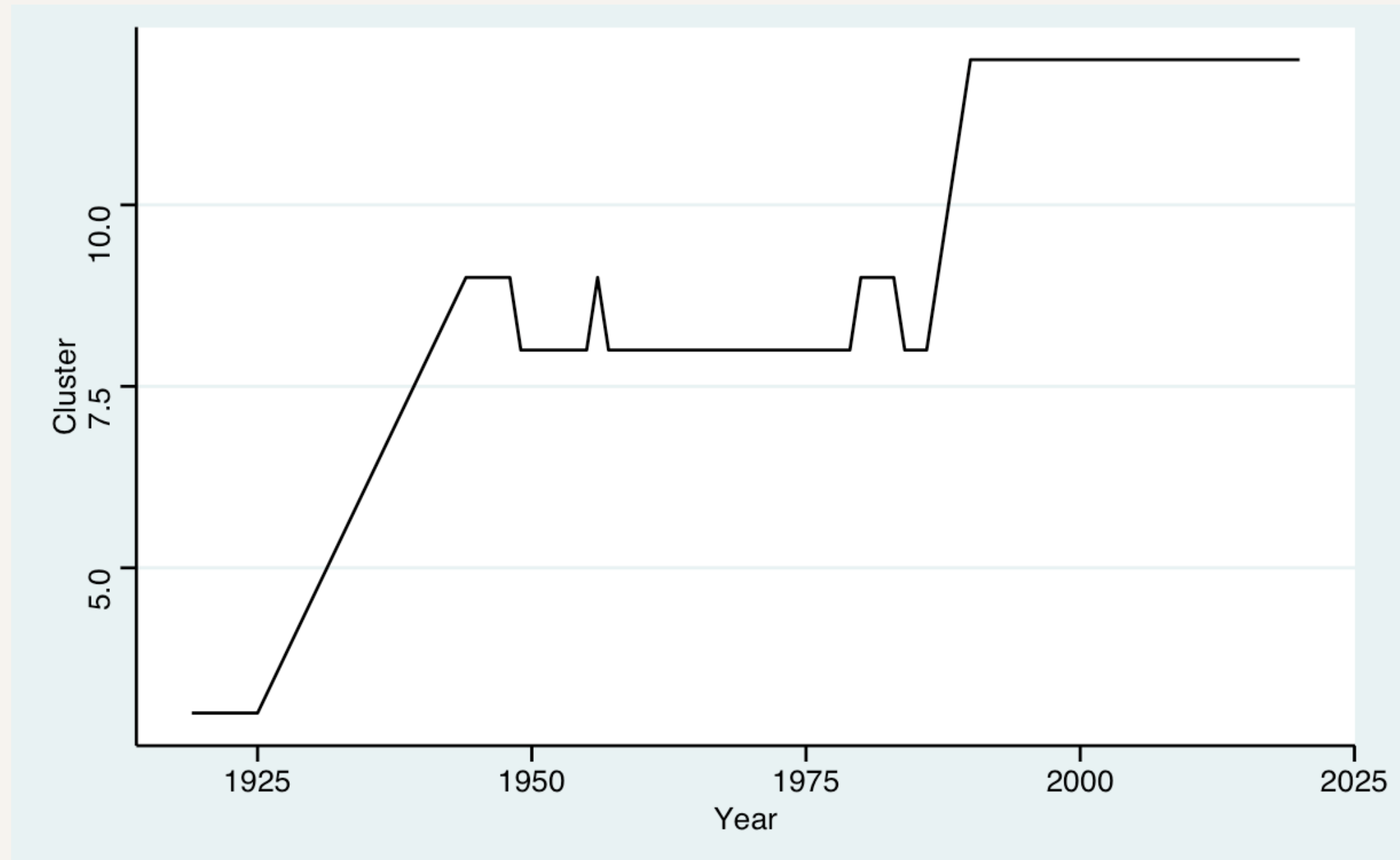
Results (II)—Regimes across CEE
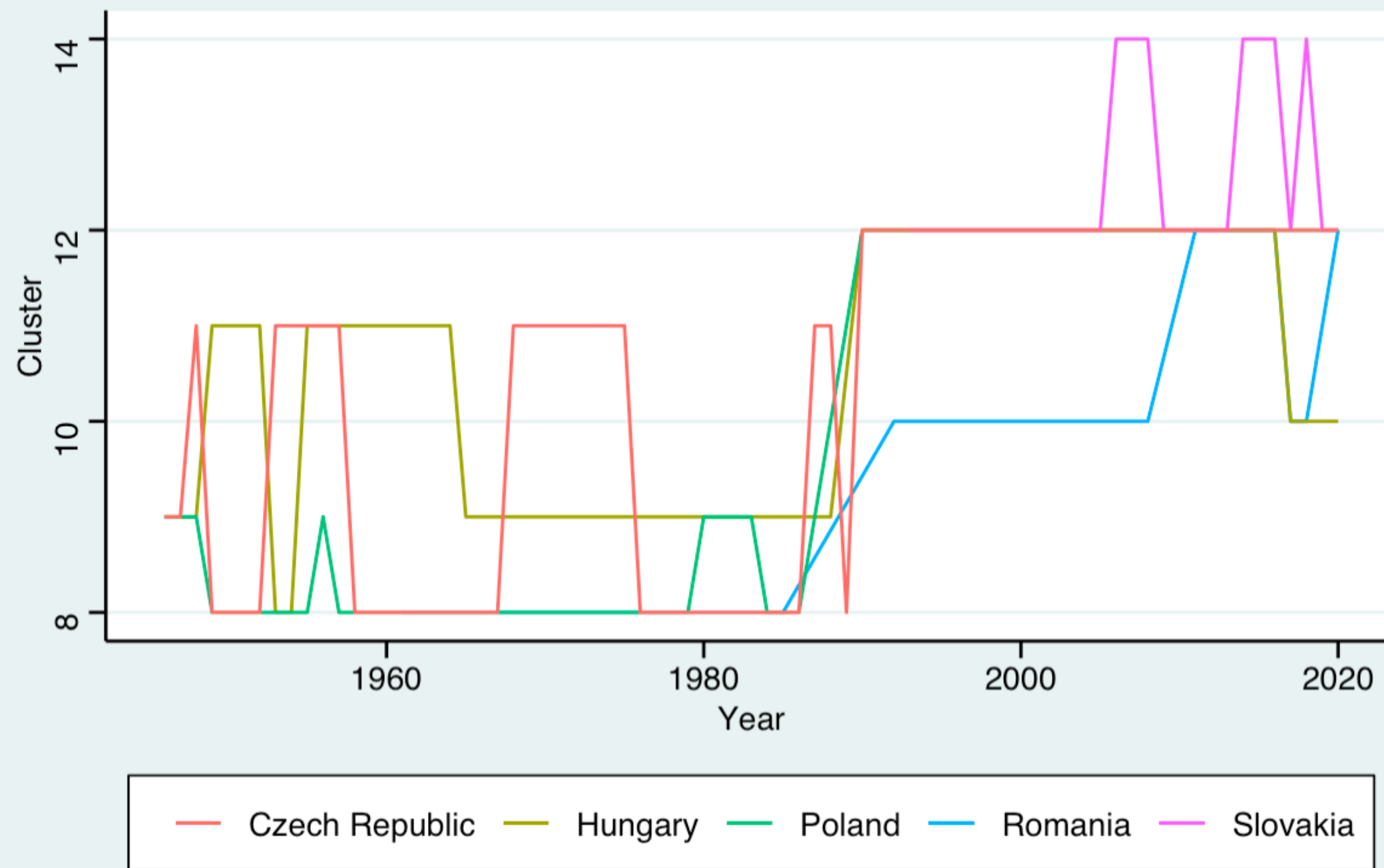
- Lots of variation at any point in time.

- Varieties of communism.

- Varieties of post-communism

- Closest to regime convergence in

the history of the region.

Results (III)— Hungary
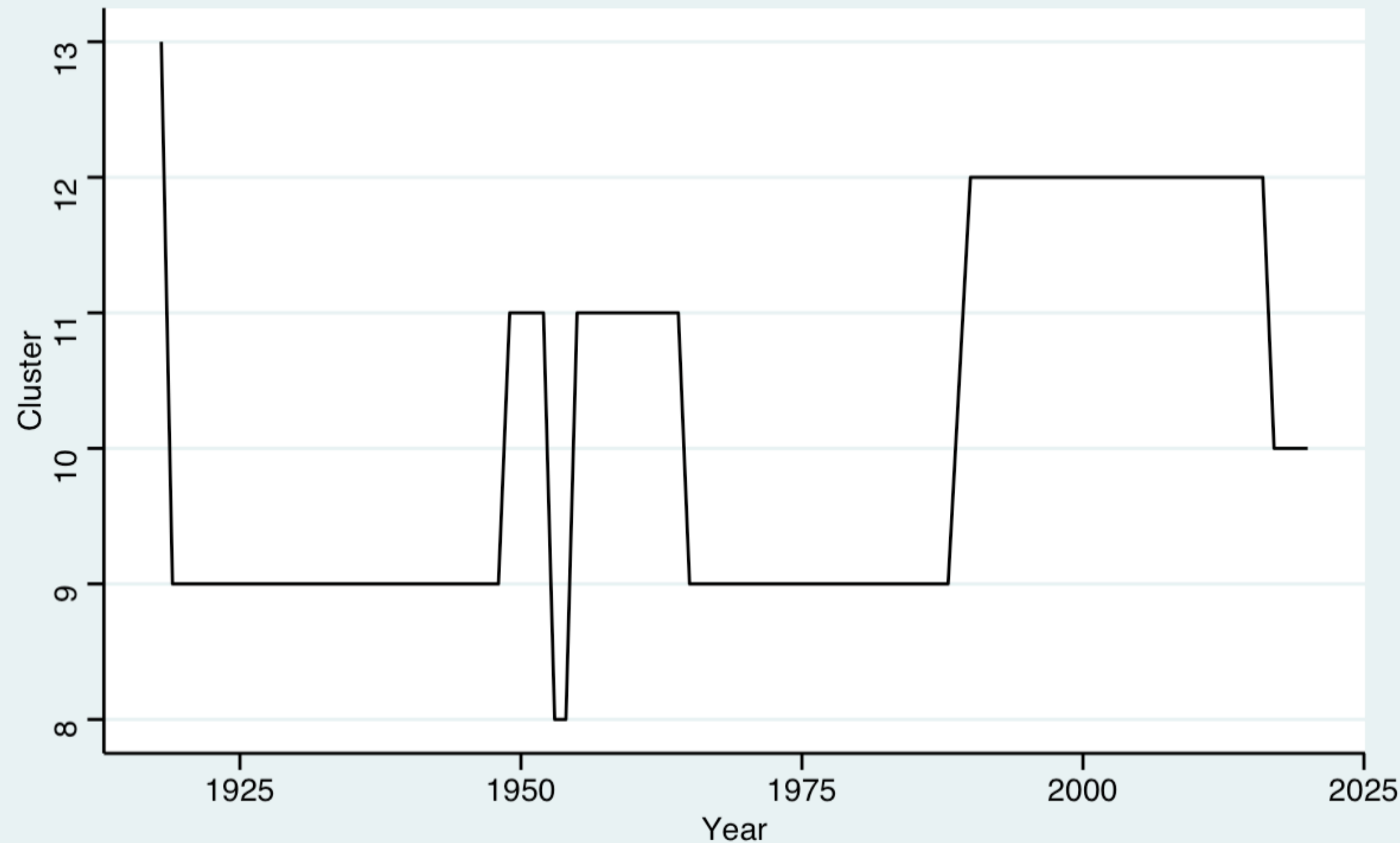
- Hungary is no longer part of the cluster usually associated with democracies.

- A unique transition from communism.

Results (IV)—Poland

- Still in the cluster associated with democracy, but ties are loosening.

- A history of regime resilience.

Results (V)—Romania

- Last one to become associated with traditional democracies
- The most tumultuous transition.
- Episodes of backsliding.

Future research directions

- Distances between clusters, what determines transitions.
- Robustness checks, and more microdata.
- Trying to make sense of the clusters.
- Continue avoiding a Eurocentric approach to studying political regimes.
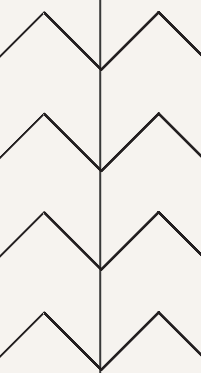
If you want more details:

https://github.com/vladsurdea/PoliticalRegimes

https://rpubs.com/vladsurdea/PoliticalRegimes_Trial

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?