

Voting in Lithuanian parliament: Is there anything more than position vs. opposition?

Vaidas Morkevičius (KTU)
Tomas Krilavičius (VDU, BPTI)

7th General Conference of the ECPR
Sciences Po Bordeaux, 4-7 September 2013
Session 28: Legislatures and Governments in Assembly Confidence
Democracies, **Panel 234:** Parliamentary Opposition in Europe

Introduction

- Position and opposition is mainly 'a parliamentary thing':
 - **Elections of the leadership of the Parliament:**
 - ◆ The Speaker, the Board, Chairs of the Committees etc.
 - **LIT:** Speaker, the Board, Conference of Chairs, Chairs of the Committees/Commissions/(Factions)
 - **Government formation:**
 - ◆ Governing coalition → Position faction(s)
 - **LIT:** voting **for** the government programme (SSRL: CH8)
 - ◆ Factions opposing government → Opposition faction(s)
 - **LIT:** voting **against** the government programme (+ non-aligned MPs)

Introduction

- Position and opposition is mainly 'a parliamentary thing':
 - Thus, MP voting is essential during the period of government formation and produces **THE POSITION**
 - The term 'opposition' is more diffuse and even some parties from the governing coalition may at times be 'in opposition' to certain legislation proposed by the government:
 - ◆ 1. Compromises in governing coalitions → 'Our coalition partners insisted on this, so we had to **VOTE YES**'
 - ◆ 2. Parties with ambivalent positions → 'We will support rational proposals if any are presented for **VOTING**'

Introduction

- ➔ Position and opposition is mainly 'a parliamentary thing':
 - The term 'opposition' is more diffuse and even some parties from the governing coalition may at times be 'in opposition' to certain legislation proposed by the government:
 - ➔ 3. Minority governments → different parties support government by VOTING for its proposals at different times / 'conditional support' of certain policies / etc.
 - Therefore, one of the most important characteristics helping to distinguish opposition from position is **VOTING in the parliament**

Introduction

- Position and opposition is mainly 'a parliamentary thing':
 - Important bills are proposed by the governing coalition are discussed in the parliament and the public sphere (media) and voted upon
 - Opposition proposes its own bills and amendments for voting:
 - **LT: factions** have almost unlimited opportunities to propose bills or discussions (a faction is allowed to introduce into the agenda any bill or discussion even at the beginning of the plenary sitting)
 - **LT: MPs** are allowed to propose any amendments to bills or other legislative acts 2 days before the plenary sitting they are discussed

Introduction

- Of course, 'being in opposition' is not only possible in the parliament:
 - **Extra-parliamentary parties and organisations** are also active:
 - ◆ Media discussions, petitions, strikes, demonstrations, rallies for referenda etc.
 - **LT:** Mostly media discussions, but also rallies and demonstrations
 - **Parliamentary parties (or separate representatives)** are active **outside the parliament**:
 - ◆ Media discussions, petitions, strikes, demonstrations, rallies for referenda etc.
 - **LT:** Mostly media discussions, but also demonstrations

Introduction

- Importantly, the opposition is defined by '**being in opposition to government policies**':
 - Voting against position policies (bills etc.) in the parliament
 - Criticising position policies (and proposing alternatives) in the public sphere (media)
- Therefore, voting in the parliament (not necessarily presence in the government) is a good indicator of 'position-opposition game in town'
 - Parties offering support for the government bills are no longer considered 'real' opposition

Introduction

- ➔ Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
 - Some say it is the only one important:
 - **Poole & Rosenthal (1997, 2007)** analysed MP voting in the US Congress and concluded that one-dimensional model (liberal-conservative) is sufficient to explain the most of the variance
 - Second important dimension appears only when racial & social issues become important (from the 70s – Unidimensional Congress)

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Others show that additional dimensions are also important depending on the 'nature' of the parliament:
 - **Hix, Noury & Roland (2006, 2007)** analysed MP voting in the EU parliament and found that the first dimension is left-right (government-opposition) and the second – pro-anti EU.
 - **Hansen & Debus (2012)** analysed MP voting in Weimar Germany and found two dimensions: 1) left-right (not government-opposition), 2) pro-anti democratic republic

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Others show that additional dimensions are also important depending on the 'nature' of the parliament:
 - **Hix, Noury & Roland (2008)** analysed MP voting in 14 parliaments around the world (Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Israel, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, South Korea, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the USA) and found that the main dividing line is between government and opposition and the second dimension (if not overlapping with the first) is left-right.

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Others show that additional dimensions are also important depending on the 'nature' of the parliament:
 - **Hix, Noury & Roland (2008)** conclusions:
 - 1) Regardless of their policy promises and ideological affinities, parties in opposition usually vote together against the party (or parties) in government; governing coalition parties generally vote together

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Others show that additional dimensions are also important depending on the 'nature' of the parliament:
 - **Hix, Noury & Roland (2008)** conclusions:
 - 2) When government-opposition voting breaks down, governing and opposition parties then tend to split along left-right lines (hence creating second left-right dimension)

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Others show that additional dimensions are also important depending on the 'nature' of the parliament:
 - **Hix, Noury & Roland (2008)** conclusions:
 - 3) Extremist members of the main party in government occasionally vote together with the opposition parties on some issues, which then reveals these members to be located in the 'centre' on the main government-opposition dimension

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Others show that additional dimensions are also important depending on the 'nature' of the parliament:
 - **Hix, Noury & Roland (2008)** conclusions:
 - 4) In parliamentary systems with single-party governments, government-opposition dynamics dominate, while in presidential systems with coalition governments, left-right policy positions of parties are clearly revealed in parliamentary votes

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Still others show that additional dimensions appear when analysing policy domains/issue areas:
 - **Wilcox & Clausen (1991)** divided the votes of the US Congress into 5 policy domains (*Government Management, Social Welfare, Agricultural Assistance, Civil Liberties, International Involvement*) and concluded that on some issues (1-2,[4]) liberal-conservative dimension dominates, however, for the remaining issue areas (3,5) some other dimensions are important

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Still others show that additional dimensions appear when analysing policy domains/issue areas:
 - **Crespin & Rohde (2010)** analysed voting of the 8 US Congresses on the 13 annual appropriation bills (13 '*redistributive areas*') and concluded that when a finer grain of issues (appropriations) is examined, voting can be described as multidimensional; however, due to the structure of agenda control, these issue areas rarely reveal themselves in conventional measures of voting behaviour because these are the types of votes that party leaders want to keep from coming to the floor

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Still others show that additional dimensions appear when analysing policy domains/issue areas:
 - **Roberts, Smith & Haptonstahl (2009)** explored voting of the US Congress (1955-1994) at three levels of aggregation: 1) all votes of the two-year Congresses; 2) votes divided according to the 'Clausen' policy domains; 3) individual bills (with 5+ votes)

Introduction

- Not surprisingly, most of the literature on parliamentary voting around the world concluded that the main dividing line in the parliaments is between the position and opposition:
- Still others show that additional dimensions appear when analysing policy domains/issue areas:
 - **Roberts, Smith & Haptonstahl (2009)** conclusions:
 - 1) Complexity in voting patterns of individual bill episodes is the norm
 - 2) Aggregating to higher levels reduces the observed dimensionality
 - 3) Liberal-conservative (government-opposition) dimension appears more dominant in more highly aggregated analyses

Introduction

- All in all, empirical research on the MP voting revealed that:
 - Dimensionality is lower when **aggregate voting** is considered (the whole term of the parliament):
 - ◆ Government vs. opposition (basically economic left vs. right)
 - Dimensionality is lower in **majoritarian democracies (parliaments)** (no president, single party government):
 - ◆ Government vs. opposition (basically economic left vs. right)

Introduction

- All in all, empirical research on the MP voting revealed that:
 - Dimensionality may increase when **separate policy areas** are considered:
 - ◆ Economic left vs. right, social liberalism vs. conservatism
 - Dimensionality may increase in **presidential (hybrid) and/or consensus democracies** (coalition government):
 - ◆ Economic left vs. right, social liberalism vs. conservatism

Our case: Lithuania

- Lithuania is a **semi-presidential** democracy where **coalition governments** dominate (only the first government (1992-1996) was fully single party):
 - **President** is allowed to introduce bills and amendments, however, this is not widely practised as the President does not have sufficient human resources:
 - During 2008-2012 term of the Seimas President introduced 106 acts, Government – 1752 and MPs – 3097
 - **MPs** and (especially) **factions** (+ certain number of MPs) are allowed to almost freely change parliamentary agenda
 - **Opposition** has certain granted rights (leader of the Opposition is member of the Board etc.)

Our case: Lithuania

- Party system of Lithuania (1992-):
 - Two major parties:
 - ♦ **Homeland Union (TS-LKD)** – conservatives (1993), formed government:
 - **1996-2000** with Christian Democratic Party (in 2008 both merged) and 'unofficially' Centre Union (CS, merged with Liberal Union in 2003)
 - **2008-2012** with Liberal Movement (LS, splinter (2006) from LCS), Liberal and Centre Union (LCS, merger (2003) of Liberal Union, Centre Union, Modern Christian Democrats) and National Resurrection Party (TPP, party of show business people) (the last two merged in 2011)

Our case: Lithuania

- Party system of Lithuania (1992-):
 - Two major parties:
 - ♦ **Social Democratic Party (LSDP)** – social democrats (merger (2001) of Democratic Labour Party (LDDP, ex-communists) and Social Democratic Party (re-established already in 1989)), formed government:
 - **1992-1996** LDDP formed single party government after somewhat surprising landslide victory in the parliamentary elections and LSDP was in opposition
 - **2001-2004** with New Union (Social Liberals) (NS, merged with Labour Party in 2011)
 - **2004-2006** with NS, Labour Party (DP, 'populist' party; merged with NS in 2011) and Peasant Popular Union (LVLS, agrarian party)

Our case: Lithuania

- Party system of Lithuania (1992-):
 - Two major parties:
 - ♦ **Social Democratic Party (LSDP)** – social democrats (merger (2001) of Democratic Labour Party (LDDP, ex-communists) and Social Democratic Party (re-established already in 1989)), formed government:
 - **2006-2008** minority government (initially supported by TS-LKD) with Civic Democracy Party (PDP, splinter (2006) from DP) and LVLS (however, in 2008 NS returned into the coalition)
 - **2012-present** with DP, Party Order and Justice (TT, 'populist' party, splinter (2002) from Liberal Union) and Polish Electoral Action (LLRA, ethnic party)

Our case: Lithuania

- Party system of Lithuania (1992-):
 - The only governing coalition that did not include TS-LKD or LSDP was very short-lived (2000-2001):
 - ♦ Included **Liberal Union** (LLS, merged with Centre Union and Modern Christian Democrats in 2003), **New Union (Social Liberals)** (merged with Labour Party in 2011) and **Modern Christian Democrats** (MKDS, splinter (1998) from Christian Democratic Party, merged into Liberal and Centre Union in 2003)
 - ♦ **None of the parties survived to 2013**
 - Partial exception Liberal Union → might be called a successor of LLS (however, it did not get enough votes to get into the Seimas in the last elections)

Our case: Lithuania

→ Hypotheses:

▪ Aggregate level:

- ◆ Lithuania is semi-presidential, however, presidents are not active in legislative process

- Voting unidimensional?

- ◆ Lithuania is ruled by coalitional governments

- Voting multidimensional?

▪ Different policy areas

- ◆ Voting multidimensional?

Data

- **Roll-call votes** are not simply all the votes of the parliament:
 - Only when a **voting is announced** by the Speaker MPs vote:
 - ◆ **Unanimous votes** are not registered → more differences might be registered than 'really exist'?
 - LT: quite many
 - ◆ Most important votes are usually **secret ballot** → less differences might be registered than 'really exist'?
 - LT: very few
 - Definition of the N of MPs **participating** in the voting:
 - Not always MPs that are really absent are defined as absent

Data

- Voting data at the **aggregate** level:
 - **Available from 1997**, however, we concentrate on the last full term of the **Seimas – 2008-2012**
 - ♦ The most recent one is too short as yet (started in 2012.11)
 - Only **important votes** are considered:
 - ♦ 'Minor' legislative acts excluded (resolutions, decisions, announcements, ratifications etc.)
 - ♦ Alternative voting excluded
 - ♦ Minor amendments (not supported by the government or the principal committee) excluded
 - ♦ Consideration and adoption stage (excluding submission)

Data

- Voting data at the **aggregate** level:
 - **Available from 1997**, however, we concentrate on the last full term of the **Seimas – 2008-2012**
 - ♦ The most recent one is too short as yet (started in 2012.11)
 - Only **important votes** are considered:
 - ♦ No less than 71 (from 141) MPs participated in the voting
 - ♦ If an act is passed, no less than 30 votes NO/ABSTAIN
 - ♦ If an act is not passed, no less than 30 votes YES
 - ♦ Total – **1160** votes (from **10351**)

Data

→ Voting data at the **aggregate** level:

▪ **Government** coalition:

- Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKDF) – 45 seats
- National Resurrection Party (TPPF) – 16 seats
- Liberal Movement (LSF) – 11 seats
- Liberal and Centre Union (LCSF) – 8 seats

▪ **Opposition** parties:

- Social Democratic Party (LSDPF) – 25 seats
- Party Order and Justice (TTF) – 15 seats
- Labour Party (DPF) – 10 seats
- Others (Peasants Popular Union (LVLS), Polish Electoral Action (LLRA), New Union, Independent) – 11 seats

Data

- ➔ Voting data at the **aggregate** level:
 - Since there were splits in governing coalition, **4 periods** are analysed **separately**:
 - 1. **TPP1: Beginning of the term** (2008.11.17) – split of the positional National Resurrection Party Faction (TPPF) (2009.07.15, Oak (position, AF) and United Lithuania (opposition, FVL) Factions established) – **216 votes**
 - 2. **TPP2: Split of the TPPF** (2009.07.16) – establishment of the Christians' Party Faction (KPF) (2010.01.21, successor of United Lithuania Faction (opposition); Oak Faction renamed (TPPF)) – **223 votes**

Data

- Voting data at the **aggregate** level:
 - Since there were splits in governing coalition, 4 **periods** are analysed **separately**:
 - ♦ 3. **KP**: **Establishment of the KPF** (2010.02.11) – merger of TPPF and Liberal and Centre Union Faction (LCSF) (2010.09.16); **LVLS** agrees on conditional support for the government – **192 votes**
 - ♦ 4. **LCS**: **Merger of TPPF and LCSF** (2010.09.21); LVLS withdraws support for the government – end of the term (2012.11.14) – **529 votes**

Data

→ Voting data at the **policy domain** level:

▪ 5 major policy domains:

♦ 1) Economy (**ECONOMY**) – **331 votes**:

- Taxation, budgets, energetics, investments, competition etc.

♦ 2) Culture and morality (**VALUES**) – **66 votes**:

- Alcohol, tobacco & narcotics control, gambling control, cultural affairs, citizenship etc.

♦ 3) Political system and law & order (**POLSYS**) – **279 votes**:

- Civil, criminal etc. codes, military, police, intelligence services, national security, Seimas statute, Government law, public service, elections and parties, public procurement, media etc.

Data

→ Voting data at the **policy domain** level:

▪ 5 major policy domains:

◆ 4) Quality of life (**WELLBEING**) – **285 votes**:

- Environment, education, health services, constructions and spatial planning etc.

◆ 5) Social policy and services (**WELFARE**) – **331 votes**:

- Social security and services, benefits, pensions, health insurance, disabled, unemployment etc.

Methods

- Data of roll-call votes are **multinomial**:
 - For / Against / Abstain / Not voted / Not participated / (Not MP – missing)
 - ◆ Usually recoded: For – 1, the rest – 0
 - ◆ This being determined by the methods of statistical analysis (NOMINATE (MDS), Optimal Scaling etc.)
 - **MCA** (also known as dual scaling, homogeneity analysis etc.) (Michailidis, de Leeuw 1998; Greenacre, Blasius 2006; Le Roux, Rouanet 2010) enables analysis of untransformed data
 - ◆ **Additional hypothesis**: untransformed data → multidimensional voting?

Methods

- MCA performed with *FactoMineR* (v1.25) package of statistical analysis environment *R*:
 - Indicator matrix approach
 - Symmetric normalization (principal coordinates)
 - Missing values (not yet an MP / not an MP any more) replaced by 'Not participated'

Analyses

→ Aggregate level:

- Votes 'Not voted' & 'Not participated' → How many?
- MCA with multinomial and binomial data (YES vs. the rest) for the 4 periods:
 - ◆ Dimensionality lower with binomial data?
 - ◆ Voting patterns and dimensions

→ Policy domain level:

- MCA with binomial data for the 5 policy domains:
 - ◆ Voting patterns and dimensions

Results: NP & NV

Name	Period	Votes	MPs	NP (aver.)	NV (aver.)	Total (aver.)	Total (%)
TPP1	2008.11.17 - 2009.07.15	216	143	40.0	8.4	48.4	33.85%
TTP2	2009.07.16 - 2010.01.21	223	142	32.3	7.3	39.6	27.88%
KP	2010.02.11 - 2010.09.16	192	141	35.1	8.6	43.7	30.97%
LCS	2010.09.21 - 2012.11.14	529	145	38.2	9.2	47.4	32.69%

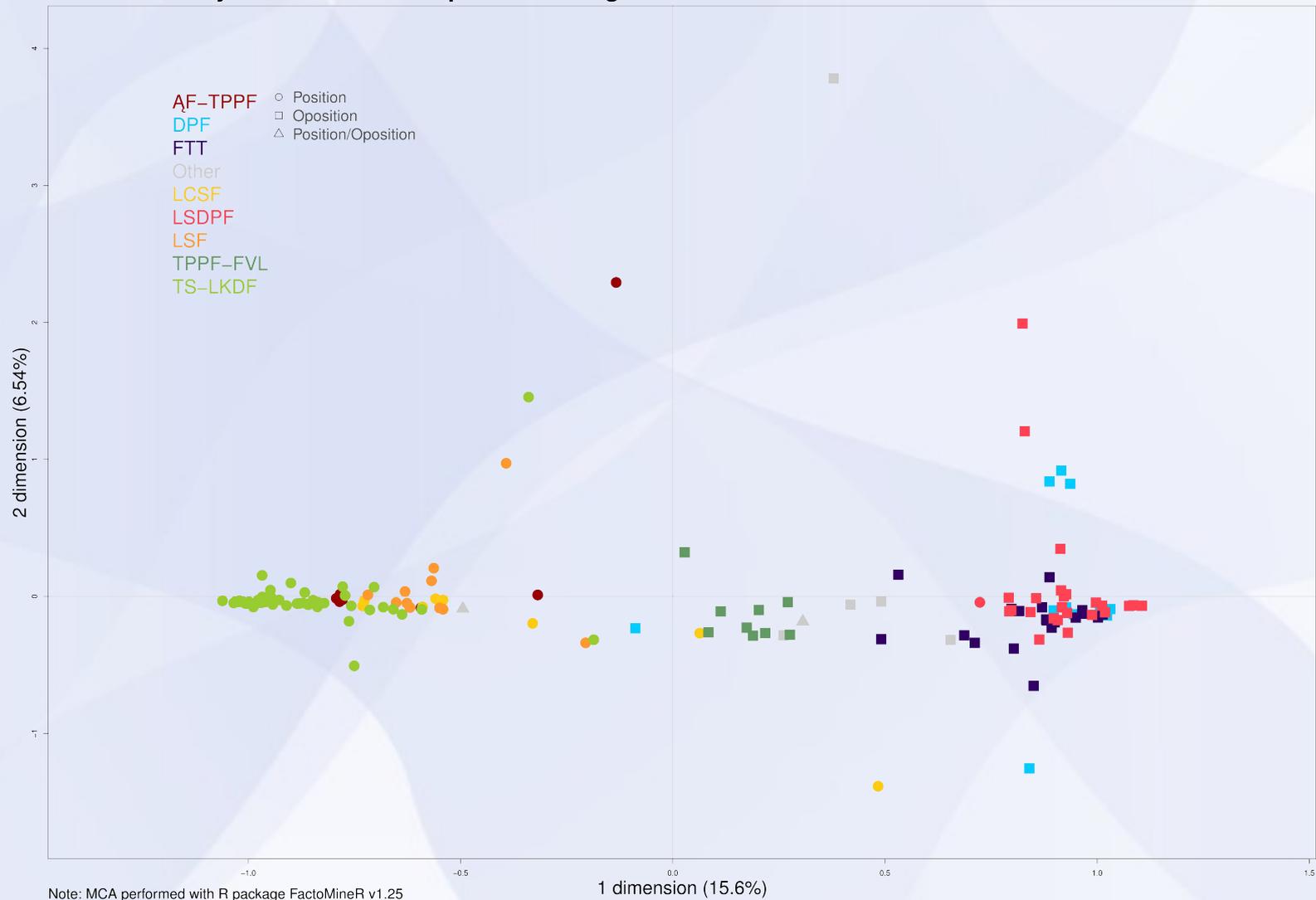
Results: MCA full categories

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: Period TPP1



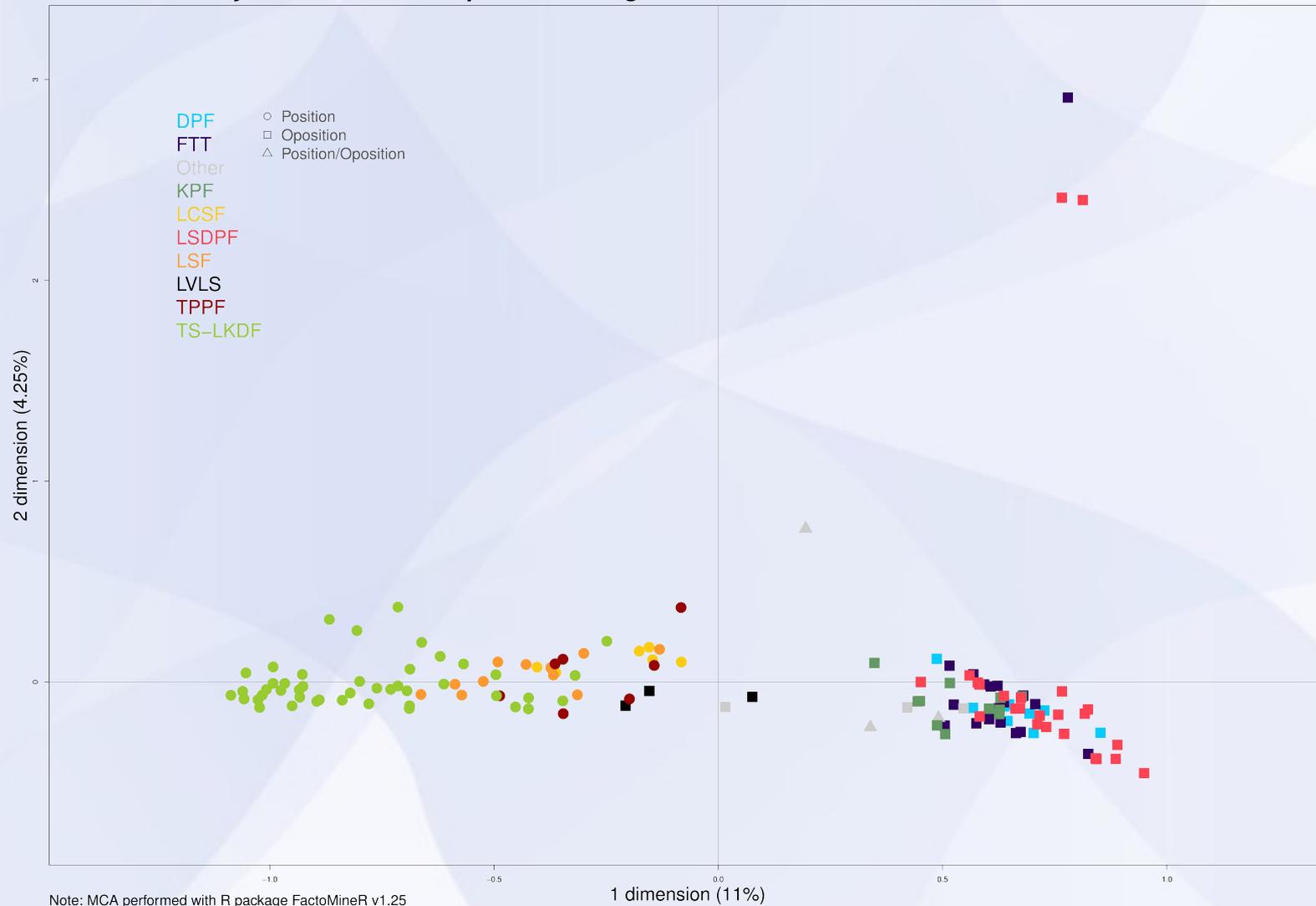
Results: MCA full categories

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: Period TPP2



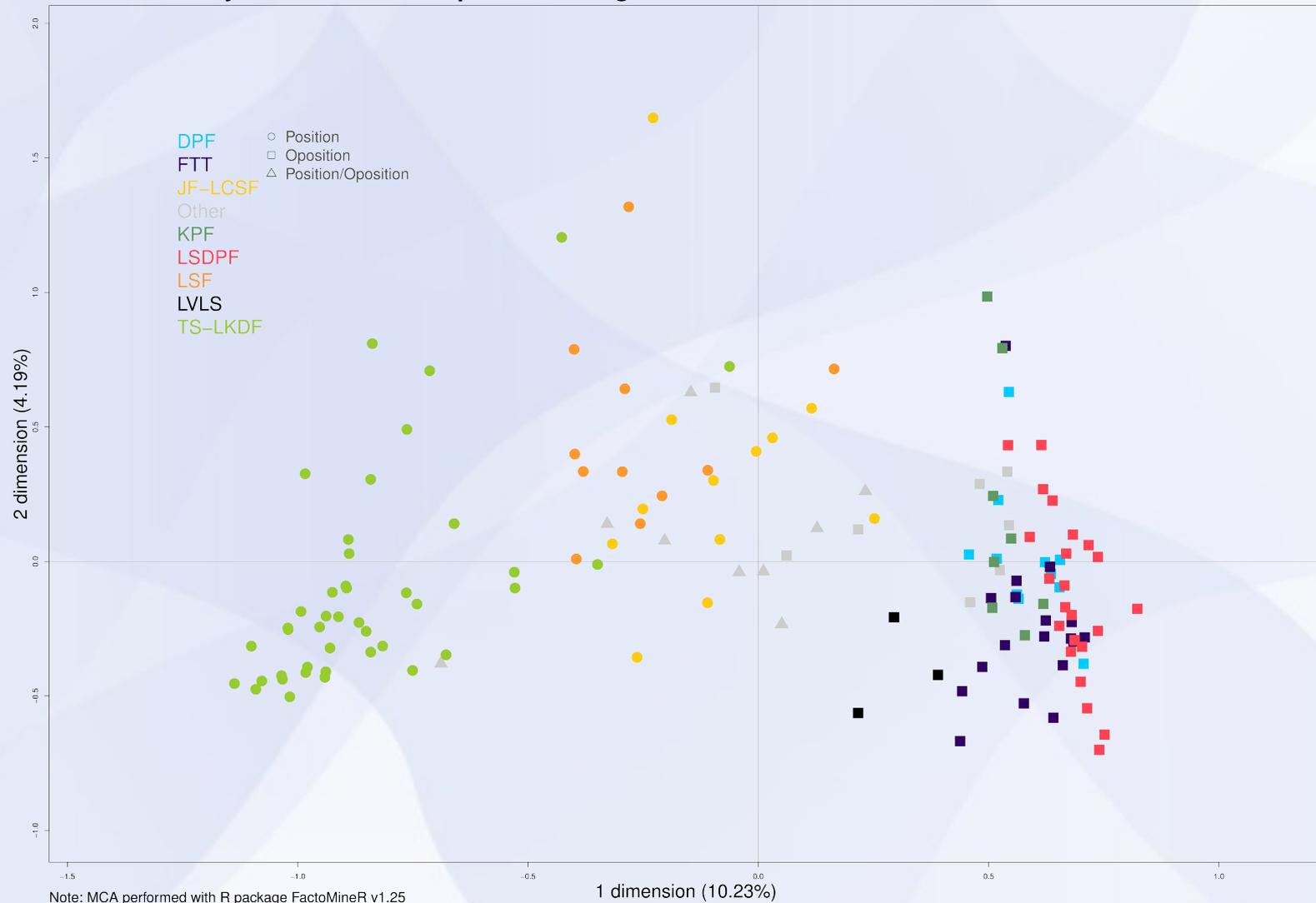
Results: MCA full categories

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: Period KP



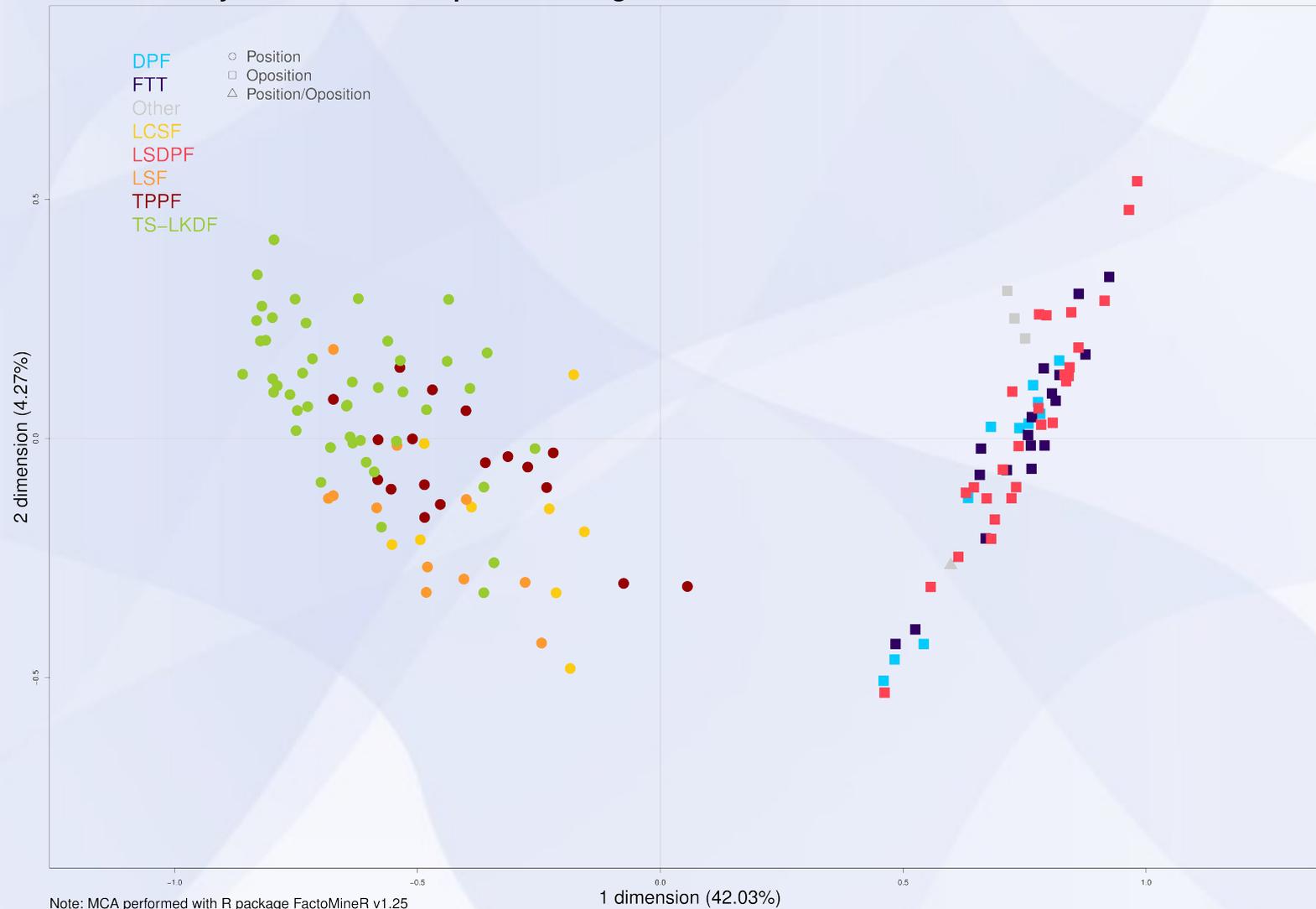
Results: MCA full categories

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: Period LCS



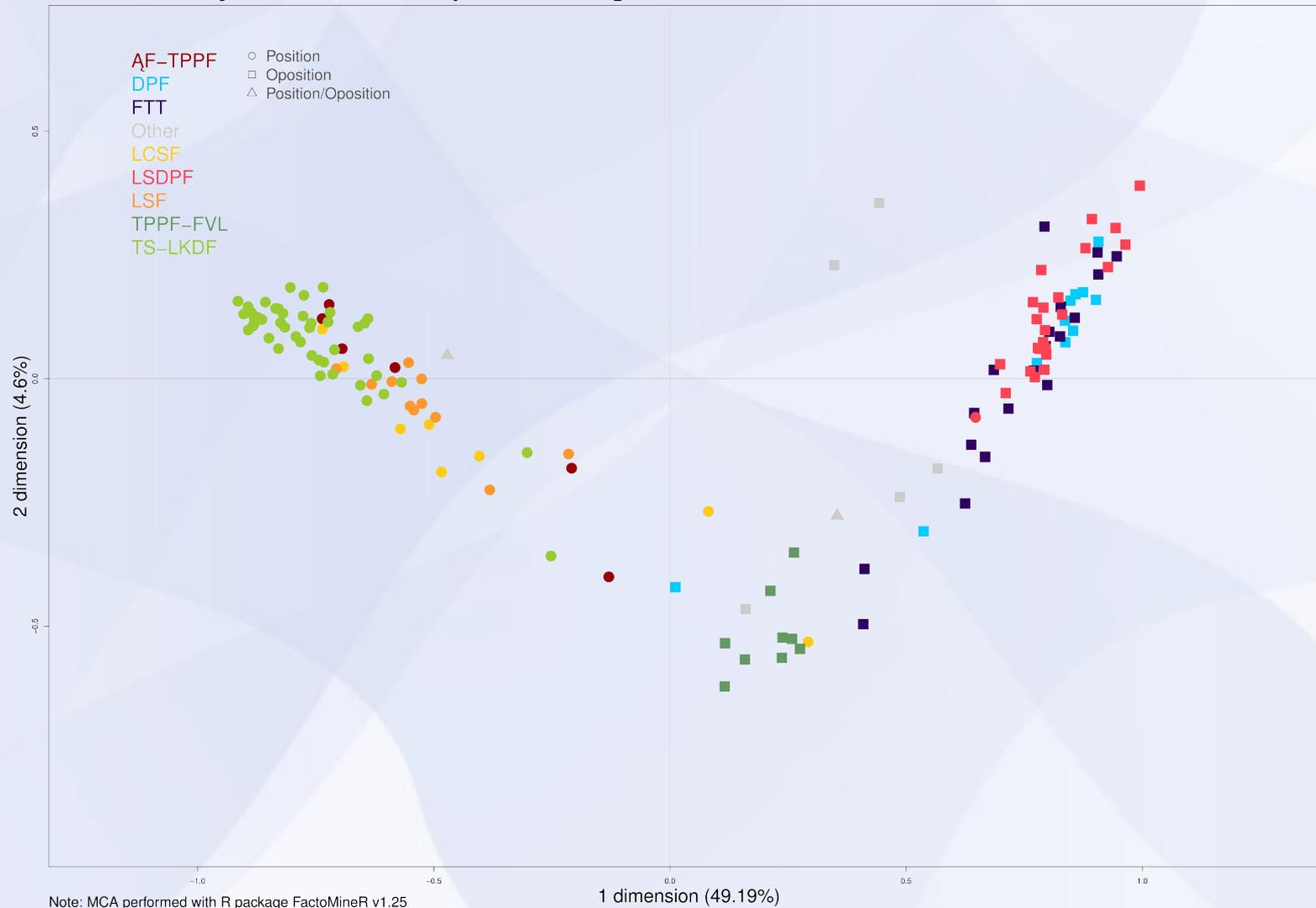
Results: MCA YES vs. the rest

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: Period TPP1



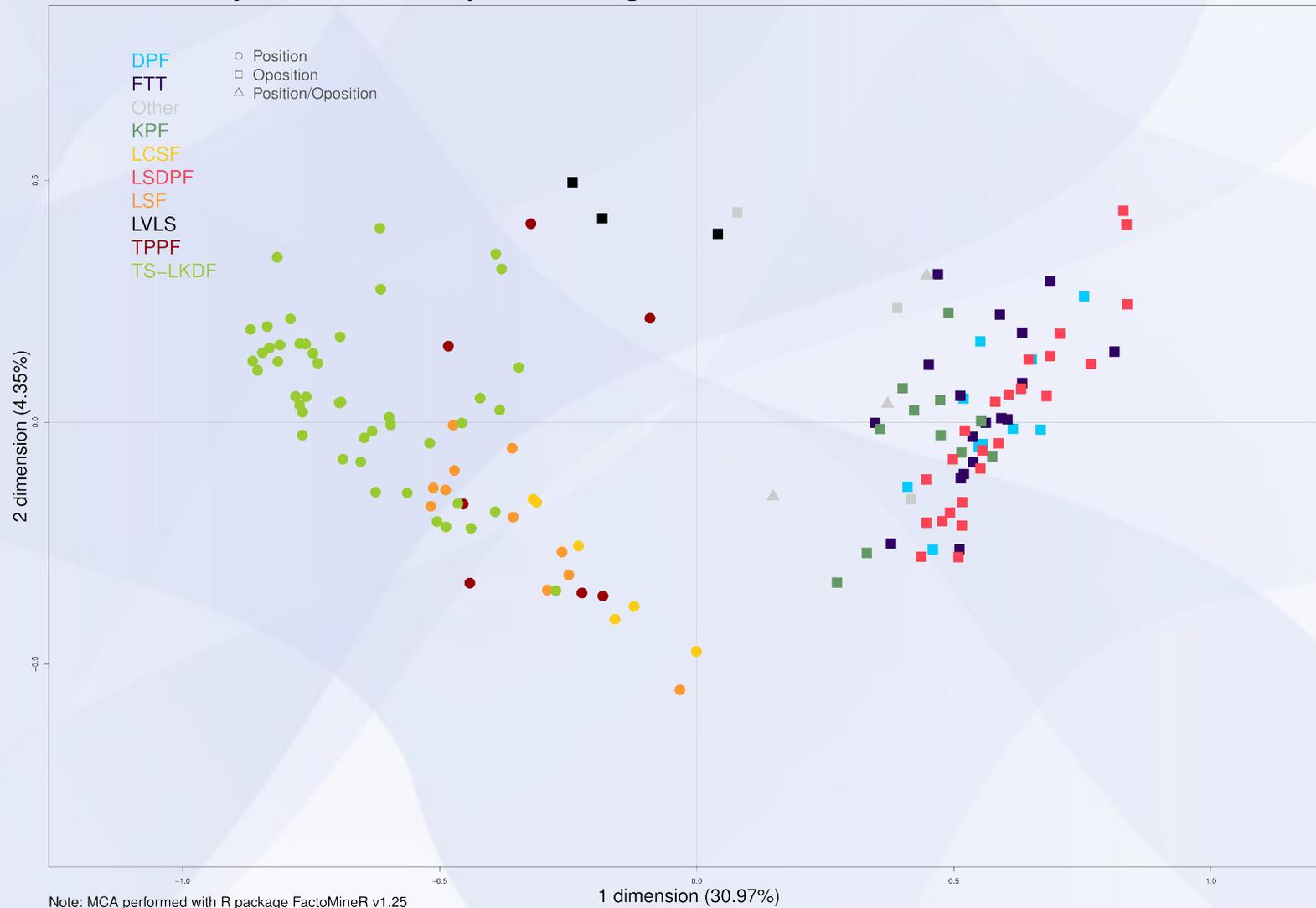
Results: MCA YES vs. the rest

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: Period TPP2



Results: MCA YES vs. the rest

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: Period KP



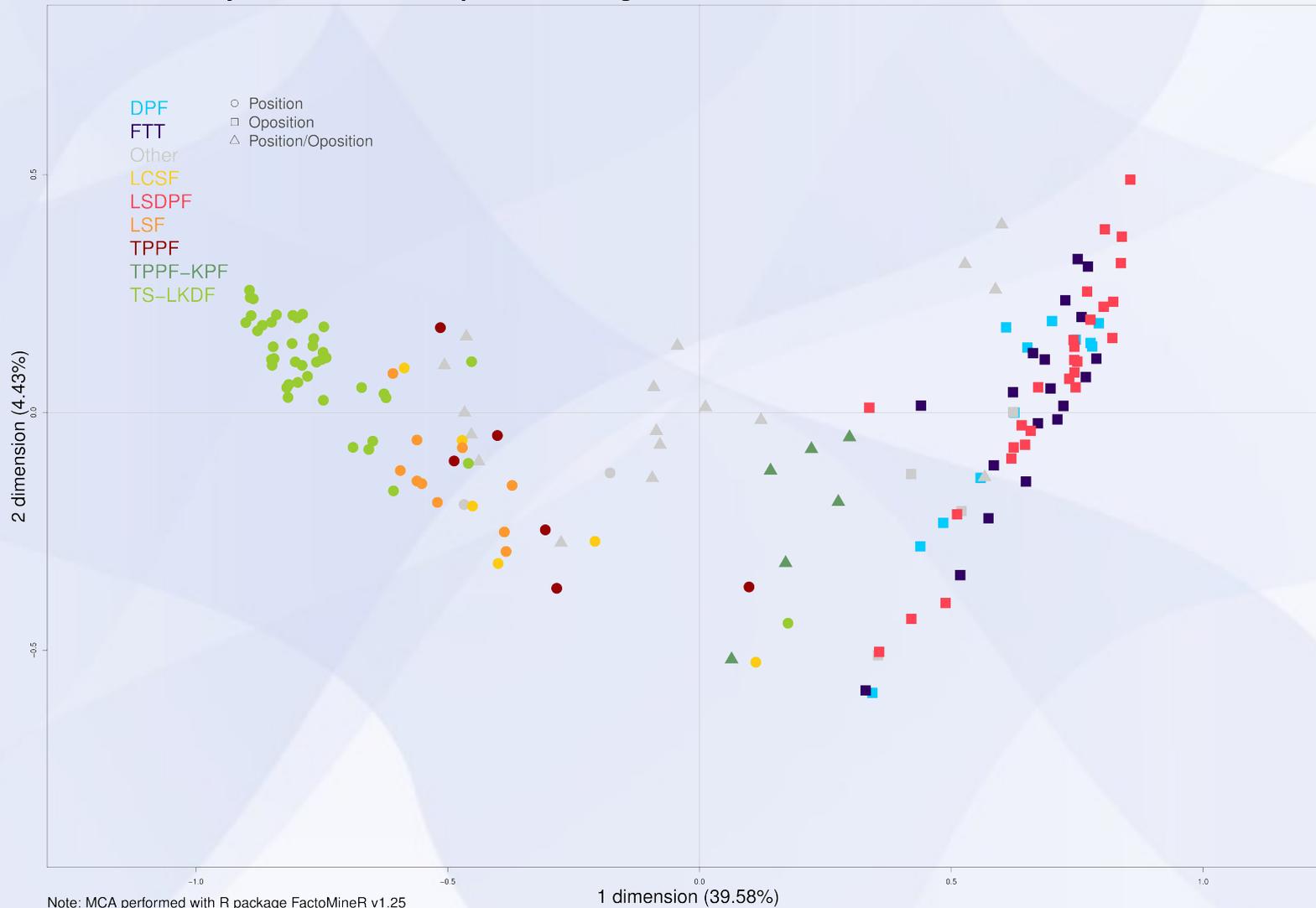
Results: MCA YES vs. the rest

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: Period LCS



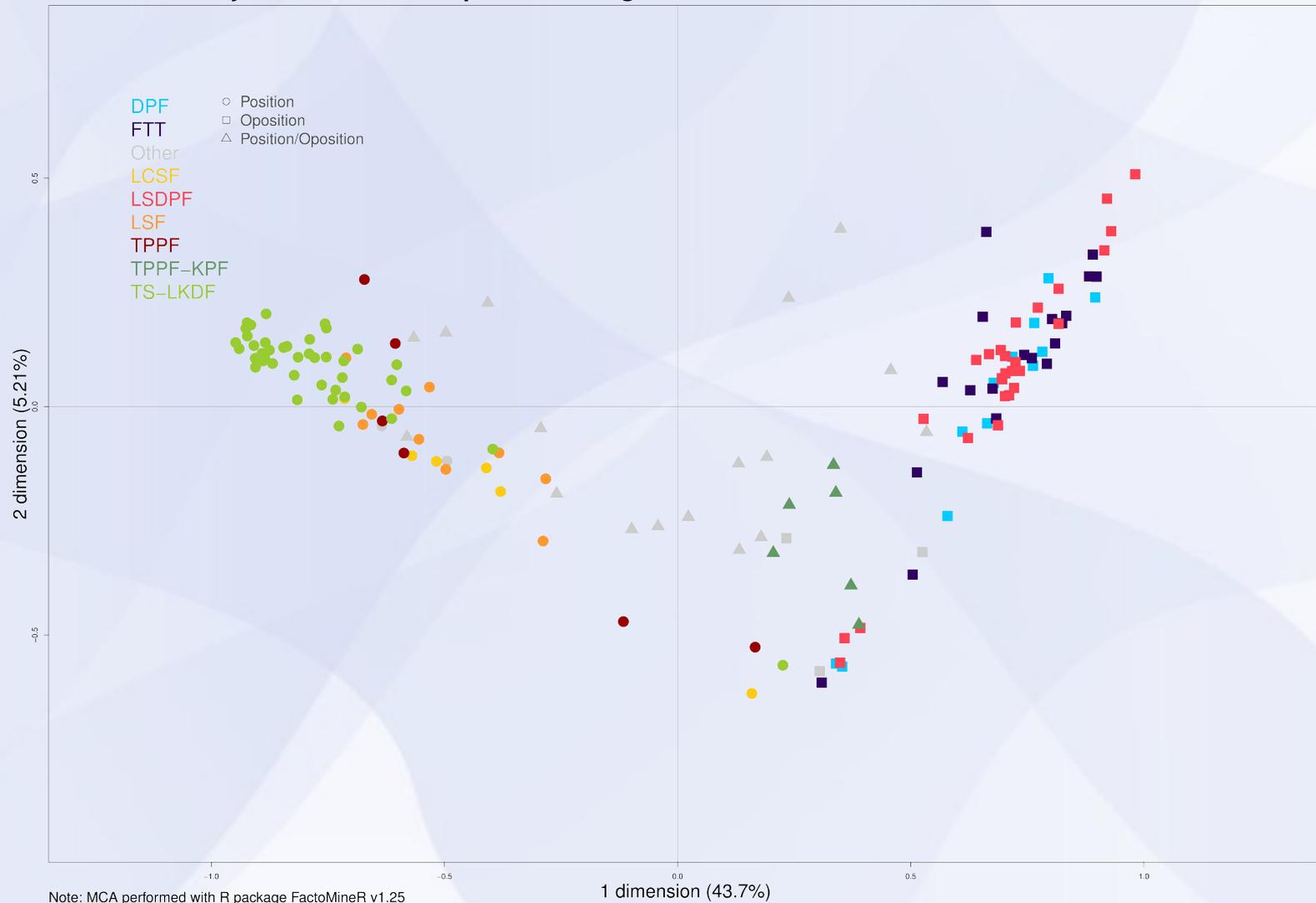
Results: MCA ECONOMY

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: ECONOMY



Results: MCA WELFARE

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: WELFARE



Results: MCA WELLBEING

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: WELLBEING



Note: MCA performed with R package FactoMineR v1.25

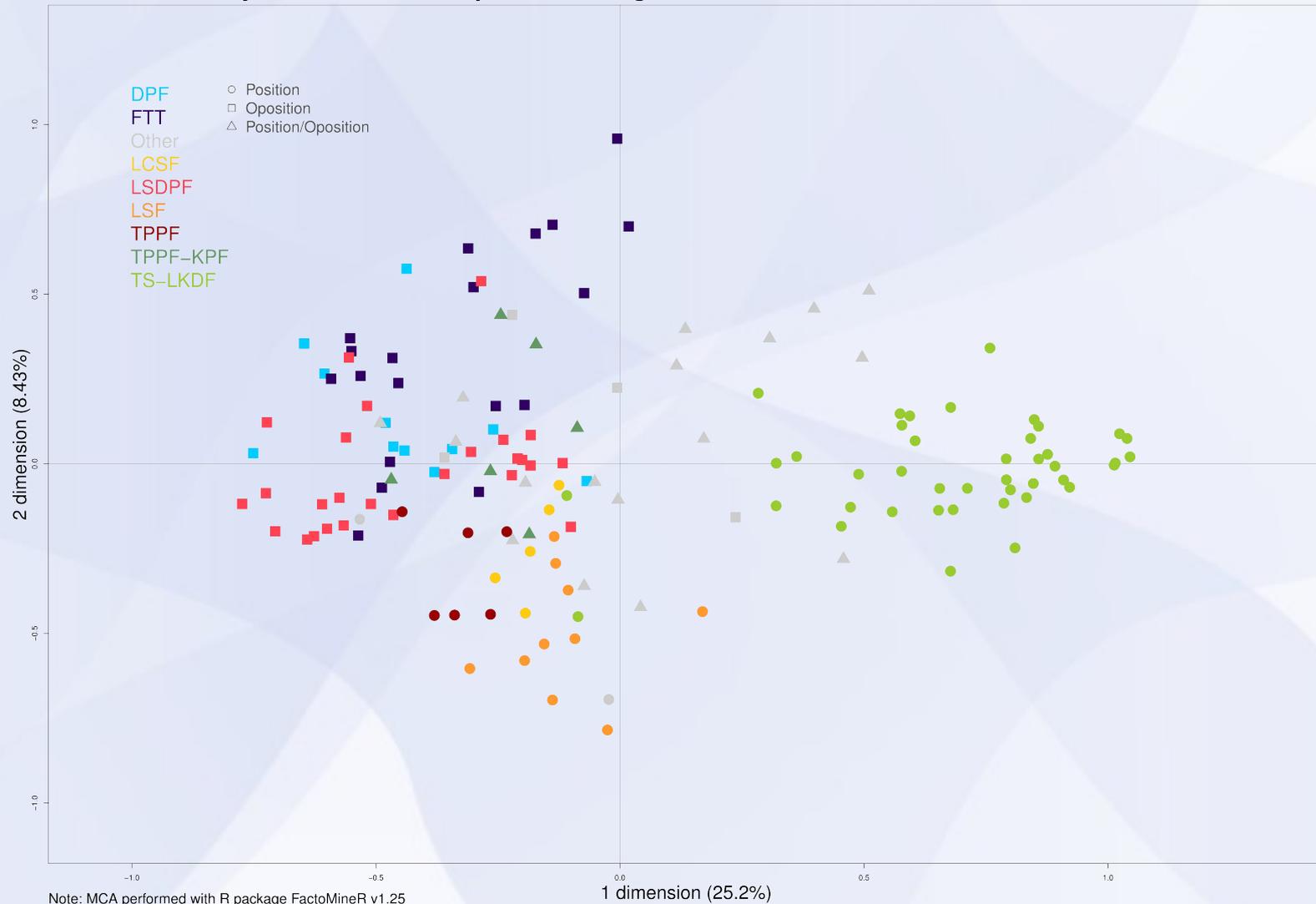
Results: MCA POLSYS

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: POLSYS



Results: MCA VALUES

Analysis of the most important votings of 2008–2012 term of the Seimas: VALUES



Note: MCA performed with R package FactoMineR v1.25

Results

→ Aggregate level:

- Quite many MPs either do not participate or do not vote
- Full coding produces 'suppressed' spacial representation
- When binomial coding is used we can see that results concur with Hix, Noury & Roland (2008):
 - ◆ 1 dimension – government vs. opposition
 - ◆ 2 dimension – social liberalism vs. conservatism

Results

→ Policy domain level:

- Economy, welfare and quality of life voting basically reflects general voting patterns (government vs. opposition / economic left vs. right)
- Voting on issues of political system and law and order is also similar to the economic and welfare matters
- On issues of culture and morality quite distinct voting – conservatives against 'the rest'.

Future

- Closer analysis of separate votes
 - MCA very good at this → joint plots
- Different division into policy domains:
 - International (EU)
 - Smaller issues