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Regimes of Social Cohesion: Societies and the Crisis of Globalisation

Andy Green

Professor of Comparative Social Science

Director of ESRC Centre for Learning and Life Chances (LLAKES)

UCL Institute of Education

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University of Crete
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Source

**Regimes of Social Cohesion: Societies and the
Crisis of Globalisation, Palgrave, 2011.**

Andy Green and Jan Germen Janmaat

Using a Inter-Disciplinary Approach

The first major study conducted in LLAKES was mixed-method and interdisciplinary. We drew on

- History of ideas (political philosophy; political economy; sociology)
- Comparative Historical Sociology
- Comparative Political Economy
- Welfare state theory
- Quantitative Sociology

Social Cohesion - Problems of Usage

Social cohesion is a term which is widely used but little understood.

- Overly ‘normative’ – assuming a particular ideological preference from the outset.
- Social cohesion is always a ‘good thing.’
- Crudely aggregative: simply list unrelated social characteristics (trust, civic association etc) as evidence of cohesion.
- Confused about levels of analysis.
- Include assumed causes and consequences in the definition.
- Proof by definition

An Analytical Comparative Approach

- comparative approach which tries to identify the different forms that social cohesion takes in different societies.
- Broad, non-normative definition of social cohesion which allows analysis of different societal forms.
- Applies at level of whole societies (not communities as in social capital).
- Social cohesion not always a ‘good thing.’

Mode of Research

The research consists of five parts:

- Analysis of different definitions-in-use in policy discussions
- Survey of the historical traditions of thought about social cohesion in western political philosophy, political economy and sociology
- Analysis of the long-durée historical trajectories of state forms in different regions which help to explain the different traditions.
- Using comparative political economy to identify possible institutional foundations of modern forms of social cohesion.
- Testing theoretical models with cross-country data on institutional characteristics and societal attitudes and behaviours.

Liberal Discourses

Liberal discourses tend to play down:

- The role of the state (in welfare and redistribution)
- Equality
- Shared values and identities (other than ‘core values’)

Emphasise importance of:

- Active civil society – at local level
- Opportunity and individual liberty (‘core values’)
- Tolerance

Republican Discourses

Republican discourses emphasise the state rather than civil society.

The state is seen to underpin social cohesion through:

- Providing welfare and social protection
- Redistribution
- Supervising conflict-mediating social partnership institutions
- Promoting shared values and common national identity.

Different currents in republican thought variously stress equality of opportunity or equality of outcomes as important pre-conditions for social cohesion, but their role in social cohesion is often largely symbolic.

Social Democratic Discourse

The social democratic discourse follows the republican discourse in most of its essentials, except that here the stress on equality is more profound.

- Like republican theory social democratic theory emphasises both the role of the state and that of autonomous but state-sanctioned national civil society organisations
- Equality is seen as pre-condition of social solidarity.
- Common identity is highly valued.

Definitions

Social cohesion refers to the property by which whole societies, and the individuals within them, are bound together through the action of specific attitudes, behaviours, rules and institutions (excluding cases of ‘pure coercion’).

Regimes of social cohesion can be seen as a relatively durable (but not immutable) configurations and social attitudes and behaviours contributing to society-wide social bonding that are underpinned by particular institutional arrangements.

Institutional Foundations of Liberal Regime of Social Cohesion

The core values underpinning social cohesion in liberal regimes include:

- Opportunity and rewards based on merit.
- Individual freedom and choice
- Active and ‘tolerant ‘ civil society

Social cohesion relies less on the state and intermediate organisation institutions:

- Absolute property rights in company law lead to shareholder model of firm based on contract not community;
- Lack of encompassing intermediate organisations
- Flexible labour markets with minimum regulation and market-driven wage setting undermine work-force solidarity and increase wage inequality.
- Non-universalistic welfare state does not promote solidarity to same degree as in social democratic states.

Institutional Foundations of Social Market Regime of Social Cohesion

Social cohesion underpinned by strong institutional mechanisms concerted by the state.

- Stakeholder model of the firm (with industrial democracy)
- Highly regulated labour markets with solidaristic wage bargaining based on industrial unionism, social partnership between encompassing intermediate organisations, and sectoral agreements on pay and conditions.
- Lower wage differentials with generous welfare provision for unemployed.
- Corporatist welfare system, based on employment contributions, less universalistic and more divisive than social democratic model.

Institutional Foundations of Social Democratic Regime of Social Cohesion

As in social market regime, social cohesion is underpinned by the state and powerful intermediate organisations.

- Centralised wage bargaining leads to low pay differentials and promotes labour market solidarity.
- Active Labour market policies support losers from industrial re-structuring.
- Universalist and generous welfare state promotes solidarity
- Egalitarian education systems promote beliefs in equality.
- Adult education promote ideal of community.

Postulated Social Cohesion Regimes in OECD Countries

Liberal

high inequality
high crime
low wage reg
low welfare
high value diversity
strong civil society
medium trust
high tolerance
high gender eq

US

GB

Canada

Australia

New Zealand

Social market

medium inequality
low crime
high wage reg
high welfare
low value diversity
medium civil society
medium trust
low tolerance
low gender eq

Germany

France

Belgium

Austria

Netherlands

Social-democratic

low inequality
low crime
high wage reg
high welfare
low value diversity
medium civil society
high trust
medium tolerance
high gender eq

Sweden

Finland

Denmark

Norway

East Asian

low inequality
low crime
-
low welfare
low value diversity
weak civil society
medium trust
low tolerance
low gender eq

Japan

South Korea

Regime indexes

Liberal		Social Democratic		Social Market		East Asian	
Country	Score	Country	Score	Country	Score	Country	Score
USA	16.81	SWE	15.90	AU	5.59	KOR	11.66
CAN	9.24	DEN	10.76	POR	3.12	JAP	9.10
GB	4.43	NL	8.15	GER	3.05	CZE	3.37
IRE	-.14	FIN	7.42	FRA	2.27	POL	2.65
GER	-.74	B	3.11	ITA	1.82	ITA	2.34
NL	-1.93	AU	.81	B	.83	SP	2.02
AU	-2.05	GER	.28	SWE	.45	GER	-.12
DEN	-2.13	IRE	.19	FIN	-.37	AU	-.52
SP	-2.27	SP	-.42	NL	-.59	FRA	-1.35
ITA	-2.49	GB	-.80	SP	-1.74	GB	-2.03
POR	-2.86	FRA	-1.10	DEN	-2.84	NL	-2.49
FRA	-3.96	CAN	-2.62	IRE	-3.14	DEN	-3.69
FIN	-4.48	ITA	-2.92	GB	-5.54	CAN	-4.23
SWE	-5.49	USA	-3.26	CAN	-6.76	SWE	-7.24
B	-6.08	POR	-5.39	USA	-11.33	USA	-8.13

Conclusions of Statistical Analysis

- Broadly confirms three of the postulated regimes with predicted characteristics ie ‘Liberal’; ‘Social Democratic’ and ‘Social Market’

CAVEATS

- Weak boundaries between social democratic and social market regimes on some indicators
- Southern European states don’t fit social market regime in many respects
- Social market regime displays much higher value diversity than expected.
- Some evidence of distinctive East Asian tradition

Societies and Crisis of Globalisation

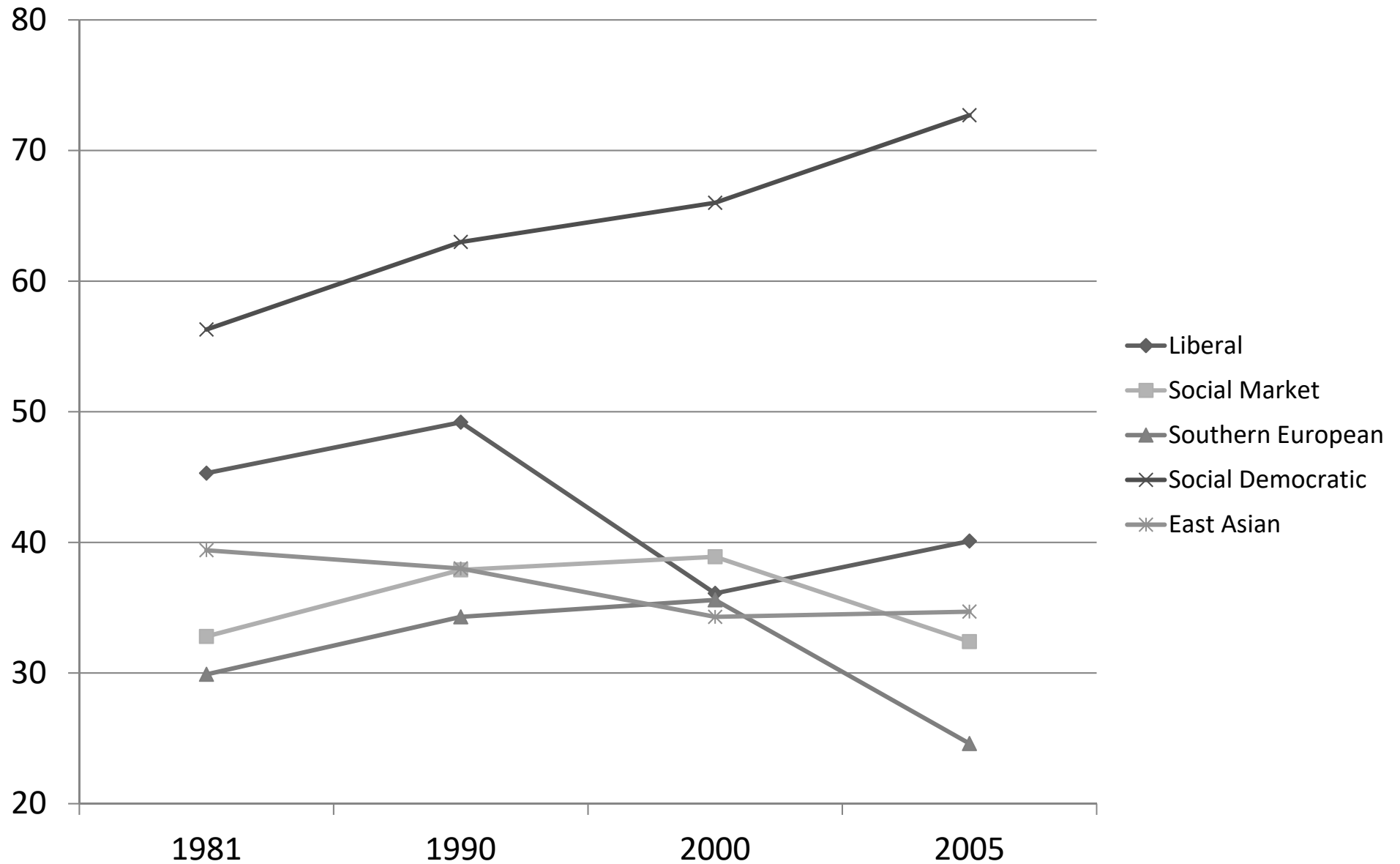
The global financial crisis of 2007/8 can be seen to the beginning of a crisis of globalization which has unleashed a widespread backlash characterized by new forms of populist authoritarian nationalism.

Social Cohesion is widely seen as threatened by:

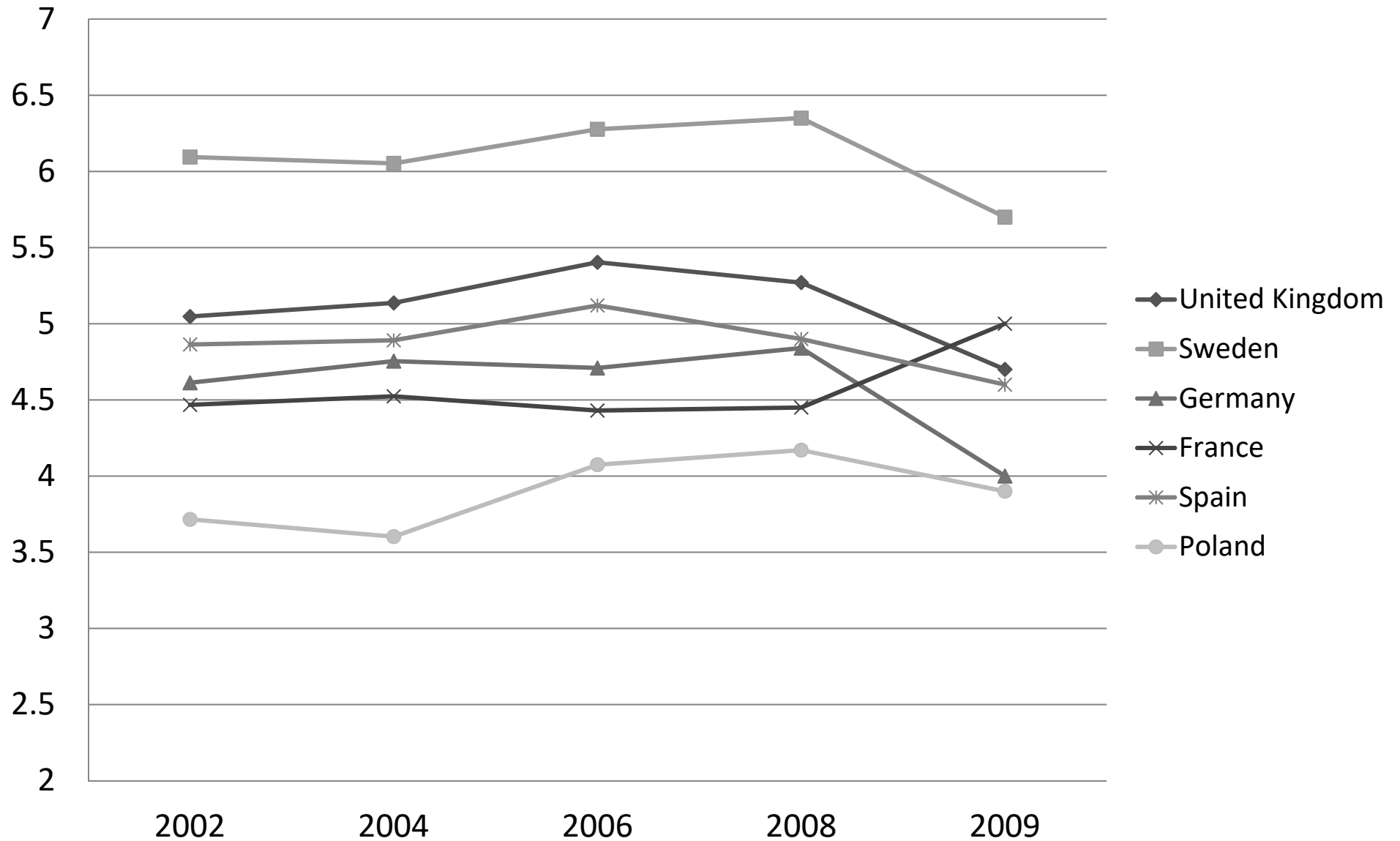
- The decline of the nation state and associated national identities (Castells, 1997)
- Increasing cultural diversity
- The growth of communitarianism and identity politics (Touraine, 2000)
- Growing individualism/uation (Beck, 2004; Giddens, 1991)
- Rising inequality (Piketty, 2014)

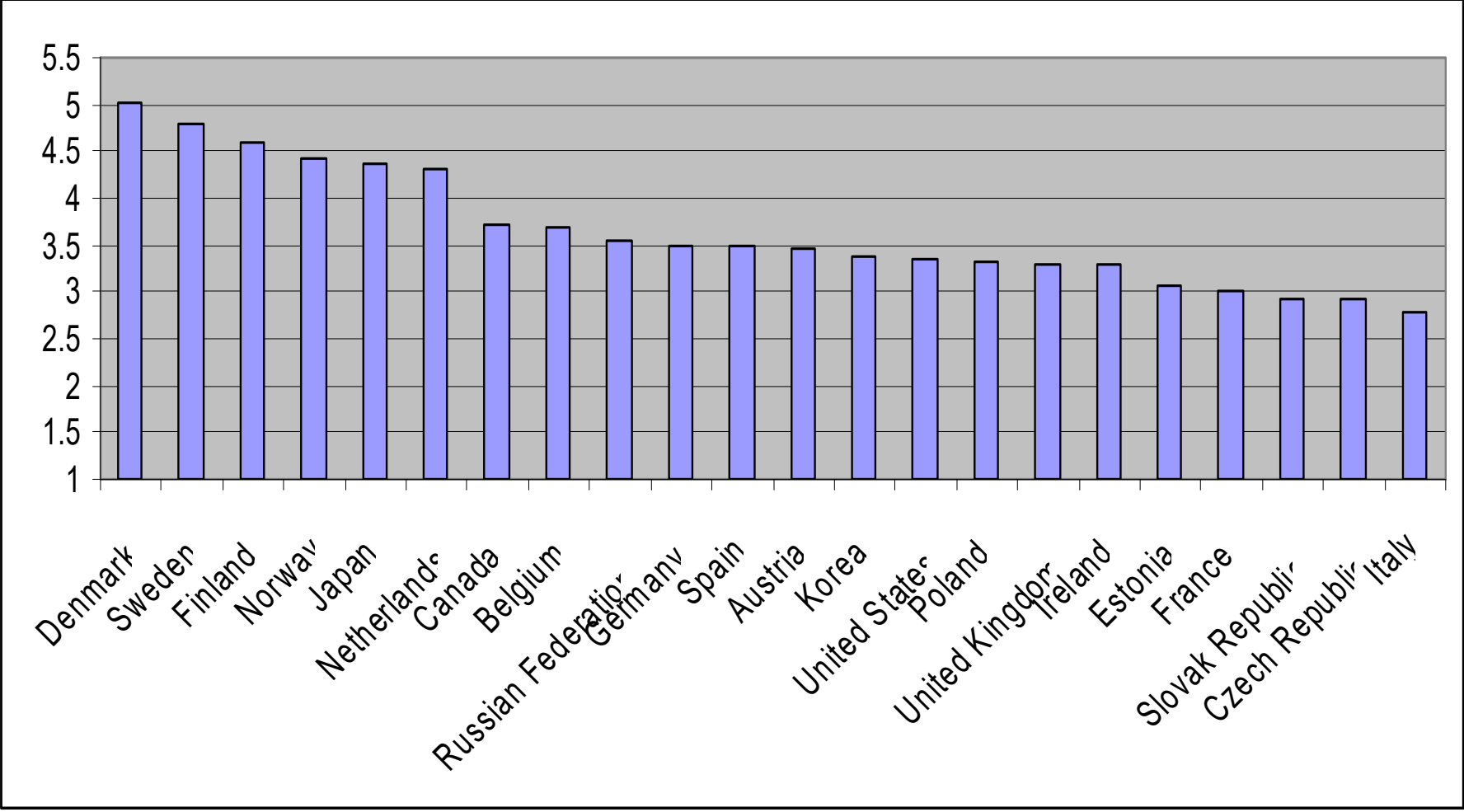
Social cohesion, measured by indicators of social and political trust, and tolerance, is often seen to be in a convergent process of decline.

Trends in Social Trust, 1981-2005

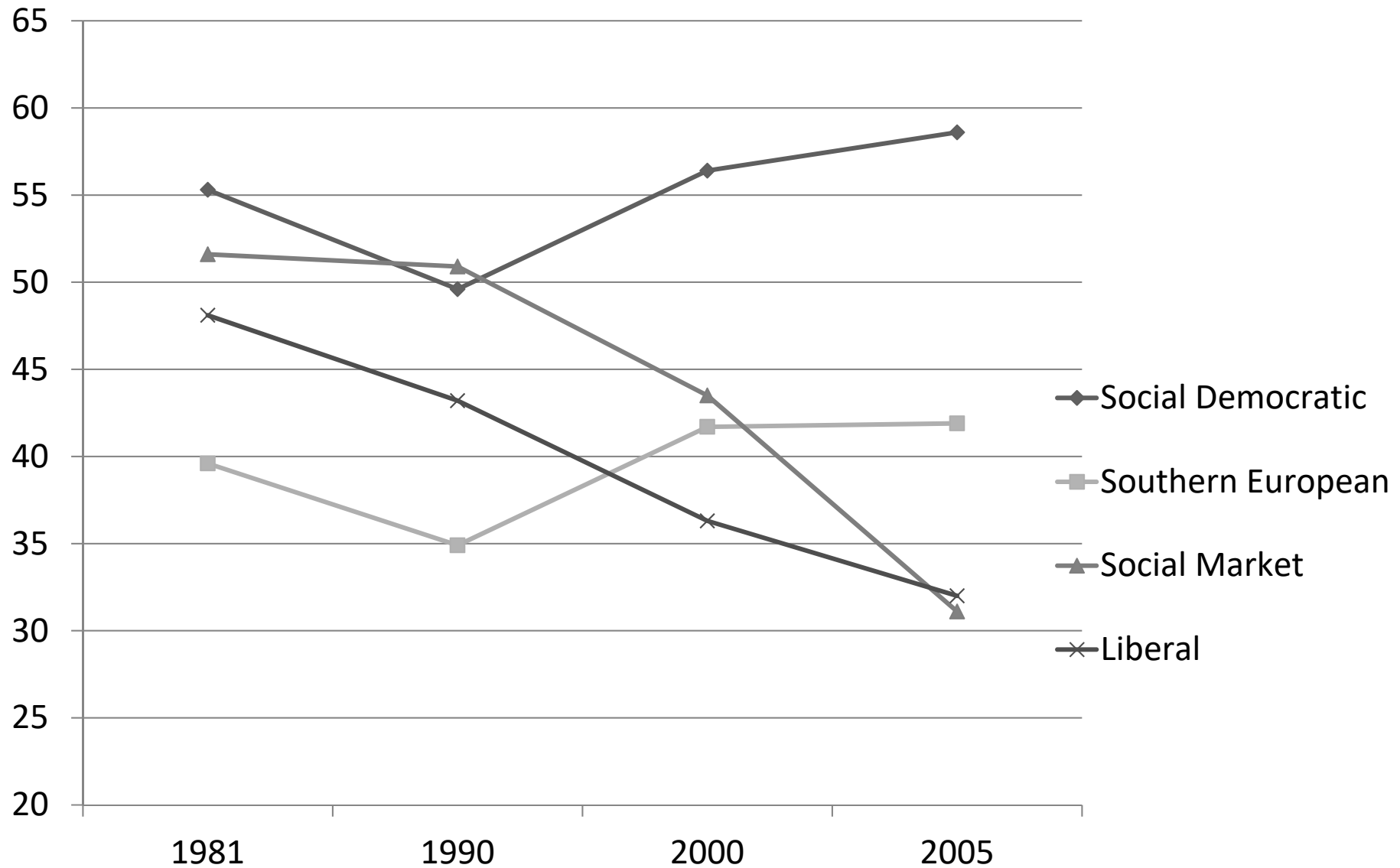


Trends in Social Trust, 2002 - 2009



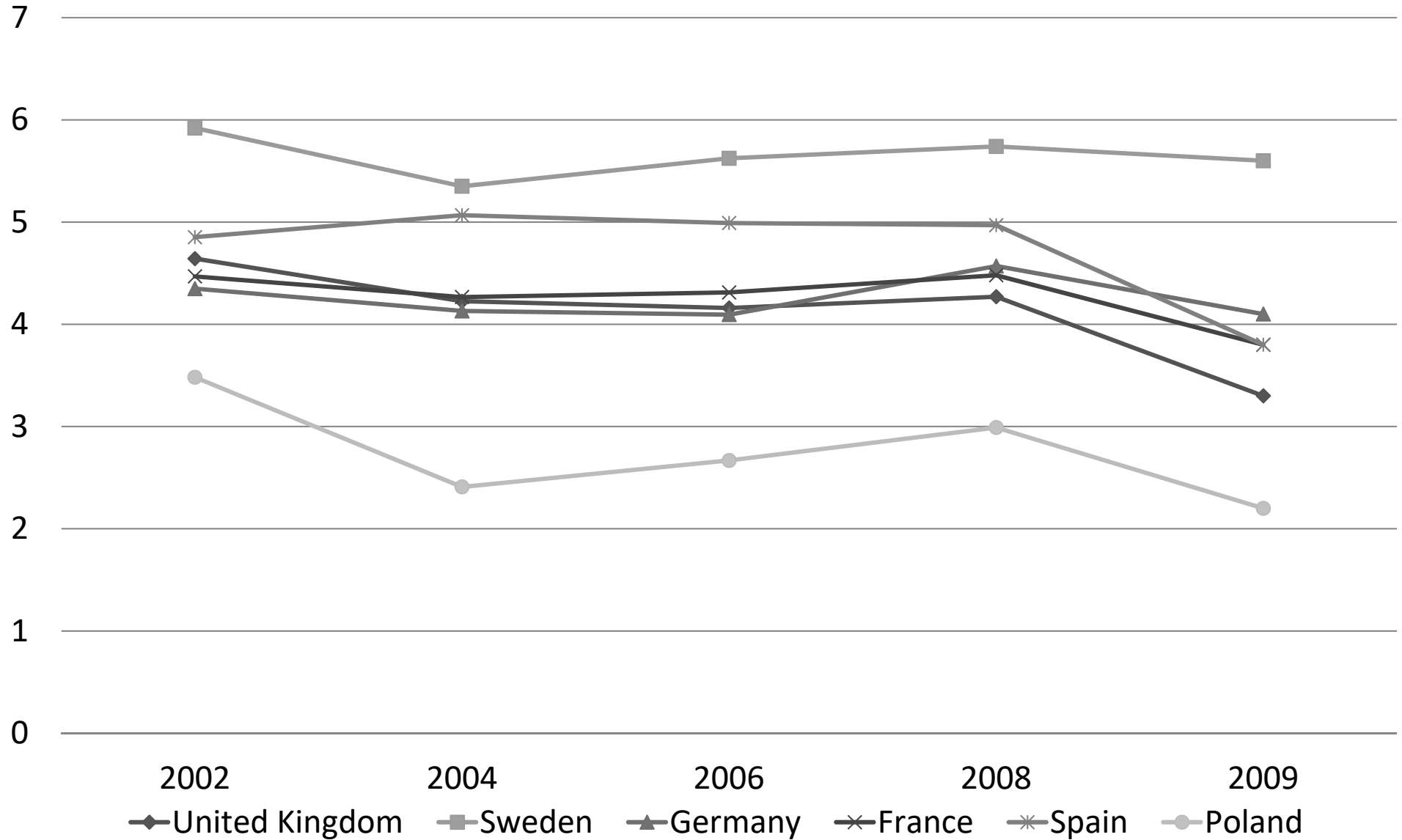


Political Trust, 1981 - 2005

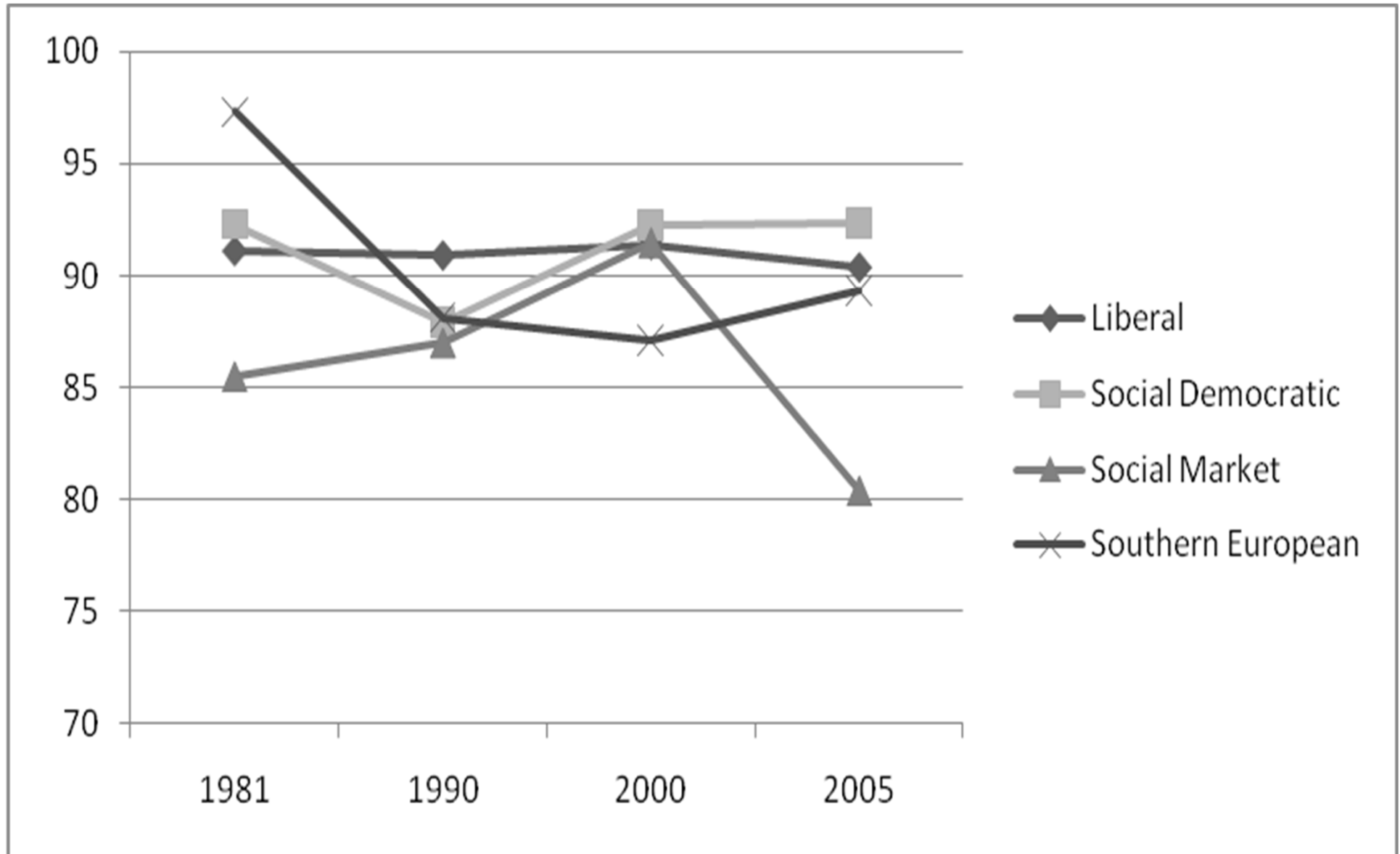


Trends in political trust

(trust in parliament; mean of 0-10 scale)



Trends in Tolerance



Pressure Points in the Face of Globalisation during the Current Crisis

Each Regime of Social Cohesion is currently under stress *at its crucial point* from forces of globalisation, particularly since the current global economic crisis of 2007/8.

- The liberal regimes is legitimated by belief in opportunity and merit but opportunity and social mobility have declined and political and financial abuses have catastrophically eroded trust in the system.
- The social market regime still benefits from strong institutional foundations but the shared values are challenged by increasing diversity.
- The social democratic regime remains relatively egalitarian and solidaristic, but its Achilles heel is immigration which many believe jeopardises the ‘national’ welfare deal.