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

Lecture in Department of Political Science
University of Crete
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Andy Green and Jan Germen Janmaat

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.’

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.

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.

Constituents of Social Cohesion in Policy Discussions

Values and Behaviours:

- Shared values and goals (such as liberty, democracy, meritocracy, equality etc)
- A sense of belonging and common identity (including national and other forms of identity)
- Tolerance and respect for other individuals and cultures
- Interpersonal and institutional trust
- Civic cooperation
- Active civic participation
- Law-abiding behaviour (low crime rates)

Institutional underpinning:

- Institution for the sharing of risk and providing social protection (the welfare state)
- Redistributive mechanisms (such as taxes) to foster equality or equality of opportunity
- Conflict resolution mechanisms.

Crux Issues or ‘Pressure Points’

Definitions of Social Cohesion vary, however, according to where they stand on various crux issues:

- Diversity v. Cultural Homogeneity
- Meritocracy v. Equality
- Individual liberty v. the state

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.

Social Cohesion Traditions

Modern discourses on social cohesion can be traced back to different traditions of thought about the social order in 18th and 19th political philosophy, political economy sociology.

- The Liberal tradition from Locke, to Smith, Bentham and J.S. Mill.
- The Republican tradition from Rousseau and Durkheim
- The Romantic Conservative Tradition from Herder.

Comparative historical sociology (Moore, Anderson, Kuhn, Greenfeld etc) argues these different intellectual traditions were rooted in variant paths to modernity and modern state formation in different regions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (ie debates about the civic and ethno-cultural nationalisms etc)

The Liberal Tradition

All liberal thought, from John Locke down to Herbert Spencer, can be said to derive from a set of fundamental and interconnected propositions about the nature of the individual and of individual freedoms; the relations of the individual to the state; and the ordering of civil society, the layer of social life between the individual and the state.

- In liberal thought the individual is taken to precede society and to be endowed with certain natural freedoms or rights and it is the role of the state to protect these freedoms and rights.

- But individual liberty is held to be in constant danger from the state, which has a natural tendency towards tyranny, and the state must therefore be contained to a minimal role, as far as is consistent with protecting these individual freedoms.

Liberal Tradition 2: John Locke

- Locke believed that individuals are born into a state of nature which he called a ‘state of perfect freedom.’ (Locke, 1963). They are endowed with reason and enjoy natural rights as human beings, not least to own property and to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

- It was the right to property which underpinned Locke’s theory of government, which argued for constitutional monarchy and governments elected through a limited franchise based on property ownership.

- The role of the state was to protect property, uphold law and order, defend the realm and safeguard the rights and liberties of citizens. Beyond this the prerogatives of the state should be kept to a minimum.

Liberal Political Economy

The liberal tradition of British Political Economy continues from where Locke left off, extending his philosophical principles into the sphere of market economics.

- Smith believed in the fundamental benefits of the market order. Although he recognized certain cases where government should intervene for the common good, the main principle was limited government – laissez-faire. There is, he said, 'a strong presumption against government activity beyond the fundamental duties of protection against foreign foes and the maintenance of justice'. (Smith, 1904, 611).
- Bentham and J.S.Mill adopted Smith's ideas for a somewhat more democratic age and found increasing causes for government intervention, but the default position was still laissez-fire. As Mill wrote: 'every departure from the laissez-faire principal, unless required by some great good, is a certain evil.' (Mill quoted in Fraser, 1985).

Liberalism and Social Cohesion

Liberal Political Economy did not use terms such as social solidarity and social cohesion. The state could be invoked as a guarantor of 'social order', but not as a source of social cohesion, since liberalism was a fundamentally against enhancing its role.

Instead, it saw the basis of social cohesion in terms of mutual self-interest in market exchanges: what was called '*National Harmony of Interests in the Market Order.*'

The notion of community was treated with some suspicion – Bentham famously said that the community was a 'fictitious body', just as the neo-liberal Margaret Thatcher later said the 'there is no such thing as society - only individuals and their families..'

The liberal concept of social cohesion was largely culture-free or, as Matthew Arnold was later to lament, 'philistine' (Arnold, 1932).

Republican Thought

French republican thought, from Rousseau down to Durkheim, explicitly repudiated *laissez-faire* liberalism.

- Liberty and state power are not seen as apposed as in liberal thought.
- The individual is not antecedent to society and the state, as in liberal discourse, but is constituted by them.
- Man, to Rousseau, may be born a 'noble savage' but 'we begin,' he says, 'to become men only when we have become citizens.' (quoted in Williams, 1961, 94).
- Social cohesion – or *solidarité* in French – arises not so much spontaneously out of civil society and free market exchange, although these may provide a foundation of mutual functional interdependencies. It is primarily something which is cultivated collectively through the formation of the political (Rousseau) or moral (Durkheim) community.

Durkheim and Social Solidarity

Durkheim's great work on social solidarity – *The Division of Labour* – was written explicitly against liberal concepts of laissez-faire.

- The book starts by recognizing that the increasing division of labour in modern societies replaces old forms of 'mechanical solidarity' (based on collective beliefs) with new forms of 'organic solidarity' (basic on mutual functional interdependence).

- However, as it proceeds, Durkheim increasingly emphasises that this is not enough to hold societies together, since market exchanges are based on unequal relations of power (produced, amongst other things, by inherited wealth and un-meritocratic labour market allocation). His later works emphasise the importance of:

1. The state acting as a 'moral force' (particularly through education) to restore collective values;

2. Professional associations intermediating conflicts in the labour market.

Romantic Conservatism

The third current in western writing on social cohesion was an explicit rejection of both liberalism and republican thought in favour of ethno-cultural forms of solidarity.

The romantic conservative tradition started with the cosmopolitan philosophers of the German Enlightenment, like Herder, who stressed the importance on language and folk traditions to individual identity and social cohesion, without claims to the superiority of particular national cultures.

However, with the extreme nationalist reaction to the French occupation after 1806, the tradition becomes increasingly racist and Xenophobic. Nationalist ideologues, like Johann Fichte, argue that the basis of social cohesion lies in:

- National / ethnic consciousness
- The subordination of the individual to the will of the state.
- 'Organic' social hierarchy

The tradition had moderate followers in Britain (like Coleridge) but was most dominant in German-speaking countries and can be seen as one of the precursors of Nazi ideology.

Historical Transitions - Abbreviated

19th C. traditions on social cohesion partially transformed during the 20th C.

- British liberalism crossed with the founding fathers to the US, where it become more radically individualist and anti-state than in the UK (particularly with the rise of neo-liberalism/conservatism). Liberal values partially extend to some other English-speaking countries.
- The Germanic ethno-cultural, nationalist tradition was decisively rejected by a re-constructed Germany after WW2, but lives on to some extent in other parts of central and eastern Europe.
- French republicanism still evident in the statism of southern Europe, but in northern continental Europe blends with Christian Democracy traditions in the 'Social Market' principles of the EU.
- Social democracy, originally an offshoot of revolutionary socialism in the 1880, morphs into a new form of gradualist parliamentary reformism, based on cross-class alliances of farmers, workers and the petit bourgeoisie, which dominated Nordic countries from 1920s to now.

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	Social market	Social-democratic	East Asian
high inequality	medium inequality	low inequality	low inequality
high crime	low crime	low crime	low crime
low wage reg	high wage reg	high wage reg	-
low welfare	high welfare	high welfare	low welfare
high value diversity	low value diversity	low value diversity	low value diversity
strong civil society	medium civil society	medium civil society	weak civil society
medium trust	medium trust	high trust	medium trust
high tolerance	low tolerance	medium tolerance	low tolerance
high gender eq	low gender eq	high gender eq	low gender eq
US	Germany	Sweden	Japan
GB	France	Finland	South Korea
Canada	Belgium	Denmark	
Australia	Austria	Norway	
New Zealand	Netherlands		

Boundaries of Social Cohesion Regimes

- Social Democratic regime distinct from Social Market regime (as in Esping- Andersen's Welfare Regimes)
- But Social Market regime is north-west continental Europe – ie not including Southern European states
- East Asia – distinctive Confucian traditions but region too diverse to be considered a regime type

Measures of Social Cohesion Components

Administrative data

Component	Indicator
Inequality	Income inequality Gini
Crime	- Homicide rate
	- Violent crime rate
Wage regulation	- Union coverage
	- Centralization of wage bargaining
Employment protection	Empl prot legislation (EPL)
State involvement	Public employment as % of total employment
Welfare state	Public social expenses as % of GDP
Ethnic diversity	% of population born abroad

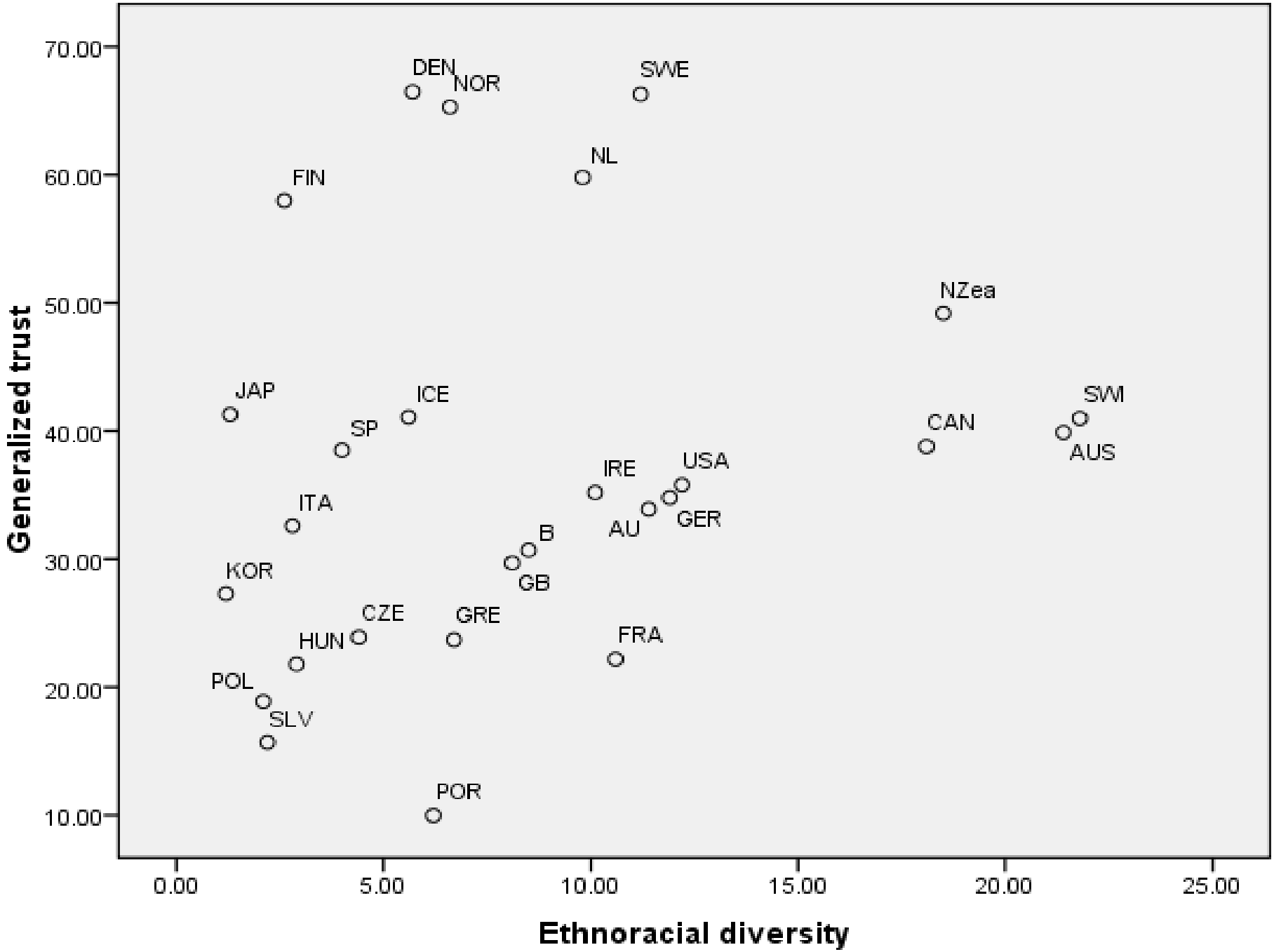
Survey data (aggregate)

Component	Indicator
Value diversity	Index of dispersion of attitudes on seven contentious issues
Trust	% one can trust most people
Civic society	- Passive participation
	- Active participation
Freedom v equality	% preferring freedom
Merit v equality	% work harder earn more
Ethnic tolerance	% not minding immigrants as neighbours
Social hierarchy	% always respect parents
Gender inequality	% men have more right to job in times of crisis

How to Explore Social Cohesion Regimes?

Four ways to test regimes:

- Cluster analysis: to assess group membership;
- Factor analysis: to assess the internal consistency of the presumed regimes substantively;
- Scatter plots: to assess the country profiles on the extracted factors.
- Composite indexes: to assess the country profiles substantively;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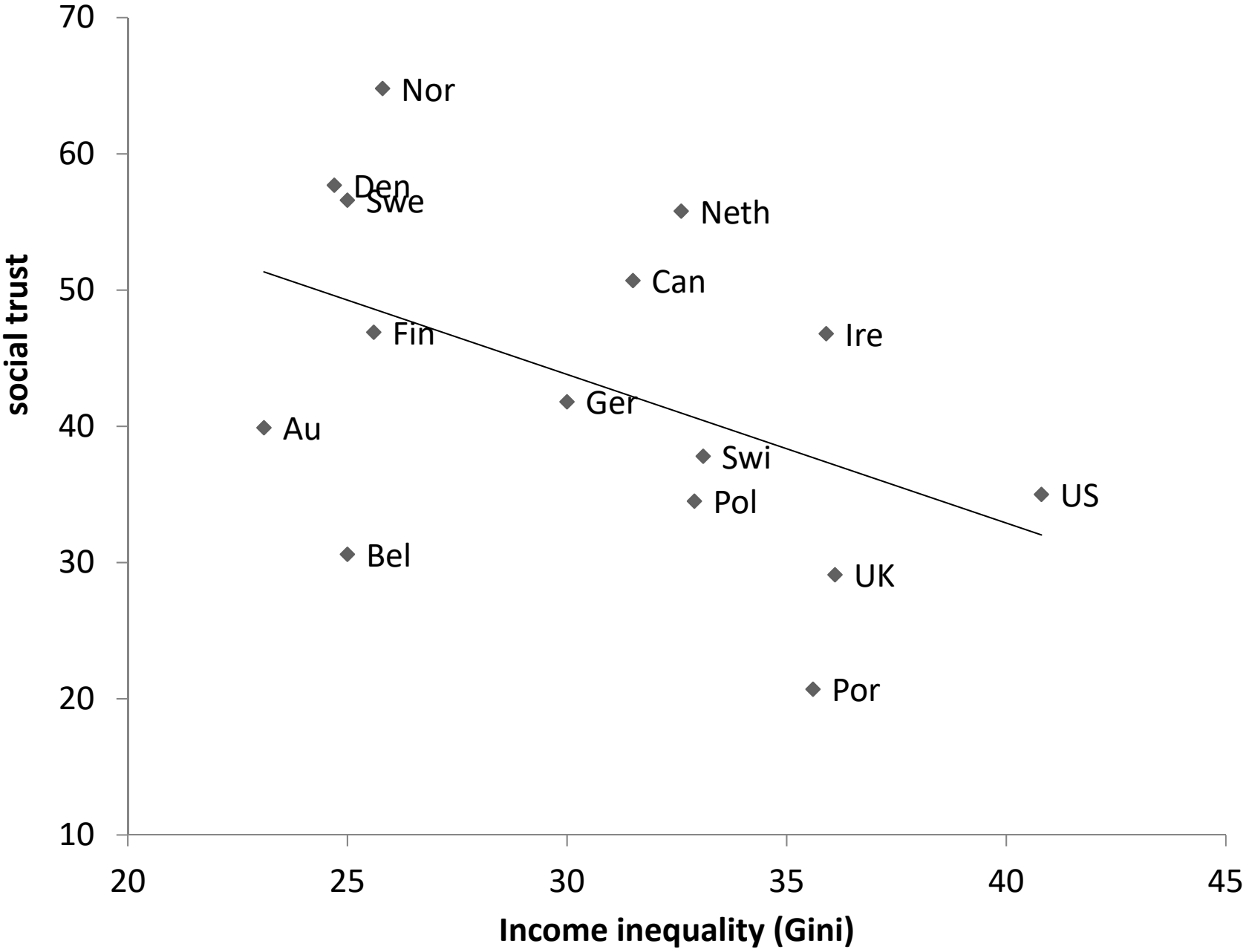
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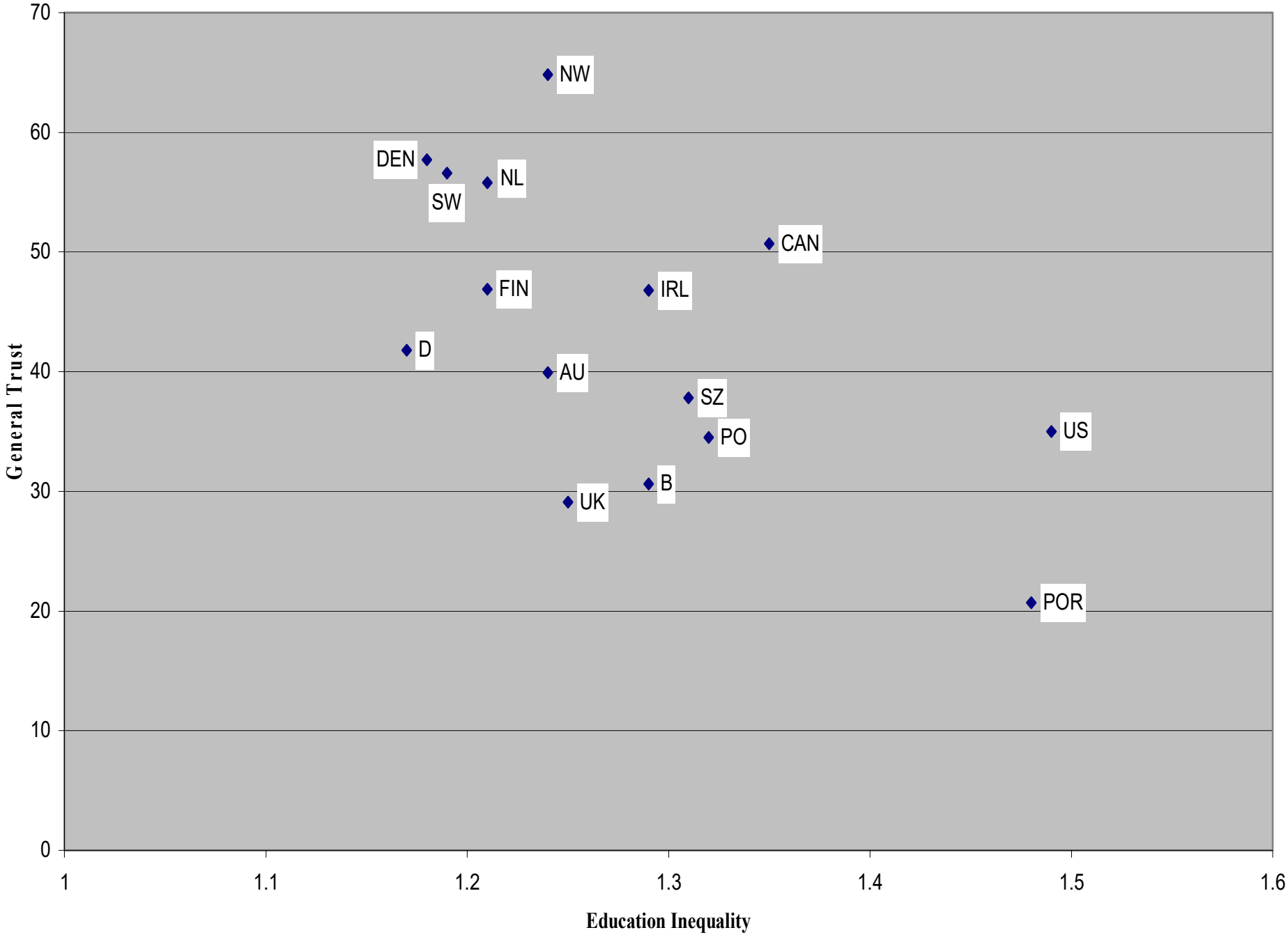
Income inequality (Gini)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General Trust
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Education Inequality
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Violent Crime Rate
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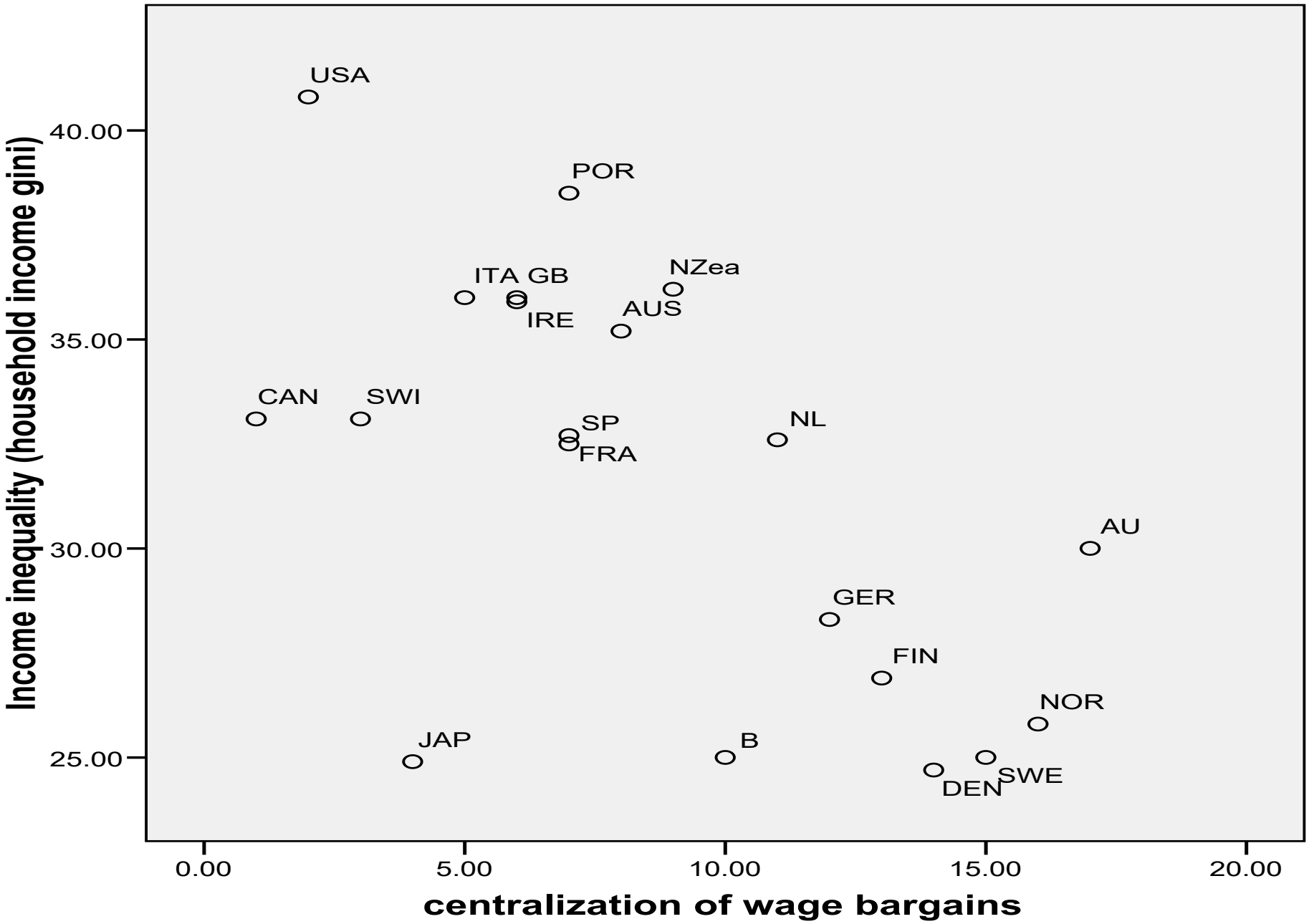
Inequality (household income gini)


Income inequality (household income gini)
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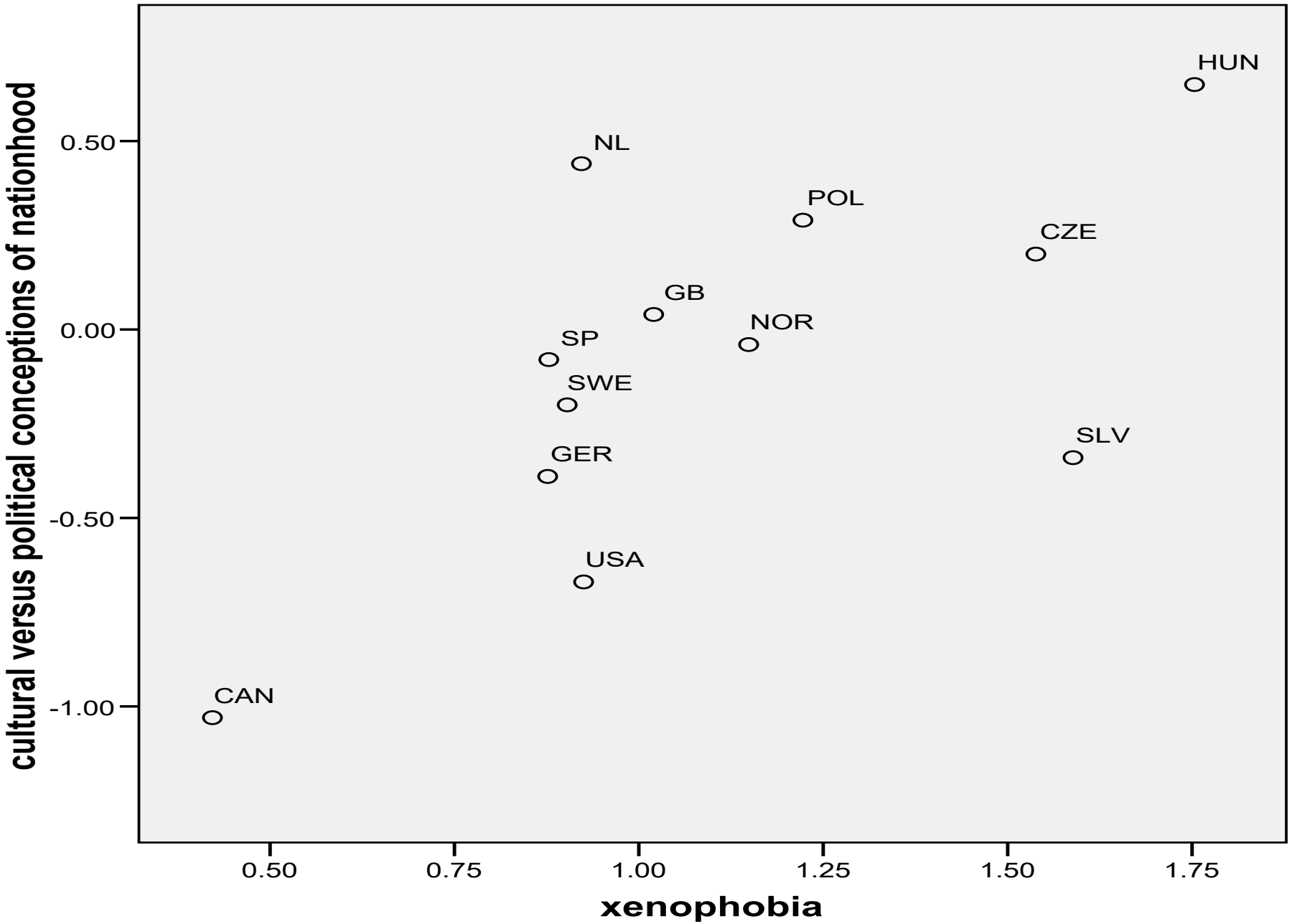
cultural versus political conceptions of nationhood
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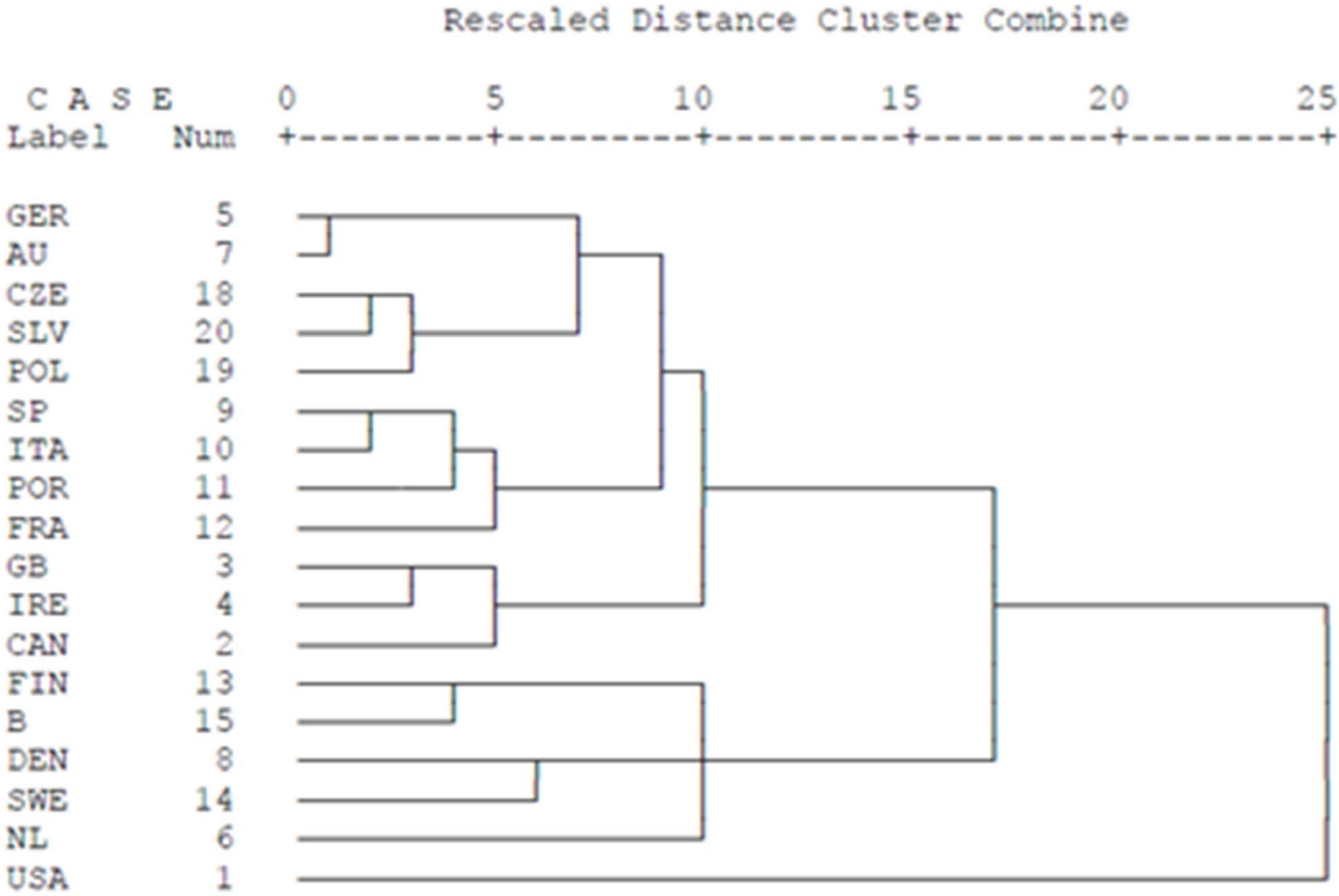
xenophobia

Cluster analysis: Dendrogram using Average Linkage (Between Groups)



LIBERAL	Social Democratic	Social Market	East Asian
Mean: -.70	Mean: 2.07	Mean: -.59	Mean: .09
Minimum: -7.25	Minimum: -3.43	Minimum: -10.97	Minimum: -9.34
Maximum: 16.44	Maximum: 13.80	Maximum: 5.50	Maximum: 11.85
Included components	Included components	Included components	Included components
Inequality +	Inequality -		
Diversity +	Diversity -	Diversity +	Diversity -
Welfare state -	Welfare state +	Welfare state +	Welfare state -
State involvement -	State involvement+	Empl protection +	Empl protection +
Wage regulation -(Union coverage)	Wage regulation + (Union coverage)	Wage regulation + (Union coverage)	Crime – (homicide)
Wage regulation – (Centralized bargain)	Wage regulation + (Centralized bargain)	Wage regulation + (Centralized bargain)	
Empl protection -	Crime – (homicide)		
Crime + (homicide)			
	Gender equality +	Gender equality -	Gender equality -
Active part +	Active part +	Active part -	Active part -
Passive part -	Passive part +	Passive part -	Passive part -
Value diversity +	Value diversity -	Value diversity -	Value diversity -
Merit +	Merit -	Merit +	Merit +
Freedom +	Freedom +	Freedom -	Social hierarchy +
Ethnic tolerance + (neighbours measure)		Ethnic tolerance - (neighbours measure)	Ethnic tolerance – (neighbours measure)

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

East Asian Traditions of Social Cohesion

East Asia is probably too diverse to talk about an East Asian 'regime of social cohesion.' Some scholars, however, have argued that there is a distinctive Confucian tradition of thinking on social cohesion which emphasizes social harmony and social peace, respect for authority and the strong state (Tu, 2000; Chan, 1993). Others have pointed to traits like:

- Top-down, state-centric form of social cohesion supported by strongly family-oriented values and strong national identities
- Relatively low-levels of associational membership and civic participation in some countries (Park and Lee, 2007)
- Medium to low-levels of social trust (at least beyond confines of the family (Fukuyama).

Societies and Crisis of Globalisation

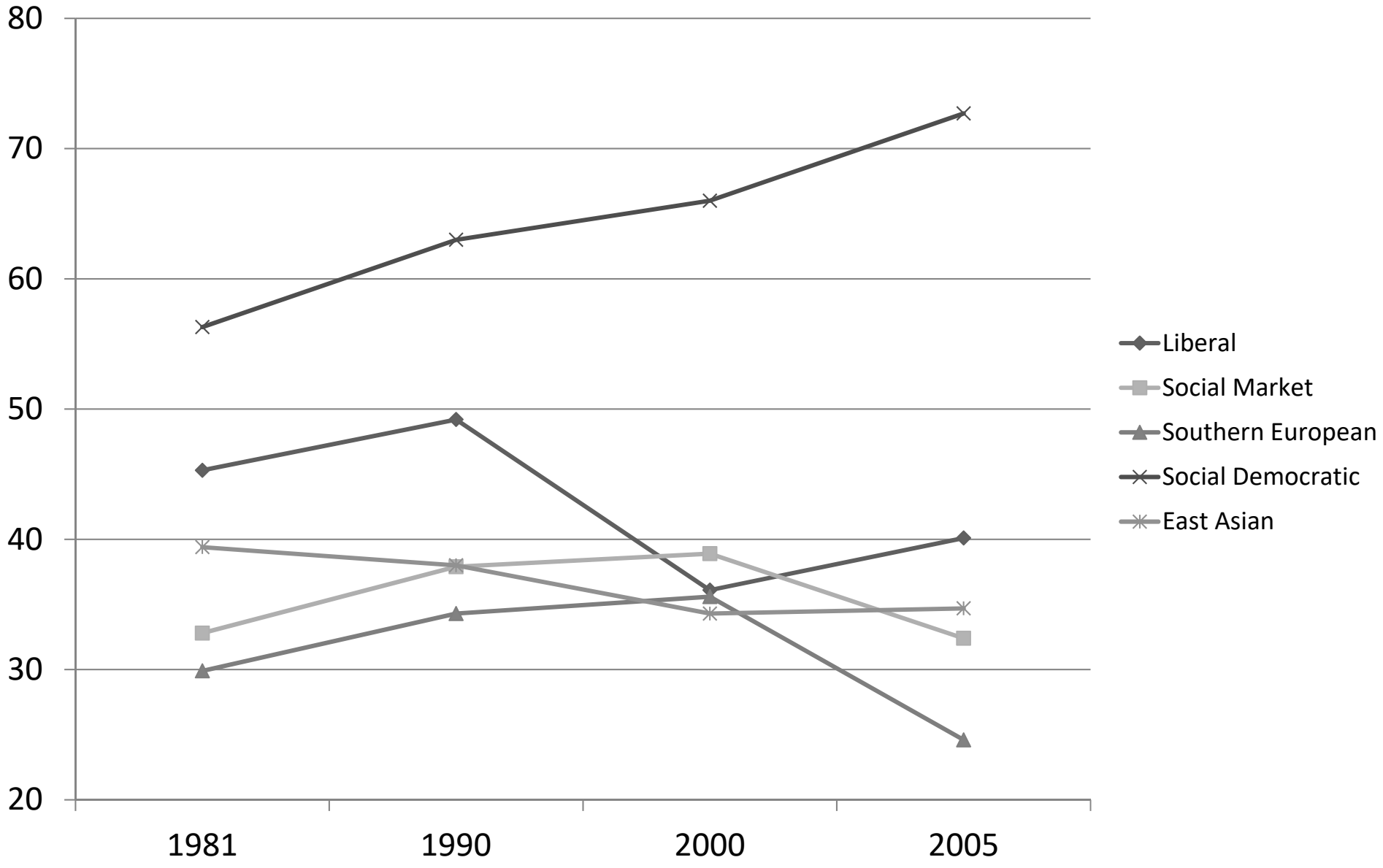
The global financial crisis of 2007/8 can be seen to the beginning of a crisis of globalization which has unleashed a widespread backlash characterized by new forms of populist authoritarian nationalism.

Social Cohesion is widely seen as threated by:

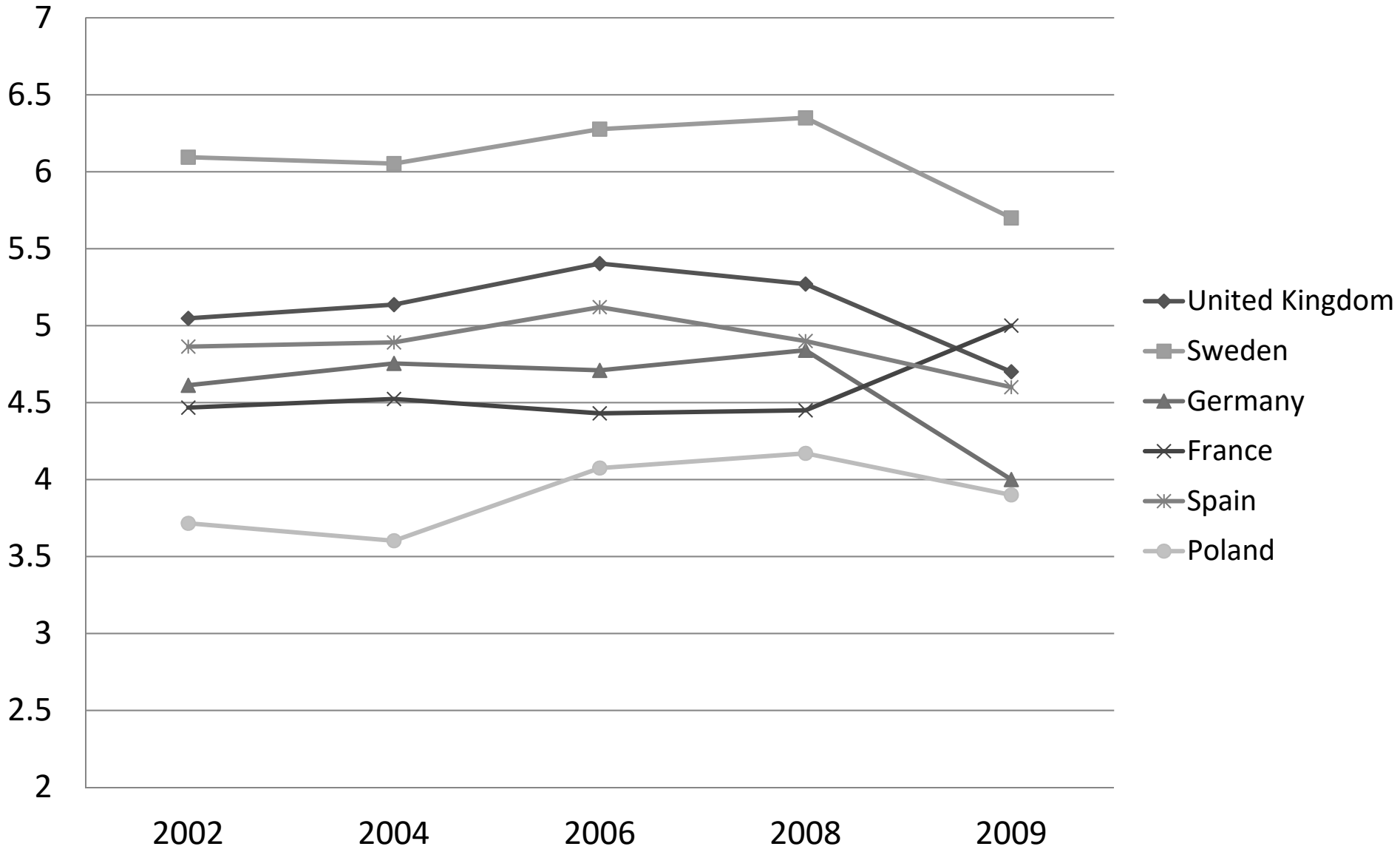
- The decline of the nation state and associated national identities (Castells, 1997)
- Increasing cultural diversity
- The growth of communitarianism and identity politics (Touraine, 2000)
- Growing individualism/uation (Beck, 2004; Giddens, 1991)
- Rising inequality (Piketty, 2014)

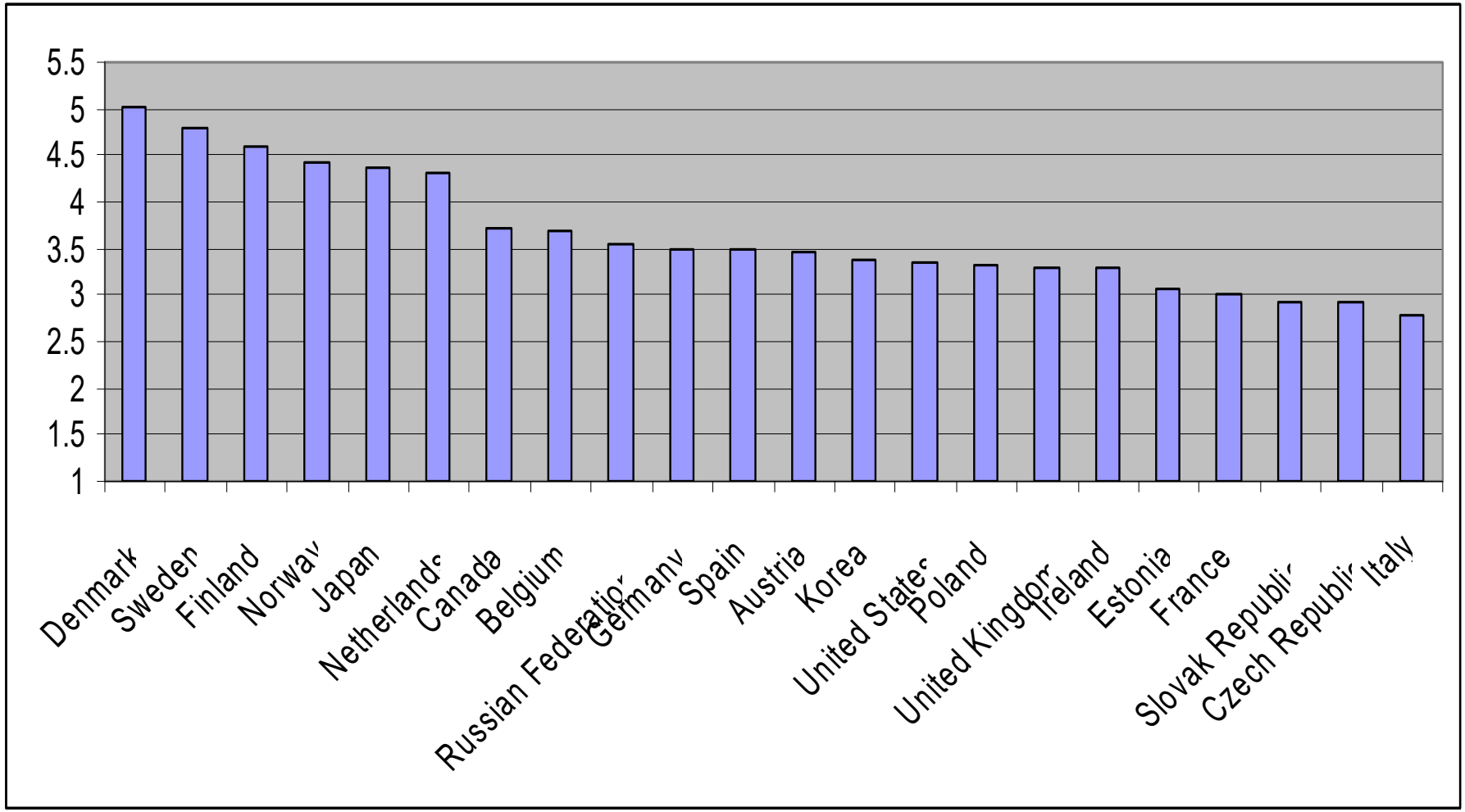
Social cohesion, measured by indicators of social and political trust, and tolerance, is often seen to be in a convergent process of decline.

Trends in Social Trust, 1981-2005



Trends in Social Trust, 2002 - 2009

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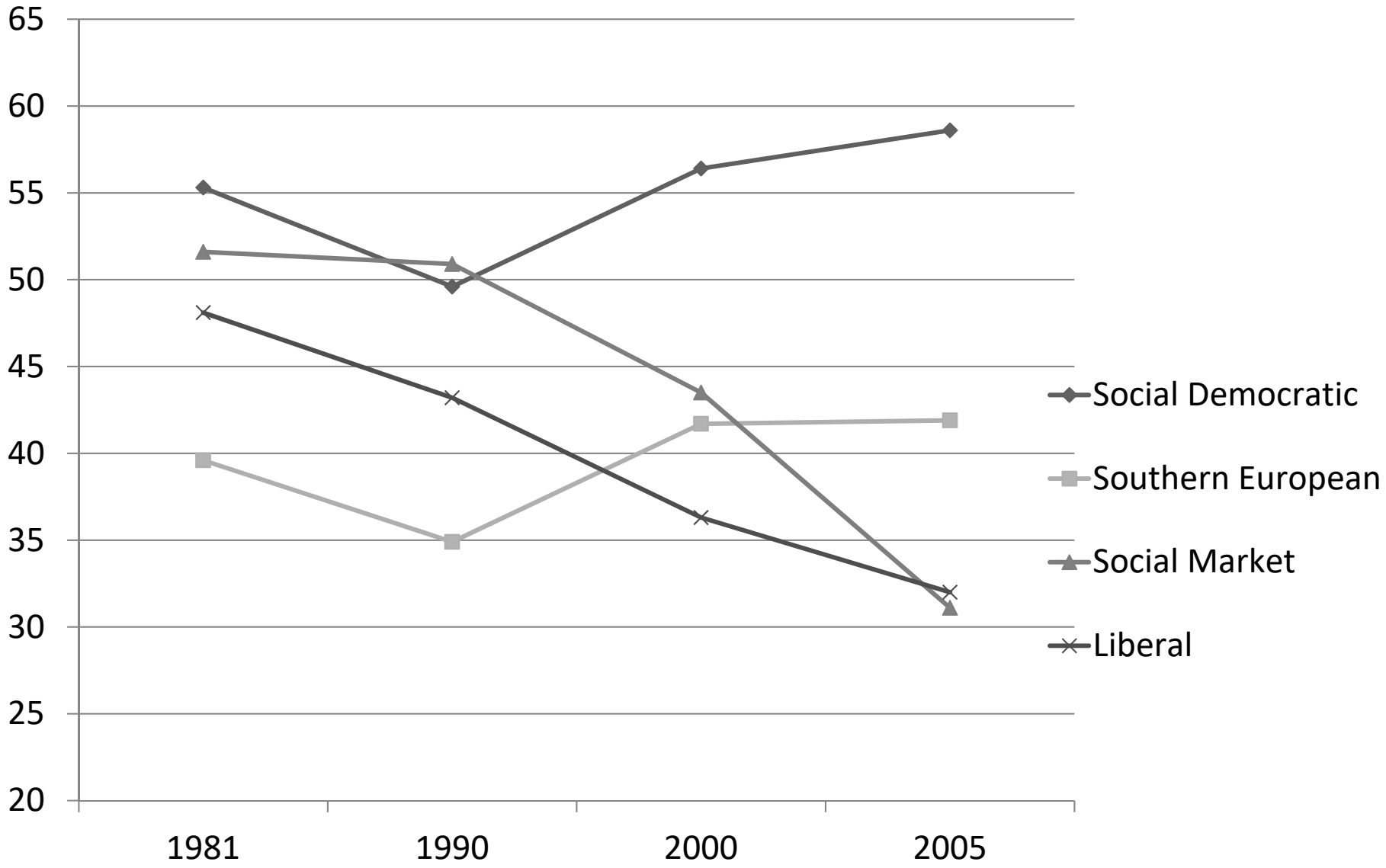
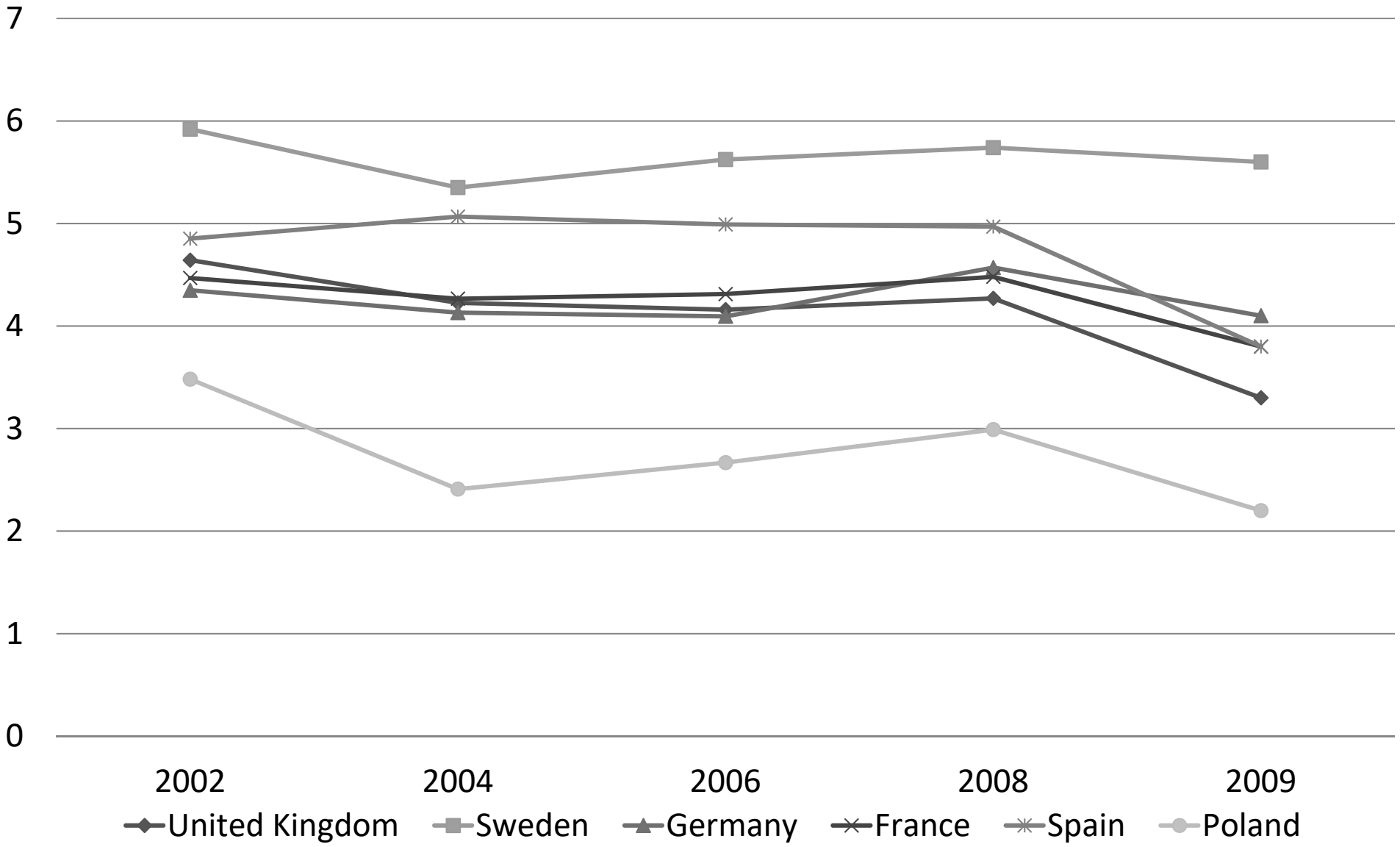
Czech Republic
Italy

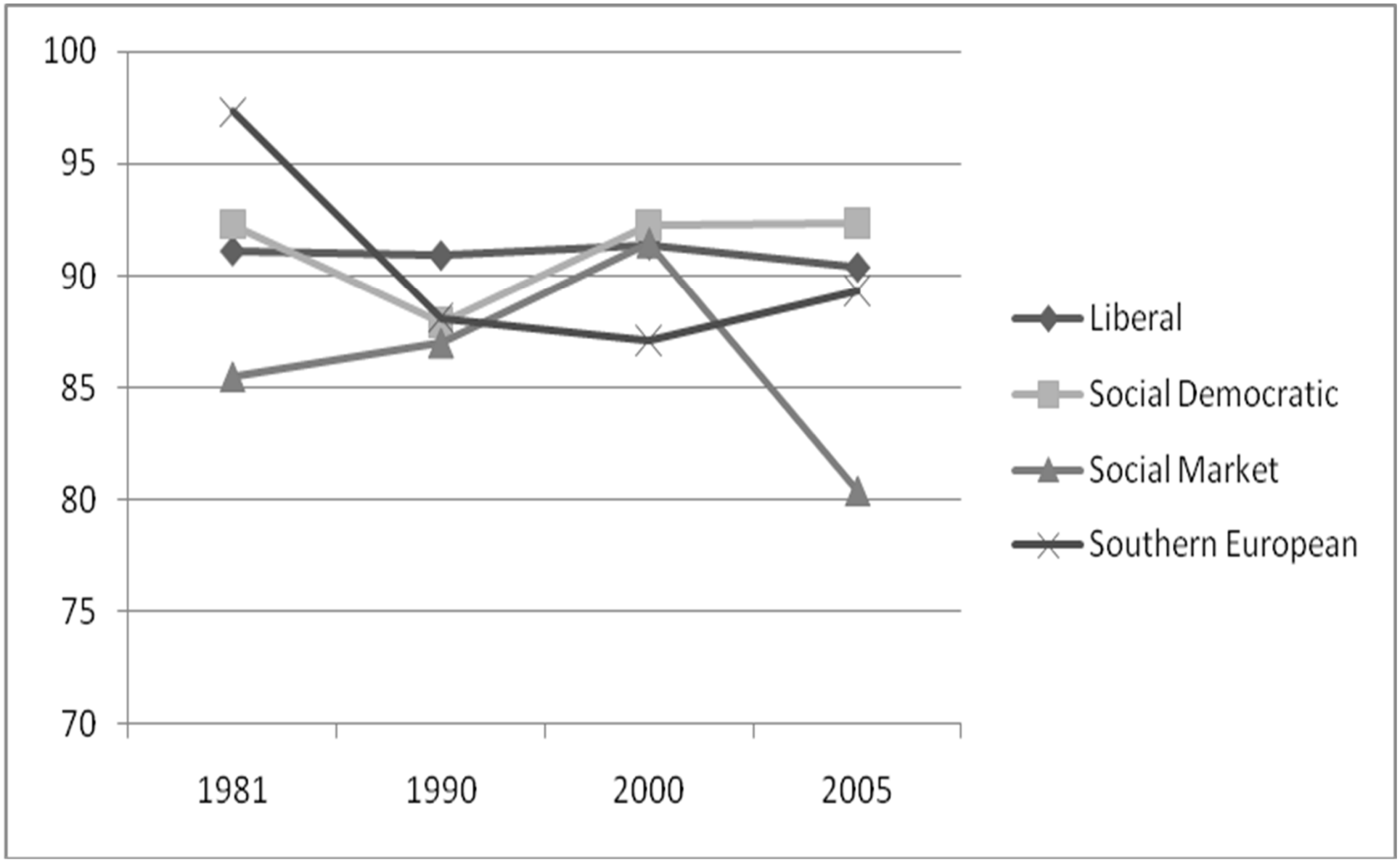
Political Trust, 1981 - 2005



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.