

A decorative graphic consisting of a grid of small grey dots, with several dots highlighted in red. The dots are arranged in a pattern that roughly follows the shape of the title and subtitle.

Is There Any Truth in the Thesis of the End of Social Democracy?

An Empirical Analysis of the Election Results and
Voter Profiles of Social Democratic Parties in Europe
over the Past 20 Years

BERNHARD WESSELS

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- This study explores in empirical terms whether there is anything in the recent reports of the death of social democracy. Bernhard Weßels analyses the electoral performance and voter profiles of social democratic parties in 12 European countries for the period 1990–2009.
- The result is – at least for adherents of the crisis scenario – surprising. There is no question of the end of social democracy. No structural crisis is discernible, either, since social democratic parties have been able to maintain their core identity and their status as national parties. The fact that, in Western Europe in particular, social democratic governments have been voted out is easily explicable in terms of the normal political cycle.
- However, the study should not be (mis)understood as sounding the all-clear. Elections are not won of their own accord. Social democracy in many European countries faces the task of re-establishing itself as a genuine alternative to the current governing parties. The study also emphasises the difficult voter structure faced by social democratic parties: no other party family is as poorly positioned among younger voters.



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Preface

Gero Maaß and Jan Niklas Engels

While at the beginning of the millennium European countries were still, for the most part, governed by social democratic parties, only ten years later social democratic government leaders seem under threat of extinction. Is European social democracy in deep crisis? Or is the rather hackneyed crisis scenario an inadequate reflection of complex reality? While in September 2009 the SPD suffered a historic electoral defeat, with only 23 per cent of the votes, in Greece the social democrats won an absolute parliamentary majority. The French Parti Socialiste (PS) polled a shameful 16 per cent of the votes in the European elections in June 2009, but in March 2010, allied with other left-wing parties, it won the regional elections in almost all of France's 26 »régions«. How do things really stand with social democracy in Europe?

Against this background, Bernhard Wessels examines, in this data-based analysis of 12 European countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom), the electoral performance of social democratic parties over the past 20 years and the socio-structural profile of their voters. The outcome is disappointing for adherents of the thesis of the imminent demise of social democracy. Despite numerous defeats suffered by social democratic parties in Europe no statistically significant downward trend can be detected. With regard to voter profiles, it turns out that the voter structures of social democratic parties correspond almost exactly to society at large. This is how it should be for a national party which, in its own terms, must be a viable electoral choice for all sectors of the population equally. At the same time, trade union members and workers are still represented disproportionately among social democratic voters. The behaviour at the polls of these traditional core groups indicates that they still identify with social democracy.

Welcome though the results of the study may be for all supporters of social democracy, one thing they most certainly are not: a blithe espousal of business as usual. Even though there is no structural downward trend for social democracy, in politics there is no guarantee that electoral defeats will be followed by victories. Only parties which develop a convincing profile and are able to offer a clear political alternative are likely to celebrate victory at the polls. Social democratic parties in particular have always understood the need to recognise the challenges of the time and to formulate an adequate political response, including policy options for a more socially just world. This future-oriented task must be taken up again by social democrats in a number of European countries.

One finding in particular provides food for thought: social democratic voters are the oldest in Europe. Social democratic parties do best among 50 to 65 year olds, followed by 40 to 50 year olds. This finding is somewhat alarming since the voters of other parties are, on average, two years younger; rival parties are much better positioned in younger age groups (up to 35 years of age). The weakness of social democratic parties among younger sections of the electorate may be an indication that social democrats have relied for too long on an electoral constituency which is »to the manner born«. In a period during which traditional social milieus are dissolving and relations between social strata are becoming more complex, parties will find it increasingly difficult to establish long-term commitments and loyalties among the electorate. This may hit social democracy – with its roots in the working class – particularly hard, although socio-demographic change and its consequences affect all parties. In future, distinctions between sections of the electorate will blur and voter volatility increase.

The disappearance of clear voter structures and the waning power of political parties to play an identity-forming role may be regrettable, but there is some comfort for social democratic parties which have not of late enjoyed a surfeit of electoral successes: votes can be won back. In order



to get back in the election-winning habit, social democratic parties must take up the challenge of voter volatility. The voters want to know why they should hand over their votes to a particular party. And they want to be approached not only with the head, but also with the heart.¹ What's more, social democratic parties need to frame their political ideas in their own terms.

Classic electoral groups are dissolving, but that just means that the emerging electoral groups have to be inspired and mobilised. Social democratic parties must therefore address themselves to those social groups that wish to play a positive role in shaping their future and that think not only about themselves, but also about others. Furthermore, even in a society characterised by increasing individualisation and complexity, solidarity and justice are not just yesterday's ideals. Most people favour a future-oriented willingness to change and solidarity. And there is no reason why this majority should not be converted into a mandate to govern.

1. On this, see the Policy Analysis by Elisabeth Wehling (2009): »Politische Kommunikation, die ankommt: Eine neurolinguistische Analyse des EU-Wahlkampfes«, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Internationale Politikanalyse, Berlin.

1. Introduction

Around a quarter of a century ago, Lord Dahrendorf predicted the end of the social democratic era. Ten years later Wolfgang Merkel also took up the question of the *End of Social Democracy?* In 2008, news magazine *Der Spiegel* forecast social democracy's apocalypse. Since the parliamentary election debacle of 2009 speculation about the future of social democracy has not abated.

What truth is there in this thesis and why does it continue to enjoy such plausibility? There is a certain irony for social democracy in one of the main reasons given in justification of the thesis, namely that social democracy is the victim of its own success: in other words, it has achieved what it set out to do in the period of the Industrial Revolution and thus has outlived its usefulness. Its success in the modernisation of societies and its achievements by virtue of a social and welfare policy directed towards social justice and protection against life's contingencies have brought about real social change and improved people's chances in life to such an extent that little remains of their former core constituencies. To this long-term-oriented demographic theory of political change which, if social democratic parties had failed to adapt, would probably have become a reality long ago, may be added a second possible aspect: the purported and to some extent observable weaknesses experienced by social democratic parties in mobilising support in the face of a hegemonic neoliberal discourse that even the financial crisis seems barely to have affected. The basic structural problem is the diminished scope for state redistribution, which permits little more than coping with scarcity, and certainly not activist and redistributive social democratic policies. Social democratic parties in government in particular have felt the full force of what it means to reform social or welfare policies in such a way that they can still be funded.

Are, then, the constantly recurring accounts of the demise of social democracy exaggerated? We shall examine this question in light of the following perspectives:

1. What about the electoral performance of social democratic parties? What opportunities do they have, when they enjoy governmental responsibilities, to address structural challenges?

2. What about the social identity and loyalty of their voters? Does social democracy still have a discernible voter profile in socio-structural terms?

2. Methodology and Data

Questions directed towards developments can be answered only if the developments themselves are examined in more detail. Current diagnoses that seek to draw conclusions from a snapshot of the present situation fall short. Also, attempts at explanation which are related to developments in only one country do not allow judgments about social democracy as a whole. In this article, therefore, the two aspects – electoral performance and the profile of social democratic constituencies – will be examined in detail from an international and time comparative perspective.

The year 1990 is taken as starting point for the analysis of electoral performance. With the democratic transformations and revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, not only was the circle of countries extended in which social democratic and other parties could exert influence via democratic processes, but also the ideological coordinates were changed, in particular for parties to the left of the political spectrum, with the elimination of »real existing« alternative systems. Since 1990, two decades have passed, with – depending on the electoral cycle – up to six national parliamentary elections, which should provide an adequate basis for some reasonably generalisable reflections.

With regard to the analysis of social democratic voter profiles we cannot go back as far as that. Regular comparative international surveys, of the kind needed for such an analysis, have only relatively recently started to become available to the social sciences or are simply not sufficiently up to date. The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), an international comparative network of national election studies (www.cses.org) commenced only in 1996 and the most recent data come from 2003. The World Values Survey goes back as far as 1981, but ends in 2005. The flagship of European survey-based social research, the European Social Survey, is qualitatively the best data base and is carried out every two years, although only since 2002.

It does go up to 2008, however, and thus covers four survey waves (www.europeansocialsurvey.org). These are the data we shall refer to here. In this way, an analysis of social democratic voter profiles for almost the whole of the past decade is possible. In what follows, 12 countries are examined which are of particular relevance for social democracy in Europe, not least because of social democrats' participation in government there: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Key results are put in an overall European context in order to test whether they might also be valid in a larger set of countries or apply only to one.

3. Electoral Performance between 1990 and 2009

Current discussions of the future of social democracy appear to start out from the assumption that the electoral situation of social democratic parties is getting worse and worse, and thus that the possibility of the kind of electoral success needed to participate in government is progressively slipping away. Such impressions can arise when relatively contemporaneous trends point in the same direction. They cannot stand up to closer examination, however, because elections are always influenced by specific factors which emerge at a certain time in a certain country. Even in a period of 20 years the number of elections is insufficient to warrant a totally reliable generalisation of possible trends. Since 1990, there has been a total of 62 elections in the 12 countries under examination here, a maximum of six elections per country. If the same trends arose in all countries in each consecutive election, judgement could be pronounced more easily – although it would be meaningful only for the past, not the future.

A couple of aspects are to be considered here in order to elicit whether there can be any question of such a global trend at all. One aspect is the question of the best and worst results achieved by social democratic parties since 1990. If there was a trend towards ever worsening election results, in all countries the time of the worst would have to come after the time of the best election result. Looking at the best and worst election results from the perspective of the order in which they took place, we may note the following. In six countries, the worst election result occurs after the best election result achieved

in the period in question: that is the case with regard to Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. In the other six countries – Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Poland, Spain and the UK – the reverse is the case. It can be concluded neither that the worst election results are all particularly recent (1998, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009), nor that the best election results lie in the distant past (2008, 2007, 2006 [twice], 2001 and 1997). What certainly cannot be derived from this is a global trend (see Figure 1).

This question can be examined in more detail if we ask about the number of gains and losses from one election to the next and, above all, the number of losses and gains in succession. Here it will be noted that not a uniform, but rather an extremely heterogeneous picture emerges across the countries concerned. In four of the 12 countries it cannot be established that over a series of elections gains or losses are to be noted (Austria, France, the Netherlands and Sweden).

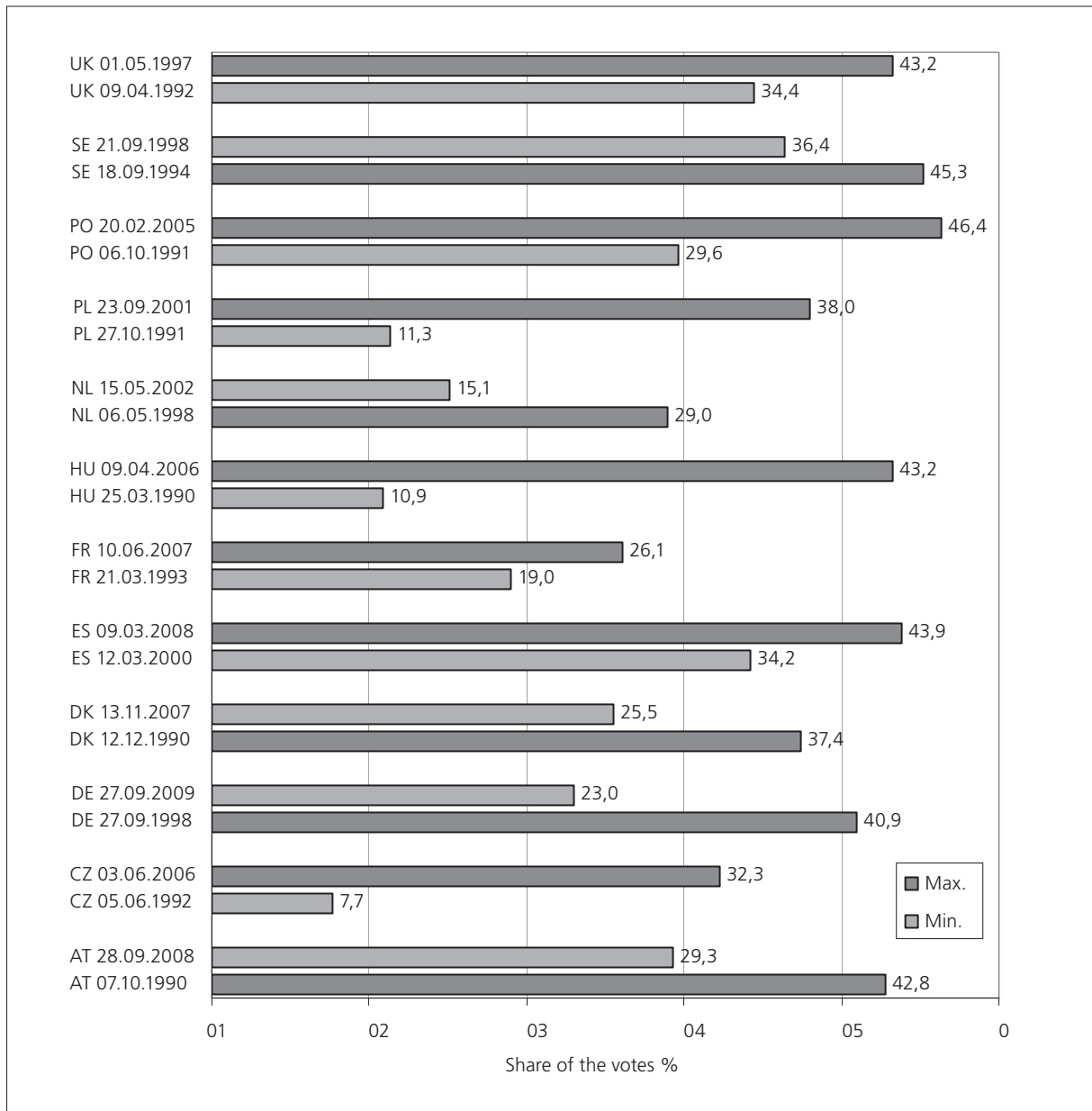
Two countries have both gains and losses in succession to record (Germany and Spain), three countries only successive losses (Denmark, Portugal and the UK) and three countries only successive gains (Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland). If one looks at these values across all countries, the balance reads: 13 gains in succession and 12 losses in succession. Even the gains and losses from one election to the next balance one another out: 26 gains, 24 losses (see Table 1).

With more precision we can investigate how the number of voters, seats, shares of votes and seats, gains and losses, as well as the distance from the largest party after or before the social democrats and the average place in the party rankings developed over the up to six electoral cycles. In total, there were at least four elections in all 12 countries since 1990, five in ten of them and as many as six in four countries. For purposes of comparison the countries under consideration should not vary. Accordingly, meaningful comparisons can be drawn from four electoral cycles, while in the fifth cycle two, and in the sixth electoral cycle as many as eight countries are lacking in this respect.

In the first four electoral cycles in the 12 countries, the share of votes and seats, the number of seats and the number of votes won did not fall at all. Furthermore, in relation to the first electoral cycle the trend is even posi-



Figure 1: Best and worst election result of social democratic parties in 12 countries (1990–2009)



Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

tive. Mean placement with regard to electoral success (as election winner or otherwise), as well as the gap in relation to the next largest party developed positively in the first four electoral cycles (see Table 2).

Although, in contrast, falls are registered in the fifth and sixth electoral cycles, it is difficult to draw inferences from

this since, in the fifth cycle, two (France and the UK) and in the sixth cycle, as many as eight (Czech Republic, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK) of the countries under consideration held no elections.



Table 1: Gains and losses of social democratic parties in 12 countries from one election to the next and several elections in succession (1990–2009)

Gains/losses from one election to the next		... in succession		Number of elections
Country		Gains	Losses	Gains	Losses	
Sweden	SE	2	2	0	0	5
Denmark	DK	1	4	0	3	6
Netherlands	NL	2	2	0	0	5
France	FR	2	1	0	0	4
Spain	ES	2	2	2	2	5
Portugal	PO	1	3	0	2	5
Germany	DR	2	3	2	3	6
Austria	AT	2	3	0	0	6
UK	UK	1	2	0	2	4
Czech Republic	CZ	3	1	2	0	5
Hungary	HU	4	0	4	0	5
Poland	PL	4	1	3	0	6
Total		26	24	13	12	62
Mean		2.2	2.0	1.1	1.0	5.2

Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

Table 2: Gains and losses of social democratic parties: mean values across 12 countries and six electoral cycles (1990–2009)

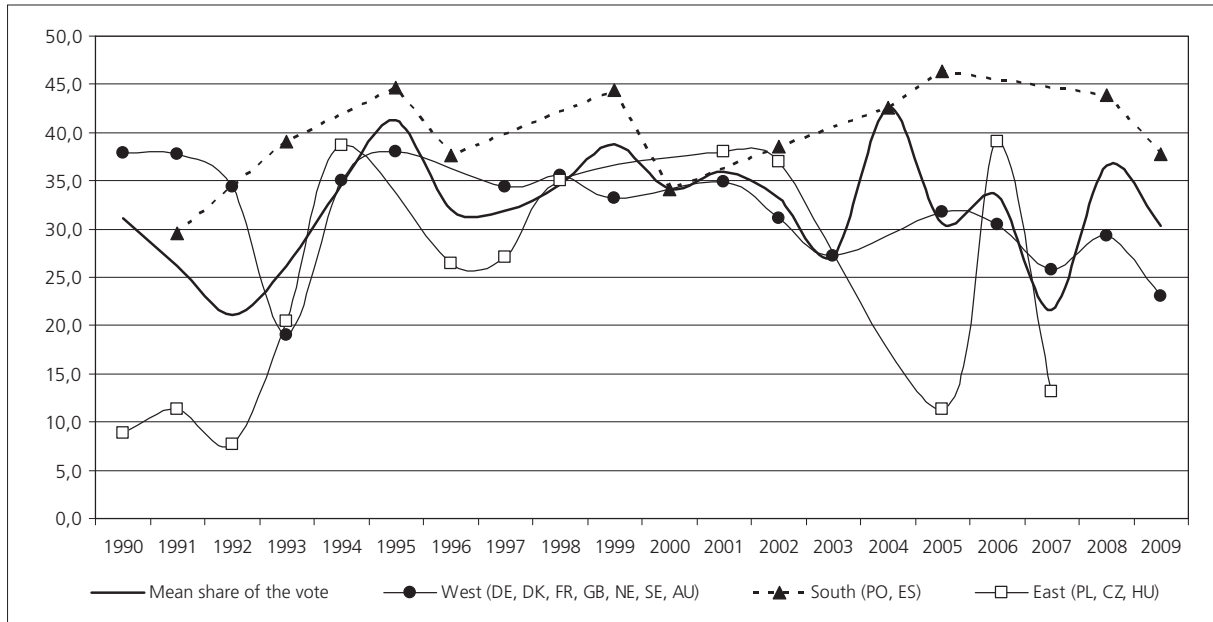
		Mean values across 1, 2, 3, ... elections in 12 countries				
Election after 1990	Number of elections during the period	Absolute	Share of the votes (%)	Gain/loss (%)	Share of the seats	Seats
1. election	12	4472458	29.06	–	30.87	107
2.	12	5211169	33.42	4.36	40.93	148
3.	12	5040507	32.68	–0.74	36.46	139
4.	12	5339824	35.25	2.57	40.31	146
5.	10	4109725	31.20	–4.98	33.75	94
6.	4	3606178	22.73	–3.95	22.96	75
Election after 1990	Number of elections during the period	Difference in share of the vote*	Rank	Share of vote min.	Share of vote max.	Spread
1. election	12	3.46	1.8	7.67	50.99	43.32
2.	12	5.49	1.3	20.41	45.25	24.85
3.	12	0.69	1.6	15.11	40.93	25.81
4.	12	4.61	1.3	26.05	42.59	16.53
5.	10	–3.72	1.9	11.31	43.87	32.56
6.	4	–9.16	2.0	13.15	29.26	16.11

Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

* Difference in vote share in relation to the second largest party, if the social democratic party was the strongest (positive value) or difference in the vote share in relation to the largest party if the social democratic party was not the strongest party (negative value).



Figure 2: Mean share of the votes of social democratic parties overall and divided into groups of countries (1990–2009)



Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

Looking at the shares of the vote over the whole period on an annual basis and by country group, a number of other considerations emerge. In general, the average shares of the vote across the 12 countries do not exhibit a falling trend over time. There is no statistically robust – that is, significant – trend. However, if some quantitative tendency must be expressed, it is, if anything, on the positive side, with an annual increase of around 0.17 percentage points. Turning to specific country groups (west: Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, UK; south: Portugal, Spain; east: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland), a number of differences arise. In the south, election successes take a cyclical course, at a slightly higher level with each cycle. In the east, development has been extremely volatile, with significant increases at the beginning of the 1990s, relative stability up to 2002 and then enormous volatility once again. Vote share in the seven western European countries develop positively up to the mid-1990s, then remain relatively stable, before starting to fluctuate up and down from 2000, with a downward tendency (see Figure 2).

The high volatility of vote shares from 2000 makes it relatively difficult to identify a trend. No statistically significant tendency can be discerned. It is true that, in the

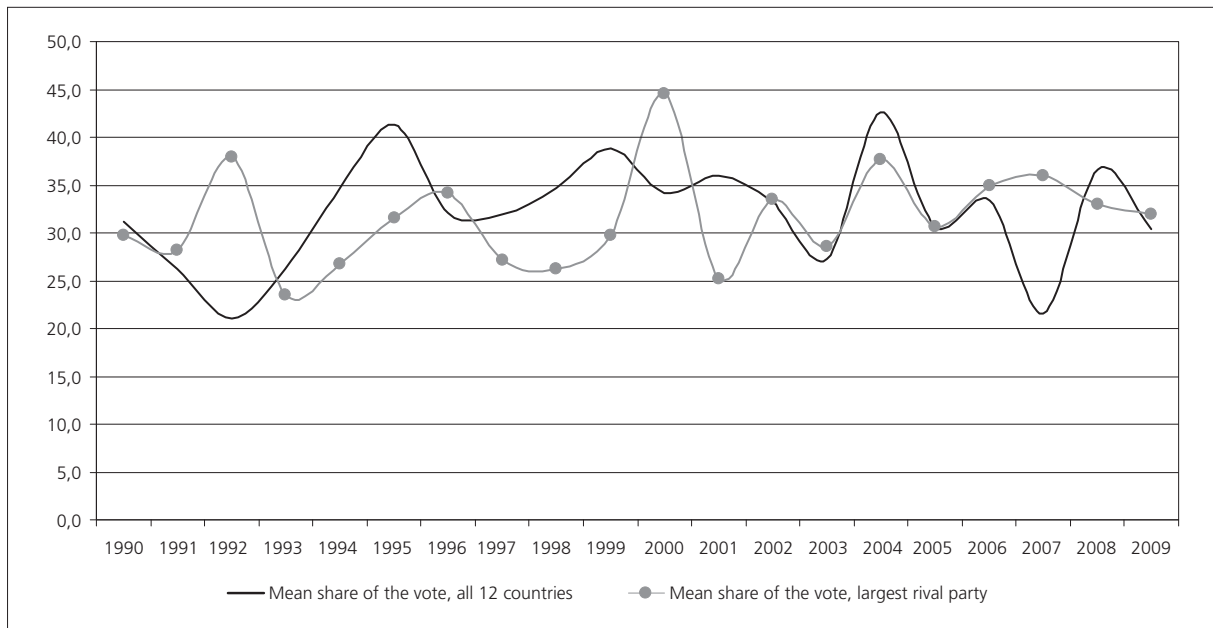
western countries, there is an annual decrease of the share of the vote of 0.4 percentage points over the period as a whole. It must, however, be pointed out that, on average, no year since 2005 has been worse than, for example, 1992.

Even in these more nuanced terms, none of this leads to the result that, from 2000 or in succeeding years, social democratic parties have suffered a structural collapse. Changes in the vote share of this kind are characteristic of the normal fluctuations of electoral cycles. Having said that, different regional developments must be borne in mind.

Nor does comparison of the vote shares of the largest competitors of social democratic parties – chiefly centre-right or Christian Democratic parties – indicate the emergence of a structural gap. If anything, the volatility of the vote shares is, by and large, even greater among the largest rival parties, which have not experienced a period of relative stability of the kind enjoyed by social democrats between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s (see Figure 3). Comparison of the first decade (up to 1999) and the second (to 2009) shows that both social democrats and their rival parties did a little better, on



Figure 3: Mean share of the vote of social democratic parties and their largest rival parties (1990–2009)



Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

average, in the second decade than in the first: social democrats by 0.7 percentage points and their largest rivals by 4.1 percentage points, though starting from a low base (mid-1990s: largest rival party: 29.5 per cent; social democrats: 31.9 per cent; see also Table A1 in the Appendix).

4. Social Democratic Governments and Government Participation between 1990 and 2009

Over the past 20 years, social democratic parties have either participated in government as coalition partners or provided the head of government in all the 12 countries under examination. Over the whole period – from 1 January 1990 to 31 December 2009 – social democrats at least formed part of the government coalition during the majority of the 7,304 days (the period is a little shorter for the three Central and East European countries – see Table 3). The shortest period – 3,228 days or 44.2 per cent of the whole – of government participation was that of the social democrats in Denmark, while the longest was in Sweden, with 5,022 days, corresponding to 68.8 per cent of the 20 years. In both countries, however,

the social democrats provided heads of government throughout the period. On average in the 12 countries social democrats participated in government for 56.7 per cent of the time and also provided the head of government for 46.7 per cent of the time. The average coalition size was 2.22 parties, ranging from one-party government, as in the UK, to relatively large coalitions in Poland, with more than three parties.

Do these markedly positive results over two decades mask a negative development in the past ten years? The answer, quite clearly, is »no«. In the past decade (1 January 2000 to 31 December 2009) social democrats have, on average, participated in government for 55.7 per cent of the time and provided the government head for 48.4 per cent of the time. Comparison of the two decades reveals a slight drop with regard to the number of days of government participation, but a significant increase with regard to number of days as head of government (see Table 3).

Looking not only at the two decades, but also at annualised values, it is clear that the number of social democratic days in government since the beginning of the 1990s at first rose steadily then, from 2001, fell back



Table 3: Government leadership and government participation of social democratic parties in 12 countries (1990–2009)

	20 years (from 1.1.1990)				
Country	Total days government participation	Total days head of government	% days government participation government	% days head of parties	Mean number of government
Sweden	5022	5022	68.8	68.8	1.33
Denmark	3228	3228	44.2	44.2	2.75
Netherlands	5628	2891	77.1	39.6	2.80
France	4025	1798	55.1	24.6	2.00
Spain	4401	4401	60.3	60.3	1.25
Portugal	3196	3196	43.8	43.8	2.25
Germany	4049	2613	55.4	35.8	2.33
Austria	4771	4771	65.3	65.3	2.71
UK	4621	4621	63.3	63.3	1.00
Czech Republic	3189	2952	44.6	41.3	2.83
Hungary	4227	4227	58.5	58.5	2.00
Poland	2939	975	44.3	14.7	3.43
Mean	4108	3391	56.7	46.7	2.22
	10 years (from 1.1.2000)				
Country	Total days government participation	Total days head of government	% days government participation government	% days head of parties	Mean number of government
Sweden	2470	2470	67.6	67.6	2.00
Denmark	697	697	19.1	19.1	2.00
Netherlands	1977	934	54.1	25.6	3.00
France	858	858	23.5	23.5	5.00
Spain	2084	2084	57.1	57.1	1.00
Portugal	1069	1069	29.3	29.3	3.00
Germany	3589	2153	98.3	59.0	2.33
Austria	1120	1120	30.7	30.7	2.33
UK	3653	3653	100.0	100.0	1.00
Czech Republic	2657	2420	72.8	66.3	2.83
Hungary	2775	2775	76.0	76.0	2.00
Poland	1473	975	40.3	26.7	3.50
Mean	2035	1767	55.7	48.4	2.50
Total number of days (basis of calculation)					
	1.1.1990–31.12.2009		1.1.2000–31.12.2009		
Western countries		7304		3652	
Czech Republic		7145			
Hungary		7221			
Poland		6640			

Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

again, but overall remains at a higher level than in the first five years of the 1990s. In terms of country groups, some differences emerge over the course of time. Any interpretation must take into consideration the fact that differences in level between country groups result from the fact that more days in government are accumulated in the seven western countries than in the south and east country groups.

Looking at the whole 20-year period the dynamic already commented on for the group of countries as a whole is amplified for the western country group. The southern and eastern countries are characterised by more marked fluctuations. In the eastern country group the values from about 1994, for example, settle at a relatively stable level, climb to a higher level in 2002 and from 2006 fall back again to the level of the second half of the 1990s. In Portugal and Spain, comprising the southern country group, development was also fairly volatile, although settling from 2005 at a stable, in comparison to previous years fairly high level (see Figures 4a and 4b).

Participation in government, as the decade-based analysis has already shown, also often means government leadership for social democratic parties (see Table 3). Looking at the proportion of time spent as head of government the dynamics observed with regard to government participation stand out even more. There is, in turn, a continuous increase from the beginning to the end of the 1990s, followed by a slight decline, hovering at a level significantly higher than at the beginning of the 1990s. Considered in terms of country groups, it appears that this is a composition effect arising from increasing instances of government leadership in the two southern countries, Portugal and Spain; volatile development in the three eastern countries; and a decline in the western countries since 1999 until a stable, lower level is established from 2006. It should be emphasised that, despite the marked decline in instances of government leadership in the western countries, the level since 2006 is as high as at the beginning of the 1990s (see Figures 5a and 5b).

The heyday of 1999 in the western countries is past and there has been a return to the state of affairs at the beginning of the 1990s. This contrasts with distinctly positive developments in the southern countries and equally positive, albeit extremely volatile developments in the eastern countries. Looked at from the perspective of 1999, this could be interpreted as a sign of crisis. Taking

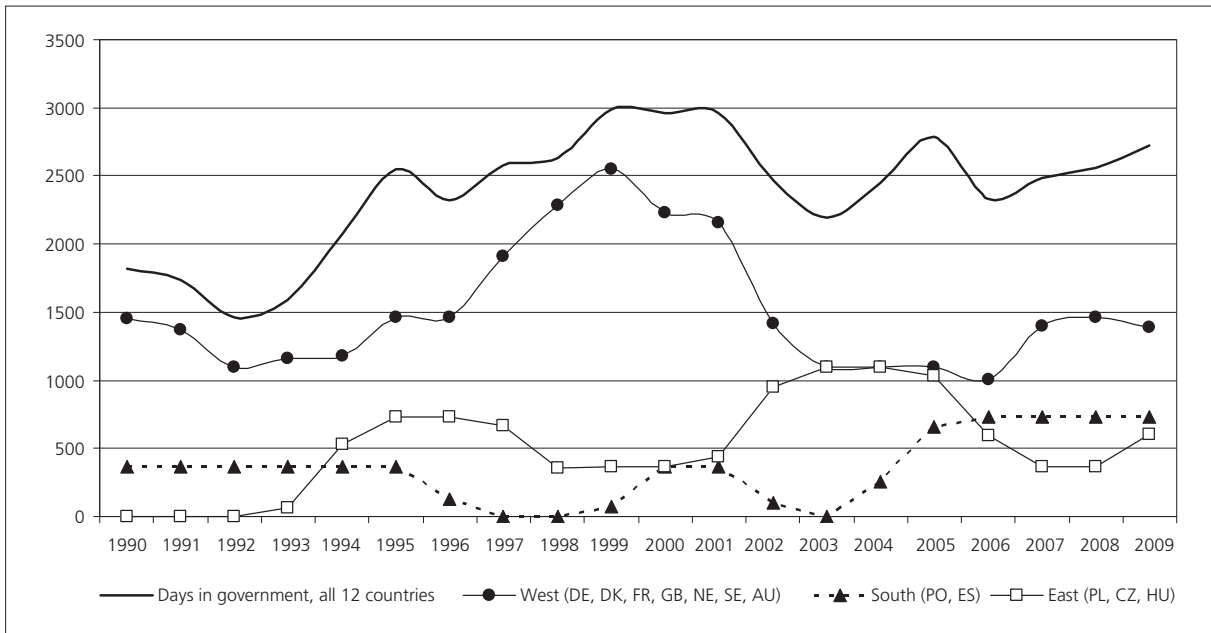
a more long-term view – as also applied in Dahrendorf's thesis of the »end of the social democratic era« 25 years ago – things look different. In a longer-term perspective the heyday of social democratic parties at the end of the 1990s is, although the desired case, nevertheless also an exception.

Putting the results of election successes and government participation in the 12 countries under examination since 1999 in an overall European context, it becomes clear that the developments of the past decade there can scarcely be distinguished from overall EU developments. The mean share of seats won by social democratic parties in the EU-17 has fluctuated slightly and, with the exception of the very high shares in 2000 and 2001, at a relatively stable level. In the ten eastern European member states greater volatility was to be observed at the beginning of the 2000s, followed by relative stability from 2004. Measured in terms of their ability to form a government alone or in coalition, the government participation of social democratic parties in the 12 countries under examination experienced a discernible fall after the peak of 1999 up to 2002, after which it remained relatively stable. In the ten eastern European countries the peak comes only in 2003, followed by a return to the level of the early 1990s (see Figure 6 and Table A1).

Europe-wide analysis basically confirms what was examined for the 12 countries in more detail: depending on country group, different developments can be noted which partly offset one another in terms of their positive and negative effects, in respect of which in no country group is there a development which points beyond the normal electoral cycle to a structural crisis, let alone the end of social democracy. Falls in the share of the vote, government participation and government leadership are not necessarily to be explained in any other way than what might be expected from the electoral and government cycle in any case. Election studies have frequently shown the effects of voter fatigue with regard to governments (so-called »wear-out effects«), resulting in a corresponding response on the part of the electorate. Relying on a certain weariness with the current government from an opposition standpoint, however, underestimates the manner in which political parties are linked as communicating vessels, which the electorate is all too well aware of. Infirmity is perceived all the sooner, the better the available alternative. From this perspective, although the decline in government participation (as well as vote

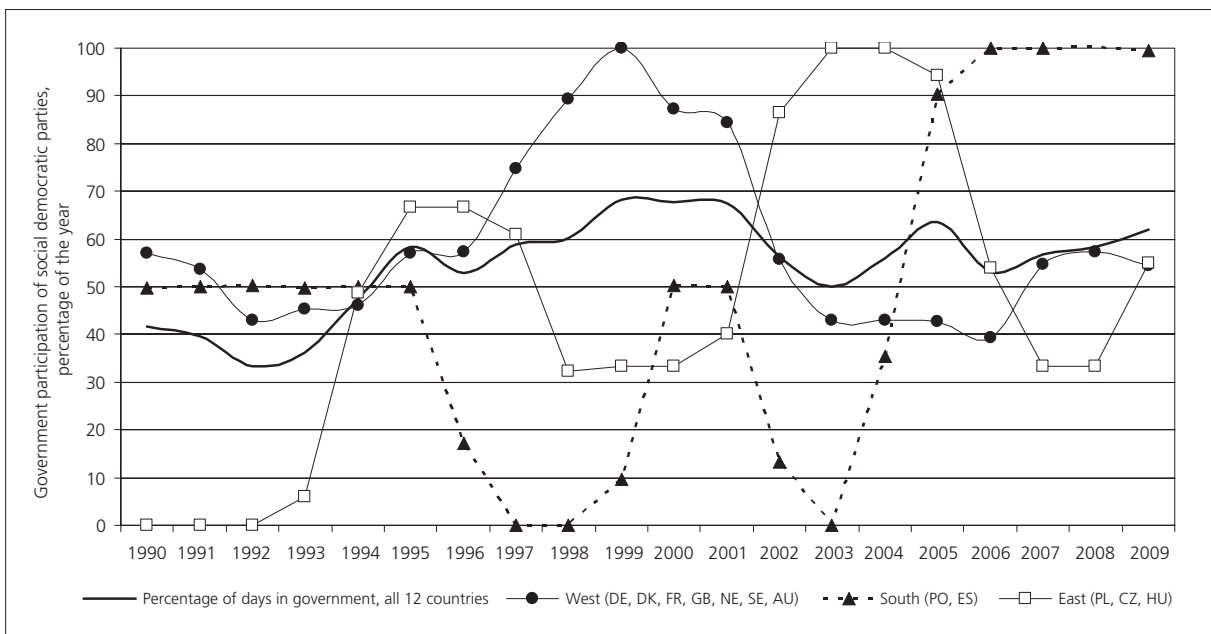


Figure 4a: Government participation of social democratic parties, number of days, all 12 countries and divided into country groups (1990–2009)



Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

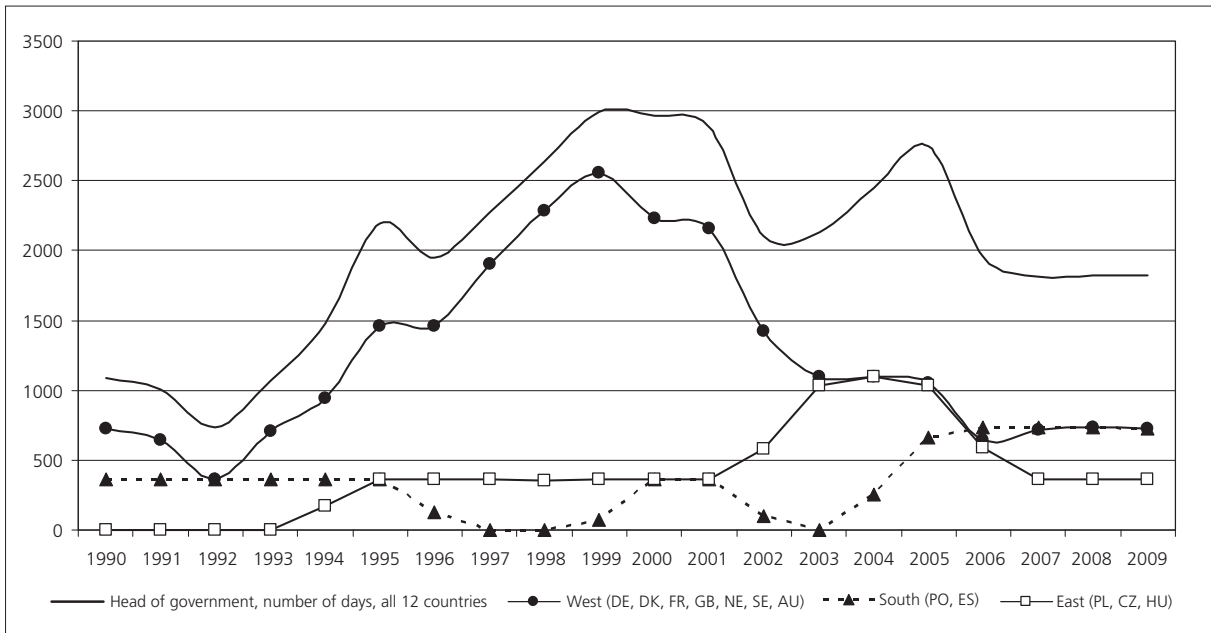
Figure 4b: Government participation of social democratic parties, percentage of the year, all 12 countries and divided into country groups (1990–2009)



Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

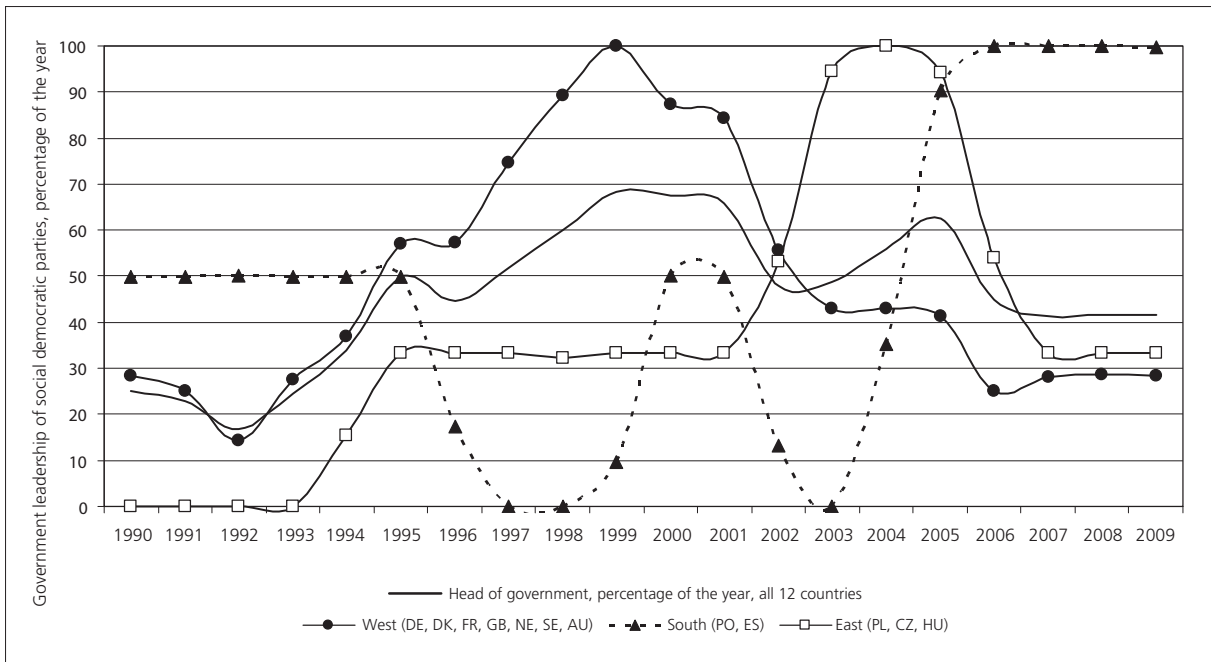


Figure 5a: Government leadership of social democratic parties, number of days, all 12 countries and divided into country groups (1990–2009)



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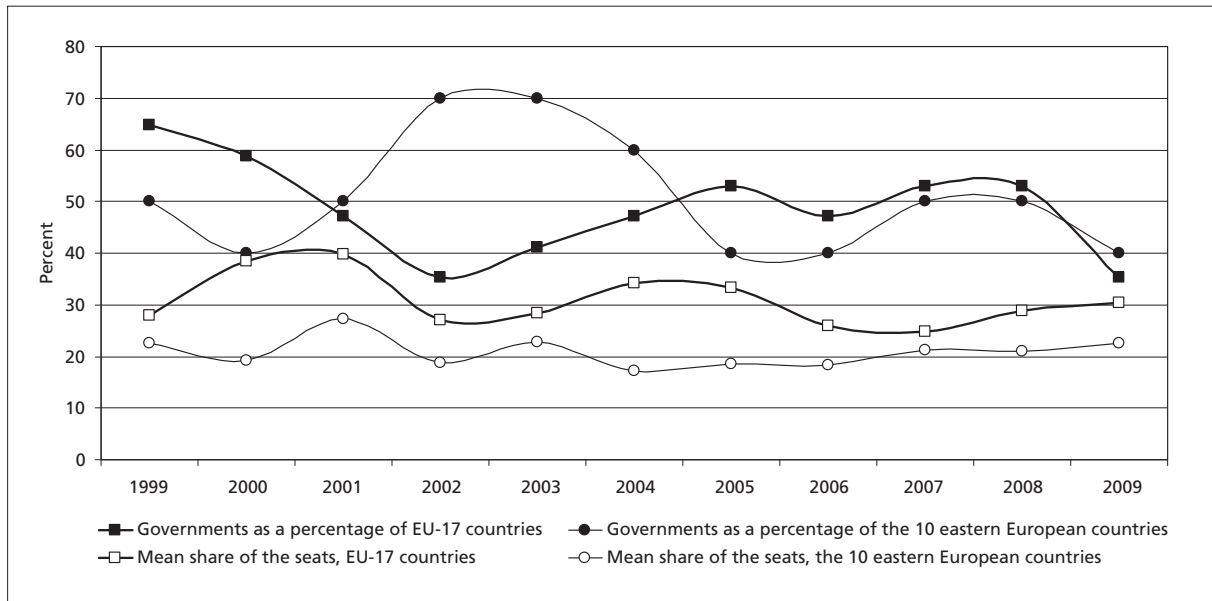
Figure 5b: Government leadership of social democratic parties, percentage of the year, all 12 countries and divided into country groups (1990–2009)



Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.



Figure 6: Share of the seats and government participation of social democratic parties, as a percentage of EU countries (1990–2009)



Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

shares) observed in the western European countries since 1999 is, on the one hand, a consequence of social democratic electoral success, paradoxical though that may seem, on the other hand, it represents an opportunity to become established as a serious alternative in order to accelerate the perception that political rivals are exhausted.

5. Social Democratic Voter Profiles in the Period 2002 to 2008

If social democracy was limited to the classic industrial workforce for its electorate, its fate would have been sealed as long ago as the first so-called »white-collar workers' revolution« in the 1920s, but at the latest with the second in the 1950s and 1960s. Having said that, it is imperative for the identity of parties with a social democratic profile that they have a social basis in the population groups for whom they speak. Policy-seeking is not an end in itself; it has to reach the people on whose behalf it is conducted.

In the face of socio-demographic change, the question arises for social democracy – in a similar manner to the

effects of increasing secularisation for Christian Democrats – of what sections of the ever more amorphous electorate social democratic policies are addressed to. The fact that social democracy has hitherto been able to ride out social change is connected to its ability to tailor its general aims to new or newly emerging groups of voters. It was particularly successful in the 1960s among white-collar workers and public sector workers in virtually every country in western and northern Europe. Social change is relentless, however, social milieus are only vestigial and social stratification is becoming more complex or at least is perceived as such. The »politicisation of social structures«, in the face of the dwindling of large social aggregates with a common experience of communitisation or socialisation, is becoming more difficult, and engendering ties and loyalties is becoming ever more dependent on the willingness of individuals to get involved, since common agencies of socialisation and social milieus have long ceased to exert any effect.

But does anyone still commit themselves to a party for the long haul or feel a bond with them? So-called party affiliation is captured in surveys and so also in the European Social Survey used here, by the following question: »Is there a political party which is closer to you than all

other parties? If yes, which one?» The question measures, as corresponding studies have revealed, medium-term affective bonds to a party.

The differences between the 12 countries under examination are substantial. While in Sweden, on average, a quarter of the population sympathise with social democracy, in Poland the average is a mere 5 per cent, with a country mean of around 17 per cent. It is true that countries such as the Czech Republic (with only around 11 per cent) and Poland (5 per cent) drag the average down significantly. In countries such as Denmark, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK, however, the proportion is 20 per cent or higher. But development over time is of particular importance.

Is there any indication of a decline in affective party attachment? Developments in the various countries differ considerably in this respect, too. The proportion of persons with a party affiliation is stable in Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, leaving aside some minor fluctuations. In France, the UK and, in particular, Hungary and Poland, however, there seems to be a downward trend (see Table 4).

Table 4: Proportion of persons with a social democratic party affiliation, all respondents (2002–2008)

	2002	2004	2006	2008	Mean
AT	15.6	12.9	13.4		14.0
CZ	14.7	7.2			10.9
DE	14.2	14.3	15.9	15.5	15.0
DK	22.7	18.8	19.8	20.0	20.3
ES	19.3	23.1	20.5	20.4	20.8
FR	18.5	21.6	18.1	15.6	18.4
GB	21.8	20.6	19.6	17.5	19.9
HU	27.4	16.1	16.8	9.4	17.4
NL	10.7	16.5	13.5	10.1	12.7
PL	10.0	4.0	3.3	3.3	5.2
PT	22.8	19.3	20.5	20.1	20.7
SE	28.0	23.7	23.0	25.6	25.1
Country mean	18.8	16.5	16.8	15.7	16.7
n = 100 %	39,860	46,631	38,168	41,027	

Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).

Persons with an emotional leaning towards social democracy also constitute a stable part of its electorate. Their support is more easily obtained for (re-)election than any other group. They also make up the largest proportion of social democratic voters: between one-third and three-quarters, depending on the country (see Table 5). Their share in the electorate of social democratic parties is declining in many countries. Where the share of those who favour a social democratic party is falling it indicates – as in France and Hungary – the loss of part of the stable electorate. In other countries it is a positive sign of the electoral success of social democratic parties: the share of those with a party affiliation is falling because the voter base is expanding.

Social democratic parties are better able than other parties to arouse voter loyalty. However, that does not apply to all countries equally. In Austria, France, Portugal, Spain and Sweden the loyalty effect of social democratic parties is markedly higher than that of their rivals. This also applies in Denmark, although to a much smaller extent. In Germany, the SPD is confronted by Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens), »die Linke« (the Left Party), but also the CDU/CSU, all of which engender party loyalties to an equal, sometimes even greater extent. In the UK, the parties are more or less equal, while in the Netherlands the loyalty effect of the social democratic PvdA has declined substantially, thereby leaving it weaker than that of their rivals. Among the three eastern European countries there are also differences: in the Czech Republic and Hungary, the rival parties engender stronger loyalties than the social democrats, while in Poland the value for the social democrats is slightly higher (see final column, Table 5).

Although it is likely that affective attachments entered into with a party are less and less shaped by embedding in the social structure, social stratification and position still constitute a structural basis for the development of such loyalties. This is traditionally strongest where labour interests also find expression in organisations – in other words, among trade union members. Social democratic voters still have a higher level of trade union organisation than the electorate as a whole. With regard to country mean, the average level of trade union organisation of social democratic voters is just under 26 per cent, while in the population as a whole it is 22 per cent. These average figures should not obscure the fact that there are extreme differences between countries. More syndicalist



Table 5: Proportion of persons with a social democratic party affiliation among those who voted for social democratic parties, 12 countries (2002–2008)

	2002	2004	2006	2008	Mean social democratic	Mean other	Diff. social democratic/other
AT	67.1	62.4	64.2		64.5	55.7	8.8
CZ	54.4	44.6			49.5	57.0	-7.5
DE	42.1	48.1	53.0	53.1	49.1	50.9	-1.8
DK	69.4	71.3	72.0	73.9	71.7	69.5	2.2
ES	74.5	64.2	58.0	55.3	63.0	53.0	10.0
FR	65.8	74.7	63.0	55.6	64.8	52.2	12.6
GB	55.6	48.6	54.2	48.8	51.8	52.5	-0.7
HU	68.0	47.4	59.3	35.9	52.7	58.3	-5.7
NL	57.5	62.4	55.9	47.5	55.9	61.2	-5.3
PL	33.5	17.8	44.5	39.1	33.7	31.8	1.9
PT	85.4	74.0	61.2	70.0	72.7	62.8	9.9
SE	71.8	60.4	72.9	70.2	68.8	63.8	5.0
n = 100 %	5,449	5,167	4,926	4,518	20,060	43,975	

Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).

Table 6: Trade union membership of social democratic voters, 12 countries (cumulative over all time intervals)

	Trade union members (current and previous) among...				Share of trade union members	
	Social democratic voters		Difference in relation to all voters		in total population	in electorate
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous		
AT	33.4	23.9	9.5	4.4	20.3	23.8
CZ	14.3	55.3	2.7	5.0	9.5	11.6
DE	18.4	26.9	4.6	2.9	12.1	13.8
DK	72.4	21.3	5.0	-0.5	63.5	67.4
ES	10.0	9.4	1.1	1.2	7.6	8.9
FR	10.1	22.3	1.4	4.2	6.9	8.7
GB	22.5	33.7	2.9	1.9	16.1	19.6
HU	11.1	49.5	0.2	5.1	9.2	10.9
NL	29.3	14.2	8.0	0.7	19.1	21.4
PL	10.7	35.9	2.1	8.5	6.8	8.6
PT	8.5	12.8	-0.2	2.1	6.9	8.7
SE	69.6	21.3	10.1	-3.1	55.2	59.5
Country mean	25.9	27.2	4.0	2.7	19.4	21.9
n = 100 %	5,360	5,169	9,445	9,708		

Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).



Table 7: Development of trade union membership among social democratic voters in comparison to the whole population

Country	2002	2004	2006	2008	Total changes	Total changes in the population
AT	36.8	29.9	32.4		-4.4	-3.6
CZ	17.9	11.6			-6.3	-4.9
DE	20.0	18.4	14.0	21.2	1.2	-2.3
DK	73.8	73.7	71.0	71.0	-2.8	-4.9
ES	13.3	9.5	10.1	8.7	-4.7	-0.8
FR	10.6	9.4	9.4	10.9	0.3	0.2
GB	24.1	20.7	23.0	22.0	-2.1	-2.8
HU	12.2	11.3	13.2	6.8	-5.5	-5.1
NL	30.9	30.1	27.3	29.1	-1.8	-4.0
PL	11.6	9.5	9.0	11.1	-0.6	-2.6
PT	13.3	7.0	7.3	8.5	-4.8	-1.9
SE	72.1	70.2	70.0	65.5	-6.6	-8.4
Mean	28.1	25.1	26.1	25.5	-3.2	-3.4

Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).

Table 8: Highest educational qualifications of social democratic voters in 12 countries (cumulative over all time intervals)

	Highest educational qualification					
	Among social democratic voters			Difference in relation to voters as a whole		
	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Diff. prim.	Diff. sec.	Diff. higher
AT	19.2	75.6	5.1	2.4	0.9	-3.3
CZ	0.5	91.9	7.6	0.0	4.4	-4.5
DE	0.8	71.5	27.8	0.0	2.4	-2.4
DK	1.9	77.0	21.2	0.6	6.4	-7.0
ES	38.6	45.5	15.9	1.2	1.8	-3.0
FR	18.5	46.1	35.4	-3.1	-2.5	5.6
GB	0.7	70.7	28.6	0.1	3.9	-4.0
HU	27.4	56.8	15.9	3.2	-1.7	-1.6
NL	11.6	62.6	25.8	4.2	-2.8	-1.5
PL	15.2	67.2	17.7	-5.0	4.2	0.8
PT	67.5	22.3	10.2	5.7	-4.7	-1.0
SE	26.1	49.6	24.3	7.9	3.6	-11.5
Country mean	19.0	61.4	19.6	1.4	1.3	-2.8
n = 100 %	3,964	11,193	4,053	10,960	36,236	14,837

Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).



Table 9: Comparative age structure of social democratic voters in 12 countries

Age class	Social democratic voters				Voters of other parties			
	2002	2004	2006	2008	2002	2004	2006	2008
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Up to 18	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Up to 25	7.8	7.3	7.7	6.2	9.8	8.1	9.2	7.4
Up to 30	6.2	6.9	5.9	5.8	7.0	6.8	6.5	7.0
Up to 35	7.5	7.1	7.8	6.9	9.0	8.4	8.0	7.9
Up to 40	9.8	10.1	8.4	8.4	10.5	9.7	9.6	9.1
Up to 50	20.8	21.1	21.6	20.8	20.7	20.8	21.0	20.3
Up to 65	28.7	29.5	28.1	28.8	25.8	26.8	26.7	27.3
Up to 75	12.2	12.5	12.9	14.6	11.4	12.9	12.0	13.2
76 and above	6.8	5.6	7.6	8.6	5.9	6.5	6.9	7.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
n = 100 %	5,508	5,229	4,979	4,567	11,635	11,264	11,476	10,428
Mean age in years:								
Voters	49.8	49.6	50.4	51.8	48.0	49.4	49.1	48.2
In comparison: total population	46.5	47.0	47.6	48.5	46.5	47.0	47.6	48.5

Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).

countries, such as France, Portugal and Spain, show very low levels of organisation, at under 10 per cent, while Denmark and Sweden register well over 50 per cent. Common to them all, however, is the fact that social democratic voters are characterised by a higher level of organisation than voters on average (see Table 6).

Even though, in the wake of social and labour market transformation, there has been a sharp fall in level of organisation (one which presumably will continue), the share of trade union members in the electorates of the 12 countries is still around 22 per cent, on average. That is a far from negligible quantity for social democratic parties, for two reasons: first, trade union members represent an identity-defining core component of the social democratic electorate; and second, the proportion is still so high that the frequently minimal vote margins that decide between opposition and government status are within reach. In any case, trade unionists vote social democrat disproportionately (see Section 6).

The decline in the number of trade union members among social democratic voters and in the population as

a whole varies between countries, but is similar overall. Between 2002 and 2008, the fall was limited (on average: –3.2 per cent in the social democratic electorate and –3.4 per cent in the general population; see Table 7).

Also with regard to levels of education, social democratic voters are slightly more likely to possess only basic qualifications in comparison to the rest of the electorate and slightly less likely to have higher qualifications. That does not apply in France and Poland, however, where – interestingly – persons with only basic qualifications are less common among social democratic voters than in the population as a whole, while persons with higher qualifications are disproportionately represented among social democratic voters (see Table 8).

Regarding the occupations of social democratic voters, no clear profile emerges. Although it is true that, according to ISCO88 (International Standard Classification of Occupations) classifications, industrial workers and skilled craftsmen, as well as unskilled workers, are more common among social democratic voters than in the general population and, correspondingly, among managers,

professionals, technicians and office workers slightly less. Overall, however, there are only marginal differences with regard to the composition of the total population on average for all countries. From this point of view, social democratic parties are true national parties (see Table A3).

The national party character of social democratic parties is less in evidence with regard to their age structure on average in all 12 countries. There are markedly fewer social democratic voters, in comparison to the population average, among younger people (up to 40 years of age) and more among older persons (in particular, between 50 and 65 years of age – see Table 9).

Although, over the period from 2002 to 2008, no trend emerges in the direction of a further aging of social democratic electorates, the deviations from the average age of social democratic voters from the population average are, at around three or more years, still very marked. The mean age of the voters of other parties is, on average, up to two years lower, which is still higher than the average age of the population. Overall, however, rival parties are much better placed in the younger age groups (up to 35): while with regard to social democratic parties these age groups make up just under 21 per cent, among rival parties the figure is just under 24 per cent, and while in the older age groups – from 65 years of age – social democratic voters account for 49 per cent, among rival parties it is only 46 per cent. It is of critical strategic importance for social democracy to make inroads into younger voter groups, not least in order to produce the next generation of social democratic voters.

6. Voting Behaviour of Core Groups of Social Democratic Supporters: Trade Union Members and Workers, 2002 to 2008

The social structural profiles of electorates constitute a distinctive feature by which a party and its identity can be characterised. Having said that, it must be asked how much of an influence social situation has on voting decisions. Even if traditional social democratic core groups are melting away as a result of social change that does not mean that they do not have particular significance for party identity. Even if, quantitatively and thus electorally, their substance is diminishing, the question remains for social democratic parties of whether their political platform still reaches these groups. Less electoral opportu-

ism in favour of the reaffirmation and definition of party identity are key elements here. It is well known that parties are punished mercilessly by their voters if they deviate too much from their identity as historical institutions; much less is known, however, about subsequent positive effects for parties which »maintain their course«. There are no grounds for speculation here either. What we should be asking is whether the identity of social democracy is still expressed in the voting behaviour of its traditional core groups, workers and trade union members.

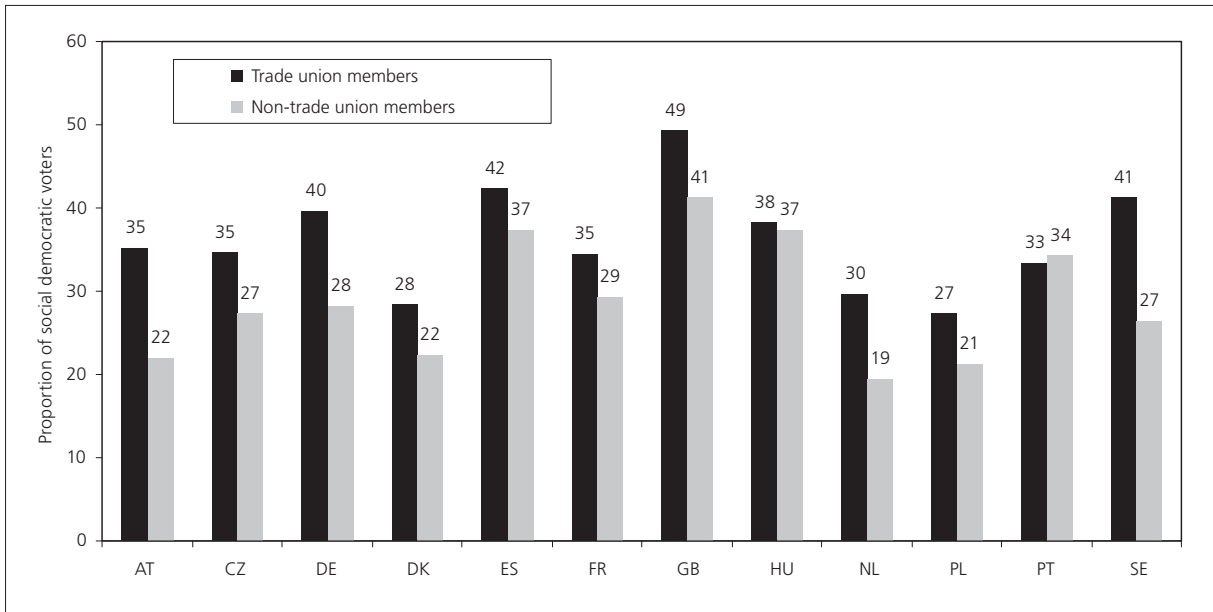
Generally speaking, in almost all countries (Portugal being an exception) trade union members still vote disproportionately for social democratic parties. The difference in terms of country mean is almost 10 percentage points. The differences between countries are considerable, however. The difference is lowest in Hungary, at just under 1 percentage point, and highest in Sweden, at almost 15 percentage points (see Figure 7).

Does the same apply to workers as a voter group? A traditional measure is provided by the Alford Index of Class Voting, named after the person who devised it. A weakness of this measure is that any disproportionately low or disproportionately high influence on voting exercised by class is not standardised to party strength. A modified Alford Index will therefore be applied here, which takes this into account. The modified index compares the ratio between the proportion of workers who vote social democrat and that of workers who do not, with the ratio between the proportion of non-workers who vote social democrat and that of non-workers who do not. In other words, it measures the relative disproportionality of the voting behaviour of workers and non-workers in favour of social democracy. This yields the expected ratios virtually across the board. The exceptions are France and Poland, the countries in respect of which the educational composition of social democratic voters also deviates from all the other countries. Otherwise, across all countries and time intervals, the proportion of workers voting social democrat is 50 % higher than that of non-workers (see Figure 8).

In Sweden, workers vote social democrat two and a half times more frequently than non-workers, which puts the Scandinavian country at the top of the rankings in this respect. Apart from France and Poland, where the share of workers voting social democrat is disproportionately

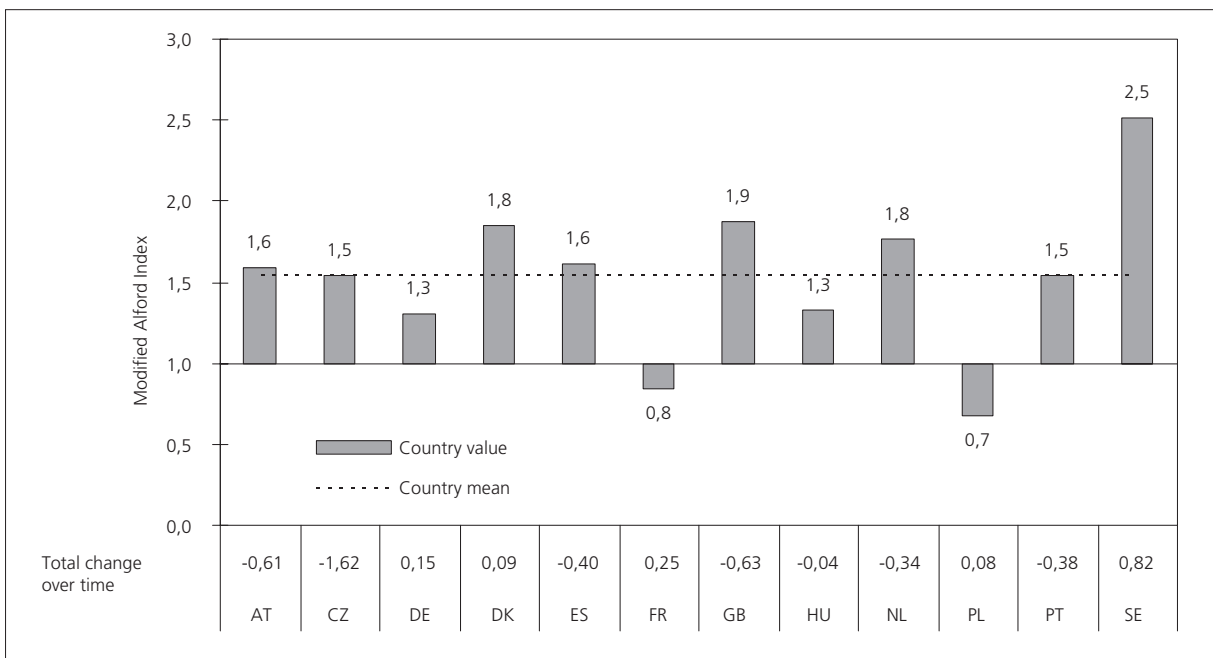


Figure 7: Proportion of social democratic voters among trade union members and non-members in 12 countries (pooled over time)



Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).

Figure 8: Modified Alford Index (disproportionality of social democratic voters among workers in industry)



Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).

low, the lowest proportion is registered in Germany and Hungary, at around 30 per cent. All in all, however, despite the falling trends in the wake of social change, historically significant core social democratic constituencies continue to vote social democrat disproportionately.

7. Is Social Democracy in Crisis?

This data-based examination of the constantly recurring thesis of the end of social democracy or of the social democratic era has cast light, from two perspectives, on whether accounts of its demise stand up to scrutiny: first, with regard to the electoral performance and government participation of social democratic parties in 12 European countries over a period of 20 years; second, with regard to the question of whether social democratic voters have a specific profile. The second aspect is, at the same time, closely linked to the question of the identity of social democracy.

Looking at the first perspective – electoral performance and government participation – it is quite clear that we cannot conclude either that the poorest election results for social democrats are the most recent, or the opposite. Looking at gains and losses from one election to the next or in sequence the results are remarkably consistent. Wins and losses balance one another out, both from one election to the next and in sequence. Furthermore, no declining tendencies are apparent in the four electoral cycles experienced by all 12 countries since 1990. Turning to government participation and leadership the results over the past decade are at least as good as those in the first decade, from 1990, as can be shown by converting periods of government into days. In the second decade (2000–2009), social democrats took a leading role in government even more frequently than in the first decade. Negative points of view which might be derivable from short-term developments may thus be qualified, even rejected. As with all comparisons, it depends on the time period under examination. The second half of the 1990s was distinguished by an enormous surge for social democracy in Europe, whose highpoint was in 1999 – with regard to government participation – with a subsequent decline from around 2004/2005. The level in the second half of the 2000s is markedly higher than in the first half of the 1990s, however. Behind these changes is less a structural crisis than the development of the electoral cycle. This development is proceeding differently in


the western countries than in the countries of eastern or southern Europe, however. To some extent, contrary developments give rise to compensation in terms of overall average for the very negative development in the group of western countries. However, with reference to the western countries from the group of 12 under examination (Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK), shares of the vote, as well as government participation and leadership remained at least as high in the second half of the past decade as at the beginning of the 1990s. In the EU-27 the findings are the same in relation to the EU-17 countries.

Even though the development of vote shares and government participation does not exhibit any trend and fluctuations correspond to the expected ups and downs of the electoral cycle, arising from governments' suffering the consequences of voter fatigue, that does not mean that a defeat will automatically be followed by a victory. Only opposition parties which offer a clear alternative to the government will accelerate the wear-out effect and be able to turn a down into an up. In the past two decades, social democratic parties have proved well able to achieve this, both on average and overall. Only if they continue along the same lines and offer a convincing profile will future success be assured.

Looking at socio-demographic profiles, it appears that there is a tendency for social democratic constituencies disproportionately to include less privileged population groups, with regard to both occupation and education. Having said that, the trend is fairly weak.

In terms of their electorate, social democratic parties in Europe constitute broad-based national parties. There is one striking exception, however. The representation of younger age groups is disproportionately low, while that of older age groups is disproportionately high. The constituencies of other parties are younger, on average, even if they are older on average than the population as a whole. As a result, social democratic parties could experience a shortfall in support in future if they are unable to win over a new generation of voters.

Looking at the other aspect, namely the extent to which certain social groups in particular vote social democrat, the expected picture emerges, generally speaking: trade unionists vote social democrat, on average, 10 percentage points more than non-trade unionists, workers pro-



portionately vote social democrat, according to a modified Alford Index, 50 per cent more frequently than non-workers. From an electoral standpoint, that may appear fairly marginal, taking into account the development of group sizes of trade unionists and workers as a result of social change. Having said that, elections are often won by narrow margins, on which these constituencies can have a decisive impact. On the other hand, this aspect is also important because the historical core identity of social democracy lies in the representation of these social groups, which they have obviously been able to preserve, and whose mobilising effect must not be underestimated.



Appendix

Table A1: Vote shares of social democratic parties by country (1990–2009)

Year	Mean 12 countries	DE	DK	FR	GB	NE	PL	PO	SE	ES	CZ	HU	AU	Mean	West	South	East	Largest rival party
1990	31.1	33.5	37.4									8.8	42.8	30.6	37.9		8.8	29.7
1991	26.2						11.3	29.6	37.7					26.2	37.7	29.6	11.3	28.2
1992	21.0				34.4						7.7			21.0	34.4		7.7	37.9
1993	26.2			19.0			20.4			39.1				26.2	19.0	39.1	20.4	23.6
1994	34.7	36.4	34.6			24.0			45.3			38.6	34.9	35.6	35.0		38.6	26.8
1995	41.3							44.6					38.1	41.3	38.1	44.6		31.5
1996	32.0									37.6	26.4			32.0		37.6	26.4	34.2
1997	31.9			25.5	43.2		27.1							31.9	34.3		27.1	27.1
1998	34.7	40.9	35.9			29.0			36.4		32.3	37.9		35.4	35.6		35.1	26.2
1999	38.8							44.4					33.2	38.8	33.2	44.4		29.8
2000	34.2									34.2				34.2		34.2		44.5
2001	35.9		29.1		40.7		38.0							35.9	34.9		38.0	25.2
2002	33.3	38.5		25.3		15.1		38.6	39.9		30.2	43.7	36.5	33.5	31.1	38.6	37.0	33.5
2003	27.3					27.3								27.3	27.3			28.6
2004	42.6									42.6				42.6		42.6		37.7
2005	30.6	34.2	25.8		35.2		11.3	46.4						30.6	31.8	46.4	11.3	30.6
2006	33.4					21.2			35.0		32.3	45.8	35.3	33.9	30.5		39.1	35.0
2007	21.6	25.5	26.1				13.2							21.6	25.8		13.2	36.0
2008	36.6									43.9			29.3	36.6	29.3	43.9		33.0
2009	30.4	23.0						37.7						30.4	23.0	37.7		31.9
Mean	32.2	34.4	31.4	24.0	38.4	23.3	20.2	40.2	38.8	39.5	25.8	35.0	35.7	32.3	31.7	39.9	24.2	31.6
1990s	31.8	36.9	36.0	22.3	38.8	26.5	19.6	39.5	39.8	38.4	22.1	28.4	37.2	31.9	33.9	39.1	21.9	29.5
2000s	32.6	31.9	26.8	25.7	37.9	21.2	20.8	40.9	37.4	40.2	31.3	44.8	33.7	32.6	29.2	40.5	27.7	33.6

Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

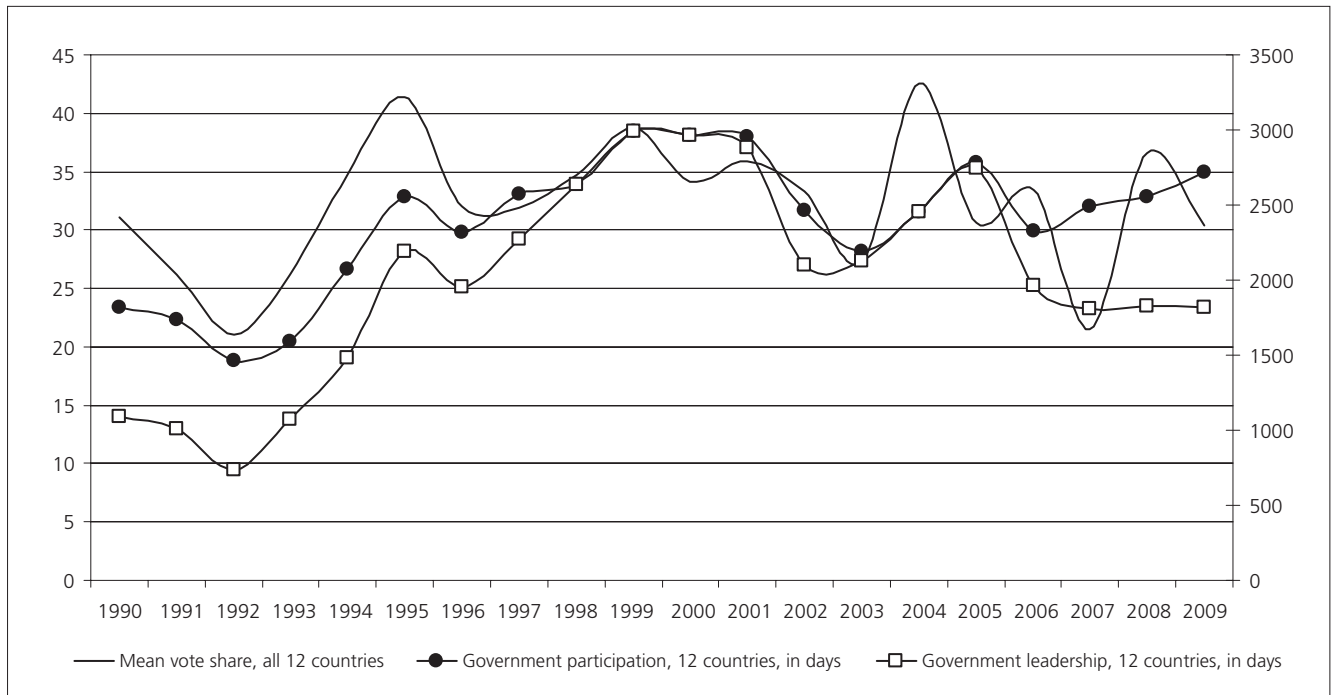


Table A2: Comparison of proportion of social democratic voters among trade union members over time

	Vote share among trade union members					Difference from vote share among all voters				Proportion of trade union members	
	2002	2004	2006	2008	Mean	2002	2004	2006	2008	Total pop.	Voters
AT	37.6	30.9	36.0		34.8	11.8	6.8	11.4		20.3	23.8
CZ	43.5	28.1			35.8	9.9	3.3			9.5	11.6
DE	38.5	42.3	36.5	41.4	39.7	7.1	12.9	5.7	14.3	12.1	13.8
DK	31.4	27.3	27.0	27.7	28.4	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.4	63.5	67.4
ES	41.3	43.9	39.9	43.9	42.3	12.2	3.1	1.7	3.1	7.6	8.9
FR	33.7	39.6	31.7	34.0	34.8	4.8	8.6	2.5	4.5	6.9	8.7
GB	49.6	49.7	48.1	49.6	49.3	4.6	4.2	7.5	8.6	16.1	19.6
HU	43.6	40.1	34.3	31.4	37.3	-0.3	1.6	-0.1	-0.2	9.2	10.9
NL	22.5	34.8	31.6	32.8	30.4	6.1	9.0	7.4	11.0	19.1	21.4
PL	43.0	27.2	11.9	12.1	23.6	4.9	-3.2	3.5	4.8	6.8	8.6
PT	36.8	19.5	39.4	42.3	34.5	8.8	-11.7	1.7	4.9	6.9	8.7
SE	44.2	43.3	36.8	40.7	41.3	6.7	4.6	5.8	6.8	55.2	59.5
Mean	38.8	35.6	34.0	35.6		6.5	3.4	4.4	6.0	19.4	21.9
n = 100 %	4,770	4,348	4,114	3,500		22,995	24,100	22,359	20,500		

Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1–4 (2002–2008).

Figure A1: Mean vote share and days of government participation and government leadership of social democratic parties in 12 countries



Source: Author's calculations based on the database »Parties, Elections and Governments«, research unit »Demokratie«, WZB.

Table A3: Occupations of social democratic voters in 12 countries

	AT	CZ	DE	DK	ES	FR	GB	HU	NL	PL	PT	SE	Social demo- cratic voters	Difference from all voters
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%-points
isogroup1														
Legislators and senior officials	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.2	-0.1
Senior officials of special interest organisations	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
Directors and chief executives of large companies	4.2	1.3	3.1	4.1	1.6	3.4	8.2	4.0	7.1	13.5	0.7	3.0	4.7	-0.8
Directors of small companies	2.4	3.9	2.7	1.4	4.4	3.2	3.0	2.7	5.1	1.9	2.7	0.9	2.9	-0.9
Major group 2: Professionals	8.6	8.3	14.9	13.2	8.9	22.6	13.7	11.4	19.0	7.6	8.4	13.6	13.6	-1.1
Major group 3: Technicians and associate professionals	17.3	20.7	23.6	19.9	10.9	24.6	11.4	10.4	18.8	16.5	6.9	15.8	16.5	-0.9
Major group 4: Clerks	22.9	10.6	13.2	9.7	8.4	13.2	11.2	9.5	12.7	8.4	10.8	10.3	11.5	-0.5
Major group 5: Service workers and shop and market sales workers	16.9	8.1	11.4	14.8	15.9	9.9	17.9	11.0	11.6	9.8	14.2	21.5	13.9	0.7
Major group 6: Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	1.2	2.1	1.5	1.0	5.5	0.8	0.6	2.1	0.8	7.1	3.2	1.1	2.2	-1.2
Major group 7: Craft and related trade workers	11.8	20.7	14.8	13.0	17.4	6.8	8.4	19.9	11.4	15.8	22.4	12.1	13.4	1.2
Major group 8: Plant and machine operators and assemblers	5.4	14.3	7.6	9.2	7.8	5.5	10.8	9.5	5.0	9.8	13.0	13.5	8.8	1.6
Major group 9: Elementary occupations	9.2	9.5	6.7	13.1	19.0	9.6	14.7	17.8	8.2	8.4	17.3	7.5	11.9	2.0
Major group 0: Armed forces	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.1	1.2	0.1	1.2	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		
n = 100 %	1,187	623	2,468	1,382	1,844	1,407	2,380	1,685	1,316	932	1,684	2,198	19,106	60,899

Source: Author's calculations based on the European Social Survey 1-4 (2002-2008).



Über den Autor

Dr. Bernhard Weßels is senior research fellow at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB) and teaches political science at Humboldt University, Berlin. Main research interests: political sociology, interest intermediation and comparative studies on political representation, research on elections and political attitudes.

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
International Policy Analysis
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Responsible:
Dr. Gero Maaß, Head, International Policy Analysis

Tel.: ++49-30-269-35-7745 | Fax: ++49-30-269-35-9248
www.fes.de/ipa

To order publications:
info.ipa@fes.de

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