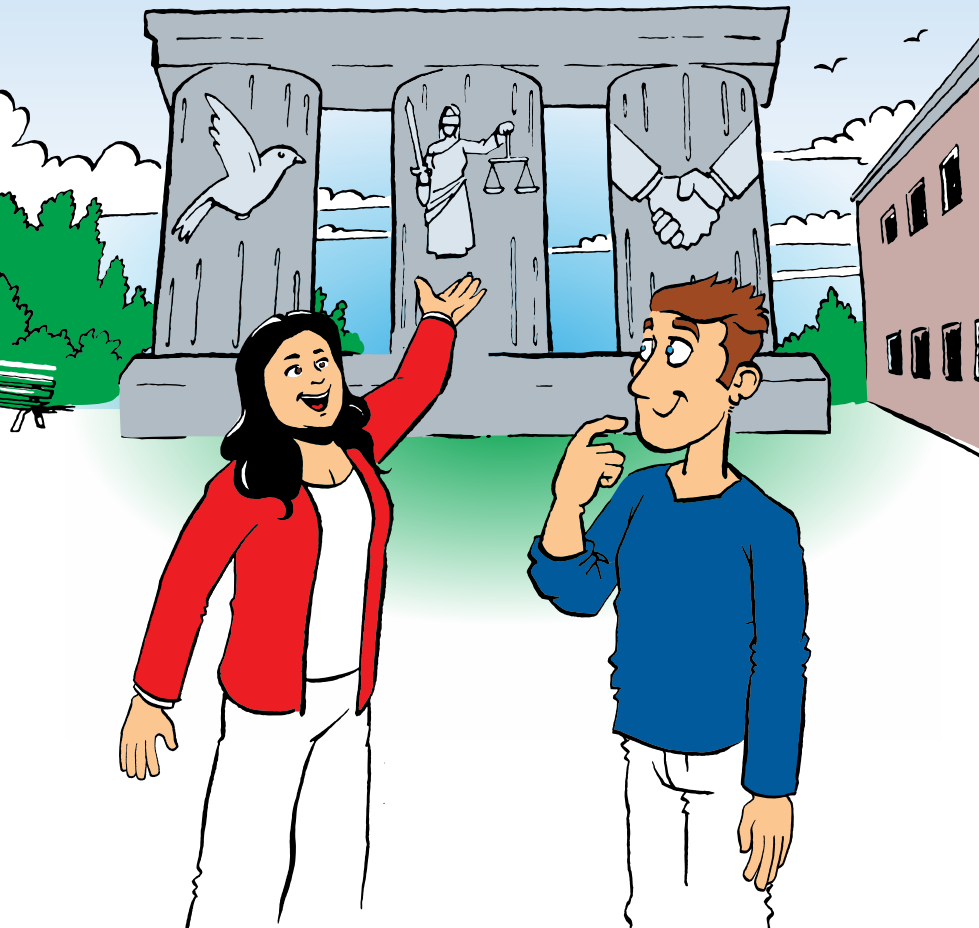


SOCIAL DEMOCRACY – CONCISE AND CLEAR 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

✓ *Values that unite us*



Social Democracy – Concise and Clear 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Published by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

German Edition, 4th Edition, July 2018: Political Academy Division
(since 2021 Civic Education and Political Dialogue Division)

Contact: jochen.dahm@fes.de

English Edition, September 2021: Division for International Cooperation

Contact: karin.benzing@fes.de

Editorial team: Barbara Mounier, Klar & Deutlich – Agentur für Einfache
Sprache (Klar & Deutlich – the Agency for Simple Language)

Jochen Dahm, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Markus Trömmel, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Illustrations: Jurjen Kraan, Alice Well

Printer: Druckerei Brandt GmbH, Bonn

Layout: Jurian Wiese, Spaß am Lesen Verlag, Münster/Amsterdam

Translated by Sprachenfabrik GmbH

This book from the Concise and Clear series is based on Reader 1 -

Foundations of Social Democracy – also published by

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

If you want to use this text commercially,

you must obtain written consent from Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Publications of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung may not be used for election
campaign purposes.

ISBN 978-3-98628-005-5

Social Democracy – Concise and Clear 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	7
Chapter 1 What is Social Democracy?	10
1.1 What does 'Social Democracy' mean?	11
1.2 Social Democracy as a movement	12
1.3 Three levels	13
1.4 How is this book structured?	17
Chapter 2 Freedom	19
2.1 Thinking about freedom	19
2.2 Freedom rights: protection rights and provision rights	24
2.3 What does Social Democracy want?	26
Chapter 3 Justice	31
3.1 What is equality – what is justice?	31
3.2 Justice: women and generations	35
3.3 How do we distribute?	36
3.4 What does Social Democracy want?	37
Chapter 4 Solidarity	39
4.1 Thinking about solidarity	40
4.2 How does solidarity work?	43
4.3 Examples of solidarity	45
4.4 What does Social Democracy want?	47

Chapter 5 Social Democracy: think – define – act	49
5.1 Fundamental values belong together	49
5.2 From thinking to defining: from fundamental value to fundamental right	51
5.3 UN Covenants	56
5.4 From defining to acting: from fundamental right to instrument	58
Chapter 6 Social Democracy compared	64
6.1 The neoliberal school of thought	64
6.2 The conservative school of thought	68
6.3 The Social Democratic school of thought	70
Chapter 7 Social Democracy in other countries	72
7.1 International study	73
7.2 The United States	76
7.3 The United Kingdom	78
7.4 Germany	80
7.5 Japan	82
7.6 Sweden	84
Chapter 8 Social Democracy in the future	86
8.1 Rethinking	87
8.2 Globalisation	88
8.3 Digital world	89
8.4 Always striving onwards	91
Want to know more?	93

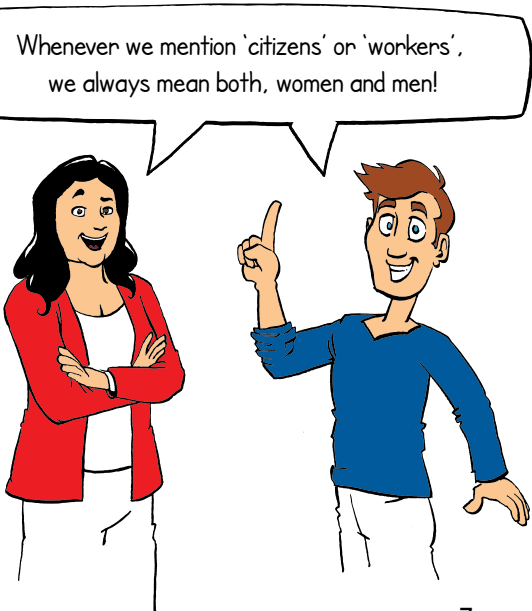
PREFACE

Politics and democracy – neither of these terms are detached concepts reserved for scholars and dreamers. Politics and democracy form the basis of our society. They affect us all. This is why the Academy for Social Democracy offers information and courses for all those involved in politics.

Are you interested in politics? Do you want to make the world a better place? Do you volunteer? Or do you work in politics? The Academy provides you with answers to your questions and ideas for further thinking.

The perfect introduction

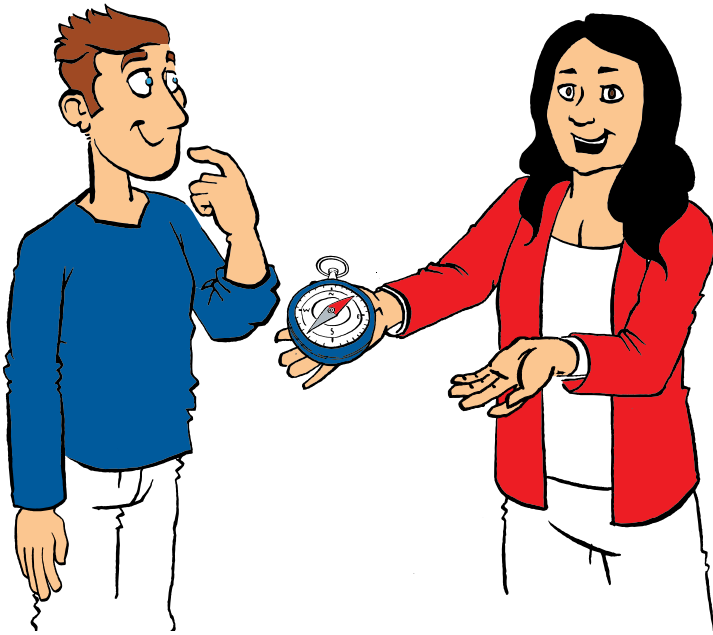
Our series *Social Democracy – Concise and Clear* provides the perfect introduction to the world of ideas behind Social Democracy. As part of the *Concise and Clear* book series, we look at important issues in politics. We use short texts that have been written in language that is easy to understand.



Whenever we mention 'citizens' or 'workers', we always mean both, women and men!

Fundamental values

The first book in this series focuses on the basics: the fundamental values of Social Democracy. How did the concepts of freedom, justice and solidarity come about? What is their significance in today's politics? How does Social Democracy differ from other political models? And what answers can Social Democracy provide to the questions of the future? You can read all this – and much more besides – in this handy book.



Here are Jan and Anna.

Jan is doing an apprenticeship.

He has a lot of questions about politics and society.

Anna is committed to greater Social Democracy.

She is happy to explain what Social Democracy is.

Deciding your own path

We use a compass as our symbol. The compass is a maritime instrument. It helps us to find the right direction.

The Academy wants to help people decide their own political path. We'd be delighted if this book series helps to achieve that.

After all, politics is a force for good if many people think about it and participate.

Jochen Dahm



Head

Academy for Social Democracy

Markus Trömmel



Project Manager

Social Democracy Readers



Why use everyday language?

We want everyone to understand what Social Democracy is all about.

This is why the *Concise and Clear* series has been written in language that is easy to understand.

WHAT IS SOCIAL DEMOCRACY?

When we hear the term *Social Democracy*, we often think of different things.

Some people believe both words mean the same thing.

“But democracy is always social!”

Others may think of the economy.

“Isn’t it something to do with a social market economy?”

Many associate the word with a particular political party.

“Social Democracy – that’s an idea coined by the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) after all!”

And some even think of history.

“Didn’t it used to be called democratic socialism?”

And what about now? Unfortunately, there is no general definition for the term *Social Democracy*.

But there are some points that are definitely part of it.

WHAT DOES SOCIAL DEMOCRACY MEAN?

What is Social Democracy?

- Social Democracy aims to make our society more democratic and more social.
- Social Democracy has three fundamental values: freedom, justice and solidarity.
- Social Democracy calls for equal rights, i.e. human rights for all. These rights apply everywhere: in our personal lives, in the economy and in society as a whole.
- Social Democracy is a political model with specific ideas. Other models include conservatism and liberalism.

Want to know more? Why not watch this film?

What is Social Democracy – a suggestion

<http://www.fes-soziale-demokratie.de/filme.html>

Want to head straight to the film on your mobile?

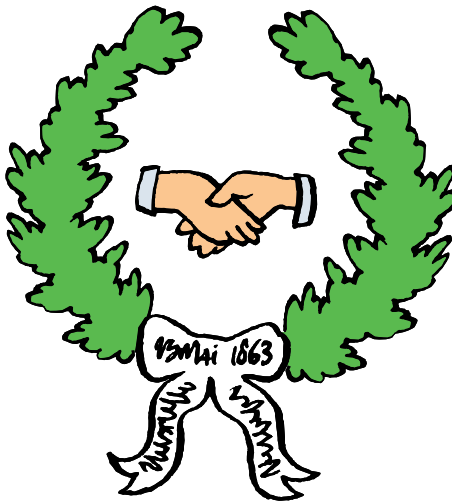
Scan this QR code using a suitable app,
such as *QR Barcode Scanner* or *Scanlife*.



SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AS A MOVEMENT

Social Democracy has been a political movement in Germany since the 19th century. Many people in Germany are enthusiastic about the movement's aims. They come together and work to change society: for greater freedom, justice and solidarity.

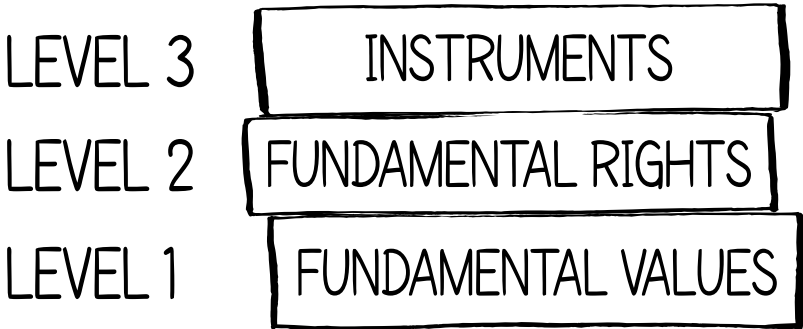
In May 1863, Ferdinand Lassalle founded the General German Workers' Association (ADAV) together with friends. They were among the first to fight for workers. Many workers undertook hard labour, received little pay and lived in poverty.



Since then, there have been and still are many associations, organisations and political parties that want greater Social Democracy. The oldest and largest is the SPD – the Social Democratic Party of Germany. The trade unions within the Confederation of German Trade Unions are also important.

THREE LEVELS

Supporters of Social Democracy want to achieve certain political goals that make life better for everyone.



There are three different levels as part of this process.

Fundamental values are the first level.

These are particularly important for people who want greater Social Democracy.

Fundamental rights are the second level.

Those who take the fundamental values seriously want everyone to have rights.

Instruments are the third level.

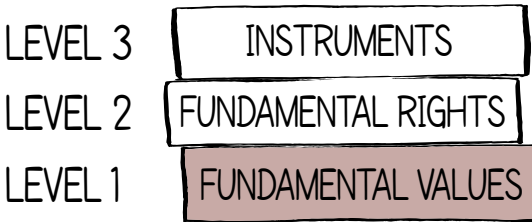
These are the tools of Social Democracy.

They ensure that the fundamental rights become reality.

Level 1

Fundamental values of Social Democracy:

Freedom, justice and solidarity



Three **values** form the foundation of Social Democracy:
they are freedom, justice and solidarity.

These values are the most important **basis** for life within society.

The **fundamental values** are not only important for Social Democracy in Germany: people with different convictions – in all countries of the world – champion these values.

Fundamental values

The most important guiding principles that should apply to all people in society.

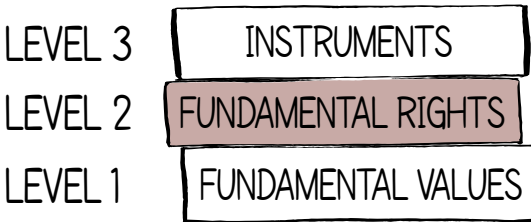
They have developed over time because people have had good experiences with them.

Social Democracy is based on them.

Level 2

The fundamental rights of Social Democracy:

Equal rights for all



How can the three fundamental values be turned into **human rights** for all? This level relates to fundamental rights. As an example, a fundamental right is the right to vote. Or that the police come when there is a threat of danger. Another fundamental right is that you can go to school. And that you are supported when you are in need.

Social Democracy means that the state actively promotes the **fundamental rights** of all people.

The state has a **duty to act accordingly**.

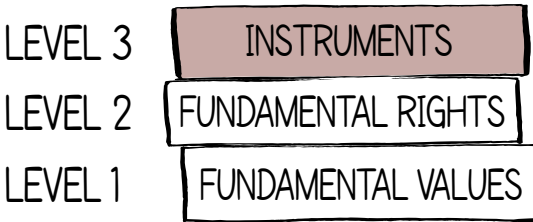
Fundamental rights

- Guaranteed rights that every person has.
- Gender, age and origin must not play a role.

Level 3

Instruments of Social Democracy:

How Social Democracy works in Germany and in other countries



What **instruments** are used to implement these fundamental rights?

How **does the state act** in practice?

What do we spend **money on as a society**?

How does it work best? This is what level three relates to.

Instruments

Different countries choose different means to guarantee people's fundamental rights.

How do the states do this exactly?

HOW IS THIS BOOK STRUCTURED?

In **Chapter 1**, we learned about the term **Social Democracy**. We briefly touched on the history of Social Democracy in Germany. We also learned about terms such as *fundamental values* and *fundamental rights*. There was a lot of theory. But we'll get to the practical element in a moment.

In **Chapter 2**, we will focus on the term **freedom**. How can individual people be free? And how does freedom work in society? What does Social Democracy want?

Chapter 3 focuses on the term **justice**. Are all people automatically equal? When are goods and opportunities distributed fairly? How can we make Germany fairer?

In **Chapter 4**, we'll look at the term **solidarity**. How people pull together varies depending on the situation. How does solidarity work in our society? What does Social Democracy want?



Chapter 5 explains how the **fundamental values** belong together – and that we also need **fundamental rights** for all.

How are these fundamental rights turned into rules and laws? And what **instruments** does the state have to turn these rights into policy?

In **Chapter 6**, we will **compare Social Democracy** with other political movements. How does Social Democracy differ from other schools of thought?

Chapter 7 covers **Social Democracy in other countries**.

How are fundamental rights implemented in the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Sweden? What are the key differences compared with Germany? And what can we learn?

In **Chapter 8**, we'll look at **Social Democracy in the future**.

Our world is changing quickly. We are already facing new challenges. There are new questions. How does Social Democracy want to answer these questions?

Compact knowledge for practice:

Social Democracy – Concise and Clear – nine books covering key political topics for Social Democracy.

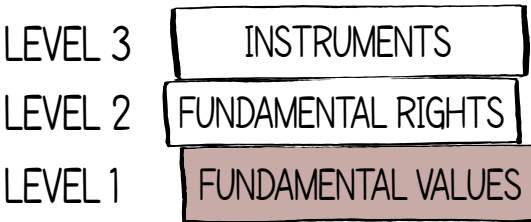


FREEDOM



In **Chapter 2**, we will focus on the term **freedom**.

How can individual people be free? And how does freedom work in society? What does Social Democracy want?



Freedom is one of the fundamental values of Social Democracy. This is the first level.

2.1

THINKING ABOUT FREEDOM

What is freedom? Everyone can imagine something.

For example:

“Doing what you want”

“Living without orders from others”

“Simply being able to go anywhere”

“Making your own decisions”

Over time, many **philosophers** have contemplated the term 'freedom'.
One of them was called **John Locke**.
He lived in England in the 17th century.

Philosopher

A philosopher reflects on life's important questions.

For example: What is the meaning of life?

Where do things come from?

What happens after death?

They try to find answers to these and similar questions.

Locke explained personal freedom as follows:

You can decide for yourself what you think about something.

You know best what is good for you.

You can decide for yourself what to do.

You can decide for yourself what to do with your possessions.

You therefore don't need other people's permission.

And his idea of freedom in society was:

You are free when you have elected a government together.

Others must not dictate laws to you.

As Locke was writing his books on freedom, many people in Europe still lived in kingdoms. Kings reigned over the people. Only a few people really lived freely. At the time, Locke's ideas were completely new.



LOCKE

Other philosophers responded on Locke's ideas. They supplemented his thoughts on freedom. One of them was called **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**. He lived in France in the 18th century.

Rousseau's idea of freedom in society was:

*People are only truly free when they can determine their own laws.
We therefore need a democracy so that people can be free.*

For Rousseau, the following point was also very important:

*We must not abuse the idea of freedom.
Some people use the word 'freedom' in situations where there is no freedom at all.*



ROUSSEAU

For example: dangerous working conditions

Some people claim that everyone has to look after themselves – even at work.

If a particular job is too dangerous for someone, they should buy their own protective clothing. A helmet, safety shoes, a protective jacket and gloves, for example. Or they should find a different job. This would be a free decision.

But in reality, that's not the case. Most people can't simply find themselves a new job and don't have enough money to buy themselves expensive protective clothing.

In Germany, employers must ensure adequate occupational health and safety. Trade unions have pushed this through.

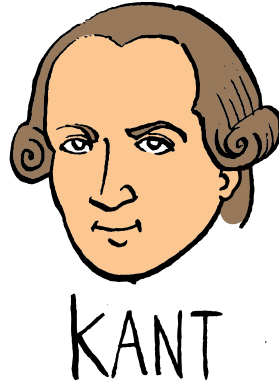
The limits of freedom

Freedom also has limits. How can one live freely without harming other people or society? This is something the philosopher **Immanuel Kant** (Germany, 18th century) considered.

Kant said:

The limits of freedom do not only lie in existing laws. But in the question: what would happen if everyone did what I want to do now?

The limits of freedom are then not only the existing laws. But rather what you want for all people in the future. Kant called this 'the moral law'.



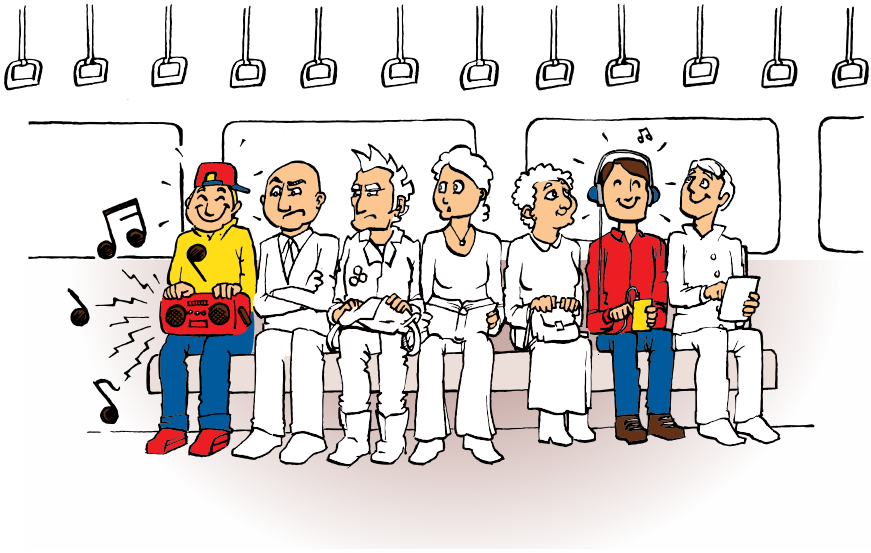
For example: listening to music on the train

Maybe you like to listen to music, preferably out loud and without wearing headphones? At home, you are free to do so. But what about when you're sitting on a busy train?

The question you need to ask yourself is what would happen if everyone did what I want to do now? In other words, what happens if everyone on the train plays their music loudly? Classical, hard rock, pop and hip hop?

You'd probably say that's it's not a good idea!

This is what Kant meant by 'the moral law'.



What does that mean for freedom now?

In Social Democracy, freedom is a fundamental value.

It is limited and guaranteed by law. However, you should not only abide by existing laws. Rather, you should also consider whether the freedom you wish to enjoy for yourself harms others.

FREEDOM RIGHTS: PROTECTION RIGHTS AND PROVISION RIGHTS

Even in modern times, philosophers are still thinking about freedom. One such example is **Isaiah Berlin**. He lived in Russia and the United Kingdom in the 20th century. Berlin made a distinction between the rights to personal protection and the rights to free development.

All people have a right to protect their freedoms.

People are allowed to decide for themselves whom they let into their home. No one may be violent towards another human being.

Children need special protection.

People's information must always be secure and private.

*The state and society must **protect** these civil liberties.*

Only then can you live in personal freedom.

We call these rights protection rights.

People also have a right to develop their freedom.

They should be able to freely develop their own personality.

They have the right to education.

They have the right to good healthcare.

They have the right to culture.

*The state should use these civil liberties to **support** each individual person.*

Everyone must be allowed and able to participate.

Only then does everyone have an equal opportunity.

We call these rights provision rights.

These protection and provision rights are not only important for the fundamental value of freedom. Protection and provision rights are also needed for justice and solidarity. This is explained in Chapter 5.

PROTECTION RIGHTS



PROVISION RIGHTS



WHAT DOES SOCIAL DEMOCRACY WANT?

How should a society deal with these civil liberties?

Are only protection rights important?

Are only provision rights important?

How much should be defined by the state?

And what takes care of itself?

Politicians and thinkers do not agree on this.

Let's look at two different points of view:

The **neoliberal school of thought** and the thinking in **Social Democracy** circles.

Neoliberal thinking

Neoliberal thinkers say that personal, individual freedom is the most important thing.

Society should set as few rules as possible.

They claim that rules and laws always restrict personal freedom.

Just imagine:

Someone doesn't just own *one* apartment, but two. They want to rent out one of them. Since the rent is very high, the owner is unable to find a tenant. There are far too few vacant apartments in the city. Despite this, the owner says: "I'll leave the apartment empty until someone pays the high rent."

Neoliberal thinkers say:

“Of course that’s OK. They own the apartment.

And there is an applicable protection right – the right of ownership.”

In response, Social Democracy says:

“That’s not good. By law, we prohibit the apartment from standing empty. Of course, there is the right of ownership. However, people also have the right to have a roof over their heads. That is a provision right. The property must be used for society’s benefit.”



In fact, there are laws that prohibit vacant apartments from remaining empty for long periods of time.

This is the case in Hamburg, where there is a severe housing shortage.

This is also set out in the German constitution.

Everyone is allowed to own property, but property should also be used socially.

Neoliberal thinkers ask:

Which rules implemented by the state are directed against individual freedom?

They want the state to interfere as little as possible in citizens’ lives. Not just in good times, but in bad times, too.

They argue:

Protection rights (relating to our own opinion, property, information) are more important than provision rights (relating to education, health, culture). If the state establishes provision rights, these could block individual freedom.

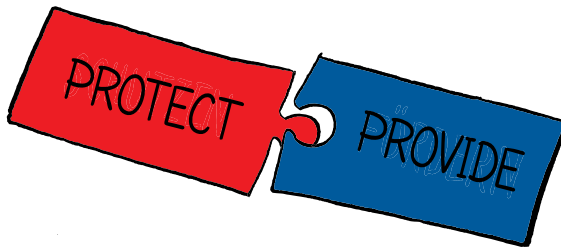
Social Democracy asks:

What should the state do so that all people can live freely?

Social Democracy wants everyone to be able to participate and live a better life. This is what the state has to promote. Always. Not just when someone is facing a crisis.

They argue:

Protection rights (relating to our own opinion, property, information) and provision rights (relating to education, health, culture) complement one another. Without provision rights, protection rights are jeopardised in the long term.



Social Democracy wants the following:

The state should define many protection and provision rights in laws. These rights guarantee that people have equal opportunities to live freely. This allows them to participate in society and make decisions. Both protection rights and provision rights are required! Which rights are set out in law and how that happens is decided collectively by society.

What does the SPD say in its **principle guidelines** about freedom?

Principle guidelines

Every political party has its own set of principle guidelines.

They state:

- Which values the party stands by.
- Which issues and tasks are most important to the party.
- What the party aims to achieve through its policies.



The principle guidelines are more general than an election manifesto.

An election manifesto is up-to-date – it always contains specific plans that the party intends to carry out if it wins the election.

The SPD's most recent principle guidelines were agreed in 2007. They are called *the Hamburg Programme*.

Freedom in the SPD's principle guidelines

“Freedom means the possibility of self-determination. Every person is qualified and competent for freedom. The question if he/she can live commensurate with this vocation is decided in society.

*Every person must be **free of undignified dependencies, misery and fear**, with **the chance to develop talents** and to become a responsible participant in society and politics.*

People can only use their freedom if they know they enjoy a sufficient amount of social security.”

Freedom is therefore a mixture of protecting rights and promoting opportunities.

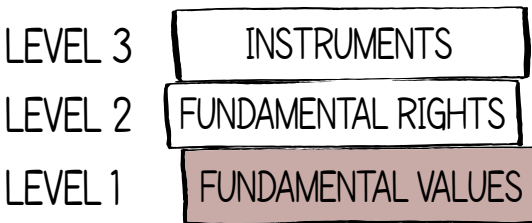




Chapter 3 focuses on the term **justice**.

Are all people automatically equal? What is a fair distribution?

How can we make Germany fairer?



Justice is one of the fundamental values of Social Democracy.

This is the first level.

3.1

WHAT IS EQUALITY – WHAT IS JUSTICE?

Birthday party

It's Jens's 8th birthday and he's invited his friends round for a party.

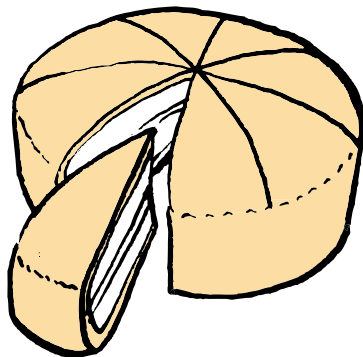
There's cake to follow the singing. How are the slices shared out?

Jens shouts: "I want to eat the whole cake myself!" But his friends don't think that's a good idea. It may be Jens's birthday, but they all want a slice of cake, otherwise it would be *unfair*.

Equality means distributing goods and opportunities fairly between everyone.

Equality is the starting point

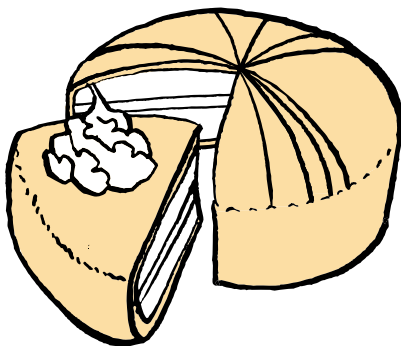
This is also set out in the German constitution:
we treat all people equally.
No matter if they are
a man or a woman,
no matter how old they are,
no matter the colour of their skin,
no matter who they love.



This means that everyone gets the same size slice of cake. Or do they?

At Jens's birthday party, two of the children are not yet four years old. They don't eat as much. The mother cuts slightly smaller slices of cake for them. Uncle Gerd still hasn't eaten anything. He's hungry – and gets a slightly bigger slice. And birthday boy Jens gets a big slice served with cream. Simply because it's his birthday.

So in the end, they didn't all get the same size slice of cake. It wasn't divided *equally*. But everyone was happy – with their own slice of cake and with everyone else's slice, too. It was divided *fairly*.



When is something distributed fairly?

A just distribution must feel *fair* – for all who share.

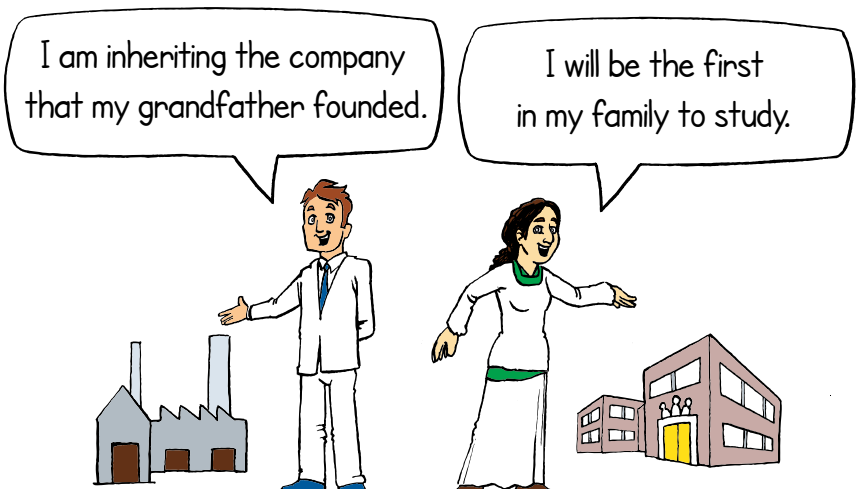
This works when three things add up:

- Firstly, the goods or opportunities – the cake slices in our example – are truly divided among everyone. In other words, it's not *all for one*.
- Secondly, everyone who is sharing understands the distribution rules. In our example, everyone understands that the birthday boy gets a big slice served with cream.
- Thirdly, everyone who is sharing agrees with the distribution rules. Since your birthday is a special day, everyone thinks it's OK for Jens to have a big slice served with cream.

It goes without saying that distributing goods and opportunities fairly in our society is more complicated than sharing equal slices of cake.

After all, there are big **differences between people**.

Their origins are different.



They have different talents, interests and careers.

I want to be a teacher.

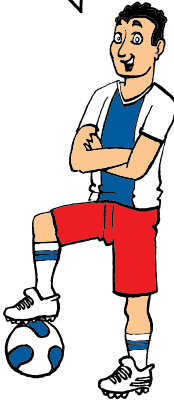


I'm going to be an inventor!



They earn different amounts of money.

5 million a year!



1,400 net!



The differences between people are significant. Justice means that everyone still gets the same opportunities for a good life.

JUSTICE: WOMEN AND GENERATIONS

There is a lot of talk about justice in politics.

There are many terms linked to *justice*.

We want to briefly explain two of these terms here.

Gender equality

In Germany, women often still have worse opportunities than men.

They often get worse work and earn less money.

That is unfair. Gender equality therefore means receiving *equal pay for equal work*, for example.

Generational justice

Generational justice means that the elderly should not live in such a way that younger generations are worse off later. This can happen, for example, if we destroy our environment or incur a lot of national debt right now.

But we also have to plan for the future in the long term.

We need to keep our roads and houses in good condition.

And we need good educational institutions, such as schools and universities. Only with a good education can subsequent generations find better solutions to tomorrow's problems. We need money to do so. We may also have to incur debt to achieve this.

HOW DO WE DISTRIBUTE?

This is what we know about justice:

It is about distributing resources fairly, such as money and goods.

But it is also about having a fair starting position, i.e. fair opportunities for all.

How do we distribute in Germany? We distribute in two ways.

Distribution by performance

The idea behind distribution by performance is:

Those who perform better get more.

This is often done in the working world.

Those who do a better job earn a higher salary.

The same applies to pensions.

Those who have paid more in get a higher pension.

But if we take distribution by performance seriously, that also means:

A company boss may perform ten times more than a simple worker.

By extension, they therefore earn ten times more.

However, the boss must not earn a hundred or even a thousand times as much as a normal worker.

Or:

Nurses should actually earn more money because they have a hard job, which is also very important.

Distribution by need

Many people support this idea:

Those facing an emergency situation get the help they need at the time.

This is how it works in the health sector:

Anyone with a certain disease receives the treatment they need.

Anyone who is healthy is not treated since they don't need it.

The same principle applies in social welfare:

Anyone who doesn't have a job receives money from the state.

Anyone who earns enough money doesn't get social welfare payments.

Both principles are important: we must take into account what people have achieved, but also what they need.

Those who can achieve a lot should be happy that they are healthy and have a good job. They can give something more to society without any problems. After all, strong shoulders can carry more than weak ones.

3.4

WHAT DOES SOCIAL DEMOCRACY WANT?

Social Democracy wants all people to be able to experience their **civil liberties** in the same way. If people have fewer good opportunities, the state should encourage and support them.

Protection rights and provision rights:

See Chapter 2, page 24

This means:

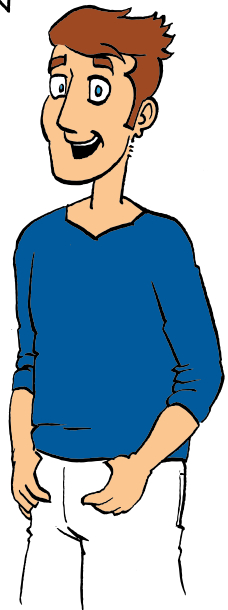
Social Democracy wants the state to actively intervene in distribution. This may be in the interest of the individual, and of society as a whole. The aim is to achieve justice and equality for all.

What a fair distribution looks like depends on the specific area. Different distribution rules apply in tax policy than in health or education policy, for example. We must renegotiate in each area. It is therefore important that everyone is able to participate in the decision-making process, such as through elections.

Everyone should have the same opportunities!
That's where the state can really help.

Justice in the SPD's principle guidelines

*“Justice is grounded on equal dignity of every person. It is a synonym for **equal freedom and equal opportunities**, independent of background and gender. Therefore justice means **equal participation in education, work, social security, culture and democracy as well as equal access to all public goods**. Where unequal distribution divides society into people giving and following instructions it infringes upon equal freedom and is thus unfair. Therefore justice requires **equal distribution of income, property and power**.”*



SOLIDARITY

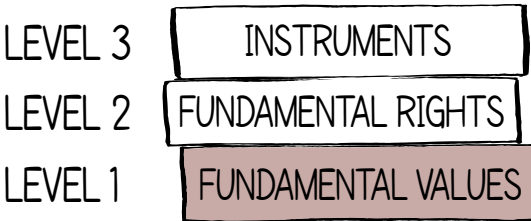


In **Chapter 4**, we'll look at the term **solidarity**.

How people pull together varies depending on the situation.

How does solidarity work in our society?

What does Social Democracy want?



Solidarity is one of the fundamental values of Social Democracy.

This is the first level.

Freedom! Equality! Fraternity!

That's what the revolutionaries shouted from the barricades in France 200 years ago. Nowadays, we'd say the fundamental values of Social Democracy – they are *freedom, justice and solidarity*.

We've already learned about the terms freedom and justice.

But what is solidarity all about? And what does it have to do with the word *fraternity*?

THINKING ABOUT SOLIDARITY



Solidarity is a combination between togetherness and help.

People who act in solidarity do the following things:

- **They feel responsible for one another.**
This sense of community applies to individuals or to a group.
Or even an entire society.
- **They act in the interest of others.**
Even if that might go against their own interest for a while.
- **They help people who believe in the same thing.**
People are in solidarity when they fight together against grievances in society.

Family spirit is a practical example of solidarity.

Most people would automatically say:

“I’d help my family – no matter the situation.

If my brother has a problem, I'm there for him – regardless of whether he can help me, too. I help him. We belong together.”

I help my brother.
We belong together.

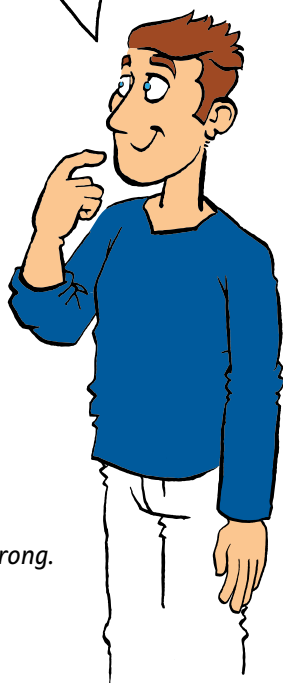
People are not only in solidarity within their family unit, but also on other occasions.

Such as at their sports club:
“We can organise the summer festival together! That way the children will have a lovely afternoon.”

Or at work. Together, we are often better protected and can achieve more:
“We’ll tell the manager together what’s going wrong. Then they have to listen to us all and can’t just take one of us on.”

In political terms:
“We are fighting for a fair minimum wage for all. Hairdressers, construction workers and cleaners have a right to fair pay.”

And when people are in great need:
“The refugees have fled their homeland because of the war. We must help them!”



Why is this feeling one of the fundamental values of Social Democracy?

It's true that not all people are in the same position.

It's true that not all people share the same interests.

But the vast majority of people have a feeling of being connected to others. This feeling is shared and experienced in many parts of our society.

People help each other without asking for anything in return. They work together in a group without anyone asking them to. And they are committed to reaching a common goal.

Most people behave in solidarity -
Social Democracy builds on this.



Most people therefore behave in solidarity – either in small or large groups. Social Democracy builds on this feeling. And history has shown that workers have achieved a lot together and in solidarity – including on key issues such as the right to vote for all.

HOW DOES SOLIDARITY WORK?

Is solidarity not the same as altruism?

Children's clothes donated to charity clothing collections.

A few coins given to a homeless person.

No, not according to American sociologist **Richard Sennet**.

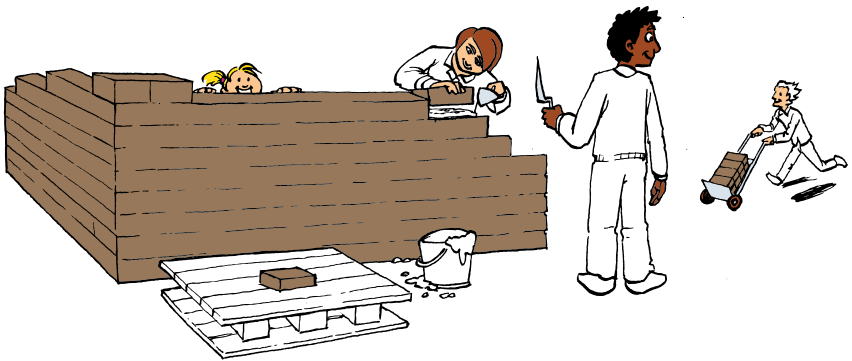
He believes:

Not everyone who gives money to the poor is acting in solidarity.

After all, solidarity does not only mean doing good deeds.

Nor is it a matter of clearing your own conscience.

Solidarity means fighting together with other people for a better world. We're not talking about support for a short time, but a better life for the future.



According to Richard Sennet, solidarity can be explained as follows:
This cooperation is actually an exchange from which everyone involved benefits. People work together to create something they could not achieve alone.

If everyone fights for themselves alone, society as a whole does not achieve much. When people work together and stick together, they achieve much more.

That is why Social Democracy has the task of helping people to work together.

The aim is to strengthen society. That is good for us all.
Policies should promote and support solidarity as much as possible.
After all, people achieve much more together.
And everyone benefits, too.



EXAMPLES OF SOLIDARITY

Trade unions

A trade union brings together people who work in the same occupational group or industry. Together they try to create better working conditions. And they support one another when it comes to collective bargaining or going on strike, for example.

The first trade unions in Germany were founded around 1850. Trade unions are strong, stable and democratic. They have a great deal of influence in the working world. They have achieved a lot, such as improved working conditions. Many workers are members of a trade union. That was the case in the past. And it is still the case today in the 21st century. Unions have an open organisation where everyone is treated equally – all members can have a say, participate and make decisions.

Social security

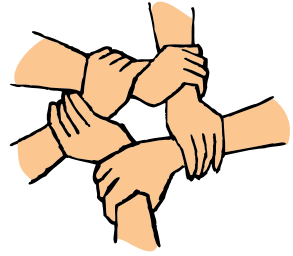
Starting in the 1880s, the German state developed new insurance policies. They covered risks such as unemployment, illness and old age. The system was and still is very simple: those who can, pay a contribution. Those who need it are supported.

Social security is an important part of our **welfare state**.

These social security policies only work thanks to solidarity among people. Everyone who has a job pays into the scheme – regardless of whether they need support themselves later or not.

The welfare state

The result of all social policy.
A system covering all measures and redistributions whereby society covers the risks of individuals.



Associations

People like to work together for a cause. Be it sport, culture, leisure or politics: there are associations in all sectors of society. Gymnastics clubs, chess clubs, hip hop dance groups and even allotment garden clubs can be found everywhere.

Why are associations so popular? A feeling of belonging. Members have the same aim or share the same hobby. They work together to achieve more than they would as an individual. And let's not forget that they have fun in doing so.

Associations positively implement the feeling of solidarity: members form a group. This group has its own aims. When these aims are achieved, not only does the group benefit, but so too does society as a whole. Such associations not only work for themselves, but for an entire society.

Solidarity on the inside – a lack thereof on the outside

The feeling of solidarity shared by members of an association is not always positive for society. There are also associations that aim to exclude and discriminate against other people. These include associations for right-wing extremists. Even in right-wing extremist associations, members stick together and help one another. But they are also against a cohesive society. That is why they threaten democracy.

WHAT DOES SOCIAL DEMOCRACY WANT?

Social Democracy wants people to feel connected to each other throughout society.

This connection can be encouraged, but not forced.

For example, the city is building a centre where associations can gather. Associations are allowed to pay low or no taxes if they do something positive for society.

The solidarity bond within our society is not the same everywhere. It can be influenced by the state and its citizens.

That is why Social Democrats must always ask:

- Which institutions and organisations are good for the cohesion of society right now?
- Are there organisations that strengthen solidarity between people? Are there any that weaken it?

Cohesion between people is only possible if you respect each other's freedom and treat one another as equals.

Social Democracy therefore states: solidarity only exists if the fundamental values of freedom and justice also apply.



Solidarity in the SPD's principle guidelines

*“Solidarity means **mutual attachment, belonging and assistance.***

It is the readiness of people to stand up for each other and provide support between the strong and the vulnerable, between generations and peoples.

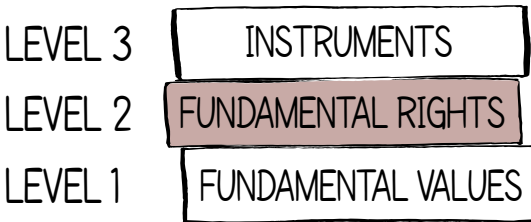
Solidarity creates strength for change.

This is the experience of the labour movement.

*Solidarity is **a strong force that ties our society together** – in spontaneous and individual readiness to give assistance, with common rules and organizations, and the welfare state’s solidarity guaranteed and organized by politics.”*

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY: THINK – DEFINE – ACT

Chapter 5 explains how the **fundamental values** belong together – and that we also need fundamental rights for all. How are these **fundamental rights** turned into rules and laws? And what **instruments** does the state have to turn these rights into policy?



This chapter deals with all three levels: fundamental values, fundamental rights and instruments.

The emphasis is on fundamental rights. This is the second level.

5.1

FUNDAMENTAL VALUES BELONG TOGETHER

The fundamental values of Social Democracy are freedom, justice and solidarity. These three values are equally important. They belong together. They support one another. And they limit one another.

Freedom is impossible without justice and solidarity.



When people live together as part of a community, the freedom of individuals is limited. When you're part of a group, you have to be considerate of others.

But living with other people can also increase your personal freedom. After all, education and culture for all (i.e. provision rights) can only be achieved through group cooperation: with justice and action in solidarity.

Justice cannot be achieved without freedom and solidarity.



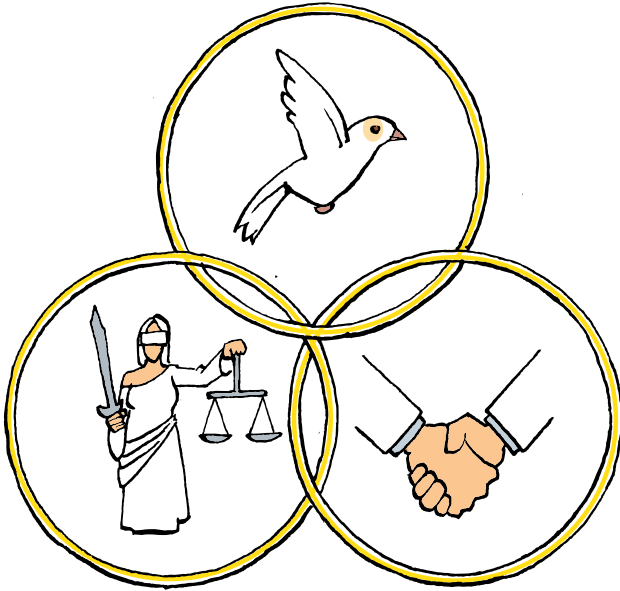
Justice means distributing goods and opportunities fairly. Everyone must agree with the distribution rules so that the distribution is deemed fair.

And that is only possible if everyone can negotiate with each other freely. To achieve this, as many people as possible have to stick together and want to help each other.

Solidarity needs freedom and justice in society.



Solidarity unites all people who want to live together in freedom and justice. This works best as part of a democracy.



The three fundamental values and how they are firmly linked:
This is at the heart of Social Democracy.

5.2

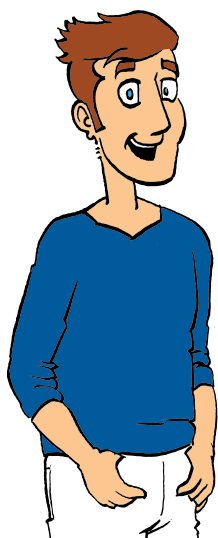
FROM THINKING TO DEFINING: FROM FUNDAMENTAL VALUE TO FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

The fundamental values are not only important for Social Democracy in Germany: people in all countries of the world champion these values of freedom, justice and solidarity.

But how people see and interpret these values varies greatly.

For some, *freedom* is the inherent dignity of the human being. For others, freedom is a gift from God. This is why people have different ideas about what freedom means.

We live in an open, diverse society. It therefore does not seem right to impose a very specific meaning of freedom, justice and solidarity on each other. Everyone can determine for themselves what freedom means to people.



Fundamental rights
apply to all people.

Instead, we can look at how the fundamental values of Social Democracy are translated into rules and laws around the world. In each country, the most important shared values have been translated into rights for the people.

These are fundamental rights that apply to all people.
They are protection rights and provision rights.

The most important rights and duties for all citizens are usually set out in a country's **constitution**. In Germany, the constitution is called the **Grundgesetz**.

Various parties have jointly established Germany's constitution. The values incorporated in the constitution are used as a basis for people living together.

In Germany, fundamental rights are found in the first 19 articles of the constitution. These articles clearly set out what the state may and may not do in its dealings with the people. For example, the fundamental rights stipulate that the state must treat all people equally and that everyone is free to express their opinion. In Germany, there are slightly more protection rights than provision rights in the constitution.



Like almost every country, Germany has many other rules and laws alongside the constitution. They stipulate how **fundamental rights work in practice**. Here are a few examples.



Freedom as a fundamental right:

The right to freely develop as a person

This means that every person has the right to shape their own life. Everyone should and may have their own wishes and ideas, and develop in a manner that suits them. Everyone should be able to live the way they want. However, this only applies provided they do not get in the way of other people. That is a protection right.

The right to the integrity of the home

A stranger may not simply enter a home if the occupant of that home does not allow it. That is a protection right.

The right to free education

Those who do an apprenticeship or further study do not usually have to pay for it. That is a provision right.



Justice as a fundamental right:

Equality in the eyes of the law

Whether rich or poor, young or old, man or woman – all people are equal in the eyes of the law. Nobody may be disadvantaged because of their person. The state must also abide by this. That is both a protection right and a provision right.

The right to work and fair pay

Every person has the right to a job. This includes being paid a fair wage. We now have a statutory minimum wage in Germany. That is a provision right.

The right to vote and stand for election

Every person has the right to participate and have a say in politics. That is both a protection right and a provision right.



Solidarity as a fundamental right:

Right of association

People who want to do something together or fight for a good cause have the right to join forces. However, nobody can be forced to join an association. If you want, you can also leave again.

That is a protection right.

Right to strike

Every person with a job has the right to refuse to work in certain situations. Anyone taking part in a strike organised by their union may not be dismissed. That is a protection right.

UN COVENANTS

Many nations around the world have also turned fundamental values into fundamental rights. Almost all countries in the world meet in New York. At the **United Nations**, they talk about problems that concern everyone.

The United Nations

Almost all countries in the world belong to the United Nations (UN). They work together for peace and human rights.



The UN member states have signed joint declarations. These declarations set out the common goals they want to work towards. These **UN covenants** also contain the fundamental rights that are important in Social Democracy.

UN Covenants

In 1966, the United Nations agreed on two covenants featuring fundamental rights. One is called the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This contains global protection rights. The other is called the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. This contains provision rights.

- The UN covenants are a good basis for Social Democracy. The fundamental rights set out in these covenants are recognised globally. Almost 170 states have signed the covenants.
- The covenants call for international cooperation and worldwide implementation of fundamental rights.
- The covenants stipulate exactly which rights people have worldwide – and which can be demanded in their own country.
- The covenants are often formulated more precisely than the constitutions in individual countries. If they were strictly observed everywhere, life would be much better for a great many people.

The UN Covenants ensure
that countries work on
implementing human rights!




FROM DEFINING TO ACTING: FROM FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO INSTRUMENT

Fundamental rights for all – that sounds great! However, despite the UN covenants, there are major differences worldwide when it comes to human rights and the welfare state.

Establishing fundamental rights in law is the first step.

Actually applying these laws is the second step.

Many states do not comply with the fundamental rights set out in the UN covenants. But only when a state is actively engaged in letting people live their fundamental rights – and guaranteeing them permanently – do citizens get something out of these covenants.



Laws that have been passed
must also be guaranteed permanently.

Establishing and protecting fundamental rights:

This is known as an **obligation to act**.

Every state has an obligation to act.

Obligation to act

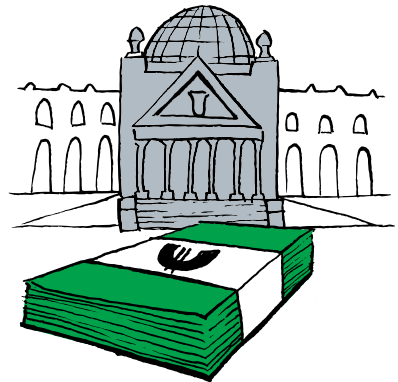
The Social Democratic school of thought believes that the state has the task of protecting and fulfilling people's fundamental rights.

The state is there to improve people's lives.

The task of the state

In Social Democracy, the state has a clear task:

to improve people's lives.



What can and should a state do?

- The state must provide a livelihood for all people. Every person has fundamental rights: having enough food to eat, a roof over their heads, roads and education.
- The state must ensure there is sufficient food, housing and schools for all. This is called *infrastructure*. All people have free access to this livelihood. This livelihood is guaranteed, provides opportunities and is the same for everyone.

- The state must offer all people the opportunity to participate in society. Since not all people are equal, the state has the task of distributing all opportunities and goods fairly. Sometimes, the state needs to redistribute.
- Moreover, in Social Democracy, the state must be careful that the economy does not get out of control.

For example, the state ensures that children do not work. The state stipulates that people must wear protective clothing while at work. And the state ensures that people do not have to work extremely long hours.

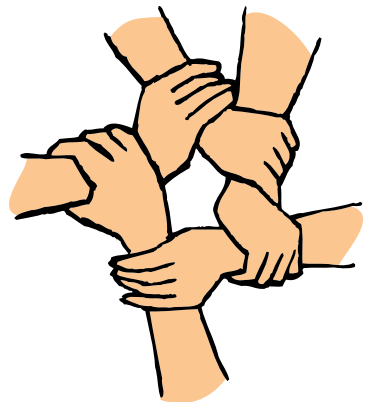
Democracy and the fundamental rights of workers must be protected. If the state does not set certain limits on the economy, some fundamental rights come under threat.

How can the state achieve this?

Different states choose different instruments to improve citizens' lives.

Example: the welfare state

In many countries, the state supports people who need help. Such as when they are ill, unemployed, suffer an accident at work or reach old age.





In **Germany**, there is a **social security** system in place. Those who can, pay a monthly contribution. This covers the costs for anyone who needs help.



In Scandinavian countries, such as **Sweden**, there is a similar system. There, however, the costs associated with unemployment benefits, care and education are paid for through **tax revenues**.

The result – namely a well-functioning welfare state – is comparable to the German system. But the instruments are different.

FREEDOM

JUSTICE

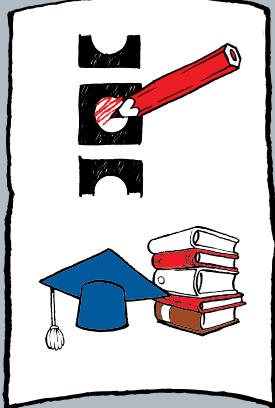
FUNDAMENTAL VALUE



FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Protection rights
and provision rights
e.g. the right to vote
the right to education

INSTRUMENTS



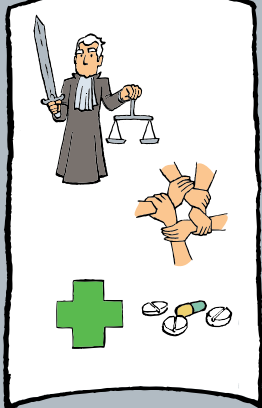
FUNDAMENTAL VALUE



FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Protection rights
and provision rights
e.g. equality in the eyes of the law
the right to healthcare

INSTRUMENTS



SOLIDARITY

FUNDAMENTAL VALUE



FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Protection rights
and provision rights
e.g. the right to assemble
the right to form trade unions

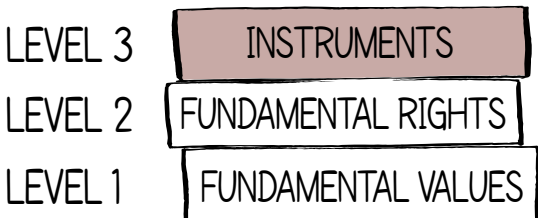
INSTRUMENTS

The state actively
advocates for..



SOCIAL DEMOCRACY COMPARED

In **Chapter 6**, we will **compare Social Democracy** with other political movements. How does Social Democracy differ from the neoliberal and conservative schools of thought?



Different political movements choose different instruments to achieve their goals. This is the third level.

6.1

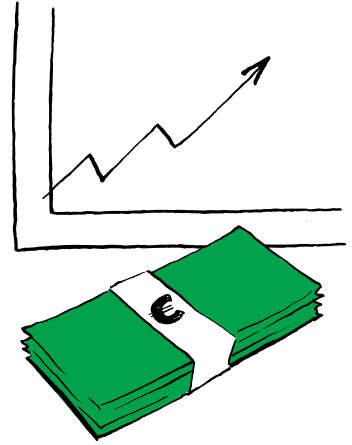
THE NEOLIBERAL SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

The goal shared by neoliberals is clear: they want all people to live with as much freedom as possible. Liberals are primarily concerned with protection rights, such as the right to property. The **market** should also be completely free.

Market

This is an economic term.
It relates to matching supply and demand, across all goods and services.

Example: the used car market.
It includes all those who are looking for a used car.
It also includes dealers and private individuals who have one or more used cars on offer.



Neoliberals champion freedom for entrepreneurs.
Freedom to think and act. And neoliberals believe the state should intervene in this freedom as little as possible.

This is what neoliberals think about fundamental values and society:

Neoliberals believe the market regulates itself.
The effect of supply and demand ensures that exactly those things are offered for which people have a need.

Neoliberals believe freedom is far more important than equality and solidarity.

They believe individuals are more important than society.

Neoliberals believe all people are free. People differ from each other based on their personal performance.

Neoliberals believe the state has the following tasks:

- The state should ensure that the market can function safely.
- The state should only help people who are facing an emergency through no fault of their own.
- The state should guarantee that nobody can interfere with a person's independence or freedom.
- For neoliberals, a stable monetary value is more important than work for all. They would rather support measures to fight inflation than a project that creates jobs.

What are the sticking points of neoliberalism?

Neoliberals say that the freedom of the market simultaneously guarantees the freedom of all people.

People who want greater Social Democracy say:

That's not true. Anyone who looks at the consequences of the free market economy can immediately recognise that this system has winners and losers. The richer get richer and the poorer get poorer. Anyone who loses more also loses their freedoms.

On the one hand, neoliberals demand as much freedom as possible: the state cannot interfere in people's lives or the market.

On the other hand, neoliberals are strictly against monopolies: in no industry should one business be overpowering, since a monopoly interferes with the free market.

Is neoliberalism successful as a school of thought?

Yes. Since the 1980s, neoliberal parties have often been elected in many countries. These parties can push through the neoliberal programme. In the process, they often dismantle the welfare state built up by Social Democrats and conservatives.

Which people support neoliberal ideas?

Neoliberals find most support among people who have a lot of money or property. These people already have a secure life – they don't need the state for that.

Neoliberalism is doubly elitist:

It is built on the ideas of the rich, and it represents the interests of the rich.

Elitist

Something belongs to the elite, a small, select group: the richest, the best educated, the people with the highest status.

THE CONSERVATIVE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

The conservative school of thought is difficult to summarise.

Conservatives mostly aim to preserve the current situation or to bring back certain things from the past.

As societies have changed rapidly throughout history, conservatives advocated for very different goals.

- At the time of the French Revolution, conservatives wanted to protect the interests of the nobility.
- When the German state came into being (around 1870), conservatives wanted to preserve the many small states.
- During the Weimar Republic, many conservatives fought against democracy; they wanted to restore the Empire.
- In the 1980s, the conservatives adopted many neoliberal values.

It is difficult to draw a line between them. So let us concentrate on the values that have been important to conservatives in recent years.

This is what conservatives think about fundamental values and society nowadays:

As far as possible, people should manage themselves or with the help of their family.

The next higher level is then only called upon when this is not possible. This would include the municipality, the region, the state or the federal government.

For example: children

Conservatives believe that parents should not put their children into childcare too early. They prefer to give parents money so that one – usually the mother – doesn't have to work and can look after the children at home. This is still the case even though the children may get fewer good educational opportunities this way.

For example: care

If someone needs care, conservatives say family and relatives should take care of them if at all possible.

There are many public care services in Scandinavia.

Such services are not so important to conservatives.

According to the principle conservative conviction, family and marriage are the cornerstones of society.

Conservative family policy focuses on male/female couples with children. Some conservatives are hugely concerned by homosexuality.

Conservatives believe the state has the following tasks:

The word *conservative* has Latin roots. It means *to preserve, to retain*.

For conservatives, preservation is also the most important task of the state: leaving things as they are. Conservatives are often satisfied with the current situation. They don't want to change or improve much.

What are the sticking points of conservatism?

Conservatism focuses on goals from the past. But as society changes rapidly, conservative goals also change continuously.

Is conservatism successful as a school of thought?

Certainly. Conservative parties repeatedly achieve good or very good election results not only in Germany, but also in many other countries. In Germany, conservative parties have been absent from the federal government for only 20 years from 1949 to the present day.

Who supports conservatism?

People who support conservative ideas usually own property, are educated and have a good position in society. Or they believe that everything was better in the past and want it to be so again.

6.3

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Social Democracy believes in a solidary, free and just society.

This goal is achievable if the state can intervene in the free market economy: the free market is regulated. It is not left to its own devices.

Social Democracy says that protection rights and provision rights complement each other. Without provision rights, protection rights are jeopardised in the long term.

Social Democracy wants people to feel connected to each other throughout society. Cohesion between people is only possible if you respect each other's freedom and treat one another as equals.

Social Democrats believe the state has the following tasks:

- The state should define many protection and provision rights in laws. These rights guarantee that people have equal opportunities to live freely.
- Provision rights are sometimes more important than protection rights. That is OK. How many rights are set out in rules and laws is decided collectively by society.
- If people have fewer good opportunities, the state should encourage and support them.
- Social Democracy wants the state to actively intervene in the distribution of funds. This may be in the interest of the individual, or of society as a whole. The aim is to achieve justice and equality for all.

What are the sticking points of Social Democracy?

People who want greater Social Democracy love to discuss their ideals. It sometimes gets very heated. But they are united by their belief that people can build a better future together. They look for answers to current problems. Their school of thought is therefore always developing further.

Willy Brandt said:

“Nothing happens of its own accord. And very little is lasting.

Therefore – be aware of your strengths and of the fact that each era requires its own answers and you really must feel up to its expectations if you hope to achieve good things.”

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Chapter 7 covers **Social Democracy in other countries**.

How are fundamental rights implemented in the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Sweden? What are the key differences compared with Germany? And what can we learn?

LEVEL 3

INSTRUMENTS

LEVEL 2

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

LEVEL 1

FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

Different countries choose different instruments to achieve their goals. This is the third level.

Almost all people share the fundamental values of Social Democracy. However, some people name and evaluate them differently.

Almost all states have signed the United Nations Fundamental Rights Treaties. But they are not taken seriously in every country.

Not every state fulfils its obligation to act. **Whether and how much the state intervenes in society** depends on the political direction of the government.

Different countries choose different instruments to implement their policies.

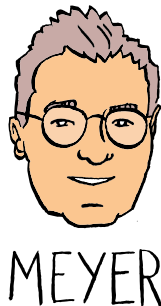
INTERNATIONAL STUDY

Academic **Thomas Meyer** and his team studied Social Democracy in different countries.

The researchers asked:

How actively does the state intervene in society to improve people's lives?

And what instruments does the state use to do so?



This chapter includes a summary of Meyer's research findings.

We'll compare the social policies of five different states.

We'll focus on three themes and the results:

Social policy

*How does **social policy** work?*

Which party has shaped the way social policy is conducted?

Social policy

What instruments are there in place in society to make life risks such as illness and unemployment bearable for citizens? How is it ensured that all citizens can participate in society and politics?

What does the state do?

What does the state do about inequality? How does this affect social differences in society?

Pensions, health and education

What are the special features of this country in terms of pensions, health and education?

Results

How are the people in this country doing? How many people have paid employment? Are the income differences large or small?

What do we already know?



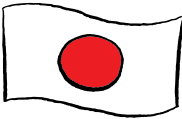
The **United States** is a country with very little Social Democracy. The country has had a neoliberal mindset and policies for a long time.



The **United Kingdom** has large social contrasts (between the **rich** and **poor**) and relatively little Social Democracy.



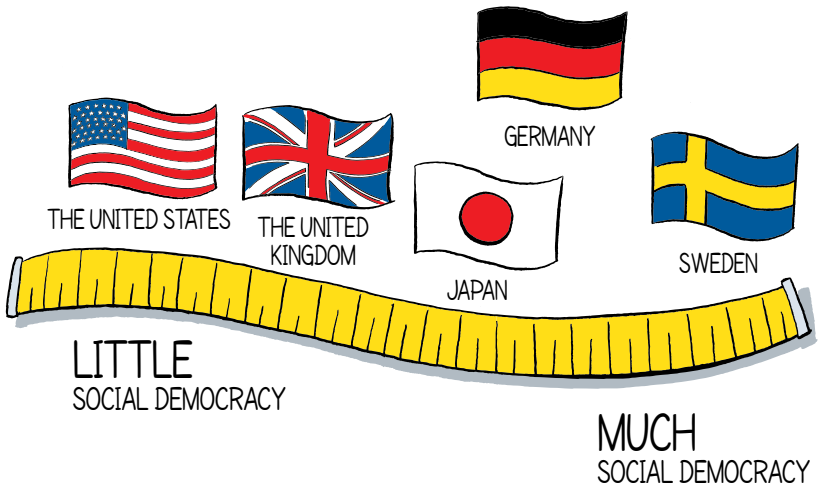
Germany is in the middle. In our country, there are elements of Social Democracy and neoliberalism, too.



Japan may not be in the western world. However, when it comes to implementing Social Democracy, the country makes for a good comparison with Germany.



Sweden is a prime example of Social Democracy: here, many fundamental rights are implemented and the state is particularly active.



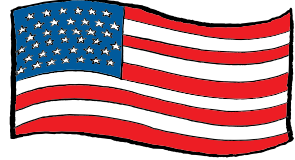
Want to know more?

Reader on Social Democracy 1, Chapter 4 (2014)

THE UNITED STATES

Social policy

Since it came into being, the United States has been pursuing a neoliberal policy. The state stays out of citizens' lives as much as possible. Individual freedom is the most important principle.



THE UNITED STATES

If someone receives state support, **distribution by performance** is far more important than **distribution by need**. The goal of American social policy is not: *everyone should participate*, but rather *to prevent the worst poverty*.

Distribution by performance

Those who perform better get more.
See Chapter 3, page 36

Distribution by need

Those in a certain situation
get the help they need at the time.
See Chapter 3, page 37

What does the state do?

The state hardly redistributes. As a result, the **social differences** between people are becoming ever greater. Some social security systems – covering illness for example – are organised by private companies. These companies want to make a profit.

Social differences

Differences in people's quality of life:

Do they have a high or low income?

Is their level of education high or low?

Do they live in a good or bad neighbourhood?

Are they healthy or unhealthy?

Is there much or little cohesion within the family?

Pensions, health and education

There are few social security programmes in the United States.

There is only a national system for pensions and unemployment insurance. Very poor Americans can get some welfare support.

However, they often do not get money but food vouchers instead.

The American social policy improved in 2014: President Barack Obama introduced *Medicare*. This provides health insurance for all.

Results

67 percent of Americans (aged 15-64) have paid work. The differences in income in the United States are very large. Very many people in the United States earn much less than the average. Although the United States is a rich country, these people are poor. 82 percent of people are satisfied with the opportunities available to them.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Social policy

The United Kingdom is a kingdom that runs as a democracy. British social policy is predominantly liberal. Even in the 18th and 19th centuries, politicians were in agreement: the government does not interfere. For a long time, only the church and private donors provided social support for the poor.



THE UNITED
KINGDOM

In the 20th century, the conservatives and socialists worked together to introduce a modest social policy. The most important life risks (illness, unemployment) were covered by the state. The benefits were low then and are still low today: people do not get much support. Some services are managed by private companies.

In the 1990s, social policy in the United Kingdom improved somewhat. But in recent years, many measures have been reversed by the conservative government.

What does the state do?

British social policy is not clear-cut. In some areas, distribution by performance applies, while in other areas, distribution by need applies. The state carries out extensive checks to determine whether someone really needs help. Many Brits find these tests degrading and embarrassing. In the United Kingdom, social disparities are large and slowly widening.

Pensions, health and education

There are national programmes for pensions and health.

The pension system is simple: participants make contributions, and the amount depends on their income. The basic pension is very low. Those who can, give themselves additional protection through a private pension.

The health system applies to all Brits: they pay taxes and are provided with free healthcare by the state.

The British education system is unfair: there are state schools but also (much better) private schools. Private schools cost a lot of money and educate a small elite. Those who are successful at school have a higher social status.

Results

71 percent of Brits (aged 15-64) have paid work. The differences in income in the United Kingdom are large. Many people in the United Kingdom earn much less than the average. Although the country is so rich, these people are poor. 88 percent of people are satisfied with the opportunities available to them.

GERMANY

Social policy

In Germany, the welfare state was established in the 19th and early 20th centuries, i.e. during the German Empire. By doing so, conservatives wanted to get ahead of the growing labour movement.

After the Second World War, the Conservatives (CDU) and the Social Democrats (SPD) worked together on the welfare state.



GERMANY

What does the state do?

In the past, the welfare state ensured that the differences between rich and poor did not become so great. But the social differences in Germany have started widening again in recent years.

Pensions, health and education

There are different social security schemes for people from different occupational groups. Employees must always insure themselves with the state. In contrast, civil servants and the self-employed can take out private insurance. Those who pay contributions over a long period of time receive more benefits. The German system is therefore good for people with many years of permanent employment.

The German statutory health insurance scheme (GKV) works, but it could be better. Civil servants and the self-employed can take out private insurance. What is unfair about this is that privately insured people are often treated better and faster than other people.

In Germany, education is a *matter for the individual federal states*. The quality of schools and universities is not the same everywhere. This means that in some federal states, pupils are better on average, yet worse in others. In Germany, success at school very much depends on social background: children from socially deprived families have much worse chances.

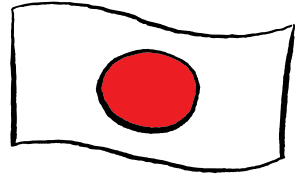
Results

73 percent of Germans (aged 15-64) have paid work. The differences in income in Germany are not as large as in the United States or the United Kingdom. There are also fewer people who are poor compared to others. But there are more poor people than in Sweden. 90 percent of people are satisfied with the opportunities available to them.

JAPAN

Social policy

Japan is an empire that runs as a democracy. The conservative party has dominated politics for many decades. Japan has a modern constitution with many fundamental rights for its citizens, such as the right to work and the right to health and culture.



JAPAN

Creating jobs is the most important goal of Japanese social policy. The state works together with the economy and the banks. Together, they reduce many of the life risks faced by the Japanese people. Many people have a permanent job for life.

What does the state do?

In Japan, citizens receive many benefits from businesses rather than the state. You need a permanent job, otherwise you can't access many social benefits.

There is little inequality in Japanese society. However, men have consistently better chances than women. And people without Japanese citizenship have almost no opportunities.

Pensions, health and education

Japanese people receive a small basic pension from the state. Most Japanese people also receive a much higher company pension.

As the population in Japan is ageing rapidly, pension contributions have been increased several times in recent years.

The health system is financed by the state. This includes healthcare for those who are insured (through the workplace) and those who are uninsured. In Japan, a deductible contribution of around 30 percent applies.

The Japanese education system is fair by comparison. Almost all pupils (98 percent) go on to further education after finishing their compulsory schooling.

Results

72 percent of Japanese people (aged 15-64) have paid work.

The differences in income in Japan are bigger than in Germany, but smaller than in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Although the country is rich, many Japanese people are poor.

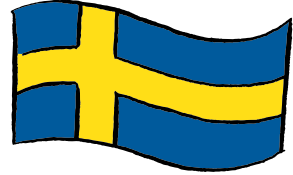
Only 70 percent are satisfied with the opportunities available to them.

SWEDEN

Social policy

The Swedish welfare state was built up and expanded over a long period of time by the Social Democratic Party.

The starting points of Social Democracy were pivotal: all people should be able to participate in social life. For many years, Sweden was seen as the model of social policy. Here, the state's system of supporting its citizens in all circumstances worked.



SWEDEN

Due to the economic crisis and its financial consequences, Social Democratic social policies were no longer attractive to all voters. The middle class voted out the Social Democrats. The conservatives took over the Swedish government for the first time in 2006. Certain elements of the strong welfare state have since been dismantled.

Nowadays, the Social Democrats – together with the Greens and the Left Party – have formed the government again.

What does the state do?

The Swedish welfare state has two starting points: basic security and ensuring the standard of living.

Taking pensions as an example, all Swedish people receive the same guaranteed pension. There is also a supplementary pension, which is dependent on income.

In Sweden, pensions, healthcare and education are financed through taxes. The state redistributes a lot, since people on high incomes pay much more tax than people on low incomes.

Pensions, health and education

The pension is the same for everyone in Sweden – it starts between the ages of 61 and 67. Anyone can get a supplementary pension through private funding.

The healthcare system is also financed through taxes. In Sweden, all medical costs are reimbursed by the state. In some provinces, people pay a patient fee.

Education is free – from pre-school through to university. Up to the age of 16, all pupils attend a comprehensive school. The vast majority of pupils then go on to grammar school. Opportunities afforded by both higher education and adult education are open to all.

Unemployment insurance is managed by trade unions. They traditionally have a lot of members in Sweden. The conservative government tried to change this but was unsuccessful.

Results

74 percent of Swedish people (aged 15-64) have paid work. The differences in income are small. Compared to the other countries, Sweden has the best results. There is little poverty in Sweden. 93 percent of people are satisfied with the opportunities available to them. Sweden also has the best results here.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN THE FUTURE

In **Chapter 8**, we'll look at **Social Democracy in the future**.

Our world is changing quickly. We are already facing new challenges.

There are new questions.

How does Social Democracy want to answer these questions?

LEVEL 3

INSTRUMENTS

LEVEL 2

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

LEVEL 1

FUNDAMENTAL VALUES


Different solutions can be found for future problems and opportunities.

Which instruments are the most suitable?

This is the third level.

RETHINKING

Social Democracy is never complete. It is at the heart of society. When the world changes, Social Democracy develops further. Both as a school of thought and as a political movement. To achieve Social Democracy, we must constantly examine, adapt and rethink our policies.



Social Democracy
is never 'complete'.



How do we do that?

First, we must look at societal developments.

Then we must ask ourselves:

What opportunities are available to people, and what risks?

We subsequently adjust our thinking and actions to this. Social Democracy doesn't want to be stuck in the past.

It takes on every challenge.

GLOBALISATION

The biggest challenge of the coming decades is to prepare our society for the consequences of globalisation.



Globalisation

The whole world is connected.

In the past, most countries only had trade contacts with their neighbouring countries. Nowadays, there are global connections in trade, culture, environment and of course communication. This has major consequences for our economy – nationally and internationally.

Globalisation offers both risks and opportunities.

Social Democracy wants to respond to the challenges in all areas:

- Trade and economy
- Financial markets, international banking
- Good working conditions, at home and around the world
- Nature and the environment
- Culture and international cooperation

Globalisation in the SPD's principle guidelines

“The 21st century is the first really global century.

Never before have people relied on each other so much worldwide.

[...] This century will either become a century of social, ecological and economic progress bringing more wealth, justice and democracy for all people or it will become a century of fierce distribution struggles and raging violence.

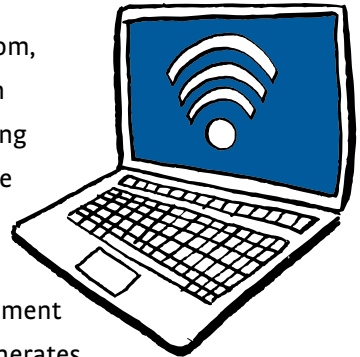
Today's lifestyle of our industrial societies will overstrain the earth's ecological power of endurance. [...] Dignified human life, peace in the world and the habitability of our planet are jeopardised."

It goes without saying that the internet plays a big role in globalisation.

8.3

DIGITAL WORLD

What do the fundamental values of freedom, justice and solidarity mean when we're on the internet? The digital world is developing at breakneck speed. Almost all people have access to the internet.



Yet every online action, every online movement has consequences. After all, every click generates data. At the moment, this data is mainly managed and used by large, private companies. But states have access to data, too.

Freedom

At the moment, people hardly know what data is being collected and who has access to it. In a free world, everyone should have the right to specify their own data and information.

Everyone should be able to know:

- *What data exists about them*
- *Who owns the data*
- *How the data is used*
- *How the data can be deleted.*

Justice

- Access to the internet – almost everyone has it, but far from everyone has access to the same quality.
- Those with slow access – such as via an old mobile phone – have worse chances in today's world than people with broadband and fast computers.
- Those who know how to use the internet well and stay up to date with the latest developments also have better chances.

Therefore, all people should have a right to good access and be able to learn as many skills as possible.

Solidarity

What does cohesion mean in the digital world?

Search engines, news sites and social networks serve people according to their interests and desires. We see more and more of what we already find interesting – and less and less of the rest of the world.

This changes our perception of society. And it may also change our willingness to help one another. We should reflect on this together.

ALWAYS STRIVING ONWARDS

Social Democracy is always changing. In the next parts of the *Concise and Clear* series, you will learn more about the challenges faced by our society and how Social Democracy views these challenges.

For example

Economy: How we can produce enough for everyone without harming society or the environment

Welfare state: How we can support one another

Europe: How the European Union works, what a European future looks like

Immigration and integration: How we can help people who are new to us.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Would you like to know more about Social Democracy?

The Academy for Social Democracy has various offers.

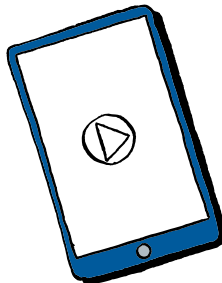


Social Democracy – Concise and Clear

Clear, practical, quick: the new book series

Social Democracy – Concise and Clear gets straight to the point.

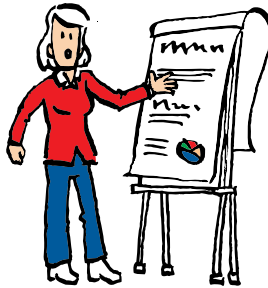
Nine topics, nine books, nine overviews. The perfect introduction to Social Democratic thinking and action.



Films

The educational films produced by the Academy for Social Democracy provide a quick initial insight into different topics. Click, watch and come up with your own initial questions in only a few minutes.

See www.fes-soziale-demokratie.de/filme.html

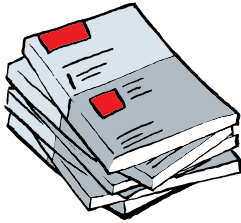


Seminars

The Academy for Social Democracy offers seminars on all topics across Germany. Here you can exchange ideas with scholars, politicians and other committed people.

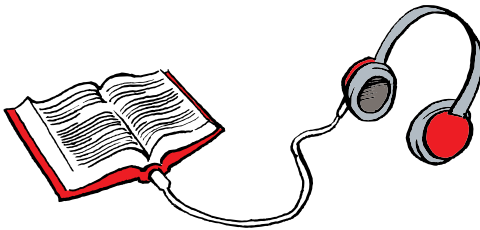
Over the course of eight modules, we discuss what Social Democracy means in the 21st century and how the basic values of Social Democracy play out. Each seminar can be booked separately.

Everything offered by the Academy for Social Democracy is also available on a mobile phone. You can simply download the *FES Social Democracy* app.



Social Democracy Readers

The Social Democracy Readers offer the opportunity to explore the issues in more detail. They touch on both theory and practice.



Audiobooks

The Social Democracy audiobooks build on the Social Democracy readers. The audiobook format offers an opportunity to listen and reflect – at home, on the road, wherever you like.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Values that unite us

What is Social Democracy?

*What do freedom, justice and solidarity mean
in today's politics?*

*How does Social Democracy differ from other
political movements?*

*How does Social Democracy in Germany compare
to other countries?*

These and many other questions are answered in the first part of the book series *Social Democracy – Concise and Clear*.

Clear, practical, quick. As part of the Concise and Clear series, we look at important issues in politics.

We use short texts that have been written in language that is easy to understand.

ISBN 978-3-98628-005-5