



WZB

Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin
für Sozialforschung

Democracy, Liberalism & the Populist Revolt

Wolfgang Merkel
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Five Steps

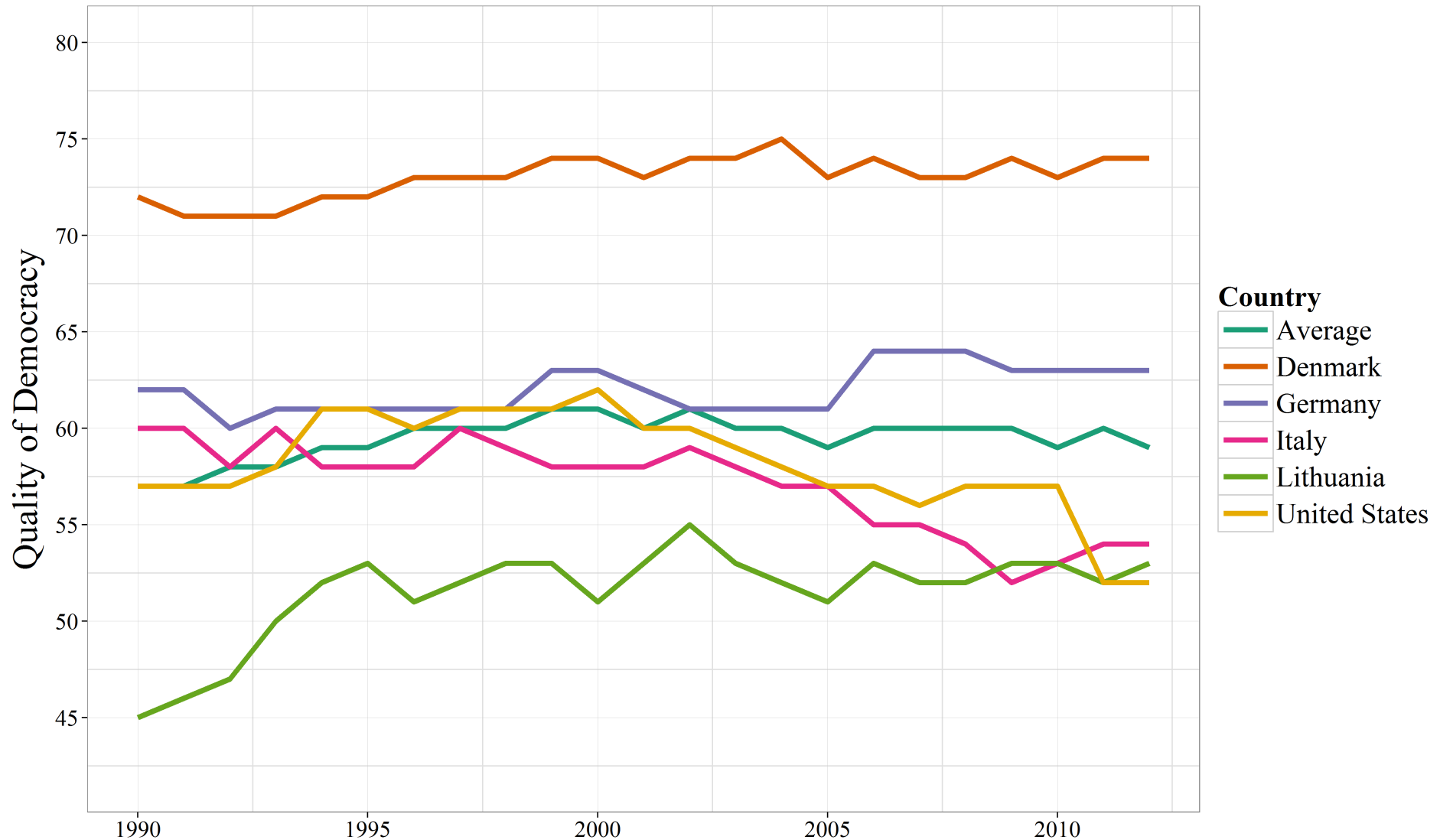
- Crisis of Democracy?
- Facts: Statistics on RWP
- Emerging Cleavage between Cosmos & Commus?
- Who are Cosmopolitans and Communitarians?
- RWP: Disease or Therapy?

Three Levels of Analysis

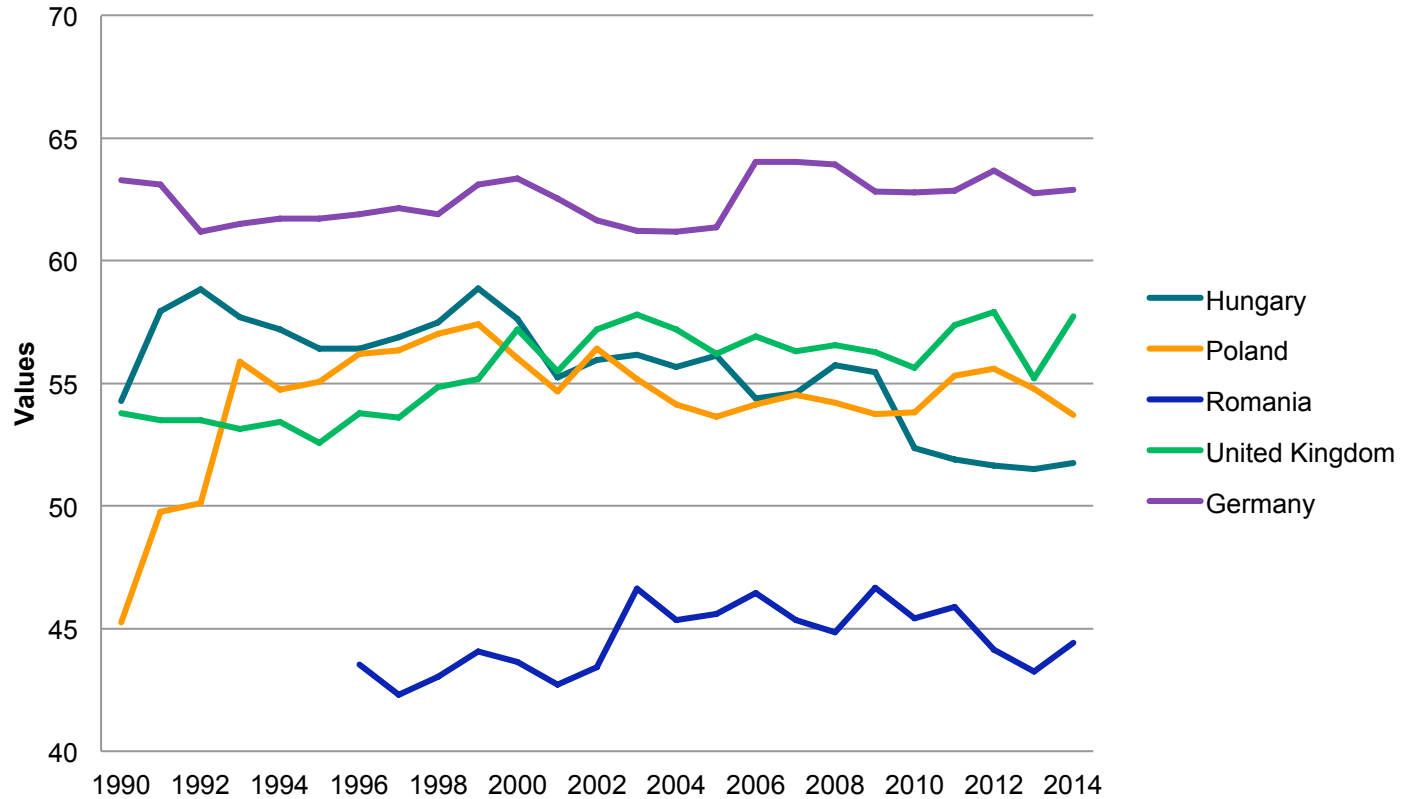
- 1. What do the people think?
(subjective dimension)**
- 2. What do scholars
think? (objective dimension)**
- 3. How are the democratic functions
fulfilled within embedded democracy?**



Quality of Democracy in 30 „best democracies“ (1990-2014)

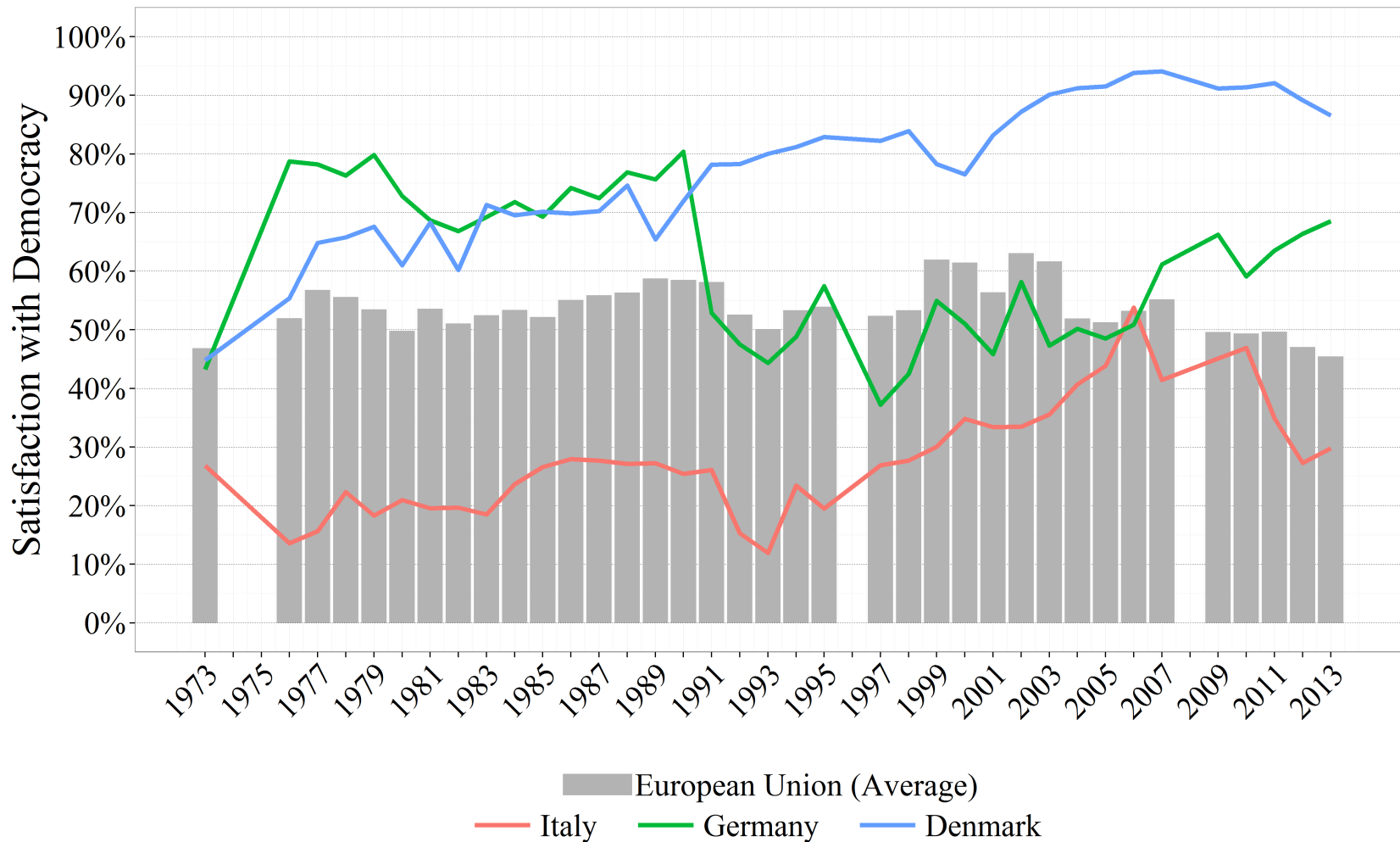


Democratic Quality



Source: Democracybarometer, April 2016

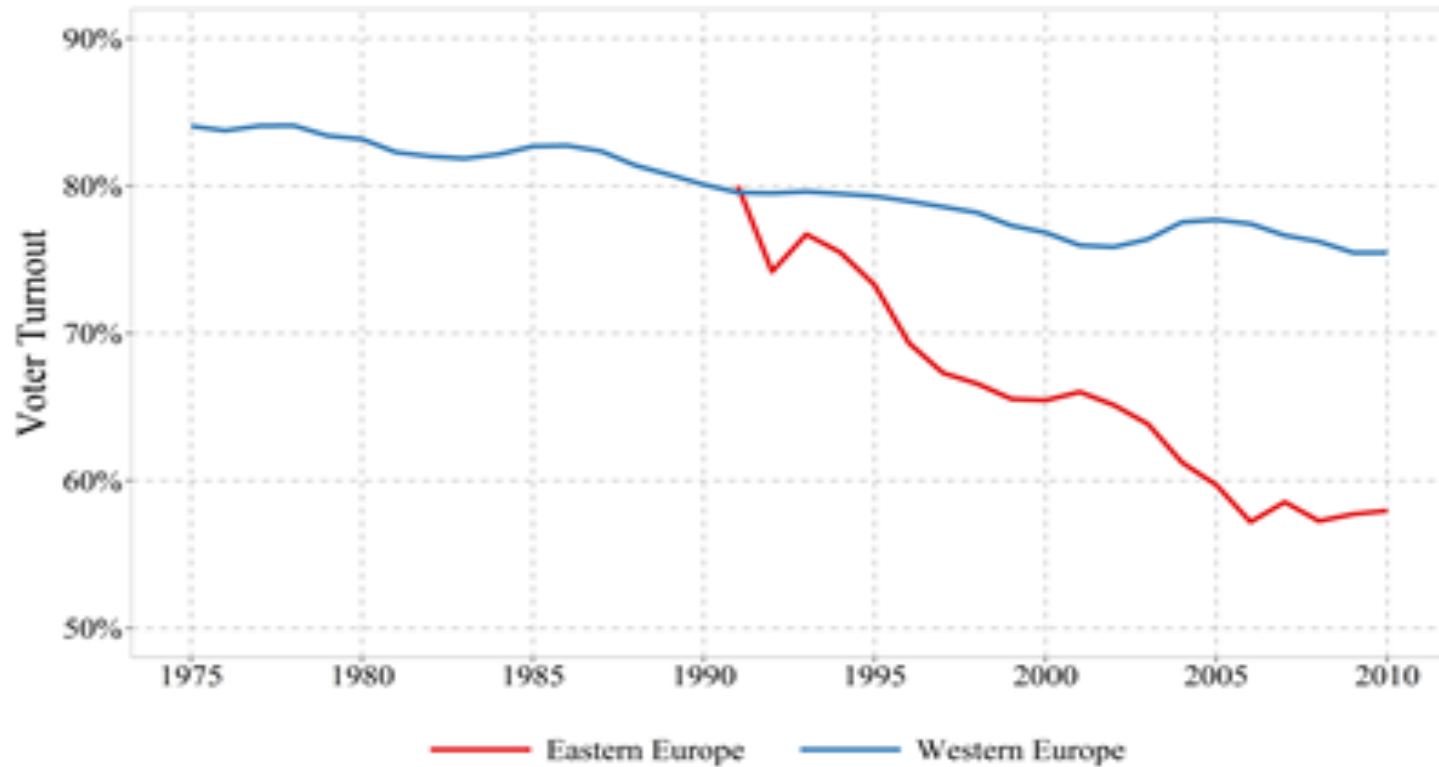
Satisfaction with Democracy in the European Union, 1973-2013



Source: Eurobarometer 1976 – 2014.

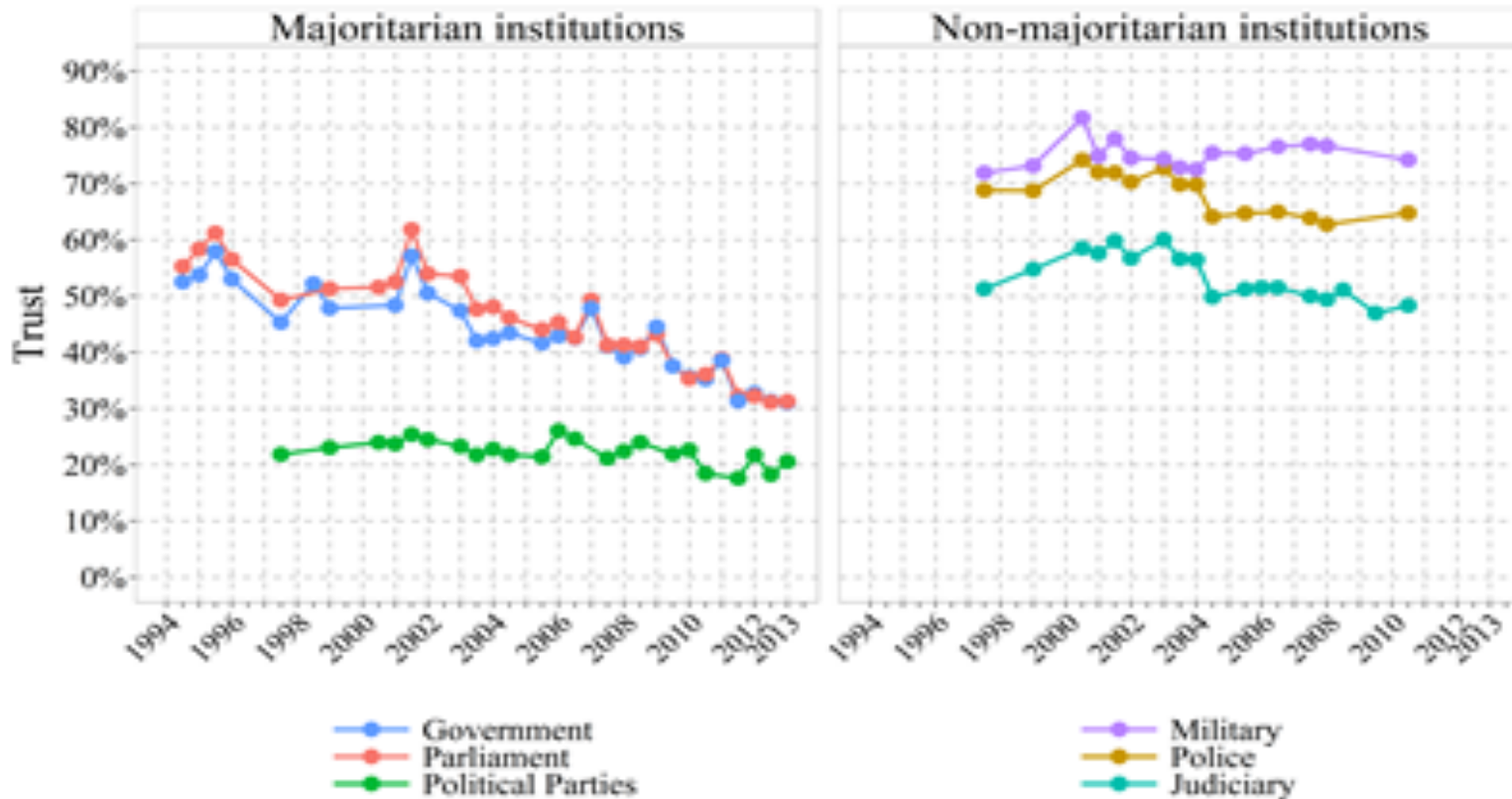
Note: Weighted data. EC/EU average according to historical composition.

Development of Voter Turnout in Western and Eastern Europe



Annual averages, EU-25 + Iceland, Norway, Switzerland. Only data on national lower houses of parliament were taken into account.
Source: WZB.

Trust in National State Institutions in the European Union



Semi-annual averages for member states of the EC/EU in accordance with their historical composition.
 Indicator: "For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it."
 Source: Eurobarometer 1994-2013.

Two Meanings of Crisis I

1. *Acute crisis: Death or life?*

- Crossroad
- Existential threat
- Fundamental decisions/medicine are required

- ❖ Examples:
 - ❖ Italy 1920-1922
 - ❖ Weimar 1930-1933
 - ❖ Spain 1933-1936/9
 - ❖ Greece 1965-67
 - ❖ Chile 1970-1973

Two Meanings of Crisis II

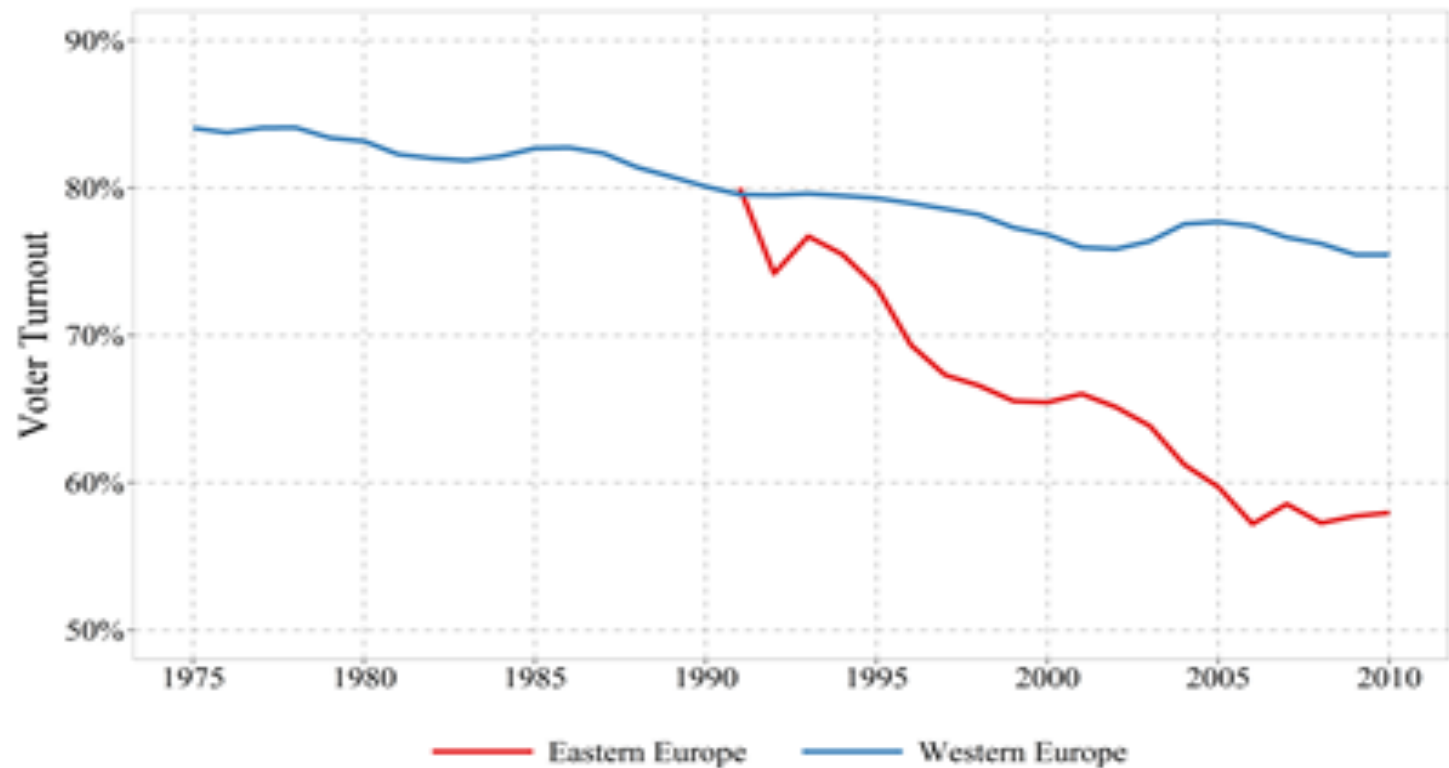
2. Latent crisis: Slow decline, erosion

- Unfulfilled normative promises of democracy (min or max)
- Erosion: Worsening of quality, chronic diseases
- Diminished subtype: Defective, illiberal, exclusive democracies, but no collapse/regime transition
- Threshold question not resolved!
- Reference: a “golden age of dem” or a “normative model of true democracy”?

Hypotheses:

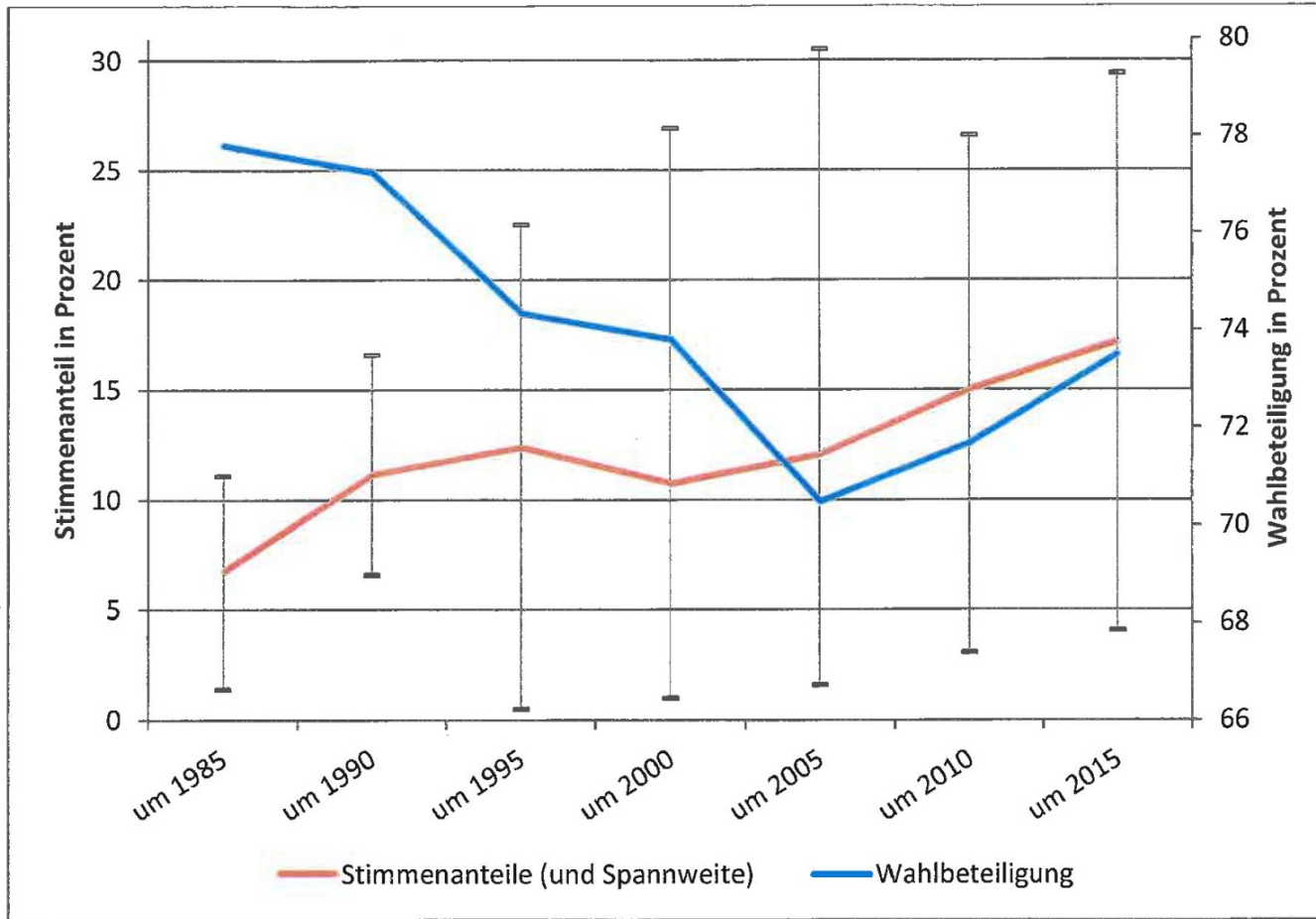
- ⇒ **If Type I, the smaller the crisis sample (clearer defined)**
- ⇒ **If Type II, the bigger the crisis sample (and less defined)**

Development of Voter Turnout in Western and Eastern Europe



Annual averages, EU-25 + Iceland, Norway, Switzerland. Only data on national lower houses of parliament were taken into account.
Source: WZB.

Wahlergebnisse populistischer Parteien in ausgewählten Ländern Europas



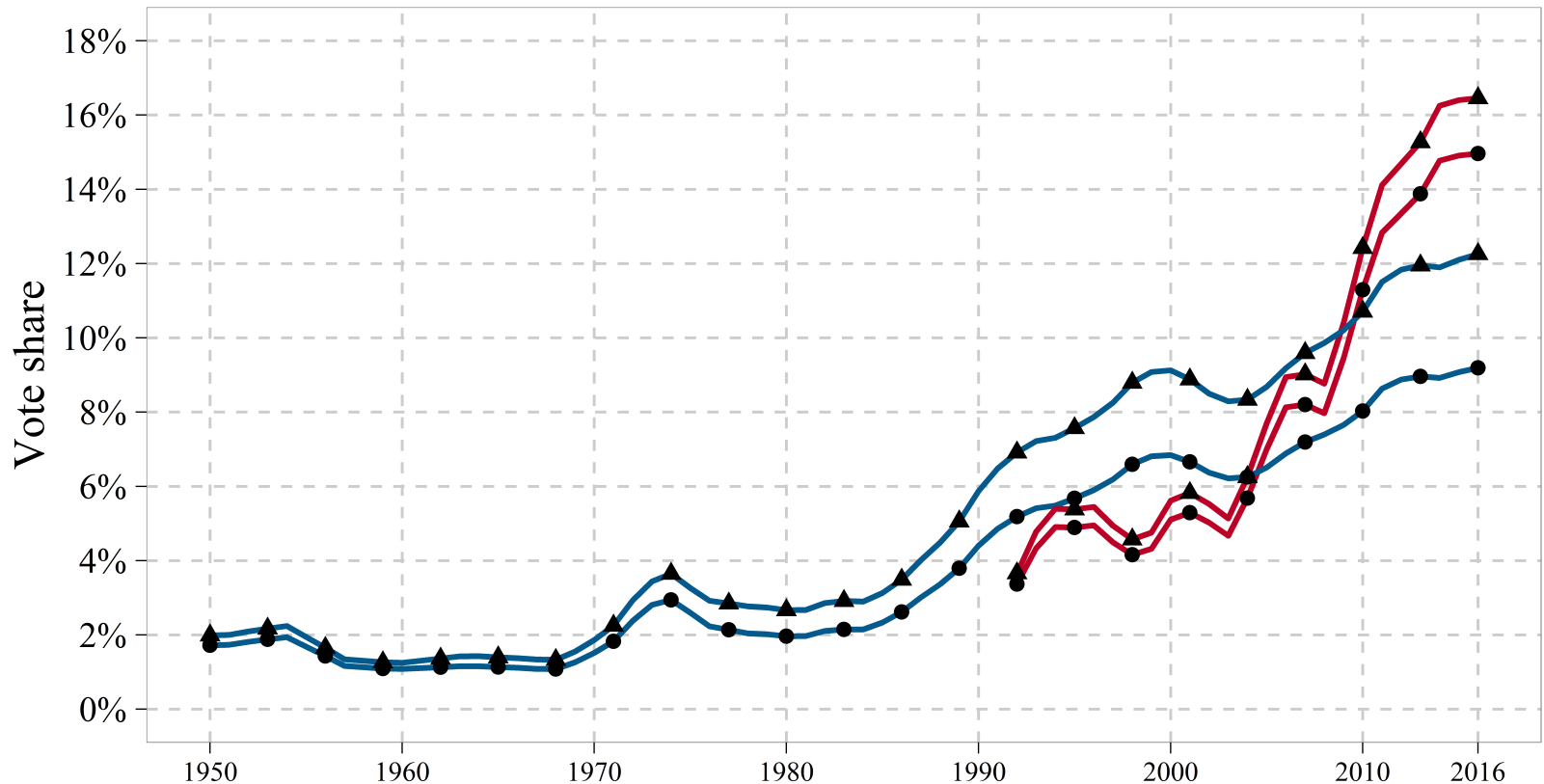
Quellen: European Election Database; IDEA Voter Turnout Database; Nationale Behörden; eigene Berechnungen.

Right Wing Populism

RWP Waves and their Themes

- **1970ies against the welfare and tax state: that has changed**
- **1980ies against EU: this has even increased**
- **1990: against liberalism and multiculturalism – still strong**
- **After 2000: against Islam, migration, refugees, open borders; shift from neo-liberalism to national-protectionism.**

Right-wing populist parties' vote share (1950-2016)



● All countries

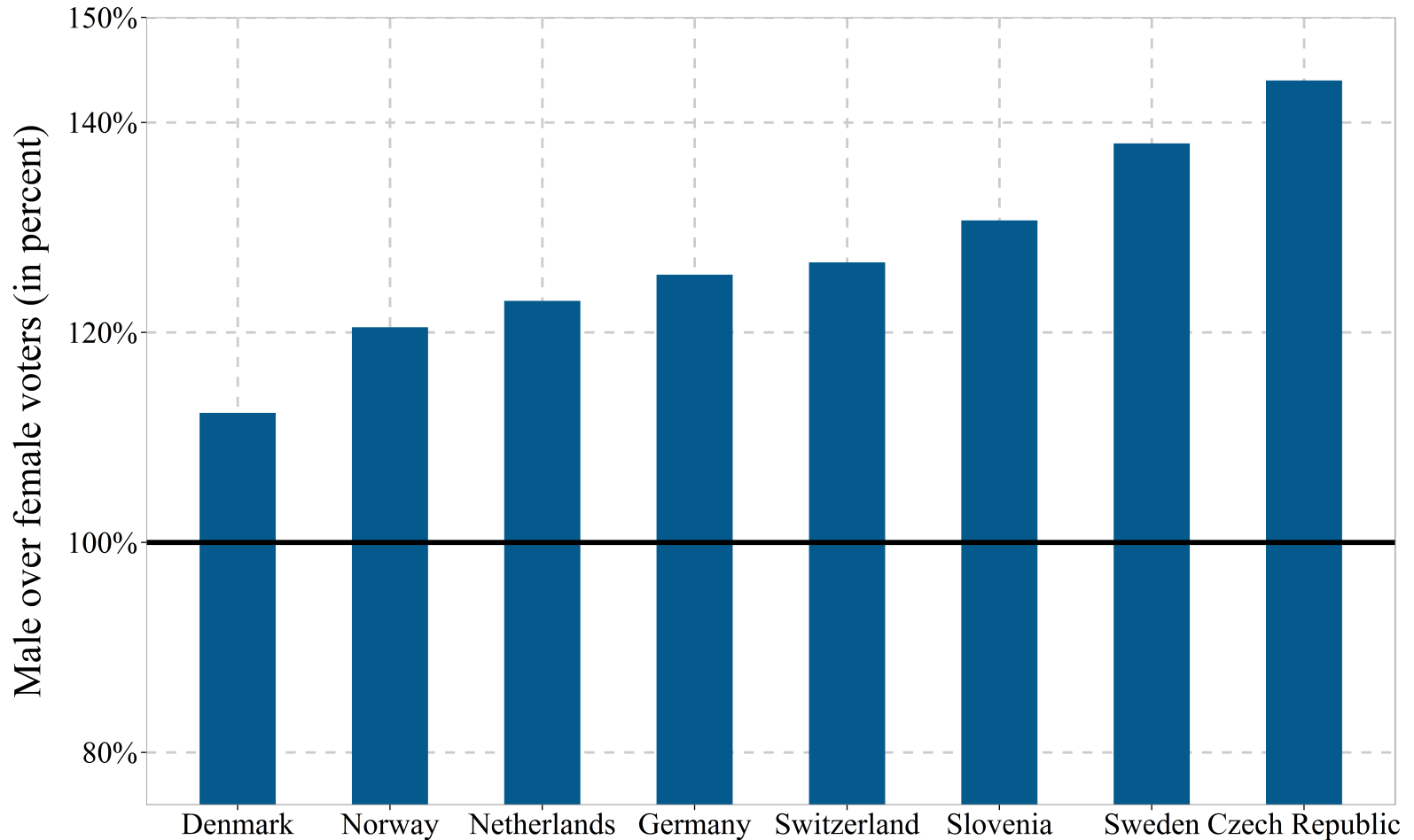
▲ Countries with right-wing populist parties

— Western Europe

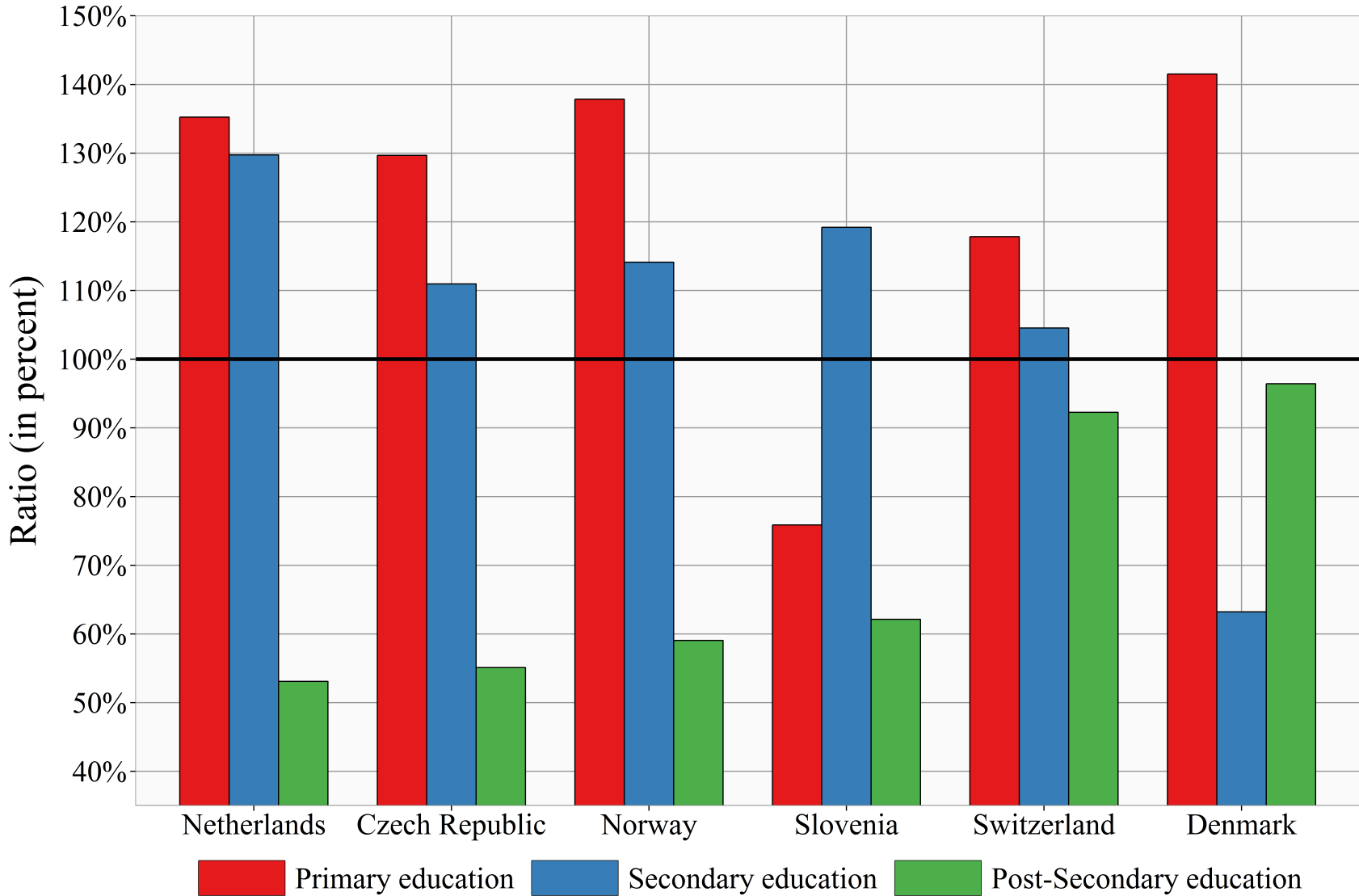
— Eastern Europe

Annual averages, EU member states and Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland.
Source: WZB Database "Elections, Parties, Governments".

Ratio of male over female right-wing voters (1996-2010)

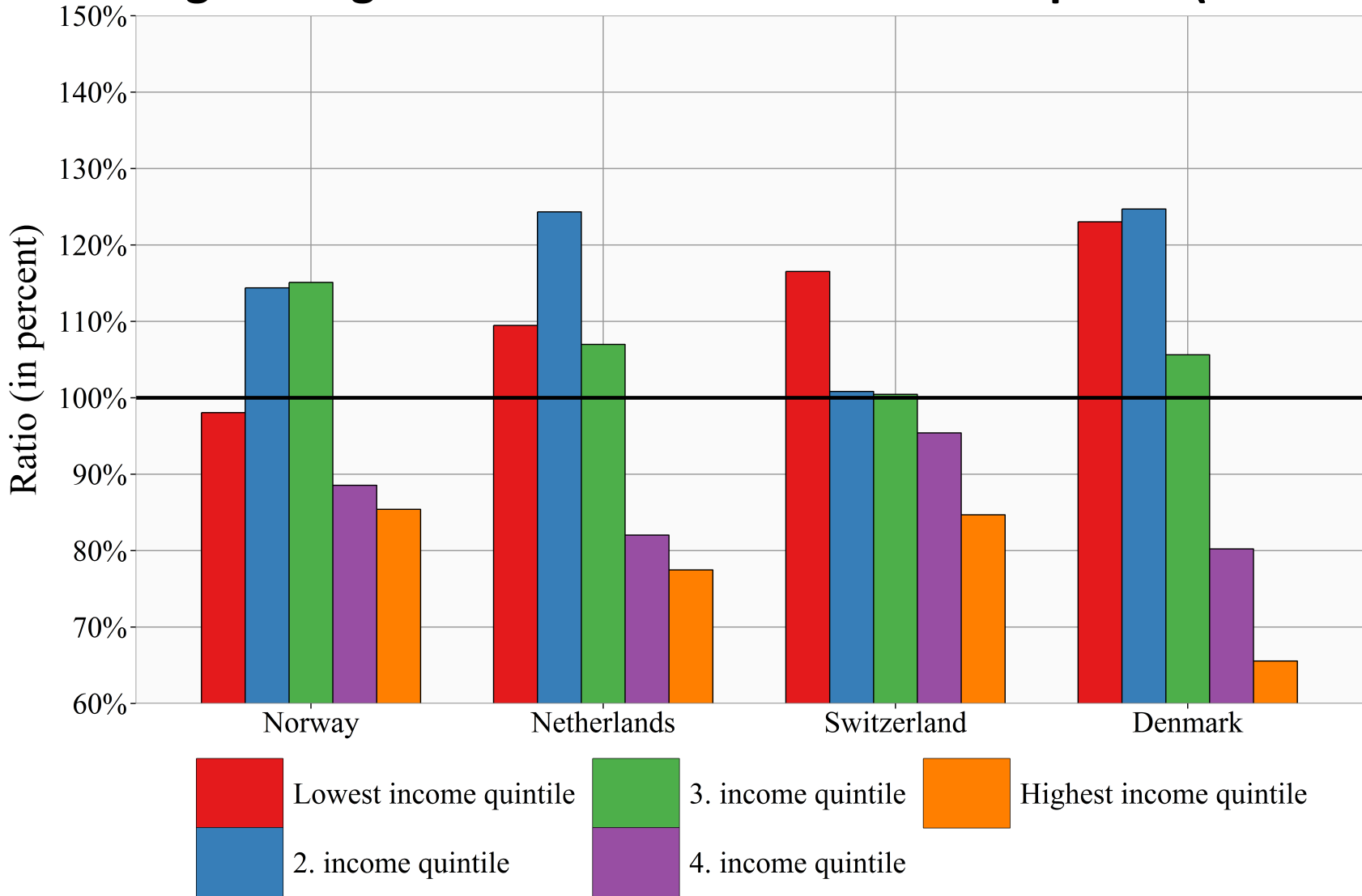


Ratio of right-wing voters' education/population (1996-2010)



Source: Cumulated CSES Study Series 1-3.

Ratio of right-wing voters' household income and public (1997-2010)

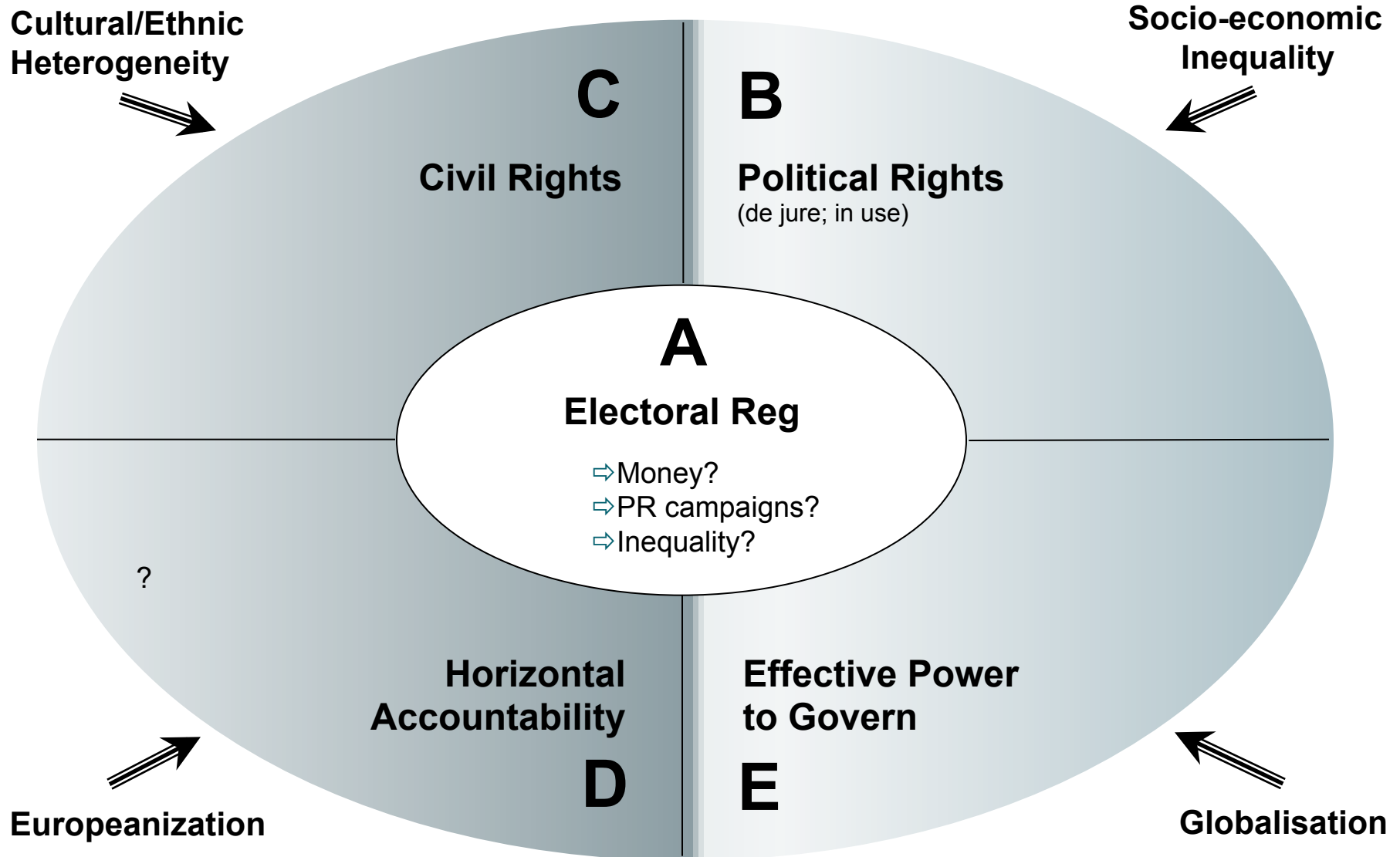


Source: Cumulated CSES Study Series 1-3.

Explanation

Cosmopolitanism & Communitarism as new cleavage

Illiberal Attacks on „Embedded Democracy“

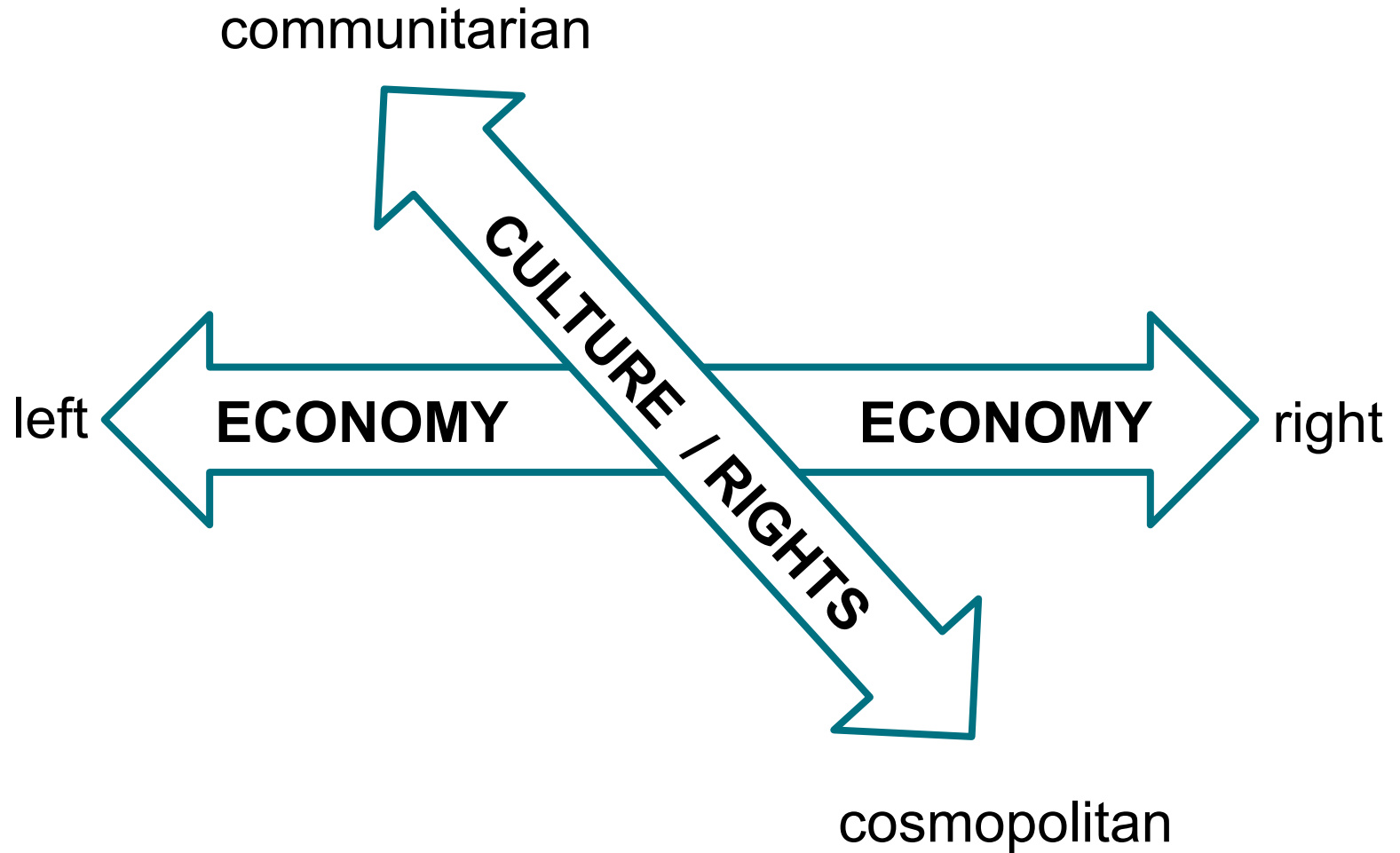


Cosmopolitans

- Winners of globalization
- Cult., pol., economic elites
- Urban middle classes
- For open borders: goods, services, capital, workers, refugees
- Transferring Sovereignty
- Deepening EU
- (Human) rights are universal; global citizens
- Multiculturalism
- Calhoun: „Frequent Flyers“

Communitarianists

- Losers of globalization
- Lower educated people
- Pro-nation state
- Critical against EU
- Controlling borders
- „Leitkultur“
- Homogeneous communities
- Variety: Folkshemmet vs RWPs



Is right-wing populism a threat?

- Distinction between Populism in opposition & in gov`t
- Stable & unstable democracies

- **Normatively:** problematic programs (texts & subtexts)
- Socioeconomically: Rebellion of losers?
- Culturally: Cosmos & Comus

- **Functionally**
 - Polarizing/ mobiliz. society: only negative? (Mouffe/ Laclau)
 - Filling a representational gap?
 - Bringing the lower class back in?
 - Repolitization & Return of the Political: which form

Literature

Merkel, Wolfgang and Sascha Kneip (Eds) 2018:
„Democracy and Crisis: Challenges in Turbulent Times“, Springer, Wiesbaden.