The development of socio-economic and political cleavages in Germany and Sweden 1949-2017

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• Income and wealth inequalities have been rising in most developed economies since the 1980s (Alvaredo et al. 2018)

• Yet, the political responses to these evolutions have been very diverse. European countries have been much more successful at containing inequality than the US (Piketty, Saez & Zucman 2018; Blanchet, Chancel & Gethin 2019)

• More recently, democratic countries seem to be moving away from distributive conflicts and turning towards identity-based politics (Le Pen, Trump, Bolsonaro, Modi...)

• “Why do the poor not expropriate the rich in democracies?” (Roemer 1998)
Related literature

• Historical evolution of electoral behaviors in old democracies (Lipset & Rokkan 1967; Evans et al. 2012; Evans & Rennwald 2014...)

• Rise of “populism” in Western democracies (Moriconi et al. 2018; Becker & Fetzer 2017; Autor et al. 2017; Colantone & Stanig 2018; Rodrik 2018; Algan et al. 2018; Becker et al. 2017...)

• Demand and supply for redistribution (Pontussen & Rueda 2010; Iversen & Soskize 2015; Bonica et al. 2013; Tavits & Potter 2015; Roemer 1998; Roemer et al. 2007)

• Connecting cleavage structures to distributive politics (Piketty 2018; Banerjee et al. 2019; Jenman & Gethin 2019)
This presentation

• A new database on the long-run evolution of electoral behaviors in Germany and Sweden.

• Focus on the division between ‘left-wing’ and ‘right-wing’ parties which has historically structured party politics in a majority of old democracies → follow-up of Piketty’s (2018) study on the emergence of multiple elites party systems in France, the UK and the US.

• Disclaimer: very preliminary results.Suggestions welcome!
Data coverage

**Germany**

- **Source A:** Bundestagswahlstudien 1949-2005 (Arndt & Gattig 2005)
- **Source B:** German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) 2009-2017
- **Number of Elections:** 19
- **Average sample:** N = 1300

**Sweden**

- **Source:** Swedish Election Studies 1956-2010
- **Number of Elections:** 17
- **Average sample:** N = 2000
Germany: data description

- Left-wing parties: SPD, Greens, Die Linke, KPD, and others
- Until 1990 only data on FRG
- Restricting post 1990 sample to former FRG territory does not affect pattern
- Often no information on Uni graduation available, just school leaving degree
- Controls: age, gender, and confession
- So far: no weights to match actual voting outcomes
Germany: all left-wing parties
Germany: SPD only

![Graph showing the difference in left-wing voting by education in Germany from 1950s to 2010s. The graph illustrates a trend where the difference in voting behavior between the top 10% and bottom 90% education voters increases over time.]
Germany: SPD only

[Graph showing changes in left-wing voting by education over time from 1950s to 2010s with and without controls.]
Sweden: data description

• Left-wing parties: SAP, Kommunisterna, Greens, and others
• Controls: age, gender, and frequency of going to church
• So far: no weights to match actual voting outcomes
Sweden: all left-wing parties

The graph shows the difference in left-wing voting by education compared to Sweden. The solid line represents the difference between the top 10% of educated voters and the bottom 90% of educated voters (after controls), while the dashed line indicates the 90% confidence interval. The data is presented from the 1950s to the 2010s.
Sweden: all left-wing parties
Sweden: SAP only
Sweden: SAP only

![Graph showing the difference in left-wing voting by education in Sweden from 1950s to 2010s. The graph compares data with and without controls.](image)
Germany: recent developments
Development of Voters Attitudes from 2009 to 2017
Voters Attitudes 2017

Position towards redistribution

Less redistribution
Neutral
More redistribution

Disburden immigration Neutral Limit immigration

Position towards integration
Development of Voters Attitudes from 2008 to 2017

Position towards immigration

Voters' perception of party positions

Disburden immigration Neutral Limit immigration

Less redistribution Neutral More redistribution

Position towards redistribution

Die Linke
Grüne
SPD
CDU
CSU
CDU/CSU
FDP
AfD

in 2009
in 2017
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