

# Brahmin Left versus Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies, 1948-2020

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**Brahmin Left versus Merchant Right:  
Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies, 1948-2020\***

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January 2023 (First version: May 5, 2021)

**Abstract**

This paper provides new evidence on the long-run evolution of political cleavages in 21 Western democracies by exploiting a new database on the vote by socioeconomic characteristic covering over 300 elections held between 1948 and 2020. In the 1950s-1960s, the vote for democratic, labor, social democratic, socialist, and affiliated parties was associated with lower-educated and low-income voters. It has gradually become associated with higher-educated voters, giving rise to “multi-elite party systems” in the 2000s-2010s: high-education elites now vote for the “left”, while high-income elites continue to vote for the “right”. This transition has been accelerated by the rise of green and anti-immigration movements, whose key distinctive feature is to concentrate the votes of the higher-educated and lower-educated electorate, respectively. Combining our database with historical data on political parties’ programs, we provide evidence that the reversal of the educational cleavage is strongly linked to the emergence of a new “sociocultural” axis of political conflict. We also discuss the evolution of other political cleavages related to age, geography, religion, gender, and the integration of new ethnoreligious minorities.

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\* Amory Gethin, Thomas Piketty: Paris School of Economics – World Inequality Lab; Clara Martínez-Toledano: Imperial College London – World Inequality Lab. We are grateful to Luis Bauluz, Carmen Durrer de la Sota, Fabian Kosse, Marc Morgan, and Alice Sodano for their help in building the dataset exploited in this paper. We thank Thomas Blanchet, Lucas Chancel, Ignacio Flores, Javier Padilla, Tom Raster, Till Weber, and seminar and conference participants from the Paris School of Economics Applied Economics Lunch Seminar and the CUNY Graduate Center Comparative Politics Workshop for helpful comments.

## I. Introduction

Economic inequalities have increased significantly in the Western world since the 1980s, although at different speeds (Alvaredo et al., 2018). Given this recent evolution, one might have expected to observe rising political demand for redistribution and the return of class-based (income-based or wealth-based) politics. Instead, Western democracies seem to have shifted to new forms of identity-based conflicts in recent decades, embodied by the increasing salience of environmental issues and the growing prosperity of anti-establishment authoritarian movements (Trump, Brexit, Le Pen, etc.). Often drawing on a common agenda of economic protectionism, restrictions to immigration flows, and conservative social policies, these movements have successfully fed into sociocultural and economic anxieties triggered by globalization and economic insecurity (Colantone & Stanig, 2019).

Yet, much remains to be understood about the origins and nature of these political upheavals. Is the rise of xenophobic “populism” the outcome of recent trends (such as the 2007-2008 crisis, immigration waves, or globalization), or can we trace it back to longer-run structural changes? Beyond country-specific factors, such as the racial divide in the United States or supranational integration in the European Union, can we find evolutions that are common to all Western democracies? On what dimensions of political conflict (income, education, age, region, etc.) have such transformations aligned?

This paper attempts to make some progress in answering these questions by exploiting a new dataset on the long-run evolution of electoral behaviors in 21 democracies. Drawing on nearly all electoral surveys ever conducted in these countries since the end of World War II, we assemble microdata on the individual determinants of the vote for over 300 elections held between 1948 and 2020. Together, these surveys provide unique insights into the evolution of political preferences in Western democracies. The contribution of this paper is to establish a new set of stylized facts on these preferences, as well as to explore some mechanisms underlying their transformation in the past decades.

The most striking result that emerges from our analysis is what we propose to call the transition from “class-based party systems” to “multi-elite party systems”. In the 1950s-1960s, the vote

for democratic, labor, socialist, social democratic, and other left-wing parties in Western democracies was “class-based”, in the sense that it was strongly associated with the lower-income and lower-educated electorate. It has gradually become associated with higher-educated voters, giving rise in the 2010s to a remarkable divergence between the effects of income (economic capital) and education (human capital) on the vote: high-income elites continue to vote for the “right”, while high-education elites have shifted to supporting the “left”. This separation between a “Merchant right” and a “Brahmin left”<sup>1</sup> is visible in nearly all Western democracies, despite their major political, historical, and institutional differences (e.g., the two-party systems of the United States or Britain versus the highly fragmented multi-party systems of France or Denmark). We also find that the rise of both green and anti-immigration parties since the 1980s-1990s has strongly accelerated this transition: while income continues to differentiate social democratic and affiliated parties from conservative and Christian democratic parties, it is education that most clearly distinguishes green and anti-immigration movements today.

To shed light on the factors underlying the emergence of multi-elite party systems, we match our dataset with the Comparative Manifesto Project database, the most comprehensive available data source on the evolution of political parties’ programs since the end of World War II. Drawing on two indicators of party ideology from the political science literature (Bakker & Hobolt, 2012), corresponding to parties’ relative positions on an “economic-distributive” axis and a “sociocultural” axis, we provide evidence that the separation between these two dimensions of political conflict and the divergence of income and education are tightly related phenomena. Specifically, we document that the correlation between parties’ income gradient and their position on the economic-distributive dimension has remained very stable since the 1960s, that is, parties emphasizing “pro-free-market” issues receive disproportionately more votes from high-income voters today, just as they used to sixty years ago. Meanwhile, the

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<sup>1</sup> In India’s traditional caste system, upper castes were divided into Brahmins (priests, intellectuals) and Kshatriyas/Vaishyas (warriors, merchants, tradesmen), a division that modern political conflicts in Western democracies therefore seem to follow to some extent.

correlation between the education gradient and parties' positions on the sociocultural axis has dramatically increased over time, from 0 in the 1960s to nearly 0.5 in the 2010s. In other words, parties promoting "liberal" policies (green and to lower extent traditional left-wing parties) have seen their electorate become increasingly restricted to higher-educated voters, while parties upholding more "conservative" views (anti-immigration and to a lower extent traditional right-wing parties) have on the contrary concentrated a growing share of the lower-educated electorate. We also find a strong and growing cross-country association between ideological polarization on sociocultural issues and the reversal of the educational cleavage. In particular, the two countries in our dataset where this reversal has not yet occurred, Portugal and Ireland, are also those where partisan divides over "identity-based" politics remain the weakest today.

We should stress however that the limitations of available information on party manifestos and policies (as well as on voters' perceptions of these manifestos and policies) constrain to some extent our ability to fully test the various hypotheses behind the evolutions that we uncover. In particular, the sociocultural axis puts together many different items that ideally should be analyzed separately and also involve various forms of class conflict. There are, for instance, different ways to design environmental policies, migration policies, cultural or education policies which can be more or less favorable to lower class, middle class or upper class voters. Generally speaking, one key limitation is that we are not able to distinguish between different dimensions of redistributive policies, for example income transfers versus education policy. One possible interpretation of our findings is that left-wing parties have gradually developed a more elitist approach to education policy, in the sense that they have increasingly been viewed by less well-off voters as parties defending primarily the winners of the higher education competition. This risk was identified as early as in 1958 by Michael Young in his famous dystopia about "the rise of the meritocracy". In this book, Young expresses doubts about the ability of the British Labour Party (of which he was a member) to keep the support of lower educated classes in case the party fails to combat what he describes as the rise of "meritocratic ideology" (a strong view held by higher education achievers about their own merit, which Young identifies as a major

risk for future social cohesion).<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the data at our disposal makes it difficult to provide a direct test for this hypothesis. In particular, we do not have long-run, comparative survey data about how voters perceive the fairness of the education system and the education policies advocated by the various political parties. The fact that participation rates have fallen sharply among bottom 50% voters (both in terms of education and income) in a number of countries (including the UK and France), but not among upper 50% voters, can be interpreted as a sign that socially disadvantaged voters have felt left aside by the rise of “multi-elite” party systems.<sup>3</sup> But it is difficult with the data at hand to determine the extent to which different redistributive policy platforms might have led to different electoral attitudes.<sup>4</sup>

We also exploit the other variables in our dataset to study cleavages related to age, geography, religion, immigration, and gender. In contrast to studies emphasizing the role of the generational divide in explaining political change in Western democracies (e.g. Inglehart, 1977; Inglehart & Norris, 2019), we find no evidence that younger generations have become more left-wing than they were in the 1950s. However, we document a striking reversal of the educational cleavage

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<sup>2</sup> For a simple theoretical model along these lines, see Piketty (2018, section 5). It is based upon a two-dimensional extension of Piketty (1995)’s model about learning the role of effort and a distinction between education-related effort and business-related effort. The model can account for the simultaneous existence of “Brahmin left” voters (i.e., dynasties believing strongly in the role of education-related effort) and “Merchant right” voters (i.e., dynasties believing strongly in the role of business-related effort). This “multi-elite” pattern differs from Young’s predictions, who anticipated that the Conservative Party would become the “Brahmin” party (supported by top Oxbridge graduates), closely followed by the Labour Party (who would become the party of “Technicians”), while the mass of voters with lower education achievement would join the “Populists”. The dystopia ends up in riots in 2033 where the sociologist writing the book is being killed.

<sup>3</sup> See Piketty (2018), figures A1-A2. Participation rates among bottom 50% voters have always been relatively low in the US (at least during the post-World War II period). To some extent the British and French pattern has moved toward the US pattern since the 1970s-1980s. Unfortunately the surveys at our disposal do not allow us to analyze in a consistent manner the evolution of participation rates in our sample of 21 countries, so we do not push any further our analysis of turnout.

<sup>4</sup> See Piketty (2020) for further discussion along these lines.

*within* generations: older lower-educated voters continue to vote “along class lines” and thus to support the left, while social democratic and green parties have attracted a growing share of the higher-educated electorate among the youth. Similarly, we show that rural-urban and religious cleavages have remained stable or have decreased in most countries in our dataset: rural areas and religious voters continue to be more supportive of conservative parties, just as they were in the 1950s-1960s. In other words, while green parties find greater support among young, urban, and non-religious voters, this does not make them fundamentally different from the traditional left. Education, not age, geography or religion, appears to have been a more fundamental source of realignment.

The only other variable in our dataset for which we find a clear reversal of electoral divides is gender: in nearly all countries, women used to be more conservative than men and have gradually become more likely to vote for left-wing parties. This can be explained by the combination of several factors, including the secularization of Western societies, the rising salience of gender equality issues, economic insecurity associated to the decline in marriage, and the growing concentration of women in the public sector. Lastly, we exploit data on voters’ religion and country of birth to study “nativist” cleavages related to the integration of new ethnoreligious minorities. We find that immigrants are generally much more supportive of social democratic and affiliated parties than natives, but that this gap varies substantially across countries. This divide is most pronounced in the case of Muslims, who overwhelmingly support social democratic and affiliated parties in all countries for which data is available, and is highest in countries with powerful anti-immigration movements. This points to the role of political supply and sociocultural factors in shaping conflicts over national identity and the integration of new minorities.

This paper directly relates to the growing literature on the sources of political change and the rise of “populism” in Western democracies. Recent studies have emphasized the roles of various economic and sociocultural factors, including globalization and trade exposure (Autor et al., 2020; Colantone & Stanig, 2018a, 2018b; Malgouyres, 2017), economic insecurity and unemployment (Algan et al., 2017; Becker et al., 2017; Becker & Fetzer, 2018; Dehdari, 2021; Fetzer, 2019; Funke et al., 2016; Guiso et al., 2020; Liberini et al., 2019), immigration (Becker & Fetzer, 2017; Dustmann et al., 2019; Halla et al., 2017; Tabellini, 2020), and cultural and

moral conflicts (Enke, 2020; Gennaioli & Tabellini, 2019; Inglehart & Norris, 2019). We contribute to this body of evidence by adopting a broader, long-run historical perspective on the evolution of political cleavages since the end of World War II.

We also contribute to the literature on multidimensional political competition and its impact on redistribution and inequality. A key result from this literature is that political support for redistribution should be inversely proportional to the strength of other political cleavages crosscutting class divides (Alesina et al. 1999a, 1999b; Gennaioli & Tabellini, 2019; Roemer, 1998; Roemer et al., 2007). The divergence of the effects of income and education on the vote documented in this paper, two strongly correlated measures of inequality, could in this context contribute to explaining why the rise of economic disparities in the past decades has not been met by greater redistribution or renewed class conflicts.

Finally, this paper relates to the large political science literature on the determinants of the vote in comparative and historical perspective. Numerous studies have highlighted that Western democracies have undergone a process of growing polarization over a new “sociocultural” or “universalistic-particularistic” dimension of political conflict in the past decades (e.g. Bornschier, 2010; Dalton, 2018; Evans & De Graaf, 2012; Inglehart, 1977; Kitschelt, 1994; Kriesi et al., 2008). We contribute to this literature by gathering the largest dataset ever built on the socioeconomic determinants of the vote in Western democracies<sup>5</sup>; by focusing explicitly on income and education, two variables rarely studied in comparative political science research; and by directly matching this dataset with historical data on party ideology to document the dynamic links between political supply and demand. In particular, we provide for the first time cross-country, long-run historical evidence that education has gradually become the key variable structuring a new dimension of political conflict. These results are in line with recent studies, focusing on specific countries or on recent decades, which have suggested education could be

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<sup>5</sup> Our work directly draws on previous data collection and harmonization efforts. See in particular Bosancianu (2017), Franklin et al. (1992), Evans & De Graaf (2012), Önuđottir et al. (2017), Thomassen (2005), and the remarkable collections of post-electoral surveys compiled by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (<http://cses.org>) and the Comparative National Elections Project (<https://u.osu.edu/cnep/>).



playing a renewed role in determining electoral behaviors (see Bovens & Wille, 2012; Bornschier, 2010b; Dolezal, 2010; Kitschelt & Rehm, 2019; Stubager, 2010; Van der Waal et al., 2010). This new dimension does not fully coincide with the traditional economic dimension (income and wealth) and appears to be related to a large and complex set of policy issues, including the environment, migration, gender, education, and merit.

Section II presents the new dataset exploited in this paper. Section III documents the emergence of multi-elite party systems and discusses the role of green and anti-immigration parties in explaining the reversal of the educational cleavage. Section IV matches our survey dataset with manifesto data to study the link between multi-elite party systems and the emergence of a new axis of political conflict. Section V explores the evolution of other determinants of electoral behaviors. Section VI concludes. All the data series, computer codes, and microfiles used in this article can be publicly accessed online as part of the *World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database* (<http://wpid.world>).

## **II. Data and Methodology**

### *II.A. A New Dataset on Political Cleavages in Western Democracies, 1948-2020*

The dataset we exploit in this paper consists in a unique collection of electoral surveys conducted between 1948 and 2020 in Western democracies.<sup>6</sup> These surveys have one main point in common: they contain information on the electoral behaviors of a sample of voters in the last (or forthcoming) election, together with data on their main sociodemographic characteristics such as income, education, or age. While they suffer from limitations typical to surveys (in

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<sup>6</sup> Previous case studies focused on specific countries covered in our dataset can be found in Piketty (2018); Kosse & Piketty (2020); Martínez-Toledano & Sodano (2021); Gethin (2021); Bauluz, Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Morgan (2021); and Durrer de la Sota, Gethin, and Martínez-Toledano (2021). Although the focus of this paper is on Western democracies, it is part of a broader project dedicated to tracking political cleavages in other democracies throughout the world: see Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty (forthcoming 2021).

particular small sample sizes), they provide an invaluable source for studying the long-run evolution of political preferences in contemporary democracies.

**Universe.** Our area of study encompasses 21 countries commonly referred to as “Western democracies”, for which we can cover a total of about 300 national elections held between 1948 and 2020 (see Table 1). These include 17 Western European countries, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. For seven countries in our dataset (France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, the UK, and the US), available surveys allow us to go back as early as the 1950s. The majority of remaining countries have data going back to the 1960s or the early 1970s, with the exception of Spain and Portugal, which did not held democratic elections between the 1940s and the late 1970s.

The focus of this paper is on national (general or presidential) elections, which determine the composition of government and the head of the State.<sup>7</sup> In the majority of Western democracies, they have been held on a regular basis every four or five years since at least the end of World War II. Depending on their frequency and the availability of electoral surveys, we are able to cover political attitudes in 9 to 21 of these elections in each country.

**Data sources.** The primary data source used in this paper consists in so-called National Election Studies, most of which have been conducted by a consortium of academic organizations (see Table 1). The vast majority of these surveys are post-electoral surveys: they are fielded shortly after the corresponding national election has been held, with sample sizes generally varying between 2,000 and 4,000 respondents, and they collect detailed and consistent information on voting behaviors and the sociodemographic characteristics of voters.

[Table 1 here]

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<sup>7</sup> We focus on general or legislative elections for all countries in our dataset except the United States, for which we study presidential elections. Our results are strongly robust to considering presidential elections in countries where they are held (e.g. France), as well as to including midterm elections in US series (see Piketty, 2018).

In all Western democracies except Austria, Ireland, and Luxembourg, we have been able to get access to such high-quality data sources. For these three countries, we rely instead on more general political attitudes surveys, which were not specifically conducted in the context of a given election but did ask respondents to report their previous voting behaviors: the Eurobarometers, the European Social Survey, and the European Election Studies. Furthermore, in a few countries such as Australia or Belgium, where national election studies were not conducted prior to the 1970s or 1980s, we complement them with a number of other political attitudes surveys conducted in earlier decades. While these sources do not allow us to accurately track election-to-election changes, they are sufficient to grasp long-run changes in party affiliations, which is the objective of this paper. A complete list of all data sources used by country can be found in appendix Table A3.

**Harmonization.** Starting from raw data files, we extract in each survey all sociodemographic characteristics that are sufficiently common and well-measured to be comparable across countries and over time. Based on these criteria, we were able to build a harmonized dataset covering the following variables: income, education, age, gender, religious affiliation, church attendance, race or ethnicity (for a restricted number of countries), rural-urban location, region of residence, employment status, marital status, union membership, self-perceived social class, and (in recent years) country of birth.<sup>8</sup>

Income and education, the two variables that form the core part of our analysis in section III, deserve special attention. Indeed, one reason why income and education variables are not often exploited in comparative research on electoral behaviors is that they tend to be difficult to harmonize. Education systems and educational attainments vary significantly across countries and over time, and they are not always perfectly comparable across surveys. The same

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<sup>8</sup> A key variable for understanding political cleavages is wealth, yet data on asset ownership was only available in a handful of countries, which is why we do not consider it in this paper: see Piketty (2018) and Martínez-Toledano & Sodano (2021) for results on France, the UK, the US, and Sweden.

limitations apply to income, which is only collected in discrete brackets in the vast majority of the sources used in this paper.

We address this shortcoming by normalizing these two variables and focusing on specific education and income deciles. We introduce in appendix A the simple method we use to move from discrete categories (education levels or income brackets) to deciles. In broad strokes, our approach consists in allocating individuals to the potentially multiple income or education deciles to which they belong, in such a way that average decile-level vote shares are computed assuming a constant vote share within each education- or income-year cell. This is a conservative assumption, as vote shares for specific parties are likely to also vary within education groups or income brackets. The levels and changes in educational and income cleavages documented in this paper should thus be considered as lower bounds of the true effects of education and income on the vote.

Lastly, for consistency and in order to make surveys more representative of election outcomes, we systematically reweigh respondents' answers to match official election results. In the vast majority of cases, given that post-electoral surveys capture relatively well variations in support for the different parties, this correction leaves our results unchanged.

### *II.B. Classifying the parties*

Our objective is to compare the evolution of electoral cleavages in Western democracies. This requires grouping political parties in such a way that the size of the coalitions considered and their historical affiliations are as comparable and meaningful as possible. To do so, we choose for our main specification to focus on a distinction between two large groups of parties (see appendix Tables A1 and A2).

On one side of the political spectrum are democratic, labor, socialist, social democratic, green, and communist parties, often classified as “left-wing” and that we also refer to as “social democratic and affiliated parties” in what follows. These include the Democratic Party in the US, labor parties in countries such as the UK, Australia, or Norway, as well as various parties affiliated to socialist and social democratic traditions in Western European countries. It also includes environmental parties in their various forms, together with parties of the “new left” that

mostly emerged after the 2008 crisis (such as Podemos in Spain or La France Insoumise in France).<sup>9</sup>

On the other side are conservative, Christian democratic, and anti-immigration parties, often classified as “right-wing” and that we also refer to as “conservative and affiliated parties”. These include the Republican Party in the US and other conservative parties such as those of the UK, Norway or Spain; Christian democratic parties, which are common in Western European multi-party systems such as those of Austria, Belgium or Switzerland; and anti-immigration parties such as the French Rassemblement National or the Danish People’s Party.

This binary classification has one major advantage: it allows us to directly compare electoral divides in two-party systems, such as the UK or the US, to those observed in highly fragmented party systems such as France or the Netherlands. However, this does not mean that these groups are ideologically or programmatically homogeneous in any way, neither internally nor over time. Our objective is, on the contrary, to document how such large families or parties have aggregated diverse and changing coalitions of voters in the past decades. In section III, we thus consider in greater detail how specific subfamilies of parties, in particular green and anti-immigration movements, have contributed to reshaping electoral divides in countries with multi-party systems.

### *II.C. Empirical Strategy*

In the rest of the paper, we present results from simple linear probability models of the form:

$$y_{ict} = \alpha + \beta x_{ict} + C_{ict}\gamma + \varepsilon_{ict}$$

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<sup>9</sup> We also include in this group a few parties clearly not affiliated with socialist or social democratic traditions, such as the Liberal Party in Canada or Fianna Fáil in Ireland. Our choice is above all motivated by our objective to compare large electoral coalitions across countries, obtaining at least 30 percent of the vote in most elections, but the transformations we document are robust to alternative specifications.

Where  $y_{cit}$  is a binary outcome variable of interest (e.g. voting for left-wing parties) for individual  $i$  in country  $c$  in election  $t$ ,  $x_{ict}$  is a binary explanatory variable of interest (e.g. belonging to top 10% educated voters), and  $C_{ict}$  is a vector of controls.

In the absence of controls, the coefficient  $\beta$  simply equals the difference between the share of top 10% educated voters voting for left-wing parties and the share of other voters (bottom 90% educated voters) voting for left-wing parties:

$$\beta = E(y_{ict} = 1, x_{ict} = 1) - E(y_{ict} = 1, x_{ict} = 0)$$

With controls, the interpretation is also straightforward: all things being equal, belonging to the top 10% of educated voters increases one's propensity to vote for left-wing parties by  $\beta$  percentage points. All control variables in our dataset are specified as dummy variables, so that the model is fully saturated and can be estimated by OLS using heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors.<sup>10</sup>

### **III. The Reversal of the Educational Cleavage and the Emergence of Multi-Elite Party Systems**

This section presents our main results on the evolution of cleavages related to income and education. Section III.A documents the emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies. Section III.B studies how the fragmentation of party systems and the rise of green and anti-immigration parties has contributed to this transformation.

#### *III.A. The Emergence of Multi-Elite Party Systems*

To document the origination of multi-elite party systems, we rely on a very simple indicator: the difference between the share of 10 percent most educated voters and the share of the 90 percent least educated voting for democratic, labor, social democratic, socialist, communist, and

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<sup>10</sup> See for instance Wooldridge (2002), chapter 15.

green parties. This difference is negative when highest-educated voters have a lower likelihood to vote for these parties, and positive when they have a higher likelihood to do so. It is equal to zero if they have exactly the same likelihood to support the left as the rest of the electorate. We use the same indicator for income, defined as the difference between the share of richest 10 percent voters and the share of poorest 90 percent voters voting for social democratic and affiliated parties.

Figure 1 depicts the average quinquennial evolution of these two indicators, after controls, in the twelve Western democracies for which data is available since the 1960s.<sup>11</sup> As shown in the upper line, highest-educated voters were less likely to vote for social democratic parties than lowest-educated voters by 15 percentage points in the 1960s. This gap has shifted very gradually from being negative to becoming positive, from -10 in the 1970s to -5 in the 1980s, 0 in the 1990s, +5 in the 2000s, and finally +10 in 2015-2020. Higher-educated voters have thus moved from being significantly more right-wing than lower-educated voters to significantly more left-wing, leading to a striking reversal in the educational divide.

[Figure 1 here]

In contrast, the evolution has been dramatically different in the case of income. The bottom line shows that top-income voters have always been less likely to vote for social democratic and affiliated parties and more likely to vote for conservative and affiliated parties. In the 1960s, the indicator was equal to -15, that is, top-income voters had a probability to vote for social democratic parties lower than that of low-income voters by 15 percentage points. This gap has decreased slightly until reaching about -10 in the past decade, but it remains significantly

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<sup>11</sup> See appendix Figure A3 for the same figure averaged over all 21 democracies (unbalanced panel).

negative. High-income voters have thus remained closer to conservative parties than low-income voters over the past fifty years.<sup>12</sup>

Combining these two evolutions, a striking long-run evolution in the structure of political cleavages emerges. In the early postwar decades, the party systems of Western democracies were “class-based”, that is, social democratic and affiliated parties represented both the low-education and the low-income electorate, whereas conservative and affiliated parties represented both high-education and high-income voters. These party systems have gradually evolved towards what we propose to call “multi-elite party systems”: higher-educated elites now vote for the “left”, while high-income elites still vote for the “right”.

Note that the two indicators shown in the figure control for all available variables at the micro level (education/income, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban location, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status). The evolution of these two indicators without controls displays a stronger decline in the influence of income on the vote, from nearly -20 in the 1960s to about -5 in 2015-2020 (see appendix Figure A1). The main reason is that higher-educated voters have on average higher incomes, so that the reversal of the educational divide has mechanically led to a reduction in the difference between top-income and low-income voters. Nonetheless, what is important for our analysis is that the transition towards a multi-elite party system is robust to the inclusion or exclusion of controls.

It is also important to stress that the divergence of the effects of income and education cannot be explained by changes in the composition of income or educational groups. In fact, the correlation between income and education has remained largely stable since the 1950s, fluctuating between 0.2 and 0.4 depending on the country considered and the quality of the data available (i.e., the number of income brackets and educational categories available in post-electoral surveys): see appendix Figure A17. We also perform a two-way Oaxaca-Blinder

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<sup>12</sup> We focus here on differences between the top 10 percent and the bottom 90 percent, but the evolutions observed are similar when comparing other groups such as the bottom 50 percent and top 50 percent (see appendix Figures A2 and A4).



decomposition of the educational cleavage and find that changes in the composition of educational groups played no significant role in the transition observed (see appendix Figure A18).

The emergence of a multi-elite party system is common to nearly all Western democracies, but it has happened at different speeds and with different intensities. Figure 2 shows that support of higher-educated voters for social democratic parties was lowest in Norway, Sweden, and Finland between the 1950s and 1970s, three democracies well known for having stronger historical class-based party systems than most Western democracies. The reversal of the education cleavage has not yet been fully completed in these countries, as social democratic parties have managed to keep a non-negligible fraction of the low-income and lower-educated electorate (Martínez-Toledano and Sodano, 2021).

[Figure 2 here]

This delay is also common to recent democracies such as Spain or Portugal or late industrialized countries such as Ireland, where left-wing parties continue to be more class-based. Portugal and to a lesser extent Ireland represent two major exceptions in our dataset, where we do not observe a clear tendency towards a reversal of the educational divide. Among several factors, this unique trajectory can be explained by the polarization of mainstream parties and the success of new left-wing parties after the onset of the 2008 financial crisis (Bauluz et al., 2021). In contrast, the gap in left votes between higher-educated voters and lower-educated voters is today highest in countries such as the United States, Switzerland, and Netherlands, due largely to the particular salience of identity-based concerns and the strength of anti-immigration and green movements in the latter two countries (Durrer et al., 2021).

Figure 3 shows that top-income voters have also remained significantly more likely than low-income voters to vote for conservative and affiliated parties in nearly all Western democracies, but with significant variations. The influence of income on the vote was strongest in Northern European countries, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s, consistently with their histories of early industrialization and strong class polarization. As traditional class divides have collapsed in these countries in the past decades, so has the relationship between income and the vote.

[Figure 3 here]

Meanwhile, low-income voters have supported less decisively left-wing parties in countries with weak historical class cleavages and strong crosscutting religious (Italy) or ethnolinguistic (Canada) cleavages (Bauluz et al., 2021; Gethin, 2021). Despite these variations, the tendency of high-income voters to support the right in contemporary Western democracies has proved remarkably resilient over time, pointing to the persistence of conflicts over economic issues and redistributive policy. The only country where a complete reversal of the income effect could well be underway is the United States (and to a lesser extent Italy, due to the recent success of the Five Star Movement among the low-income electorate), where in 2016 and 2020 top 10 percent earners became more likely to vote for the Democratic Party for the first time since World War II (Piketty, 2018).<sup>13</sup>

### *III.B. The Fragmentation of Political Cleavage Structures*

The emergence of multi-party systems has come together with a significant reshuffling of political forces in most Western democracies.<sup>14</sup> As shown in Figure 4, traditional socialist and social democratic parties have seen their average vote share across Western democracies decline from about 40 percent to 34 percent since the end of World War II, while that received by Christian and conservative parties has decreased from 38 percent to 30 percent. Communist parties, who used to gather 7 percent of the vote in the 1940s, have almost completely disappeared from the political scene. Green and anti-immigration parties made their entry in the

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<sup>13</sup> We also present in the appendix results on the evolution of the vote by subjective social class, based on questions asking respondents to self-identify as belonging to the “working class” or “lower class” as compared to “the middle class” or “the upper class”. In all countries with available data, self-perceived working class voters were substantially more likely to vote for left-wing parties in the 1950s and 1960s. These divides have monotonically declined since then, even after controlling for income, education, and other available sociodemographics (see appendix Figures CF1 and CF2).

<sup>14</sup> The United States and the United Kingdom are two exceptions, where the emergence of multi-elite party systems has entirely occurred within existing parties.

political landscape in the 1970s and 1980s and have progressed uninterruptedly since then, reaching on average 8 percent and 11 percent of votes in the past decade. Support for social-liberal and liberal parties has remained more stable, even though there are important variations across countries.

[Figure 4 here]

Figure 5 decomposes our previous income and education indicators for each of these families of parties in the past decades, revealing the profound transformation in the structure of political cleavages that took shape between the 1960-1980 period (panel A) and the 2000-2020 period (panel B). As shown in panel A, in 1960-1980 both top 10% educated voters and top 10% income voters were significantly less likely to vote for social democratic and socialist parties and more likely to vote for conservative and Christian parties. By 2000-2020, income continues to clearly distinguish these two families of parties, but their education gradient has now reached an average close to zero. Meanwhile, support for anti-immigration and green parties does not differ significantly across income groups, but it does vary substantially across educational categories: top 10% educated voters are more likely to vote for green parties by 5 percentage points and less likely to vote for anti-immigration parties by a comparable amount (out of total vote shares averaging 8-11%, as shown in Figure 4).

If we combine social democratic, socialist, and green parties on one side and conservative, Christian, and anti-immigration parties on the other, we get back to our multi-elite party system, with higher-educated, low-income voters supporting the former and lower-educated, high-income voters supporting the latter. In other words, the increasing support for green and anti-immigration parties has clearly contributed to the emergence of multi-elite party systems.

[Figure 5 here]

Figure 6 displays these same indicators for each of the countries in our dataset over the 2010-2020 period, distinguishing between traditional right-wing and left-wing parties in panel A and between anti-immigration and green parties in panel B. Two facts clearly stand out from these figures. First, the two-dimensional structure of political conflict previously documented can be seen in nearly all countries in our dataset: social democratic and socialist parties systematically

make better relative scores among low-income voters, conservative and Christian parties among high-income voters, anti-immigration parties among lower-educated voters, and green parties among higher-educated voters.

Secondly, despite these commonalities, there are large differences across countries in these two indicators. In particular, while nearly all green parties make better scores among higher-educated voters than among the lower educated, they differ in their tendency to attract low- or high-income voters. Similarly, anti-immigration parties have attracted a particularly high share of the lower-educated vote in several Western democracies in the past decade, but we also observe significant variations in the income profile of far-right voting. These variations are likely to reflect cross-country differences in political fragmentation and voting systems, which create different incentives for parties of the traditional left or the traditional right to adapt their policy proposals in the face of growing electoral competition from new political movements. To better understand these dynamics and the role of political supply in shaping multi-elite party systems, we now turn to manifesto data.

[Figure 6 here]

#### **IV. The Origins of Multi-Elite Party Systems: Evidence from Manifesto Data**

This section investigates the relationship between the emergence of multi-elite party systems and ideological polarization by matching our survey dataset with manifesto data. Section IV.A introduces the Comparative Manifesto Project data and the indicators we consider. Section IV.B presents our results on the link between political supply and demand.

##### *IV.A. Manifesto Project Data and Methodology*

**Manifesto Data.** To make a first step towards understanding the mechanisms underlying the emergence of multi-elite party systems, we match our survey dataset with the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP: Volkens et al., 2020), a hand-coded historical database on the programmatic supply of political parties. The CMP is the result of a collective effort to collect and code the manifestos published by parties just before general elections. Each manifesto is

first divided into “quasi-sentences” conveying a specific claim or policy proposal. These quasi-sentences are then assigned to broad ideological or policy categories using a common coding scheme. The resulting dataset presents itself in the form of items (such as “social justice” or “law and order”), with scores corresponding to the share of quasi-sentences dedicated to a specific issue in a party’s manifesto. The CMP is the largest available database on political programs in contemporary democracies at the time of writing, and the only one covering nearly all elections held in our 21 countries of interest since the end of World War II.<sup>15</sup>

**Combination of Manifesto and Survey Data.** We proceed by matching one by one every single party reported in both the CMP and our dataset. This was possible for a total of 459 parties, allowing us to cover over 90% of votes cast in nearly all elections contained in the survey data (see appendix Figure B1). The remaining correspond either to independent candidates, or to small parties for which data was not available in the CMP. To the best of our knowledge, this represents the most comprehensive mapping between political supply and demand ever built in comparative research.

**Indicators of Interest.** Following the political science literature, we consider two main indicators of political supply proposed by Bakker & Hobolt (2013). The indicators correspond to parties’ positions on two axes of political cleavages: an “economic-distributive” axis representing class-based divides over economic policy and inequality, and a “sociocultural” axis mapping conflicts over issues such as law and order, the environment, multiculturalism, or immigration.

The economic-distributive indicator is equal to the difference between the percentage of “pro-free-market” statements and “pro-redistribution” statements in a given party’s manifesto. Pro-redistribution emphases include, among others, the regulation of capitalism, nationalization, or

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<sup>15</sup> Other available datasets on political supply, such as the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (<https://www.chesdata.eu/>), sometimes contain more detailed questions on parties’ orientations. However, they unfortunately do not cover the decades preceding the 1990s or the 2000s, which is why we do not exploit them in this paper.

social justice. Meanwhile, pro-free-market statements encompass references to the limitation of social services, anti-protectionism, and free enterprise (see appendix Table B1, panel A).

Conversely, the sociocultural indicator is defined as the difference between the percentage of “liberal” emphases and “conservative” emphases. Conservative emphases include categories such as political authority, positive evaluations of traditional morality, or negative attitudes towards multiculturalism; liberal emphases cover issues related to environmentalism, the protection of underprivileged minority groups, or favorable mentions of multiculturalism (see appendix Table B1, panel B).

Given that manifesto items sum by definition to 100%, both indicators theoretically range from -1 to 1, with 1 representing a case of a party exclusively emphasizing pro-free-market/conservative values, and -1 that of a party exclusively emphasizing pro-redistribution/liberal values. While these measures of political ideology remain relatively broad and are not exempt from measurement error given the nature of political manifestos, they represent the best data at our disposal to study the link between political supply and demand in the long run.

Let us also stress at this stage that by operating this distinction between economic and sociocultural dimensions of political conflict, we are not suggesting in any way that sociocultural divides are purely conflicts over identity or morality, which would be exempt from material concerns and would naturally oppose “conservative” lower-educated voters to “liberal” higher-educated individuals. Immigration, environmental, or cultural policies are not only the subject of conflicts over values: they also have strong distributional implications, for instance by disproportionately affecting low-skilled workers or by mostly benefitting residents of large cities, who tend to concentrate a larger share of the higher-educated electorate. In that respect, the emergence of a secondary dimension of political conflict linked to education should also be understood as incorporating new cleavages over inequality (including inequalities within the education system itself, which as we suggested in the introduction could play a key role in explaining the divergence between a “Brahmin left” and a “Merchant right”).

#### *IV.B. The Evolution of Ideological Polarization*

How has the structure of economic and sociocultural conflicts changed in Western democracies since the end of World War II, and to what extent can this account for the emergence of multi-elite party systems? Table 2 provides a first answer to this question by displaying the evolution of the average economic-distributive and sociocultural scores of specific families of parties between 1945 and 2020 (see appendix Figures B2 to B8 for a complete representation of the political space by decade). Indices are normalized by the average score by decade so as to better highlight the dynamics of polarization.

Polarization on economic issues has remained remarkably stable in the past decades. The economic-distributive score of social democratic and socialist parties has remained 9 to 14 points below average, while that of conservative parties has fluctuated between +8 and +11. Green parties, which started gaining electoral significance at the beginning of the 1980s, have held economic positions that are comparable to that of traditional left-wing parties. Anti-immigration parties have moved closer to the average position of conservative parties, after a period of particularly strong emphasis on pro-free-market policies. This is consistent with qualitative accounts on the ideological transformation of far-right movements in Western Europe, from the Freedom Party of Austria (Durrer de la Sota et al., 2021) to the French Rassemblement National (Piketty, 2018) and the True Finns (Martínez-Toledano & Sodano, 2021), which have increasingly shifted to defending economic redistributive policies in recent years.

Meanwhile, polarization on the sociocultural axis of political conflict has dramatically risen since the 1970s, after a brief period of convergence in the early postwar decades. This polarization has been driven by both old and new parties. Between 1970 and 2020, social democratic and socialist parties increasingly emphasized liberal issues, as their deviation from the mean sociocultural score declined linearly from -0.6 to -5.4, while conservative parties shifted to more conservative positions. Green parties have consistently emphasized liberal issues to much greater extent than other parties since their emergence in the 1980s, with a stable score of about -25. Finally, anti-immigration parties have seen their score on the sociocultural axis surge, from +4 in the 1970s to +20 in the 2010s.

In summary, looking at the supply side suggests that the rise of green and anti-immigration parties since the 1970s-1980s has not substantially altered the structure of economic conflict in

Western democracies, given that these parties have adopted positions on distributive issues that are comparable to that of the traditional left and the traditional right. It is on the sociocultural axis that polarization has deepened, as green and anti-immigration parties have emphasized sociocultural divides to a much greater extent than preexisting political forces.

#### *IV.C. Ideological Polarization and Multi-Elite Party Systems*

The stability of economic-distributive conflicts and the rise of sociocultural divides resonates well with our finding on the stability of the income gradient and the reversal of the educational cleavage. In particular, if the two phenomena are related, one might expect to observe that (1) parties with more liberal positions attract a relatively higher share of higher-educated voters, (2) this relation should rise over time as the sociocultural axis of political conflict gained prominence, and (3) countries that are more polarized on sociocultural issues should have higher education gradients, thereby accounting for the cross-country variations documented in section III.

Figure 7, Panel A provides strong descriptive evidence that the emergence of multi-elite party systems and the rise of a second dimension of political conflict are tightly associated. The upper line represents the party-level correlation between the education gradient and the sociocultural index by decade. This correlation was close to zero and not statistically significant in the 1960s. It has risen monotonically since then, from 0.1 in the 1970s to 0.3 in the 1990s and finally 0.46 in the past decade (see also appendix Figures B9 to B13, which plot the associated scatter plot by decade and decompose specific families of parties). Meanwhile, as represented in the bottom line, the correlation between the income gradient and the position of a given party on the economic-distributive axis has remained very stable and negative over the entire period.<sup>16</sup> In other words, higher-educated voters have gradually converged in supporting parties with liberal positions, while high-income voters continue to vote for parties with pro-free-market positions just as much as they used to in the immediate postwar era. We show in the appendix that this

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<sup>16</sup> The economic-distributive is reverted here, so as to better highlight its similarity with Figure 1.



transformation is robust to controlling for the composition of parties' electorates in terms of other variables (age, gender, etc.), as well as to accounting for country, year, and election fixed effects (see appendix Table B2).

Figure 7, Panel B plots the cross-country relation between a simple measure of ideological polarization, defined as the standard deviation of the sociocultural index across all parties in a given election, and the education gradient in the past decade. The relation between the two indicators is strongly positive: countries in which parties compete more on sociocultural issues also display a greater propensity of higher-educated voters to support social democratic, socialist, green, and affiliated parties. In particular, we see that Portugal and Ireland, which were identified as two exceptions showing no clear trend towards a reversal of the educational cleavage, are the two countries where sociocultural polarization is today the lowest.<sup>17</sup> While the small number of countries makes it difficult to precisely identify the evolution of this relationship over time, we also find that it has grown over time, in line with our party-level analysis (see appendix Figure B14).

[Figure 7 here]

Results combining data on political supply and demand therefore suggest that the emergence of a new sociocultural axis of political conflict has strongly contributed to the move from “class-based” to “multi-elite” party systems in Western democracies. As parties have progressively come to compete on sociocultural issues, electoral behaviors have become growingly clustered by education group. This relation holds at the country level, with the divergence between education and income being more pronounced in democracies where parties compete more fiercely on this new dimension of electoral divides.

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<sup>17</sup> Notice that the indicator mechanically “overestimates” polarization in highly fragmented party systems such as that of Denmark, while it underestimates it in countries with few parties such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, or the United States. This may explain why these countries have lower levels of sociocultural polarization than one might expect.

## **V. Electoral Change in Western Democracies: Alternative Explanations and Other Dimensions of Political Conflict**

This section builds on our new dataset on political cleavages in Western democracies to study alternative explanations of the changing relationship between socioeconomic characteristics and the vote and analyze other dimensions of political conflict. In particular, we successively consider generational (section V.I), rural-urban (V.II), religious (V.III), immigration (V.IV), and gender (V.V) cleavages.

### *V.I. Generational Cleavages*

We first analyze the evolution of the vote by age in the past six decades. We do not find any evidence that older generations have become more conservative than younger generations. While there are fluctuations across countries and over time, the gap between the share of young and old voters supporting left-wing parties has remained remarkably stable on average (see appendix Figures CA1 to CA4). Nonetheless, we do identify interesting variations in the case of specific families of parties. The share of votes received by green and new left-wing parties (such as Die Linke in Germany or Podemos in Spain) is clearly decreasing with age, consistently with the idea that new generations give greater weight to environmentalism and social-liberal values (see Figure 8, Panel A). However, we find no evidence of an equally systematic generational divide when it comes to voting for anti-immigration parties. The share of votes received by anti-immigration parties increases with age in Denmark, Italy, Norway, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Sweden, but it clearly decreases in Austria, Spain, Finland, and France (also see appendix Figures CA5 and CA6).

[Figure 8 here]

These results put into question a strand of the political science literature, first formulated by Inglehart (1977) and most recently reasserted by Inglehart and Norris (2019), which argues that political change in Western democracies would have a strong generational dimension. In particular, Inglehart (1977) developed the “silent revolution” theory according to which new generations born in the second half of the twentieth century in Western democracies would give

greater importance to liberal “post-materialist” values, having been socialized in an era of unprecedented affluence. Older generations, by contrast, would have remained more likely to continue upholding conservative values. The replacement of old generations by new ones would thus lead to a progression in the share of social-liberal citizens and an ever-shrinking share of conservatives in Western societies. The emergence of populist authoritarian leaders in recent years would have accordingly represented a conservative response to this sociopolitical transformation, fueled by feelings of sociocultural anxiety and reinforced by growing material insecurity linked to globalization and rising inequality (Inglehart & Norris, 2019). Our findings cast doubt on the idea of a generalized backlash against current social change among older generations common to all Western democracies. As Figure 8, Panel A shows, nativist parties have disproportionately attracted younger voters in a number of European countries in the past decade.

While differences in left-right voting behaviors *across* cohorts have not changed significantly in the past decades, political cleavages *within* cohorts do seem to have played an important role in generating the reversal of the educational cleavage in Western democracies. Figure 8, Panel B shows that higher-educated voters have been more likely to vote for social democratic and affiliated parties than lower-educated voters within generations born after the 1940s, while the opposite is true among generations born before World War II. New generations have thus become increasingly divided along educational lines, suggesting that the educational cleavage is likely to continue rising in the future, as old generations voting along historical class lines gradually disappear from the political scene. The reversal of the educational cleavage has, however, also taken place within recent cohorts, which points to the role of other factors potentially related to political supply or ideological change as documented in Section IV.

[Figure 8 here]

## *V.II. Rural-Urban Cleavages*

We also find that rural-urban divides have remained remarkably stable in the past seven decades. Despite significant realignments in other dimensions of political conflict, rural areas continue to be more likely to vote for conservative and affiliated parties by 5 to 15 percentage points in

most Western democracies (Figure 9, Panel A). Accordingly, the fragmentation of the political space in multi-party systems has been associated with a reshuffling of rural-urban divides *within* left-right blocs. Historically, left-wing movements arising from the industrial revolution were more popular among urban manual workers, while farmers remained more faithful to existing conservative forces; today, support for green parties tends to be concentrated in cities, while anti-immigration parties generally fare better in rural areas (see appendix Figures CB1 and CB2). The stability of the rural-urban cleavage thus rules out this regional dimension as an important driver of the changing relationship between the vote and socioeconomic inequalities since the end of World War II.

[Figure 9 here]

Several Western democracies, however, seem to have witnessed a significant transformation of center-periphery cleavages in recent years, as socialist, social-democratic, and green parties have concentrated a growing share of the vote of capital cities (see appendix Figures CB3 to CB7). These findings are consistent with the urban economics literature on agglomeration economies, which documents an increasing concentration of high-skilled individuals in larger cities and emphasizes the importance of the spatial sorting of talented individuals for overall welfare and wage inequality (Baum Snow and Pavan, 2013; Baum-Snow et al., 2018; Behrens et al., 2014; Diamond, 2016; Duranton and Puga, 2004). If this transition were to continue, cleavages between big cities and peripheral regions could accentuate in the future, as urban areas continue to concentrate a growing share of the higher-educated electorate.

### *V.III. Religious-Secular Cleavages*

Social democratic and affiliated parties were historically more favorable to preserving the secular aspect of the State, while conservative and Christian parties traditionally represented the interests of the Church and religious voters. As secularization advanced in the decades following World War II, traditional religious affiliations progressively lost importance, leading to the collapse of Christian Democratic parties in many countries.

Figure 9, Panel B depicts the difference in the share of voters belonging to the religious majority—Protestants in historically Protestant countries, Catholics in historically Catholic

countries, and both Catholics and Protestants in mixed countries—and the share of non-religious voters or religious minorities voting for left-wing parties between the 1950s and the 2010s. In all Western democracies with available data, this difference has remained consistently negative: voters belonging to the religious majority have always been significantly less likely to vote for left-wing parties. However, this gap has declined, suggesting a gradual weakening of traditional religious-secular divides. The difference was historically larger in Catholic countries and in countries with both Catholics and Protestants, but it has also declined faster than in Protestant-majority countries. These historical differences have been explained by the establishment of national Churches under state authority in Protestant countries, which limited the importance of religion as a source of political conflict (Dalton, 1996; Knutsen, 2004).

These results suggest that religious-secular divides have not been a major source of political realignment in the past decades. While green movements often disproportionately attract non-religious individuals (see appendix Figure CC4), this does not make them different from traditional left-wing parties, which have always found greater support among secular voters too. On the right of the political spectrum, support for anti-immigration parties appears to vary little across religious groups in most countries (see appendix Figure CC5), so that their progression in recent decades has further contributed to the weakening of the religious cleavage.

#### *V.IV. Nativist Cleavages: Immigrants and the Muslim Vote*

Following the decolonization process, the opening of international borders, the shocks induced by globalization, and the influx of refugees from war-ridden countries, Western democracies have seen a gradual increase in migration inflows in the past decades. Many of these immigrants and their descendants acquired citizenship, allowing them to vote in national elections.

Figure 10, Panel A shows that social democratic and affiliated parties have attracted a significant share of these new minorities in many Western democracies, but with substantial variations. In particular, the strength of this new “nativist” cleavage strongly correlates to the salience of immigration issues and the way they are represented politically. Many of the countries at the top of the figure have seen the emergence of powerful anti-immigration parties in the past decades, including Austria, Denmark, France, and Switzerland. Meanwhile, countries with the weakest

differences in voting behaviors between natives and immigrants from non-Western democracies, notably Iceland, Portugal, Australia, and New Zealand, have seen anti-immigration parties make lower scores at the national level or simply have no such party at all. Together, these results point to the role of the politicization of immigration in generating new cleavages over national identity.

[Figure 10 here]

Following 9/11 and the rise of Islamist extremism in the Middle East and other parts of the world, many anti-immigration and conservative parties gradually shifted at the same time from opposing immigration in general terms to emphasizing the specific threat that Islam and Muslim minorities would represent to Western culture (Kallis, 2018). Consistently with the idea that Muslim voters perceive conservative and anti-immigration parties as particularly hostile to their integration, we find that they have been substantially more likely to vote for social democratic and affiliated parties than other voters in the past decade (Figure 10, Panel B). The gap is much larger than for immigrants as a whole, exceeding 40 percentage points in several countries, which points to the particular strength of cleavages linked to Muslim communities. Despite low sample sizes, there are significant variations across countries, which broadly follow the ranking observed in the case of the immigrant-native cleavage. In France, the only country for which data on Muslims allows us to go back to the mid-1980s, we find that this divide has dramatically risen over time (Piketty, 2018: Figure 2.6h).

### *V.V. Gender Cleavages*

Studies carried out through the 1950s to 1970s found that women were more supportive of conservative parties and less likely to participate in politics than men in Western democracies (Duverger, 1955; Lipset, 1960). However, this “traditional gender cleavage” has disappeared since the 1980s and a “modern gender gap” has emerged according to which women have become closer to social democratic and affiliated parties than men (Inglehart and Norris, 2000). We corroborate these findings by plotting the difference between the fraction of women and the fraction of men voting for left-wing parties for each country in our dataset (Figure 11). Whereas this difference was negative in all countries in the 1950s, it has become gradually positive until reaching 5

percentage points on average in the 2010s. Gender differences in voting behavior have thus progressively realigned in Western democracies.

[Figure 11 here]

The traditional gender gap has been related to structural gender differences in religiosity and societal assignments, as well as women having more conservative values. (Blondel, 1970; Goot & Reid, 1984). Figure 11 indeed shows that the traditional gender cleavage was stronger in countries with pronounced religious cleavages such as France, Spain, and in particular Italy. After controlling for religiosity and religious affiliation, the traditional gender cleavage shrinks from -32 percent to -11 percent in the 1950s in Italy and completely disappears in France in the 1960s (see appendix Figure CE1). In contrast, the gender cleavage barely changes after controls in countries with less important historical religious cleavages, such as Britain and Switzerland, or with strong class cleavages such as Norway or Finland.

While the dealignment of gender divides has been associated with the weakening of class and religious cleavages (Dalton, 1996), most explanations of the realignment of women towards left-wing parties have emphasized structural and sociocultural factors. In the US and Western Europe, the decline of marriage, the rise of divorce, and the economic fragility of women have been shown to be important drivers behind the emergence of the modern gender gap (Abendschön & Steinmetz, 2014; Edlund & Pande, 2002). In Northern Europe, the expansion of women's employment in the public sector has also been an important factor behind the increase in the vote for the left among women in recent decades (Knutsen, 2001; see appendix Figure CE2). Women have also been more attracted by environmental issues, which have spurred women's support for green parties, while anti-immigration parties have generally found greater support among men (Givens, 2004; see appendix Figures CE3 and CE4). The recent gender alignment has thus mirrored the reversal of the education cleavage.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The new historical database on political cleavages in 21 Western democracies introduced in this article reveals some striking facts. In the early postwar decades, social democratic and affiliated

parties represented both the low-education and the low-income electorate, while conservative and affiliated parties represented both high-education and high-income voters. These party systems have gradually evolved towards “multi-elite party systems” in most Western democracies, in which higher-educated elites vote for the left, whereas high-income elites still vote for the right.

Results combining our database on political demand with political supply data from the Comparative Manifesto Project suggest that the emergence of a new sociocultural axis of political conflict has strongly contributed to the move from “class-based” to “multi-elite” party systems in Western democracies. As parties have progressively come to compete on sociocultural issues, electoral behaviors have become increasingly clustered by education group. This divergence between education and income has been most pronounced in democracies where parties compete most fiercely on this new dimension of electoral divides.

While multiple lessons have emerged from this new database, we acknowledge the analysis remains insufficient and is not exempted from limitations. First, the indicators of political supply used in this paper and more generally the CMP data capture the tendency of parties to *emphasize* specific issues and are therefore unable to perfectly measure their *position* on these issues. Moreover, the policy categories coded in the CMP database unfortunately remain very broad, which precludes us from analyzing in greater detail more specific types of issues such as gender equality, immigration, trade protectionism, or education policy. Addressing these two shortcomings would require going back to the original manifestos and derive new indicators from text analysis or alternative coding techniques.

Secondly, while our descriptive analysis has provided strong suggestive evidence that the emergence of multi-elite party systems and the rise of a new sociocultural axis of political conflict were interrelated phenomena, much remains to be understood when it comes to the mechanisms underlying this transformation. In particular, a promising avenue for future research lies in establishing more directly the causal impact of political supply on the transformation of political cleavages. This would require identifying quasi-experimental settings in which parties exogenously change position on specific issues or suddenly shift to emphasizing new concerns.



Finally, the electoral surveys exploited in this paper rely on samples of a few thousands of voters available since the end of World War II that are sufficient to reveal major trends at the national level, but prevent us from carrying more refined and long-run analyses. Other sources and methods, such as localized election results linked to census data, could be mobilized to broaden the historical perspective and perform more granular analyses.

All of these issues raise important challenges that we hope will contribute to stimulating new research in these multiple directions.

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**Table 1 - A New Dataset on Political Cleavages in Western Democracies, 1948-2020**

	Time period	Elections	Main data source	Data quality	Avg. sample size
Australia	1963-2019	18	Australian Election Studies	High	2382
Austria	1971-2017	10	Eurobarometers, European Social Survey	Medium	3831
Belgium	1971-2014	14	Belgian National Election Study	High	4817
Canada	1963-2019	17	Canadian Election Studies	High	3302
Denmark	1960-2015	21	Danish Election Studies	High	2819
Finland	1972-2015	11	Finnish Voter Barometers	High	2452
France	1956-2017	17	French Election Studies	High	3208
Germany	1949-2017	19	German Federal Election Studies	High	2782
Iceland	1978-2017	12	Icelandic National Election Studies	High	1488
Ireland	1973-2020	13	Eurobarometers, European Social Survey	Medium	7115
Italy	1953-2018	14	Italian National Election Studies	High	2147
Luxembourg	1974-2018	9	Eurobarometers, European Election Studies	Low	3890
Netherlands	1967-2017	15	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies	High	2068
New Zealand	1972-2017	16	New Zealand Election Studies	High	2555
Norway	1957-2017	15	Norwegian Election Studies	High	1964
Portugal	1983-2019	10	Portuguese Election Studies	High	1822
Spain	1979-2019	14	CIS Election Surveys	High	8996
Sweden	1956-2014	19	Swedish National Election Studies	High	3088
Switzerland	1967-2019	14	Swiss Election Studies	High	3328
United Kingdom	1955-2017	16	British Election Studies	High	5262
United States	1948-2020	18	American National Election Studies	High	2179

**Source:** authors' elaboration.

**Note:** the table presents, for each country, the time coverage of the dataset, the number of elections covered, the main data source used, the quality of electoral surveys, and the average sample size of these surveys.

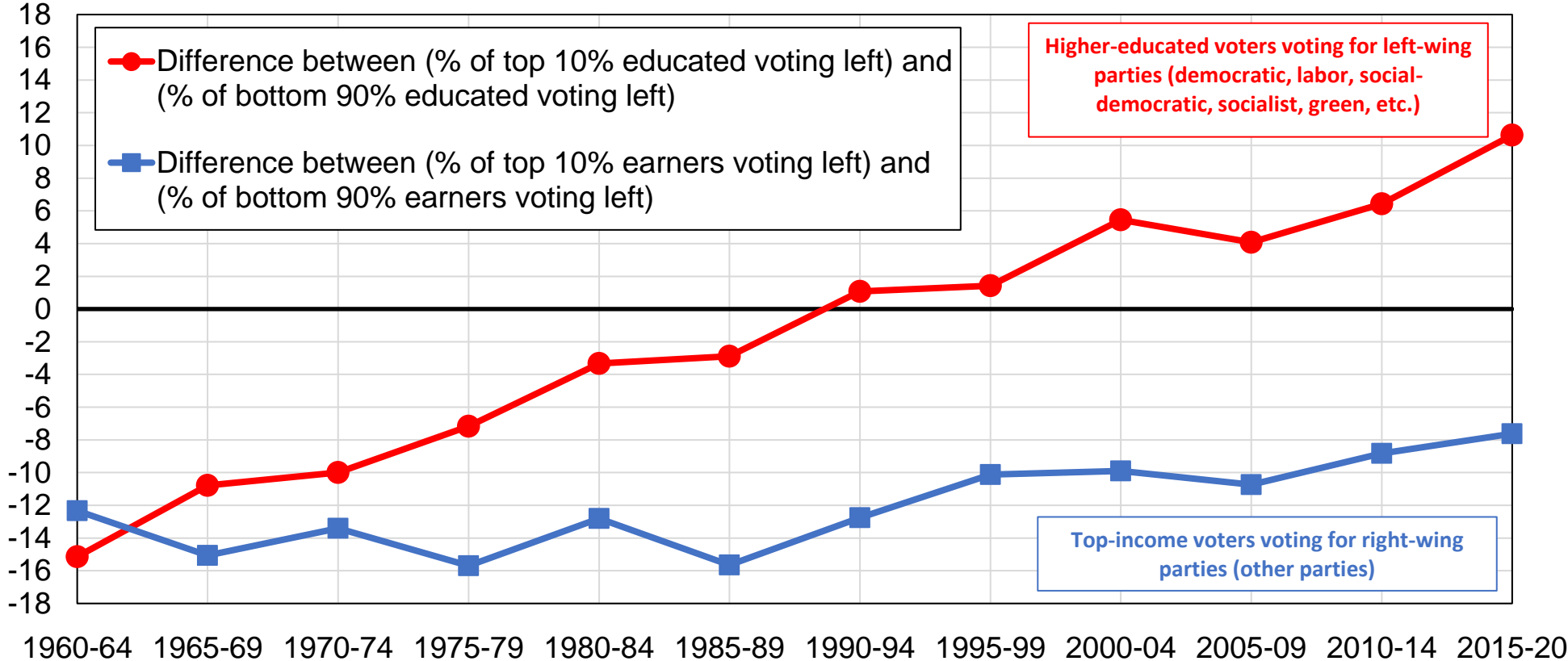
**Table 2 - Ideological polarization in Western democracies, 1945-2020**

	Economic-distributive index				Sociocultural index			
	Social Democrats	Conservatives	Anti-immigration	Greens	Social Democrats	Conservatives	Anti-immigration	Greens
1945-59	-12,3	11,2			-2,2	2,2		
1960-69	-9,1	9,2			-1,1	0,9		
1970-79	-9,3	8,8	17,6		-0,6	0,6	3,9	
1980-89	-10,9	10,9	15,8	-8,5	-1,9	2,5	3,4	-24,1
1990-99	-9,9	8,2	11,6	-11,5	-3,6	5,2	7,1	-25,4
2000-09	-9,4	8,1	10,4	-6,8	-4,9	6,3	11,2	-24,8
2010-20	-13,5	11,2	8,7	-11,2	-5,4	4,4	20,4	-25,1

**Source:** authors' computations using the Comparative Manifesto Project database.

**Note:** the table displays the average economic-distributive and sociocultural scores by decade for four families of parties across all Western democracies: social democratic, socialist and other left-wing parties; conservative, Christian democratic, and liberal parties; anti-immigration parties; and green parties. Negative values on the economic-distributive index correspond to greater proportions of pro-redistribution emphases relatively to pro-free-market emphases in party manifestos. Negative values on the sociocultural index correspond to greater proportions of liberal emphases relatively to conservative emphases. Indices are normalized by the average score by decade so as to better highlight the dynamics of polarization.

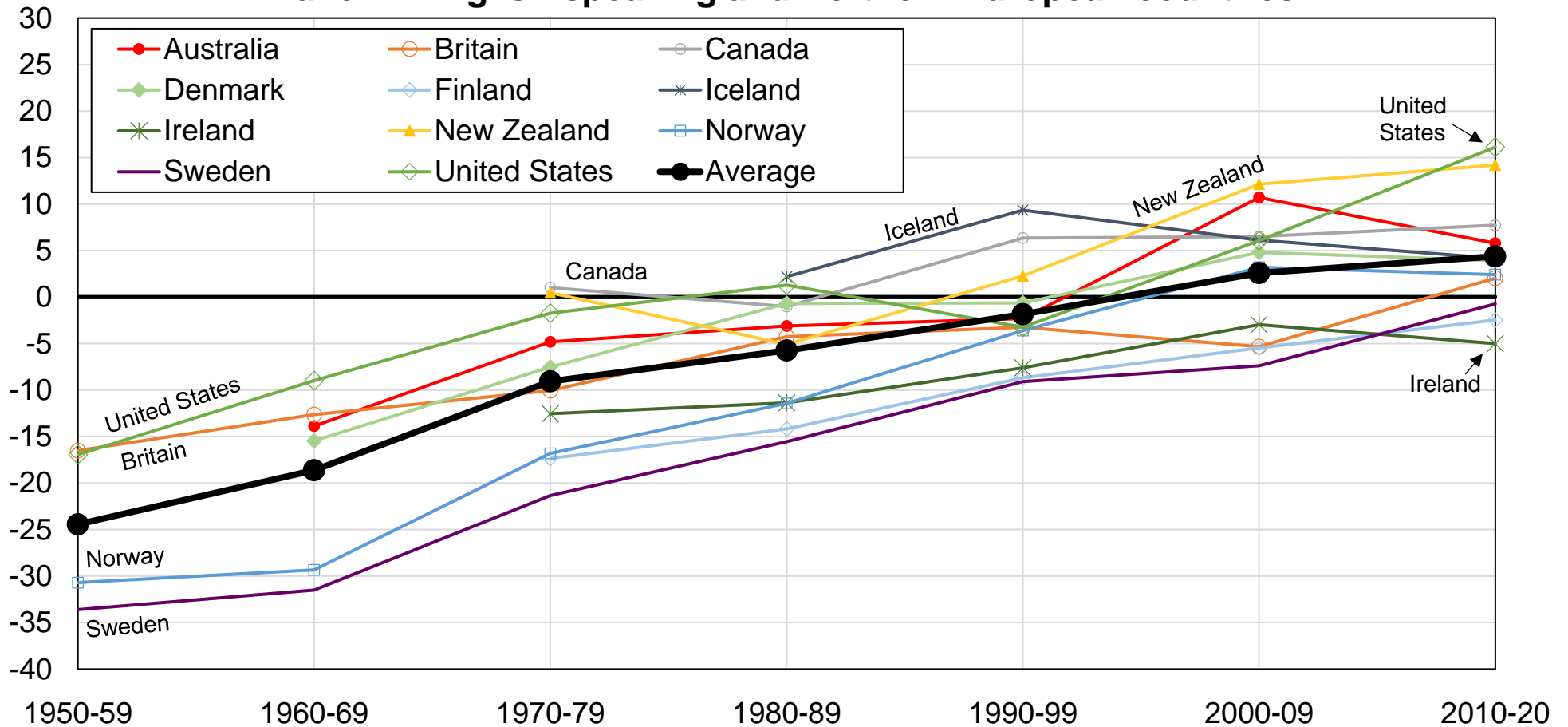
**Figure 1 - The emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** in the 1960s, both higher-educated and high-income voters were less likely to vote for left-wing (democratic / labor / social-democratic / socialist / green) parties than lower-educated and low-income voters by more than 10 percentage points. The left vote has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rising to a "multi-elite party system". Figures correspond to five-year averages for Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the US. Estimates control for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

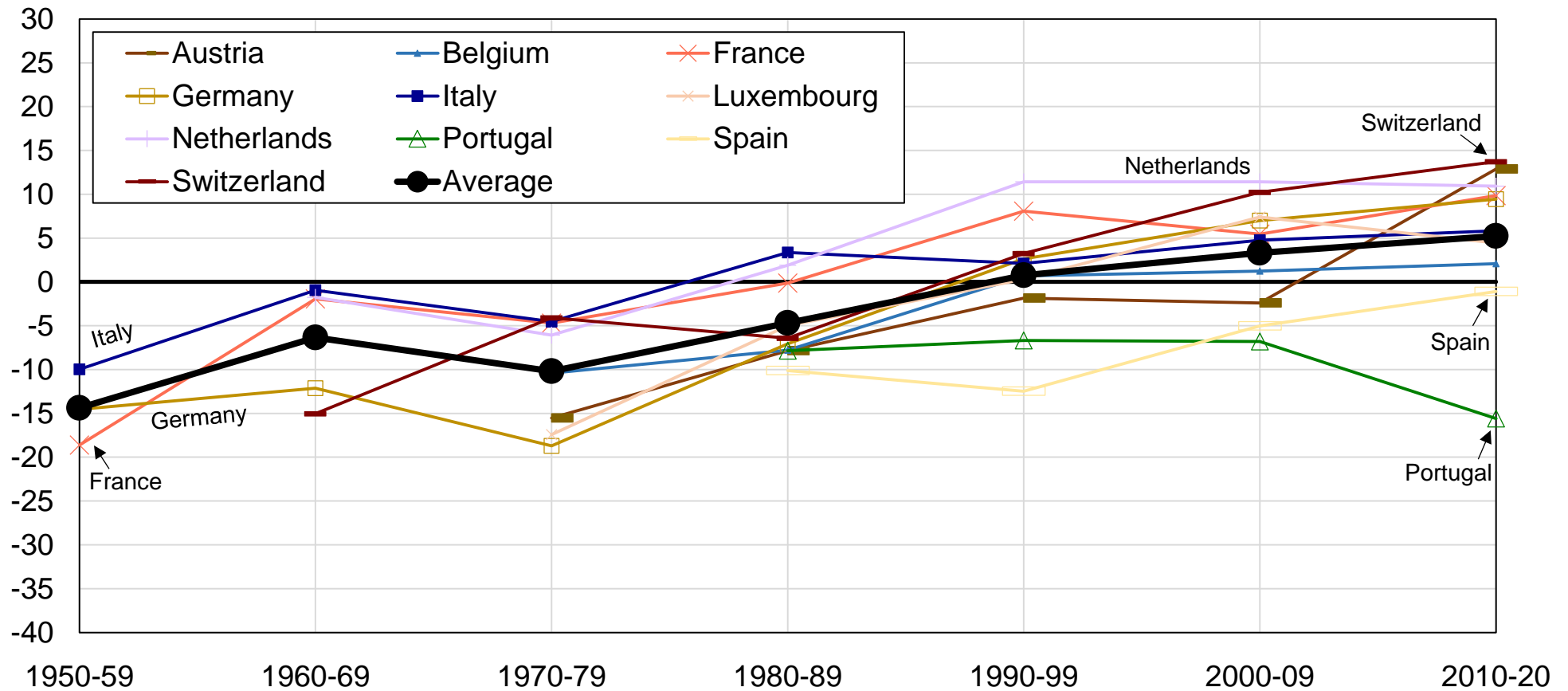
**Figure 2 - The reversal of educational divides in Western democracies.  
Panel A. English-speaking and Northern European countries**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties in English-speaking and Northern European countries. In nearly all countries, higher-educated voters used to be significantly more likely to vote for conservative parties and have gradually become more likely to vote for these parties. Estimates control for income, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

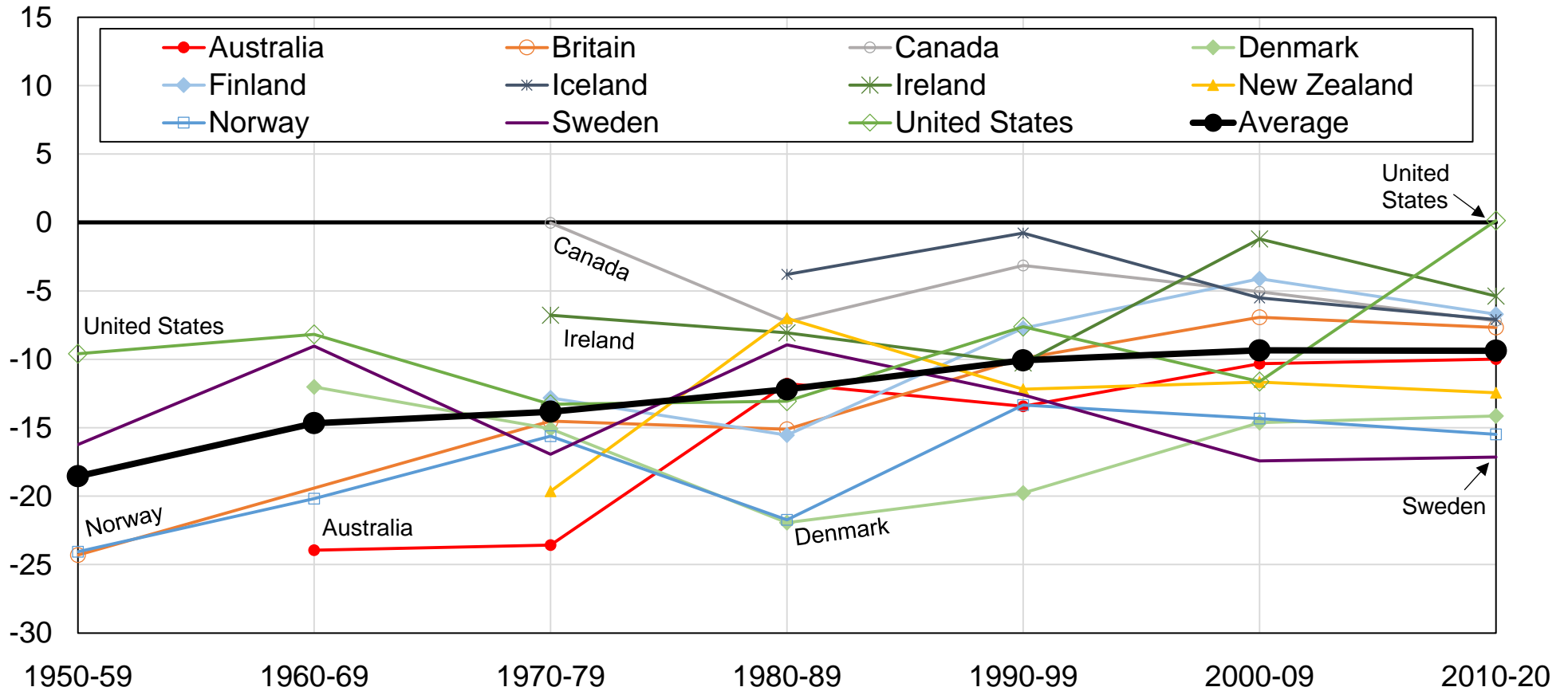
**Figure 2 - The reversal of educational divides in Western democracies.  
Panel B. Continental and Southern European countries**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties in Continental and Southern European countries. In nearly all countries, higher-educated voters used to be significantly more likely to vote for conservative parties and have gradually become more likely to vote for these parties. Estimates control for income, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

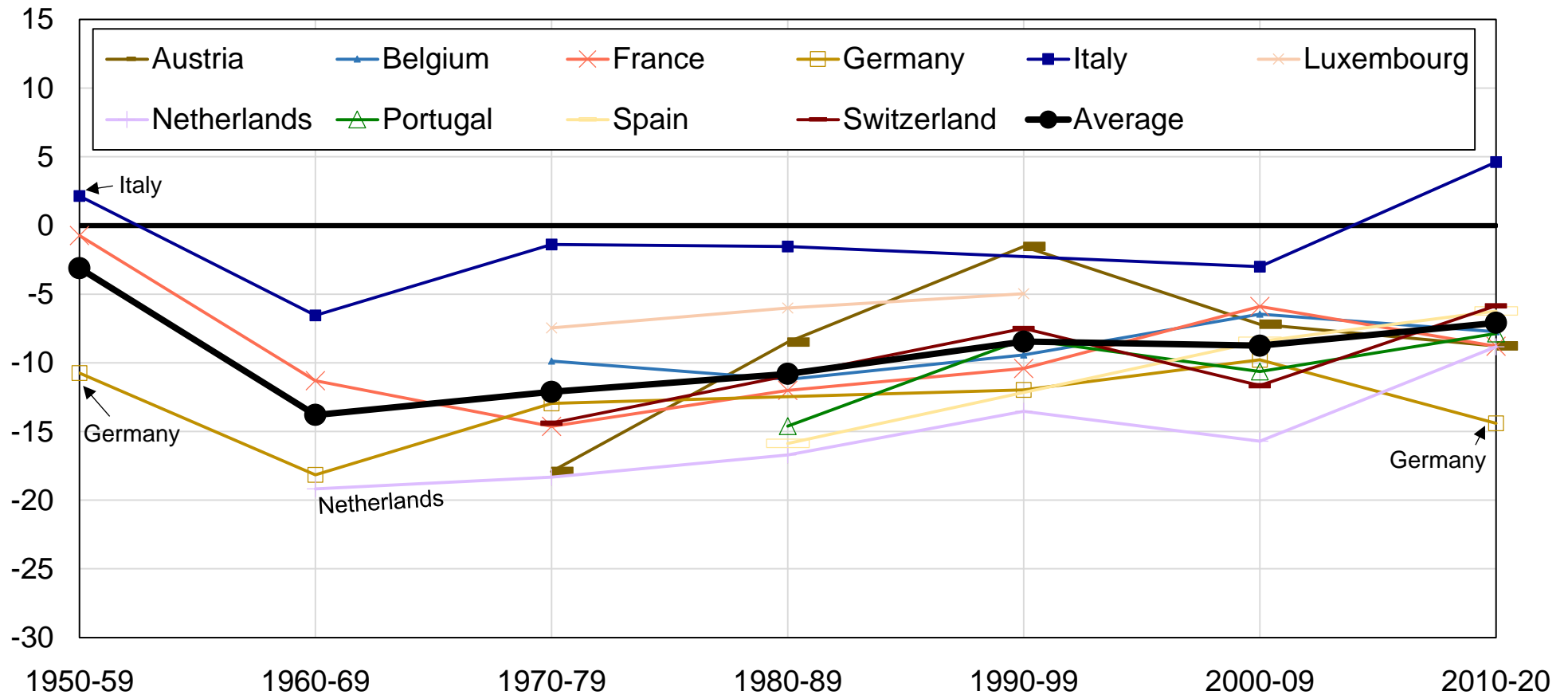
**Figure 3 - The stability/decline of income divides in Western democracies.  
Panel A. English-speaking and Northern European countries**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties in English-speaking and Northern European countries. In all countries, top-income voters have remained significantly less likely to vote for these parties than low-income voters. Estimates control for education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

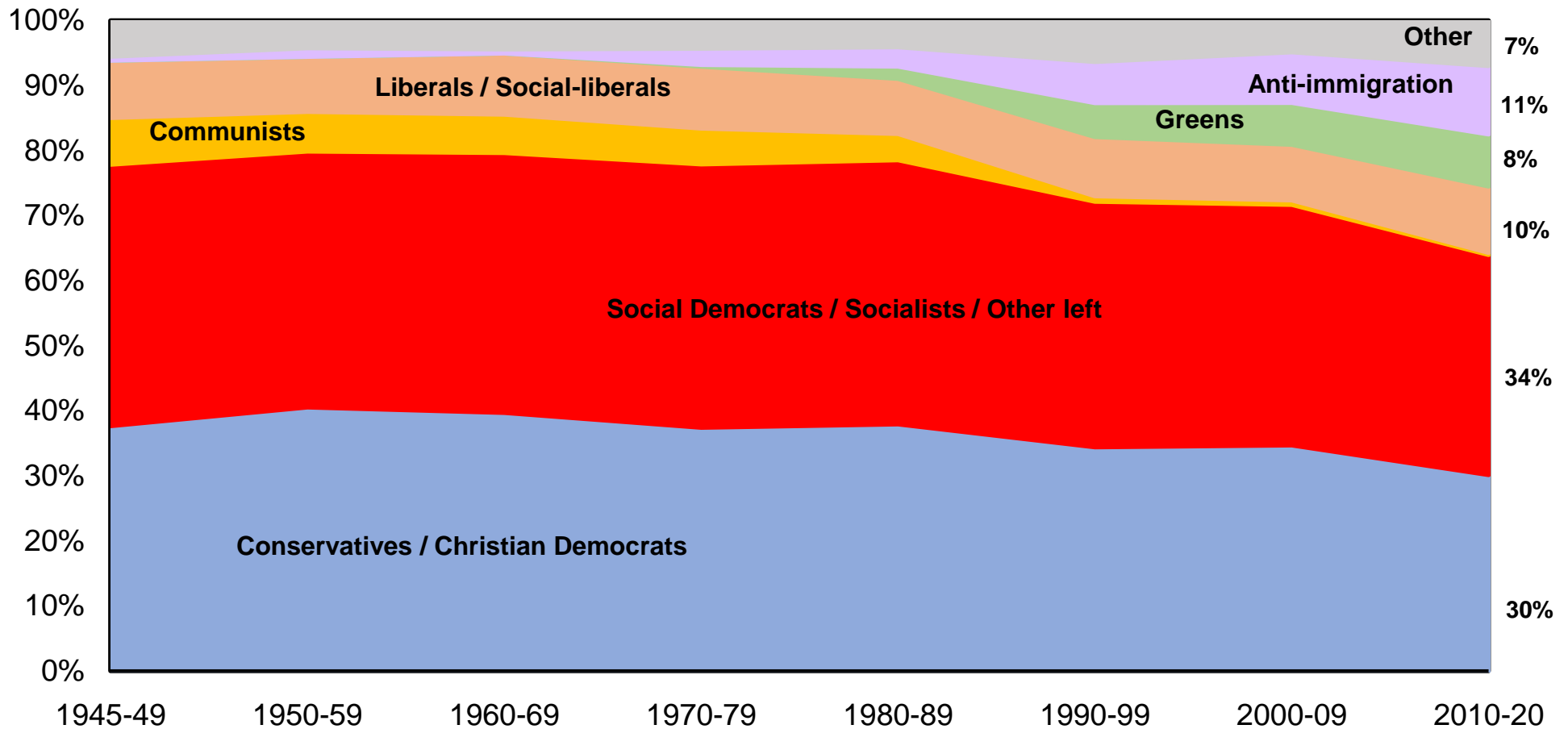
**Figure 3 - The stability/decline of income divides in Western democracies.  
Panel B. Continental and Southern European countries**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties in Continental and Southern European countries. In all countries, top-income voters have remained significantly less likely to vote for these parties than low-income voters. Estimates control for education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

**Figure 4 - The transformation of Western party systems, 1945-2020**

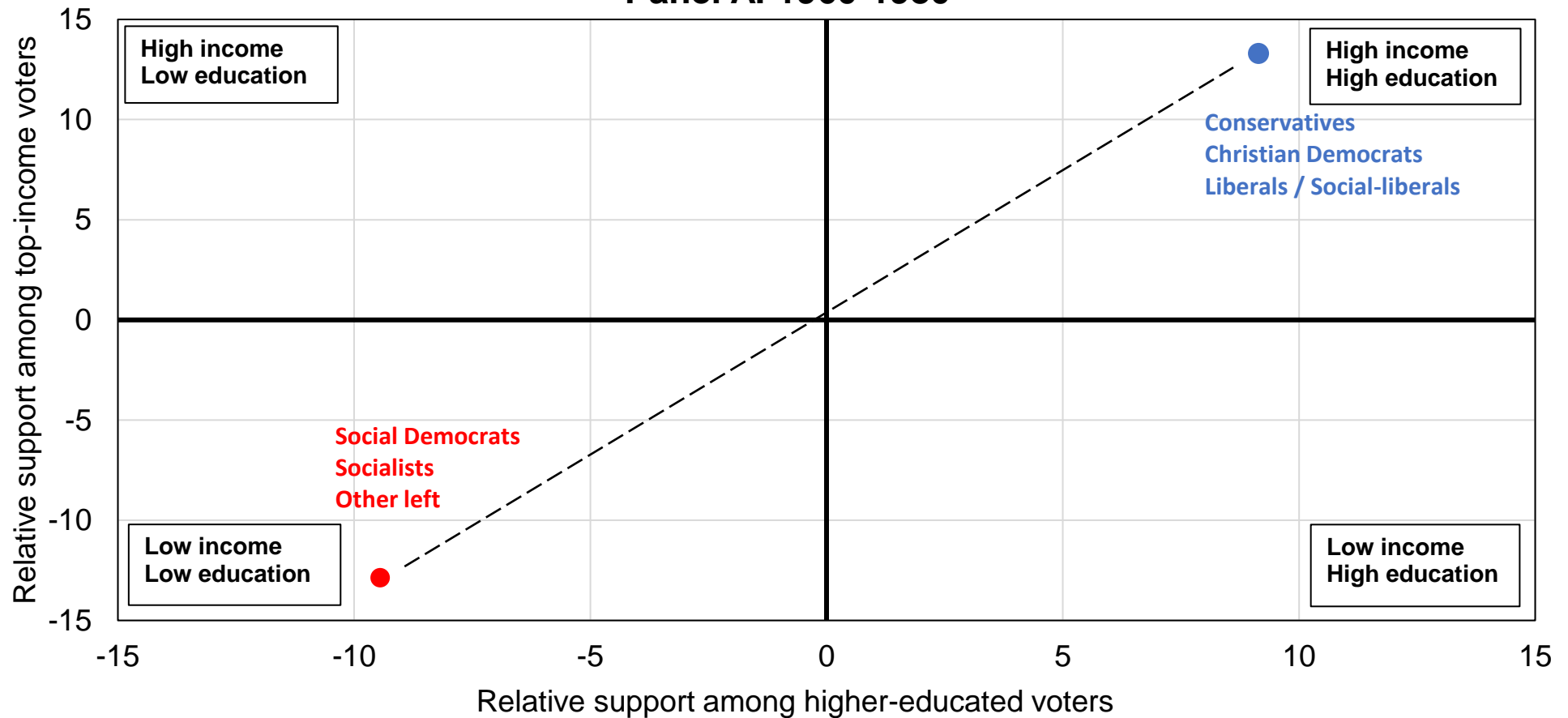


**Source:** authors' computations using official election results data.

**Note:** the figure represents the average share of votes received by selected families of political parties in Western democracies between the 1940s and the 2010s. Communist parties saw their average scores collapse from 7% to less than 0.5%, while green and anti-immigration parties have risen until reaching average vote shares of 8% and 11% respectively. Decennial averages over all Western democracies except Spain and Portugal (no democratic elections before 1970s) and the United States and the United Kingdom (two-party systems).



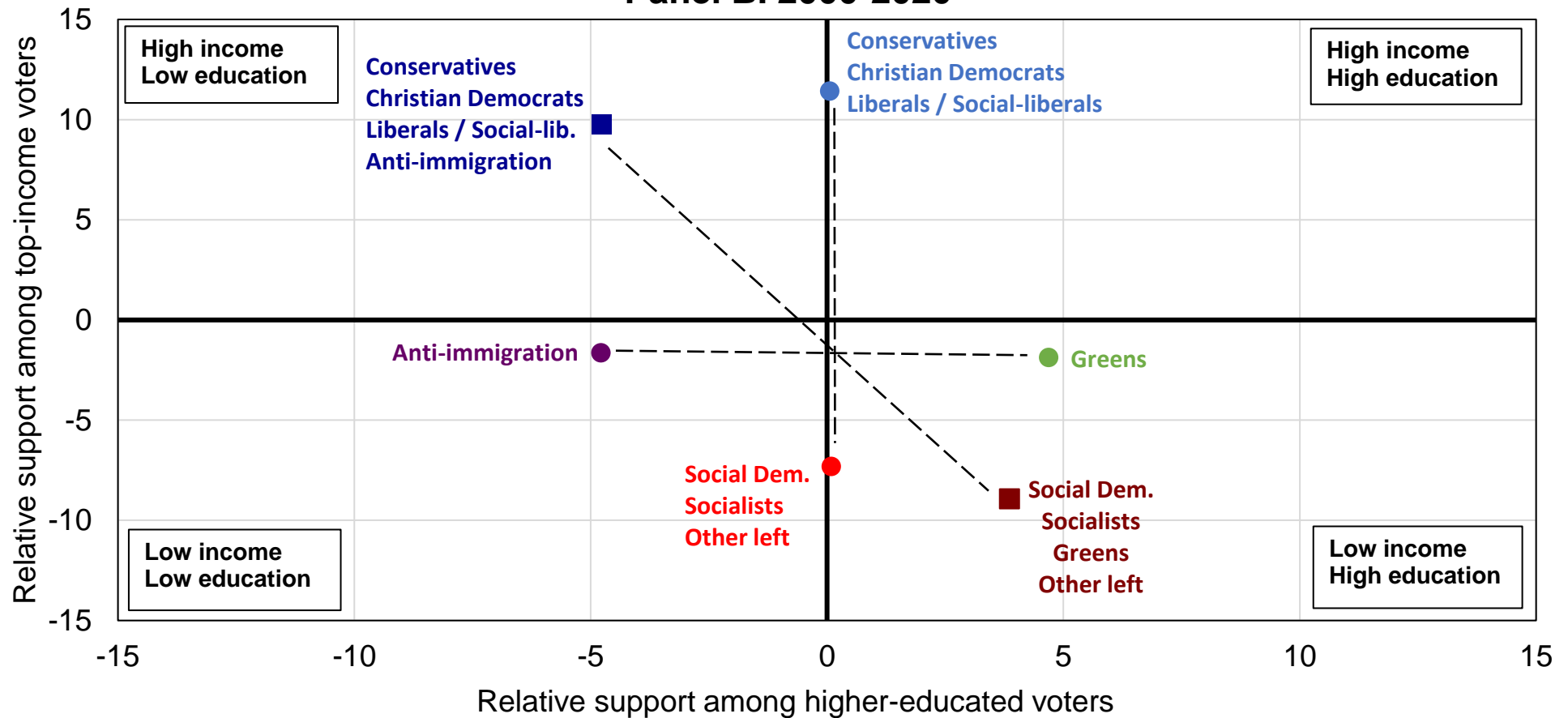
**Figure 5 - The fragmentation of Western cleavage structures.  
Panel A. 1960-1980**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis. In the 1960s-1980s, socialist and social democratic parties were supported by both low-income and lower-educated voters, while conservative, Christian, and liberal parties were supported by both high-income and higher-educated voters. Averages over all Western democracies. Estimates control for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

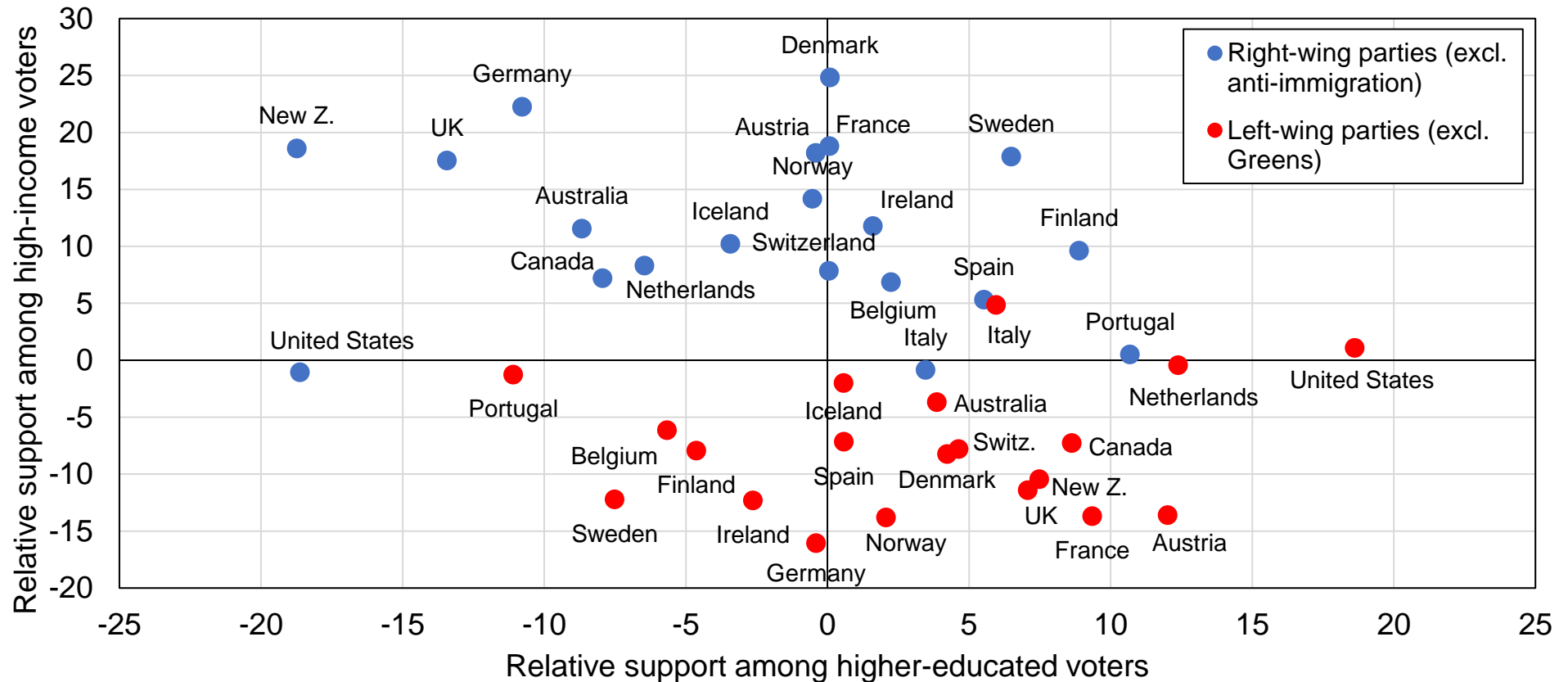
**Figure 5 - The fragmentation of Western cleavage structures.  
Panel B. 2000-2020**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis. Education most clearly distinguishes anti-immigration from green parties, while income most clearly distinguishes conservative and Christian parties from socialist and social-democratic parties. Averages over all Western democracies. Estimates control for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

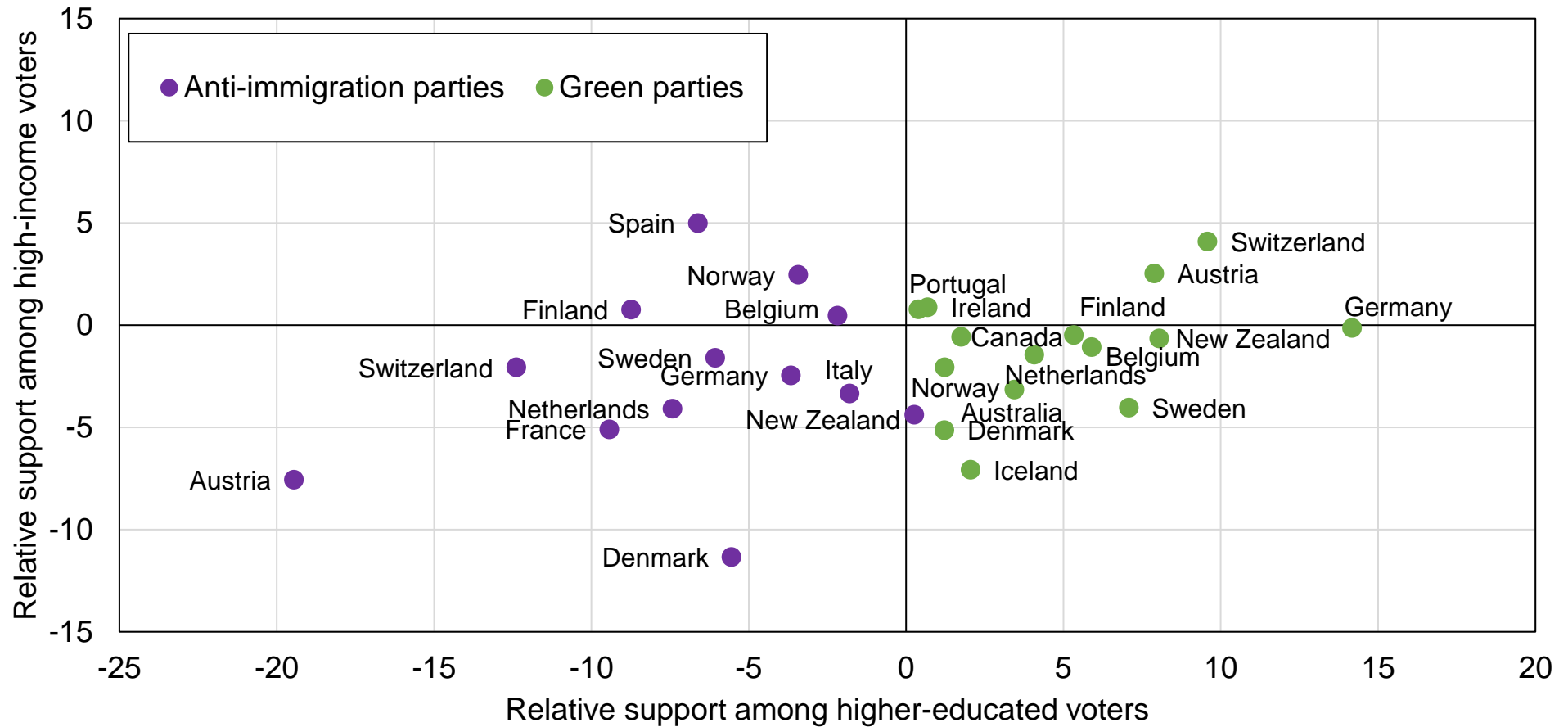
**Figure 6 - Decomposing multi-elite party systems, 2010-2020**  
**Panel A. Social Democrats / Socialists vs. Conservatives / Christians**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis, over the 2010-2020 period. Estimates control for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

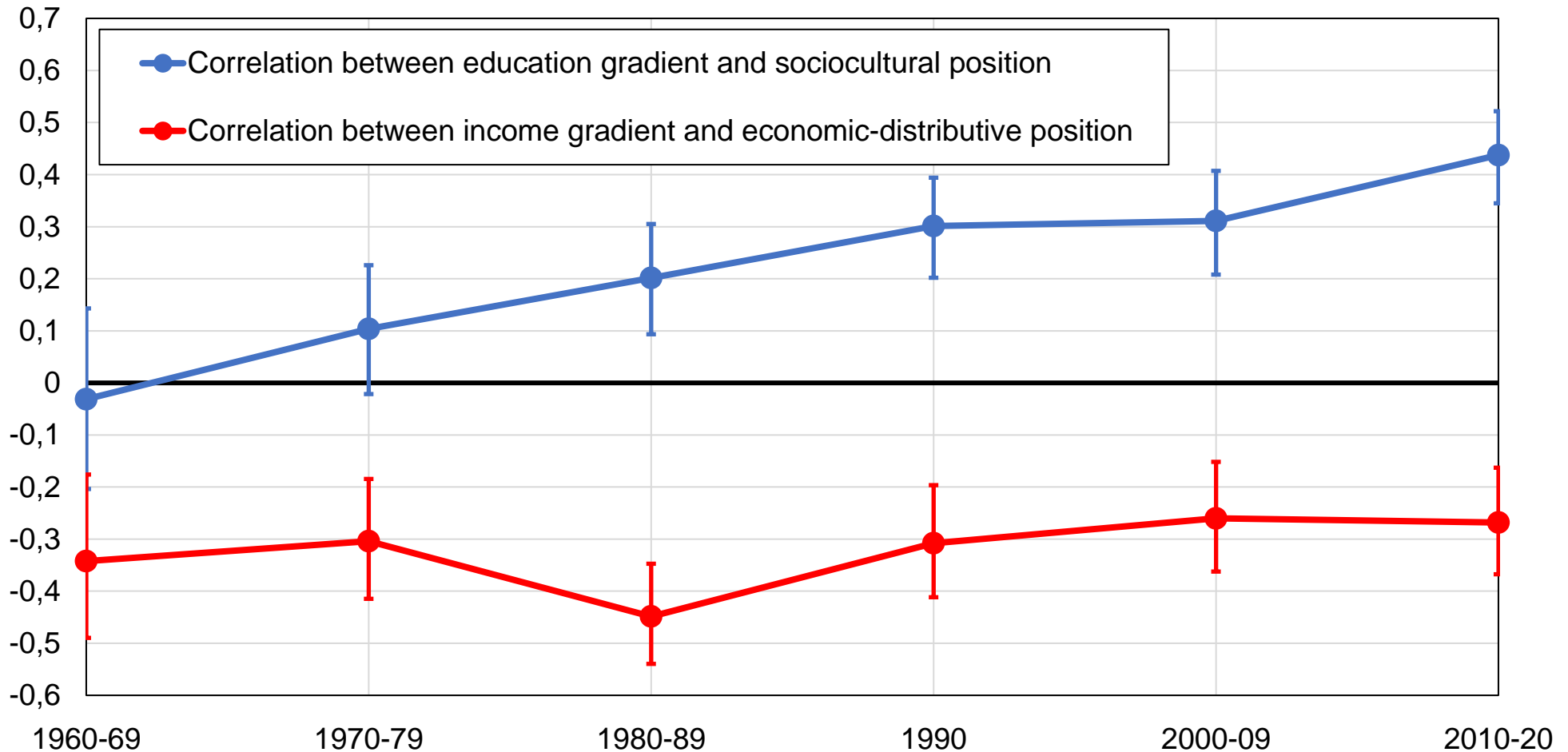
**Figure 6 - Decomposing multi-elite party systems, 2010-2020**  
**Panel B. Green vs. Anti-immigration parties**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis, over the 2010-2020 period. Estimates control for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

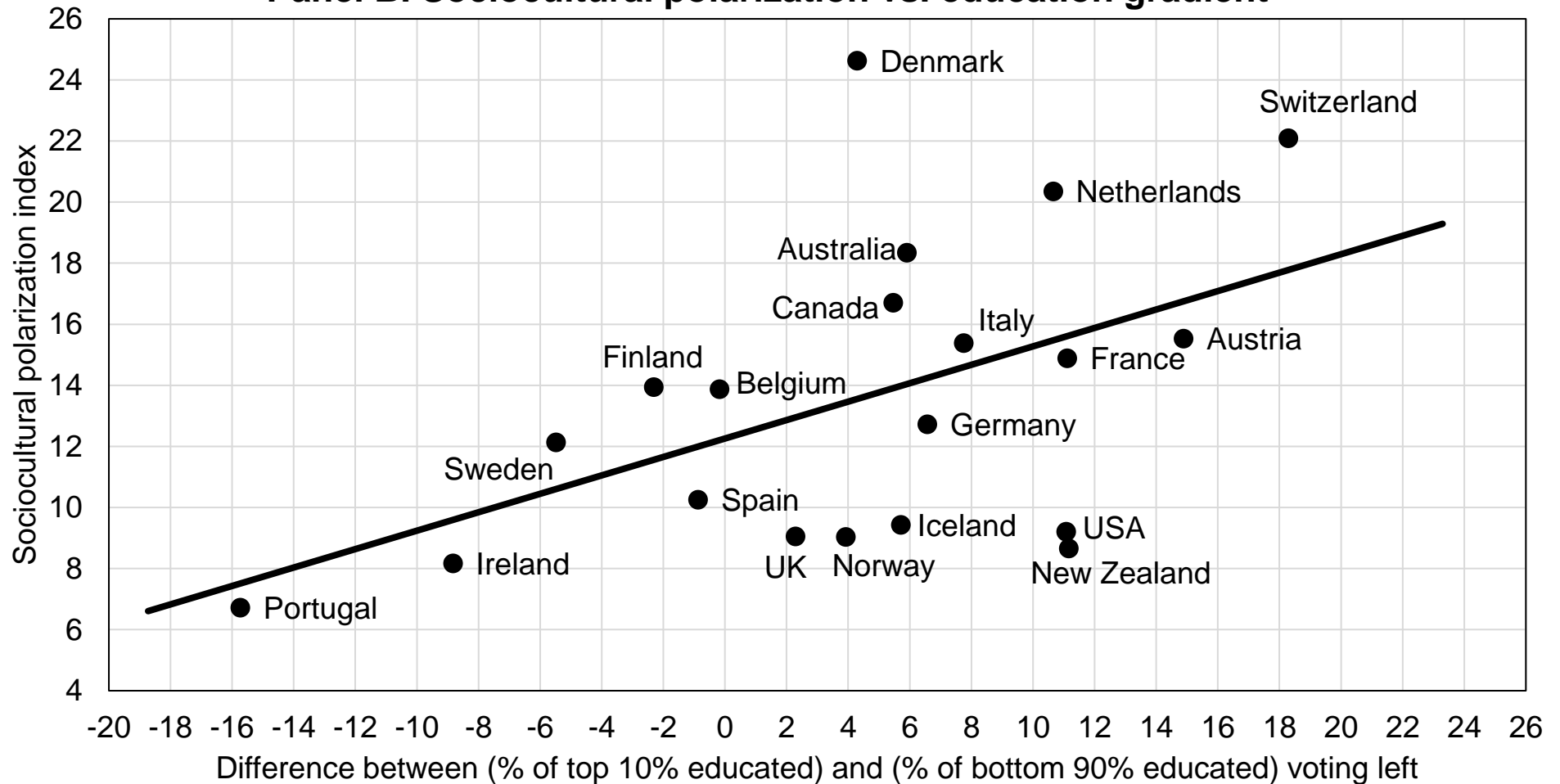
**Figure 7 - Multi-elite party systems and ideological polarization**  
**Panel A. Party ideology, income, and education**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database with Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** the upper lines plots the raw correlation between the education gradient (defined as the share of top 10% educated voters within the electorate of a given party) and the sociocultural index. The bottom line plots the raw correlation between the income gradient (defined as the share of top 10% income voters within the electorate of a given party) and the economic-distributive index (inverted, so that higher values correspond to greater pro-redistribution emphases). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

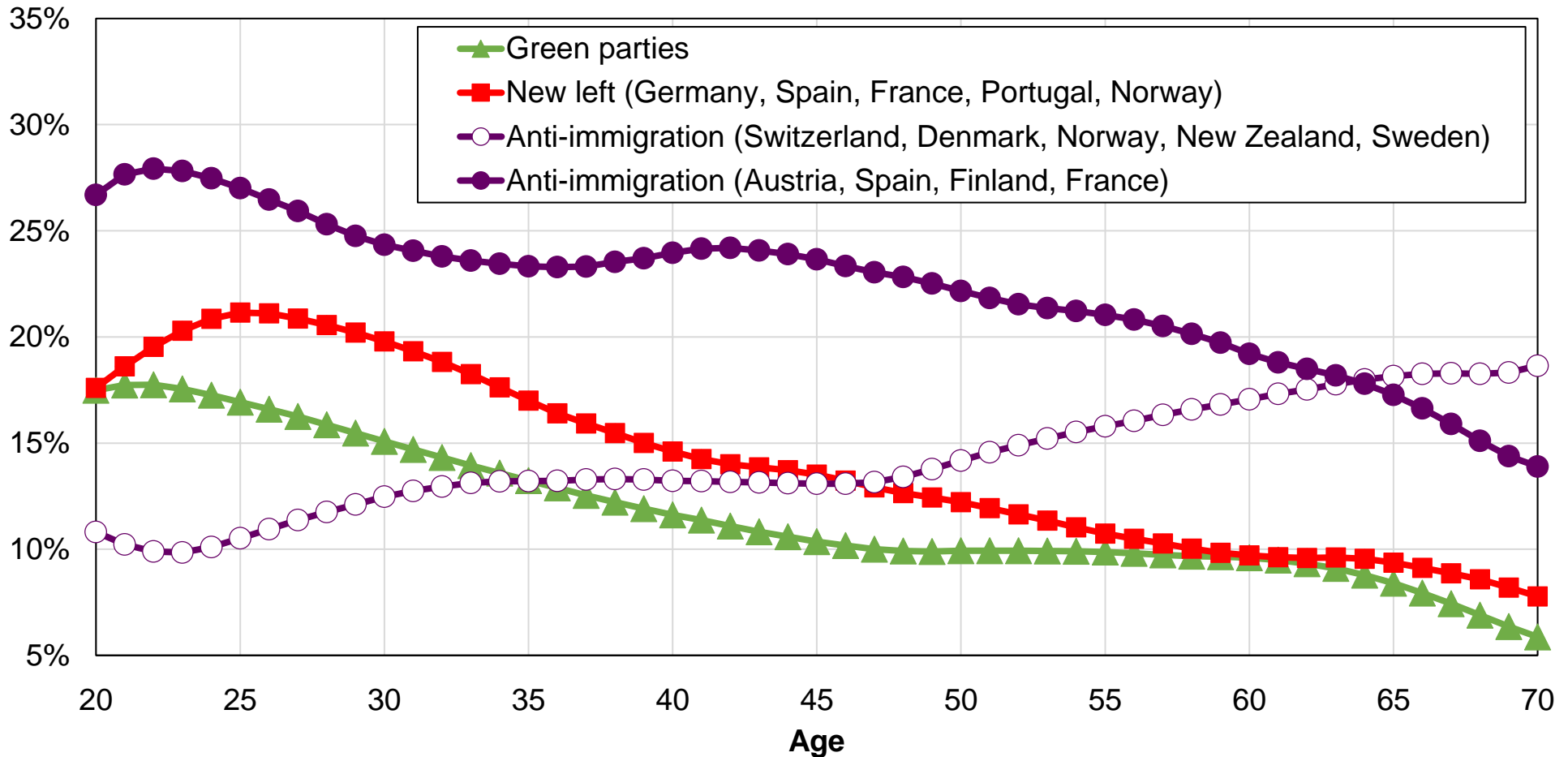
**Figure 7 - Multi-elite party systems and ideological polarization**  
**Panel B. Sociocultural polarization vs. education gradient**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** the figure represents the relationship between sociocultural polarization (defined as the standard deviation of the sociocultural index across all parties in a given country) and the educational cleavage for all 21 Western democracies in the 2010s. Higher-educated voters are significantly more likely to support left-wing parties in countries where polarization on the sociocultural axis is higher.

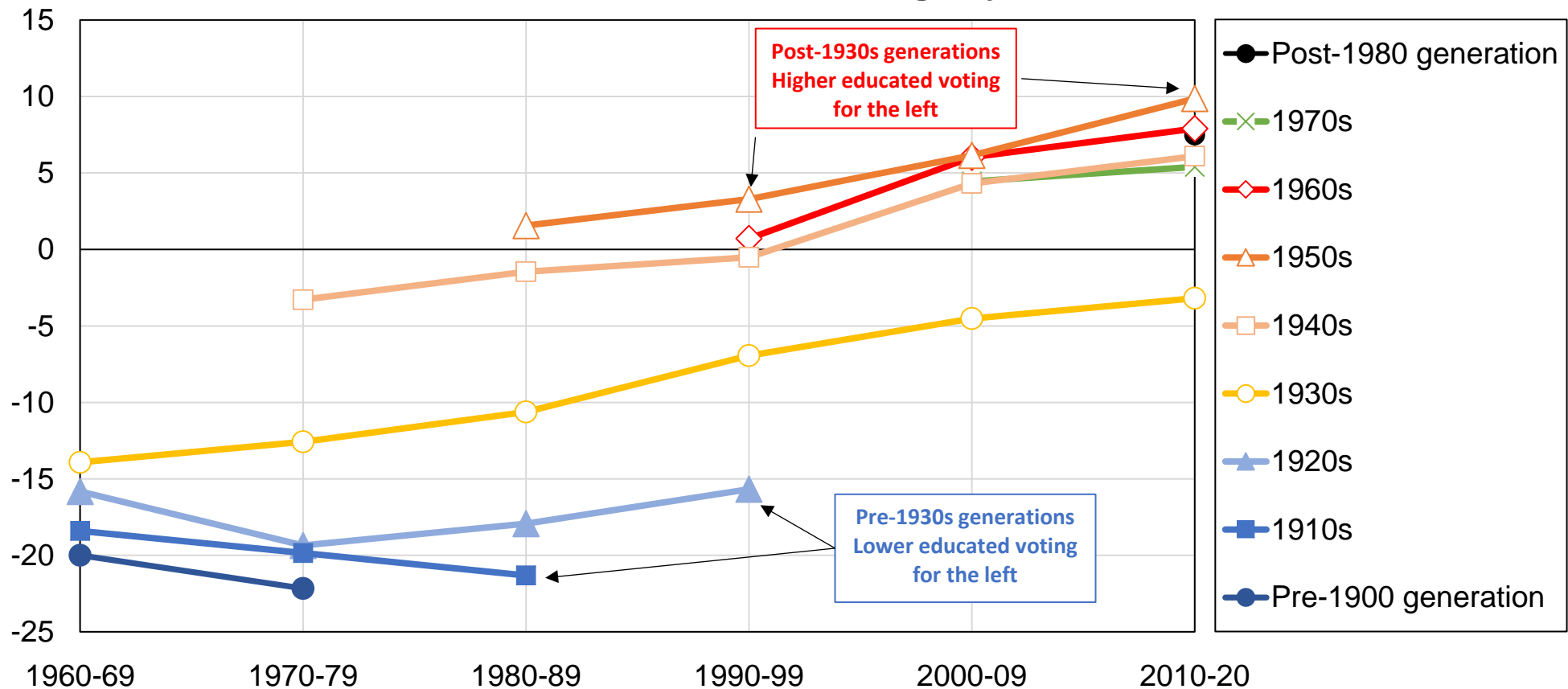
**Figure 8 - Generational cleavages**  
**Panel A. Generational cleavages and party system fragmentation**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the share of votes received by selected groups of parties in Western democracies by age in the last election available. Green parties and "New left" parties (Die Linke, Podemos, France Insoumise, Bloco de Esquerda, Norwegian Socialist Left Party) make much higher scores among the youth than among older generations. By contrast, there is no clear age profile in the case of far-right or anti-immigration parties. 20 corresponds to voters aged 20 or younger; 70 corresponds to voters 70 or older.

**Figure 8 - Generational cleavages**  
**Panel B. The educational cleavage by birth cohort**

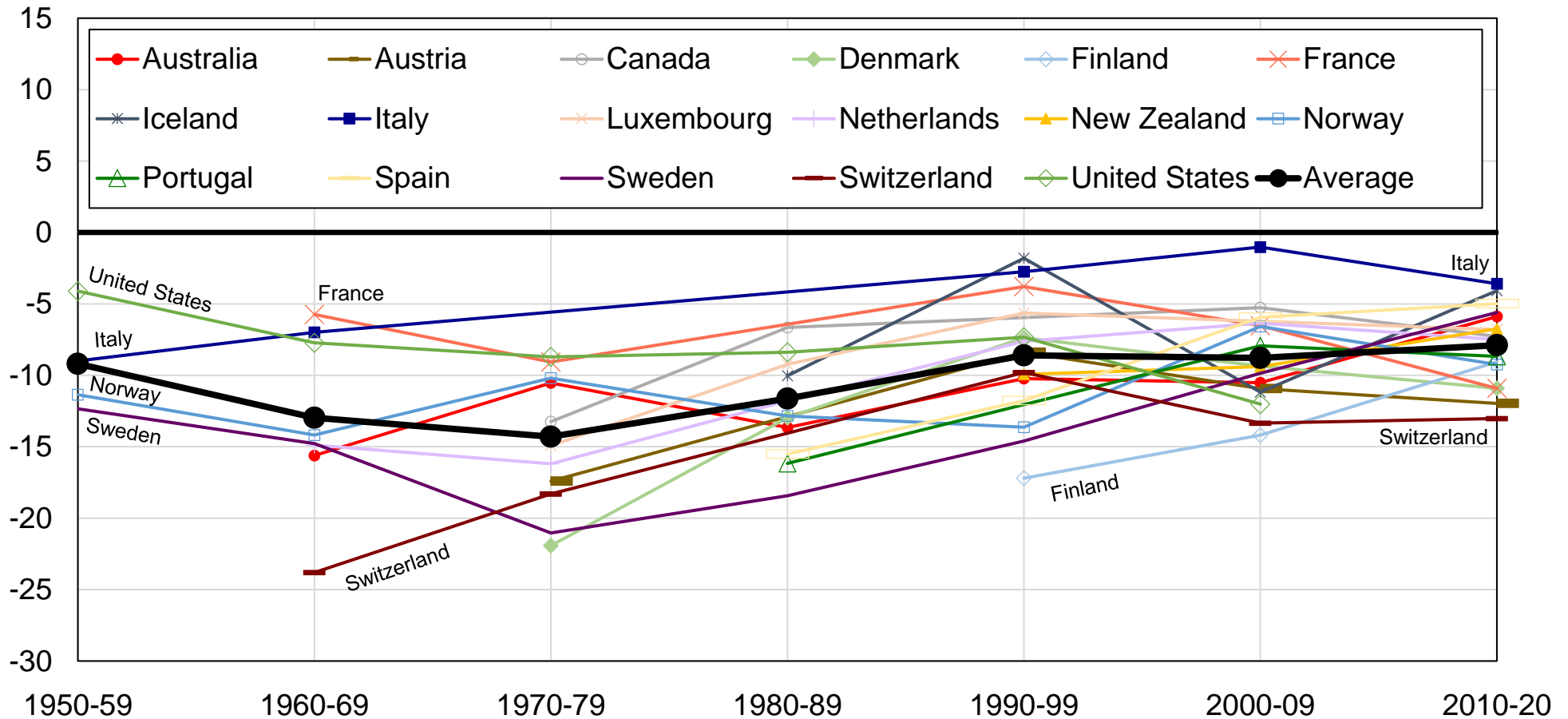


**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties within specific cohorts. Between the 1960s and the 1990s, lower-educated voters born in the early decades of the twentieth century remained significantly more likely to vote for these parties than higher-educated voters born during the same period. In the last decade, on the contrary, young lower-educated voters were significantly less likely to vote for these parties than young higher-educated voters. Figures correspond to ten-year averages for Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the US.



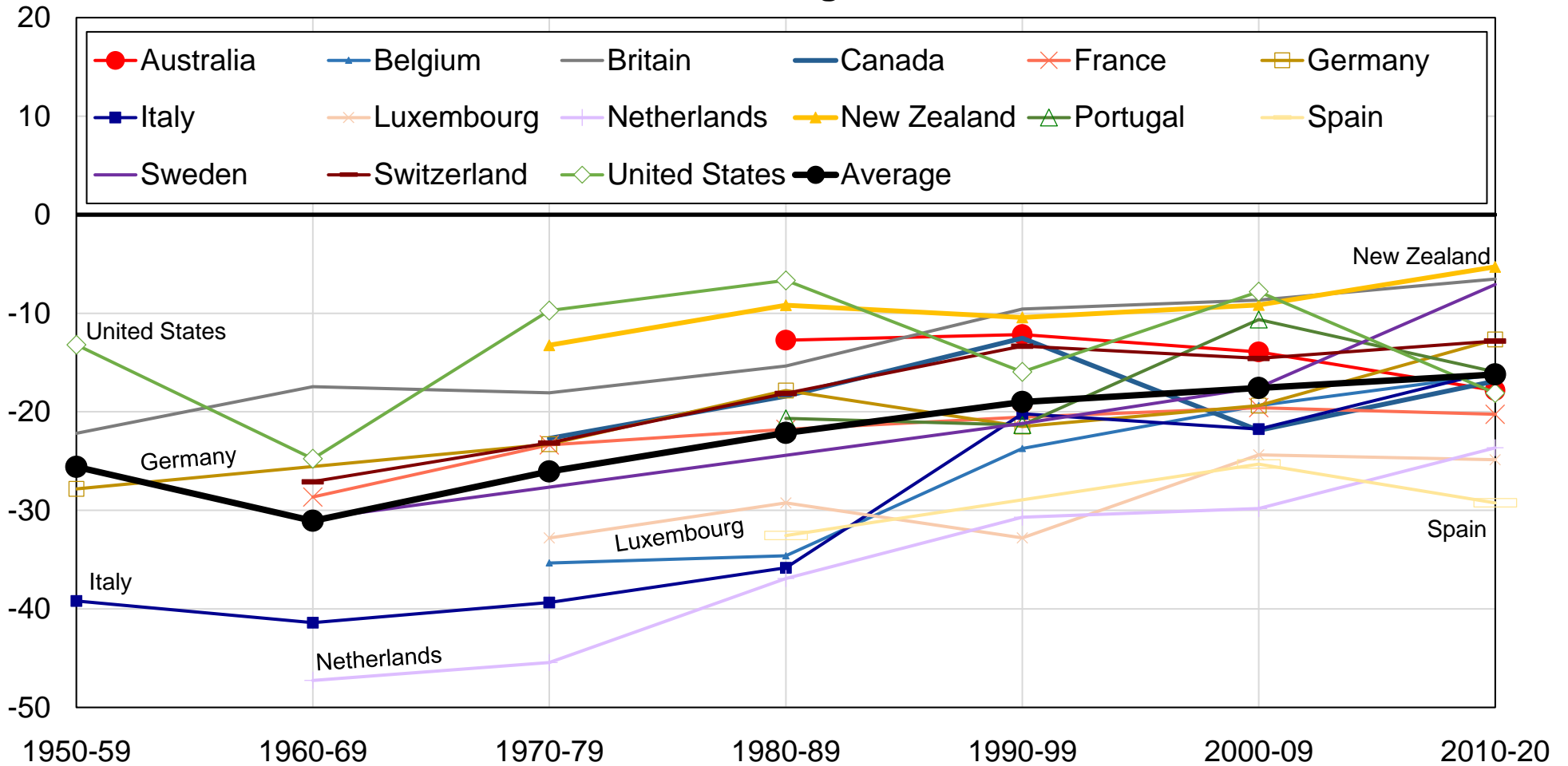
**Figure 9 - Religious and rural-urban cleavages**  
**Panel A. The rural-urban divide**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure displays the difference between the share of rural areas and the share of urban areas voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties. In all countries, rural areas have remained significantly less likely to vote for these parties than cities, with no clear trend over time. Estimates control for income, education, age, gender, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

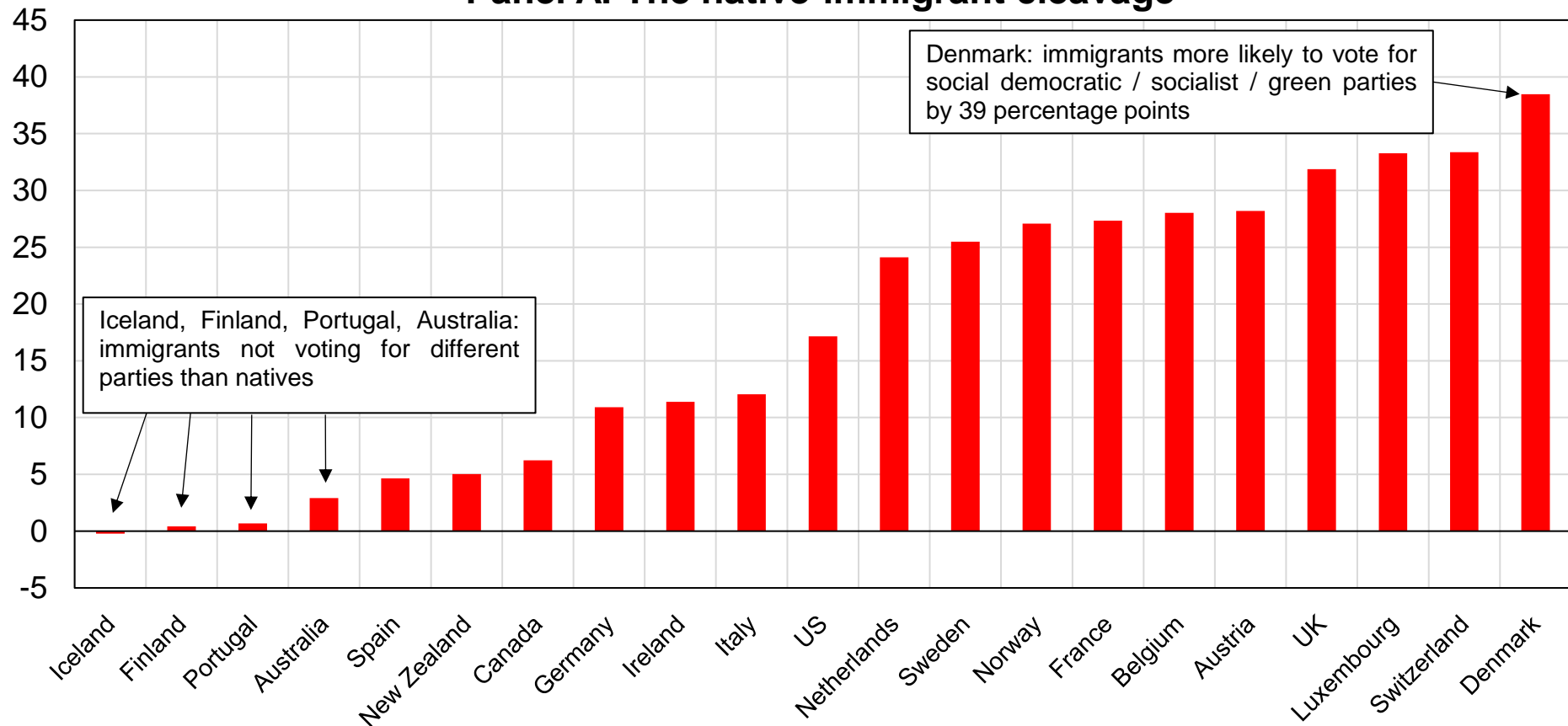
**Figure 9 - Religious and rural-urban cleavages**  
**Panel B. The religious divide**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure displays the difference between the share of Catholics (or Catholics and Protestants in mixed countries) declaring going to church at least once a year and the share of other voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties. In all countries, religious voters have remained significantly less likely to vote for these parties than other voters.

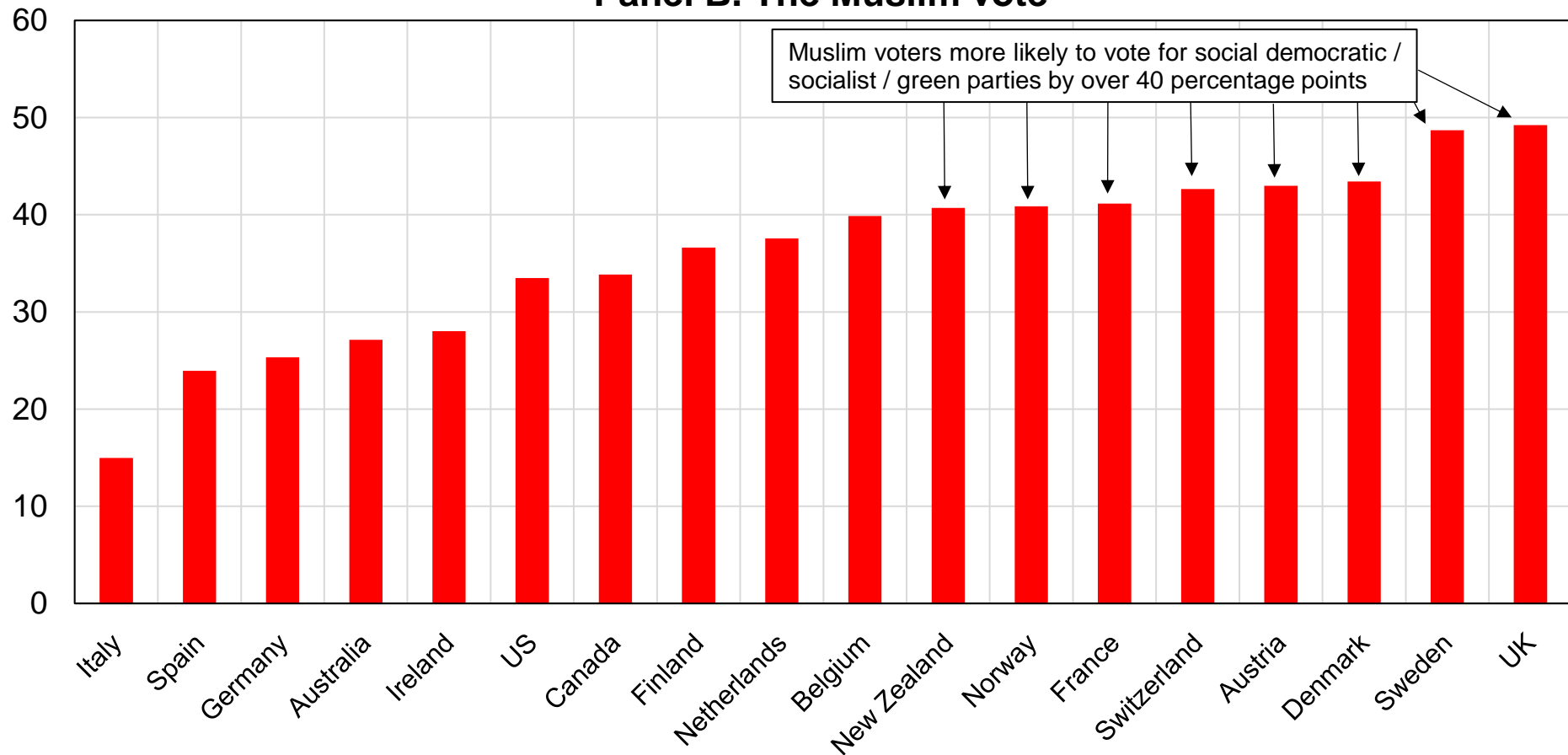
**Figure 10 - The nativist cleavage**  
**Panel A. The native-immigrant cleavage**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and the European Social Survey for Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of voters born in non-Western countries (all countries excluding Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States) and the share of natives (voters born in the country considered) voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties over the 2010-2020 period. In nearly all Western countries, immigrants are much more likely to vote for these parties than natives. US and Iceland figures include voters born in Western countries given lack of data on exact country of origin. Excludes Fianna Fáil in Ireland.

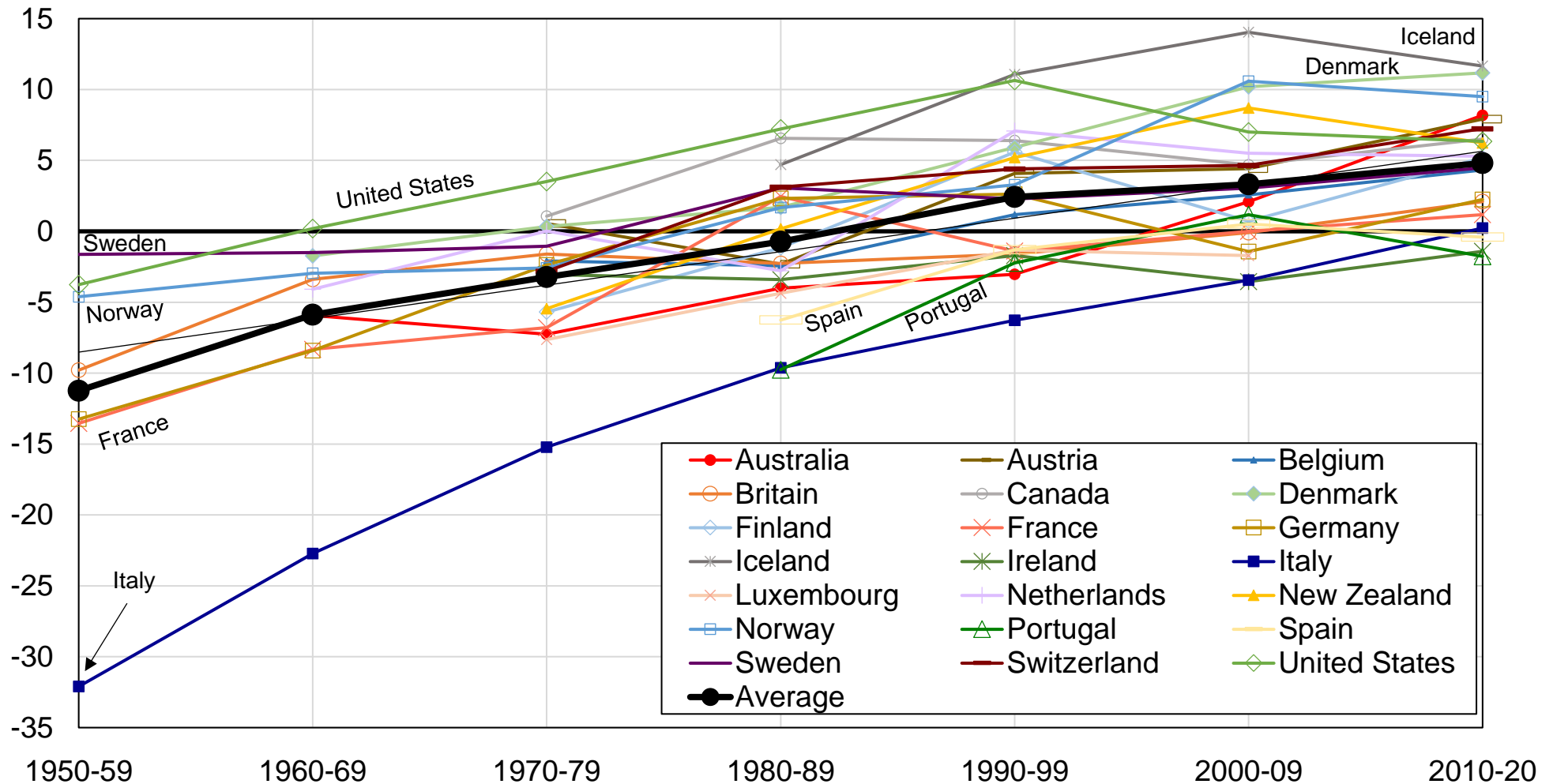
**Figure 10 - The nativist cleavage**  
**Panel B. The Muslim vote**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and the European Social Survey for Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of Muslim voters and the share of non-Muslims voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties over the 2010-2020 period. In all Western countries, Muslims are substantially more likely to vote for these parties than non-Muslims. This cleavage is stronger in countries with strong far-right parties (e.g. Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, France). Excludes Fianna Fáil in Ireland.

**Figure 11 - The reversal of the gender cleavage**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure displays the difference between the share of women and the share of men voting for democratic / labor / socialist / social democratic / socialist / green parties in Western democracies. In the majority of countries, women have gradually shifted from being significantly more conservative than men in the 1950s-1960s to being significantly more left-wing in the 2000s-2010s.

**Brahmin Left versus Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies, 1948-2020\***

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May 5, 2021

**APPENDIX**

This appendix supplements our paper “Brahmin Left versus Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies, 1948-2020”. It contains additional methodological details, as well as supplementary figures and tables.

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This appendix supplements our paper “Brahmin Left versus Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in Western Democracies, 1948-2020”. Appendix A presents the methodology used to derive quantile groups from discrete categories. Appendix B contains supplementary figures and tables.

*Appendix A. Estimation of quantile groups from discrete categories*

One of the contribution of this paper is to provide data on the vote share received by specific parties and coalitions by income and education groups, decomposing for instance the population into its poorest or least educated half (the bottom 50%), the next 40% (the middle 40%), and the highest decile (the top 10%). Such groups are key to track political cleavages over time and compare them across countries. The problem is that existing surveys do not provide continuous values for income or education: these variables are most often coded in discrete categories (educational levels in the case of education, income brackets in the case of income).

To partially overcome this issue, we introduce a simple reweighing method, which exploits the distribution of individuals in each bracket or category to approximate quantiles. Consider for example the 2015 Canadian Election Study, which contains an income variable coded in eighteen brackets (see table 1). One is interested in computing the proportion of individuals belonging to the lowest income decile voting for the New Democratic Party  $\bar{y}_{\{d=1\}}$ , where  $y$  is a binary variable taking 1 if the respondent voted for the NDP and 0 otherwise, and where  $d$  refers to the income decile to which the respondents belong. Unfortunately, this is not directly possible with this income variable since only 5% of individuals belong to the first income bracket ( $b = 1$ ), and 15.5% of them belong to the lowest two brackets ( $b \in [1,2]$ ). If support for the NDP decreases linearly with income, then  $\bar{y}_{\{b=1\}}$  will strongly overestimate  $\bar{y}_{\{d=1\}}$ , while  $\bar{y}_{\{b=2\}}$  will strongly underestimate it since we are looking at individuals who are on average too poor in the first case and too rich in the second. However, it is easy to see that since individuals within the second bracket range from quantiles 0.05 to 0.155, this means that  $\frac{0.05}{0.155-0.05} \approx 48\%$  of them belong to the bottom 10%, while 52% of them belong to the rest of the population, assuming for simplicity that individuals within brackets are uniformly distributed.

**Table 1 - Reweighting categories to approximate quantiles: example for income brackets in Canada, 2015**

Bracket number	Frequency range	Decile-specific reweighting factor												
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
1	0.000 - 0.050	1												
2	0.050 - 0.155	.48	.52											
3	0.155 - 0.201		.97	.03										
4	0.201 - 0.253			1										
5	0.253 - 0.309			.84	.16									
6	0.309 - 0.355				1									
7	0.355 - 0.478				.36	.64								
8	0.478 - 0.529					.43	.57							
9	0.529 - 0.554						1							
10	0.554 - 0.599						1							
11	0.599 - 0.652						.02	.98						
12	0.652 - 0.734							.59	.41					
13	0.734 - 0.767								1					
14	0.767 - 0.807								.82	.18				
15	0.807 - 0.876									1				
16	0.876 - 0.902									.92	.08			
17	0.902 - 0.973										1			
18	0.973 - 1.000											1		

*Note:* author's computations based on the 2015 Canadian Election Study. *Interpretation:* individuals belonging to the second income bracket represent 10% of the population and are located above the 5% poorest individuals, but within the 15.5% poorest. Assuming that individuals' incomes are uniformly distributed within this income bracket, this implies that 48% of them belong to bottom 10% earners and 52% of them are in the second income decile. To approximate the mean of a variable  $y$  for individuals within the first decile of income, one can therefore give a weight of 1 to those in the first bracket, a weight of 0.48 to those in the second bracket, and compute the weighed mean of  $y$  over these individuals.

Therefore, a reasonable approximation of the vote share received by the NDP among bottom 10% earners is a weighed average of vote shares in the two brackets:

$$\bar{y}_{\{d=1\}} = \frac{1 \times \bar{y}_{\{b=1\}} + 0.48 \times \bar{y}_{\{b=2\}}}{1 + 0.48}$$

This estimator is consistent, assuming that the average value taken by the dependent variable is constant within brackets. In practice, however, it does make sense to believe that the vote shares vary also within brackets in the same direction as observed between them. Therefore, this approximation should be considered as a lower bound of the true effect. Still, this method



clearly does much better than computing deciles or quintiles directly from brackets – which could in fact not be quantile groups given that frequencies would necessarily be imbalanced.

**Figure 1 - From brackets to deciles: vote for the New Democratic Party by income group in Canada, 2015**

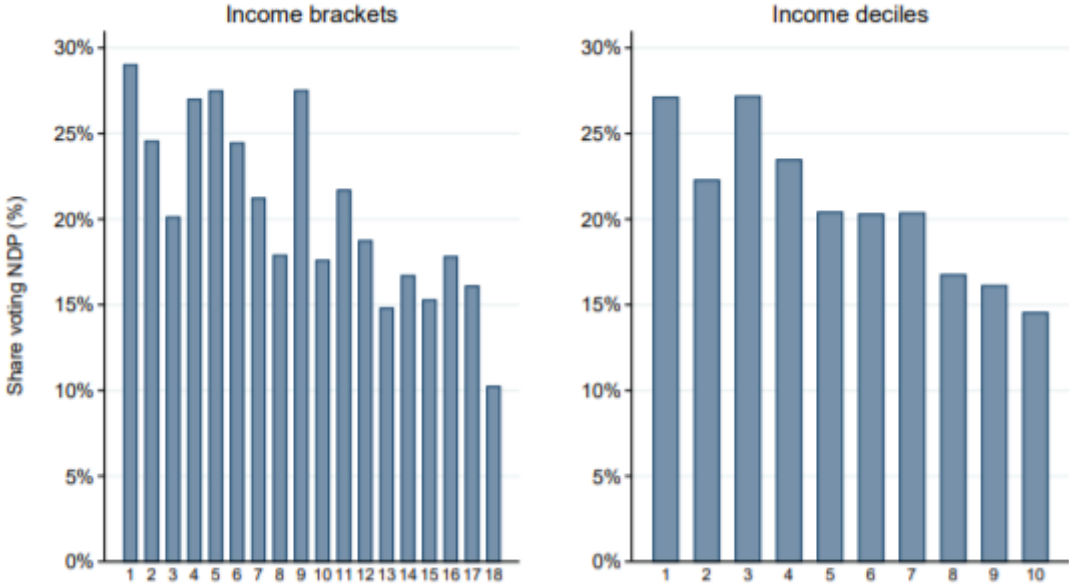


Figure 1 shows the results obtained when computing vote shares for the New Democratic Party in the 2015 Canadian national election. Unsurprisingly, the two pictures look very similar, since computing vote shares by decile amounts to computing weighed averages across income brackets.

Another interesting aspect of this method is that it enables us to control for structural changes not only in income, but also in other ordered variables such as education, wealth or even rural-urban scales. If university graduates were originally 5% in the 1960s and increased up to 30% in the 2010s, for instance, then one can exploit detailed educational categories to approximate “top 10% educated voters”. In the 1960s, this category is composed of both university graduates and some secondary educated voters; in the 2010s, it gives more weight to individuals with masters or PhDs. This is what we do throughout the paper.

Finally, one issue is that ‘splitting’ brackets into deciles implies that a single individual may belong to different quantile groups: in the example above, individuals in bracket 2 belong both to the first and the second deciles. While this is not problematic when computing averages, it makes regression models impossible to solve: without changing the dataset, one cannot compare the vote shares of the first and second decile with control variables.

To solve this problem, we expand the entire dataset as many times as the number of quantile groups required. In the case of deciles, for instance, the procedure consists in duplicating all observations ten times. Then, one simply needs to attribute the corresponding weights to duplicated individuals: individuals belonging to bracket 2 see their sample weight multiplied by 0.48 in their first observation, 0.52 in the second time they appear in the dataset, and 0 in all other instances. Since this process only reweighs individuals, it leaves the effect of other explanatory variables perfectly unchanged.

*Appendix B. Supplementary figures and tables*

**Table A1 - Main classification of political parties**

	<b>Democratic / Labor / Socialist / Social Democratic / Green parties</b>
Australia	Labor Party, Greens
Austria	Social Democratic Party, KPÖ, Greens, NEOS, Other left
Belgium	Socialist Party, Socialist Party Differently, Ecolo, Groen, PTB
Canada	Liberal Party, Green Party, New Democratic Party
Denmark	Social Democrats, SF, Social Liberal Party, Red-Green Alliance
Finland	Social Democratic Party, Green League, Left Alliance, Other left
France	Socialist Party, Communist Party, Other left
Germany	Social Democratic Party, Alliance 90/The Greens, Die Linke
Iceland	Left-Green Movement, Social Democratic Alliance, People's Party
Ireland	Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin, Other left
Italy	Democratic Party, Free and Equal, Other left
Luxembourg	Socialist Workers' Party, Greens, Other left
Netherlands	Labour Party, Socialist Party, D66, Greens, Other left
New Zealand	Labour Party, Greens, Other left
Norway	Labour Party, Green Party, Socialist Left Party
Portugal	Socialist Party, Left Bloc, Unitary Democratic Coalition
Spain	Socialist Workers' Party, Podemos, United Left, Other left
Sweden	Social Democratic Party, Left Party, Green Party
Switzerland	Social Democrats, Party of Labour, Green Party, Green Liberal Party
United Kingdom	Labour Party
United States	Democratic Party

**Source:** authors' elaboration.

**Table A2 - Detailed classification of political parties**

Country	Party	Family
Australia	Labor Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Australia	Liberal Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Australia	Australian Greens	Greens
Australia	National Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Australia	Australian Democrats	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Australia	Palmer United Party	Anti-immigration
Australia	One Nation Party	Anti-immigration
Austria	Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Austria	Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ)	Anti-immigration
Austria	Greens	Greens
Austria	NEOS / Liberal Forum	Liberals / Social-liberals
Belgium	Christian People's Party (CVP)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Belgium	Belgian Socialist Party (PSB)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Belgium	Socialist Party (PS)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Belgium	New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)	Other
Belgium	Party for Freedom and Progress (PLP/PVV)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Belgium	Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats (VLD)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Belgium	Socialist Party (SP / sp.a)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Belgium	Reformist movement (MR)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Belgium	Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD&V)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Belgium	PL	Liberals / Social-liberals
Belgium	Christian Social Party (PSC)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Belgium	Liberal Reformist Party (PRL)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Belgium	Volksunie (VU)	Other
Belgium	Vlaams Blok	Anti-immigration
Belgium	Workers' Party of Belgium (PTB)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Belgium	Communist Party (PCB)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Canada	Liberal Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left

Canada	Conservative Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Canada	Canadian Alliance	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Canada	Reform Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Canada	New Democratic Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Canada	Bloc Québécois	Other
Canada	Social Credit Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Denmark	Social Democratic Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Denmark	Liberal Party of Denmark (Venstre)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Denmark	Conservative People's Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Denmark	Danish People's Party	Anti-immigration
Denmark	Progress Party	Anti-immigration
Denmark	Socialist People's Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Denmark	Danish Social-Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Finland	Social Democratic Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Finland	Agrarian Union	Other
Finland	Centre Party	Other
Finland	Finnish People's Democratic League	Communists
Finland	National Coalition Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Finland	True Finns	Anti-immigration
Finland	Left Alliance	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Finland	Greens	Greens
Finland	Finnish People's Party	Liberals / Social-liberals
Finland	Finnish Rural Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Finland	Swedish People's Party	Other
France	UDR/UNR	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
France	La République En Marche! (LRM)	Liberals / Social-liberals
France	Union for French Democracy (UDF) / Democratic Movement (MoDem)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
France	LR/UMP/RPR	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
France	Socialist Party (PS) / French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
France	Communist Party (PCF)	Communists
France	Popular Republican Movement (MRP) / Democratic Centre (CD)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
France	Reforming Movement (MR, 1973)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
France	Republican Party of Liberty - Conservatives	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
France	National Front (FN)	Anti-immigration

France	Progress and Modern Democracy	Other
France	Rally for the French People - Gaullists	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
France	La France Insoumise (FI) / Front de gauche (FDG)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
France	National Centre of Independents and Peasants (CNIP)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
France	Radical Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Germany	CDU/CSU	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Germany	Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Germany	Die Linke	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Germany	Free Democratic Party (FDP)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Germany	Alternative for Germany (AfD)	Anti-immigration
Germany	Greens	Greens
Germany	All-German Bloc (GB/BHE)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Iceland	Independence Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Iceland	Social Democratic Alliance	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Iceland	Progressive Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Iceland	United Socialist Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Iceland	People's Alliance	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Iceland	Social Democratic Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Iceland	Left-Green Movement	Greens
Iceland	Centre Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Iceland	Pirate Party	Other
Iceland	Reform Party	Liberals / Social-liberals
Iceland	Women's Alliance	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Iceland	People's Party	Other
Iceland	Liberal Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Iceland	National Preservation Party	Other
Iceland	Bright Future	Liberals / Social-liberals
Ireland	Fianna Fáil	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Ireland	Fine Gael	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Ireland	Labour Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Ireland	Sinn Féin	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Ireland	Progressive Democrats	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Italy	Christian Democracy (DC)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Italy	Olive Tree	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left

Italy	People of Freedom (PDL)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Italy	Five Star Movement (M5S)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	Italian Communist Party (PCI)	Communists
Italy	Democratic Party (PD)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	Forza Italia (FI)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Italy	Democratic Party of the Left (PDS)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	Democrats of the Left (DS) / Margherita / Ulivo	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	National Alliance (AN)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Italy	Popolars for Italy (PPI)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	Italian Socialist Party (PSI)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	Civic Choice	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Italy	Lega	Anti-immigration
Italy	Socialist Party of Italian Workers	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	Communist Refoundation Party (PRC)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Italy	Italian Social Movement (MSI, MSI-DN)	Anti-immigration
Luxembourg	Christian Social People's Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Luxembourg	Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Luxembourg	Democratic Party	Liberals / Social-liberals
Luxembourg	Democratic Group	Liberals / Social-liberals
Luxembourg	Patriotic and Democratic Group	Liberals / Social-liberals
Luxembourg	Action Committee	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Luxembourg	The Greens	Greens
Luxembourg	Communist Party of Luxembourg	Communists
Luxembourg	Green List Ecological Initiative	Greens
Luxembourg	Alternative Democratic Reform Party	Anti-immigration
Netherlands	Catholic People's Party (KVP)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Netherlands	Labour Party (PvdA)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Netherlands	Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Netherlands	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Netherlands	Pim Fortuyn List (LPF)	Anti-immigration
Netherlands	Party for Freedom (PVV)	Anti-immigration
Netherlands	Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Netherlands	Christian Historical Union (CHU)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats

Netherlands	Socialist Party (SP)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Netherlands	Democrats 66 (D66)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Netherlands	Communist Party of the Netherlands	Communists
Netherlands	PvdV	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Netherlands	GroenLinks (GL)	Greens
New Zealand	National Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
New Zealand	Labour Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
New Zealand	Alliance	Greens
New Zealand	Social Credit Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
New Zealand	New Zealand First	Anti-immigration
New Zealand	Green Party of Aotearoa	Greens
Norway	Labour Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Norway	Conservative Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Norway	Progress Party	Anti-immigration
Norway	Christian Democratic Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Norway	Centre Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Norway	Socialist Left Party / Socialist Electoral League	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Norway	Liberal Party	Liberals / Social-liberals
Portugal	Socialist Party (PS)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Portugal	Democratic Peoples' Party (PPD) / Social Democratic Party (PSD)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Portugal	United People Alliance (APU)	Greens
Portugal	PCTP/MRPP	Communists
Portugal	CDS / People's Party (PP)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Portugal	Unitary Democratic Coalition (CDU, PCP-PEV)	Greens
Portugal	Left Bloc (BE)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Spain	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Spain	People's Party (PP)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Spain	Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD)	Other
Spain	Popular Alliance - People's Democratic Party (AP-PDP)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Spain	VOX	Anti-immigration
Spain	Ciudadanos	Liberals / Social-liberals
Spain	Podemos	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Spain	Communist Party of Spain (PCE)	Communists
Spain	United Left (IU)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left



Spain	Democratic and Social Centre (CDS)	Other
Sweden	Swedish Social Democratic Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Sweden	Moderate/Right Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Sweden	Liberal People's Party	Liberals / Social-liberals
Sweden	Centre Party	Liberals / Social-liberals
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	Anti-immigration
Sweden	Left Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Sweden	Christian Democrats	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Sweden	New Democracy	Anti-immigration
Sweden	Green Party	Greens
Sweden	Left Party/Communists	Communists
Switzerland	Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (SPS/PSS)	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
Switzerland	Free Democratic Party of Switzerland (FDP/PLR)	Liberals / Social-liberals
Switzerland	Christian Democratic People's Party of Switzerland (CVP/PDC)	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
Switzerland	Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC)	Anti-immigration
Switzerland	Green Party of Switzerland (GPS/PES)	Greens
Switzerland	Green Liberal Party of Switzerland (GLP/PVL)	Greens
USA	Democratic Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
USA	Republican Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
United Kingdom	Conservative Party	Conservatives / Christian Democrats
United Kingdom	Labour Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
United Kingdom	Liberal Democrats	Liberals / Social-liberals
United Kingdom	Social Democratic Party	Social Democrats / Socialists / Other left
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party (UKIP)	Anti-immigration

**Source:** authors' elaboration.

**Note:** the table provides information on the categorization of political parties by family in the survey dataset (see Figure 4 on election results). Excludes small parties (average vote share lower than 5% across elections in which the party participated).

**Table A3 - Data sources**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Election</b>	<b>Source</b>
Australia	1966	International Social Mobility and Politics File (Franklin et al. 1992)
Australia	1972	International Social Mobility and Politics File (Franklin et al. 1992)
Australia	1977	International Social Mobility and Politics File (Franklin et al. 1992)
Australia	1983	International Social Mobility and Politics File (Franklin et al. 1992)
Australia	1984	International Social Mobility and Politics File (Franklin et al. 1992)
Australia	1987	Australian Election Study
Australia	1990	Australian Election Study
Australia	1993	Australian Election Study
Australia	1996	Australian Election Study
Australia	1998	Australian Election Study
Australia	2001	Australian Election Study
Australia	2004	Australian Election Study
Australia	2007	Australian Election Study
Australia	2010	Australian Election Study
Australia	2013	Australian Election Study
Australia	2016	Australian Election Study
Australia	2019	Australian Election Study
Austria	1971	International Social Mobility and Politics File (Franklin et al. 1992)
Austria	1983	International Social Mobility and Politics File (Franklin et al. 1992)
Austria	1986	International Social Mobility and Politics File (Franklin et al. 1992)
Austria	1994	Eurobarometers
Austria	1995	Eurobarometers
Austria	1999	Eurobarometers
Austria	2002	European Social Survey
Austria	2006	European Social Survey
Austria	2013	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
Austria	2017	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
Belgium	1971	Eurobarometers
Belgium	1974	Eurobarometers
Belgium	1977	Eurobarometers
Belgium	1978	Eurobarometers
Belgium	1981	Eurobarometers
Belgium	1985	Eurobarometers
Belgium	1987	Eurobarometers
Belgium	1991	Belgium General Election Study
Belgium	1995	Belgium General Election Study
Belgium	1999	Belgium General Election Study
Belgium	2003	European Social Survey
Belgium	2007	European Social Survey
Belgium	2010	European Social Survey
Belgium	2014	European Social Survey
Canada	1963	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	1965	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	1968	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	1974	Canadian Election Studies

Canada	1979	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	1980	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	1984	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	1988	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	1993	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	1997	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	2000	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	2004	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	2006	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	2008	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	2011	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	2015	Canadian Election Studies
Canada	2019	Canadian Election Studies
Denmark	1960	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1964	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1966	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1968	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1971	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1973	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1975	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1977	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1979	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1981	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1984	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1987	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1988	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1990	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1994	Danish Election Study
Denmark	1998	Danish Election Study
Denmark	2001	Danish Election Study
Denmark	2005	Danish Election Study
Denmark	2007	Danish Election Study
Denmark	2011	Danish Election Study
Denmark	2015	Danish Election Study
Finland	1972	Finnish Voter Barometers
Finland	1975	Finnish Voter Barometers
Finland	1979	Finnish Voter Barometers
Finland	1983	Finnish Voter Barometers
Finland	1987	Finnish Voter Barometers
Finland	1995	Finnish Voter Barometers
Finland	1999	Finnish Voter Barometers
Finland	2003	Finnish Voter Barometers
Finland	2007	Finnish National Election Studies
Finland	2011	Finnish National Election Studies
Finland	2015	Finnish National Election Studies
France	1956	French Election Studies
France	1958	French Election Studies
France	1962	French Election Studies
France	1965	French Election Studies
France	1967	French Election Studies

France	1973	French Election Studies
France	1974	French Election Studies
France	1978	French Election Studies
France	1986	French Election Studies
France	1988	French Election Studies
France	1993	French Election Studies
France	1995	French Election Studies
France	1997	French Election Studies
France	2002	French Election Studies
France	2007	French Election Studies
France	2012	French Election Studies
France	2017	French election studies
Germany	1949	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1953	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1957	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1961	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1965	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1969	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1972	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1976	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1980	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1983	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1987	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1990	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1994	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	1998	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	2002	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	2005	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	2009	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	2013	German Federal Election Studies
Germany	2017	German Federal Election Studies
Iceland	1978	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	1983	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	1987	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	1991	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	1995	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	1999	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	2003	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	2007	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	2009	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	2013	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	2016	Icelandic National Election Studies
Iceland	2017	Icelandic National Election Studies
Ireland	1973	Eurobarometers
Ireland	1977	Eurobarometers
Ireland	1981	Eurobarometers
Ireland	1982	Eurobarometers
Ireland	1987	Eurobarometers
Ireland	1989	Eurobarometers
Ireland	1992	Eurobarometers

Ireland	1997	Eurobarometers
Ireland	2002	European Social Survey
Ireland	2007	European Social Survey
Ireland	2011	European Social Survey
Ireland	2016	European Social Survey
Ireland	2020	UCD Online Election Poll
Italy	1953	Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
Italy	1958	Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
Italy	1968	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	1972	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	1983	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	1987	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	1992	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	1994	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	1996	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	2001	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	2006	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
Italy	2008	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	2013	Italian National Election Studies
Italy	2018	Italian National Election Studies
Luxembourg	1974	Eurobarometers
Luxembourg	1979	Eurobarometers
Luxembourg	1984	Eurobarometers
Luxembourg	1989	Eurobarometers
Luxembourg	1994	Eurobarometers
Luxembourg	1999	Eurobarometers
Luxembourg	2004	European Social Survey
Luxembourg	2013	European Election Studies (EES)
Luxembourg	2018	European Election Studies (EES)
Netherlands	1967	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1971	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1972	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1977	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1981	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1982	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1986	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1989	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1994	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	1998	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	2002	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	2006	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	2010	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	2012	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
Netherlands	2017	Dutch Parliamentary Election Studies
New Zealand	1972	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	1975	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	1978	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	1981	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	1984	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	1987	New Zealand Election Studies

New Zealand	1990	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	1993	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	1996	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	1999	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	2002	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	2005	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	2008	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	2011	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	2014	New Zealand Election Studies
New Zealand	2017	New Zealand Election Studies
Norway	1957	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1965	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1969	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1973	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1977	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1981	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1985	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1989	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1993	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	1997	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	2001	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	2005	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	2009	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	2013	Norwegian National Election Studies
Norway	2017	Norwegian National Election Studies
Portugal	1983	ESEO
Portugal	1985	ESEO
Portugal	1987	ESEO
Portugal	1991	ESEO
Portugal	1995	European Election Studies (EES)
Portugal	2002	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
Portugal	2005	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
Portugal	2009	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
Portugal	2015	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
Portugal	2019	Portuguese Election Study
Spain	1982	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	1986	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	1989	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	1993	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	1996	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	2000	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	2004	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	2008	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	2011	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	2015	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	2016	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	2019	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Spain	2020	Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas
Sweden	1956	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1958	Swedish National Election Studies

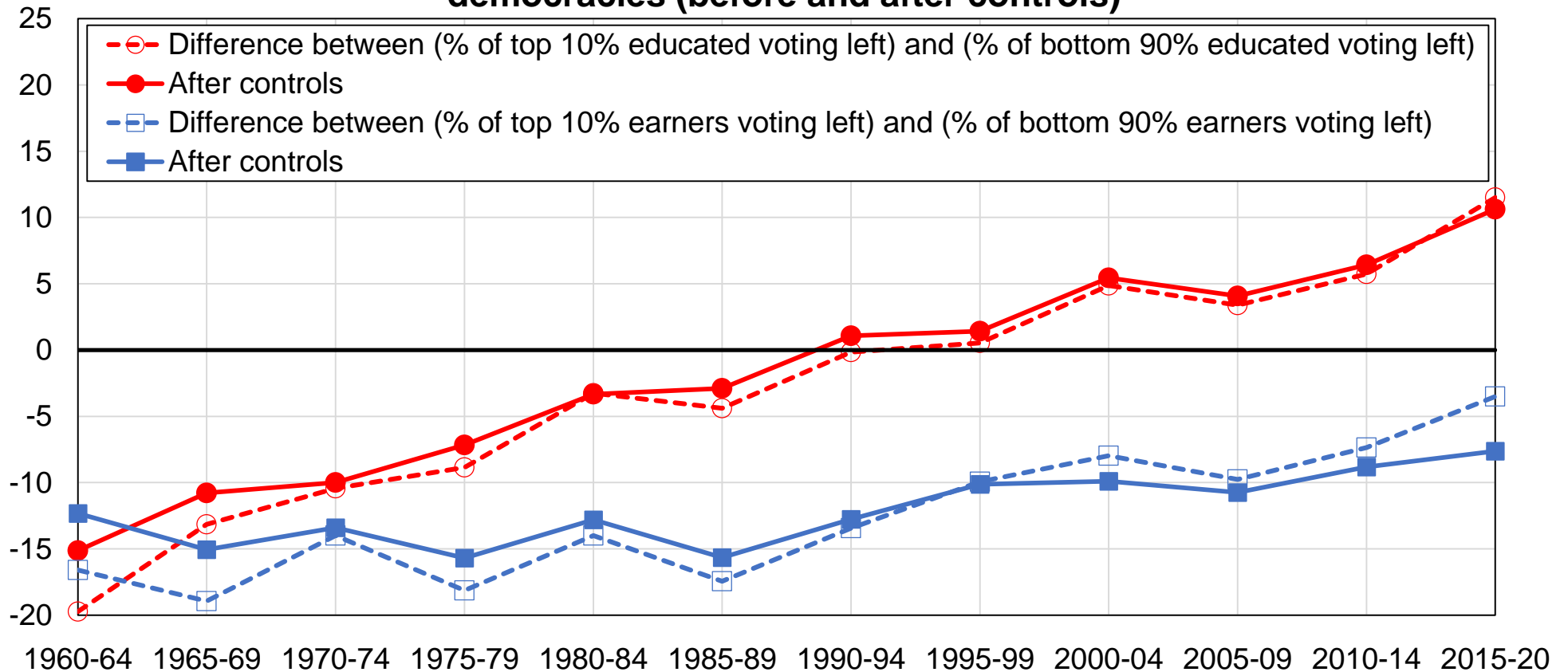
Sweden	1960	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1964	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1968	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1970	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1973	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1976	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1979	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1982	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1985	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1988	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1991	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1994	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	1998	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	2002	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	2006	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	2010	Swedish National Election Studies
Sweden	2014	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)
Switzerland	1967	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	1971	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	1975	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	1979	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	1983	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	1987	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	1991	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	1995	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	1999	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	2003	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	2007	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	2011	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	2015	Swiss National Election Studies
Switzerland	2019	Swiss National Election Studies
UK	1955	British Election Studies
UK	1959	British Election Studies
UK	1964	British Election Studies
UK	1966	British Election Studies
UK	1970	British Election Studies
UK	1974	British Election Studies
UK	1979	British Election Studies
UK	1983	British Election Studies
UK	1987	British Election Studies
UK	1992	British Election Studies
UK	1997	British Election Studies
UK	2001	British Election Studies
UK	2005	British Election Studies
UK	2010	British Election Studies
UK	2015	British Election Studies
UK	2017	British Election Studies
US	1948	American National Election Studies
US	1952	American National Election Studies
US	1956	American National Election Studies

US	1960	American National Election Studies
US	1964	American National Election Studies
US	1968	American National Election Studies
US	1972	American National Election Studies
US	1976	American National Election Studies
US	1980	American National Election Studies
US	1984	American National Election Studies
US	1988	American National Election Studies
US	1992	American National Election Studies
US	1996	American National Election Studies
US	2000	American National Election Studies
US	2004	American National Election Studies
US	2008	American National Election Studies
US	2012	American National Election Studies
US	2016	American National Election Studies
US	2020	American National Election Studies

**Source:** authors' elaboration.



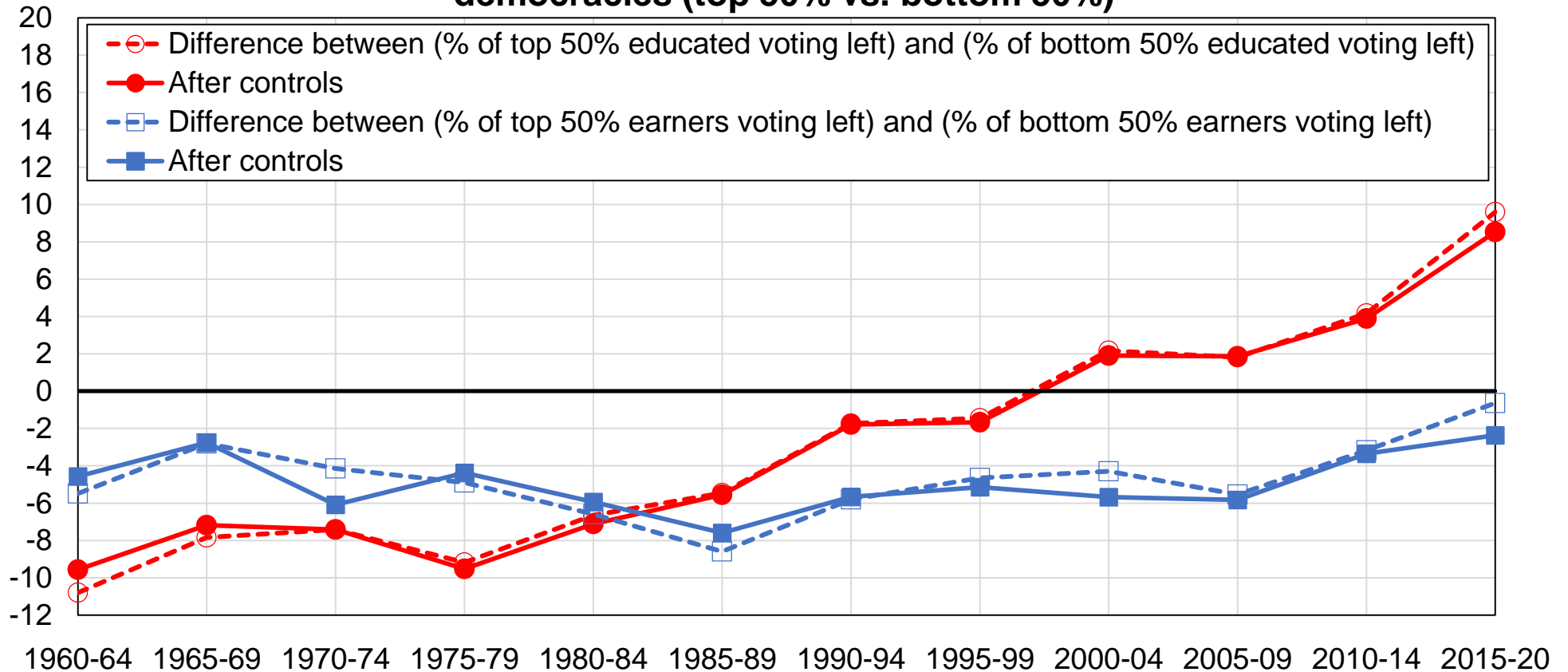
**Figure A1 - The emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies (before and after controls)**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** in the 1960s, both higher-educated and high-income voters were less likely to vote for left-wing parties than lower-educated and low-income voters by more than 10 percentage points. The left vote has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rising to a "multiple-elite" party system. Figures correspond to five-year averages for Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the US. The estimates are presented before and after controlling for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

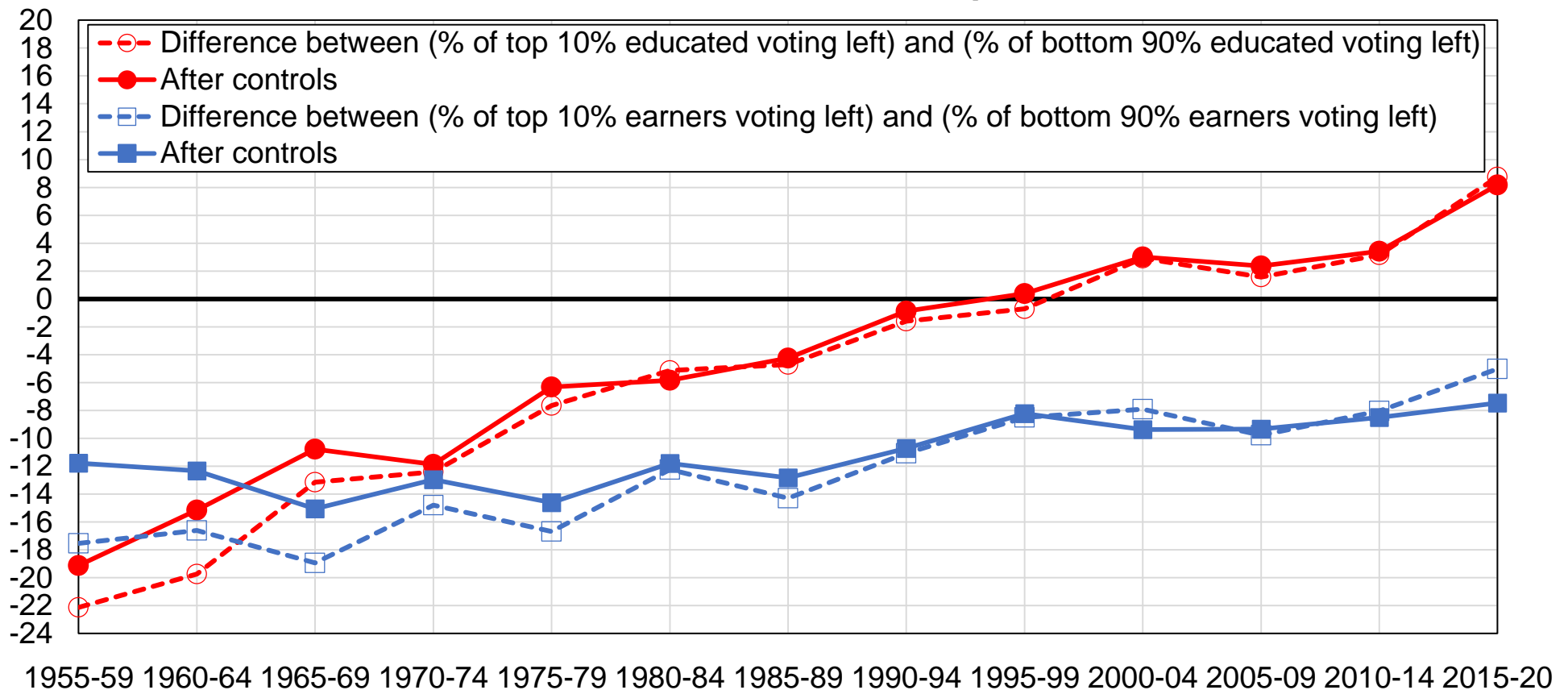
**Figure A2 - The emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies (top 50% vs. bottom 50%)**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** in the 1960s, both higher-educated and high-income voters were less likely to vote for left-wing parties than lower-educated and low-income voters. The left vote has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rising to a "multiple-elite" party system. Figures correspond to five-year averages for Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the US. The estimates are presented before and after controlling for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

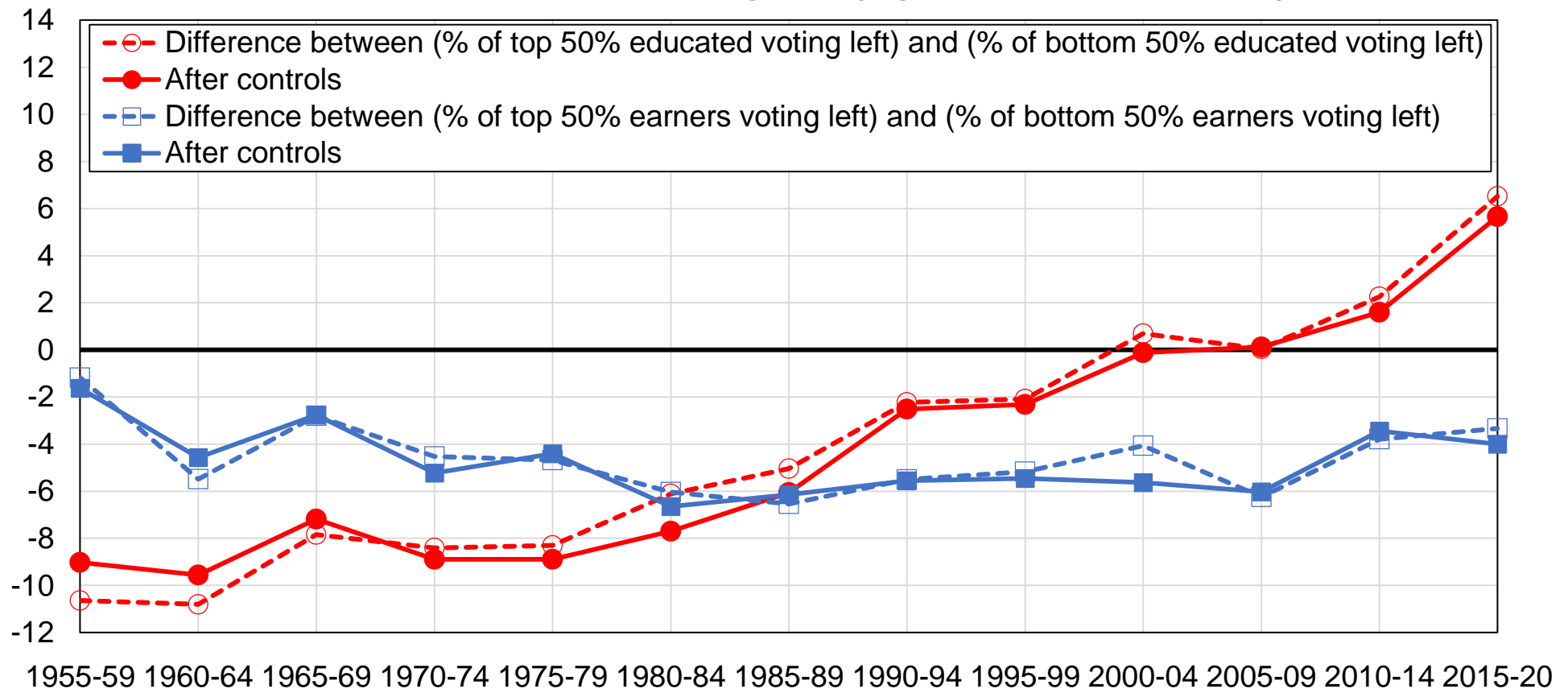
**Figure A3 - The emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies, unbalanced panel**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** in the 1960s, both higher-educated and high-income voters were less likely to vote for left-wing parties than lower-educated and low-income voters by more than 10 percentage points. The left vote has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rising to a "multiple-elite" party system. Figures correspond to five-year averages over all countries available for a given time period (unbalanced panel of all 25 Western democracies). The estimates are presented before and after controlling for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

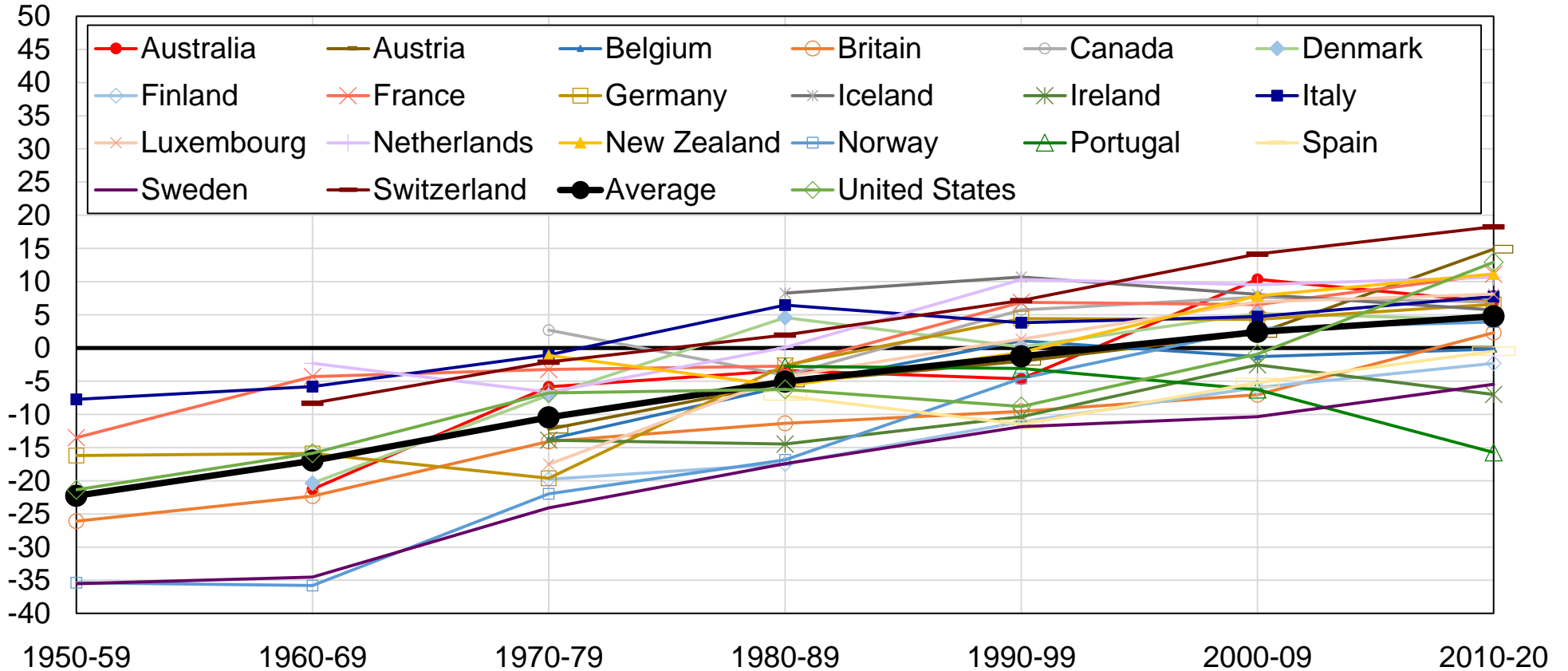
**Figure A4 - The emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies, unbalanced panel (top 50% vs. bottom 50%)**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** in the 1960s, both higher-educated and high-income voters were less likely to vote for left-wing parties than lower-educated and low-income voters. The left vote has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rise to a "multiple-elite" party system. Figures correspond to five-year averages over all countries available for a given time period (unbalanced panel of all 25 Western democracies). The estimates are presented before and after controlling for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

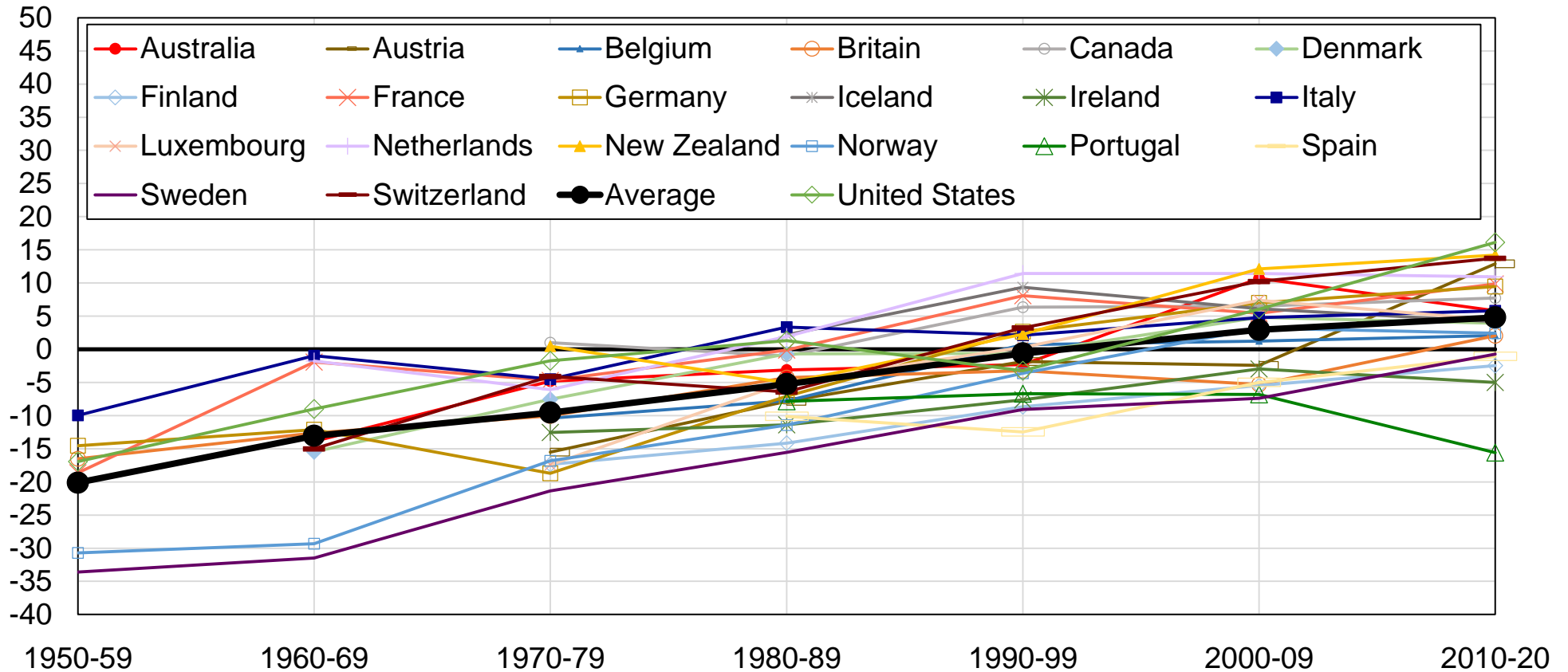
**Figure A5 - The reversal of educational divides, all Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western countries. In nearly all countries, higher-educated voters used to be significantly more likely to vote for right-wing parties and have gradually become more likely to vote for left-wing parties.

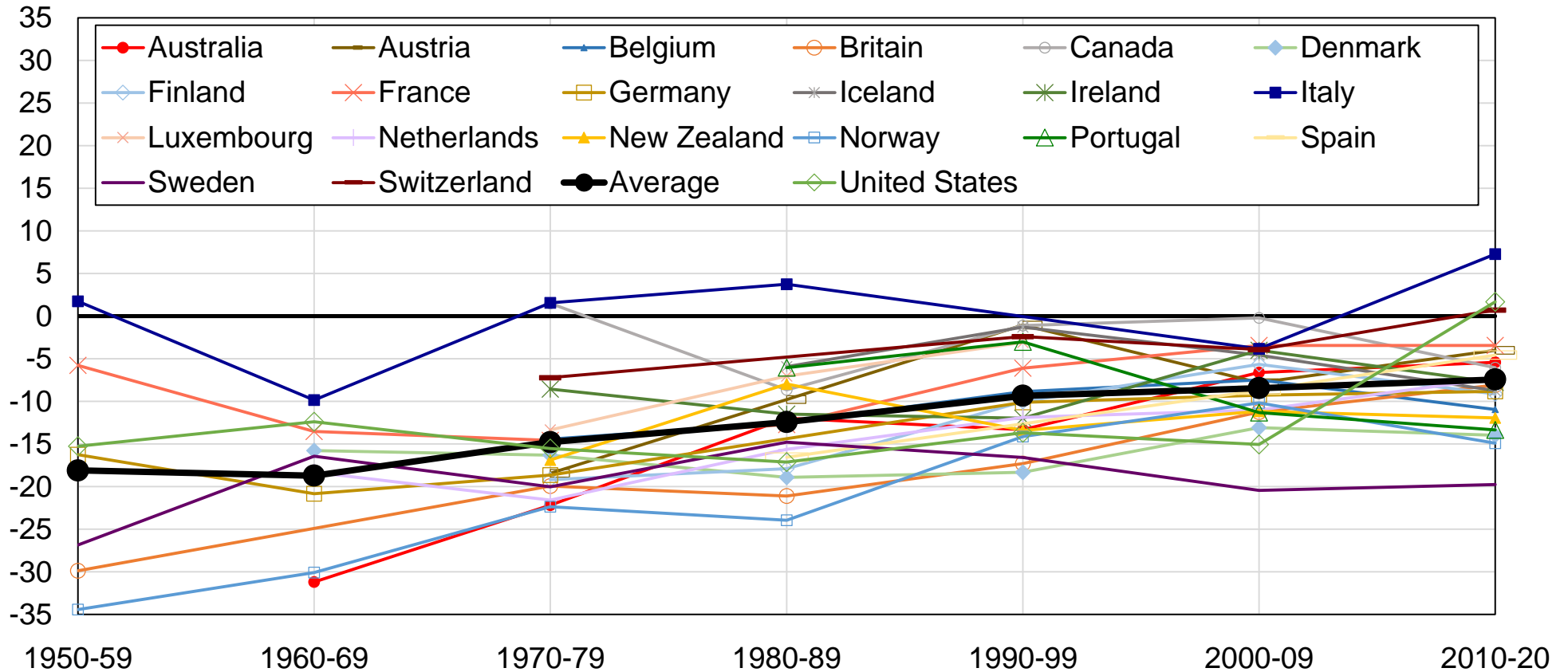
**Figure A6 - The reversal of educational divides, all Western democracies, after controls**



Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western countries, after controlling for income, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available). In nearly all countries, higher-educated voters used to be significantly more likely to vote for right-wing parties and have gradually become more likely to vote for left-wing parties.

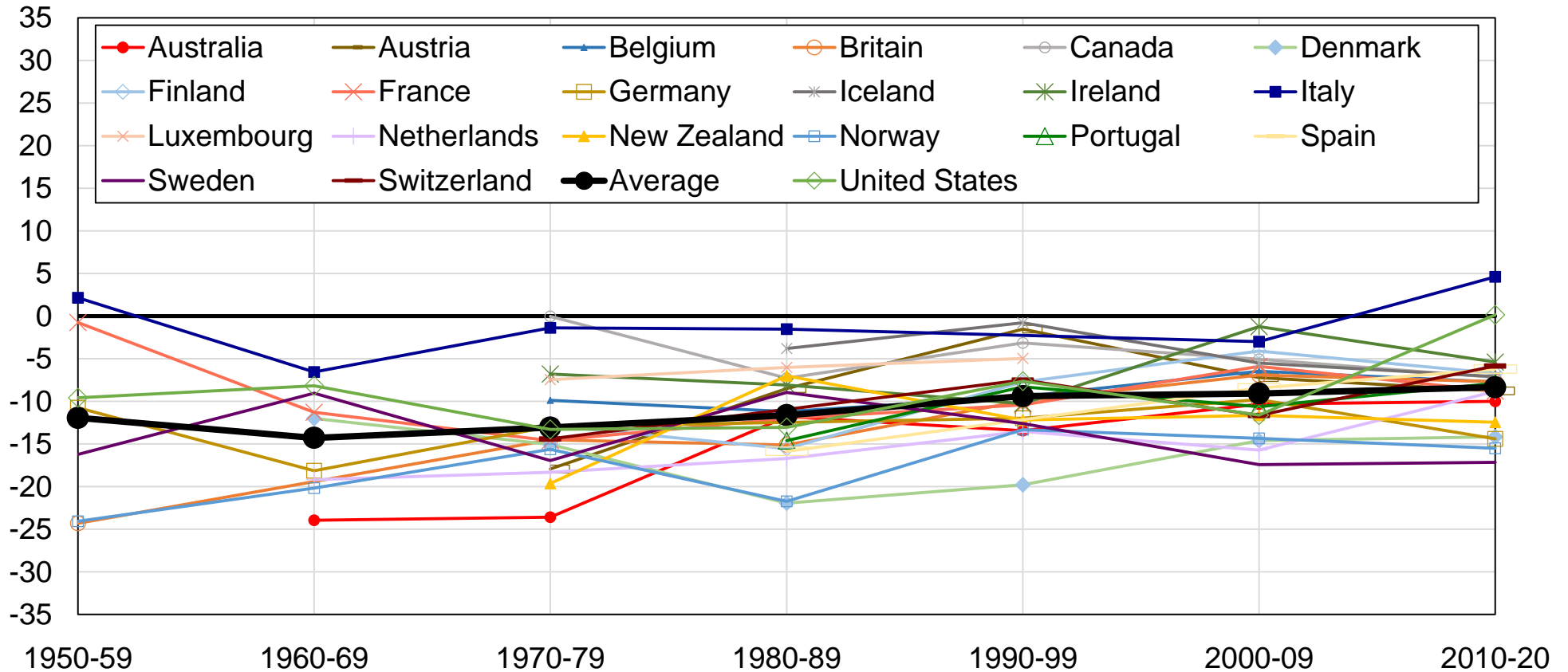
**Figure A7 - The decline/stability of income divides, all Western democracies**



Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western countries. In all countries, top-income voters have remained significantly less likely to vote for left-wing parties than low-income voters.

**Figure A8 - The decline/stability of income divides, all Western democracies, after controls**

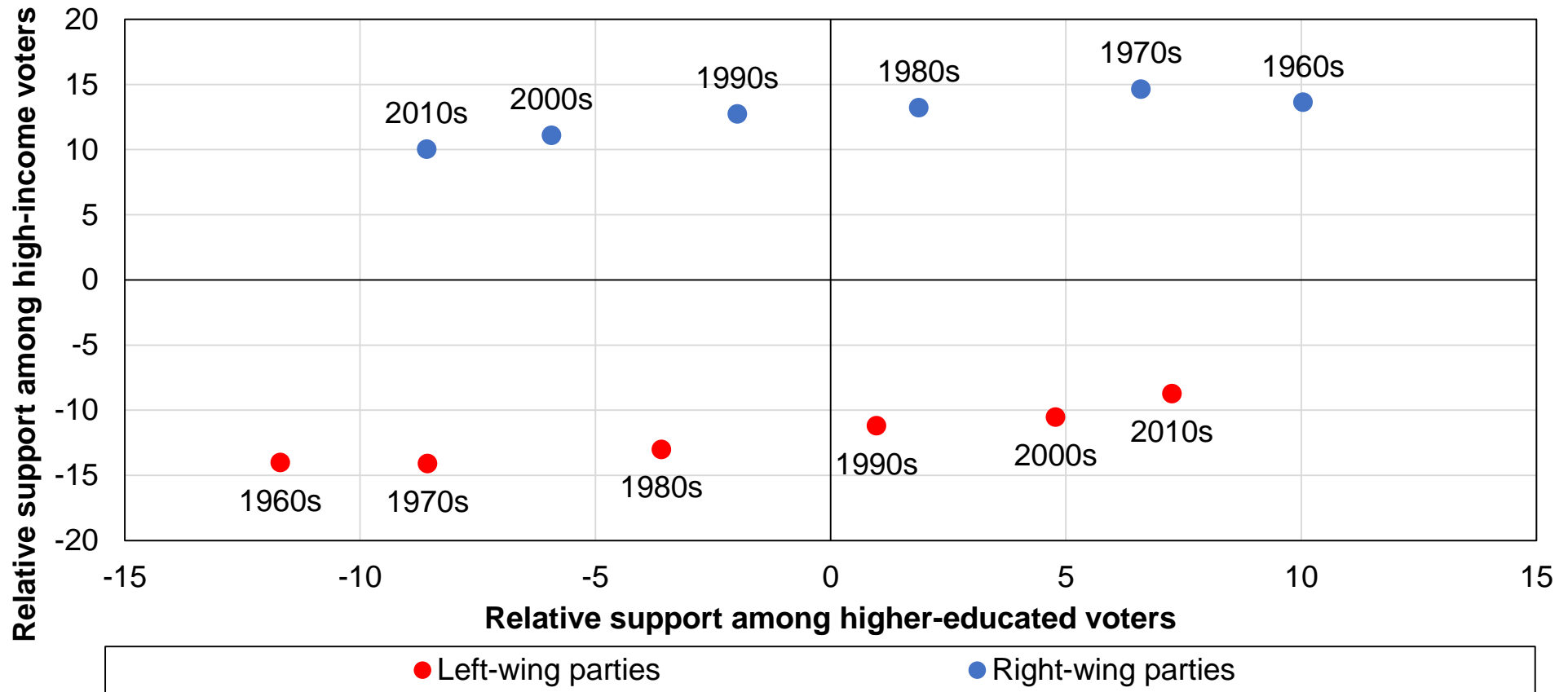


Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western countries. In all countries, top-income voters have remained significantly less likely to vote for left-wing parties than low-income voters. Estimates control for education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).



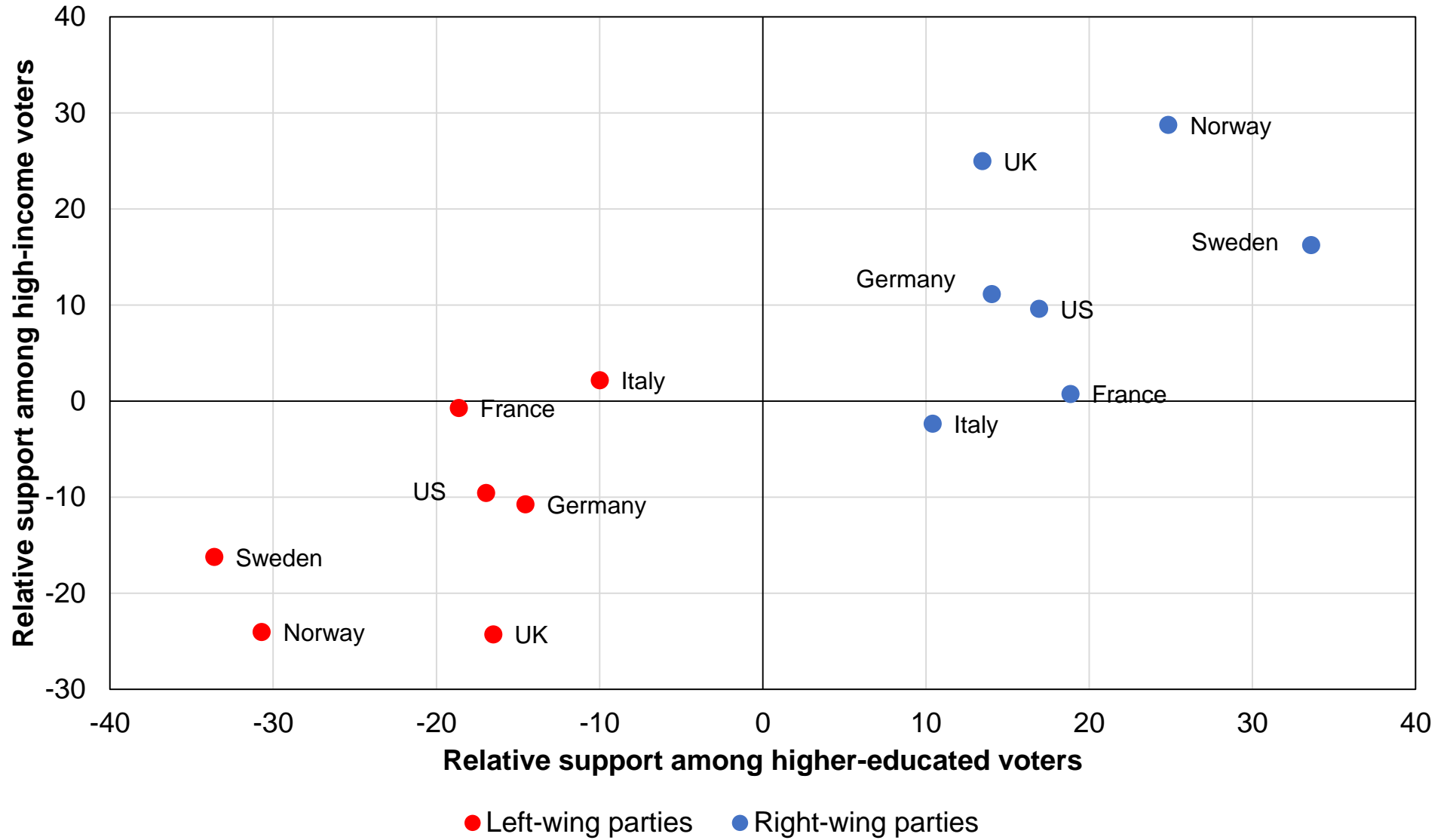
**Figure A9 - The emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies (quadrant representation), all countries**



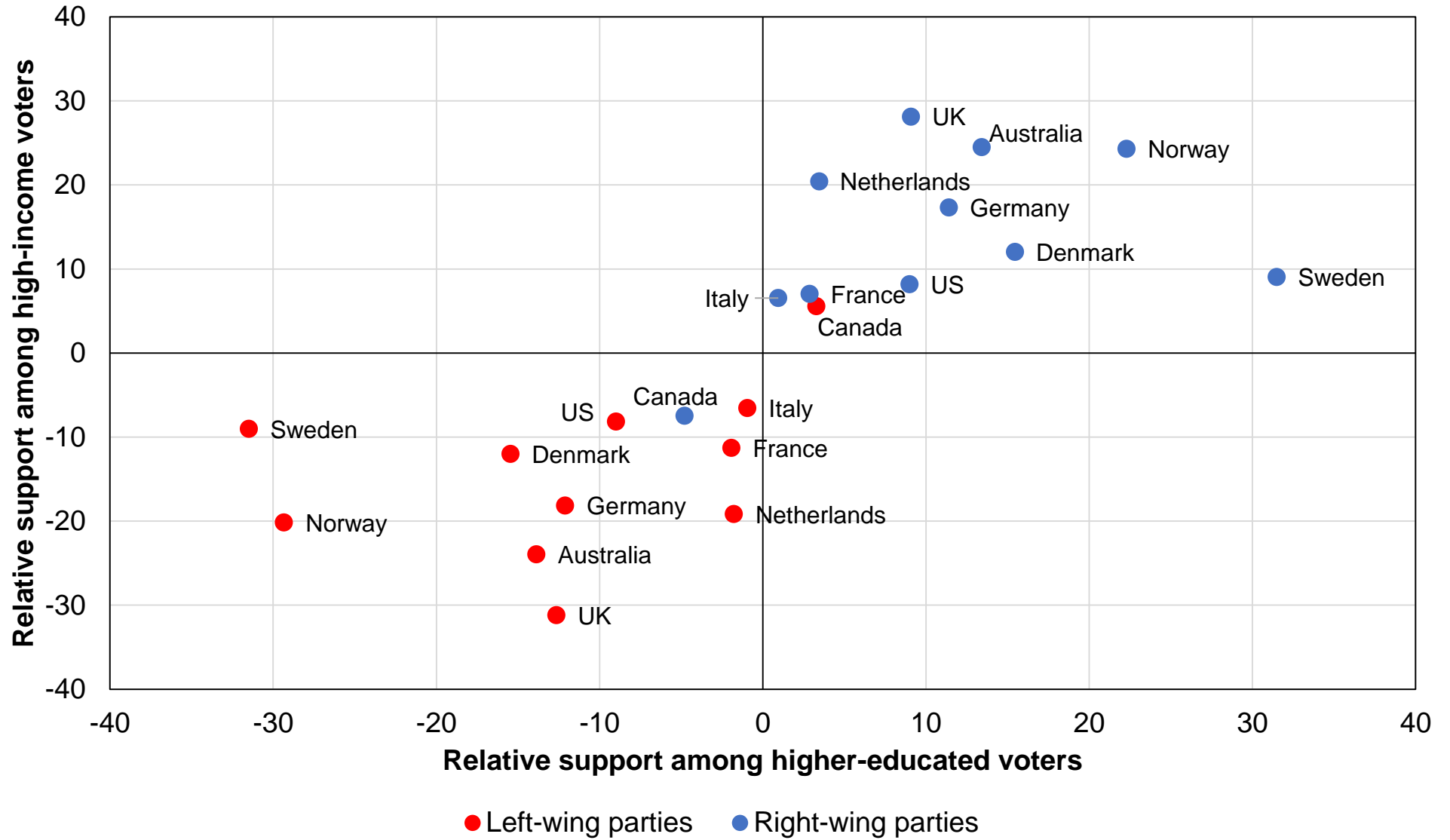
Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis. Estimates control for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available). Figures correspond to ten-year averages for Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the US.

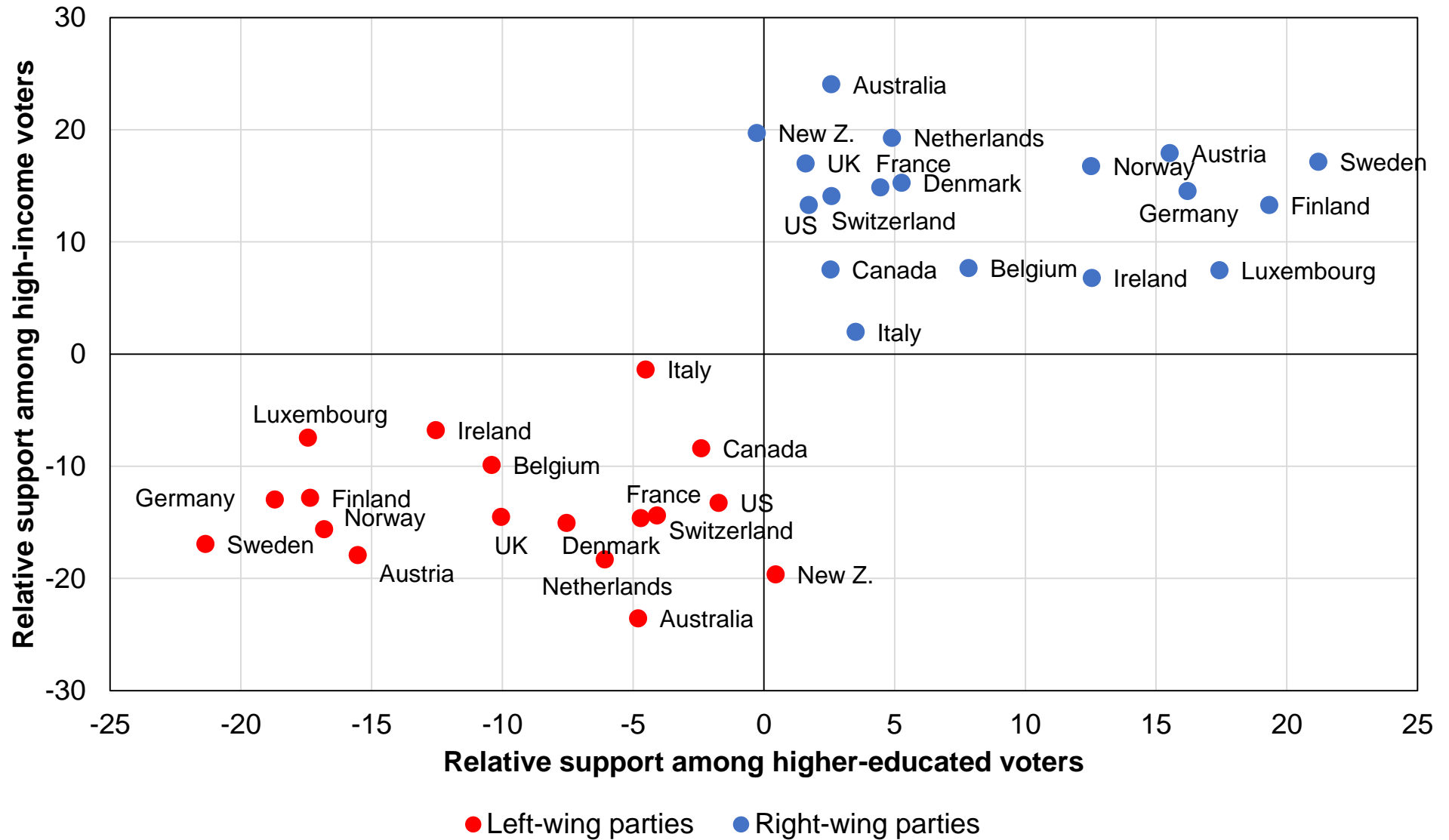
**Figure A10 - Income and educational divides in Western democracies, 1950s**



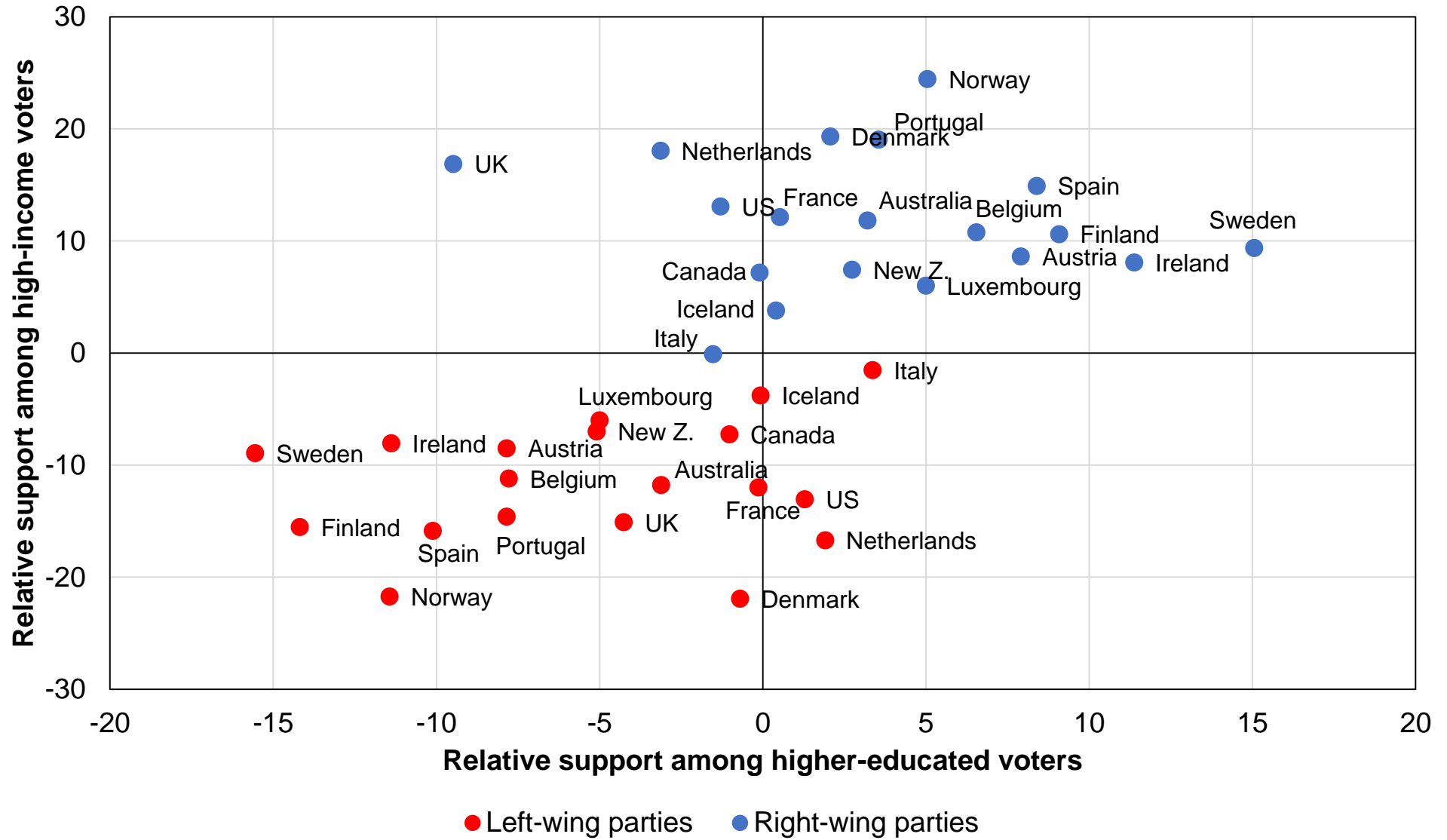
**Figure A11 - Income and educational divides in Western democracies, 1960s**



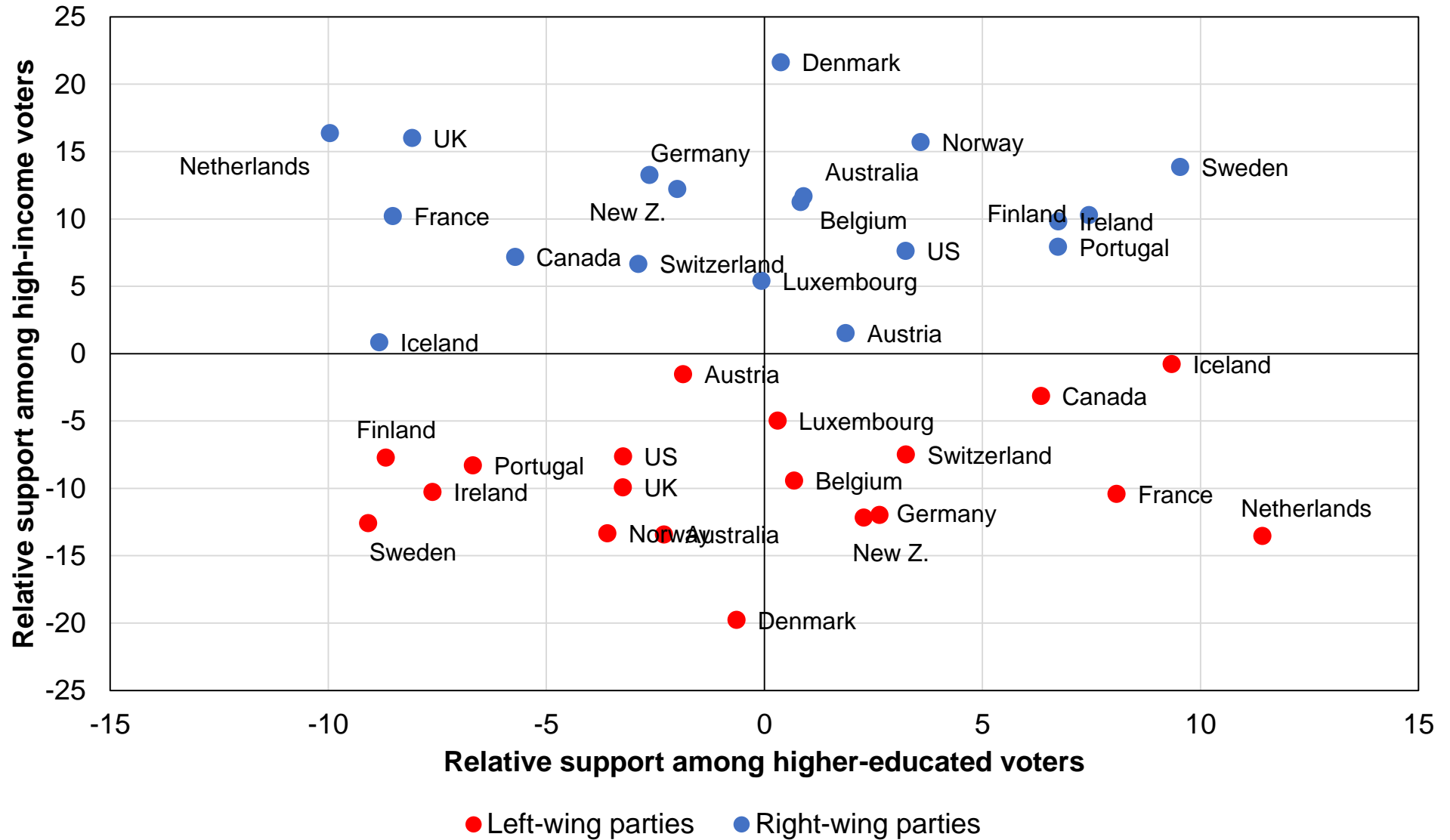
**Figure A12 - Income and educational divides in Western democracies, 1970s**



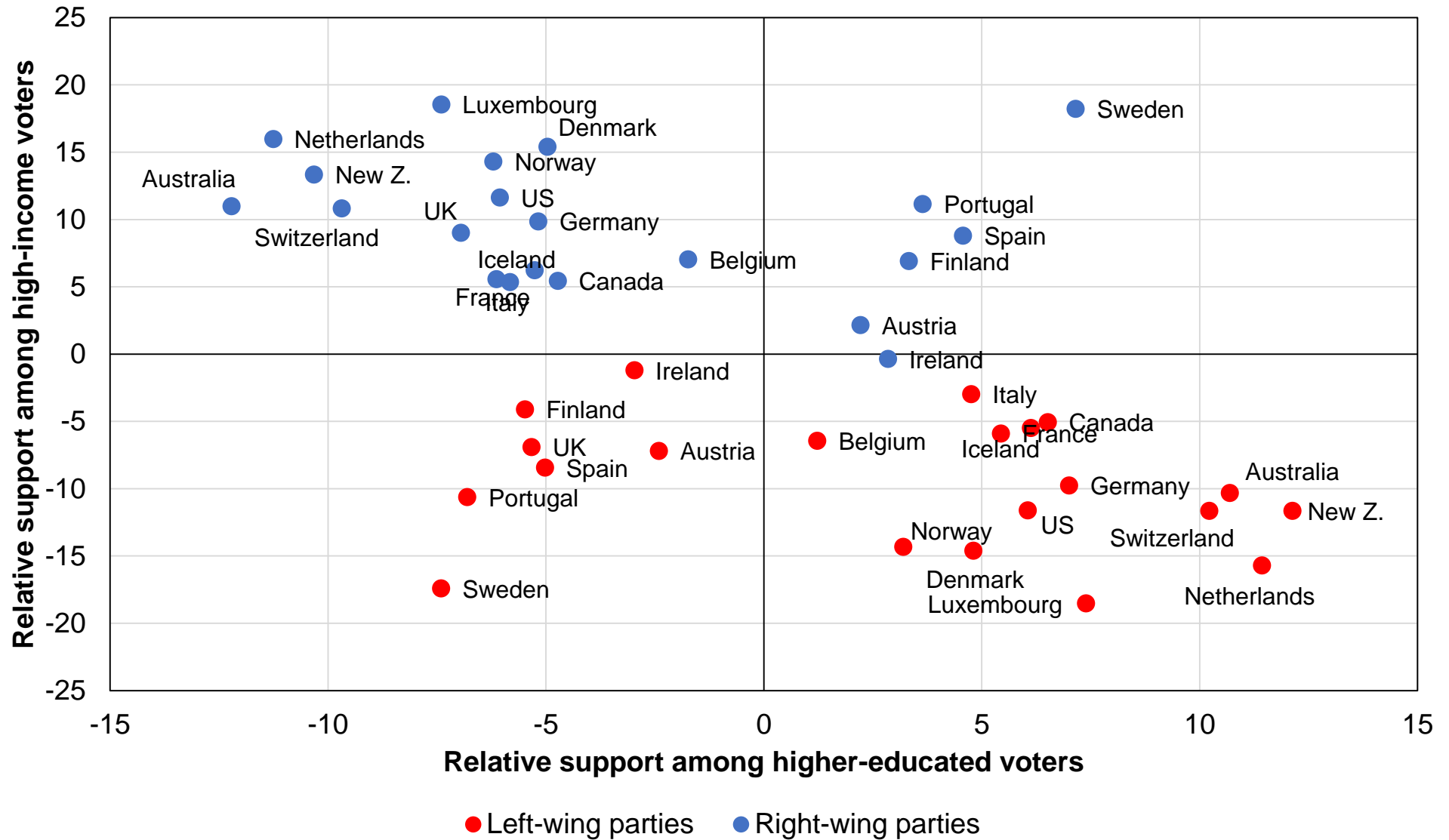
**Figure A13 - Income and educational divides in Western democracies, 1980s**



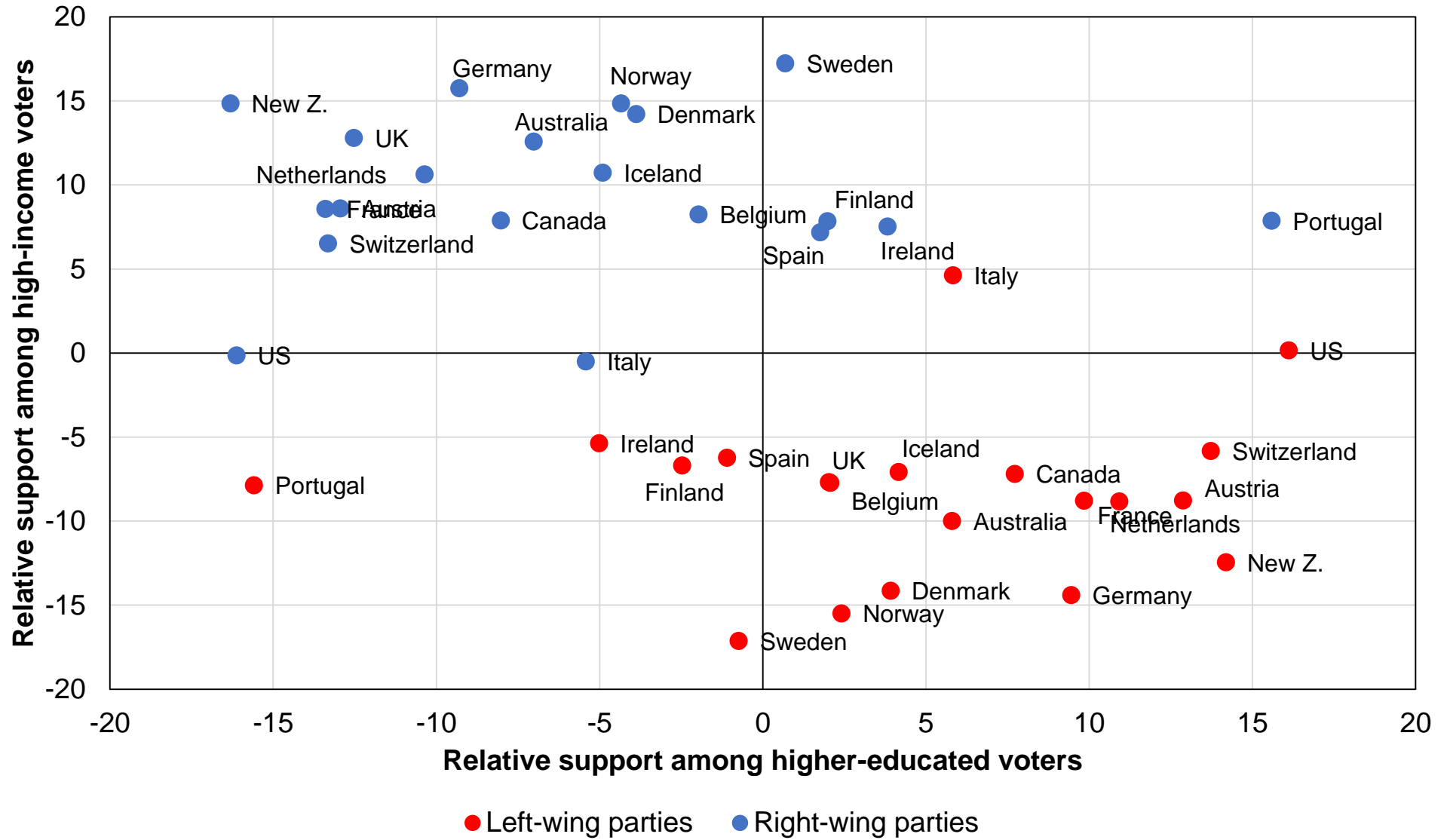
**Figure A14 - Income and educational divides in Western democracies, 1990s**



**Figure A15 - Income and educational divides in Western democracies, 2000s**

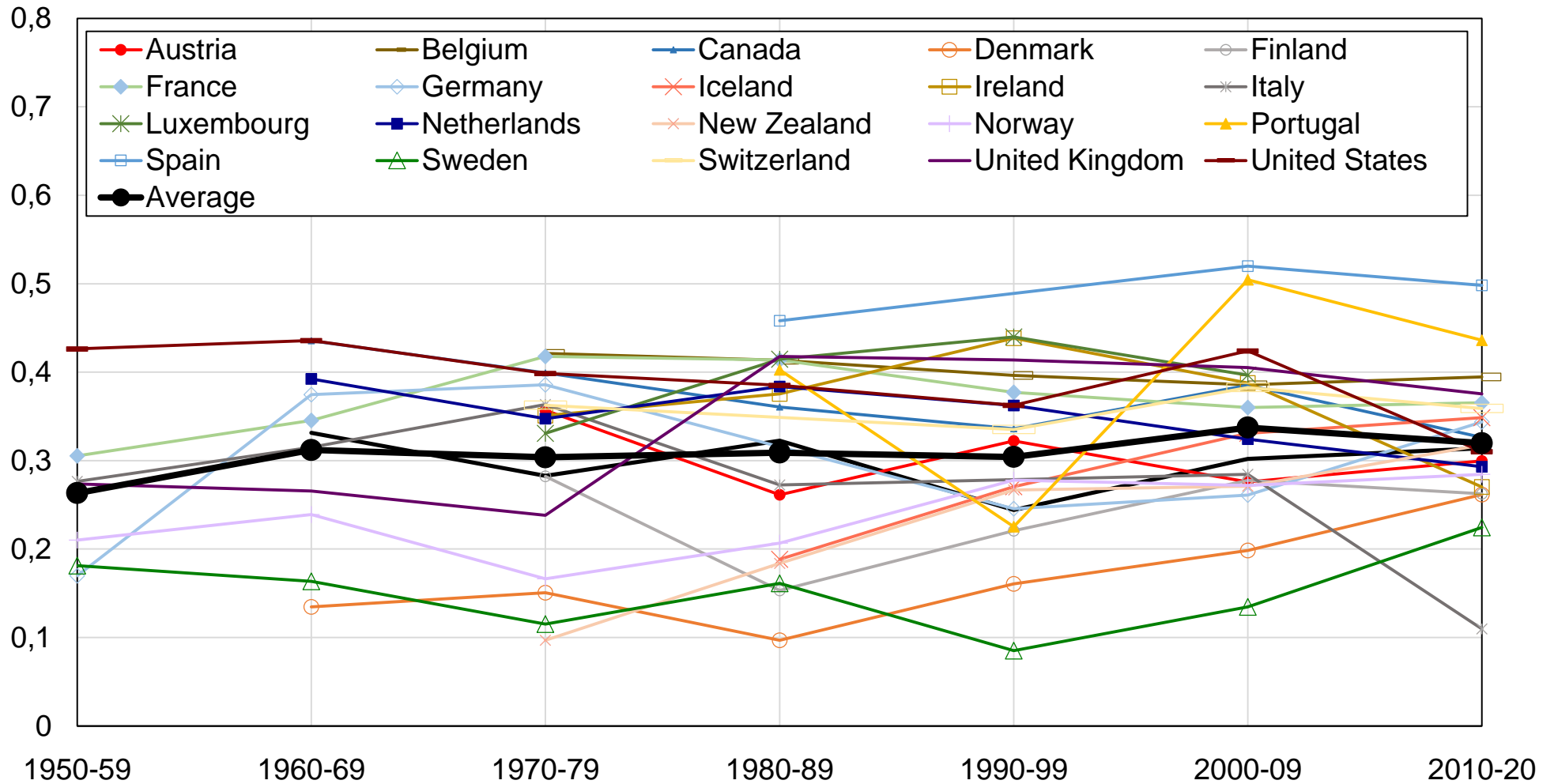


**Figure A16 - Income and educational divides in Western democracies, 2010s**





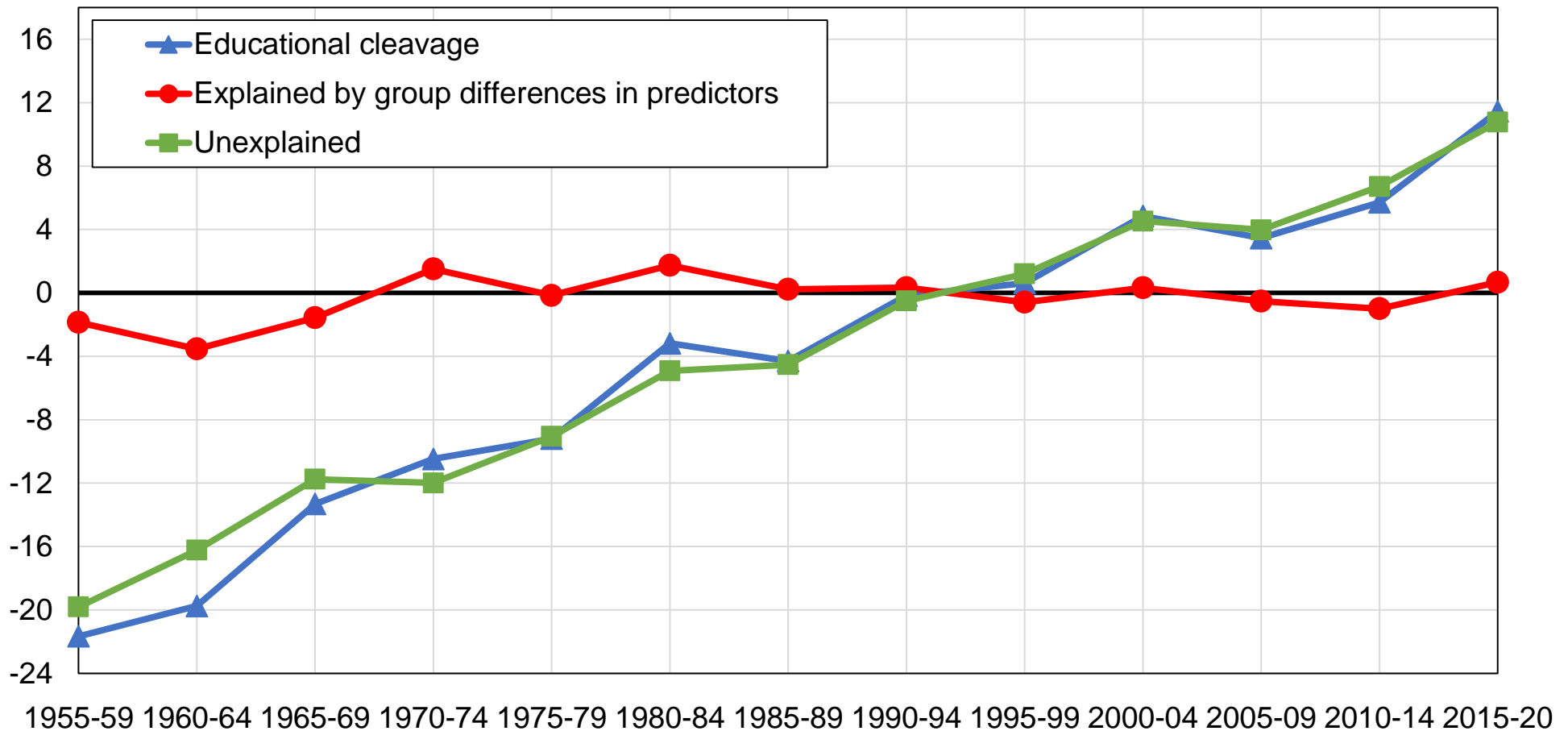
**Figure A17 - Correlation between income and education**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the correlation between income and education in post-electoral surveys in all Western democracies. Income is defined as the rank (quantile group) to which individuals belong, computed directly from raw income brackets. Education is defined as education deciles, computed from available educational categories (see methodology).

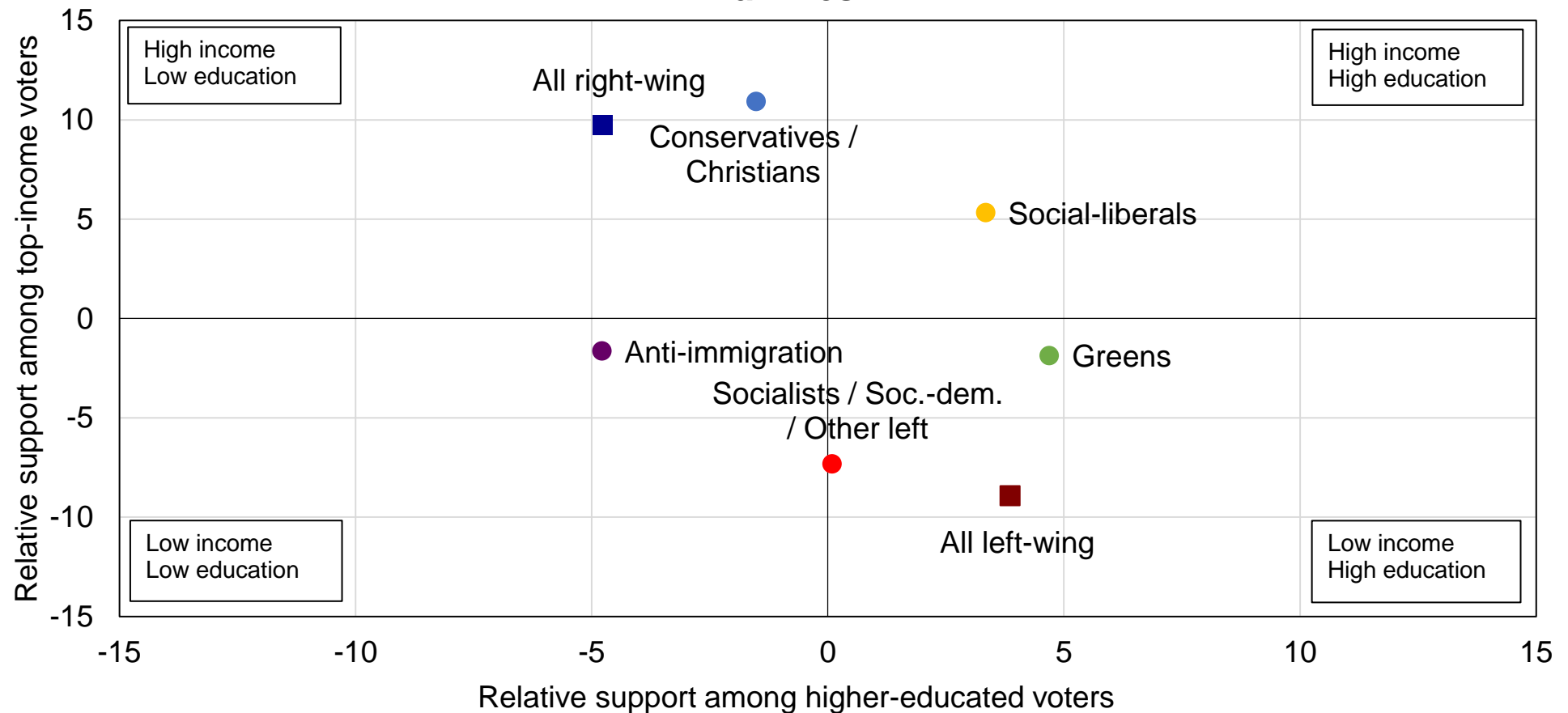
**Figure A18 - Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition of educational cleavage**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents a two-way Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition of the educational cleavage by decade, separating it into a component explained by group differences in predictors (that is, differences in the composition of educational groups by age, gender, income, etc.) and an unexplained component. The unexplained component is almost perfectly equal to the actual indicator, revealing that the reversal of educational divides cannot be accounted for by changes in the composition of educational groups. Figures correspond to five-year averages for Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the US.

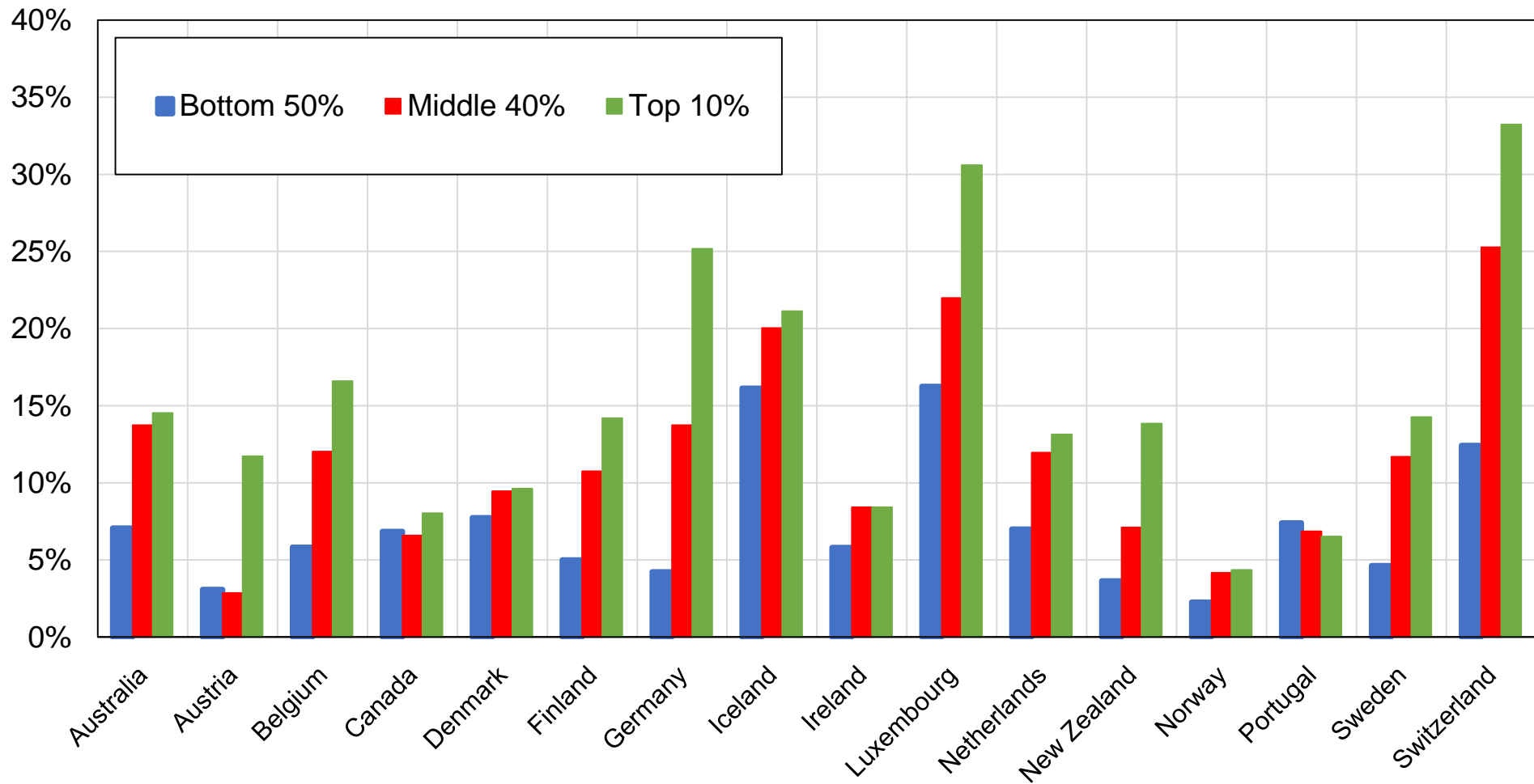
**Figure A19 - Decomposing multi-elite party systems: Detailed party families**



Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis. Education most clearly distinguishes anti-immigration from green parties, while income distinguishes most clearly conservative and Christian parties from socialist and social-democratic parties. Averages over all Western democracies over the 2000-2020 period. Estimates control for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

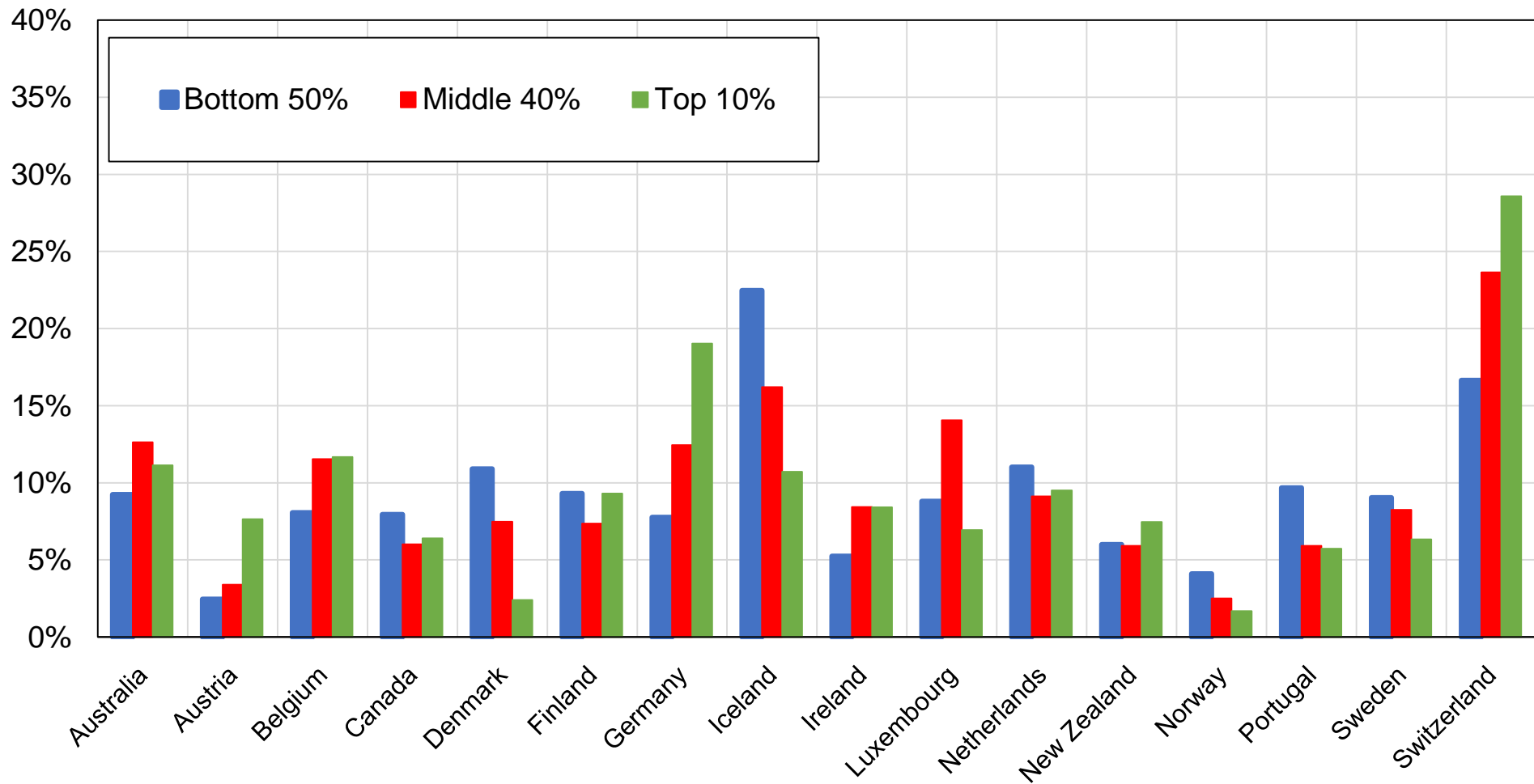
**Figure A20 - Vote for Green parties by education group**



Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure shows the share of votes received by Green parties in Western democracies in the last election available by education group.

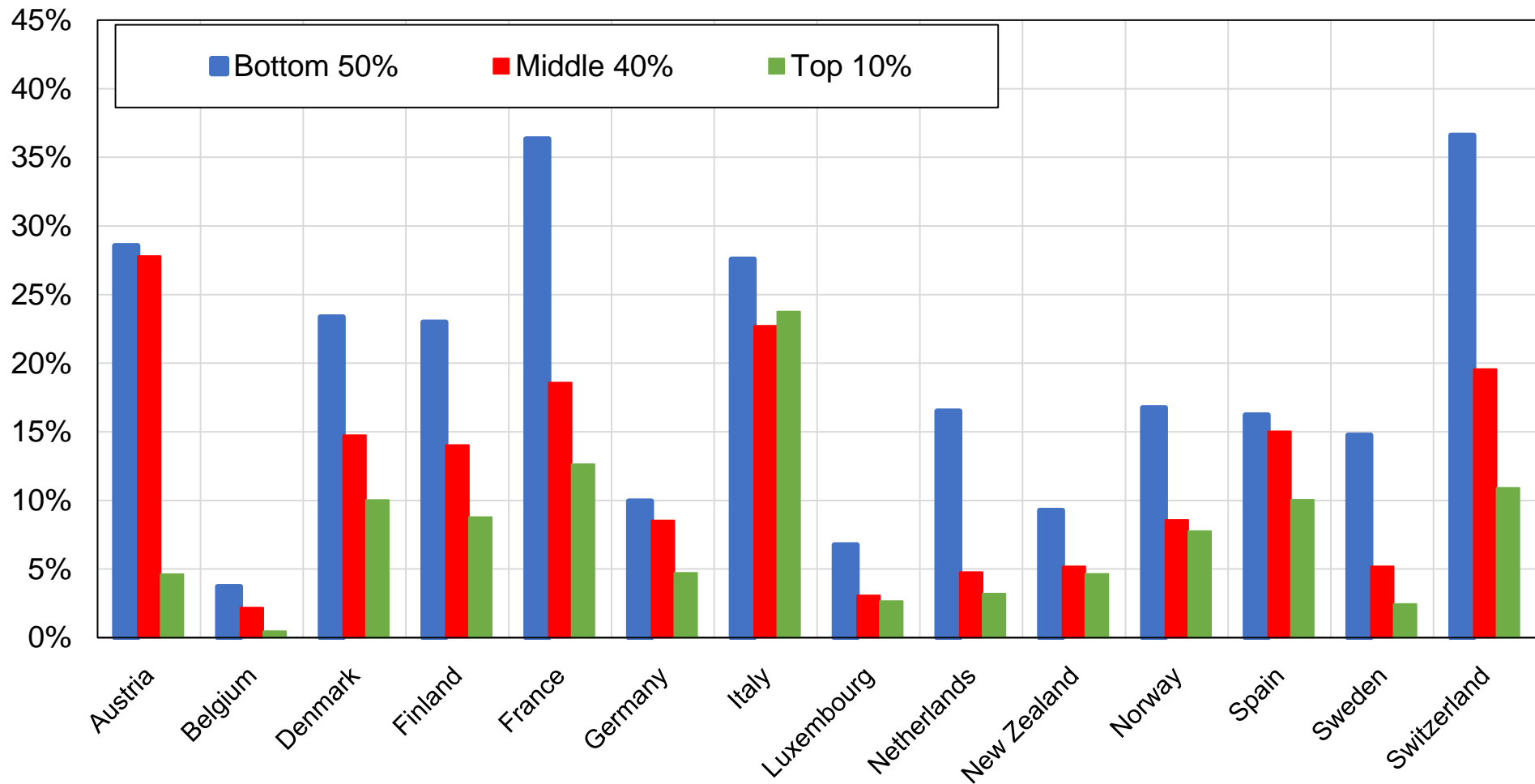
**Figure A21 - Vote for Green parties by income group**



Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure shows the share of votes received by Green parties in Western democracies in the last election available by income group.

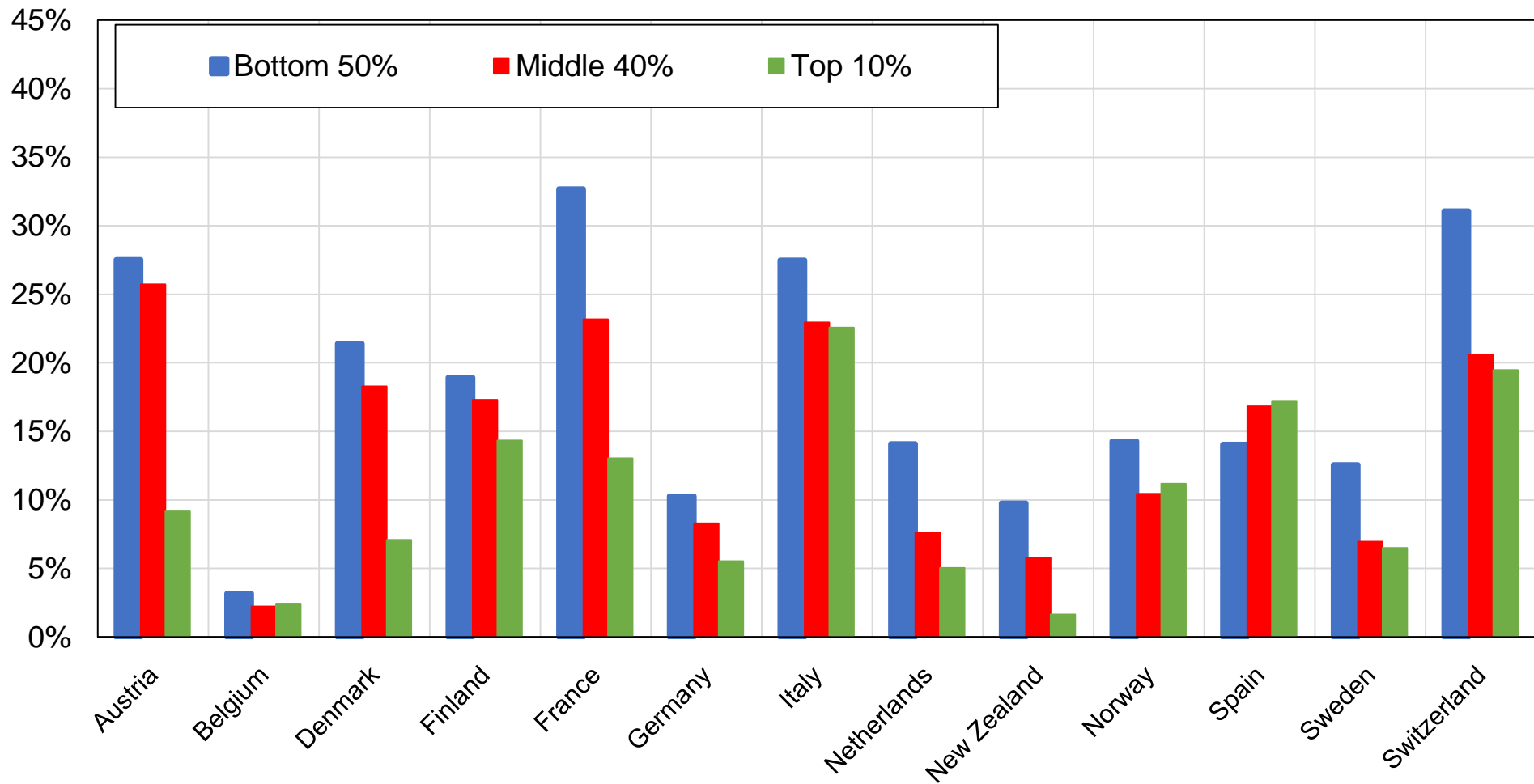
**Figure A22 - Vote for anti-immigration parties by education group**



Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure shows the share of votes received by anti-immigration parties in Western democracies in the last election available by education group.

**Figure A23 - Vote for anti-immigration parties by income group**



Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure shows the share of votes received by anti-immigration parties in Western democracies in the last election available by income group.

**Table B1 - Bakker-Hobolt modified Comparative Manifesto Project measures**

**A. Economic-distributive dimension**

**Pro-free-market emphases**

Free enterprise  
 Economic incentives  
 Anti-protectionism  
 Social services limitation  
 Education limitation  
 Productivity: positive  
 Economic orthodoxy: positive  
 Labour groups: negative

**Pro-redistribution emphases**

Regulate capitalism  
 Economic planning  
 Pro-protectionism  
 Social services expansion  
 Education expansion  
 Nationalization  
 Controlled economy  
 Labour groups: positive  
 Corporatism: positive  
 Keynesian demand management: positive  
 Marxist analysis: positive  
 Social justice

**B. Sociocultural dimension**

**Conservative emphases**

Political authority  
 National way of life: positive  
 Traditional morality: positive  
 Law and order  
 Multiculturalism: negative  
 Social harmony

**Liberal emphases**

Environmental protection  
 National way of life: negative  
 Traditional morality: negative  
 Culture  
 Multiculturalism: positive  
 Anti-growth  
 Underprivileged minority groups  
 Non-economic demographic groups: positive  
 Freedom-human rights  
 Democracy

**Source:** adapted from R. Bakker and S. B. Hobolt, "Measuring Party Positions," in G. Evans and N. D. de Graaf (ed.), *Political Choice Matters: Explaining the Strength of Class and Religious Cleavages in Cross-National Perspective*, Oxford University Press, 2013, 38. For more detail on the content of each category and the Manifesto Project methodology, see <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>.



**Table B2 - Sociocultural polarization and educational cleavages: regression results**

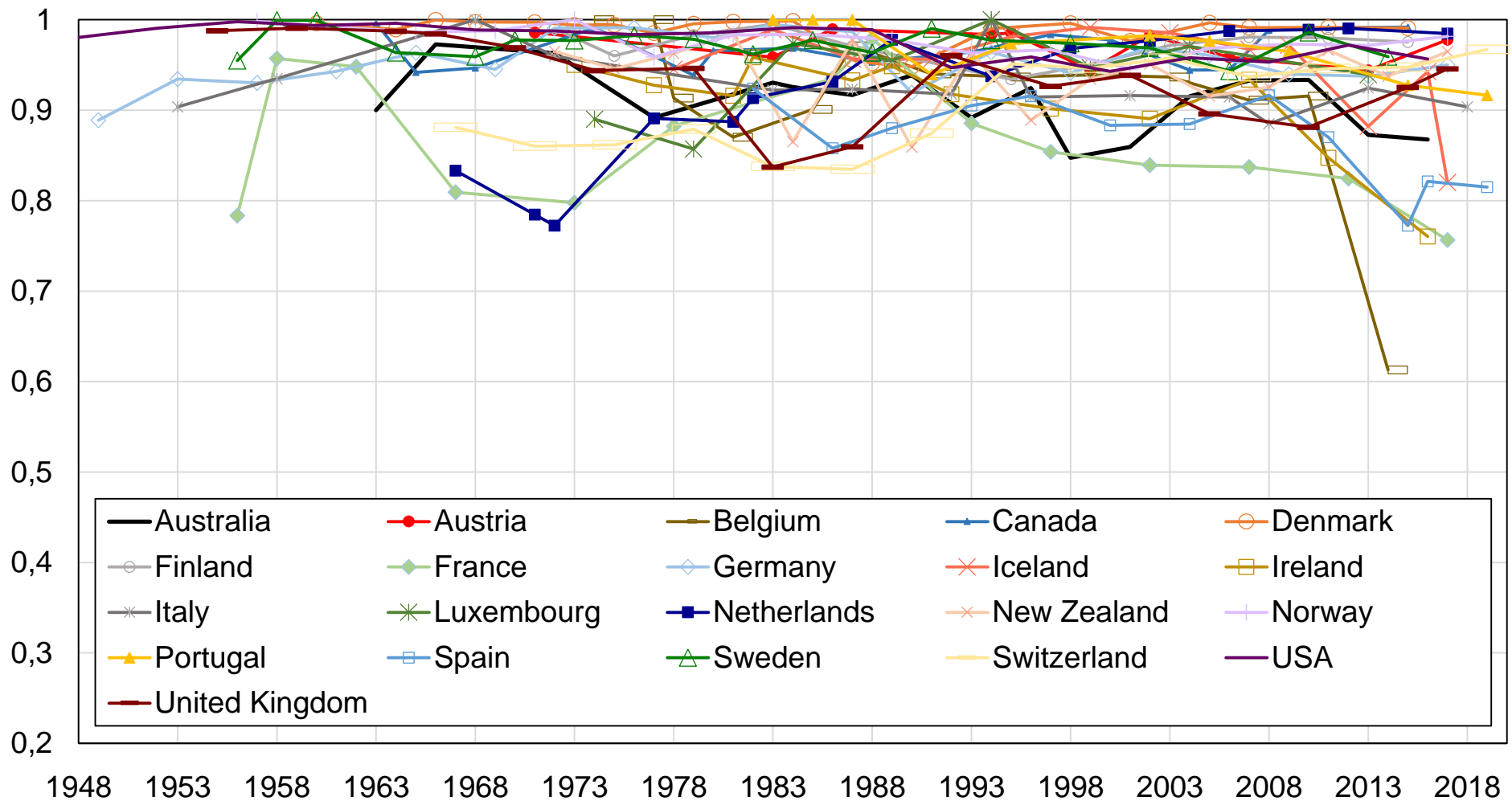
	Raw coefficient	After controls and country/year fixed effects	After controls and election fixed effects
1948-1979	-0.13*	0.12	0.11
1980-1999	-0.68***	-0.13	-0.21
2000-2020	-1.21***	-0.65***	-0.73***

**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Datatabase with Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** the table reports the coefficient associated to a regression of the sociocultural index on the education gradient (the share of top 10% educated voters within a given party's electorate) at the party level, decomposing the dataset into three time periods: 1948-1979, 1980-1999, and 2000-2020. The first column reports the raw coefficient (without controls). The second column reports the coefficient after controlling for country and year fixed effects and for the composition of the electorate of each party in terms of income, age, gender, rural-urban location, and religion. The third column reports the same coefficient after controlling for the same variables and for election fixed effects (that is, interacting country and year fixed effects). \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .

**Interpretation:** in 1948-1979, the link between a party's position on the sociocultural axis and the composition of its electorate in terms of education was small and not statistically significant; in 2000-2020, it has become strongly negative and statistically significant at the 1% level, so that parties strongly emphasizing liberal issues in their manifestos receive much greater support from higher-educated voters.

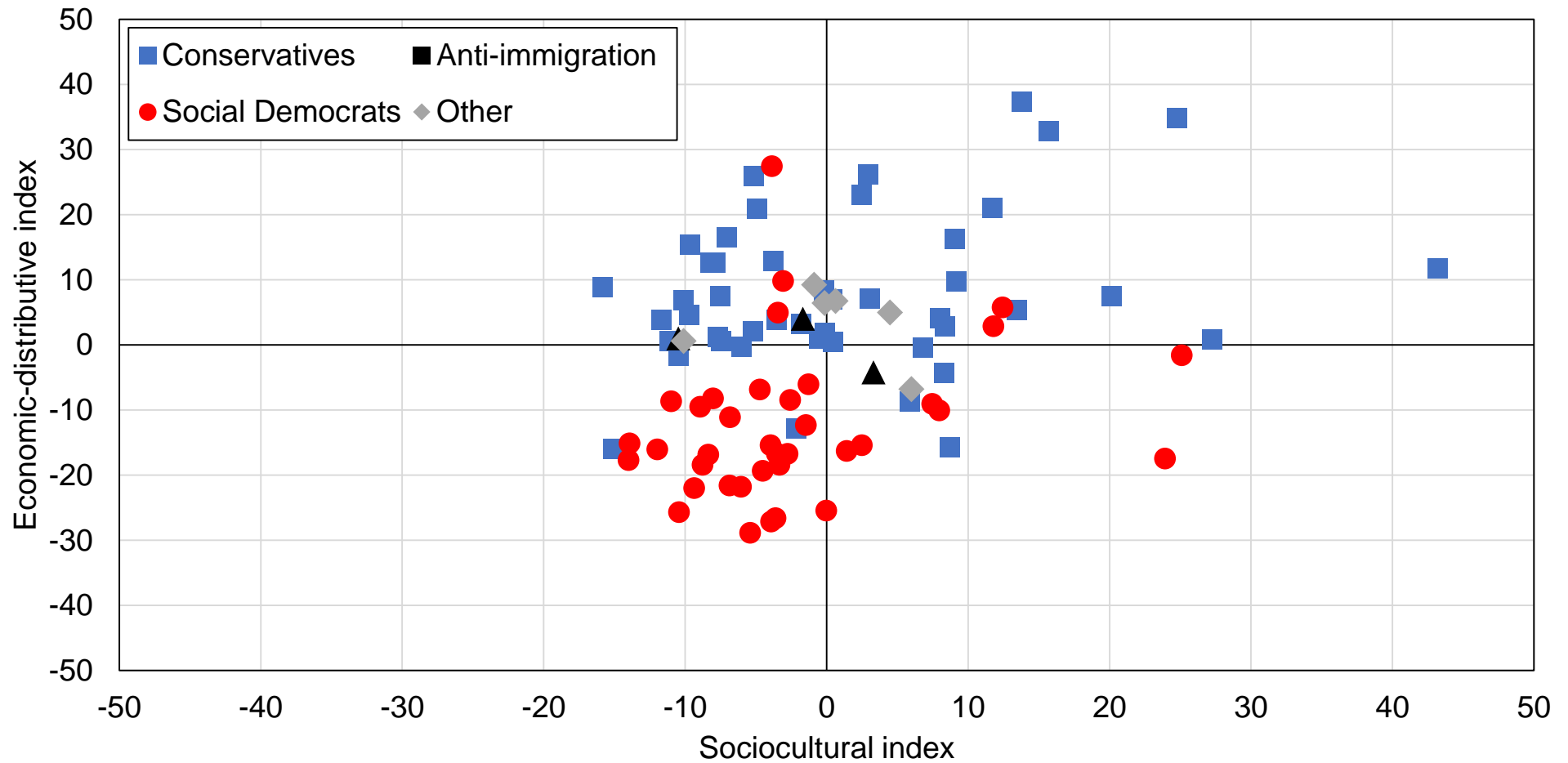
**Figure B1 - Share of votes covered by the survey-manifesto dataset**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** the figure represents the total share of votes captured by the merged survey-manifesto dataset by country for all elections available between 1945 and 2020.

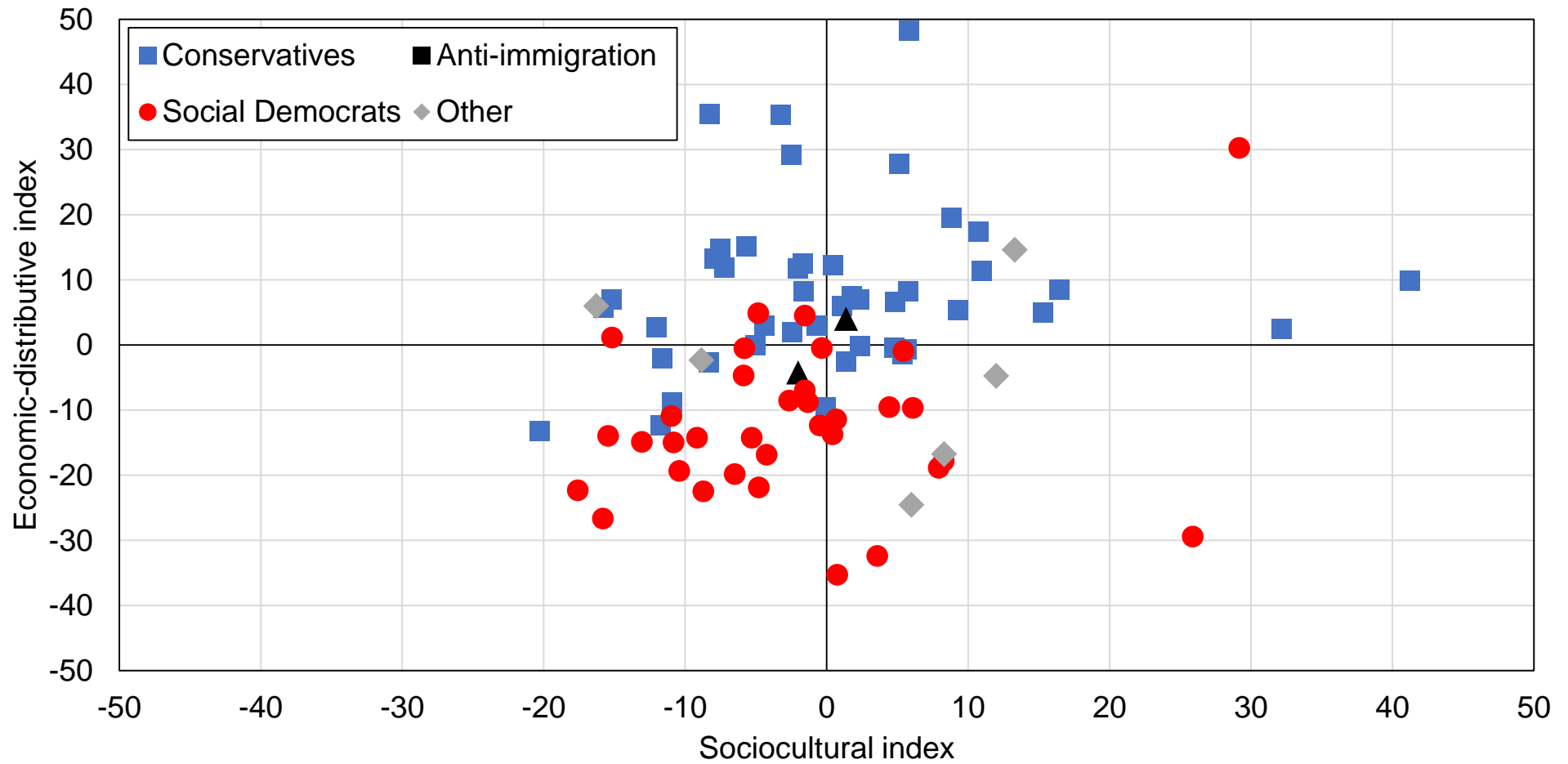
**Figure B2 - Ideological polarization in Western democracies, 1950s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the Comparative Manifesto Project database.

**Note:** the figure displays the average score of all parties available in the CMP dataset in the 1950s on the economic-distributive index (y-axis) and the sociocultural index (x-axis). Parties are categorized into conservative, Christian democratic, and liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

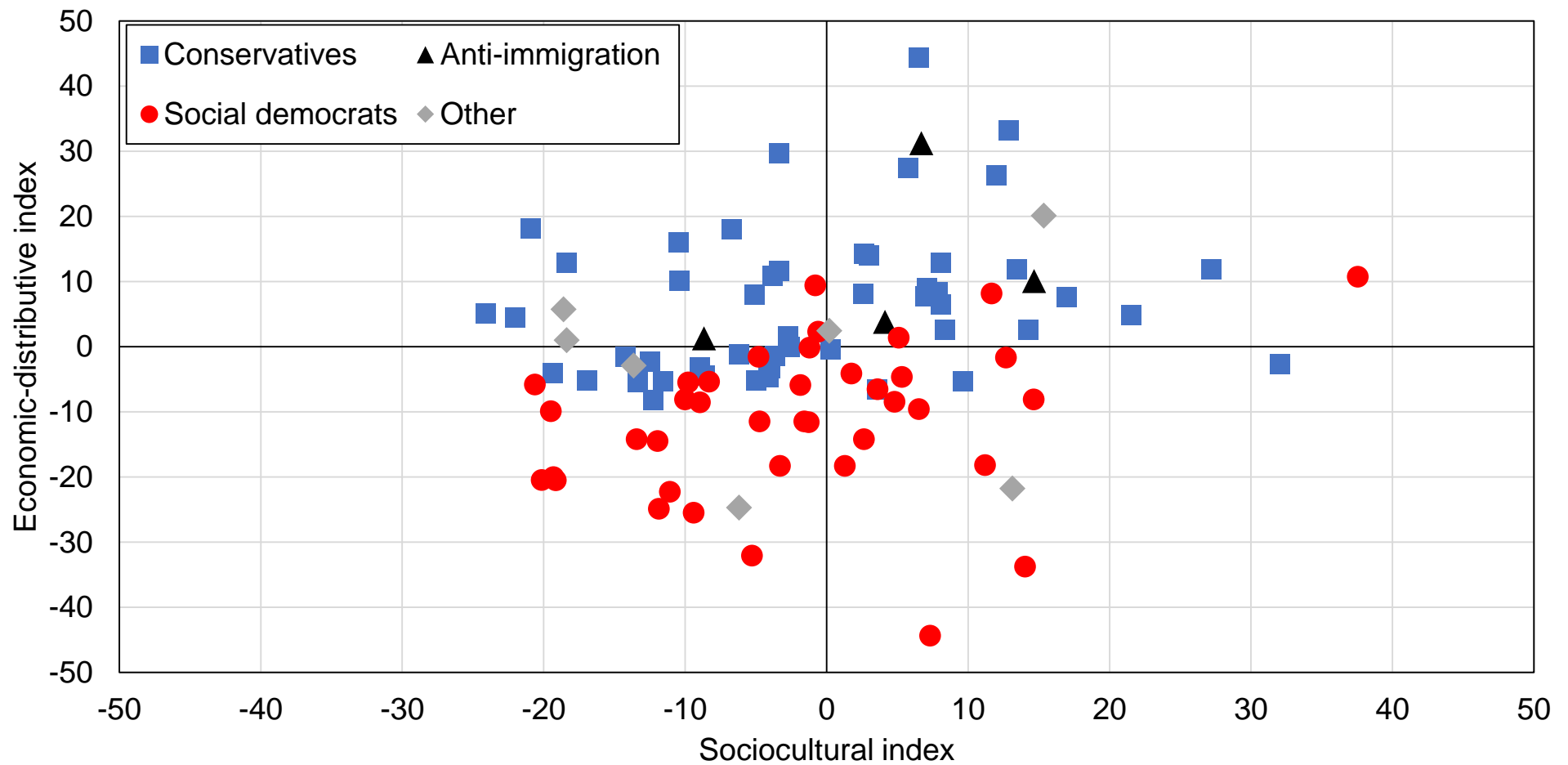
**Figure B3 - Ideological polarization in Western democracies, 1960s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the Comparative Manifesto Project database.

**Note:** the figure displays the average score of all parties available in the CMP dataset in the 1960s on the economic-distributive index (y-axis) and the sociocultural index (x-axis). Parties are categorized into conservative, Christian democratic, and liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

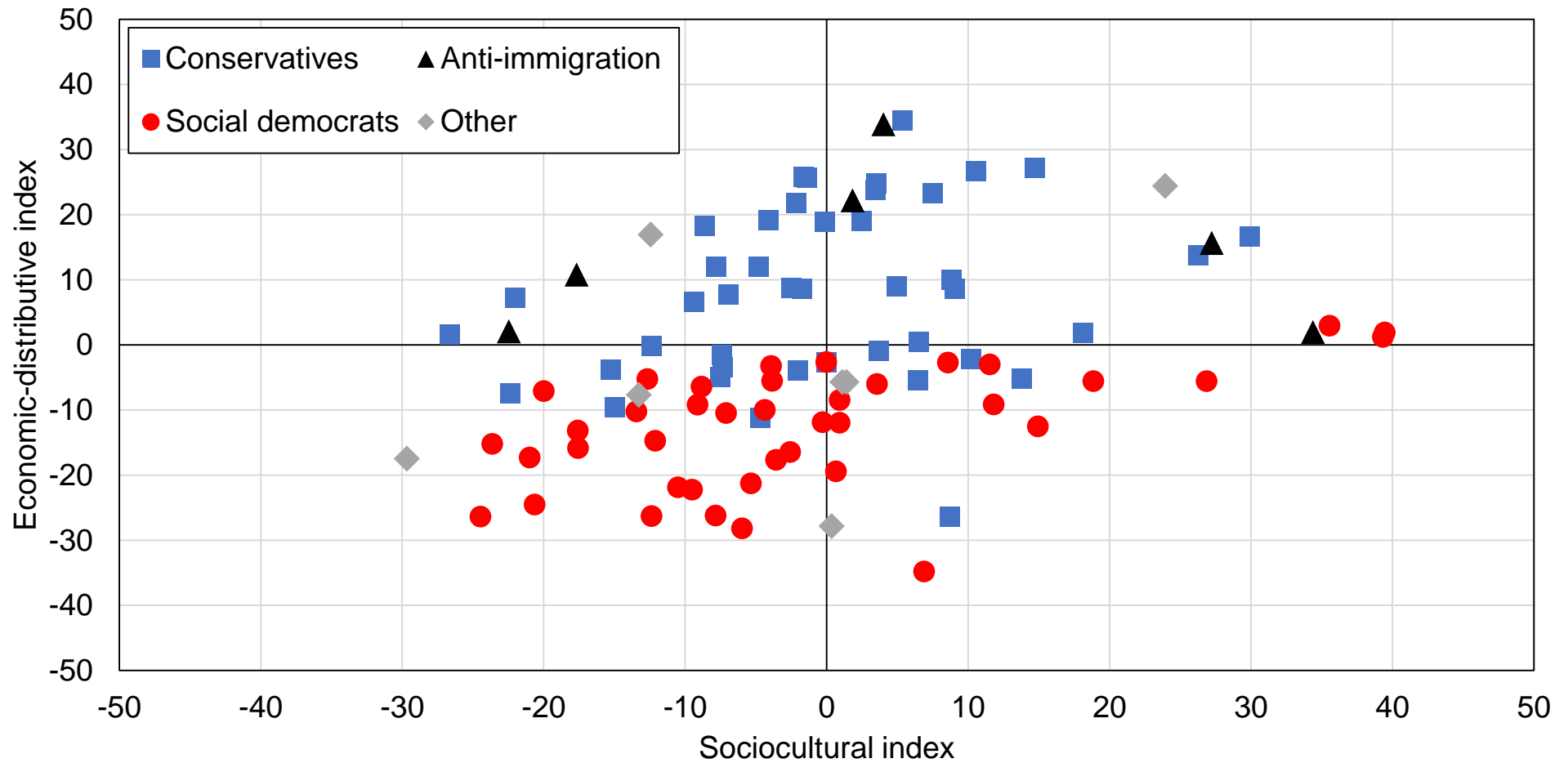
**Figure B4 - Ideological polarization in Western democracies, 1970s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the Comparative Manifesto Project database.

**Note:** the figure displays the average score of all parties available in the CMP dataset in the 1970s on the economic-distributive index (y-axis) and the sociocultural index (x-axis). Parties are categorized into conservative, Christian democratic, and liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

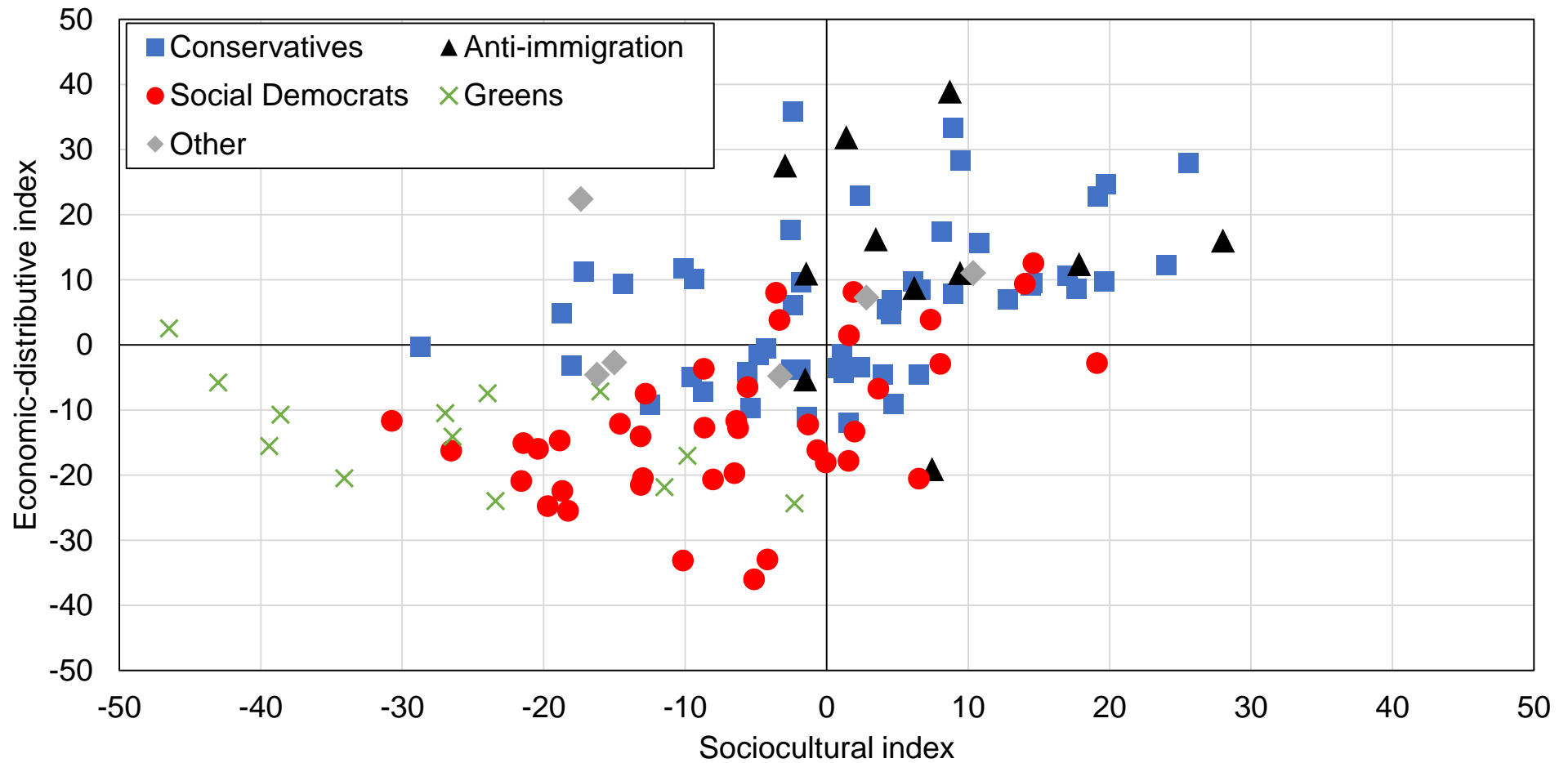
**Figure B5 - Ideological polarization in Western democracies, 1980s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the Comparative Manifesto Project database.

**Note:** the figure displays the average score of all parties available in the CMP dataset in the 1980s on the economic-distributive index (y-axis) and the sociocultural index (x-axis). Parties are categorized into conservative, Christian democratic, and liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

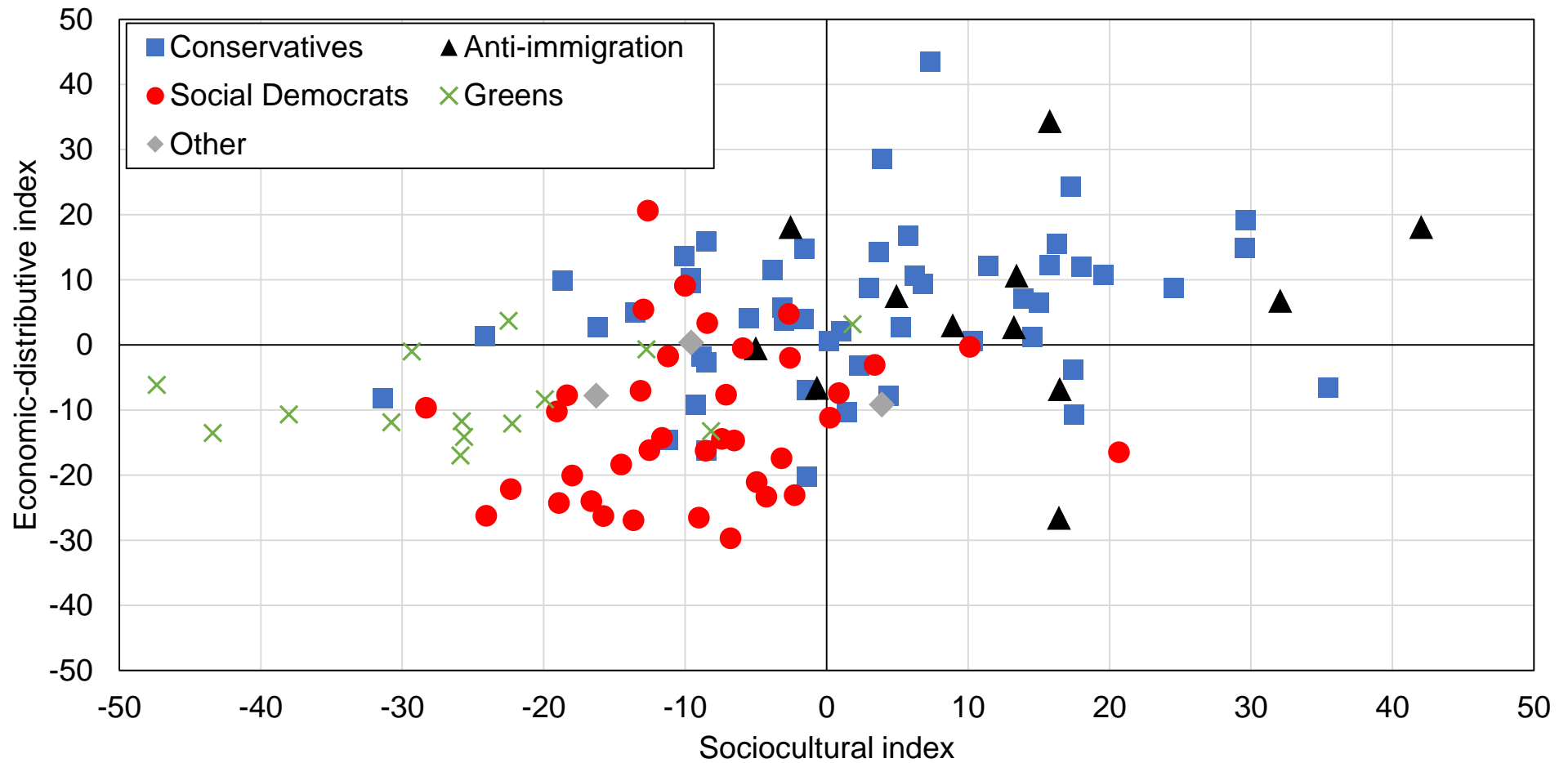
**Figure B6 - Ideological polarization in Western democracies, 1990s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the Comparative Manifesto Project database.

**Note:** the figure displays the average score of all parties available in the CMP dataset in the 1990s on the economic-distributive index (y-axis) and the sociocultural index (x-axis). Parties are categorized into conservative, Christian democratic, and liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

**Figure B7 - Ideological polarization in Western democracies, 2000s**

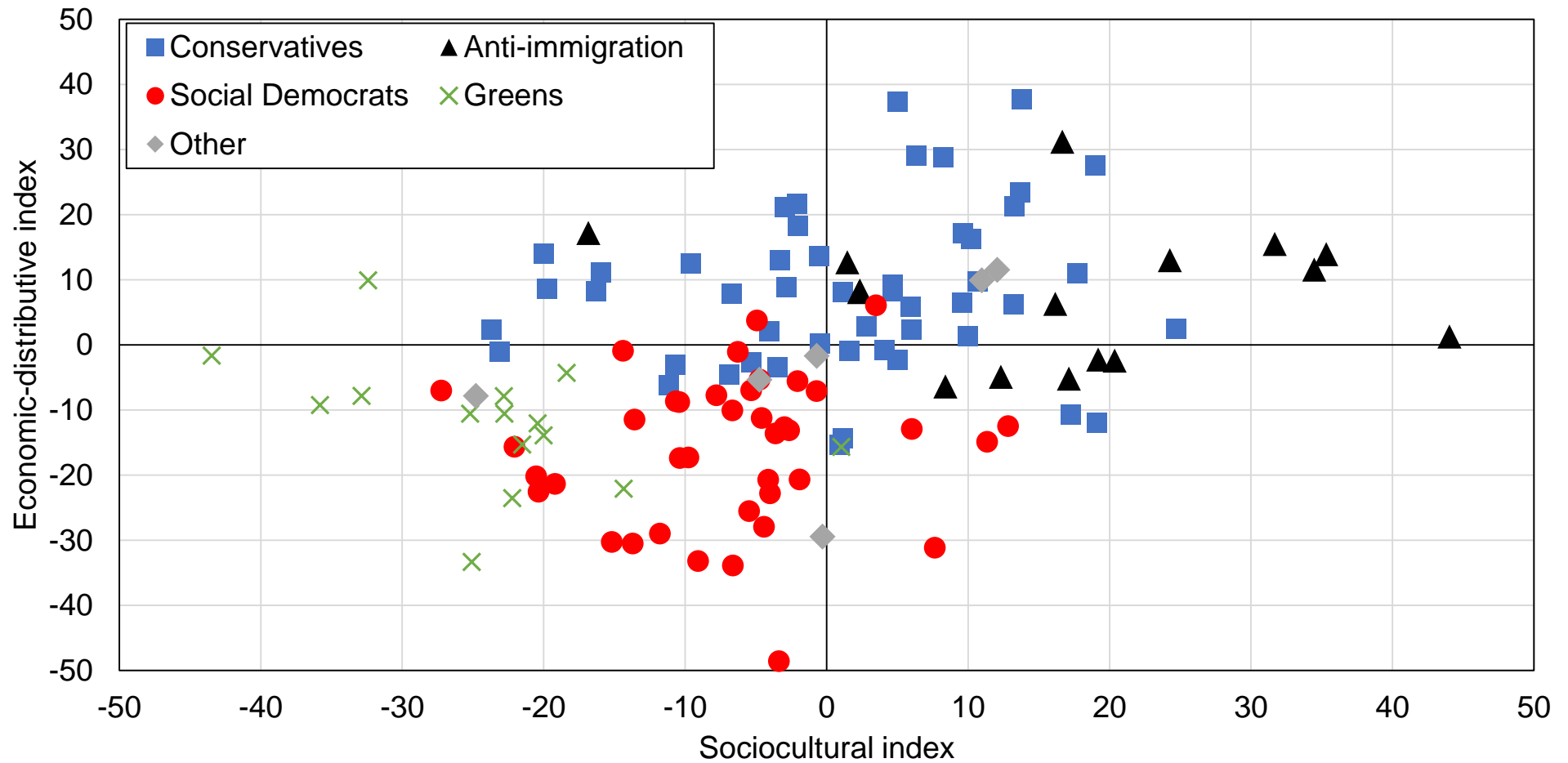


**Source:** authors' computations using the Comparative Manifesto Project database.

**Note:** the figure displays the average score of all parties available in the CMP dataset in the 2000s on the economic-distributive index (y-axis) and the sociocultural index (x-axis). Parties are categorized into conservative, Christian democratic, and liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.



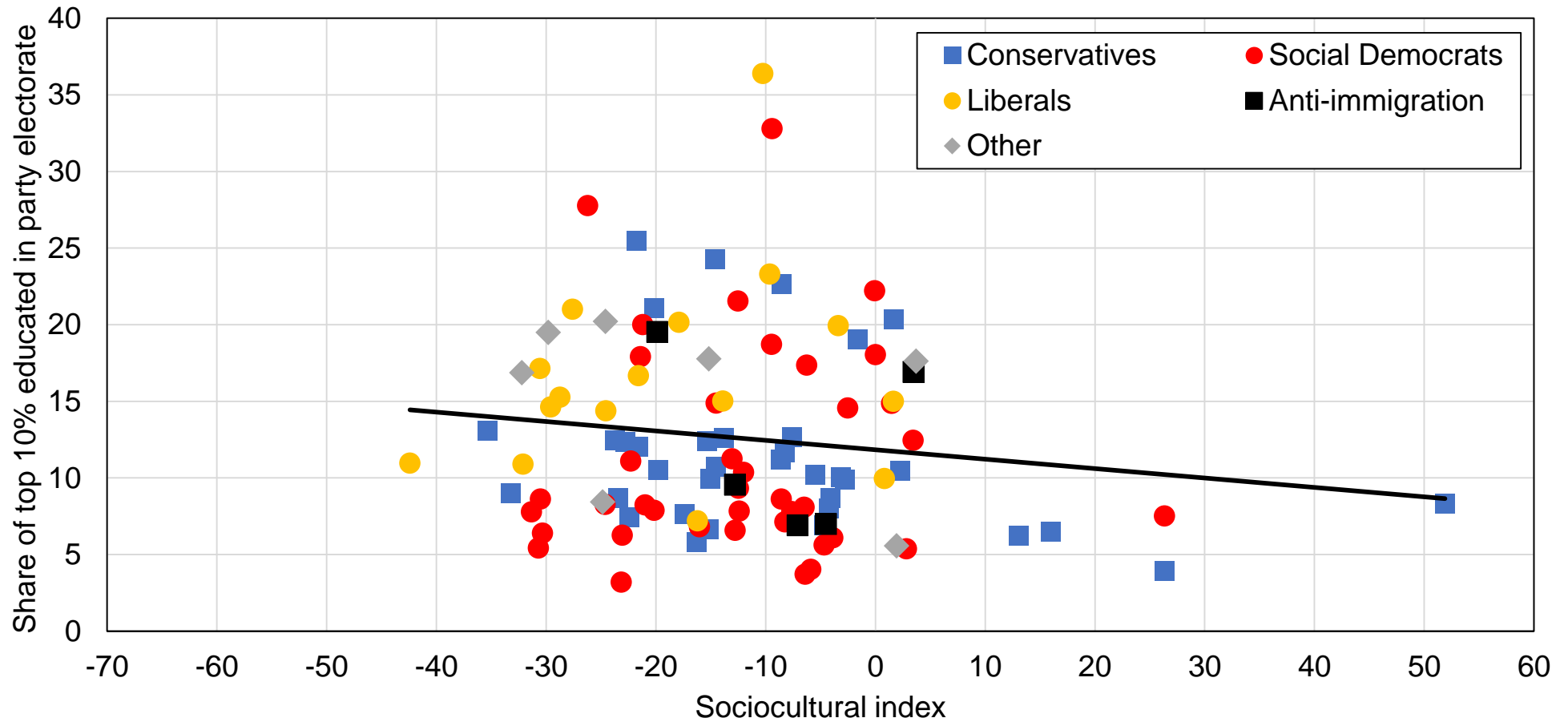
**Figure B8 - Ideological polarization in Western democracies, 2010s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the Comparative Manifesto Project database.

**Note:** the figure displays the average score of all parties available in the CMP dataset in the 2010s on the economic-distributive index (y-axis) and the sociocultural index (x-axis). Parties are categorized into conservative, Christian democratic, and liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

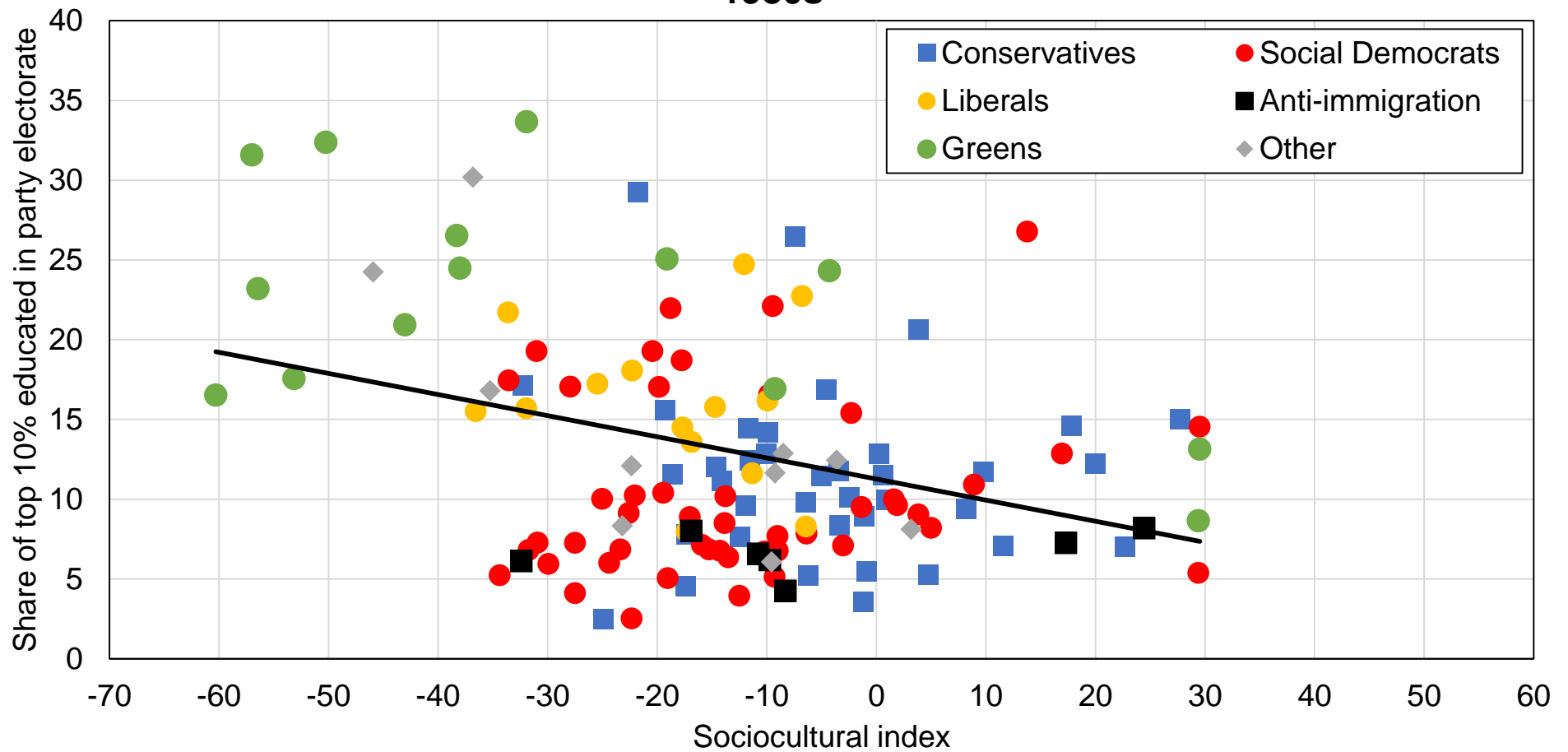
**Figure B9 - Sociocultural polarization and educational cleavages, 1970s**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** parties are categorized into conservative and Christian democratic parties; liberal and social-liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

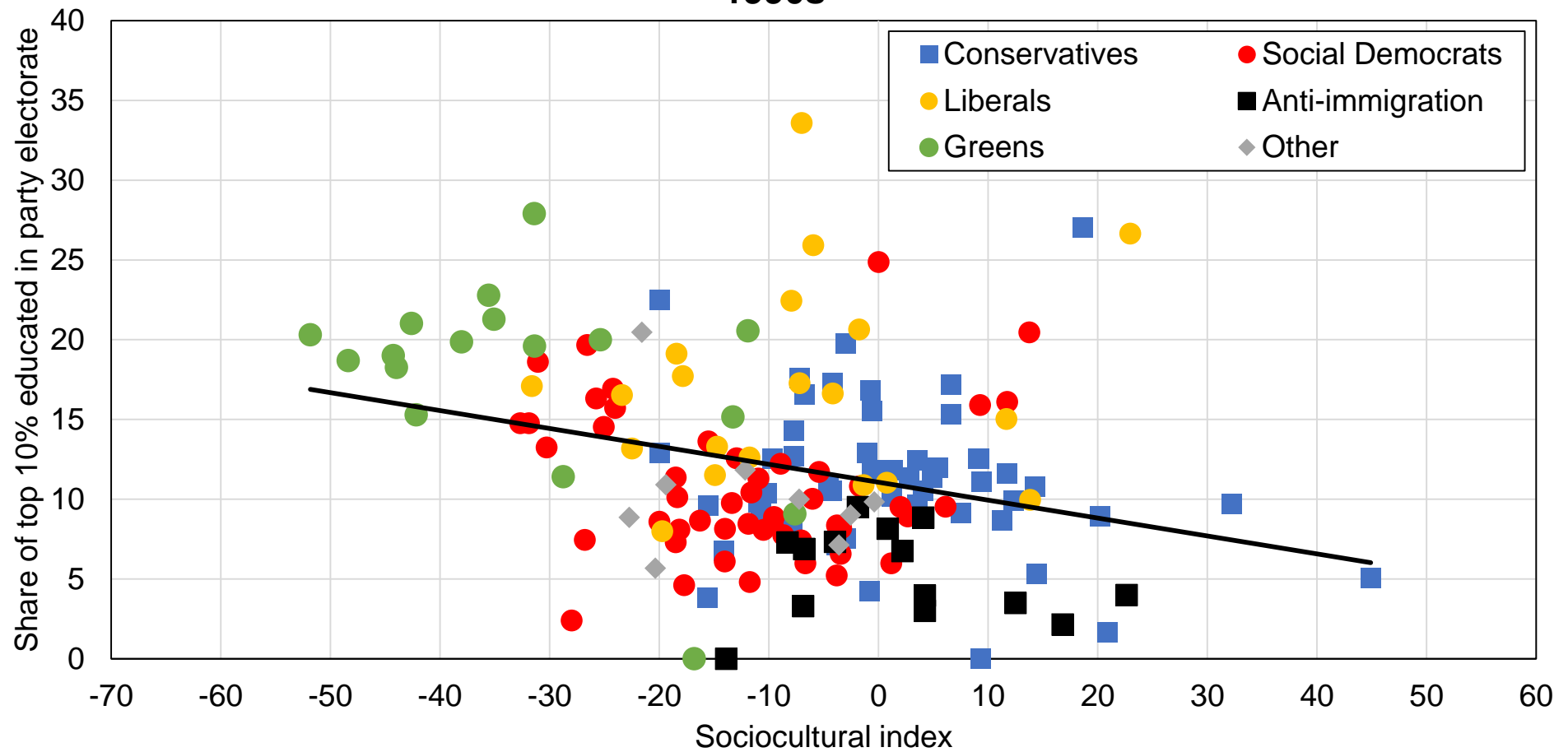
**Figure B10 - Sociocultural polarization and educational cleavages, 1980s**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** parties are categorized into conservative and Christian democratic parties; liberal and social-liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

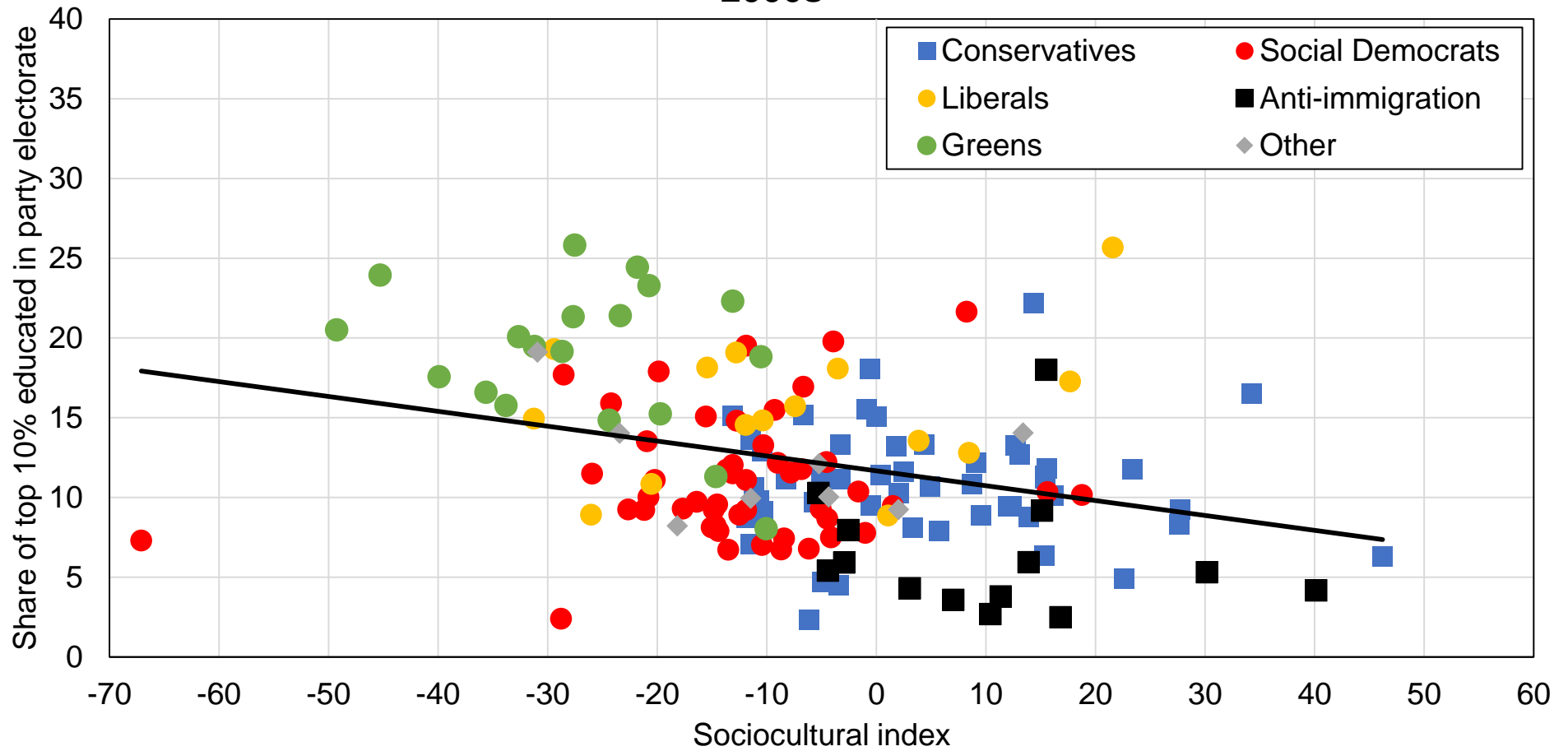
**Figure B11 - Sociocultural polarization and educational cleavages, 1990s**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** parties are categorized into conservative and Christian democratic parties; liberal and social-liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

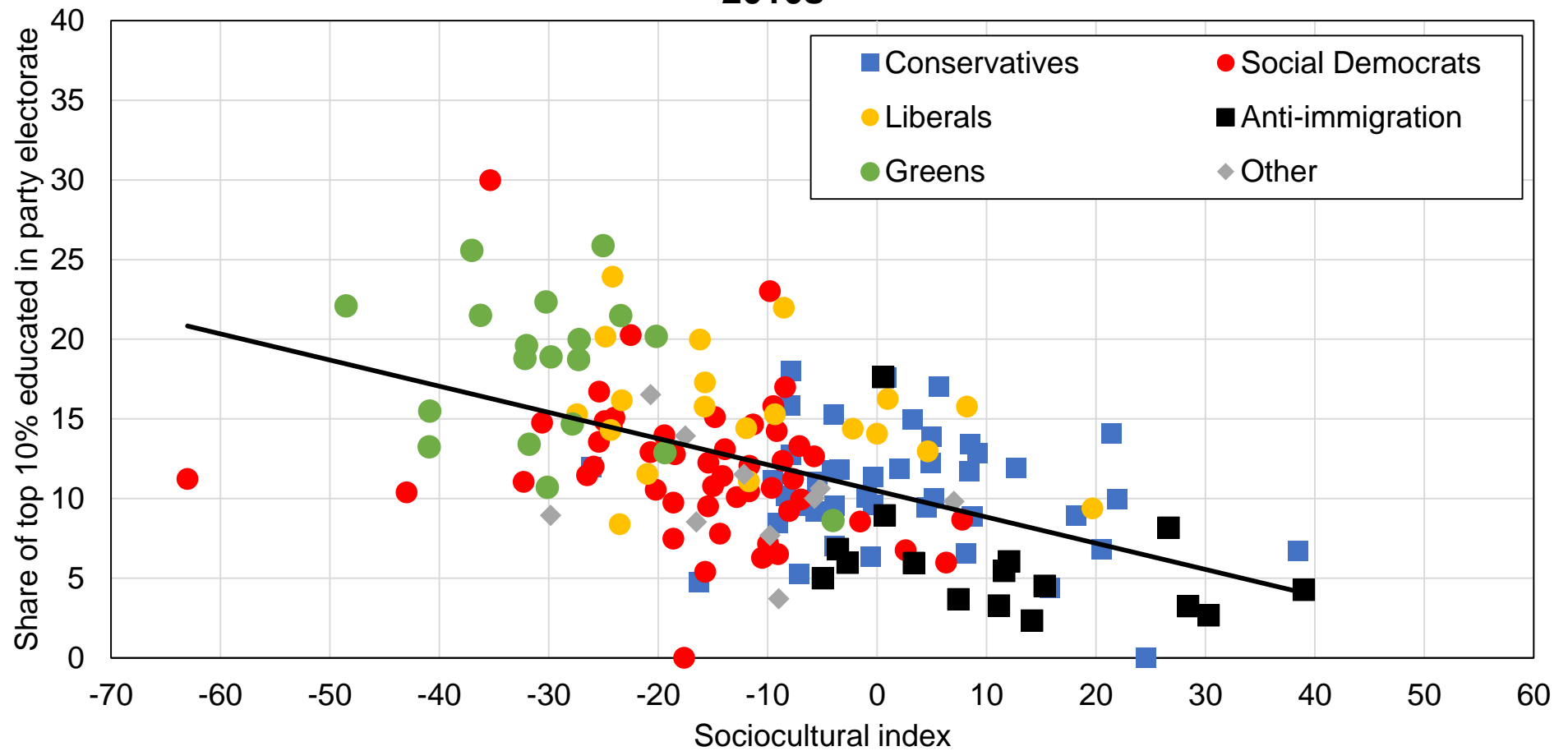
**Figure B12 - Sociocultural polarization and educational cleavages, 2000s**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** parties are categorized into conservative and Christian democratic parties; liberal and social-liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

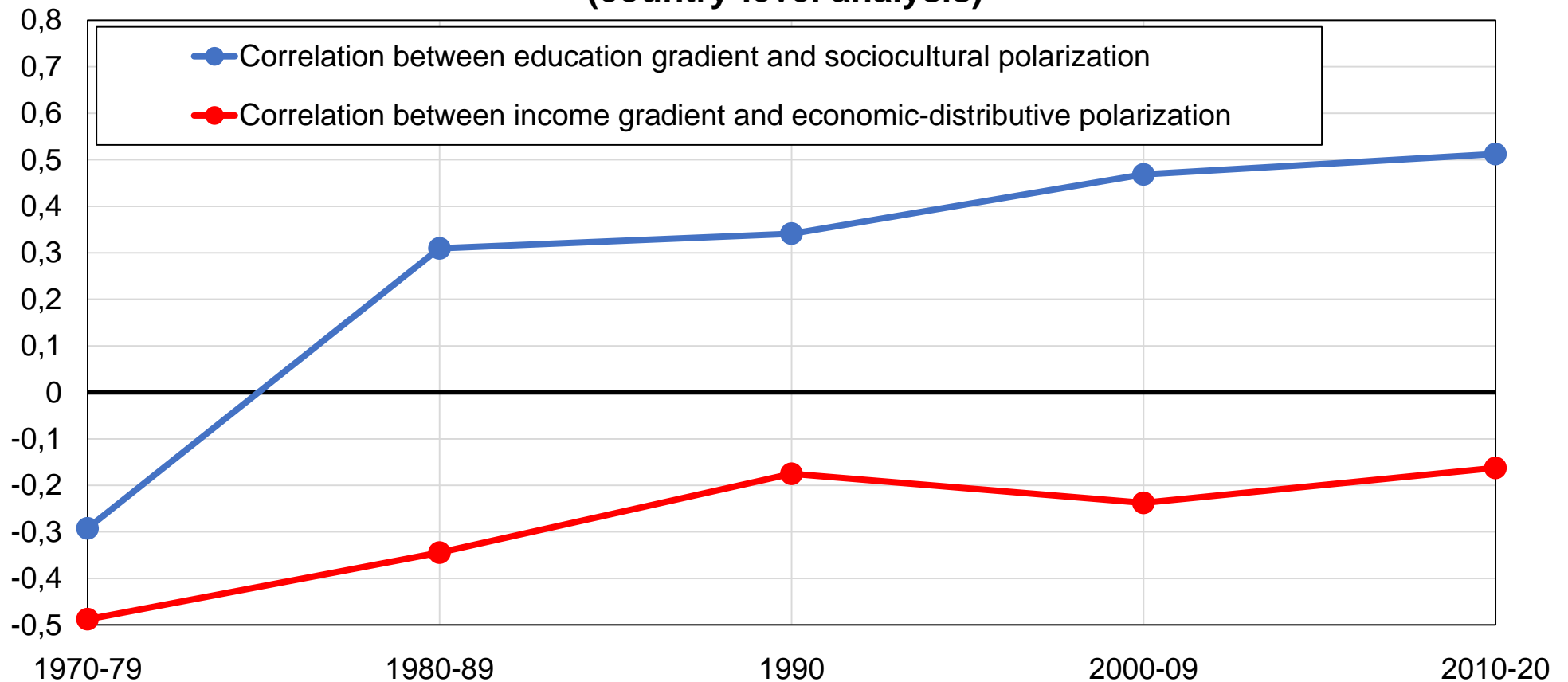
**Figure B13 - Sociocultural polarization and educational cleavages, 2010s**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** parties are categorized into conservative and Christian democratic parties; liberal and social-liberal parties; social democratic, socialist, and other left-wing parties, anti-immigration parties; green parties; and other unclassifiable parties.

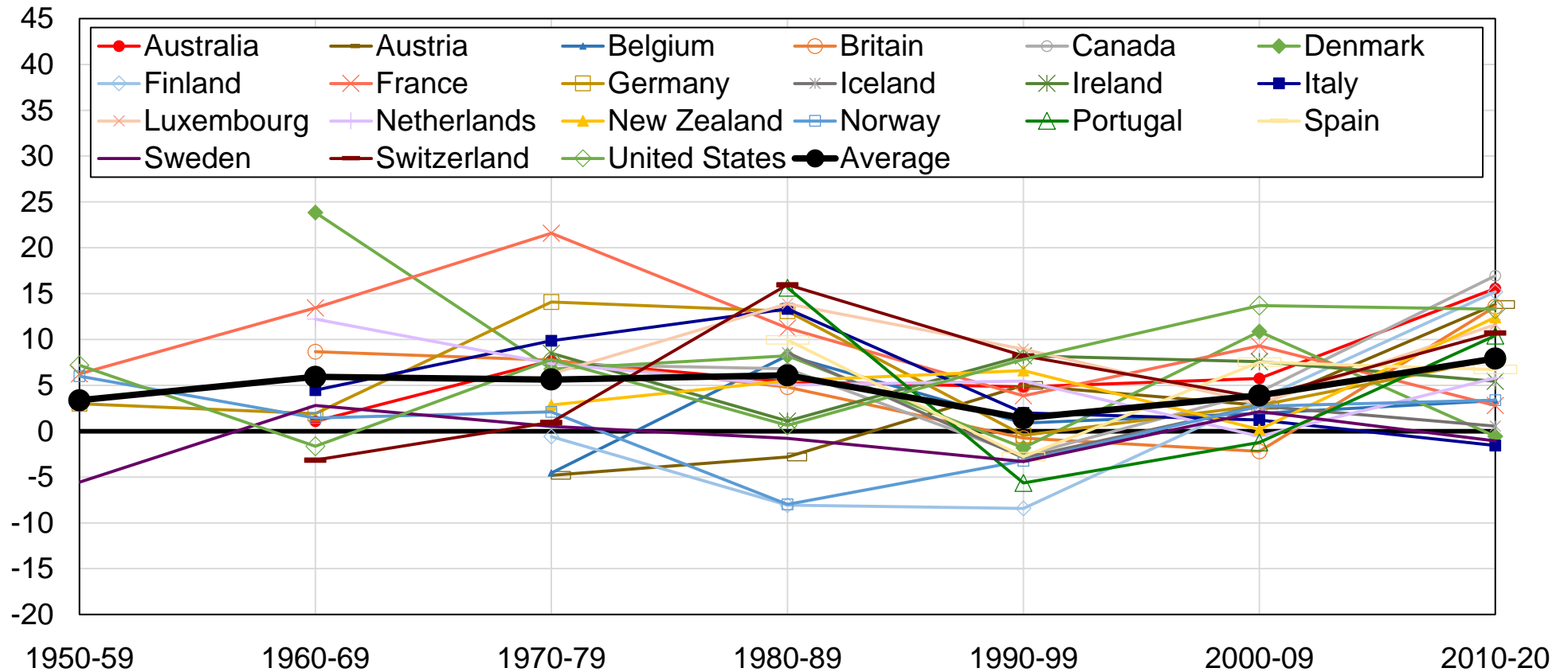
**Figure B14 - Ideological polarization and multi-elite party systems  
(country-level analysis)**



**Source:** authors' computations combining the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database and Manifesto Project data.

**Note:** the upper lines plots the raw correlation between the education gradient (defined as the difference between the share of top 10% educated voters and the share of bottom 90% educated voters voting for left-wing parties) and sociocultural polarization (defined as the standard deviation of the sociocultural index across all parties in a given country). Conversely, the bottom line plots the raw correlation between the income gradient and economic-distributive polarization (inverted, so that higher values correspond to greater pro-redistribution emphases). Both polarization indices are normalized to the average standard deviation to highlight relative evolutions.

**Figure CA1 - Vote for left-wing parties among young voters in Western democracies**

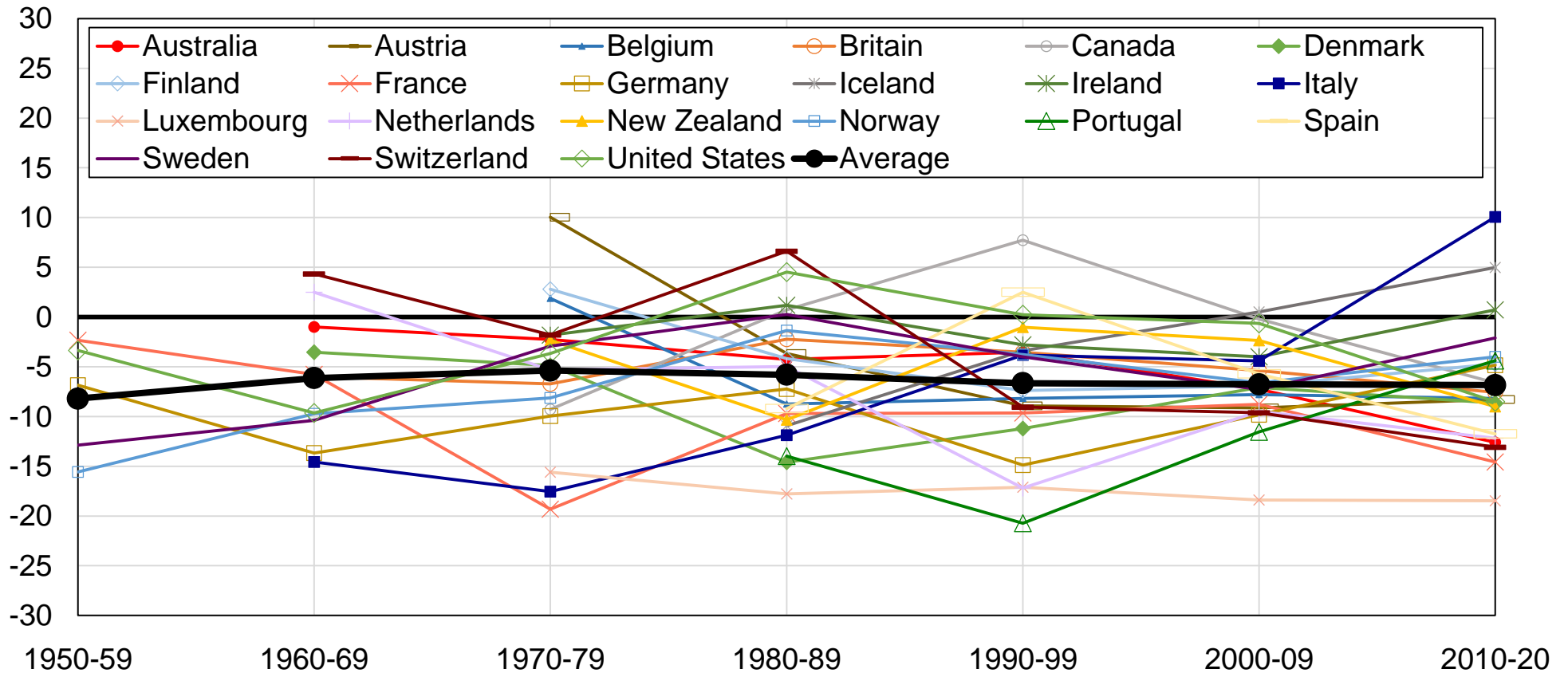


**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of voters younger than 25 and the share of voters aged 25 or above voting for left-wing parties in Western democracies.



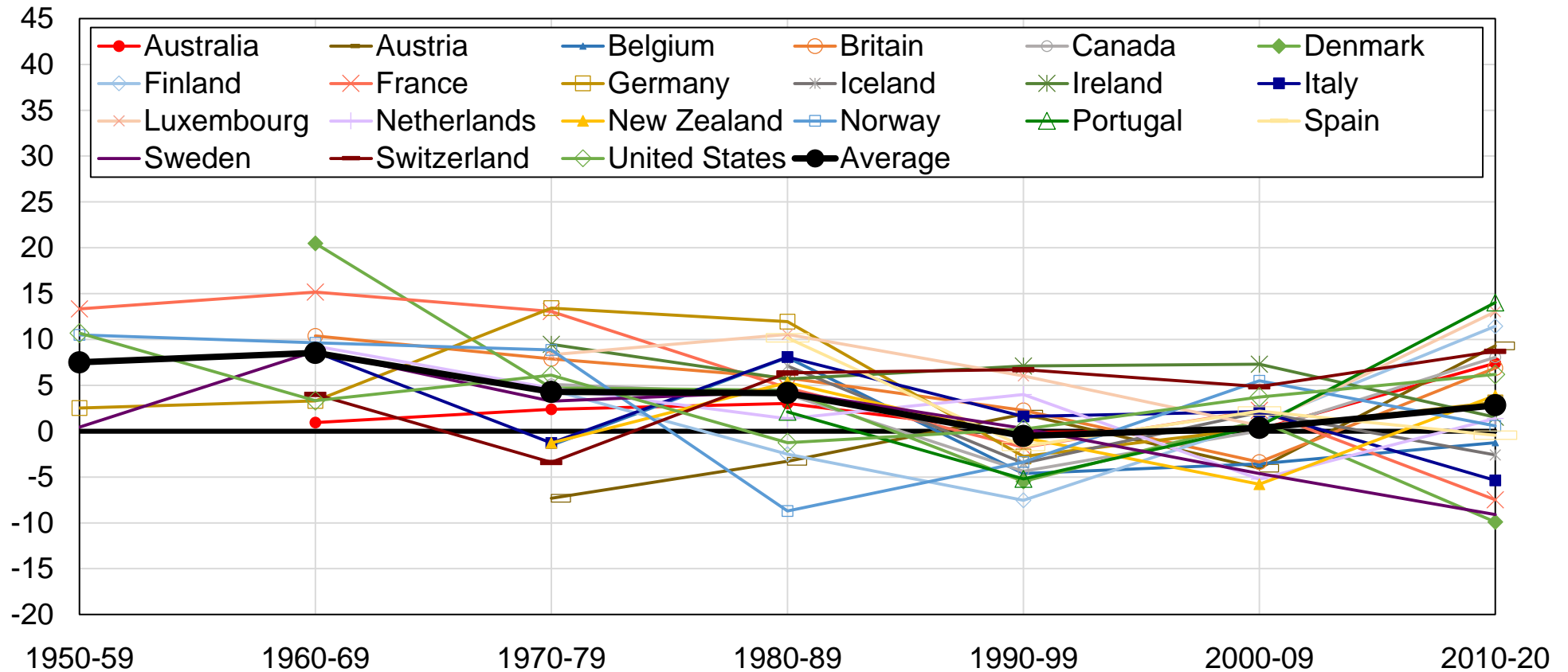
**Figure CA2 - Vote for left-wing parties among old voters in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of the 10% oldest voters and the share of the youngest 90% voters voting for left-wing parties in Western democracies.

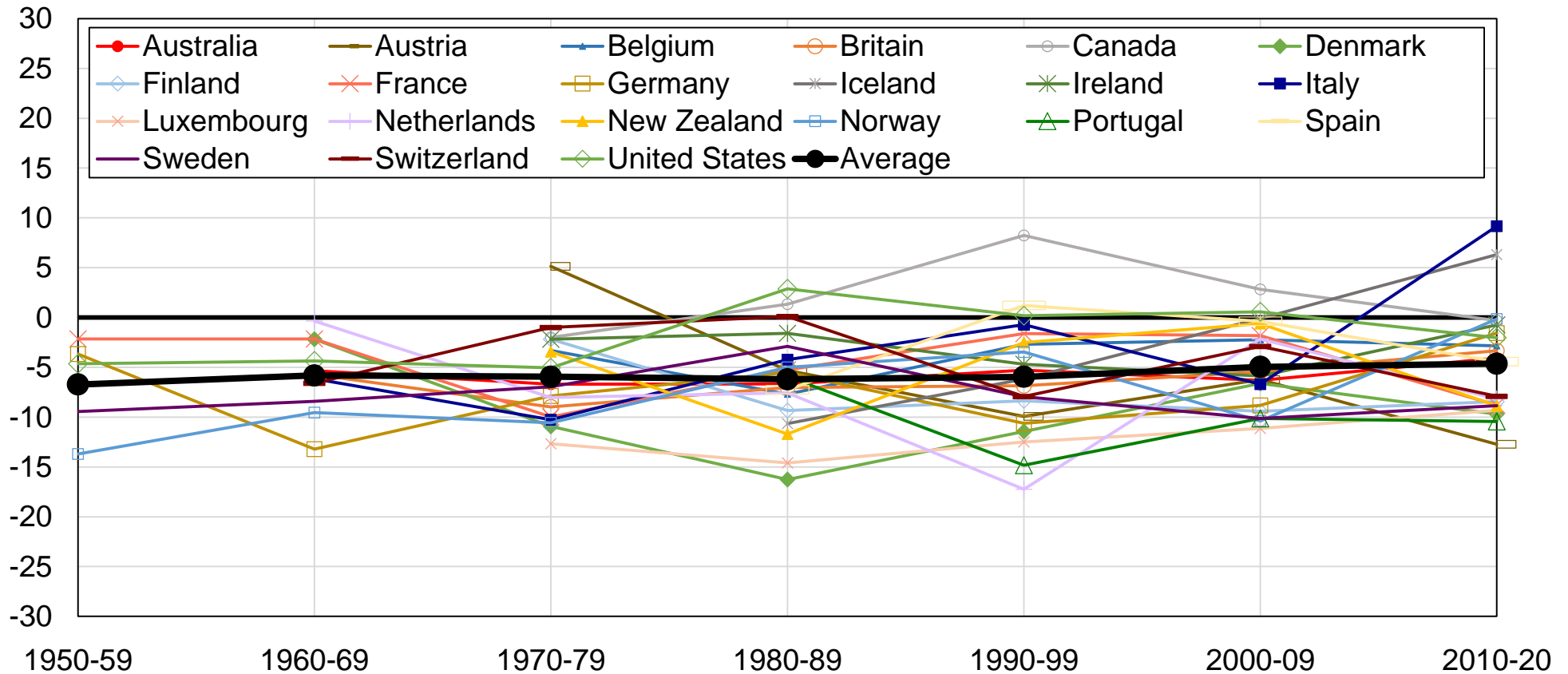
**Figure CA3 - Vote for left-wing parties among young voters in Western democracies, after controls**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of voters younger than 25 and the share of voters aged 25 or above voting for left-wing parties in Western democracies, after controlling for income, education, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status.

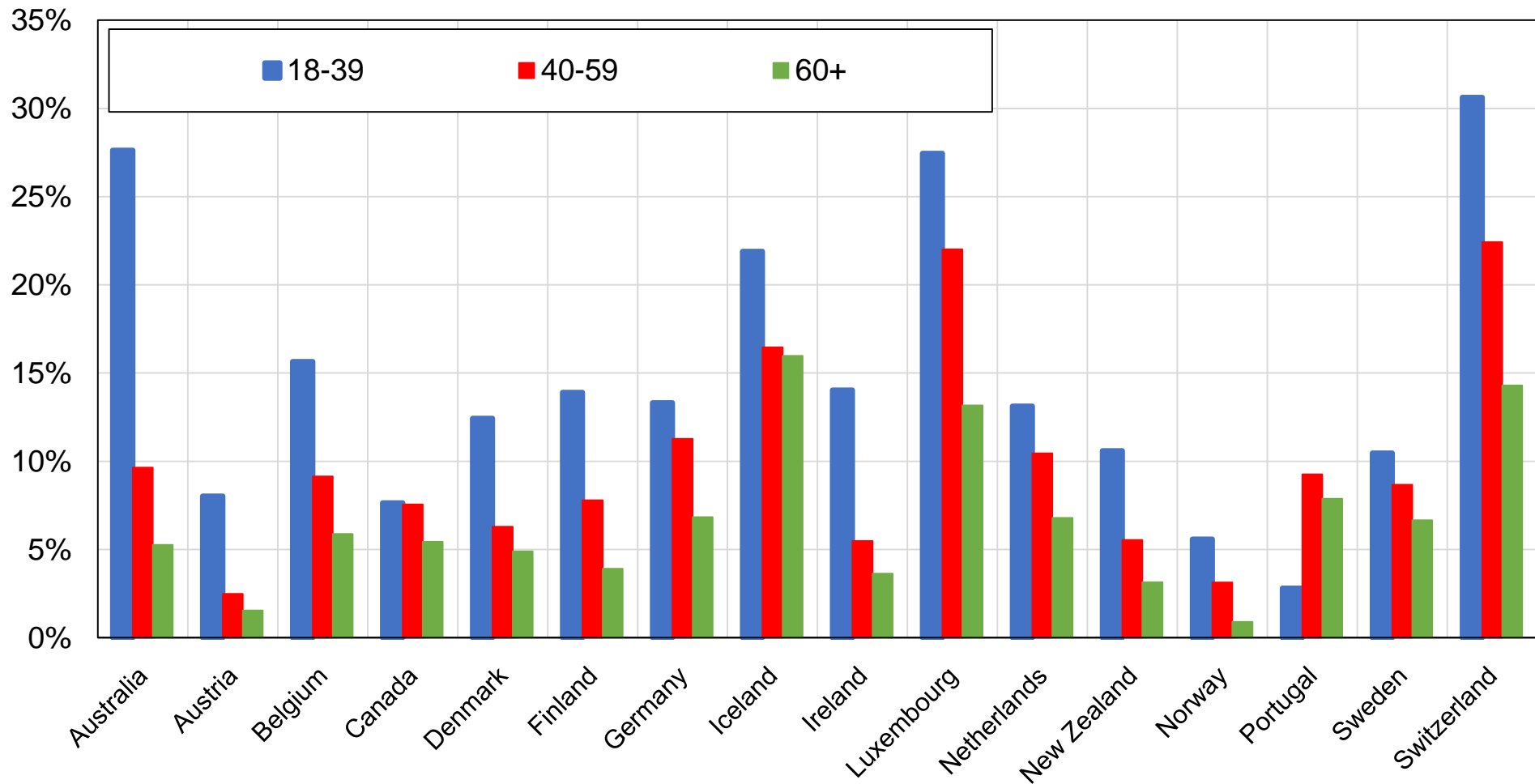
**Figure CA4 - Vote for left-wing parties among old voters in Western democracies, after controls**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of the 10% oldest voters and the share of the youngest 90% voters voting for left-wing parties in Western democracies, after controlling for income, education, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status.

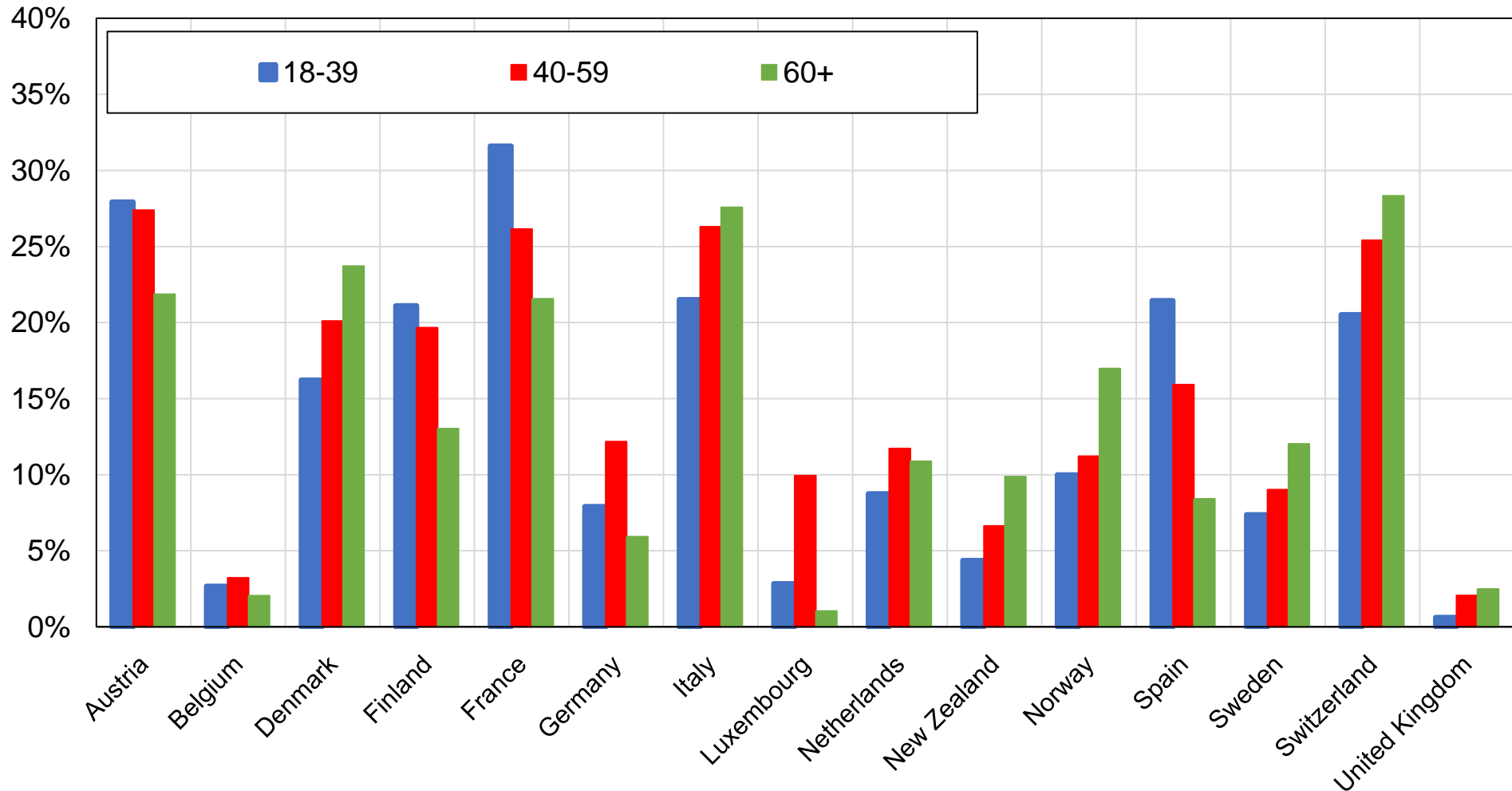
**Figure CA5 - Vote for Green parties by age group**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by Green parties in Western democracies in the last election available by age group.

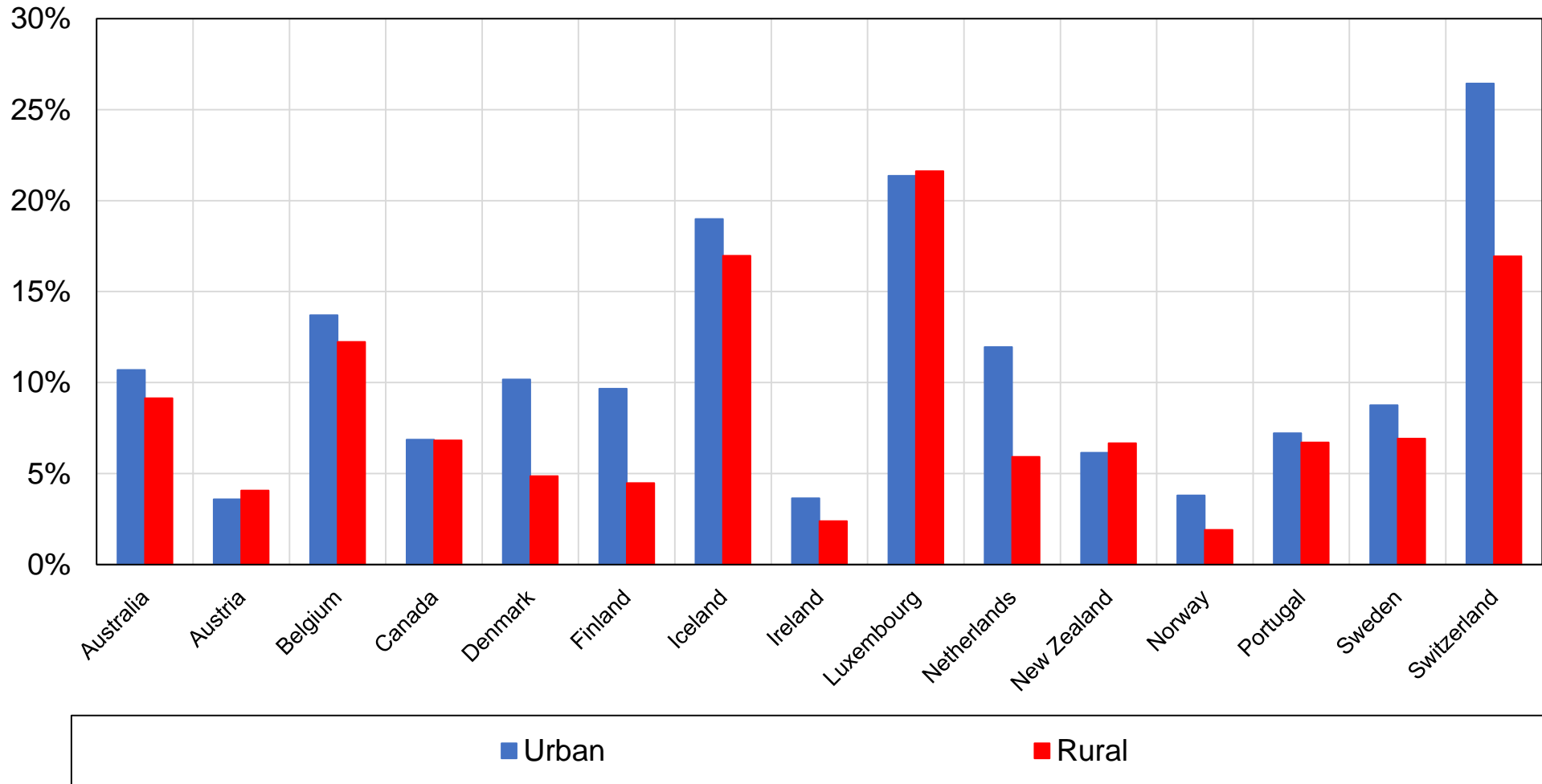
**Figure CA6 - Vote for anti-immigration parties by age group**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by anti-immigration parties in Western democracies in the last election available by age group.

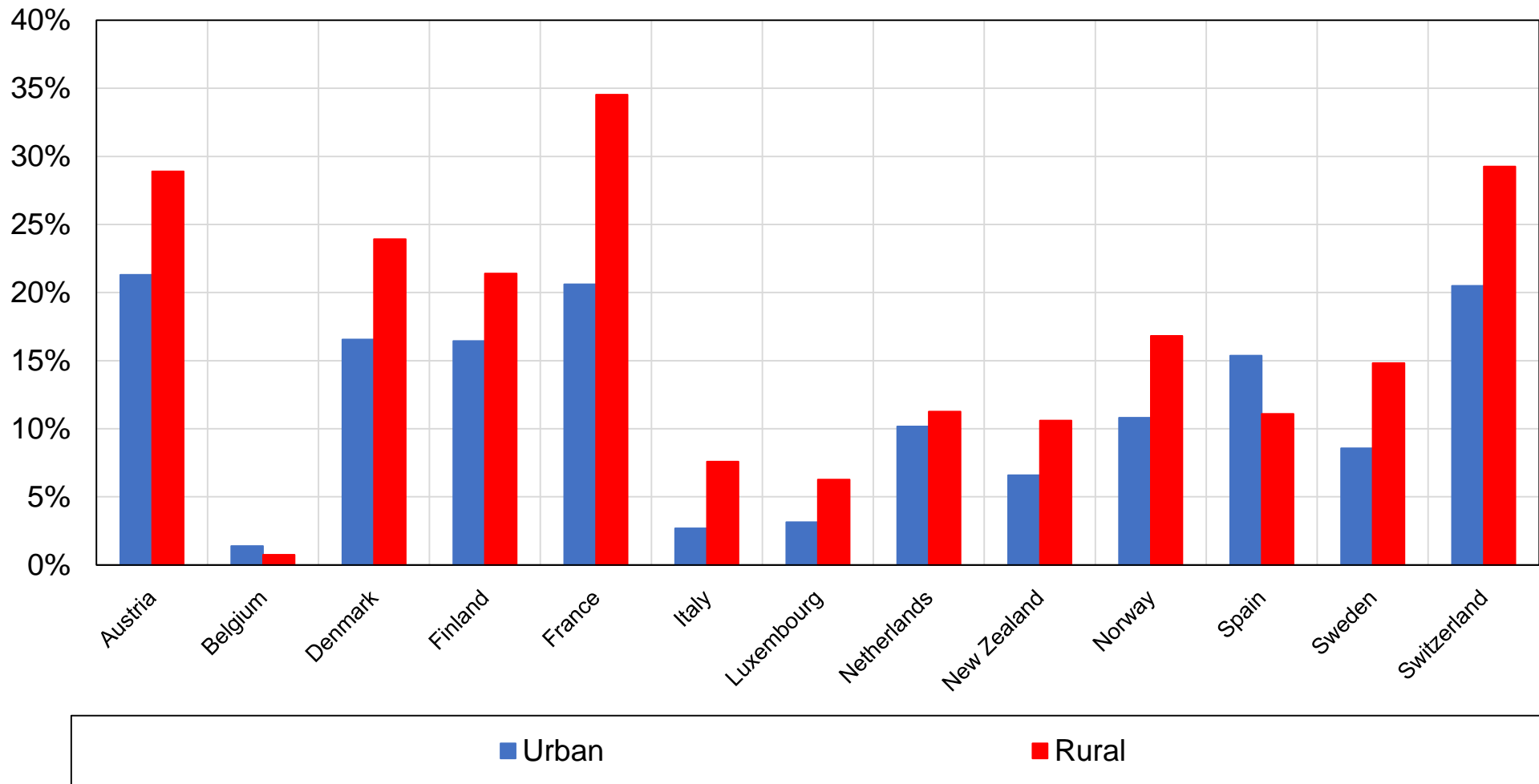
**Figure CB1 - Vote for Green parties by rural-urban location in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by Green parties by rural-urban location in Western democracies.

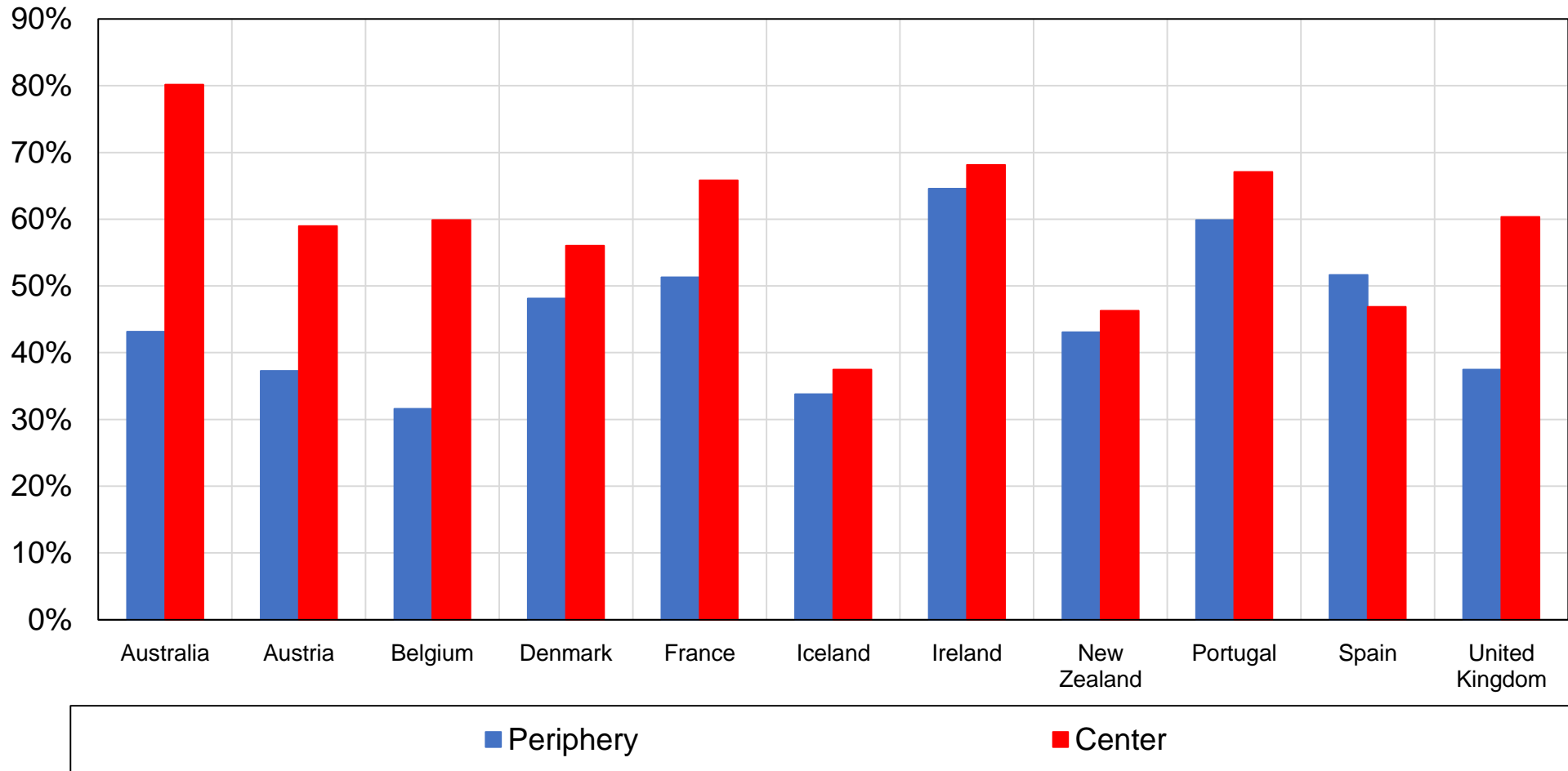
**Figure CB2 - Vote for anti-immigration parties by rural-urban location in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by anti-immigration parties by rural-urban location in Western democracies.

**Figure CB3 - Vote for left-wing parties by center-periphery location in Western democracies**

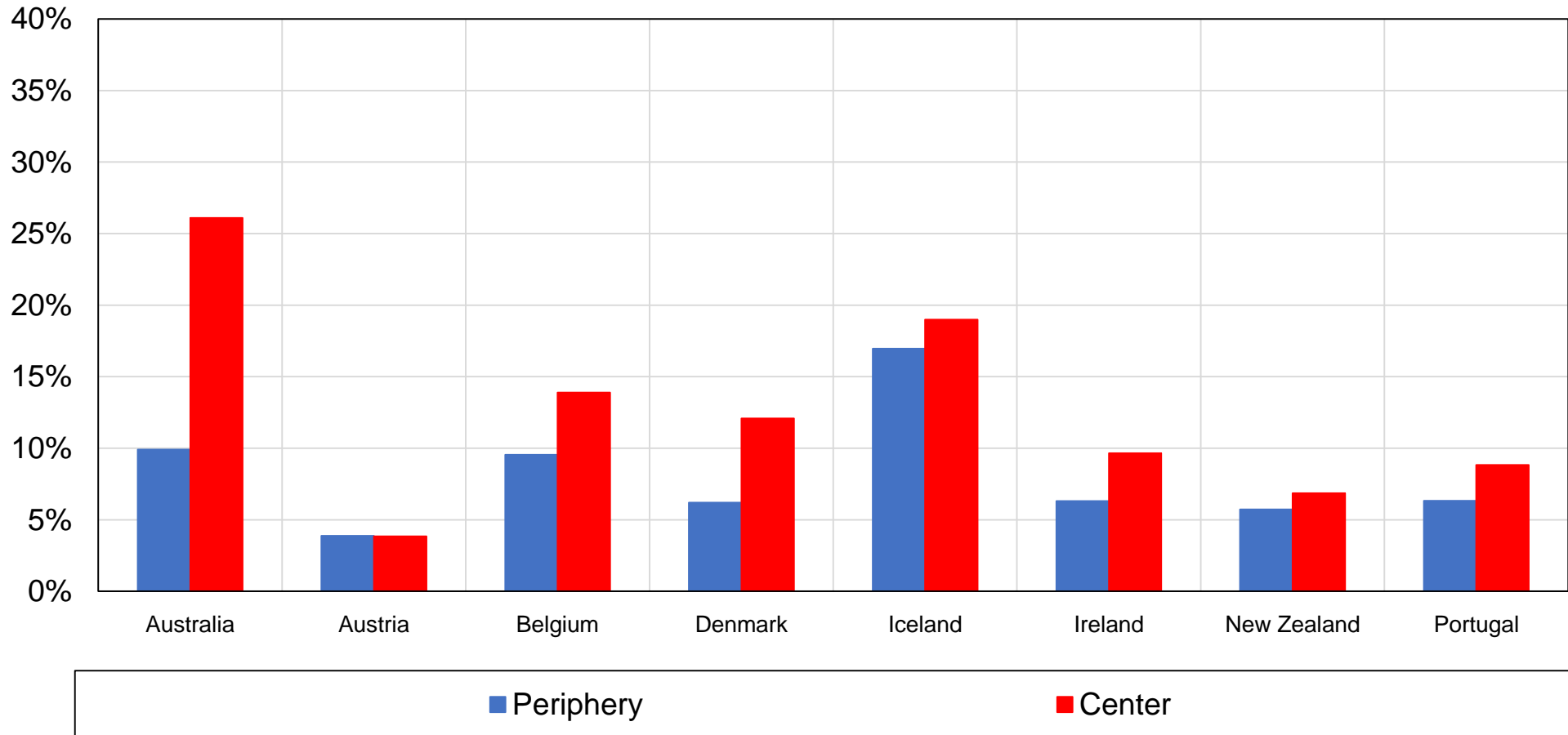


**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by left-wing parties by center-periphery location in Western democracies. Centers correspond to the Australian Capital Territory (Australia), Vienna (Austria), Brussels (Belgium), Copenhagen (Denmark), Paris (France), Reykjavík (Iceland), Dublin (Ireland), Auckland and Wellington (New Zealand), Lisbon (Portugal), Madrid (Spain), and London (United Kingdom).



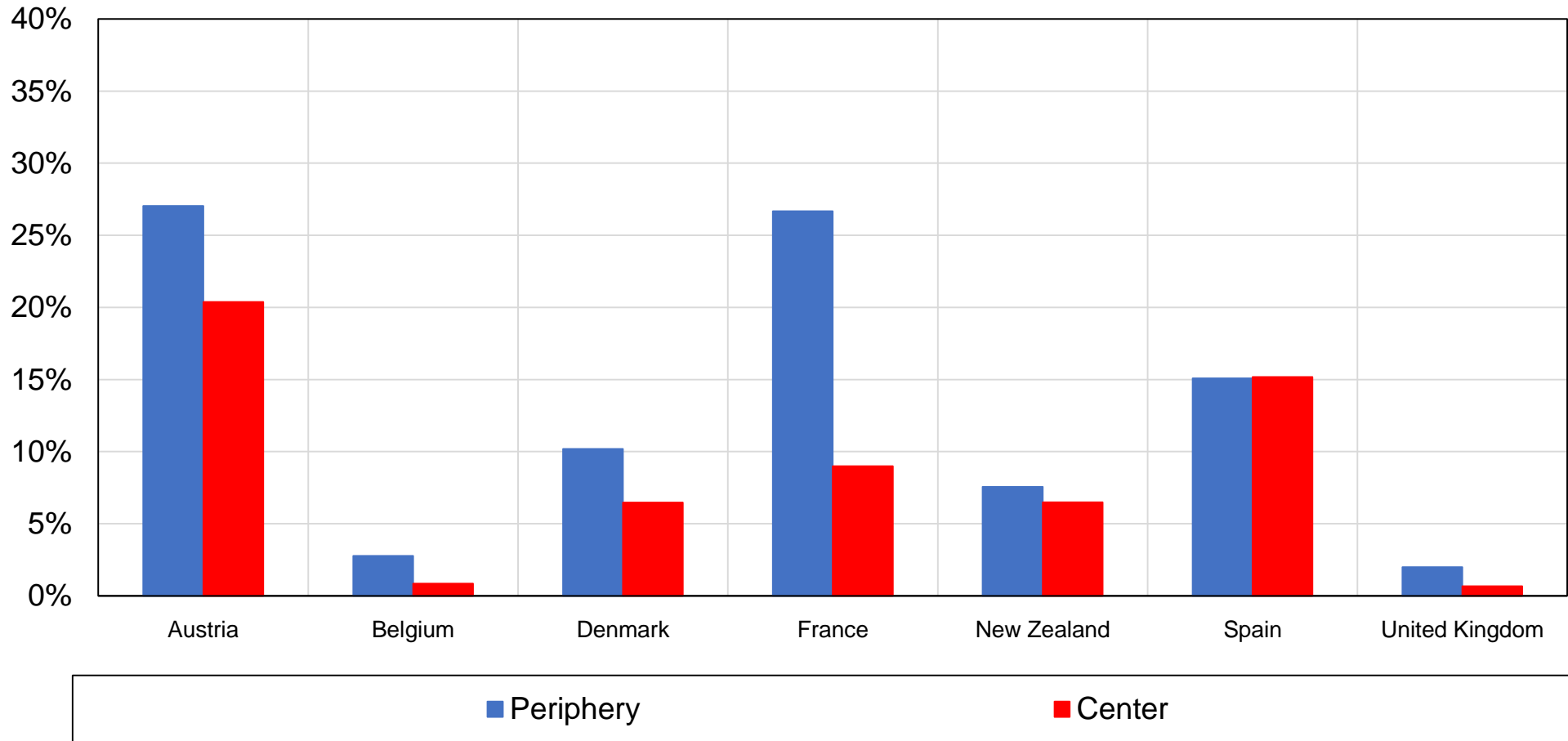
**Figure CB4 - Vote for Green parties by center-periphery location in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by Green parties by center-periphery location in Western democracies. Centers correspond to the Australian Capital Territory (Australia), Vienna (Austria), Brussels (Belgium), Copenhagen (Denmark), Paris (France), Reykjavík (Iceland), Dublin (Ireland), Auckland and Wellington (New Zealand), Lisbon (Portugal), Madrid (Spain), and London (United Kingdom).

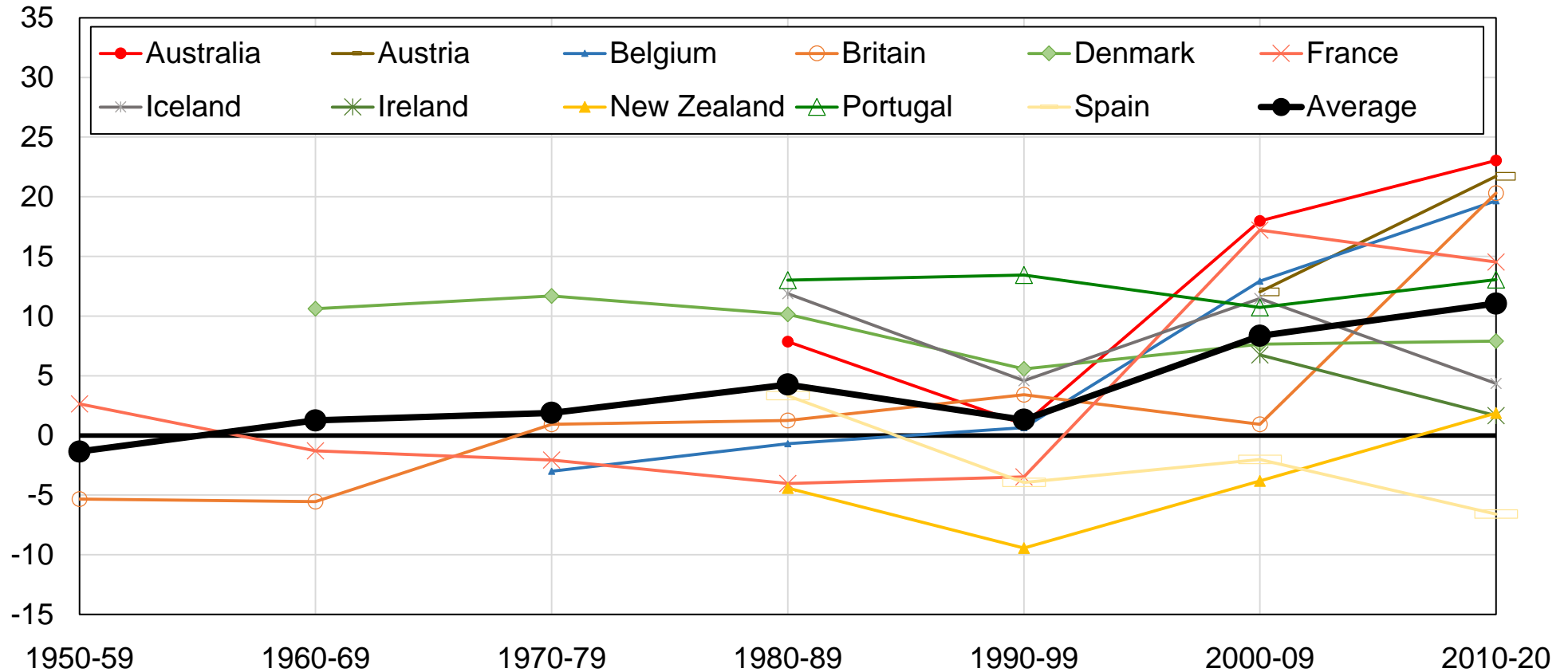
**Figure CB5 - Vote for anti-immigration parties by center-periphery location in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by anti-immigration parties by center-periphery location in Western democracies. Centers correspond to the Australian Capital Territory (Australia), Vienna (Austria), Brussels (Belgium), Copenhagen (Denmark), Paris (France), Reykjavík (Iceland), Dublin (Ireland), Auckland and Wellington (New Zealand), Lisbon (Portugal), Madrid (Spain), and London (United Kingdom).

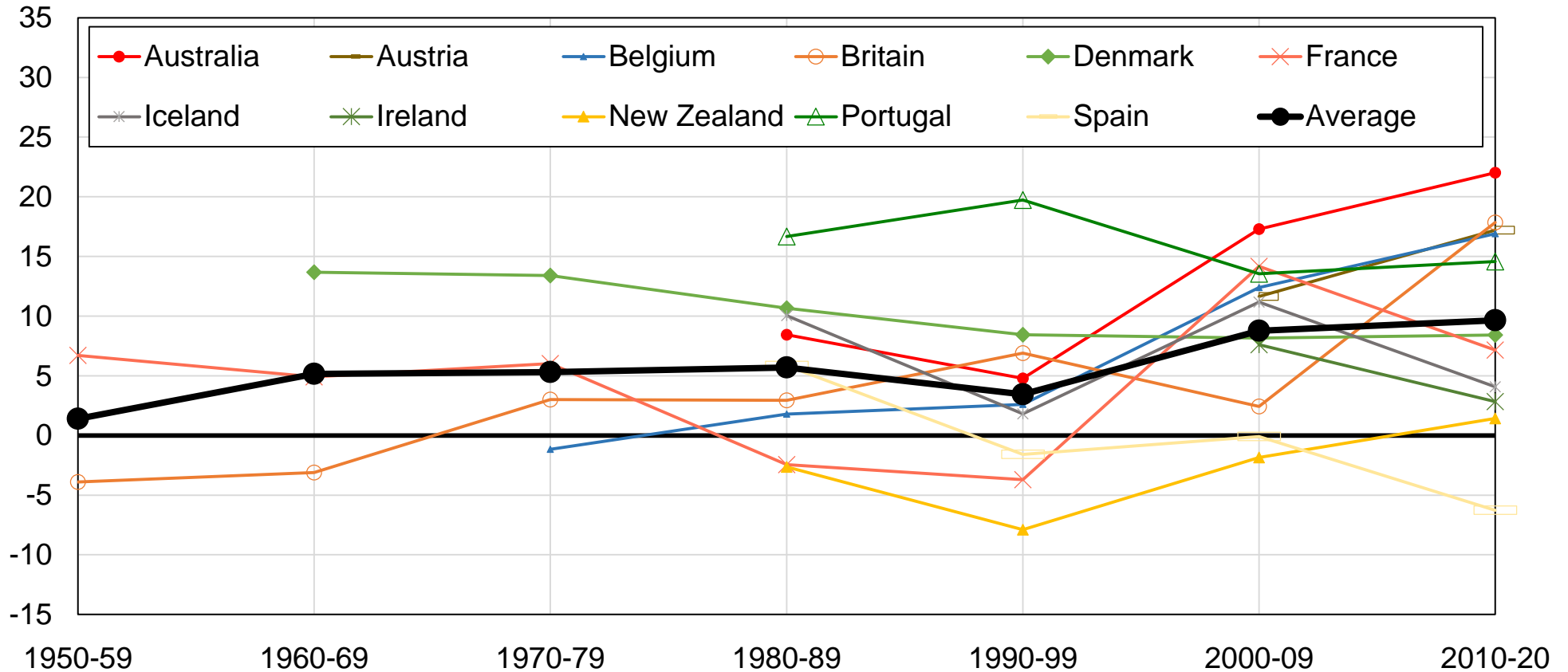
**Figure CB6 - Vote for left-wing parties among capital cities in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of voters living the in the capital city and the share of other voters voting for left-wing parties in Western democracies. Centers correspond to the Australian Capital Territory (Australia), Vienna (Austria), Brussels (Belgium), Copenhagen (Denmark), Paris (France), Reykjavík (Iceland), Dublin (Ireland), Auckland and Wellington (New Zealand), Lisbon (Portugal), Madrid (Spain), and London (United Kingdom).

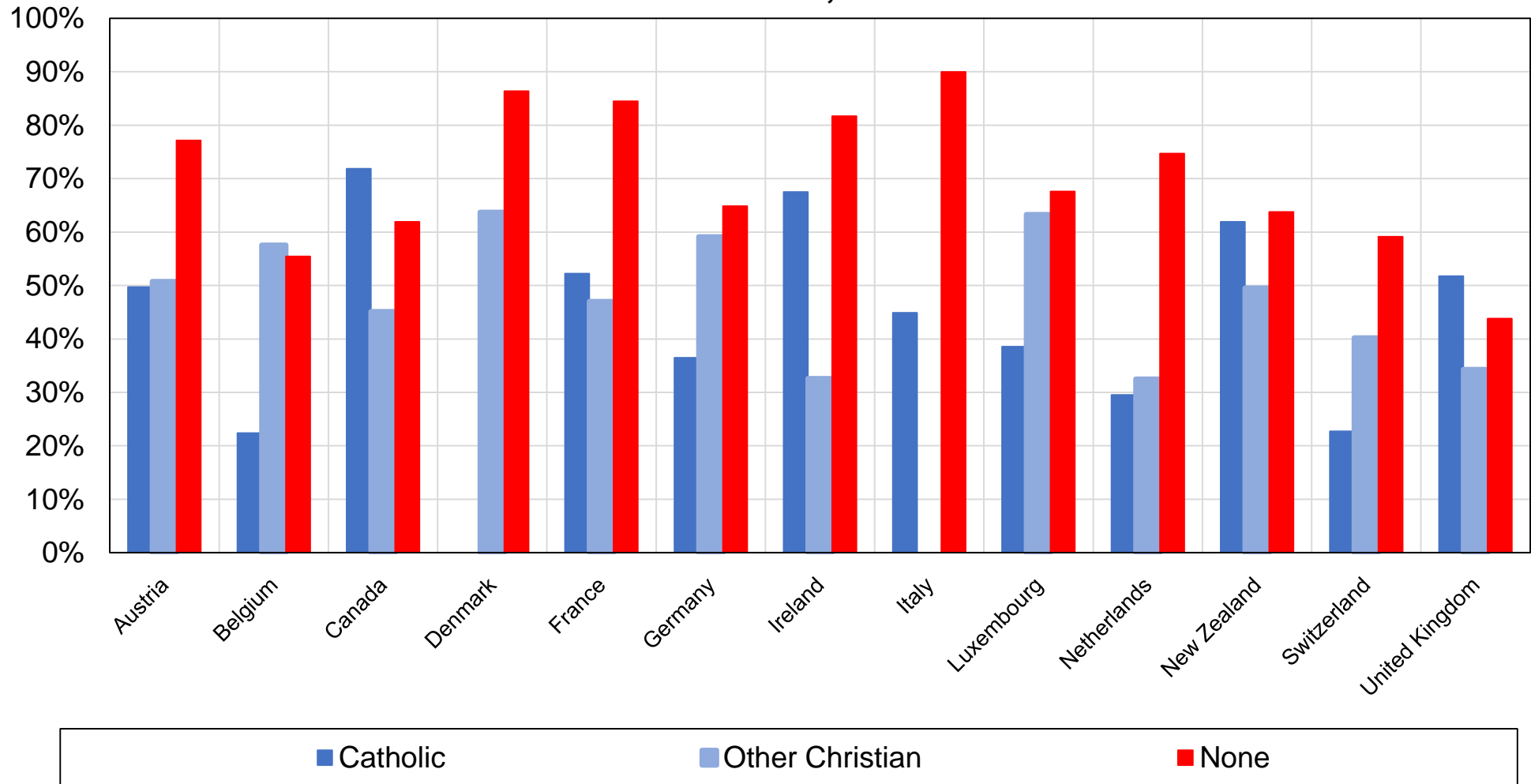
**Figure CB7 - Vote for left-wing parties among capital cities in Western democracies, after controls**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of voters living in the capital city and the share of other voters voting for left-wing parties in Western democracies, after controlling for income, education, age, gender, employment status, and marital status. Centers correspond to the Australian Capital Territory (Australia), Vienna (Austria), Brussels (Belgium), Copenhagen (Denmark), Paris (France), Reykjavík (Iceland), Dublin (Ireland), Auckland and Wellington (New Zealand), Lisbon (Portugal), Madrid (Spain), and London (United Kingdom).

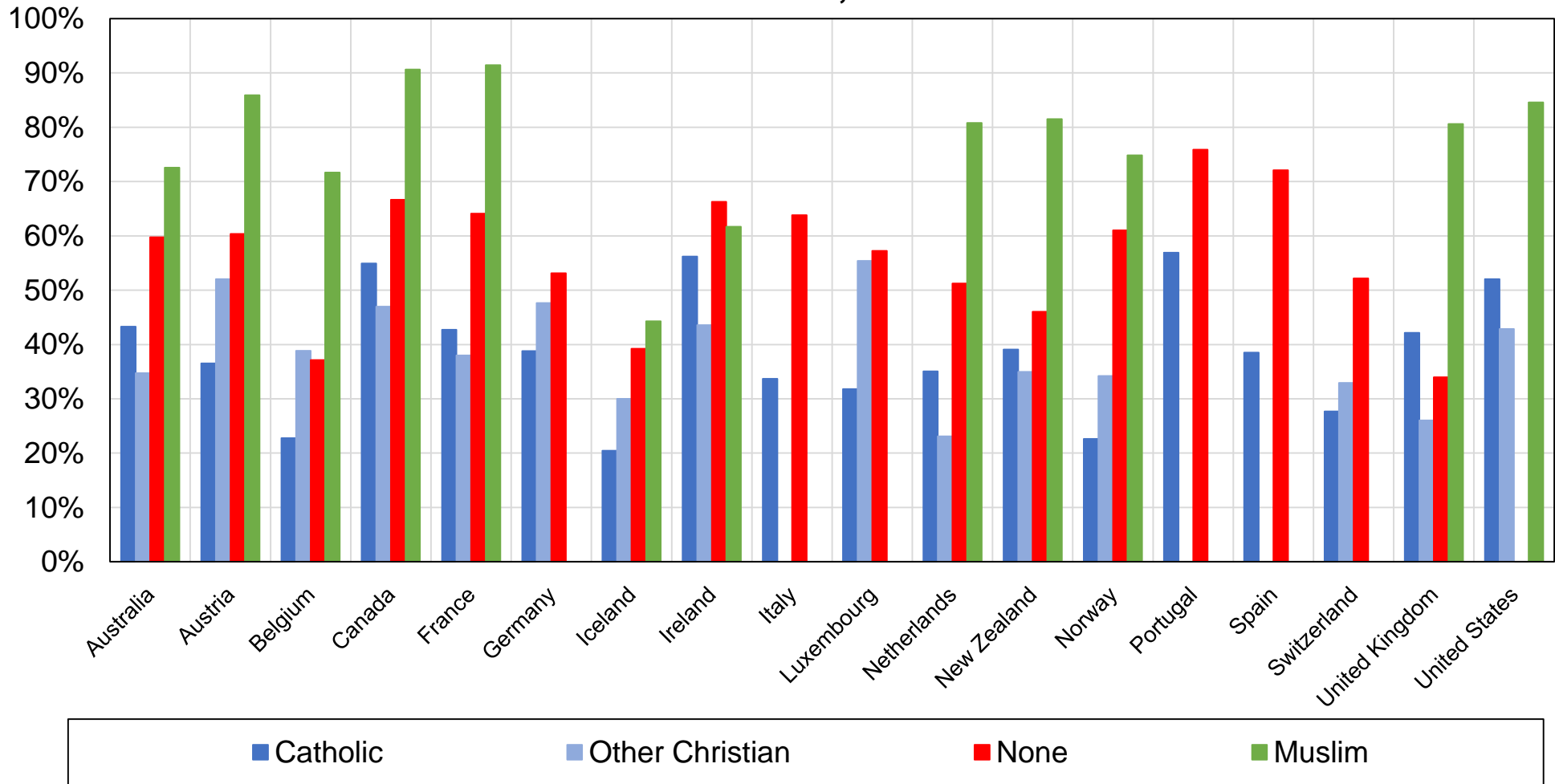
**Figure CC1 - Vote for left-wing parties by religion in Western democracies, 1970s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by left-wing parties by religion in the 1970s in Western democracies.

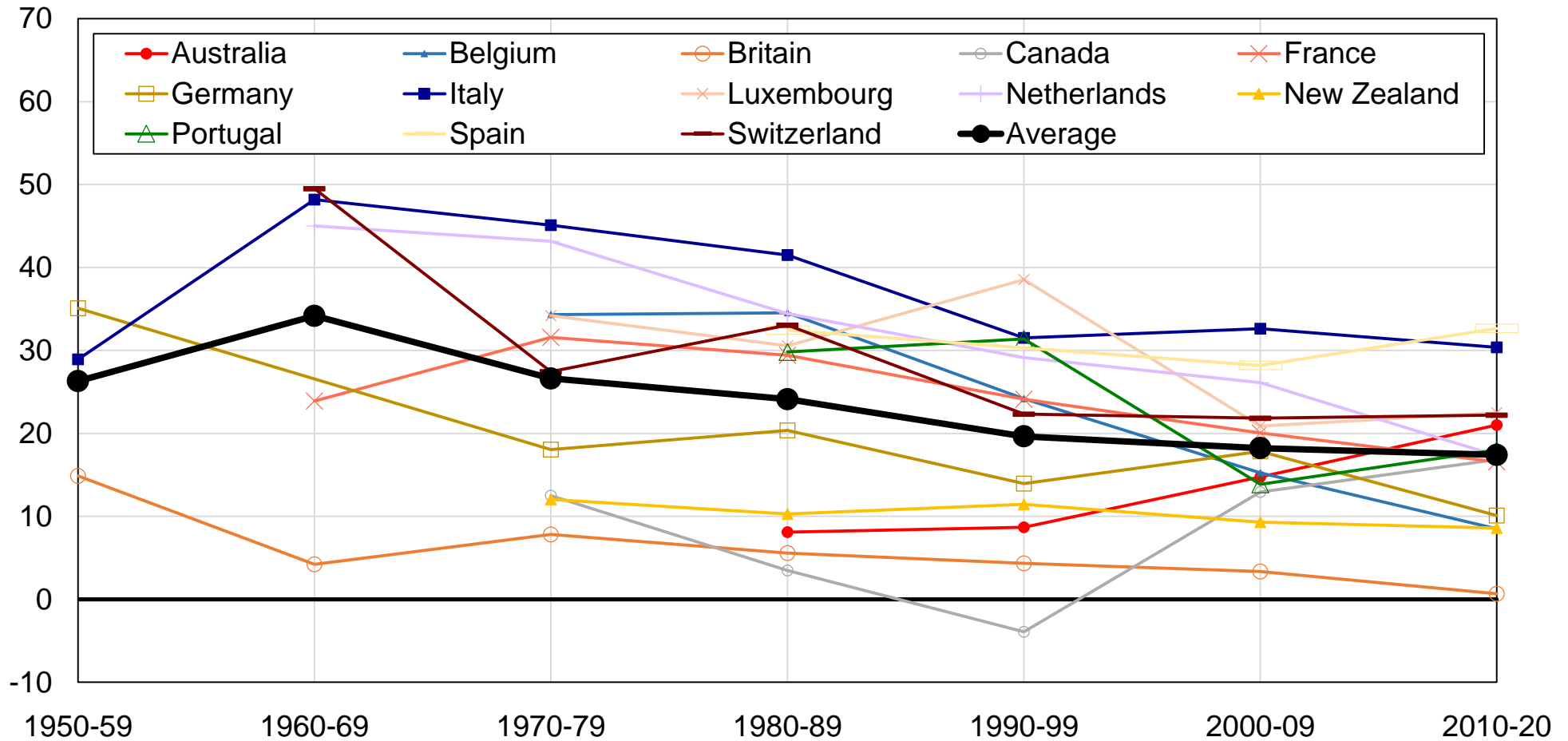
**Figure CC2 - Vote for left-wing parties by religion in Western democracies, 2010s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by left-wing parties by religion in the 2010s in Western democracies.

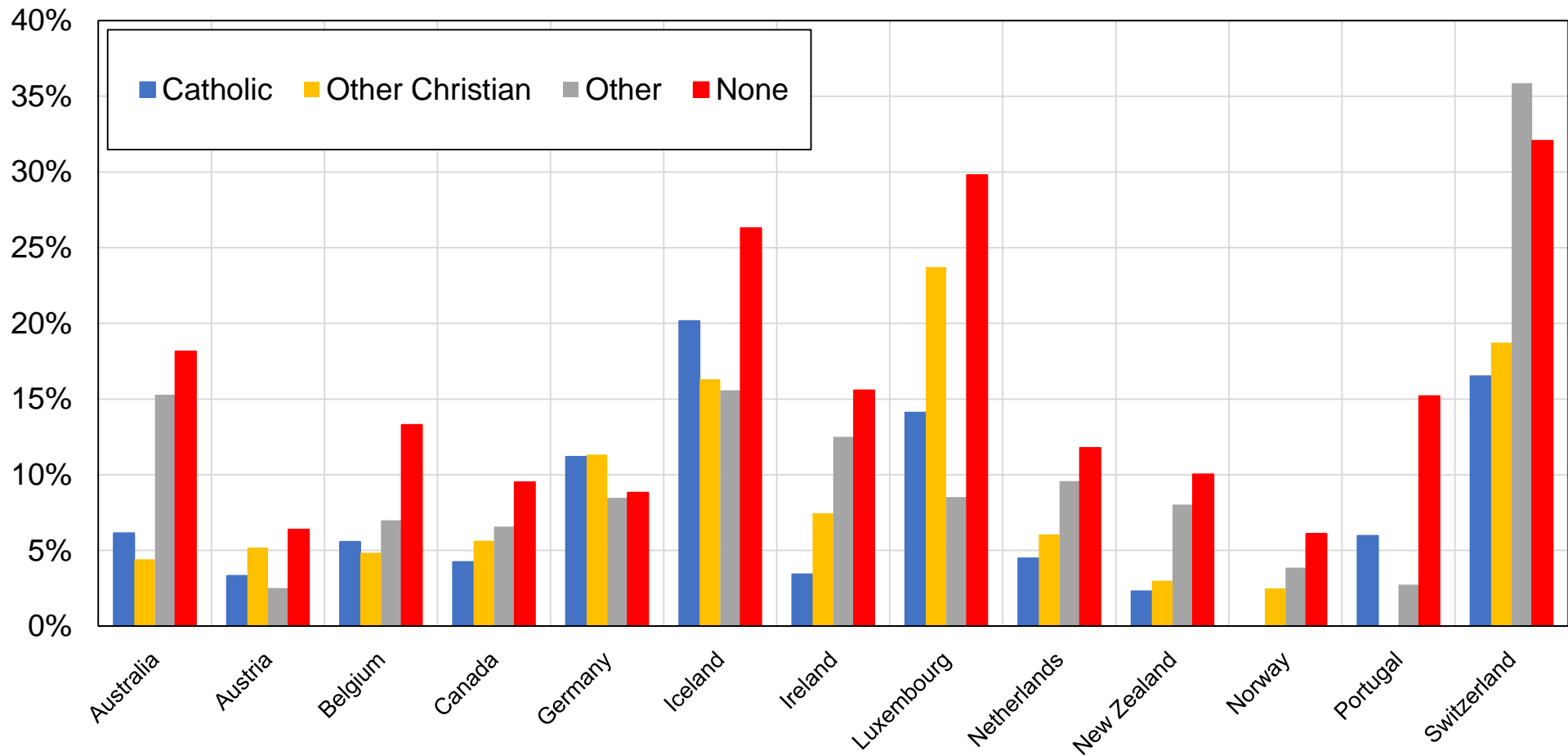
**Figure CC3 - Vote for left-wing parties among voters with no religion in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of voters belonging to no religion and the share of other voters voting for left-wing parties in Western democracies. Non-religious voters have remained significantly more left-wing than the rest of the electorate since the 1950s.

**Figure CC4 - Vote for Green parties by religion, 2010s**

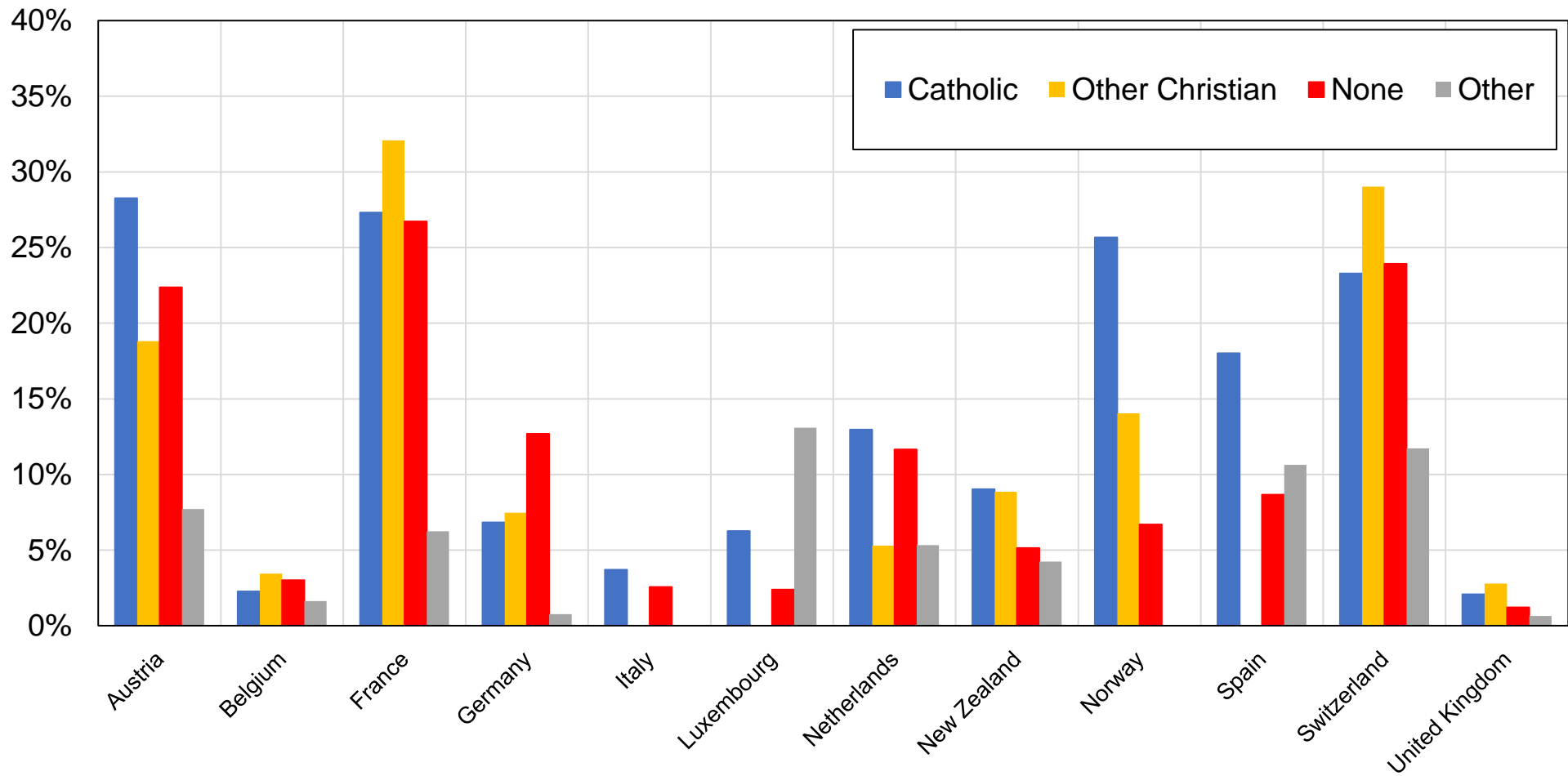


**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by Green parties by religious affiliation.



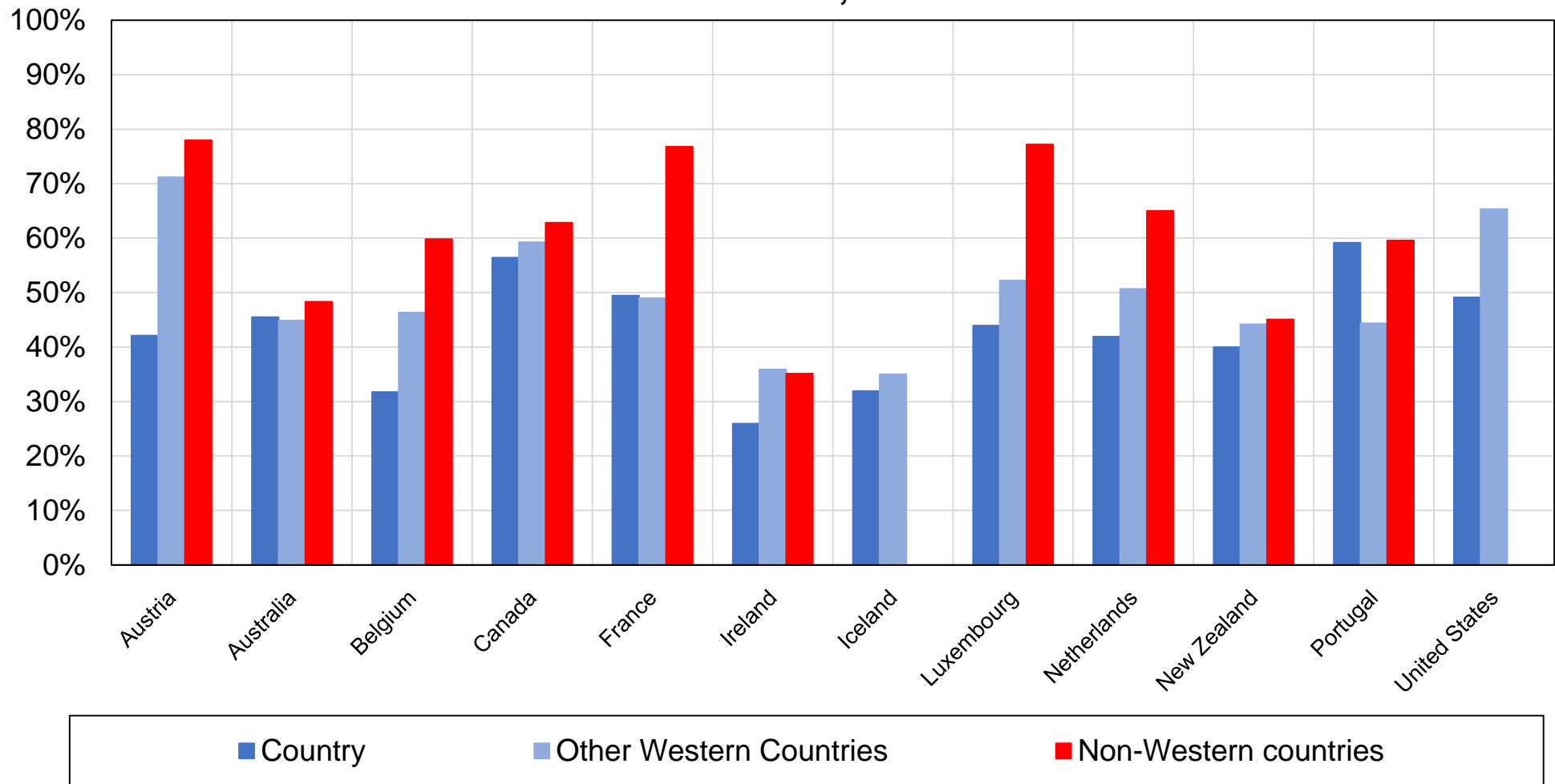
**Figure CC5 - Vote for anti-immigration parties by religion, 2010s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by anti-immigration parties by religious affiliation.

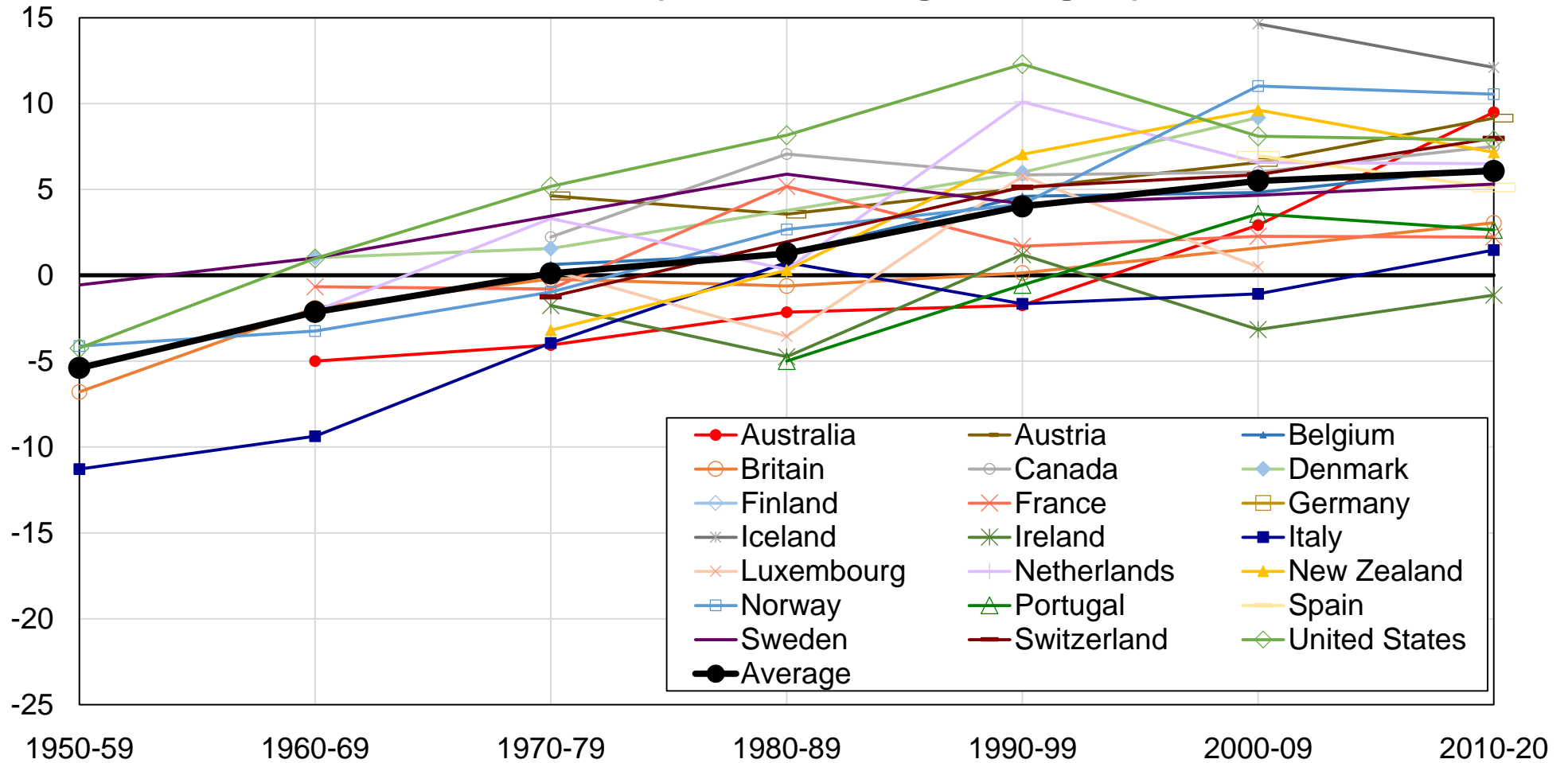
**Figure CD1 - Vote for left-wing parties by country of birth in Western democracies, 2010s**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by left-wing parties by country of birth in Western democracies in the 2010s. Excludes Fianna Fáil in Ireland. Covers 2007 and 2012 elections in France (no data in 2017).

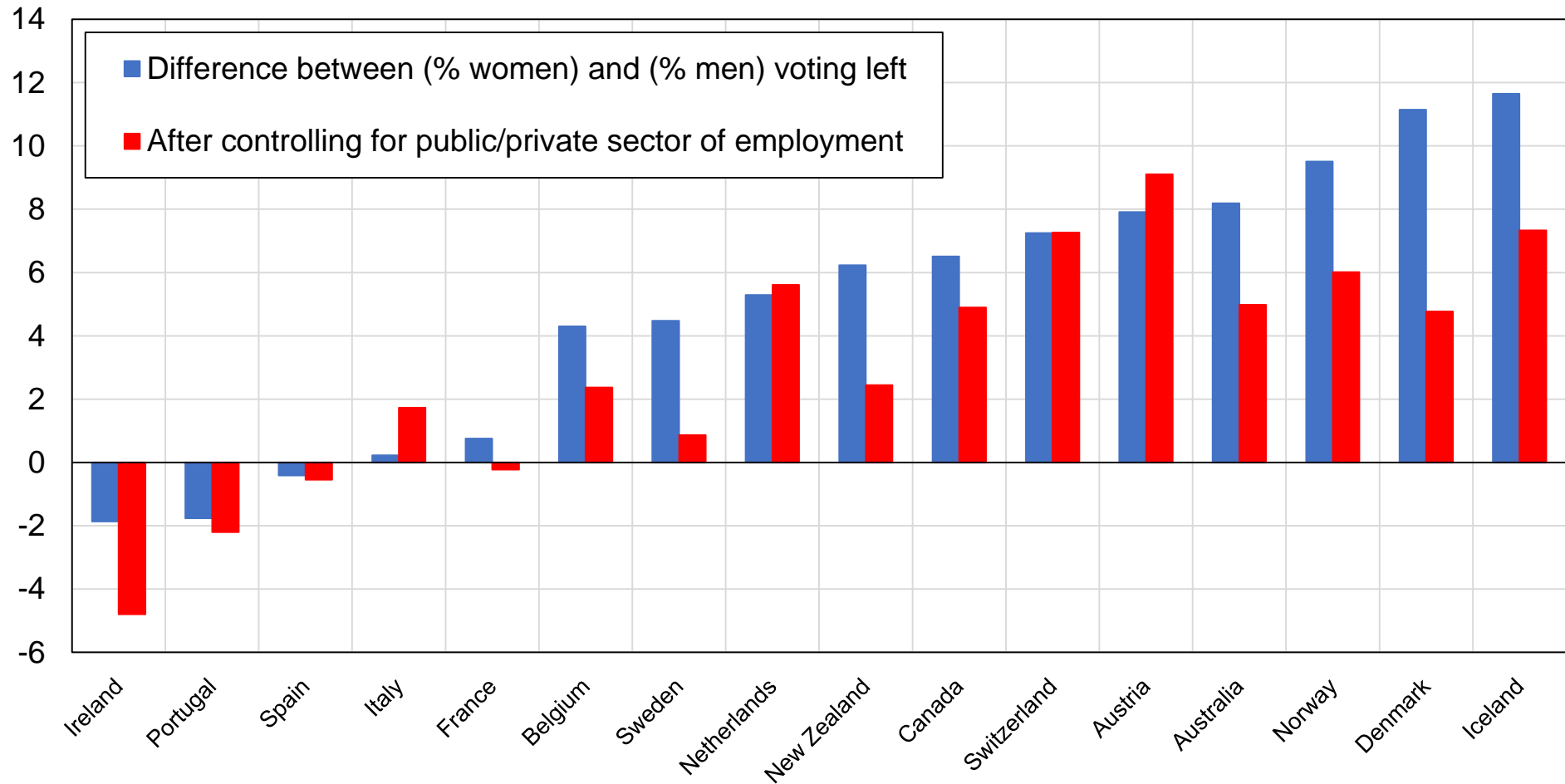
**Figure CE1 - Vote for left-wing parties among women in Western democracies (after controlling for religion)**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure displays the difference between the share of women and the share of men voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western democracies, after controlling for religion and church attendance. In the majority of countries, women have gradually shifted from being significantly more right-wing to being significantly more left-wing than men.

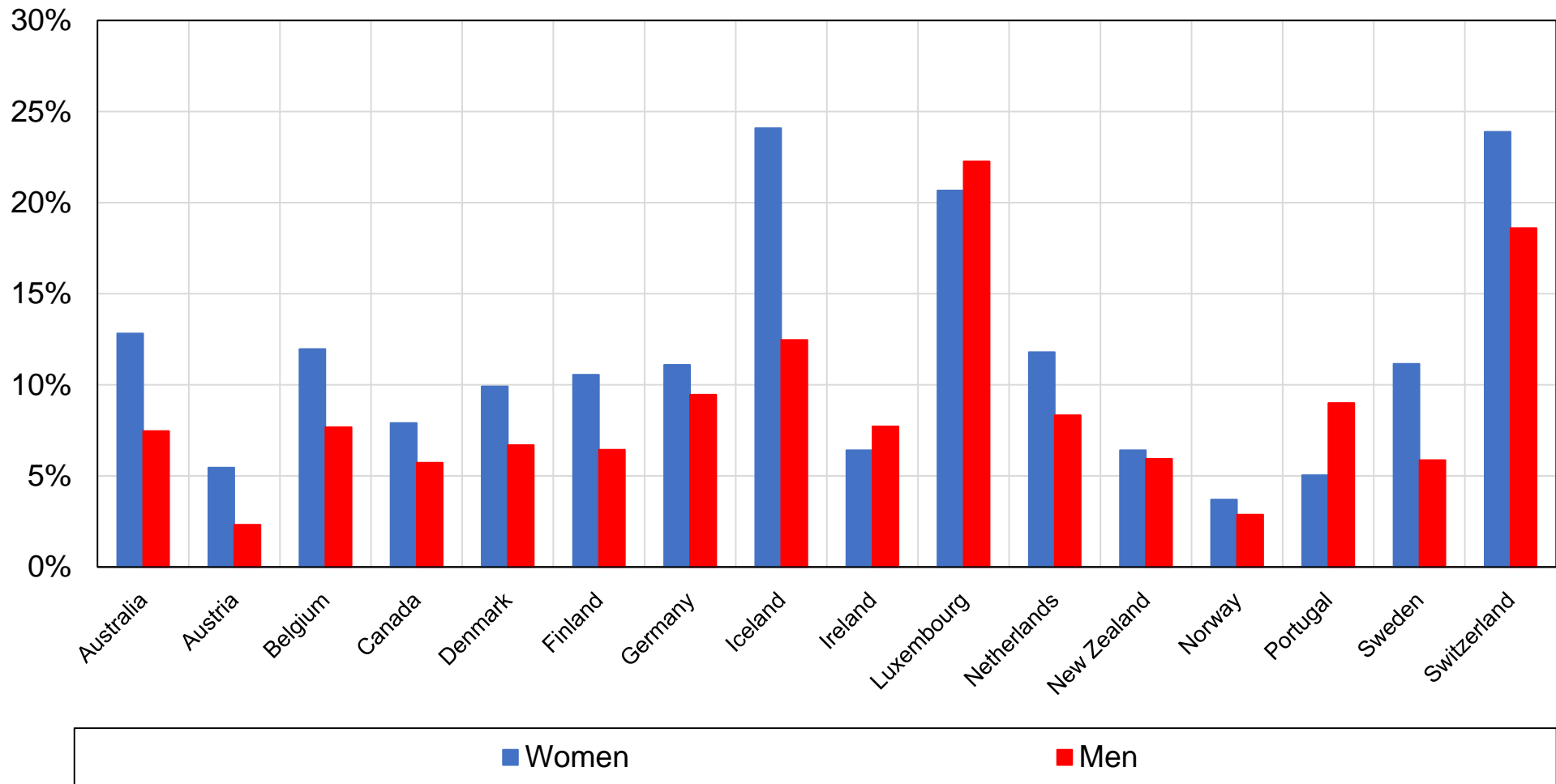
**Figure CE2 - Gender cleavages and sectoral specialization in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of women and the share of men voting for left-wing parties in Western democracies in the last election available, before and after controlling for occupation (employment status + private/public sector of employment).

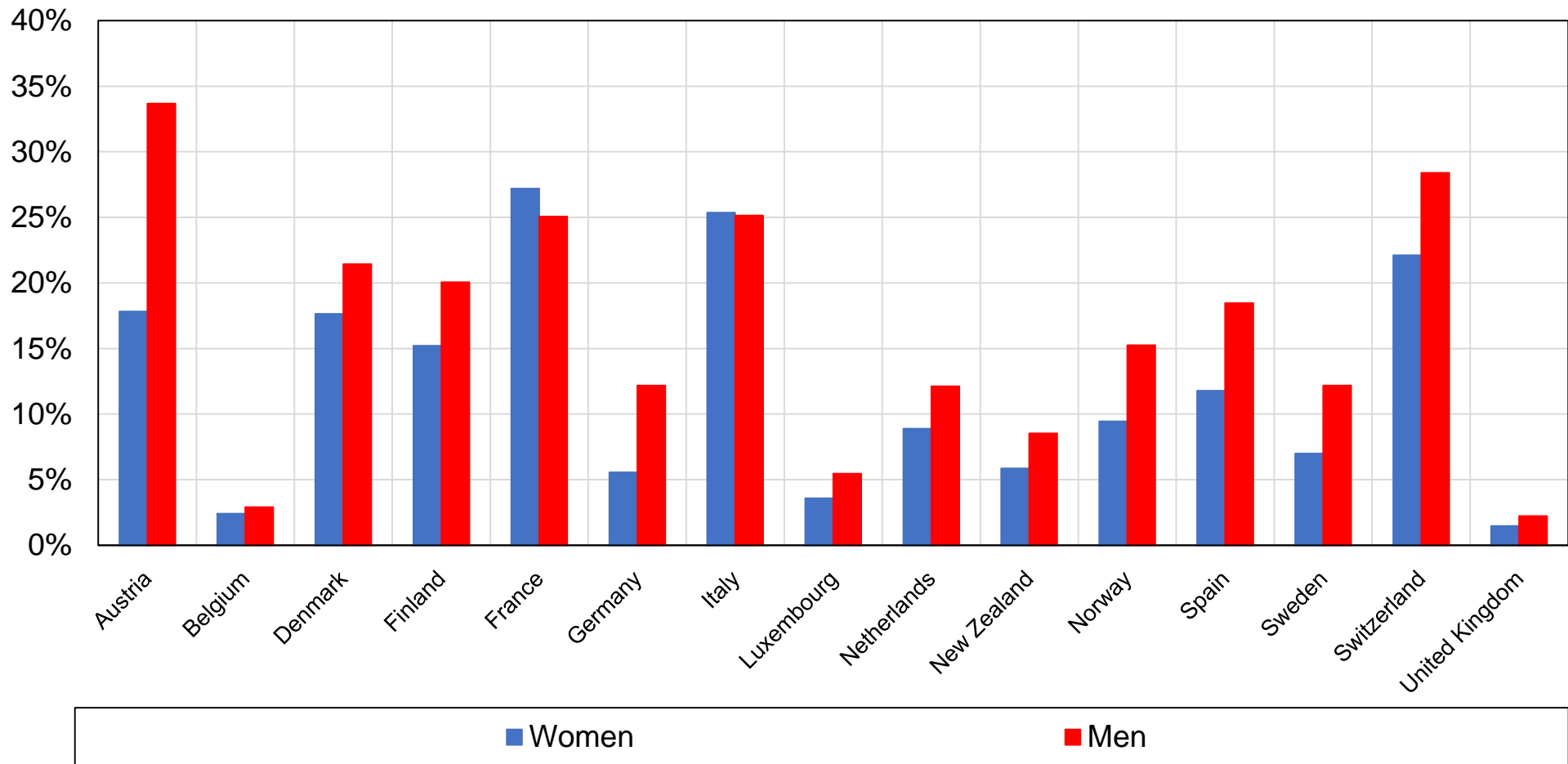
**Figure CE3 - Vote for Green parties by gender in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by Green parties by gender in Western democracies in the last election available.

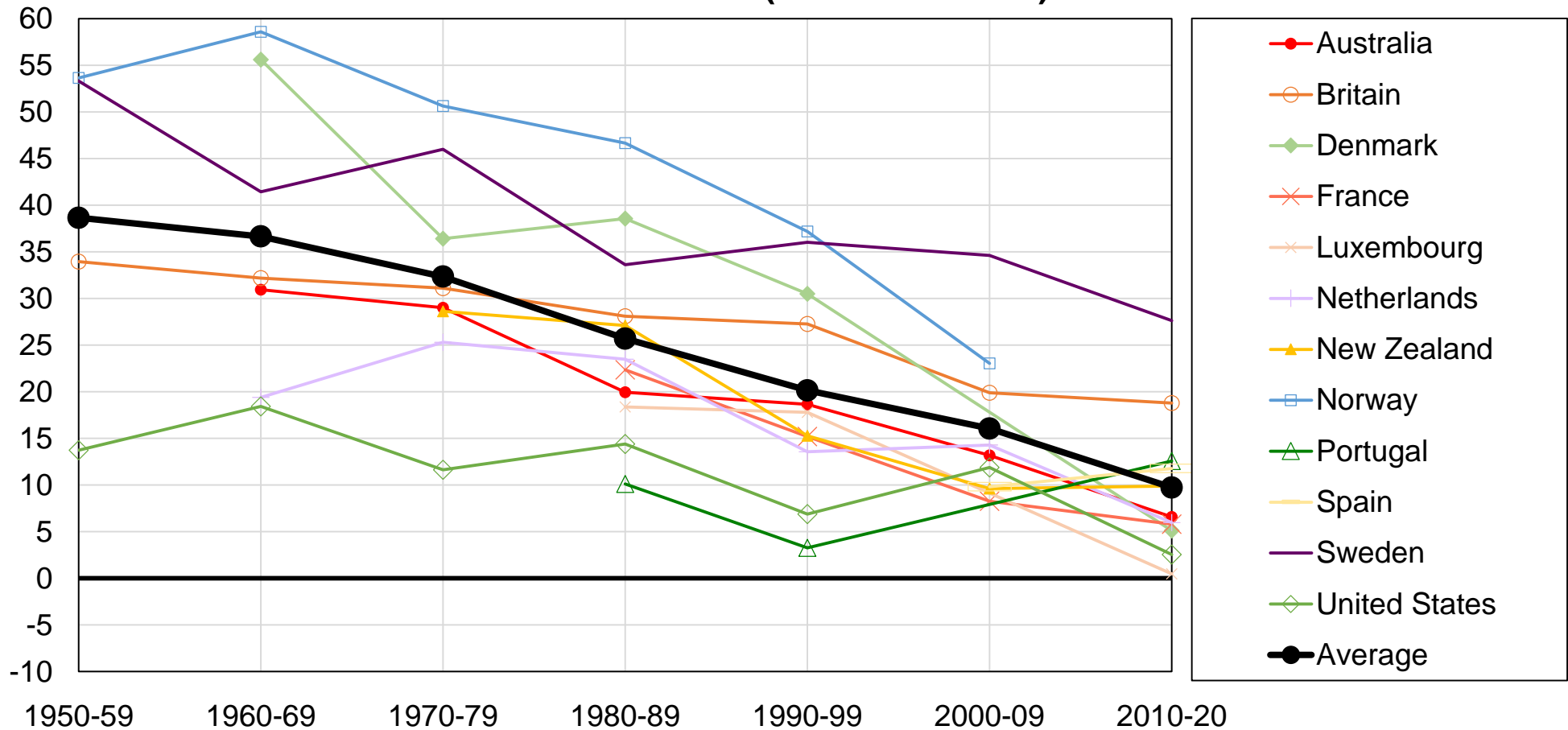
**Figure CE4 - Vote for anti-immigration parties by gender in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by anti-immigration parties by gender in Western democracies in the last election available

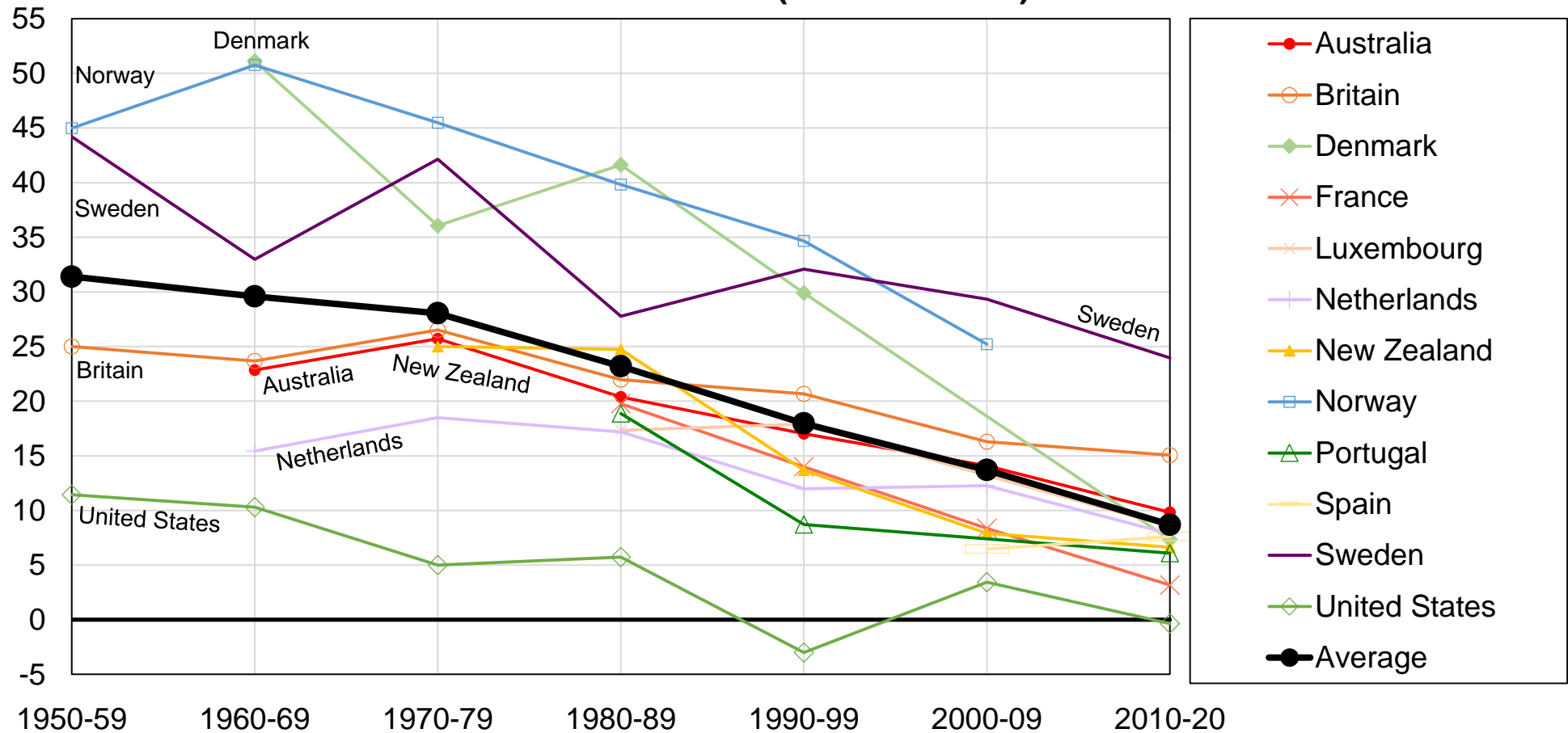
**Figure CF1 - The decline of self-perceived class cleavages in Western democracies (before controls)**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of voters self-identifying as belonging to the "working class" or the "lower class" and the share of voters identifying with the "middle class", the "upper class" or "no class" voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties.

**Figure CF2 - The decline of self-perceived class cleavages in Western democracies (after controls)**

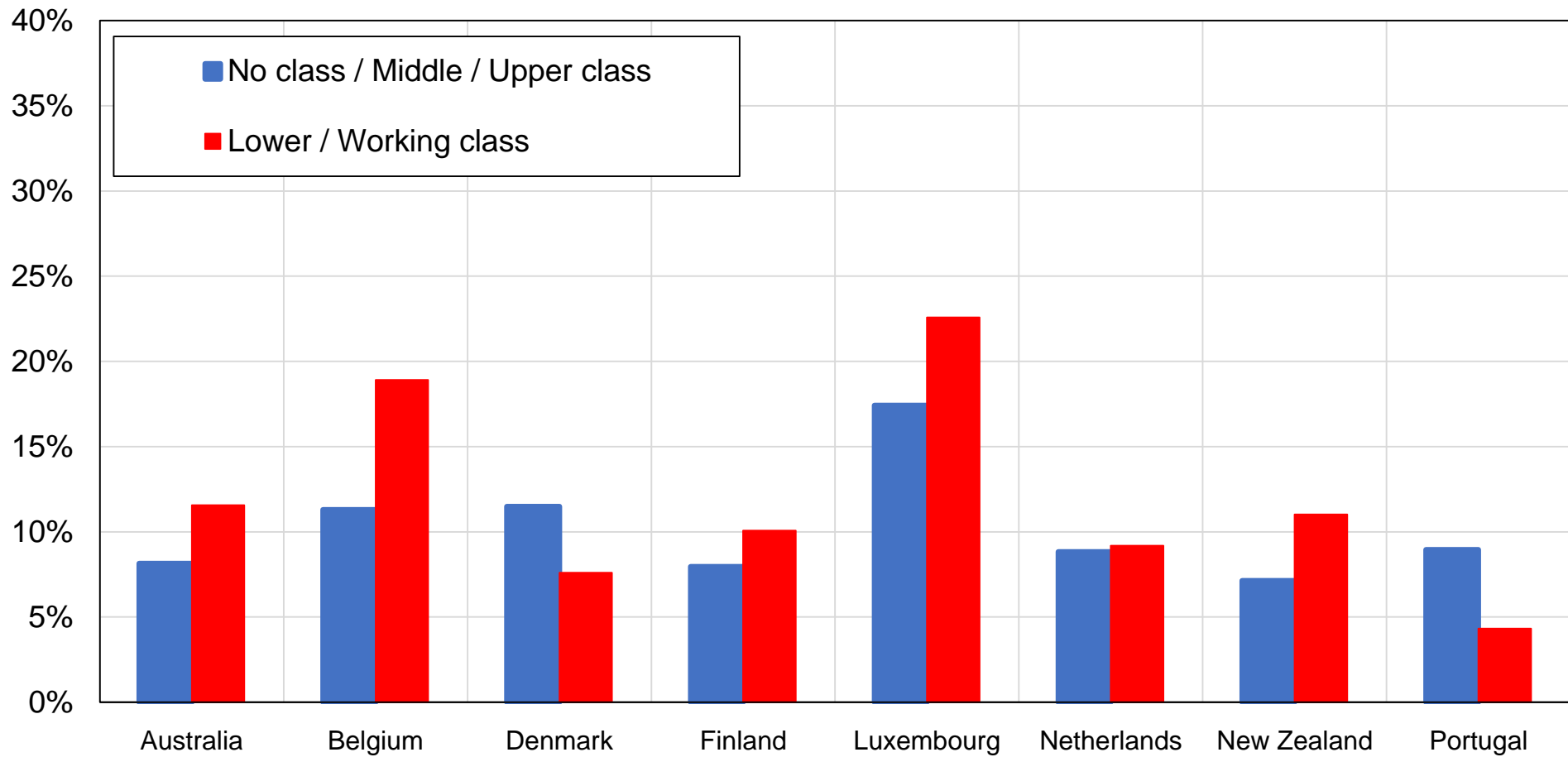


**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the difference between the share of voters self-identifying as belonging to the "working class" or the "lower class" and the share of voters identifying with the "middle class", the "upper class" or "no class" voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties. Self-perceived class cleavages have declined significantly over the past decades. Estimates control for income, education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).



**Figure CF3 - Vote for Green parties by self-perceived class**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by Green parties in Western democracies in the last election available by self-perceived social class.

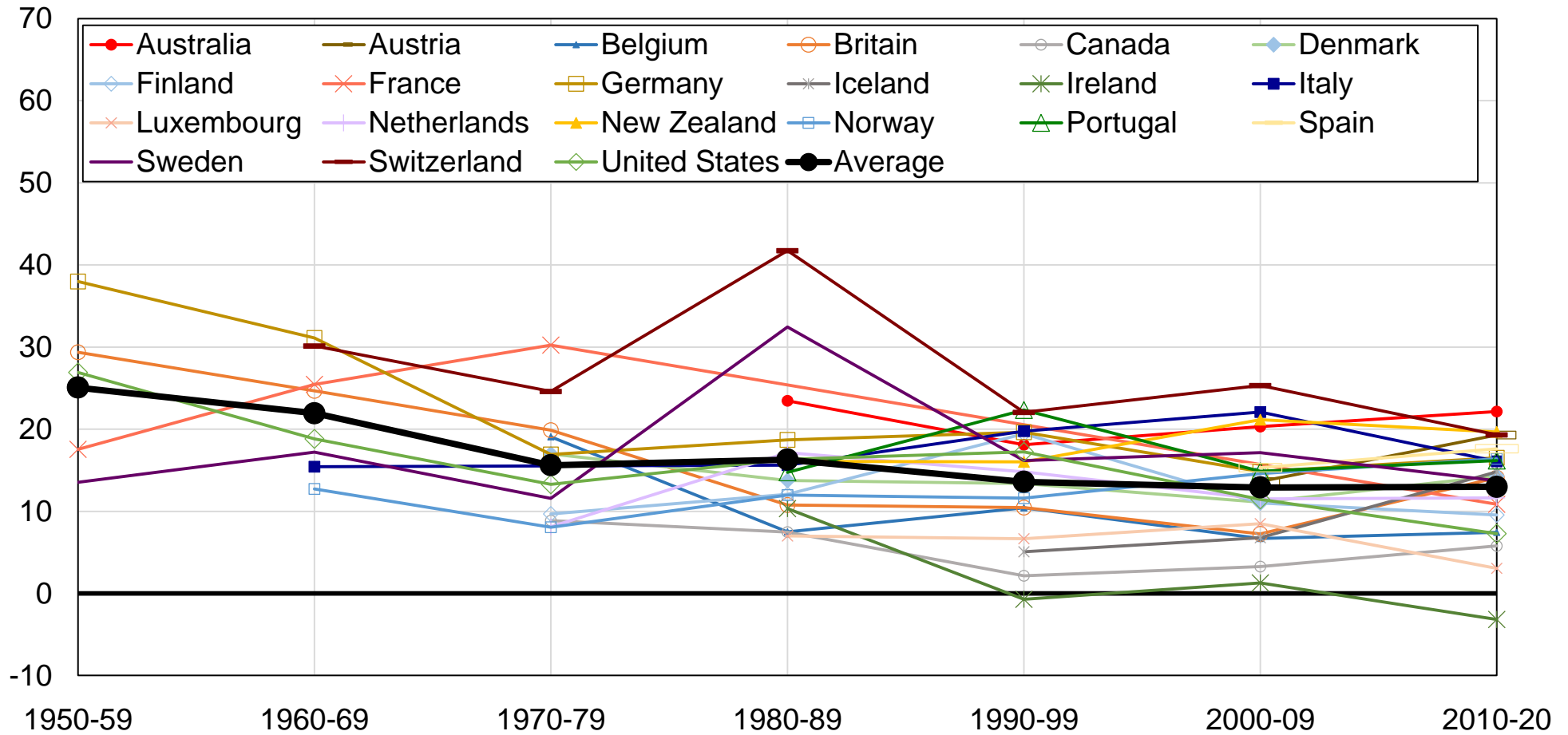
**Figure CF4 - Vote for anti-immigration parties by self-perceived class**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure shows the share of votes received by anti-immigration parties in Western democracies in the last election available by self-perceived social class.

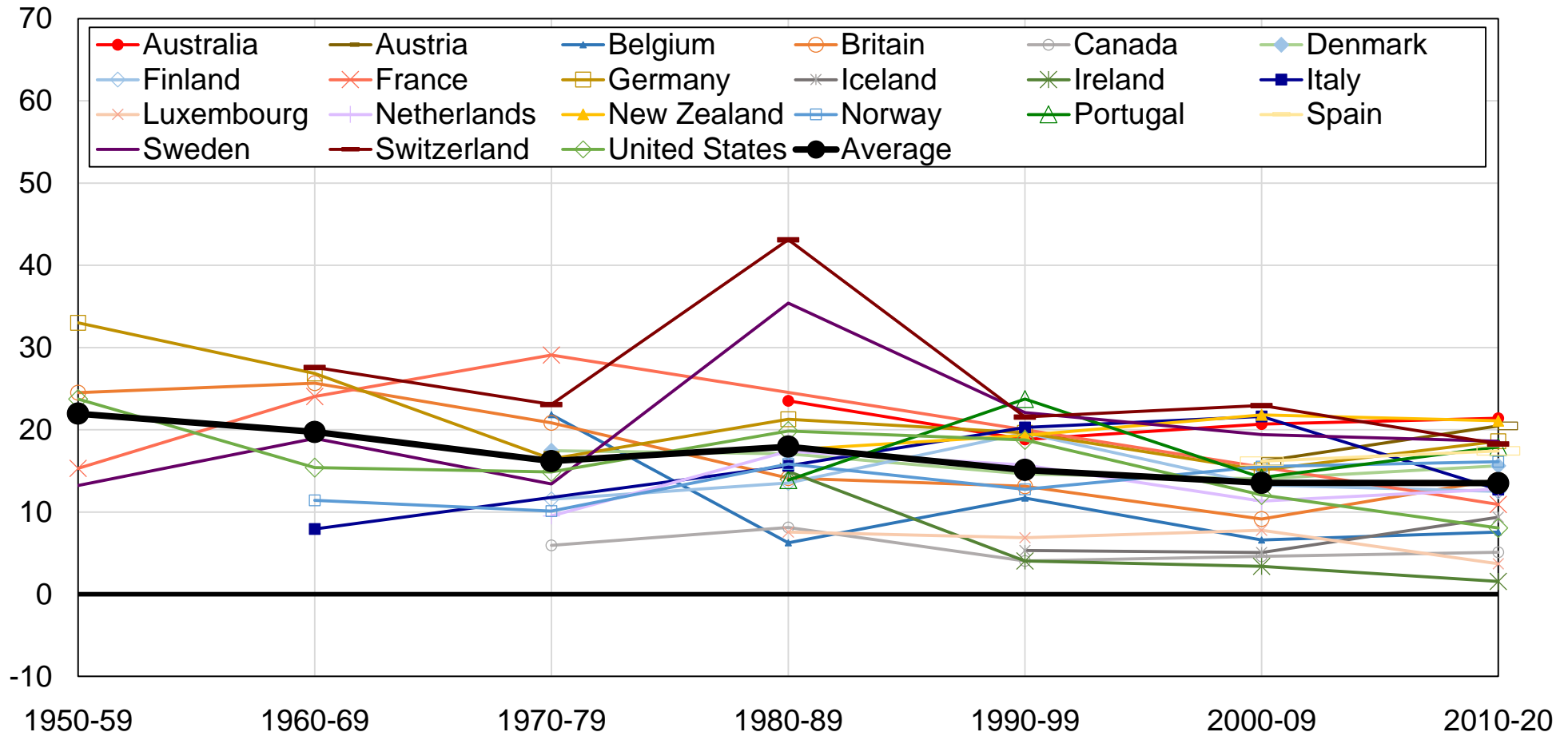
**Figure CF5 - Vote for left-wing parties among union members in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of union members and the share of non-union members voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western democracies.

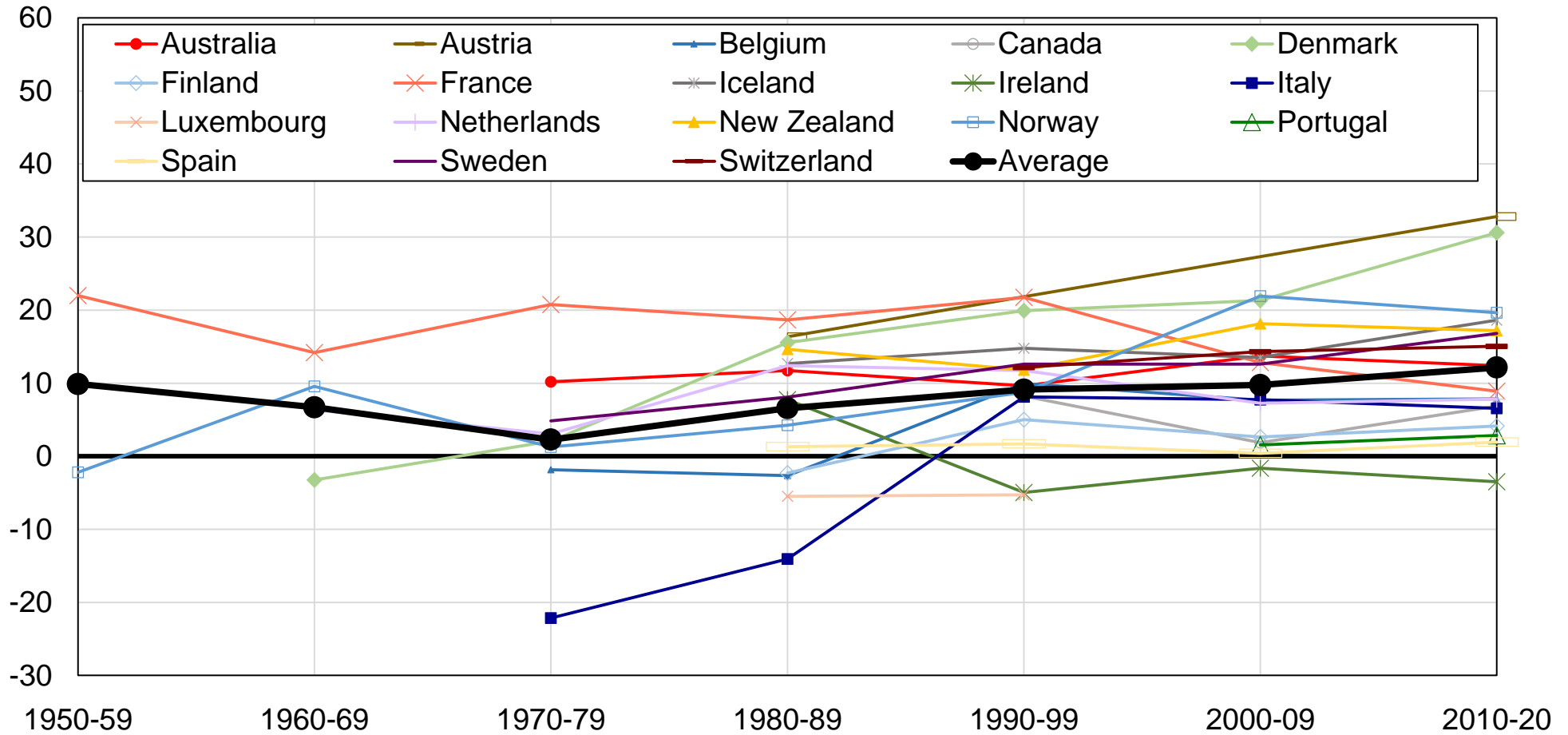
**Figure CF6 - Vote for left-wing parties among union members in Western democracies, after controls**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of union members and the share of non-union members voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western democracies. Estimates control for education, income, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

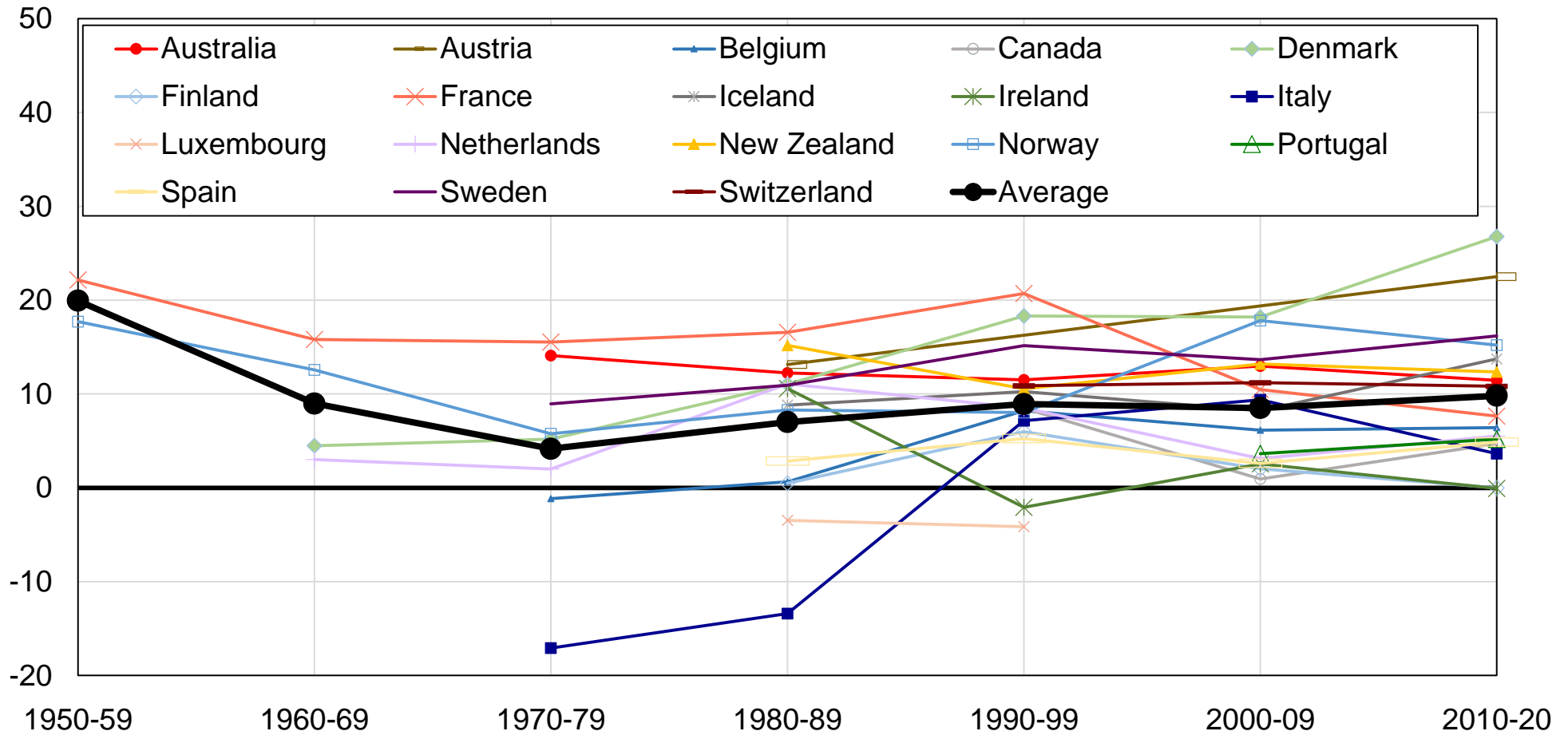
**Figure CF7 - Vote for left-wing parties among public sector workers in Western democracies**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of public sector workers and the share of private sector workers voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western democracies.

**Figure CF8 - Vote for left-wing parties among public sector workers in Western democracies, after controls**



**Source:** authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

**Note:** the figure represents the difference between the share of public sector workers and the share of private sector workers voting for left-wing (socialist, social-democratic, communist, and green) parties in Western democracies. Estimates control for education, income, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).