

## Political Sociology Lectures: Class

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- ▶ What is social class?
- ▶ Measurement
- ▶ Inequality and Social Mobility
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- ▶ Conclusions

# Concept

**Marx:** defined class by one's relationship with the means of production (owner or not).

- ▶ Capitalist system allows the owners to extract surplus from the proletariat.
- ▶ This leads to class struggle and political tension.
- ▶ Class consciousness important for the proletariat to realise their political interests.

**Weber:** 'We may speak of a 'class' when

1. a number of people have in common a specific *causal component of their life chances*, in so far as
2. this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and
3. is represented under the *conditions of the commodity or labor markets*.'

Equation of class and power is complicated by status groups

e.g. capitalists with aristocrats in Victorian novels

High class can lead to status and therefore power, but not if the status groups are closed. e.g. Caste in India

# Measurement of Class: 'Objective' Social Class

- ▶ *Not* consumer spending patterns
  - ▶ so not market research social grade (A,B,C1,C2,D,E)
- ▶ *Not* income, which does not capture future prospects.
- ▶ *Not* simply manual/non-manual, which is too crude

**Goldthorpe schema:** Main distinctions are on the basis of

- ▶ Employment Relations
  - ▶ Employers/Self-Employed/Employees
- ▶ Contract type (among employees)
  - ▶ Service *versus* Labour

*Service contracts* exist where 'it is required of employees that they exercise delegated authority'. They characteristically,

- ▶ are long-term
- ▶ involve compensation in part through future benefits such as career development, security, pensions, salary increments
- ▶ have positive incentives (carrots)

*Labour contracts* characteristically,

- ▶ are short-term
- ▶ involve specific payment for effort on a piece or time basis
- ▶ have close supervision to ensure productivity (sticks)

However, the relationship between contract type and the nature of work has been increasingly muddled with the causalisation of professional jobs and employment protection for some working class jobs.

# Goldthorpe Class Schema

- 
- 
- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| I   | Service class—Higher-grade professionals, administrators, officials, managers, proprietors of moderate to big business, . . . |
| II  | Service class—Lower-grade professionals, administrators, officials, managers, . . .   |
| III | Routine non-manual workers  |
| IV  | Small proprietors, self-employed, farmers, . . .  |
| V   | Lower-grade technicians, supervisor of manual workers   |
| VI  | Skilled manual workers  |
| VII | Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers   |
- 
- 

- ▶ Not ordinal. Recent social mobility studies put III with VII (Breen 2017).
- ▶ Politically IV distinct.
- ▶ Pensioners, unemployed, and non-participants classified by previous occupation if there is one.
- ▶ Possibility of ignoring an *underclass*
  - ▶ a group of long-term dependents on state benefits including unemployed, single parents, disabled, etc.

## Cultural Divisions based on Occupation

- ▶ Long been clear that political loyalties, of the salariat especially, are divided between those in private versus public sector, and especially those in social-cultural professions versus business management
- ▶ Question of whether we should separate professionals from managers raised by Manza and Brooks (1999), and reasonably commonly done now, e.g. Evans and Tilley (*New Politics of Class*, 2017).
- ▶ Oesch (2008) argues for redefinition of class location based on economic and cultural cleavages based on work economic interests and work logics.

**TABLE 1. Expected class cleavage in party preferences**

<i>Cleavage</i>	<i>Parties opposed</i>	<i>Occupational classes most strongly opposed</i>	<i>Decisive criteria for class opposition</i>
I. Economic – about the just distribution of resources: holders of organizational power vs. blue collar workers	Conservative right vs. traditional left	Employers and managers vs. production and service workers	Differences in socio-economic resources (market power)
II. Cultural – about questions of identity and community: cultural diversity and international openness vs. cultural homogeneity and national demarcation	Libertarian left vs. populist right-wing	Socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals vs. production workers and small business owners	Differences in the work logic (organizational experience) and different levels of education



**TABLE 4. Eight-class schema based on vertical differences in occupational skill requirements and horizontal differences in the work logic**

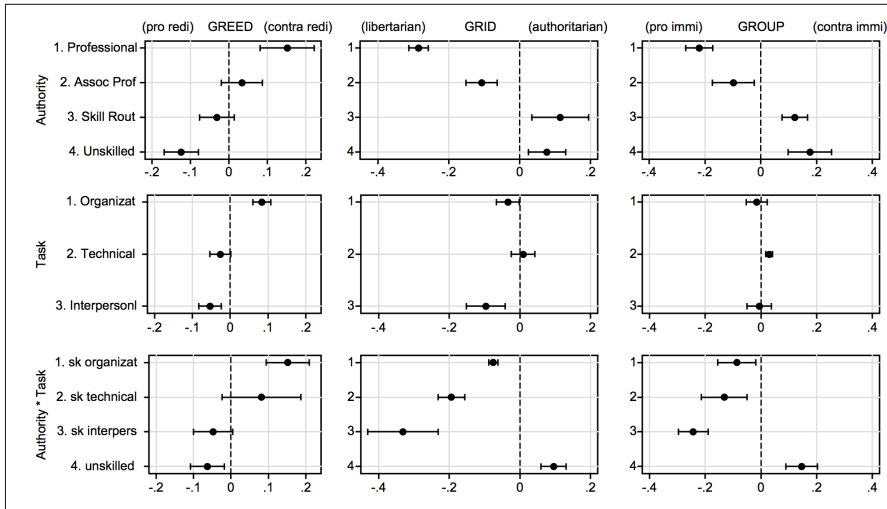
<i>Employees</i>			<i>Self-employed</i>
<i>INTERPERSONAL SERVICE WORK LOGIC</i>	<i>TECHNICAL WORK LOGIC</i>	<i>ORGANIZATIONAL WORK LOGIC</i>	<i>INDEPENDENT WORK LOGIC</i>
<b>Socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals</b>	<b>Technical professionals and semi-professionals</b>	<b>Higher-grade and associate managers and administrators</b>	<b>Traditional bourgeoisie (large employers [ &gt; 9] and self-employed professionals)</b>
Medical doctors Social workers Teachers	Computing professionals Mechanical engineers Safety inspectors	Financial managers Managers in small firms Public administrators	Accountants Hotel owners Lawyers
<b>Service workers</b>	<b>Production workers</b>	<b>Office clerks</b>	<b>Small business owners with less than 9 or no employees</b>
Children's nurses Home helpers Waiters	Assemblers Carpenters Machinery mechanics	Bank tellers Mail sorting clerks Secretaries	Farmers Hairdressers Shopkeepers

# Kitschelt and Rehm (CPS 2016) I

**Table 2.** Logics of Task Structures and Political Preferences.

		Logic of task structure		
		Organizational	Technical	Interpersonal
<b>High dispositional capacities and autonomy</b> ([associate] professionals)	Greed	Strongly pro-market, anti-redistribution	Moderately pro-market, anti-redistribution	Equivocal on markets and redistribution
	Grid	Libertarian governance, with qualifications	More in favor of libertarian governance	Most in favor of libertarian governance
	Group	Inclusive conception of citizenship	More inclusive conception of citizenship	Most inclusive conception of citizenship
	Left-right self-placement	Center-right	Center	Center-left
<b>Low dispositional capacities and autonomy</b> ([un]skilled vocational white-and blue-collar employees)	Greed	Strongly in favor of redistribution		
	Grid	Disposition toward authoritarian governance		
	Group	Disposition toward exclusive group membership		
	Left-right self-placement	Center to left placement		

# Kitschelt and Rehm (CPS 2016) II



**Figure I.** Mean levels of attitudes for each level of logic of authority, logic of task structure, and their interaction. Sk = skilled.

## Evans and Tilley (2017) *New Politics of Class*: Typology

	SEG categories	Traditional jobs	Newer jobs
<i>Old Middle Class</i>	Managers large, managers small, self-employed with employees, self-employed professionals, farmers	Manager, small business owner with employees, shopkeeper, barrister, farmer	Self-employed website designer, HR manager
<i>New Middle Class</i>	Employed professionals, intermediate non-manual	Architect, teacher, university lecturer, nurse, social worker	Occupational therapist, dietician, paramedic, dental hygienist
<i>Junior Middle Class</i>	Junior non-manual	Bank cashier, clerk, secretary, typist	Legal assistant, dispatch technician
<i>Own Account</i>	Self-employed without employees	Shop owner with no employees, self-employed own account plumber	
<i>Personal Service</i>	Personal service workers	Nursery assistant, assistant, chauffeur	Personal care assistant, tour guide
<i>Foreman</i>	Foremen and supervisors	Lead hand, production supervisor, construction foreman	Packing manager
<i>Working Class</i>	Skilled manual, semi-skilled manual, unskilled manual, farm worker	Machine operator, seamstress, warehouseman, quarry worker, miner, farm labourer	Packer, order picker, HGV driver, gardener, waste treatment officer

*Note:* People in the armed forces are assigned to the old middle class if they have management responsibilities (i.e. are officers), and the working class if not. People with no current occupation are assigned to a class by their previous occupation, or if no previous occupation their spouse's occupation.

## Cultural Divisions based on Occupation: Critique

- ▶ Separating out socio-cultural professions, or professionals from managers, arguably strays from Weberian definition of class if there is no case for the separation based on differing economic interests
- ▶ Need to be careful not to reorganising class schemas in light of political values since that would raise questions of endogeneity in two senses.
  - ▶ Explanatory variable constructed to fit the dependent variable
  - ▶ People choose the kind of work based on their politics
- ▶ Revising class measures to match voting patterns better does make class voting look stronger but does not mean class *explains* vote choice better.
- ▶ So need to consider carefully what the justification is for the grouping of occupations into "classes".

# Subjective Class Identity

- ▶ Objective and subjective social class are related but different (conceptually and practically).
- ▶ Class identity is a tendency to think of oneself as a member of social class.
- ▶ Narrower than class 'awareness' or 'consciousness'
- ▶ Marxist distinction between 'class in itself' (objective) and 'class for itself' (subjective class consciousness).
- ▶ Measurement of subjective class identification with the following questions.

*Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to any particular class?*

*IF YES Which one is that?*

*IF NO etc Most people say they belong to either the middle class or to the working class. Do you ever think of yourself as being in one of these classes?*

- ▶ For men class identity is a function of Father's social class and individual occupation, in much the same way as in the 1960s.
- ▶ A woman's class id is now more dependent on her own occupation and less on her partner's than it was in the 1960s (Heath et al 2009).
- ▶ Roughly the same numbers of people identify with classes as they did in the 1960s.

Table 1.1 Prompted and unprompted class identity, 1964–2005

	Column percentages							
	1964	1970	1974	1983	1987	1992	1997	2005
Unprompted: middle class	14	16	17	20	16	16	20	20
Unprompted: working class	34	25	25	33	30	29	31	25
Total unprompted	48	41	41	53	46	45	51	45
Prompted: middle class	16	17	17	14	18	18	17	17
Prompted: working class	31	38	38	27	31	30	30	32
Did not identify with any class	4	4	4	6	5	6	2	6
N	832	731	2329	3637	3795	2672	2906	2102

Notes: The 1974 survey is the one following the October general election. 1992 and 1997 are weighted to correct for over-sample in Scotland, and 2005 is weighted to account for differential refusal. DK/refused are included with the category 'did not identify with any class'. Respondents aged 21 and over in 1964.

Sources: 1964–1997 British Election Studies; 2005 BSA.

However, the sense of belonging to a social class has declined (Heath et al 2009), but not by much (also Evans and Tilley 2017).

*Table 1.2* The strength of belonging to one's social class

	Column percentages	
	1963	2005
<b>Class identity</b>		
Close to middle class	14	14
Middle class but not close	13	22
Neither	6	6
Working class but not close	29	35
Close to working class	37	22
<i>N</i>	1938	2102

*Note:* The direction of class identity was obtained in 1963 from a question worded differently from that asked in 2005. For details, see Butler and Stokes (1974: 476).

*Sources:* BES 1963 and BSA 2005.



# Sources of class identity: Evans and Mellon (BSA 2016)

**Table 4 Working class identity by occupational class, 2003–2015**

% identifying as working class	2003	2005	2006	2012	2015
<b>Occupational class</b>					
Managerial and professional	44	43	44	43	47
Intermediate, self-employed and lower supervisory	70	68	70	73	64
Semi-routine and routine	77	76	78	81	77
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>907</i>	<i>1908</i>	<i>3014</i>	<i>990</i>	<i>1050</i>

**Table 6 Proportion identifying as working class, by father's occupational class and respondent's occupational class**

% identify as working class		Father's occupational class		
Respondent's occupational class	Father: managerial and professional	Father: intermediate, self-employed and lower supervisory	Father: semi-routine and routine	
Managerial and professional	24	49	61	
Intermediate, self-employed and lower supervisory	36	69	73	
Semi-routine and routine	‡	68	75	

‡ = percentage not shown as base is less than 50

# Consequences of class identity: Evans and Mellon (BSA 2016) I

**Table 9 Libertarian-authoritarian and left-right values and attitudes towards immigration, by occupational class and class identity**

		<b>Libertarian</b>	<b>Authoritarian</b>		<b>Left</b>	<b>Right</b>		<b>Anti-immigrant</b>	<b>Pro-immigrant</b>
<b>Occupational class</b>									
Managerial and professional	%	59	41	%	44	56	%	46	54
Intermediate, self-employed and lower supervisory	%	39	61	%	51	49	%	65	35
Semi-routine and routine	%	40	60	%	58	42	%	69	31
<b>Class identity</b>									
Middle class	%	55	45	%	40	60	%	48	52
Working class	%	40	60	%	49	51	%	65	35

*The bases for Table 9 can be found in the appendix to this chapter*

# Consequences of class identity: Evans and Mellon (BSA 2016) II

**Table 10 Prevalence of right-wing, authoritarian and pro-immigrant attitudes, by occupational class and class identity**

	<b>Managerial and professional</b>	<b>Intermediate, self-employed and lower supervisory</b>	<b>Semi-routine and routine</b>	<i>Unweighted base</i>
<b>% right-wing</b>				
Middle class identifier	59	61	59	378
Working class identifier	60	47	47	524
<b>% authoritarian</b>				
Middle class identifier	38	55	49	381
Working class identifier	56	60	63	526
<b>% pro-immigration</b>				
Middle class identifier	64	42	34	427
Working class identifier	38	32	31	610

# Class Inequality

Social class has a major impact on . . .

- ▶ Income
- ▶ Health (including mortality, morbidity, mental health)
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Quality of life

Moreover, concerns about class inequalities are compounded by low social mobility.

## Example of a Social Mobility table

class origin	class destination							overall
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	
Higher Service	45.2	18.9	11.5	7.7	4.8	5.4	6.5	7.3
Lower Service	29.1	23.1	11.9	7.0	9.6	10.6	8.7	5.9
Routine Non-manual	18.4	15.7	12.8	7.8	12.8	15.6	16.9	7.3
Small Proprietors	12.6	11.4	8.0	24.4	8.7	14.4	20.5	14.3
Foremen & Technicians	14.2	13.6	10.1	7.7	15.7	21.2	17.6	11.5
Skilled Manual	7.8	8.8	8.3	6.6	12.3	30.4	25.9	27.5
Semi and Unskilled Manual	6.5	7.8	8.2	6.6	12.5	23.5	34.9	24.6
1972 Overall Distribution	13.6	11.5	9.2	9.4	11.6	21.2	23.5	9434

Source: Goldthorpe(1987)

# Piketty (2014): for next six slides

TABLE 7.1.  
*Inequality of labor income across time and space*

Share of different groups in total labor income	Low inequality (= Scandinavia, 1970s–1980s)	Medium inequality (= Europe 2010)	High inequality (= US 2010)	Very high inequality (= US 2030?)
The top 10% (“upper class”)	20%	25%	35%	45%
Including the top 1% (“dominant class”)	5%	7%	12%	17%
Including the next 9% (“well-to-do class”)	15%	18%	23%	28%
The middle 40% (“middle class”)	45%	45%	40%	35%
The bottom 50% (“lower class”)	35%	30%	25%	20%
Corresponding Gini coefficient (synthetic inequality index)	0.19	0.26	0.36	0.46

*Note:* In societies where labor income inequality is relatively low (such as in Scandinavian countries in the 1970s–1980s), the top 10% most well paid receive about 20% of total labor income; the bottom 50% least well paid about 35%; the middle 40% about 45%. The corresponding Gini index (a synthetic inequality index with values from 0 to 1) is equal to 0.19. See the online technical appendix.

TABLE 7.2.  
*Inequality of capital ownership across time and space*

Share of different groups in total capital	Low inequality (never observed; ideal society?)	Medium inequality (= Scandinavia, 1970s–1980s)	Medium–high inequality (= Europe 2010)	High inequality (= US 2010)	Very high inequality (= Europe 1910)
The top 10% “upper class”	30%	50%	60%	70%	90%
Including the top 1% (“dominant class”)	10%	20%	25%	35%	50%
Including the next 9% (“well- to-do class”)	20%	30%	35%	35%	40%
The middle 40% (“middle class”)	45%	40%	35%	25%	5%
The bottom 50% (“lower class”)	25%	10%	5%	5%	5%
Corresponding Gini coefficient (synthetic inequality index)	0.33	0.58	0.67	0.73	0.85

*Note:* In societies with “medium” inequality of capital ownership (such as Scandinavian countries in the 1970s–1980s), the top 10% richest in wealth own about 50% of aggregate wealth; the bottom 50% poorest about 10%; and the middle 40% about 40%. The corresponding Gini coefficient is equal to 0.58. See the online technical appendix.

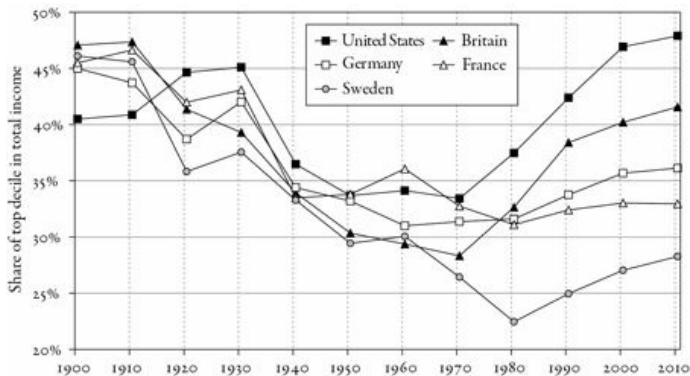


FIGURE 9.7. The top decile income share in Europe and the United States, 1900–2010

In the 1950s–1970s, the top decile income share was about 30–35 percent of total income in Europe as in the United States.

Sources and series: see [piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c](http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c).



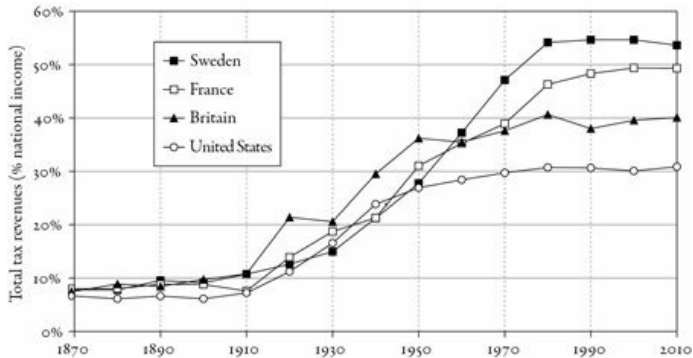


FIGURE 13.1. Tax revenues in rich countries, 1870–2010

Total tax revenues were less than 10 percent of national income in rich countries until 1900–1910; they represent between 30 percent and 55 percent of national income in 2000–2010.

Sources and series: see [piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c](http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c).

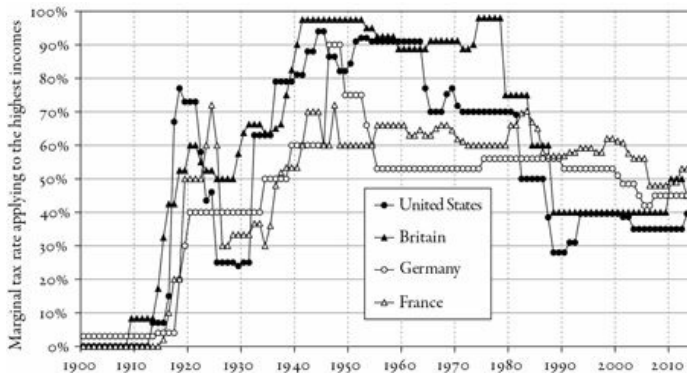


FIGURE 14.1. Top income tax rates, 1900–2013

The top marginal tax rate of the income tax (applying to the highest incomes) in the United States dropped from 70 percent in 1980 to 28 percent in 1988.

Sources and series: see [piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c](http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c).

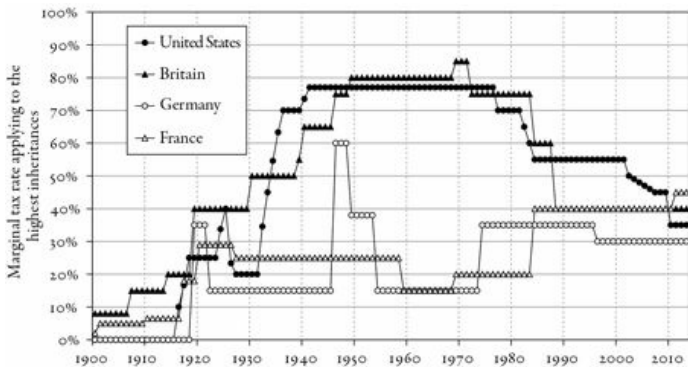


FIGURE 14.2. Top inheritance tax rates, 1900–2013

The top marginal tax rate of the inheritance tax (applying to the highest inheritances) in the United States dropped from 70 percent in 1980 to 35 percent in 2013.

Sources and series: see [piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c](http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c).

## Bases for Class Voting

Given the way class is defined there is no *necessary* reason for such inequalities.

- ▶ Many could be alleviated by public policy (mainly redistribution).
- ▶ Moreover the presence of class based inequality is usually considered more unfair if there is also low social mobility.

As well as class voting on the basis of differing economic interests, Butler and Stokes (1974) argued it is also a product of class and partisan identity reinforced by ...

- ▶ families (though socialization)
- ▶ trade unions and other organizations
- ▶ local communities

See Weakliem and Heath (Rat. and Soc. 1994) So how strong is class voting? And how much has it changed?

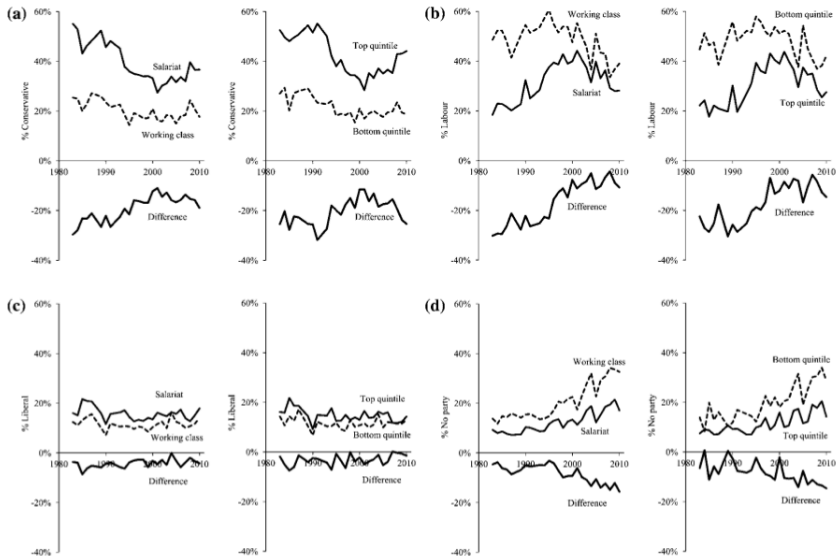
## Class and the Vote in Britain: 1964 and 1997

Class	Vote		
	Con	Lab	Lib
<b>1964</b>			
Higher Service	65	18	17
Lower Service	61	20	19
Routine Non-manual	59	26	15
Small Proprietors	74	15	11
Foremen & Technicians	37	48	15
Skilled Manual	25	70	5
Semi and Unskilled Manual	26	66	8
<b>1997</b>			
Higher Service	44	34	22
Lower Service	37	42	21
Routine Non-manual	33	49	18
Small Proprietors	43	40	17
Foremen & Technicians	21	62	17
Skilled Manual	14	67	19
Semi and Unskilled Manual	18	69	13

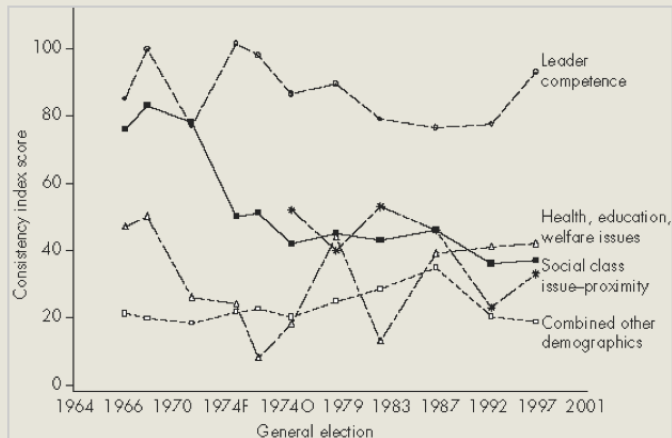
Source: British Election Studies

# Evans and Tilley (2012)

**FIGURE 1 Support for (a) the Conservatives, (b) Labour, (c) the Liberals, and (d) No Party Support by Occupational Class and Income over Time**



## Class Voting in Britain: Clarke et al. 2004



*Figure 3.14* Effects of social class and other factors on Conservative versus Labour voting, 1964–2001 general elections

*Source:* 1964–2001 BES post-election surveys.

# Measurement of Class Voting

**Absolute Class Voting:** The proportion of the working class voting Labour, plus the proportion of the middle class voting Conservative.

- ▶ But if, say, the working class are more Labour than the middle class are Conservative, then a decline in the size of the working class would lead to a decline in *absolute* class voting without any change in the level of *cross-class* voting.

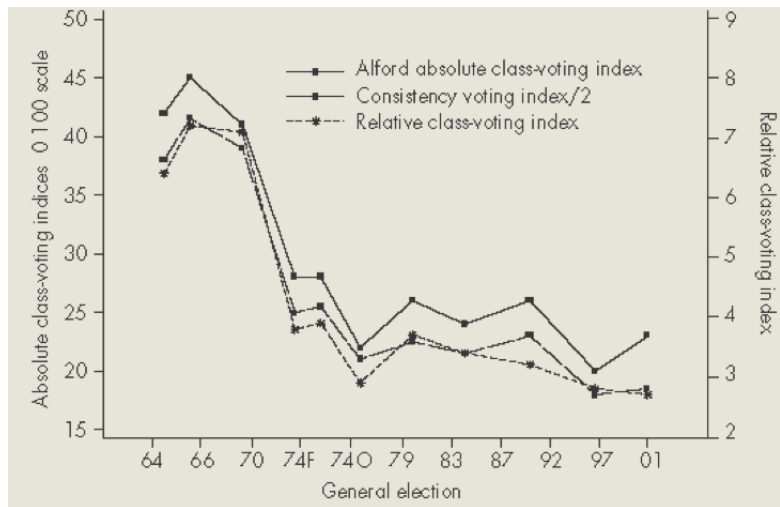
**Relative Class Voting:** Can be measured by,

- ▶ **Alford Index:** Proportion of the working class voting Labour, minus the proportion of the middle class voting Labour.
  - ▶ This is also sensitive to a changes in the overall sizes of the classes or parties.
- ▶ **Odds Ratio:** The odds of A to B is is the probability of A divided by the probability of B. An odds ratio is the odds of voting for one party rather than another for one class, divided by the equivalent odds for another class.
  - ▶ Not sensitive to changes in the class or party sizes.

Conclusions as to the nature of and change in class voting depend much more on which parties and classes are compared than which measures are used.



## Similar trends with different measures: Clarke et al. 2004



Note these are simple Middle Class/Working Class, Conservative/Labour indicators. But definite *dealignment*.

## Dealignment and Realignment

Lipset and Rokkan (1969) argued that party systems in Western Europe reflected the social cleavages, including class, that were important at the time of universal male enfranchisement. (The Freezing Hypothesis).

Since then many have argued that there has been a process of **Dealignment**, which is the *weakening* of the association between class and vote.

Note that Lipset and Rokkan never said that the association between class and vote had frozen, only that the party system froze.

**Realignment** is a *reshaping* of the relationship between class and vote.

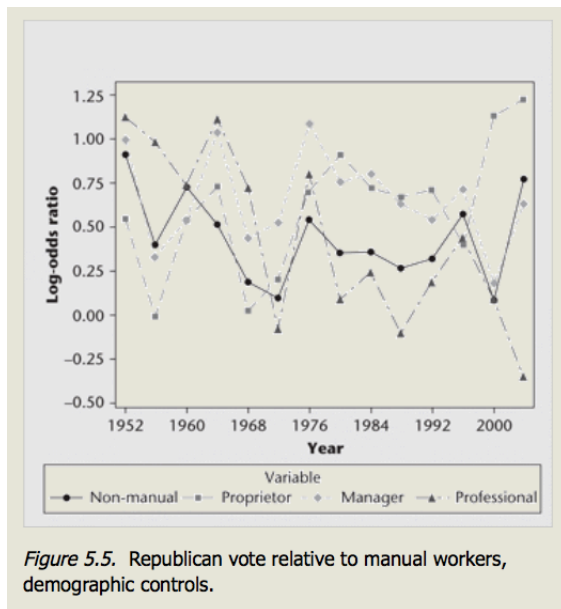
e.g. the New Deal coalition of the South with the Northern blacks and working class was a realignment (V.O. Key).

# Class voting in the US

Major historical question—Why no socialist party?

- ▶ Early franchise
- ▶ Ethnically divided working class
- ▶ Liberal culture
- ▶ Most important thing is differential turnout
  - ▶ Service class has a much higher turnout than the working class
- ▶ Professionals have moved from being the most Republican class in the 1950s to the second most Democratic class by the late 1980s and the most Democratic class by 1996.
- ▶ self-employed became significantly more Republican, and non-skilled workers less Democratic, in the 1980s, with nonskilled workers shifting even further towards the center in 1996. (Manza and Brooks (1999), and Weakliem (2013))

Weakliem (in Evans and de Graaf 2013)



# Class voting trends cross-nationally: Brooks (2004)

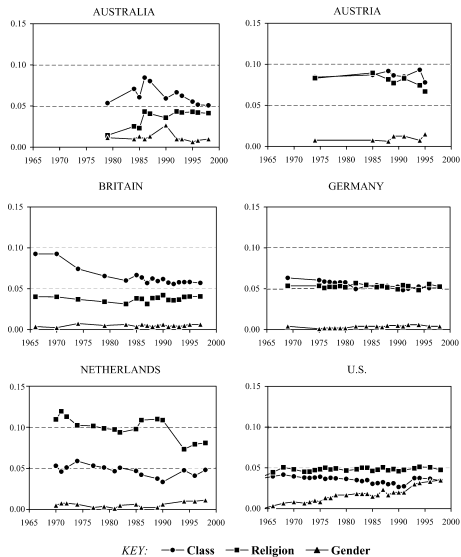


Fig. 1. Changing magnitude of the class, religion, and gender cleavages.

# Class voting cross-nationally: Jansen et al. (2013): service vs. manual classes

G. Jansen et al./Social Science Research 42 (2013) 376–400

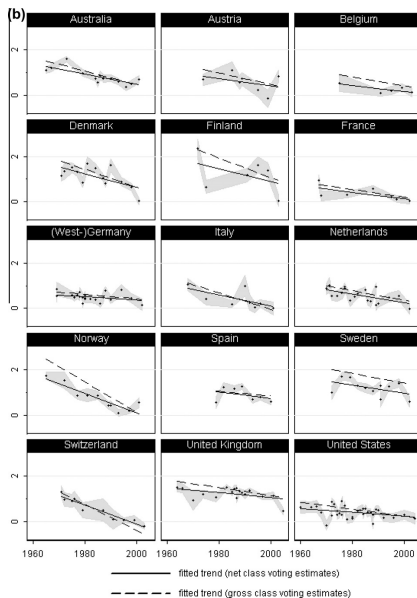


Fig. 2. (continued)

## Class voting in Europe and Britain: Gingrich (PQ 2017): middle vs working classes

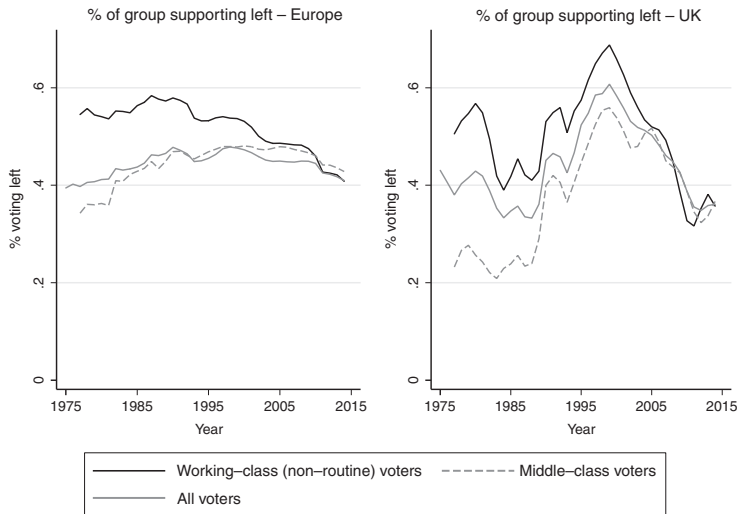


Figure 2: Support for left parties by class group

## Working Class in Europe moving more to Populist Right: Gingrich (PQ 2017)

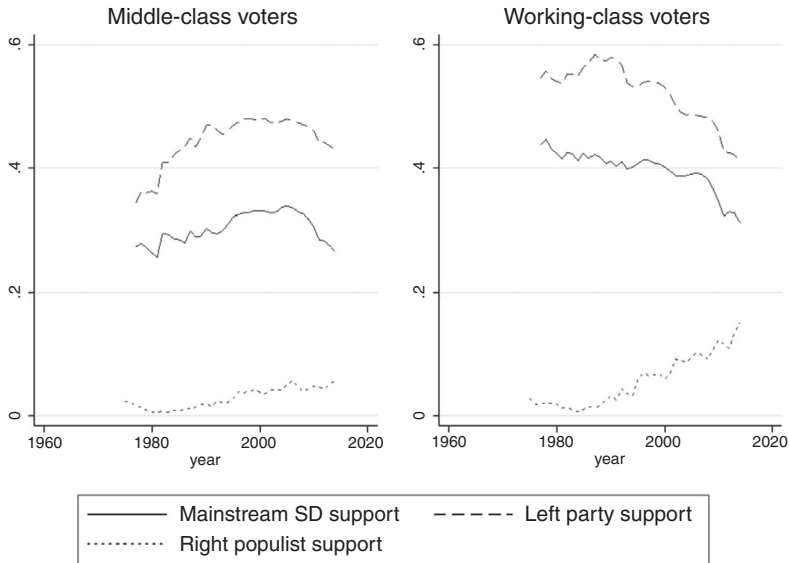
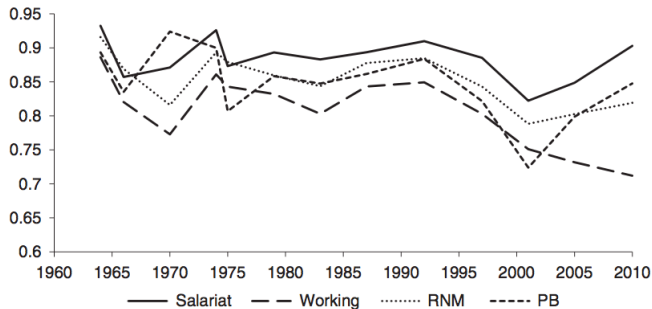


Figure 7: Vote for range of parties by class group



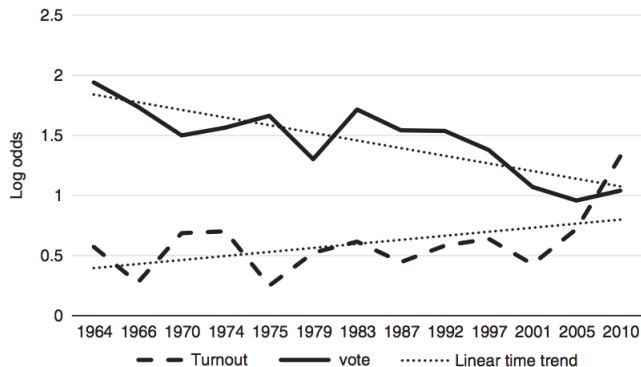
## Working Class in Britain increasingly abstaining more: Heath (BJPS 2016)



*Fig. 1. Reported turnout by class, 1964–2010*

Source: BES 1964–2010.

## Class turnout gap now bigger than the class vote gap: Heath (BJPS 2016)



*Fig. 2. Impact of class on vote choice and turnout (log odds), 1964–2010*

*Notes:* Log odds are based on a comparison of working class and salariat. Vote choice is comparison of Labour and Conservative.

## Left parties in Europe no longer working class parties: Gingrich (PQ 2017)

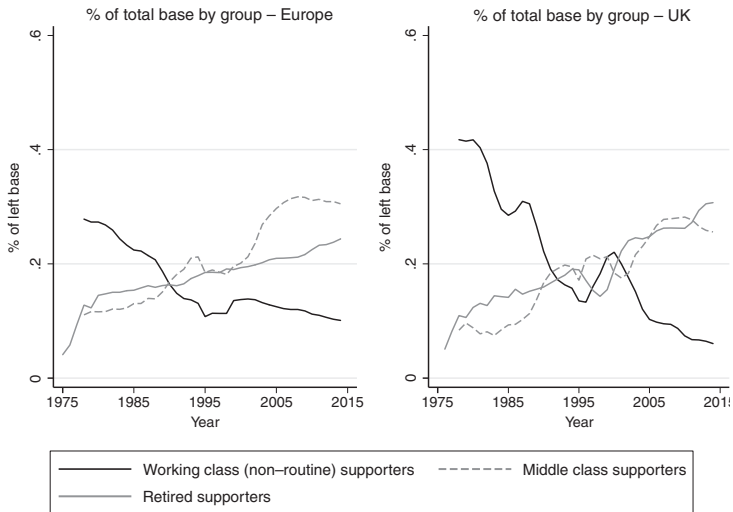


Figure 3: Left base by class group

Nonetheless there is a stable left vote in Europe: Gingrich (PQ 2017)

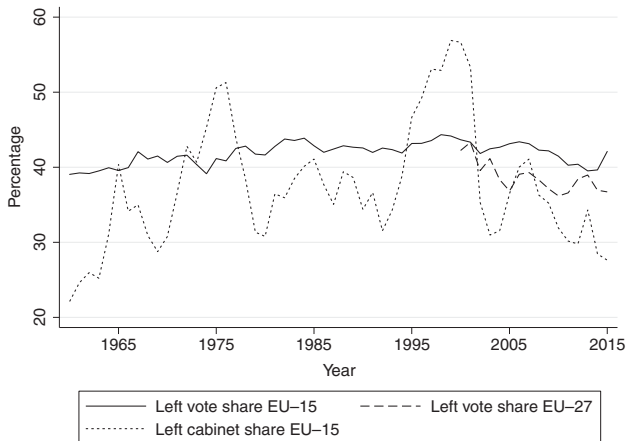


Figure 1: Vote share in parliamentary elections 1960–2015

## Class voting cross-nationally: Best (2011): group size and turnout also matter

Table 5. Sources of change in the contributions of manual workers to social democratic parties: size, turnout, and loyalty

	Contribution		Size		Turnout		Loyalty	
	Trend	SE	Trend	SE	Trend	SE	Trend	SE
Belgium	-0.29*	0.04	-0.18*	0.03	-0.03*	0.01	-0.16*	0.03
Denmark	-0.22*	0.02	-0.12*	0.03	0.04	0.02	-0.16*	0.02
France	-0.12*	0.03	-0.06*	0.02	0.01	0.01	-0.09*	0.03
Germany	-0.21*	0.02	-0.10*	0.01	-0.06*	0.01	-0.07*	0.02
Great Britain	-0.26*	0.07	-0.28*	0.03	-0.06*	0.02	0.17*	0.07
Ireland	-0.08*	0.03	-0.05*	0.01	-0.05*	0.01	0.01	0.03
Italy	-0.44*	0.06	-0.17*	0.03	-0.03*	0.01	-0.37*	0.06
The Netherlands	-0.38*	0.04	-0.24*	0.02	-0.05*	0.02	-0.14*	0.03

Table entries are the results of regressing the variables on time. Size, turnout, and loyalty regressions represent the trends in the contribution when only the reported variable is allowed to vary and the others are held constant at their 1975–77 values.

N = 23 for Belgium, France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, 24 for Denmark, Germany, and Ireland, and 17 for Italy.

\*Statistical significance at the 0.05 level for one-tailed tests.

# Theories of Class Dealignment I

- ▶ Embourgeoisement and mobility mean class is less relevant for determining economic life-chances.
  - ▶ But there has been increasing inequality so plenty of scope for redistributive politics.
- ▶ New cleavages are more important.
  - e.g. gender, ethnicity, public vs. private sectors
  - ▶ But for Britain Clarke et al. (2004) show that net effects of other cleavages haven't really changed.
- ▶ "Processes of *individualization* deprive class distinctions of their social identity . . . They lose their independent identities and the chance to become a formative political force" (Ulrich Beck)
  - ▶ There has been a weakening of the relationship between class id and party id, but not the kind of secular decline that individualization requires (Heath et al. 2009).

# Theories of Class Dealignment II

- ▶ Education and 'cognitive mobilization' have led to greater issue orientation, a decline in identity based politics and a rise in valence politics
  - ▶ Elff (2007) shows that data on watching TV news, education or discussing politics do not help explain the patterns of change in class voting we observe.
- ▶ With more widespread media leadership effects are becoming more important.
  - ▶ But Clarke et al. (2004) seem to show that leadership effects have always been important and haven't grown in strength.

## Rise of new value politics?

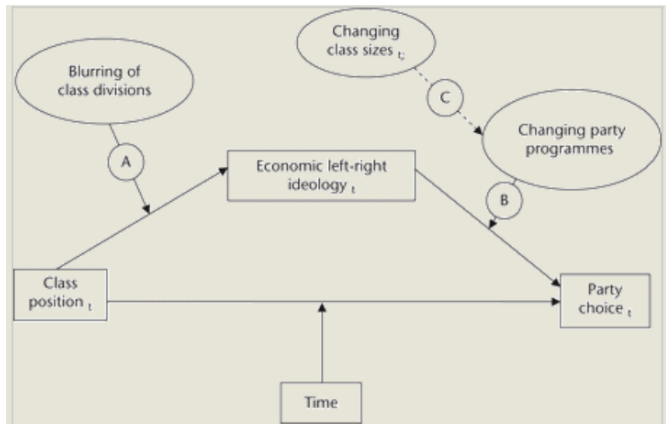
- ▶ Post-materialism is on the rise (Inglehart)
- ▶ and social democratic parties have responded to the declining size of the working class by adapting policy platforms to attract postmaterialist middle class voters.
- ▶ If this has caused dealignment then we should have seen centre left parties gaining middle class postmaterialist voters and losing materialist working class ones over time,
- ▶ but we didn't across seven W European countries from 1975 to 2002 (Elff 2007).
- ▶ but maybe we have since then.
- ▶ Post-materialist values of liberalism and environmentalism are particularly strong among socio-cultural professions and their movement to social-democratic parties broadly fits the Inglehart argument.



## Party choice explanation for change in class voting I

- ▶ Left-wing parties have responded to the decline in size of working class and weakened the class distinctiveness of the political choices facing the electorate by moving towards the centre of the Left-Right ideological spectrum.
- ▶ Idea that party offerings matter for strength of class voting goes back to Butler and Stokes (1974) and before
- ▶ The decline in class voting is a function of the party strategy rather than the social changes. (Evans et al. (1999), Oskarson (2005), Elff (2009) etc)
- ▶ *Political Choice Matters* book by Evans and de Graaf considers this argument for various countries and comparatively, and with an analogous argument for religious voting.
- ▶ Evans and Tilley (2017) present a broader version for GB

## Party choice explanation for change in class voting II

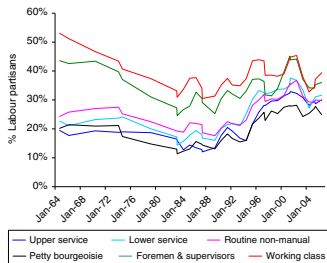


*Figure 1.1.* The effects of class position on party choice via economic left-right ideology, showing the impact of structural change through either (i) the blurring of class divisions and its impact on the link between class position and left-right ideology, or (ii) the impact of shifts in party positions on the link from left-right ideology to party choice.

## Party choice explanation: Britain I

- ▶ Evans and Tilley (BJPS 2011) argued voters were only responsive to changes in party polarization after 1974, because that is when they became more instrumental rather than expressive.
  - ▶ Note that appealing to an increase in instrumental voting is consistent with cognitive engagement version of the modernisation theory they are arguing against.
- ▶ Even then there is clearly a big unexplained decline in class voting (witness the class:post74 interaction terms in Model 3), and within the pre1974 period (compare Fig2a with Fig5).

# Party choice explanation: Britain II



redicted probability of Labour support by social class from a model including controls for other characteristics

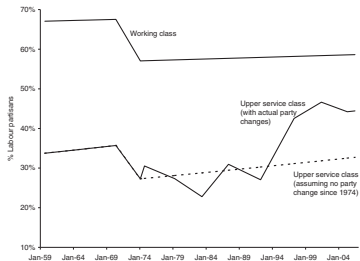


Fig. 5. Predicted probabilities of Labour support over time controlling for movement in party ideological positions

Fewer working class MPs has led to class dealignment and class turnout gap (Heath, BJPS 2013 & 2016) I

- ▶ Political choice argument struggles to explain high class voting in the 1960s despite low polarisation
- ▶ Descriptive representation might matter to people as well as substantive representation
- ▶ Working class voters more likely to vote for working class candidates
- ▶ So decline in the number of working class candidates for Labour in Britain has led to decline in class voting a widening of the turnout gap



Fig. 4. Working-class MPs in Britain, 1964–2010. Source: Datacube

Fewer working class MPs has led to class dealignment and class turnout gap  
(Heath, BJPS 2013 & 2016) II

- ▶ Some evidence at constituency level and also working-class Labour candidates associated with greater perceptions that the party is left wing
- ▶ However, danger of
  - ▶ correlation due to trending phenomena (working class candidates and both weakening class voting and widening class turnout gap)
  - ▶ selection bias at the constituency level (Labour fielding working class candidates in the most working class and Labour constituencies)

Fewer working class MPs has led to class dealignment and class turnout gap  
(Heath, BJPS 2013 & 2016) III

- ▶ Also, not actually much change in working class support for Labour instead of Conservative until 2015

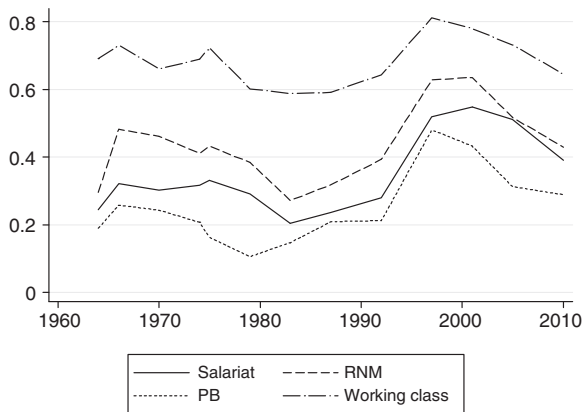
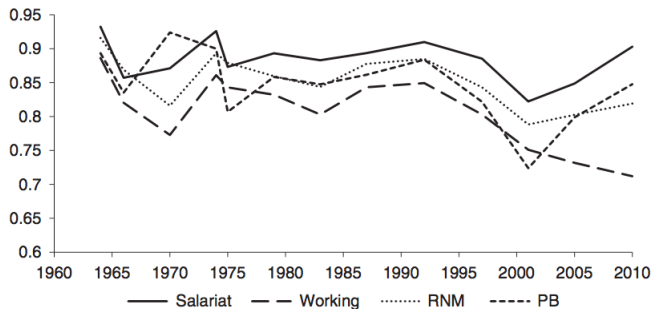


Fig. 1. Probability of voting Labour vs. Conservative by class, 1964–2010. Source: BES 1964–2010

Fewer working class MPs has led to class dealignment and class turnout gap  
(Heath, BJPS 2013 & 2016) IV

and the class turnout gap only widening since 2005.

- ▶ but most of the decline in working class MPs done by 1997



*Fig. 1. Reported turnout by class, 1964–2010*

*Source: BES 1964–2010.*

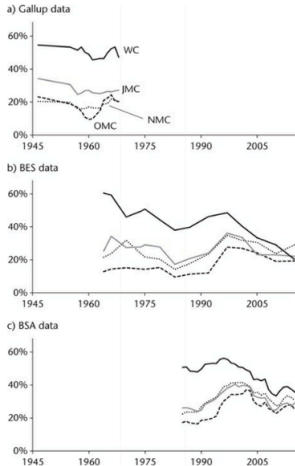


## Evans and Tilley (2017) *The New Politics of Class I*

- ▶ Puts all of the above issues together and makes a broader argument about the decline of class politics, not just voting, in Britain
- ▶ Looks at class voting as a percentage of the electorate (not just voters) to show that the main story is the collapse of Working Class turnout for Labour since Blair.

# Evans and Tilley (2017) *The New Politics of Class II*

Figure 7.1 Percentage voting Labour



## Evans and Tilley (2017) *The New Politics of Class* III

- ▶ They attribute this not just to Labour's move to the centre and declining numbers of working class MPs, but also to changes in the extent to which Labour are seen as the party of the working class and politics is talked about in class terms in the media.
- ▶ They make a compelling case that major differences in economic life chances between the middle and working classes persist, along with class identification and distinct policy preferences, and so dealignment is not due to the decreasing social relevance of class.

## Comments on Evans and Tilley (2017) I

- ▶ Sub-title of the book is “The Political Exclusion of the British Working Class” but this might be going too far:
  - ▶ Labour policies remain more beneficial for the working class than those of the Conservatives.
  - ▶ And, as they argue, now that the working class is a minority, Labour have to chase middle class votes to win.
- ▶ It is still not quite clear why class voting was so strong during the post-war consensus when the Conservatives, as the party of the minority middle class, had to chase working class voters and maintained nationalised industries and high tax rates on the rich.

## Comments on Evans and Tilley (2017) II

- ▶ Given their argument, there is a puzzle as to why the middle classes did not abandon the Tories in the 1950s in the way that the working class has apparently given up on Labour since the 1990s.
- ▶ Perhaps, as Butler and Stokes (1974) argued ...
  - ▶ High turnout in the 1950s was maintained by strong class and partisan identification
  - ▶ Tories achieved a positive reputation for economic management
- ▶ So, valence politics and the decline of party identification is probably also part of the story behind recent working class abstention.
- ▶ Also note that the 2008 financial crisis damaged New Labour's reputation for economic management and hurt the working class most.
  - ▶ Signs of declining working class Labour voting in 1970, 1979 and 2010 after economic crises under Labour governments

## Party choice explanation for decline in class voting elsewhere

- ▶ For US, increasing polarization of parties might help explain increasing alignment of voters by income in recent years (Bartels 2008), but Weakliem (in Evans and de Graaf 2013) finds that change in polarisation does not explain changing patterns of class voting in US.
- ▶ Jansen et al (Social Science Research, 2013) look cross-nationally and argue that polarisation (from CMP data) explains most of the changes in class voting (in line with Elff (2007)) but that there is still an unexplained linear decline.
- ▶ This partly because no systematic decline in polarisation. Jensen et al (in Evans and de Graaf 2013) argue that increasing education helps explain the trend.

# Conclusion

- ▶ Class is strongly related to economic and social welfare.
- ▶ The state has some power to increase or reduce the inequality.
- ▶ There is a popular perception that class is not as important as it once was, either absolutely or in politics.
- ▶ There is a debate about whether the changing role of class in electoral politics seems is mainly the product of the choice the parties offer to voters.