

# PSC 160

## Campaigns and Elections: A Global Perspective

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Lecture 5: Class Voting in Industrial Democracies  
May 23, 2016

# Class Outline

1. In-class reading I: Orwell
2. Theories of Social Class
3. Cross-National Trends in Class Voting
4. In-class reading II: Elff
5. Explaining Class Dealignment

## Toffs and Toughs (1937) I



Lords cricket ground, 1937 Eton vs Harrow match

## Toffs and Toughs (1937) II

- ▶ Iconic British photograph taken by Jimmy Simes on 9 July 1937
- ▶ Contrasted two schoolboys in Harrow School uniform with three working class boys in oversized jackets
- ▶ Eton and Harrow are English public schools (as distinct from state schools)
  - ▶ Annual school fees at Harrow: £36,150 or \$54,000 USD
  - ▶ Average private day school fees in the UK (2016): £15,500
  - ▶ Average salary in the UK (2014): £26,500
  - ▶ 7% of UK popn attend fee-paying schools, but 32% of MPs
- ▶ What does this picture tell you about the pre-war British 'class system'?

## George Orwell: A Brief Biography

- ▶ Born Eric Arthur Blair in 1903
- ▶ Won a scholarship to Eton – alma mater of 19 UK prime ministers (inc. David Cameron)
- ▶ Joined the Imperial Police after school and was posted to Burma
- ▶ Most famous for novels *Animal Farm*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
- ▶ Died of tuberculosis at the age of 47

# The Road to Wigan Pier



*"I remember a winter afternoon in the dreadful environs of Wigan. All round was the lunar landscape of slag-heaps, and to the north, through the passes, as it were, between the mountains of slag, you could see the factory chimneys sending out their plumes of smoke."*

**George Orwell**  
**The Road to Wigan Pier**

# Theories of Social Class

## Defining Social Class: Karl Marx

- ▶ One's class not constituted by income or occupation
- ▶ But defined by one's relations with the means of production (owner or not)
- ▶ In Marxist theory, distribution of economic goods determined by the relations of production
  - ▶ E.g. feudalism, capitalism
- ▶ The 'superstructure' – a system of social relationships (politics, law, religion) that legitimates and perpetuates the prevailing class structure
  - ▶ Why? Ideas cannot gain prominence unless they support either ruling or rising class interests

## Defining Social Class: Max Weber

- ▶ One's class defined by market capacity – which in turn determined one's life chances
- ▶ A function of capital ownership, but also education and skills
- ▶ Thus, identified distinguished between four classes:
  - ▶ The propertied class
  - ▶ The intellectual, administrative and managerial class
  - ▶ Petty bourgeoisie (small businessmen, shopkeepers)
  - ▶ The working class
- ▶ Distinguished between social classes and status groups
  - ▶ One's status determines the social estimation or prestige one receives
  - ▶ Correlated with, but not determined by, economic standing
  - ▶ Individuals belonging to a status group defined by their lifestyle

## How Should We Measure 'Class'?

- ▶ Income?
- ▶ Manual vs. non-manual employment?
- ▶ Goldthorpe schema
  - ▶ Developed in the late 1970s
  - ▶ Distinguished class from wealth *or* prestige
  - ▶ Defined by employment function (service vs. labor) and relations (employer, employee, self-employed)

## Goldthorpe Class Schema

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- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 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   |
-

## Class Identification I

- ▶ Objective and subjective class identity are distinct, conceptually and practically
- ▶ Subjective class identity measured in surveys using questions like the following:
  - ▶ Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to any particular class?
  - ▶ IF YES: Which one is that?
  - ▶ IF NO: 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?

## Class Identification II

Heath et al. (2009): sense of belonging to a social class has declined, even if not numbers

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.

## Class Identification III

Heath et al. (2009): sense of belonging to a social class has declined, even if not numbers

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
N	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.

## Resurrecting Social Class

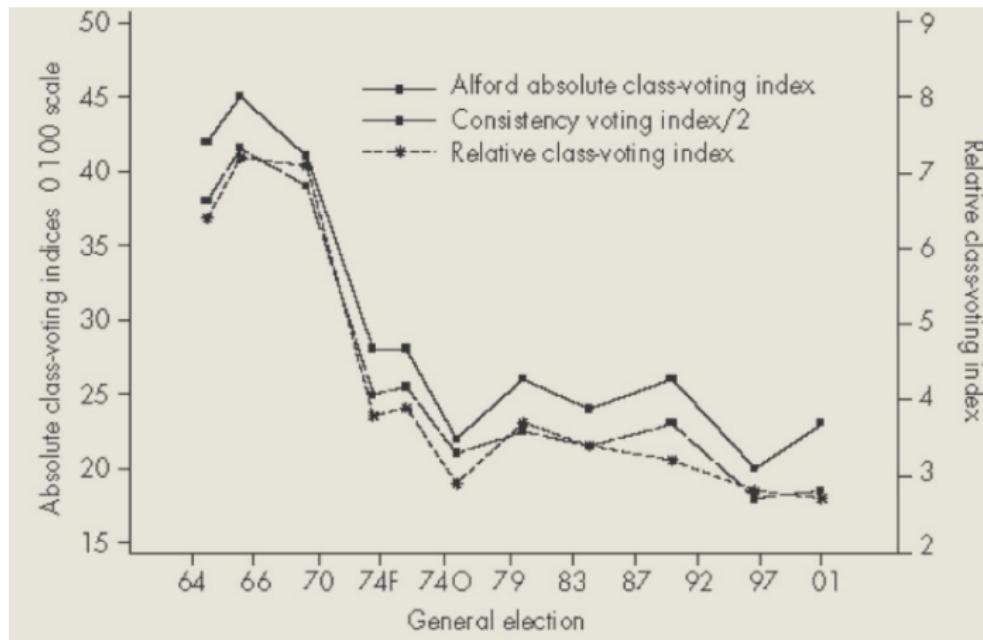
- ▶ New model of social class recently developed by UK sociologists (Savage et al. 2013)
- ▶ Views social class as a ‘multi-dimensional construct’
  - ▶ Classes defined by economic interests, but also social networks and cultural preferences
  - ▶ Recognizes variation in income within occupations
  - ▶ Better able to explain variation in preferences over cultural consumption
- ▶ Through analysis of responses to enormous survey, identify seven distinct classes
  - ▶ Survey can be accessed at:  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22000973>

# Trends in Class Voting

## What Is Class Voting?

- ▶ The extent to which social class predicts vote choice in a particular country
  - ▶ Most commonly measured using the Alford index: proportion of manual workers voting 'with their class', minus proportion of non-manual workers voting 'against their class'
- ▶ We may expect class voting to result from individuals' different economic interests – and thus, policy preferences
  - ▶ May also be a by-product of socialization
  - ▶ By families, trade unions and other organizations, local communities

## Class Voting in Britain, 1964–2001



Source: Clarke et al. (2004)

## Class Dealignment: A Cross-National Trend

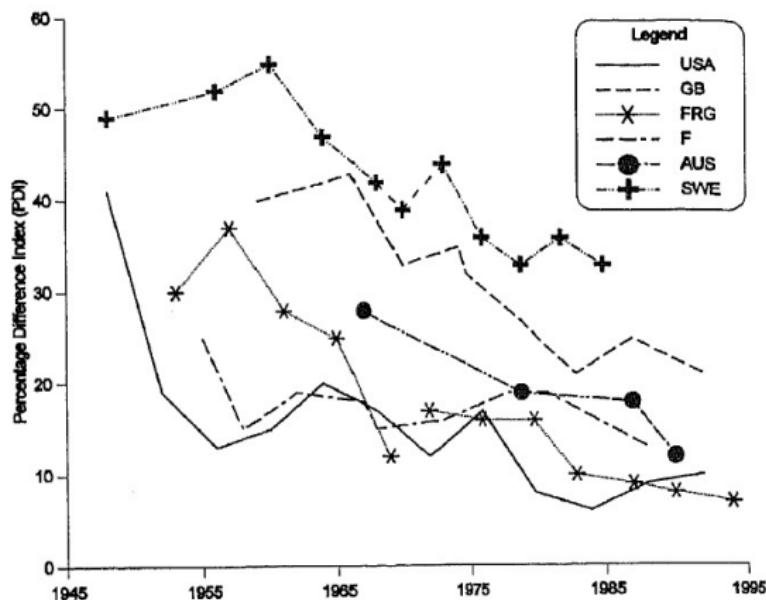


Figure 13.1. Trends in Class Voting

SOURCE: Australia (McAllister 1992, 134); Sweden (Inglehart 1990a, 260); other nations (Dalton 1996, chap. 8). Table entries are the Alford Class Voting index, that is, the percentage of the working class preferring a leftist party minus the percentage of the middle class voting for the left. American data are based on congressional elections, except for 1948, which is presidential vote.

# **Elff: Social Structure and Electoral Behavior**

# **Explaining Class Dealignment**

# Theories of Class Dealignment I

The end of ideology?

- ▶ Former mass parties evolved into catch-all parties in much of post-war Europe (Kirchheimer 1966) – seeking to cultivate a trans-class appeal
  - ▶ Examples: Germany, Britain
- ▶ As a consequence, cross-party consensus on many formerly divisive policies
- ▶ Absence of policy disagreement on class-related issues  
    ⇒ decreased salience of class for voters

But, voters still aware of class differences between parties (Dalton 1996)

## Theories of Class Dealignment II

Dalton (1996) emphasizes the role of post-war social change:

- ▶ Shrinking of the traditional working class
- ▶ Lifestyles more 'individualized and diverse', rather than bounded by social networks
- ▶ As a consequence, many voters now lack a class identity
- ▶ Same voters also mobilized by 'new' issues that cut across cleavages (Inglehart 1977, 2008)  
    ⇒ change in content of left/right orientations
- ▶ In place of class voting: issue voting, candidate-centered politics (Wattenberg 1991, Franklin 1992)

## Theories of Class Dealignment III

Clarke et al. (2004) suggest that, in Britain, e.g. leader competence has always been important



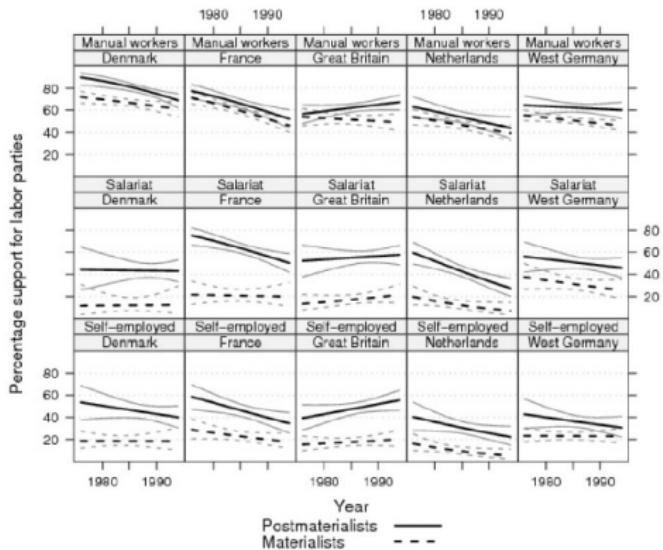
Figure 3.14 Effects of social class and other factors on Conservative versus Labour voting, 1964–2001 general elections

Source: 1964–2001 BES post-election surveys.

## Theories of Class Dealignment IV

Elff (2007) shows that labor parties have not gained post-materialist voters, except in the UK

Figure 6  
Class, value priorities, and the support for Labor parties, 1976–1994



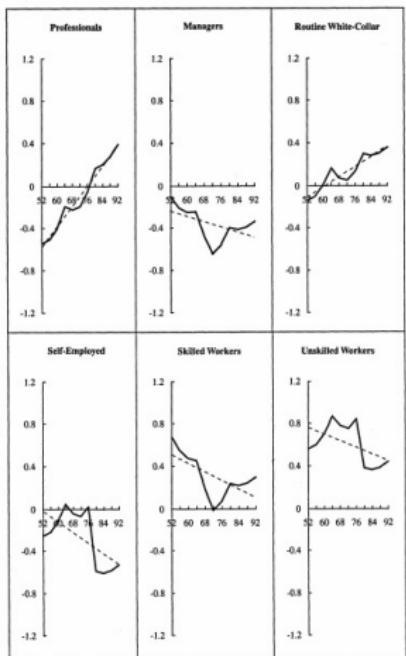
## Theories of Class Dealignment V

Manza and Brooks (1997) argue that, in the US, the character of class voting in pres. elections has *changed* rather than declined

- ▶ Define 'class voting' as divergent patterns of vote choice among classes
  - ▶ How does this compare to the Alford index measure?
- ▶ Distinguish between professionals (salaried and self-employed) and managers

# Theories of Class Dealignment VI

FIGURE 1: Maximum Likelihood Estimates of Trends in Class-Specific Vote Choice, 1952-1992; Preferred (—) and Smoothed Trend (- - -)



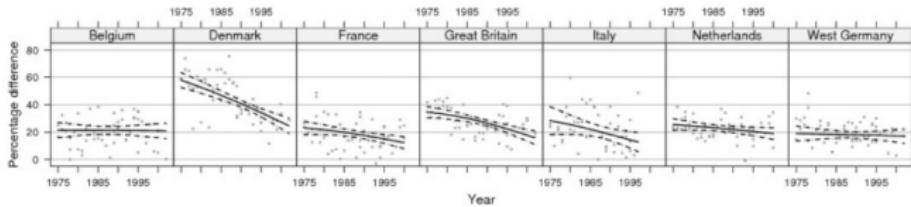
- ▶ Professionals now strongly D rather than R
- ▶ SE much more R than before
- ▶ Attitudes on social issues (race, gender) key to professionals' realignment
- ▶ However, increasing R support among SE related to higher economic satisfaction under Reagan
- ▶ Also growing opposition to the welfare state among SE

# Theories of Class Dealignment VII

Elff (2007): claims of general class dealignment overstated

**Figure 3**

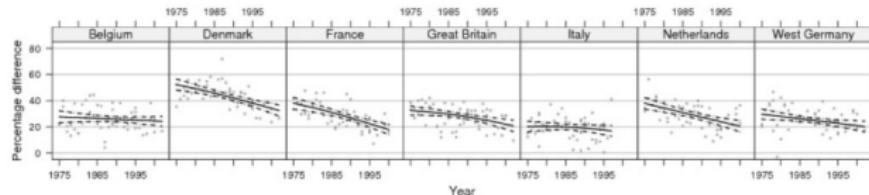
Class differences regarding the support for labor parties, working class versus salariat  
1975–2002



Note: The period of observation is 1975–2000 for France and the Netherlands and 1975–1997 for Italy.

**Figure 4**

Class differences regarding the support for labor parties, working class versus self-employed,  
1975–2002



Note: The period of observation is 1975–2000 for France and the Netherlands and 1975–1997 for Italy.

## Theories of Class Dealignment VIII

- ▶ Elff (2007) argues for importance of **party strategy** and **party polarization** in explaining variation in class voting
- ▶ Key example: ideological moderation of 'New Labour' under Tony Blair
  - ▶ Abandonment of Clause IV (commitment to common ownership of means of production, distribution and exchange) in 1994
  - ▶ By contrast, significant party polarization in 1970s, 1980s UK

## Next Class: Ethnic Voting I

To read before class tomorrow: Hainsworth, 'Success at the Polls'.