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THE CHANGING SHAPE OF CLASS VOTING

An individual-level analysis of party support in Britain, Germany and Switzerland

Daniel Oesch

ABSTRACT: In the 1990s, sociologists engaged in a heated controversy about class voting. Although empirical evidence accumulated, positions remained surprisingly divided. This paper argues that this disagreement is due to two factors. Firstly, it reflects diverging understandings as to the concept of class voting. Secondly, it is explained by the use of class models that do not satisfactorily represent today's social stratification in Western Europe. In consequence, this paper uses a detailed multi-class schema and examines two cleavages running through the social structure: (i) the economic divide separating holders of organizational power from the working-class, (ii) the cultural divide opposing high-skilled classes engaged in interpersonal work settings (who hold a liberation view of community) from low-skilled classes occupied in object-related tasks (who hold an authoritarian view of community). Based on individual level data, our analyses show that classes continue to systematically differ in their party support. There is strong electoral evidence for the traditional economic cleavage in Britain's and Germany's class structure, while in Switzerland the cultural cleavage seems more salient. Hence, class voting continues but appears to involve more (and different) class-party alliances than just left-voting by the woking class. Among others, we find salaried professionals in the social and cultural services to rally the libertarian left, while managers support parties on the right. Moreover, where a right-wing populist party alternative exists, it attracts disproportionate support from production workers and small business owners.
Key words: class; class voting; party support; cleavage; middle class

1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, political scientists and sociologists in Western Europe and the United States have engaged in a fierce – and still unresolved – debate

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about class voting. Initially, the controversy was opened by a series of electoral studies, which reported a declining influence of social divisions on voting in almost all occidental democracies (Dalton *et al.* 1984; Rose and McAllister 1986; Franklin 1992). Known as the 'dealignment' argument, these studies maintained that traditional linkages between classes and parties were replaced by new (and volatile) associations based on voters' issue positions, values, or sympathy for candidates (Inglehart 1984; Clark and Lipset 1991; Dalton 1996). These conclusions set off widespread contention and resulted in several books enquiring into the class basis of voting (Lee and Turner 1996; Evans 1999a; Clark and Lipset 2001; Brettschneider *et al.* 2002). Yet although evidence accumulated, positions did not grow closer, still remaining divided between the thesis of trendless fluctuation (e.g., Evans 1999b; Hout *et al.* 1999; Goldthorpe 2001) and the thesis of a general decline in the class basis of voting (e.g., Schnell and Kohler 1995; Nieuwbeerta and Manza 2002). How can these contrasting results be explained? We argue that they are mainly due to two factors.

Firstly, they reflect diverging understandings as to the concept of class and class voting. While for some scholars, class voting is the extent to which the *working class* rallies parties on the *left* (Clark and Lipset 1991; Franklin *et al.* 1992), other researchers understand class voting as the presence of systematic links between *different classes* and *various parties* (Evans 2000; Goldthorpe 2001). Hence, a first group of scholars equals class voting with the sole capital–labour divide (e.g., Dalton 1996), whereas a second group of researchers does not specify what socio-professional categories should be linked with what party (e.g., Müller 1999). Secondly, we believe ambiguous findings to be further due to the fact that many class models used in electoral studies do not accurately reflect today's social stratification in Western Europe. This clearly applies to binary class measures that simply separate the working from the middle class. Moreover, we also believe more sophisticated class measures such as the EGP-schema[1] or the Wright schema to reflect employment stratification typical of high industrialism of the 1970s (see Oesch 2003). Accordingly, these class models may not give optimal results with data of today's labour markets. Our analysis is thus guided by the assumption that whether an influence of social structure on party support is identified, depends on how the class concept is operationalized.

Hence, the question we try to address in this paper is the extent to which various occupational categories differ in their support for political parties. Thereby, different links between categories and parties are

1. The EGP-schema is associated with the writings of John H. Goldthorpe and his colleagues, notably Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero (1979) and Erikson and Goldthorpe (1993).

possible. If working class categories systematically favour parties of the radical right, this is as much an indicator for the persisting influence of social structure on voting as if these categories strongly supported parties on the left (Oesch 2008). We formulate the hypothesis of two different cleavages running through the social structure. Besides (i) the economic divide separating holders of organizational power from the working-class, we argue that there is (ii) a cultural division line opposing high-skilled classes engaged in interpersonal work settings (who hold a libertarian view of community) from low-skilled classes occupied in object-related tasks (who hold an authoritarian view of community). These two cleavages will be empirically analyzed for Britain, Germany and Switzerland with a modified class schema that introduces horizontal distinctions within both the salaried middle class and the working classes. We expect this schema to provide more detailed insight into the distribution of party preferences within the social structure.

Our study is structured as follows. We start out with a discussion of the two cleavages and formulate the hypotheses that we wish to test empirically. We then discuss the operationalization of our key variables, party support and above all class position. This allows us to analyze class voting with individual-level data for Britain (BHPS 1999), Germany (GSOEP 2000) and Switzerland (SHP 1999), by comparing classes' mean support for different parties on the basis of t-tests and running logistic regressions for party support.

2. Hypotheses about class voting: the structural bases of two cleavages

The main argument of our paper is that class voting continues, but firstly remains frequently hidden by insufficient class measures, and secondly may imply different links between the social structure and party support than those stipulated by traditional cleavage theory. In fact, we argue that scholars writing about the decline of class voting primarily refer to the declining share of working class members voting for the left. The reason why this particular configuration of class voting has received so much attention in the literature is because it overlaps with a social cleavage – the division between capital and labour – that has profoundly influenced European party systems and political conflicts over the last 150 years. However, working class support for the left is just one particular configuration of the possible ties between social structure and political parties.

In order to clarify this argument, John Scott's (1994) distinction between *social class* and *class location* is helpful. While a social class in the Weberian sense is defined as a demographic unit that shares a collective

identity and a common organization over time, class location simply refers to an individual's present market and work situation (Scott 1994). The concept of social class applies to the household, whereas the class location pertains to the individual. Scott's concept of class location comes close to what Jürgen Kocka (1980: 104) calls an *economic class*: individuals who, due to a common economic position, may share latent interests, but not necessarily anything else. For the debate on class voting, the distinction between social class and class location is consequential: with the possible exception of farmers, large employers ('industrialists'), small business owners ('the petite bourgeoisie'), and the working class in some countries and some time periods, the majority of occupational groups have never been *social classes* in the Weberian sense of units sharing a collective identity and a common organization over time. Hence, historically, the fact that some occupational groups have become social classes with a shared consciousness and a class organization is clearly an exception and not the rule. Accordingly, 'social class voting' is a much rarer phenomenon than 'class location voting'. Yet we argue that, when focussing on the second phenomenon, there are still systematic links between class position and party support.

Accordingly, this study focuses on the less ambitious definition of class as class location and empirically examines the class basis of two different cleavages. We briefly outline the antagonism at the basis of the two divides that we expect to see reflected in party preferences:

1. The first cleavage has an economic basis. It originates in the industrial revolution and opposes manual labour and holders of organizational power. While blue-collar workers, who possess few socio-economic resources and are thus strongly exposed to labour market risks, are expected to turn to the state in order to safeguard their interests, groups with larger market power – in particular people owning (employers) or controlling (managers) capital – appear more likely to favour market mechanisms and to oppose redistribution (Svallfors 1999: 203). In terms of political preferences, this economic cleavage should lead employers and managers to vote for parties upholding the economic status quo, namely conservative parties. On the contrary, routine production and service workers are expected to turn towards parties promoting greater economic equality and government redistribution: parties of the traditional left. Intermediate occupations such as clerks, technicians or semi-professionals also possess intermediate levels of market resources. Accordingly, expectations for their party preferences are less clear cut: they appear less likely than employers or managers – but more likely than production or service workers – to cast a conservative vote.

2. The second cleavage is closely linked with Herbert Kitschelt's (1994: 16–7) argument that an individual's class location – through the organizational experience and work environment – is not only related to his or her political preferences on the distributive dimension between a socialist and capitalist pole, but also to his or her dispositions on the communitarian dimension between a libertarian and authoritarian pole. Hence, we deal here with a cultural divide which sets classes apart on the basis of differences in their work logic (their organizational experience) and their educational attainment. We briefly need to specify why we believe differences in the work logic to be consequential for class voting. Where people primarily deal with human individuality in their work environment (as in health care, education, social work, the media or art), communicative involvement is strongest and authority relations diluted. In these work logic, primary concern is for the individual 'client' (that is: a patient, student or petitioner) and not the employing organization. Occupational groups engaged in these interpersonal work settings such as socio-cultural professionals (or, on a lower skill level, service workers) are thus expected to hold a more libertarian view of community than those occupied in clear cut command structures and mainly dealing with object- or document-related tasks such as managers (or, on a lower skill level, production workers). Besides class location, education seems to play a role as well: higher education is expected to go along with more "libertarian" political values. It provides the cognitive skills – notably language skills – which facilitate access to other lifestyles and thus contributes to cultural tolerance (Lipset 1963).

By combining different work logics with different levels of education, we obtain our expectations as to classes' party preferences on this dimension. At the libertarian end of this cultural divide, we expect to find socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals: they are highly educated and work in the face-to-face service logic typical of teaching, caring and healing occupations. Their preferences contrast most strongly with low-skilled production workers and small business owners such as farmers, self-employed artisans and shopkeepers. These latter classes are expected to be situated at the authoritarian end of the political preferences map (Kitschelt 1995; Betz 1998; Kriesi 1998, 1999; Müller 1999; Kriesi and Lachat 2004; Lubbers and Güveli 2007; Oesch 2008). In terms of party support, high-skilled classes in interpersonal work settings such as socio-cultural professionals are likely to favour the parties most strongly in favour of cultural diversity and individual autonomy: the parties of the libertarian left (Kitschelt 1994). In contrast, low-skilled classes occupied in object-related tasks such as production workers and small business owners

are expected to prefer political parties upholding cultural homogeneity and national demarcation: right-wing populist parties (Kitschelt 1995; McGann and Kitschelt 2005).

Table 1 summarizes the two division lines and attributes to each cleavage the political parties and classes that we expect to be opposed. There is wide agreement in the literature that the existence of a structural basis alone is not sufficient to render a class divide politically salient (Bartolini and Mair 1990). In order to become politically salient, a structural conflict needs to translate into a consciousness of shared interests and these interests further need to be articulated by a collective actor such as a political party. Hence, whether the two oppositions of Table 1 materialize in the political arena depends, among others, on a country's party system. This implies that although we believe these division lines to have a structural basis in all Western European countries, they will only show in those countries where the corresponding parties – notably left-libertarian and right-wing populist parties – exist. Hence, an analysis mainly focusing on the divides' existence would need to take in account both the demand and supply side of politics (e.g., Elff 2005; Kriesi *et al.* 2006). However, this is not the primary aim of this article which concentrates on the *structural* context of mobilization, that is party preferences of voters.

3. Countries, data and operationalization

Our empirical analysis compares class-voting in three countries: Britain, Germany and Switzerland. While these Western European countries share

TABLE 1. Expected class cleavage in party preferences

Cleavage	*Parties opposed*	*Occupational classes most strongly opposed*	*Decisive criteria for class opposition*
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

a series of structural characteristics (such as a market economy, a representative democratic system and a post-industrial class structure), they present large variance with respect to the political supply-side (the party system): (i) Great Britain is a majority electoral system with bipartisan competition for government, where only one further party (the Liberals) is relevant; (ii) Germany is a proportional representation system with two large and two (sometimes three) small relevant parties; (iii) Switzerland is a consensus democracy with four large governmental parties and one small relevant non-governmental party (the Green Party). For these three countries, we have selected individual-level surveys that are both sufficiently large and include detailed information about employment and political behaviour: the *British Household Panel Survey* (BHPS) year 1999; the *German Socio-Economic Panel* (GSOEP) year 2000, and the *Swiss Household Panel* (SHP) year 1999. Table 2 provides more detailed information about these datasets.

Our dependent variable *party support* is operationalized as follows: in the Swiss survey, we select the Sunday question ('what party would you vote for if elections were held tomorrow'). In the British survey, respondents are asked in a first step to name the party they support. In a second step, those (and only those) individuals not indicating a party are further asked the Sunday question. The two answers are then combined into a single variable of party support. Finally, the variable contained in the Germany survey only refers to party identification ('toward which party do you lean?'). In theory, party identification is considered an imperfect indicator for party choice. However, it has repeatedly been shown in empirical research that party identification, far from being a

TABLE 2. Data sets and sample size

	British Household Panel Survey (BHSP)	*German Socio-Economic Panel* (GSOEP)	*Swiss Household Panel* (SHP)
Year of data collection	1999	2000	1999
Total sample size: *N* individuals	15,625	23,341	7799
Size of target population: *N**	7032	11,477	3866
Reference	Taylor (2001)	Haisken-DeNew and Frick (2001)	Zimmermann et al. (2003)
Webreference	www.iser.essex.ac.uk	www.diw.de/english/sop	www.swisspanel.ch

* Individuals aged between 20 and 65 years and spending at least 20 hours per week in paid employment.
In the datasets, cross-sectional weights are provided to improve the samples' representativity. We applied them to all our analysis.

stable long-term measure, is constantly adapted by voters in order to match their voting intention (e.g., Franklin and Jackson 1983; Franklin 1984). Hence, in electoral studies party identification is commonly used as a proxy for party support (e.g., Küchler 1990; Kohler 1998). This will be done in this paper as well. However, it must be kept in mind that the questions behind our dependent variables are not identical.

Our decisive independent variable is *class location*. Traditionally, political scientists have measured the class divide's influence on voting behaviour with the Alford index (Clark and Lipset 1991; Dalton 1996). This index is simply computed as the difference in support for left-wing parties between blue-collar and white-collar workers (Alford 1962). This crude measure of the class structure has been the object of thorough criticism (Hout *et al.* 1995). In a review article of the class debate, Evans (2000) puts heavy emphasis on the need for electoral studies to move away from a binary measure of class (working class vs. middle class) to more sophisticated concepts of class. This need is all the more evident as shifts in the employment structure such as service sector growth, welfare state expansion, occupational upgrading and rising female participation have resulted in an increasingly large and heterogeneous salaried middle class, at the expense of the shrinking industrial working class. As we have argued in detail elsewhere (Oesch 2003), these shifts put heavy strain also on sophisticated class devices such as the EGP-schema, originally developed in the 1970s to reflect the class structure of industrial society. While this schema provides detailed criteria in order to discriminate among male occupations – notably occupations in production – it does not differentiate satisfactorily within the growing professional and managerial ranks of the salaried middle class (despite the useful refinement undertaken by Rose and Pevalin 2003). This is not a problem for studies of upward and downward mobility. However, based on work by Kriesi (1998) or Müller (1999), we argue that horizontal distinctions within the class structure are vital for the study of political preferences.

Accordingly, we will resort to a modified class schema that has been discussed and empirically examined in great detail elsewhere (Oesch 2006a, b). The schema's construction logic is based on the combination of a *vertical axis* reflecting more or less favourable employment relationships (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1993) with a *horizontal axis* capturing differences in the work logic (Kriesi 1989; Esping-Andersen 1993; Kitschelt 1994; Müller 1999). While the vertical axis is theoretically well documented (Goldthorpe 2000: chap. 10) and easily operationalized through the notion of occupational skill requirements (see Tåhlin 2007), the horizontal axis must be explained in greater detail. We follow Kitschelt (1994: 17) who maintains that work experience is a critical factor shaping people's political preferences. Hence, in spite of similarly (dis)advantageous employment

relations, there are important differences in the work logic between middle class categories such as (i) professionals in the social and cultural services, (ii) professionals in technical fields, and (iii) managers. The same holds true on the level of the working classes between (i) service workers, (ii) production workers and (iii) clerks. Among wage-earners, we thus horizontally distinguish three different work logics, each work logic giving rise to a separate hierarchy.

- an *interpersonal work logic*, where individuals are employed in face-to-face attendance to people's personal demands and primarily depend on social skills;
- a *technical work logic*, where daily work either consists in the development and use of technical expertise or the deployment of craft;
- an *organizational work logic* defined by bureaucratic imperatives, work experience being shaped by coordination, control and administrative tasks;

We have argued elsewhere that these work logics systematically differ with respect to the four underlying dimensions shown in Table 3 (Oesch 2006a: 64–6): (1) the setting of the work process; (2) the authority relations; (3) primary orientation; (4) type of skills required (see Oesch 2006a: 64).

TABLE 3. The dimensions at the basis of the three different work logics of employees

	Interpersonal work logic	*Technical work logic*	*Organizational work logic*
Setting of work process	Service setting based on face-to-face exchange	Work process determined by technical production parameters	Bureaucratic division of labour
Relations of authority	Working largely outside the lines of command	Working outside the lines of command for higher grades, working within a clear-cut command structure for lower grades	Working within a bureaucratic command structure that corresponds to a career sequence
Primary orientation	Orientation towards the student, patient or petitioner	Orientation towards the professional community	Primary orientation towards the employing organization
Skill requirements	Expertise and communicative skills for higher grades, social skills for lower grades	Scientific expertise for higher grades, crafts and manual skills for lower grades	Coordination and control skills for higher grades, clerical skills for lower grades

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

Employees			*Self-employed*
Interpersonal service work logic	*Technical work logic*	*Organizational work logic*	*Independent work logic*
Socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals	**Technical professionals and semi-professionals**	**Higher-grade and associate managers and administrators**	**Traditional bourgeoisie (large employers [> 9] and self-employed professionals)**
Medical doctors Social workers Teachers	Computing professionals Mechanical engineers Safety inspectors	Financial managers Managers in small firms Public administrators	Accountants Hotel owners Lawyers
Service workers	**Production workers**	**Office clerks**	**Small business owners with less than 9 or no employees**
Children's nurses Home helpers Waiters	Assemblers Carpenters Machinery mechanics	Bank tellers Mail sorting clerks Secretaries	Farmers Hairdressers Shopkeepers

We add a fourth work logic – the *independent work logic* – based on differences in the employment status, thus separating employers and the self-employed from the much larger group of employees. By combining the two axes, we obtain the 8-class schema shown in Table 4.[2] For each class we have listed three frequent and characteristic occupations. We believe this class measure to present three advantages for the analysis of political behaviour: firstly, large employers and self-employed professionals are distinguished from salaried professionals; secondly, managers are kept separate from members of the social and cultural (semi-)professions on the one hand, the technical (semi-)professions on the other; thirdly, workers in production, evolving in a "Fordist" division of labour, are differentiated from workers with comparable skill levels working in interpersonal service or clerical jobs.

We allocate individuals to these classes on the basis of information about (i) their employment status (employee or employer/self-employed), (ii) the number of their employees and, most consequently, (iii) their present occupation (ISCO 1988 codes at the most detailed 4-digit level). Table A.1

2. This is the reduced version of a detailed 17-class schema that has been used for an enquiry into employment stratification (see Oesch 2006a, b). For this paper's analysis of party preferences, the more parsimonious 8-class version seems more helpful.

in the annexe gives information about the schema's operationalization.[3] As the focus of our study lies on class location and not social class, we prefer the individual over the household as unit of analysis. Moreover, in order to avoid deriving a class position from the employment of individuals only marginally involved in the labour market, we restrict our analysis to men and women aged 20–65 years who spend at least 20 hours per week in paid work. Table 2 lists the number of individuals remaining in our analysis once we exclude individuals spending less than 20 hours per week in paid employment.

Our empirical analysis is structured as follows. We first compare different classes' support for different parties in a bivariate context. We then move on to multivariate analysis and run binomial logistic regressions for support of a party of the centre-right and the libertarian left. This allows us to control for the influence of education. Finally, we present a comprehensive view of class voting through the use of multinomial regressions.

4. Analysing class voting I: the economic cleavage opposing workers and holder of organizational power

European social democracy may have somewhat loosened its ties with its traditional working class constituency (Kitschelt 1999). Nonetheless, the conflict between labour and capital is still chiefly articulated by social democratic parties on the one hand and bourgeois parties on the other. We examine this first cleavage with the help of *t*-tests with Bonferroni correction,[4] thus assessing whether the support for a party family (social democratic or bourgeois) significantly differs between a given class and the population mean. Table 5 presents the extent to which each class is over- or under-represented among a party's electorate. Results clearly point towards the persistence of the traditional class divide in Britain and Germany: despite the business-friendly stance of the then prime ministers Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder, largest support for the traditional left comes in both countries from the industrial working class, followed by service workers in Britain and clerks in Germany. In contrast, support for Labour and SPD is strongly below average among the traditional bourgeoisie and small business owners; these two classes are by far the strongest followers of the

3. The syntax used to operationalize the schema is available from the author for both Stata and SPSS.
4. The Bonferroni method uses the *t*-distribution, like the pairwise *t*-test. However, it is more conservative as it corrects for chance capitalization ('if we go on testing long enough, we will inevitably find something which is "significant"') by adjusting the threshold for significance downward to the number of pairwise comparisons made (e.g., Knoke, 1976).

TABLE 5. Over- and underrepresentation of classes' support for parties of the Traditional left, Bourgeois right, Libertarian Left and Populist Right

	Cleavage I						*Cleavage II*			
	Support for Labourist Party			*Support for centre-right Party*			*Support for parties of the Libertarian Left*			*Support for popu-list rightwing party*
	GB 99: *Labour Party*	DE 00: *Social Democrats*	CH 99: *Social Democrats*	GB 99: *Conservative Party*	DE 00: *CDU/CSU and FDP*	CH 99: *CVP, FDP LPS*	GB 99: *Liberal Democrats*	DE 00: *Green Party*	CH 99: *Green Party, Social Democr.*	CH 99: *Swiss People's Party*
Socio-cultural specialists	+3.7***	−3.7***	+24.7***	−13.7***	−6.3***	−12.9***	+7.9***	+10.4***	27.3***	−15.7***
Service workers	+5.3***	+2.0*	−0.8	−5.3***	−2.2*	−4.3***	−0.3	−4.7***	−0.7	+5.6***
Technical specialists	−2.9**	+0.9	+0.4	+4.5***	−5.3***	+3.0	+1.6*	+4.6***	0.0	−4.9***
Production workers	+9.4***	+9.4***	−2.7	−5.7***	−3.7***	−7.0***	−5.0***	−5.8***	−3.3*	+12.3***
Managers	−6.1***	+0.6	−6.8***	+7.4***	+2.1*	+11.3***	+0.9	0.0	−8.3***	−1.6
Clerks	−0.2	+7.2***	−0.4	−2.3**	−3.4***	−0.8	+0.2	−1.8***	−0.4	−1.2
Traditional bourgeoisie	−8.9***	−26.7***	−6.1***	+14.2***	+24.5***	+10.8***	−0.1	+5.3***	−2.8	−6.4***
Small business owners	−13.1***	−23.7***	−15.4***	+15.6***	+22.4***	+3.9**	−2.0***	−2.2***	−16.5***	+11.6***
Proportion in target sample	48.0	44.3	35.5	30.5	40.1	33.0	13.4	8.4	40.1	21.5
N observations (nationals only)	5125	4744	1985	5125	4744	1985	5125	4744	1953	1985

Notes: Values shown are percentages of over- or underrepresentation of each class relative to the country mean in party support (displayed in the last row). Asterisks indicate whether the differences in the means are statistically significant using the Bonferroni method, where *** significant at the 0.001 level; ** at the 0.01 level; * at the 0.05 level.

Data sources: Britain BHPS 1999; Germany GSOEP 2000; Switzerland SHP 1999.

Question wording: GB: 'which party do you feel closest to?' or, if none 'which party would you vote for if elections were held tomorrow; DE: 'toward which party do you lean?'; CH: 'which party would you vote for if elections were held tomorrow?'

Conservative Party in Britain and the centre-right coalition in Germany. Hence, party support in Britain and Germany still appears to be structured by the traditional economic cleavage that opposes low skilled wage-earners (above all production workers) and owners of means of production (employers and the self-employed).

In Switzerland, the labour–capital divide is only visible for party preferences of employers and the self-employed: support for the Social Democratic Party (SPS) is lowest among small business owners, managers and the traditional bourgeoisie. At the same time, these three categories are strongly overrepresented among supporters of the bourgeois bloc. Interestingly, in Switzerland, clear-cut party preferences of economically well endowed classes such as the traditional bourgeoisie and managers contrast with little defined preferences of the economically weaker classes of clerks, service workers and production workers. In Switzerland's party system, the cleavage between employers and workers thus appears to be only articulated by the capital side. Switzerland's social-democratic party SPS has its stronghold not among workers, but strikingly so among professionals employed in the social and cultural services (25 percentage points above average support). However, we believe this feature of class voting to be more usefully explained by the second cleavage than by the labour–capital divide.

So far, we have examined the class-party link only in a bivariate context. Yet part of the relationship between particular classes and political parties may be due to other individual characteristics such as sex, age or public sector employment. Moreover, we explicitly expect individuals' cognitive skills – best measured by their education – to be relevant for the second cultural cleavage. Accordingly, the determinants of conservative and left-libertarian party support for each country are examined in a multivariate context with controls introduced for education, sex, age and public sector employment. Table 6 shows the results of these binary logistic regressions.

With respect to conservative party support, we find strongest class contrasts in Britain: classes with large market power such as the traditional bourgeoisie, small business owners, managers and technical specialists are significantly more likely to vote for the Conservatives than the reference category of clerks.[5] In contrast, production workers and socio-cultural specialists are less prone to support the Conservatives. In Germany and Switzerland, only two classes significantly differ from clerks in their

5. We choose clerks as the reference group because we expect this category to be relatively neutral both with respect to the economic and the cultural cleavage: there are classes both more likely and less likely to support a conservative or a left-libertarian party than clerks. Hence, this reference group makes it more difficult for us to find significant class differences than if we had chosen as reference category with more profiled party preferences such as socio-cultural specialists or small business owners.

TABLE 6. Estimates of the odds of supporting a party on the centre-right or the libertarian left (Exp[B] of binary logistic regressions)

	Cleavage I			*Cleavage II*		
	Support for centre-right party			*Support for party of the libertarian left*		
	GB 99: *Conservative Party*	DE 00: *CDU/CSU, FDP*	CH 99: *CVP, FDP LPS*	GB 99: *Liberal Democrats*	DE 00: *Green Party*	CH 99: *Green Party, SocDemoc.*
Class						
Socio-cultural specialists	0.67**	0.94	0.56*	1.22	2.21***	2.16***
Service workers	0.87	1.03	0.84	0.92	0.72	1.05
Technical specialists	1.36*	0.83	1.07	1.05	1.57	1.08
Production workers	0.79*	0.89	0.70	0.66*	0.53*	1.10
Managers	1.58***	1.20	1.57*	0.98	1.18	0.72
Clerks (reference)						
Traditional bourgeoisie	1.85**	2.72***	1.25	0.85	1.39***	0.97
Small business owners	1.79***	2.54***	1.05	0.85	1.07	0.57*
Education						
Compulsory or incomplete schooling (reference)						
Vocational secondary	1.24	1.20	0.90	0.48**	0.78	1.29
General secondary	1.49***	1.19	0.97	0.88	2.08	1.96**
Post-secondary, but no tertiary degree	1.59***	1.21	1.03	0.88	1.88	1.35
Tertiary degree	0.95	1.17	1.11	1.42*	3.29**	1.96**
Sex						
Female	1.03	1.25**	1.01	1.19	1.25	1.38**
Age						
20–35	0.81**	0.99	0.89	0.88	0.99	0.71**
35–50 (reference)						
51–65	1.62***	1.33***	1.13	1.22	0.38***	0.74*

TABLE 6 (*Continued*)

	Cleavage I			*Cleavage II*		
	Support for centre-right party			*Support for party of the libertarian left*		
	GB 99: *Conservative Party*	DE 00: *CDU/CSU, FDP*	CH 99: *CVP, FDP LPS*	GB 99: *Liberal Democrats*	DE 00: *Green Party*	CH 99: *Green Party, SocDemoc.*
Sector						
Private (reference)						
Public	0.63***	0.86*	0.67**	1.17	0.90	1.64***
Constant	0.31	0.43	0.57	0.15	0.07	0.42
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0.083	0.048	0.056	0.034	0.149	0.125
N (nationals only	5091	4664	1981	5091	4664	1981

Figures shown are the odds ratios of the chance of supporting a given party as to the chance of not supporting that party with respect to the reference category. *** Significant at the 0.001 level; ** at the 0.01 level; * at the 0.05 level. Data sources: Britain BHPS 1999; Germany GSOEP 2000; Switzerland SHP 1999.

support for the centre-right: in Germany, the traditional bourgeoisie and small business owners are 2.5 times more likely to vote for the centre-right parties than clerks. In Switzerland, this applies to managers (who are significantly more likely) and socio-cultural specialists (who are significantly less likely than clerks to support a centre-right party). In all three countries, age increases and public sector employment decreases the likelihood of voting for a bourgeois party.

5. Analysing class voting II: the cultural cleavage separating high-skilled professionals from production workers and small business owners

The cultural cleavage refers to the communitarian dimension set between a libertarian and authoritarian pole. It divides high-skilled individuals in communicative work settings who hold a libertarian view of community (for instance with respect to cultural diversity and international integration) from low-skilled individuals primarily occupied in object-related work who take an authoritarian stance to question of community (expressed in a preference for cultural homogeneity and national demarcation). This division line is primarily articulated by the libertarian left and the radical right. Identifying the libertarian left party is straightforward in the case of Germany, namely the Green Party. In Britain, the Liberal Democratic Party comes closest to a libertarian party on the left. It is more libertarian – clearly standing for cultural diversity – than leftist in character. Since our focus lies on the first dimension, this is not overly problematic. Finally, Switzerland's libertarian left is not only composed of the small Green Party, but also comprises the Social Democratic Party that, in the context of Switzerland's fragmented multi-party system, has not metamorphosed into a catch-all organization, but chosen a left-libertarian profile.

Results shown in Table 5 confirm that in all three countries socio-cultural specialists are by far the strongest followers of the libertarian left. This applies to support for Britain's Liberal Democrats (8 percentage points above average), for Germany's Green Party (+ 10 points) and most clearly so for Switzerland's Social Democratic and Green Party combined (+ 27 points). While these highly skilled members of the social and cultural professions are likely to endorse cultural diversity, two other classes seem less well equipped to deal with an increasingly internationalized political space and multiculturalism: production workers and small business owners. Table 5 reveals that these two classes are significantly underrepresented among voters of the libertarian left in all three countries.

According to the hypothesis of a cleavage, classes most clearly in favour of left-libertarian parties ought to be least supportive of right-wing populist parties and vice versa. In our sample, the antithesis of the libertarian left

has in Switzerland only, a strong political expression with the Swiss People's Party (SVP). For this country, we find the expected over-representation of production workers (12 percentage points above average) and small business owners (+ 12 points) among populist right-wing voters – a result repeatedly observed in electoral studies (e.g., Lubbers *et al.* 2002; McGann and Kitschelt 2005; Oesch 2008). As expected, socio-cultural (semi-)professionals are strongly underrepresented among SVP voters.

In the literature, several attempts have been made to explain support of socio-cultural professionals for the libertarian left not by their class location, but by their higher education or the public sector setting of their jobs (e.g., Kitschelt 1994; Heath and Savage 1995; Knutsen 2001). These two arguments are tested in a multivariate context: in order to identify the influence of education on class and party support, we have run a regressions on party support both with education (results shown in Table 6) and without education (results shown in Table A.2 in the annexe). Our results show, first of all, that education has a very different influence on conservative than left-libertarian party support. The comparison of pseudo R^2 in Table 6 and A.2 reveals that introducing education adds very little to the explanation of conservative support in Britain and none at all to that of centre-right support in Germany and Switzerland.

In contrast, education significantly improves the explained variance of left libertarian support in Britain and, above all, in Germany and Switzerland. Individuals with a tertiary degree are 1.4 (Britain), 2.0 (Switzerland) and even 3.3 (Germany) times more likely to vote for a party of the libertarian left than individuals without secondary schooling. The introduction of education into the regressions also alters the relationship between occupational classes and left-libertarian party preference: the observed positive relationship between high-skilled socio-cultural specialists and left libertarian support, albeit remaining strongly significant, becomes weaker in Germany and Switzerland and disappears altogether in Britain. In contrast, production workers' significantly lower likelihood of supporting a left libertarian party than clerks remains unchanged in Britain and Germany. Hence, while the level of education plays an important role in explaining people's preference for a left-libertarian party, it does not account for the significant differences between occupational classes' party support.

A similar conclusion can be drawn with respect to public sector employment. It has a significant effect on left-libertarian party support in Switzerland, but not in Britain and Germany. Yet although this effect is strongly positive in Switzerland, socio-cultural specialists are still more than twice as likely as clerks to vote for either the Social Democrats or the Green Party. Hence, preferences of socio-cultural professionals for the libertarian left are not satisfactorily explained by either education or public sector employment.

6. A comprehensive view of class voting

To conclude our empirical analyses, Figures 1–3 provide a comprehensive view of class voting in the three countries under study. Based on multinomial regressions, they show for all classes the probabilities of men in a given age cohort (36–50 years old) to either support the social democrats, the libertarian left (green or liberal party) or the centre-right.[6] For easier comparison, we have regrouped the eight classes into three categories: (i) the salaried middle class, (ii) the working class, (iii) employers and the self-employed.

Within the two latter categories, similarities in the class-party ties across countries are striking. In both Britain and Germany, the three working class categories are more likely to support the traditional left and less likely to plebiscite the libertarian left than all the other classes. This pattern is most marked among production workers: the industrial working class is the category most strongly supportive of the traditional left, but has least affinity with the libertarian left and among the lowest probabilities to vote for the conservatives (only surpassed by socio-cultural specialists). On the other side of the labour–capital cleavage, the traditional bourgeoisie and small business owners are the classes least likely to vote for the left, but

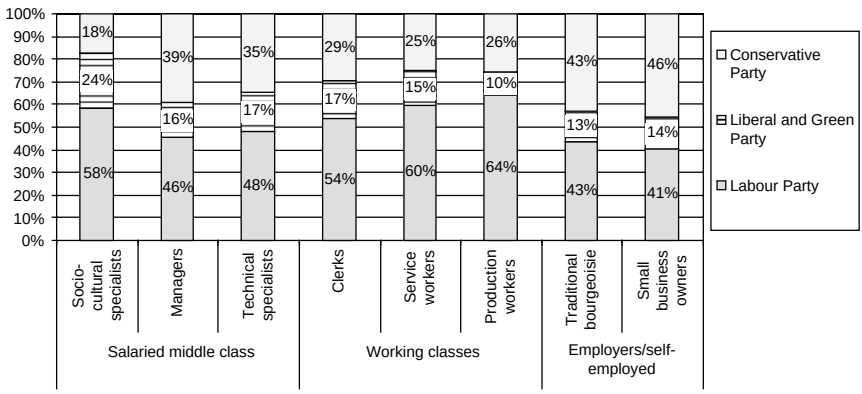

Figure 1. Probabilities of supporting a given party in Britain 99 (men aged 36–50)[7]

6. In Switzerland, the choices are somewhat different and are made between the three following blocs: (i) the Social Democratic and Green parties, (ii) the centre-right parties; (iii) the large right-wing populist party SVP.
7. Coefficients of multinomial logistic regressions on party support are transformed into predicted probabilities. Model information: Britain: N = 5107, pseudo R^2 Nagelkerke = 0.066; Germany: N = 4667, pseudo $R^2 = 0.106$; Switzerland: N = 1982, pseudo $R^2 = 0.146$.

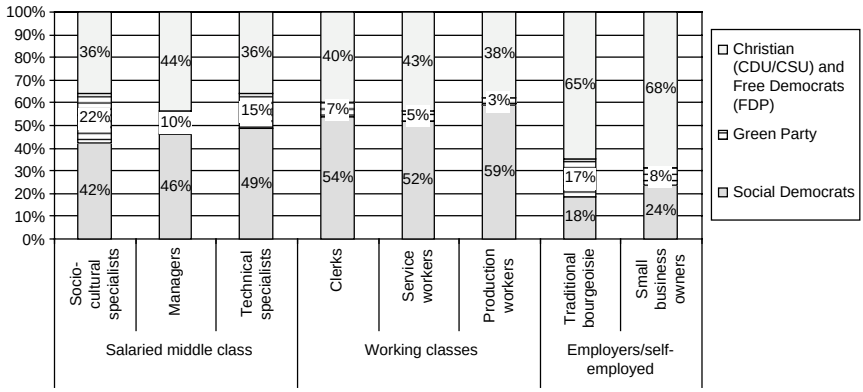

Figure 2. Probabilities of supporting a given party in Germany 00 (men aged 36–50)

show strongest support for the Conservatives in Britain and the centre-right parties in Germany. In Switzerland, of greater consequence than the labour–capital cleavage is the cultural cleavage between high skilled professionals, particularly socio-cultural specialists, on the one hand, and production workers and small business owners on the other. While the first massively rally the Social Democrats or the Greens, the latter disproportionately support the right-wing populist party SVP.

Overshadowed by the division lines separating working class members from capital owners and salaried professionals from small business owners, Figures 1–3 also suggests that the salaried middle class is far from being homogenous with respect to party support: while socio-cultural (semi-)professionals are the strongest backers of the libertarian left in all

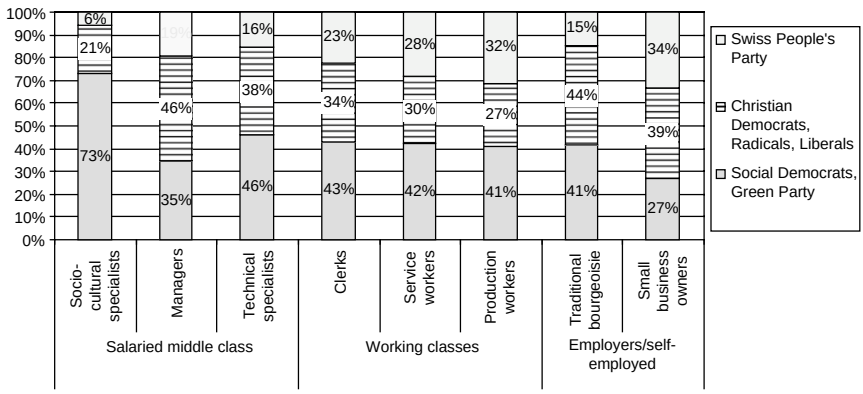

Figure 3. Probabilities of supporting a given party in Switzerland 99 (men aged 36–50)

three countries, managers are not more likely than the average citizen to support these parties. In contrast, managers are overrepresented among conservative voters, whereas socio-cultural specialists are the class least likely to vote for a bourgeois party everywhere. This divide within the middle class between socio-cultural professionals leaning towards the libertarian left and managers favouring the right has repeatedly been observed for countries such as Germany (Müller 1999), The Netherlands (Güveli *et al.* 2007; Lubbers and Güveli 2007) or Switzerland (Kriesi 1998). Our results further strengthen the argument that class voting may frequently remain hidden by the inadequate operationalization of class; once we keep different categories within the salaried middle class separate, there is no evidence for Goldthorpe's (1995: 322) expectation that the service class becomes a homogeneously conservative element within modern society.

7. Discussion

This article's objective was to get a better understanding of the social structural basis of party support. It started out from the argument that class voting cannot be reduced to working class support for the left. Instead, we formulated the hypothesis that at least two cleavages run through the social structure. Besides the economic labour–capital conflict, a second cultural division line separates salaried professionals supportive of cultural diversity and individual autonomy from low-skilled workers and small business owners attached to cultural homogeneity and national demarcation. The class basis of these two cleavages is analyzed with a multi-class schema that provides detailed differentiation within the growing salaried middle class and the heterogeneous working class.

What are the empirical findings of our study? The traditional economic divide is still evident in Britain's and Germany's class structure, where preferences for the social democratic left and the conservative right clearly follow hierarchical lines: Between production workers and small business owners, support for Labour differs by 22 percentage points in Britain and support for SPD by 33 percentage points in Germany. In Switzerland, employers and managers express party preferences as predicted by the capital–labour divide, but low-skilled workers do not. This finding is closely linked to the second cleavage based on questions of community and identity. It opposes (semi-)professionals in social and cultural services from production workers and small business owners in Swiss politics. While the first strongly support the parties of the libertarian left, the latter lean towards the opposite pole, the right-wing populist SVP. There is some evidence for the second divide in Germany and, to a lesser degree, in

Britain, socio-cultural specialists having become the backbone of the libertarian left (German Greens and British Liberals) in both countries.

The finding that economically powerful classes such as salaried professionals are voting for the left has often been misinterpreted as an indicator for the decline of class voting. We argue on the contrary that it may well be the expression of class voting, as individuals in a given class location (the social and cultural professions) systematically support a given party (of the libertarian left). This result seems to substantiate earlier findings about the political heterogeneity of the salaried middle class in Western Europe (Kriesi 1998; Müller 1999; Güveli 2007). While members of the social and cultural professions stand out as particularly supportive of the libertarian left in all three countries, managers are significantly more likely to vote conservative.

As we focus exclusively on party preferences of voters and do not integrate the supply side of politics into our analysis, we are unable to identify the exact configuration of cleavages. What we may affirm with some certainty is that party support of different classes is not distributed randomly in the three European countries under study. On the opposite, party choice appears significantly linked to class location in every one of the three countries studied. Hence, our analysis produces no evidence supporting the argument of the end of class voting. Yet while classes continue to systematically differ at the polls, class voting seems to involve different alliances than just left voting by the working class. These new alliances include socio-cultural professionals rallying the libertarian left and low-skilled workers supporting the Populist Right.

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Annexe

TABLE A.1. ISCO-1988 codes of each class (identical for British, German and Swiss samples)

Socio-cultural professionals and semi-professionals	*Technical professionals and semi-professionals*	*Higher-grade and associate managers and administrators*	*Large employers (> 9) and self-employed professionals*
2220-2320, 2330-2340, 2350-2359, 2430-2432, 2440, 2442-2444, 2445-2446, 2450-2455, 2460, 3220-3224, 3226, 3229-3340, 3460-3472, 3480	*2100-2213, 3100-3152, 3210-3213, 3434*	*1100-1239, 2410-2429, 2441, 2470, 1300-1319, 3410-3433, 3440-3450*	*Self-employed (SE) and 10 or more employees, or SE and 2000-2470*
Service workers	*Production workers*	*Office clerks*	*Small business owners with less than 9 or no employees*
3225, 3227-3228, 3473-3475, 5000, 5100, 5110-5113, 5120-5123, 5131-5139, 5130, 5140, 5141-5143, 5149, 5200-5220, 9100-9152	6000-6154, 7000-7442, 8000-8300, 8310-8311, 8312-8322, 8323-8324, 8330-8331, 8332-8340, 9153-9162, 9200-9213, 9300-9330	4000-4112, 4113, 4211, 4212-4222, 5160-5169	SE and less than 10 or no employees (and not 2000-2470)

Not possible to allocate to a given class: 100, 2400, 3000, 3200, 3400, 9000.
Allocation rules:

1. Employers and self-employed are separated from employees on the basis of their employment status. They are allocated to the independent work logic.
2. Among employers and the self-employed, individuals are allocated to classes on the basis of the following criteria:
if they have more than 9 employees = large employers
if they have 9 or less employees and are professionals (ISCO codes 2000–2470) = self-employed professionals
if they have 9 or less employees and are not professionals = small business owners
if they do not have any employees and are not professionals = small business owners.
3. Among employees, individuals are allocated to the different classes on the basis of the ISCO-codes. This allocation process is discussed in detail in Oesch (2006a: 77–83). It undoubtedly implies subjective judgement about the work logic and employment relationship of occupational groups, and thus provides large ground for disagreement. See the comment made by Anthony Heath (1980:50; quoted by Marshall et al. 1985): 'The classification of occupations exhibits more disarray than almost any other issue in professional sociology and provides endless ground for argument and confusion. How a sociologist decides to categorize occupations will reflect his own beliefs about the nature of the social world, his theoretical preference and objectives, and his own moral or political attitudes and values (and all these will themselves be interrelated).'

TABLE A.2. Estimates of the odds of supporting a party on the centre-right or the libertarian left without controlling for education (Exp[B] of binary logistic regressions])

	Cleavage I			*Cleavage II*		
	Support for centre-right party			*Support for parties of the libertarian left*		
	GB 99: *Conservative Party*	DE 00: *CDU/CSU, FDP*	CH 99: *CVP, FDP LPS*	GB 00: *Liberal Democrats*	DE 00: *Green Party*	CH 99: *Green Party, SocDemoc.*
Class						
Socio-cultural specialists	0.61***	0.93	0.61*	1.58**	3.88***	2.74***
Service workers	0.85	1.02	0.85	0.94	0.60	1.04
Technical specialists	1.33*	0.83	1.13	1.21	2.32***	1.22
Production workers	0.76*	0.88	0.70	0.65**	0.40**	1.06
Managers	1.52***	1.21	1.64*	1.12	1.47	0.78
Clerks (reference)						
Traditional bourgeoisie	1.69**	2.73***	1.37	1.04	2.63***	1.21
Small business owners	1.75***	2.55***	1.05	0.88	1.07	0.61*
Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)	0.071	0.048	0.055	0.024	0.107	0.114
N (nationals only)	5107	4667	1982	5107	4667	1982

Figures shown are the odds ratios of the chance of supporting a given party as to the chance of not supporting that party with respect to the reference category. The same control variables for age, sex and public sector employment are introduced as in the regressions displayed in Table 5.
*** Significant at the 0.001 level; ** at the 0.01 level; * at the 0.05 level.
Data sources: Britain BHPS 1999; Germany GSOEP 2000; Switzerland SHP 1999.