



International
Inequalities Institute



Rethinking class in an era of escalating inequality: the importance of Pierre Bourdieu

Mike Savage

(with the help of Magne Flemmen, Laurie Hanquinet, Daniel Laurison, Rebecca Simson, Paul Segal and Paul Wakeling)

The challenge of inequality...?

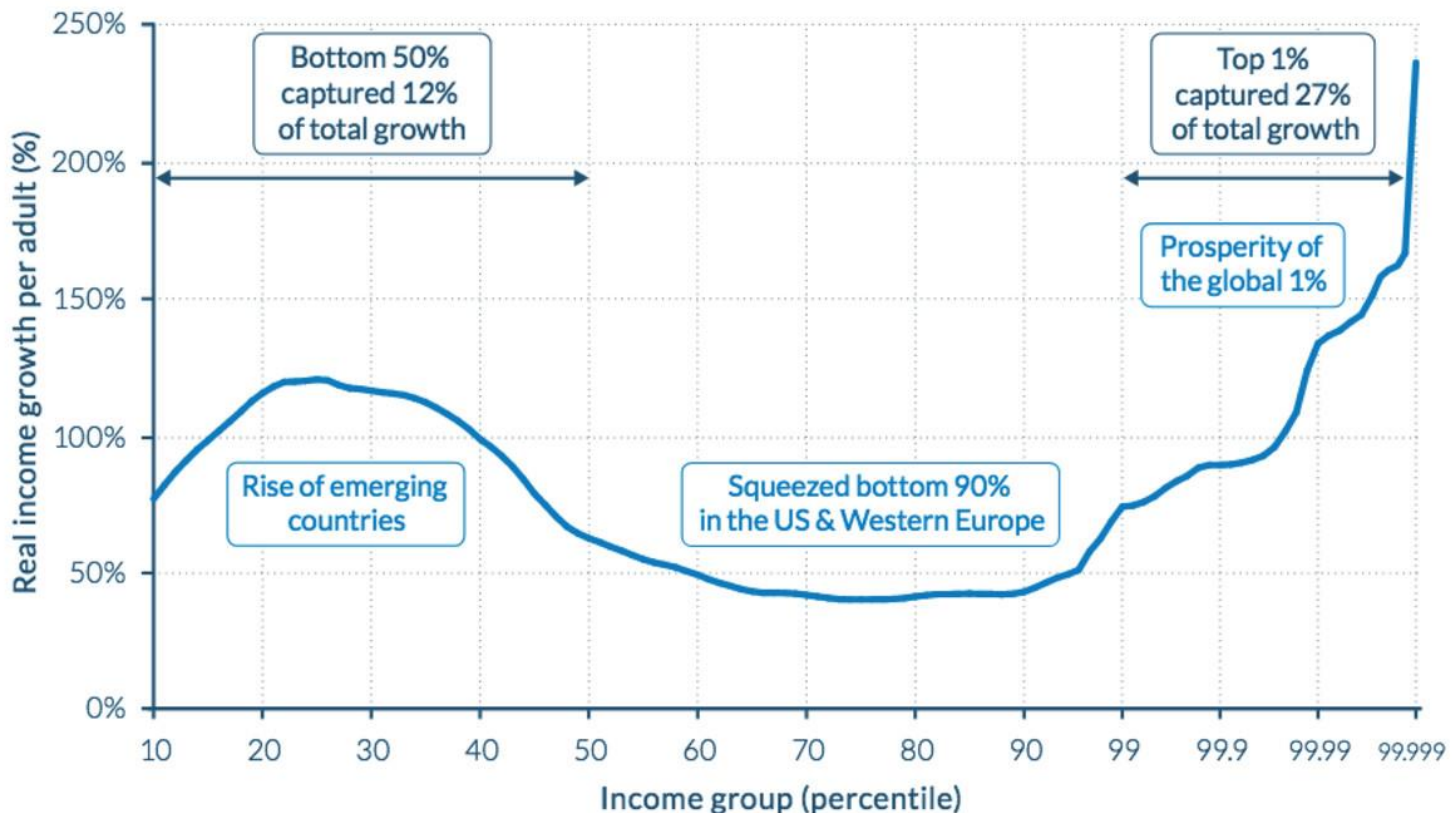
‘the combined trends of increased inequality and decreasing (social) mobility pose a fundamental threat to the American Dream, our way of life, and what we stand for around the globe’’
(Obama, 2013)

‘Income and wealth disparity is rated...as the most important trend in determining global developments over the next 10 years’ (World Economic Forum 2017)

Global income trends and enhanced inequality

Figure 2.1.4

Total income growth by percentile across all world regions, 1980–2016



Source: WID.world (2017). See wir2018.wid.world for more details.

On the horizontal axis, the world population is divided into a hundred groups of equal population size and sorted in ascending order from left to right, according to each group's income level. The Top 1% group is divided into ten groups, the richest of these groups is also divided into ten groups, and the very top group is again divided into ten groups of equal population size. The vertical axis shows the total income growth of an average individual in each group between 1980 and 2016. For percentile group p99p99.1 (the poorest 10% among the world's richest 1%), growth was 74% between 1980 and 2016. The Top 1% captured 27% of total growth over this period. Income estimates account for differences in the cost of living between countries. Values are net of inflation.

PLAN of LECTURE

1. Sociological models of class vs Bourdieu
2. Theorising class and elites
3. A case study: class in the age of BREXIT

1: SOCIOLOGICAL CLASS MODELS VS BOURDIEU

Sociological models of class

- Both Marxist and Weberian traditions originate in the 'problematic of the proletariat' (David Lockwood)
- Sees class as (some kind of) categorical variable
- Generally use employment/occupation based criteria to specify key 'big class' thresholds.

Goldthorpe's sociological model

Box 1

**Categories of John Goldthorpe's Class Scheme
And Supposed Form of Regulation of Employment**

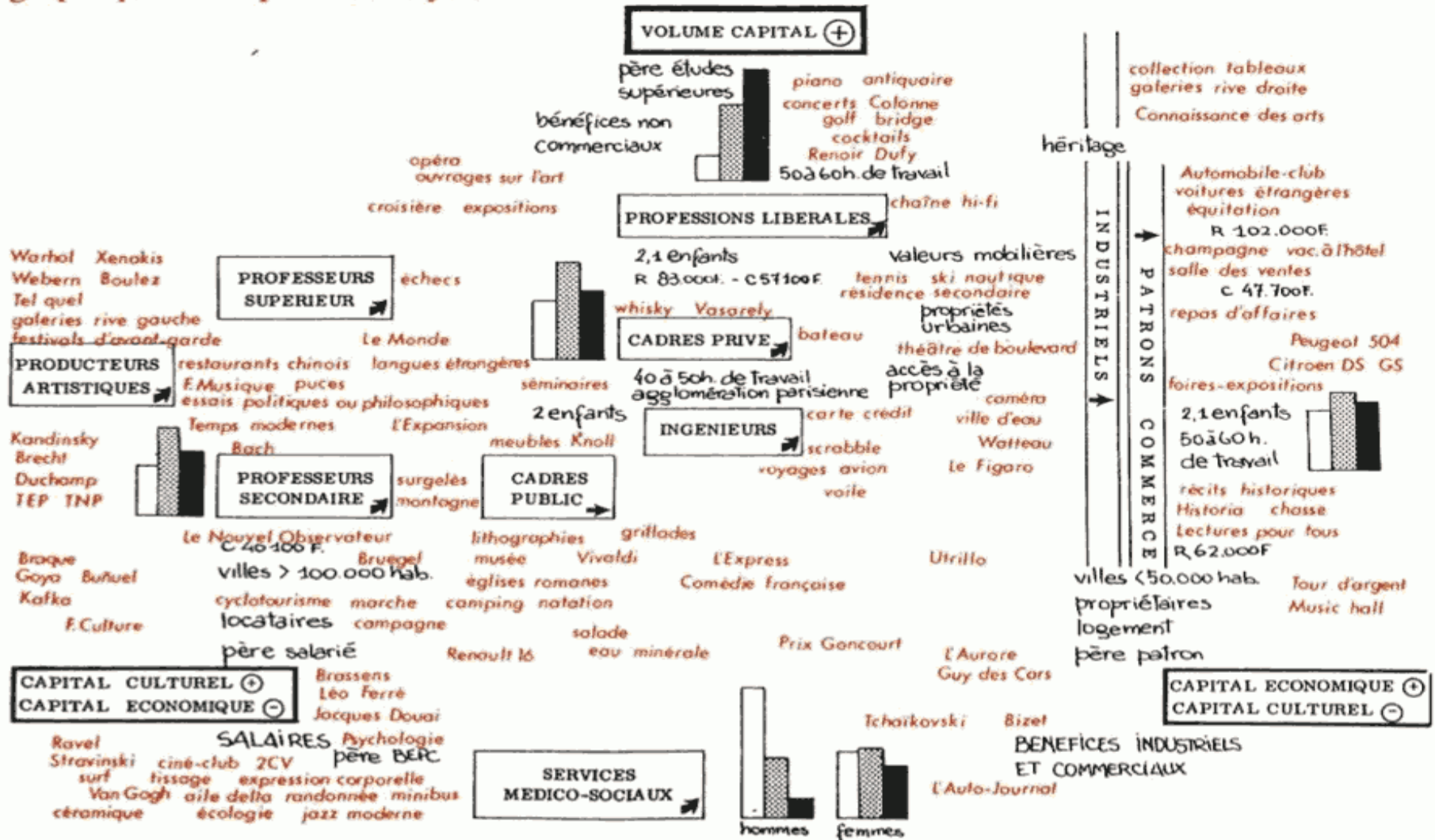
<i>Class</i>	<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Form of Regulation of Employment</i>
I	Professionals, Administrators and Managers, higher-grade	Service Relationship
II	Professionals, Administrators and Managers, lower-grade, and higher-degree Technicians	Service Relationship (modified)
III a	Routine Nonmanual Employees, higher-grade	Mixed
III b	Routine Nonmanual Employees, lower-grade	Labour Contract (modified)
IVabc	Small Proprietors and Employers, and self-employed Workers	
V	Lower-grade Technicians and Supervisors of manual workers	Mixed
VI	Skilled Manual Workers	Labour Contract (modified)
VII a	Nonskilled Manual Workers (other than in agriculture)	Labour Contract
VII b	Agricultural Workers	Labour Contract

Source: Goldthorpe (2000, p. 209)

Problems with the employment approach

- The decomposition of the working class weakens its conceptual underpinnings
 - Demographically
 - Politically
- Does not grasp the gendered and kinship based dynamics of inequality
- Offers weak tools to understand inequality dynamics and the 'pulling away of the top'
- Gives little handle on the internal fracturing of privileged social classes and the need for sociological analyses of elites
- Generally assumes nations are 'containers' for classes

graphique 6—Espace des styles de vie



The Great British Class Survey

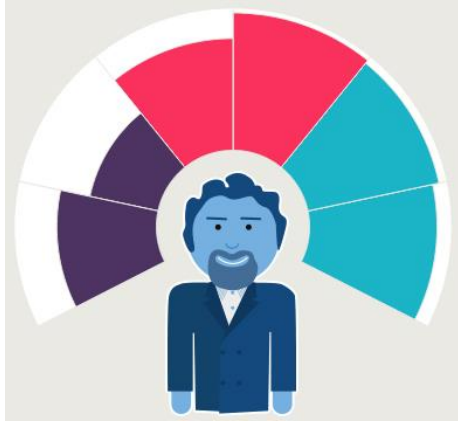
- BBC approached us to assist with a web survey which they thought would have current affairs as well as 'scientific' interest
- Seeks to exemplify Bourdieu's view of class as multi-dimensional and based on economic, social and cultural capital
- Survey launched in January 2011 and generated 161,000 respondents by that summer and 330000 by 2013 – the largest ever survey of social class in the UK

The new class system?

Elite



Established m c



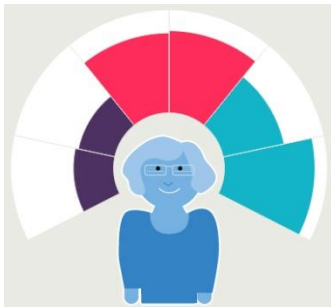
New affluent workers



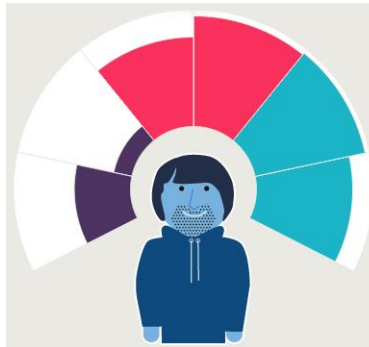
Technical mc



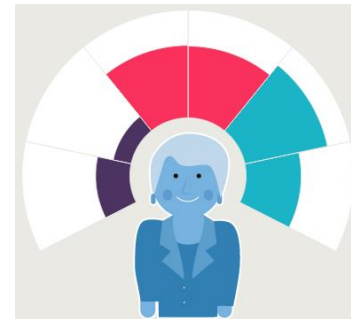
Traditional w c



Emerging service workers



Precariat



	Elite	Established middle class	New affluent workers	Technical middle class	Traditional working class	Emergent service workers	Precariat
Household income	£89 082	£47 184	£29 252	£37 428	£13 305	£21 048	£8 253
Household savings	£142,458	£26 090	£4 918	£65 844	£9 500	£1 138	£793
House value	£325 000	£176834	£128 639	£163 362	£127 174	£17 968	£26 948
Social contact score	50.1	45.3	37.8	53.5	41.5	38.3	29.9
Social contact number	16.2	17.0	16.9	3.6	9.8	14.8	6.7
Highbrow cultural capital	16.9	13.7	6.9	9.2	10.8	9.6	6.0
Emerging cultural capital	14.4	16.5	14.8	11.4	6.5	17.5	8.4

Age

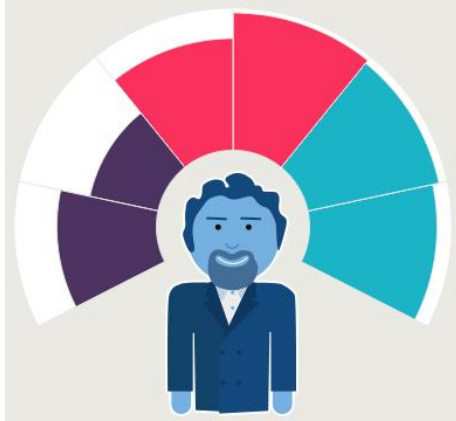
Elite



57

Established m c

46



New affluent workers



44

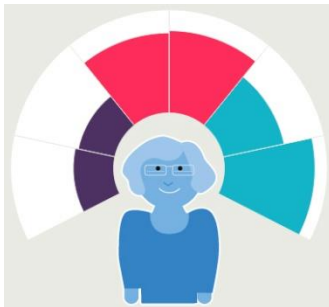
Technical mc



52

Traditional w c

66



Emerging service workers



32

Precariat



50

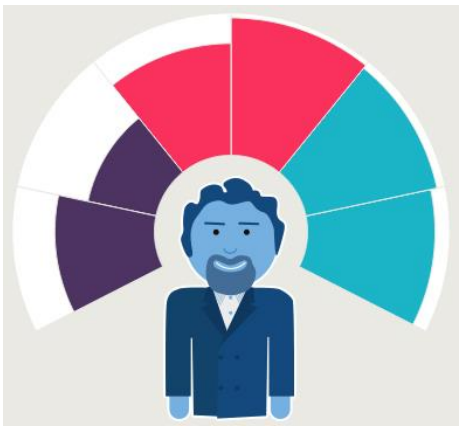
% ethnic min

Elite



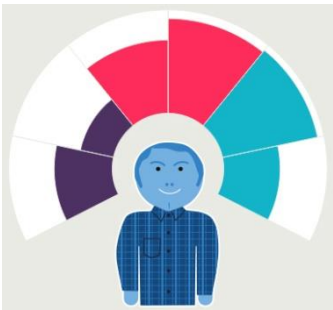
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Established m c



13

New affluent workers



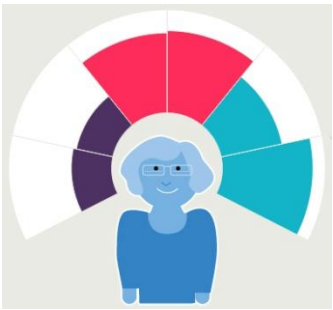
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Technical mc



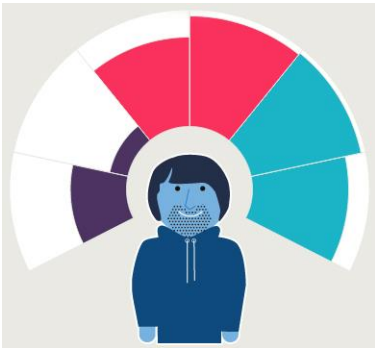
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Traditional w c



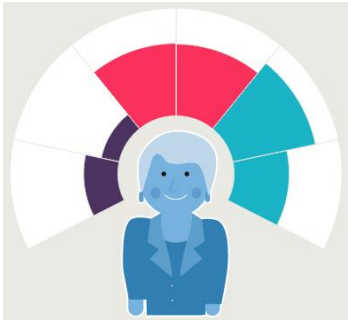
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Emerging service workers



21

Precariat



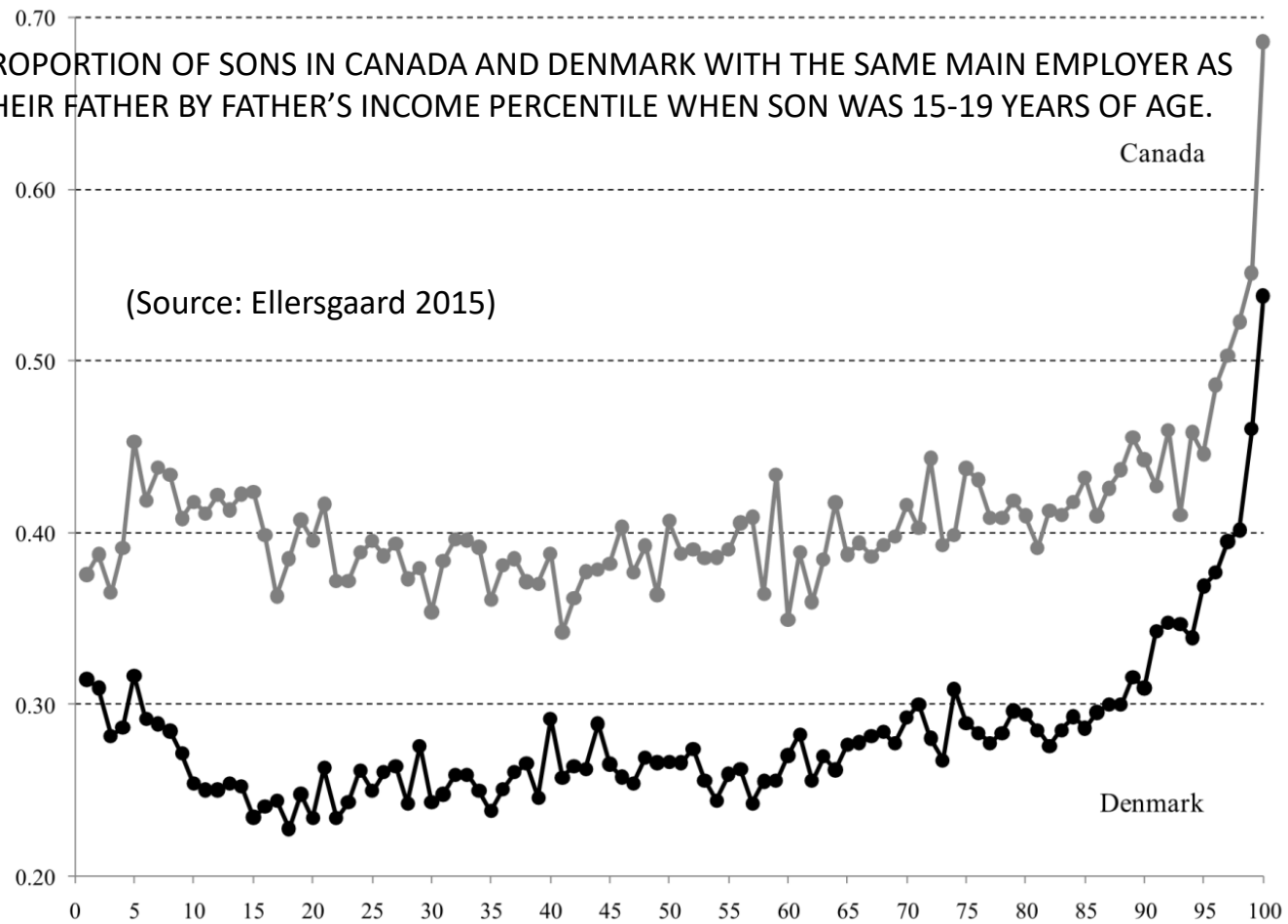
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The Bourdieusian challenge to class analysis

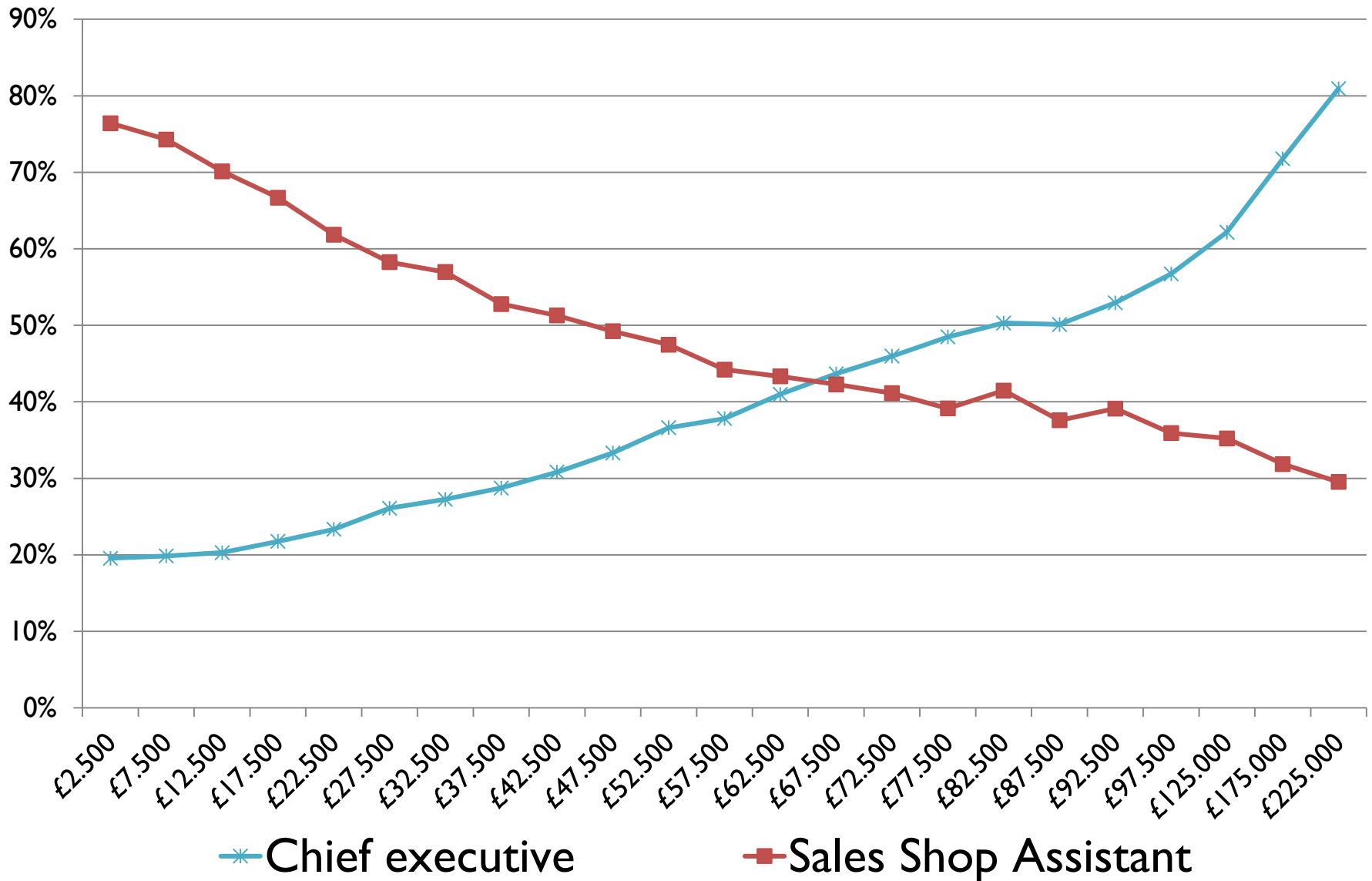
1. Focusing on class with respect to capital, rather than occupation or consumption
2. Theorising the middle class with respect to elites and the 'top end', rather than fixating on the 'collar boundary'
3. Recognising horizontal as well as vertical splits in class formation

2: THEORISING CLASS AND ELITES

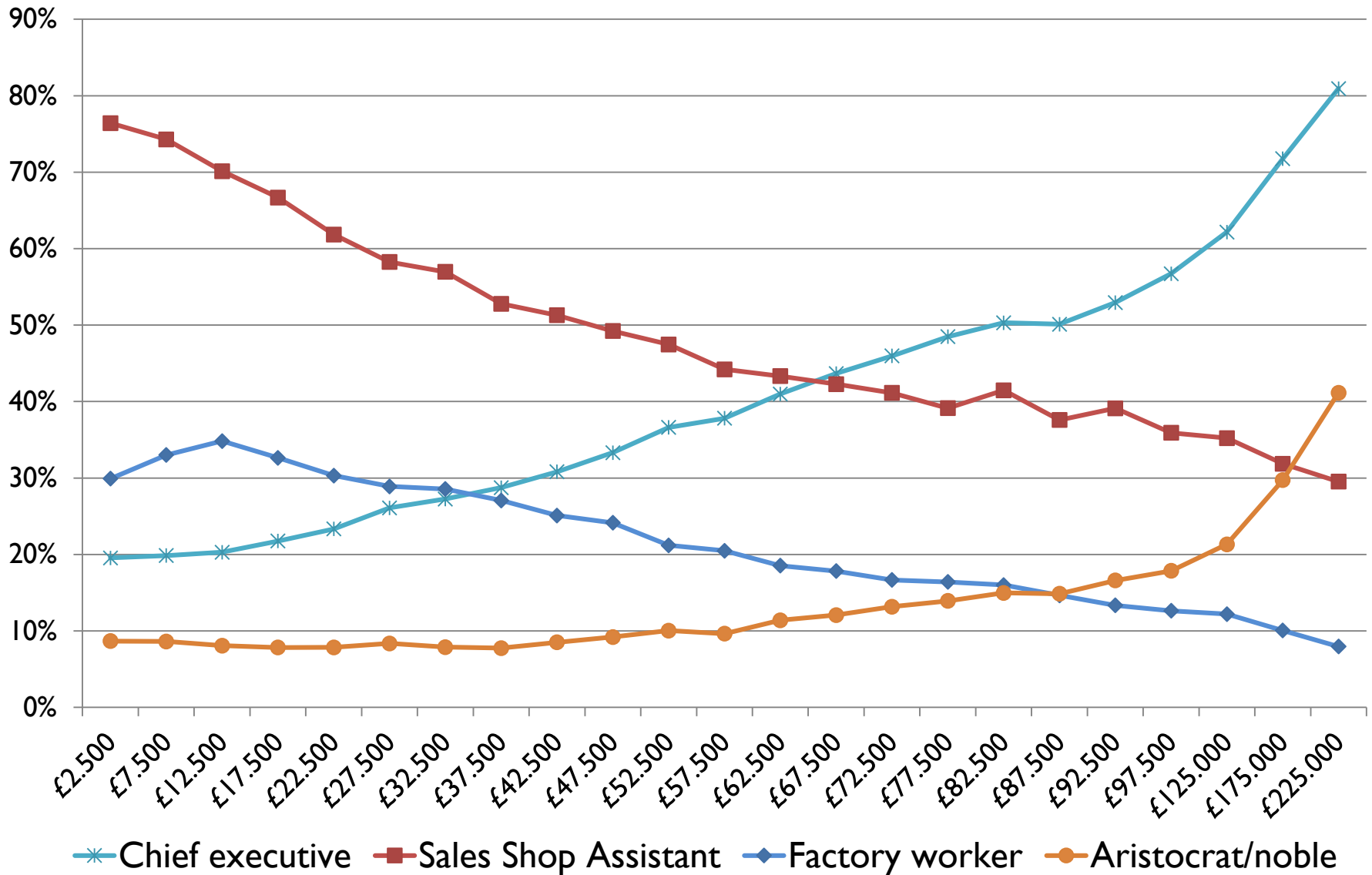
PROPORTION OF SONS IN CANADA AND DENMARK WITH THE SAME MAIN EMPLOYER AS THEIR FATHER BY FATHER'S INCOME PERCENTILE WHEN SON WAS 15-19 YEARS OF AGE.



Percent who Know a... by Income



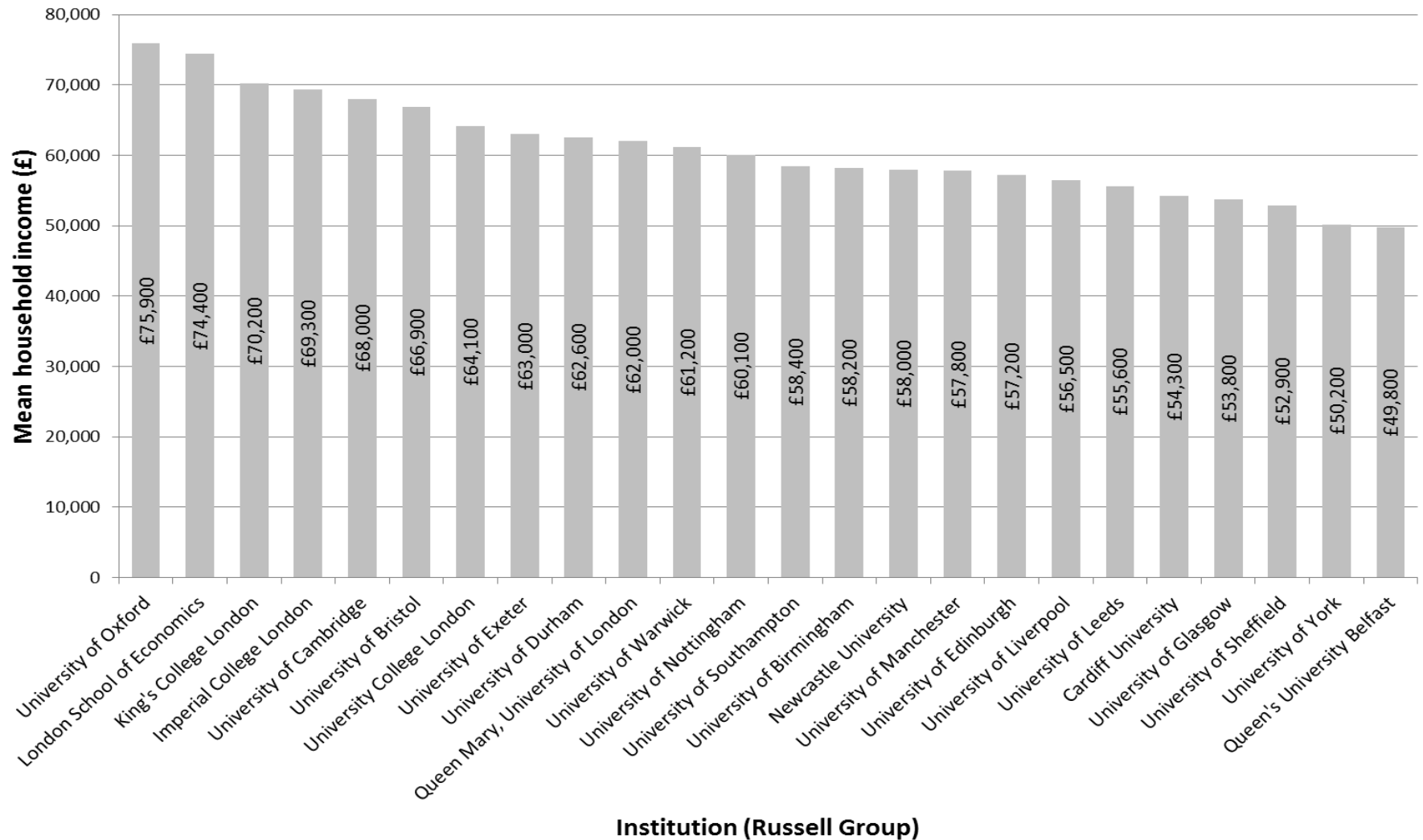
Percent who Know a... by Income



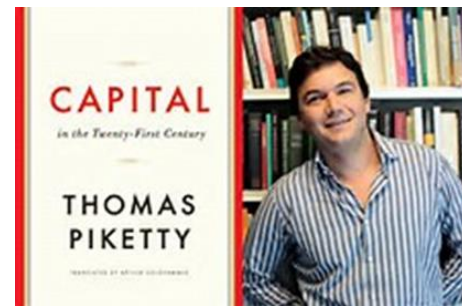
Continuing Exclusivity of Medicine And Law

		short-range	mid-range	long-range	
	stable	mobile	mobile	mobile	N
Medical practitioners	52.6%	22.6%	20.7%	4.2%	259
Law	42.6%	19.6%	24.7%	13.0%	214
Other Life Science Professionals	37.6%	20.2%	32.2%	10.0%	180
Media Professionals	36.3%	26.2%	24.9%	12.6%	127
Other Professionals	33.8%	23.2%	26.2%	16.8%	146
Finance	30.8%	16.2%	38.9%	14.2%	249
Scientists	30.2%	24.8%	33.0%	12.1%	247
Academics	29.8%	27.1%	31.1%	12.0%	164
Business Professionals	27.8%	22.3%	32.2%	17.7%	949
Accountants	26.2%	17.5%	38.0%	18.4%	323
Built Environment Professionals	25.7%	18.9%	40.5%	15.0%	150
Managers and Directors in Business	24.9%	18.1%	37.4%	19.6%	773
Protective Civil Service	24.7%	11.9%	36.6%	26.8%	82
Information Technology	24.5%	24.8%	33.7%	17.1%	736
Engineers	21.8%	21.8%	38.1%	18.4%	452
Public Sector Managers & Professionals	16.4%	24.2%	41.7%	17.7%	298

University and pay levels



Piketty on Bourdieu



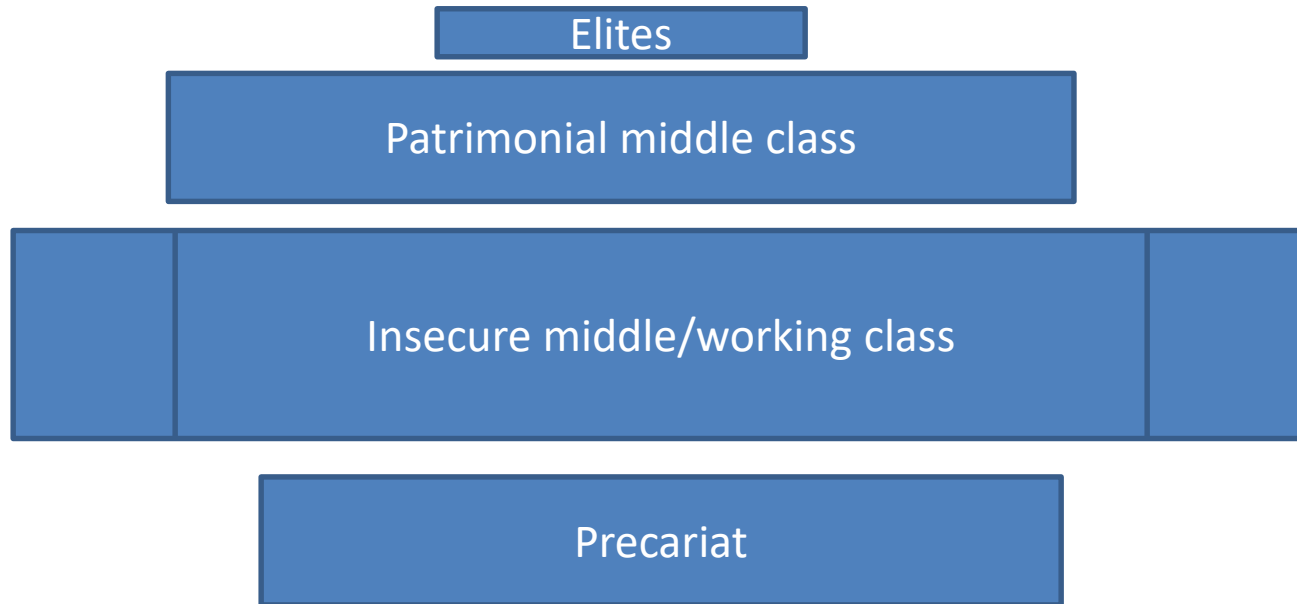
Bourdieu when he starts writing about social inequality in the 1960s writes exactly in the middle of the period....of low financial wealth, low real estate value.....(he says) okay, well maybe you now have new forms of symbolic capital and cultural capital, which shape power relations between social groups, and that doesn't mean a very, very violent relationship between social group based upon domination does not exist anymore. **And my message is to say, in order to think about power and inequality relations in the 21st Century we need to combine the two. Because we have a return of capital in the sense of financial capital, real estate capital, which is playing a very big role today, much bigger than the '50s, '60s, '70s.**

A capital based model of class....?

Overlap with a capitals/assets/resources approach (Savage, Warde, Devine 2008)

- Recognises a distinctive asset rich ‘elite’
- But also, a larger ‘patrimonial class’ reflecting the diffusion of significant asset wealth
 - 16% of French can expect to inherit 750k euros (Piketty)
 - GBCS suggest 7% of UK are in a distinctly ‘elite’ class
- Sees wealth thresholds as harder to enter than ‘middle class’ income thresholds
- Recognises the decline of the ‘capital composition’ axis

A new 'wealth' model of class?

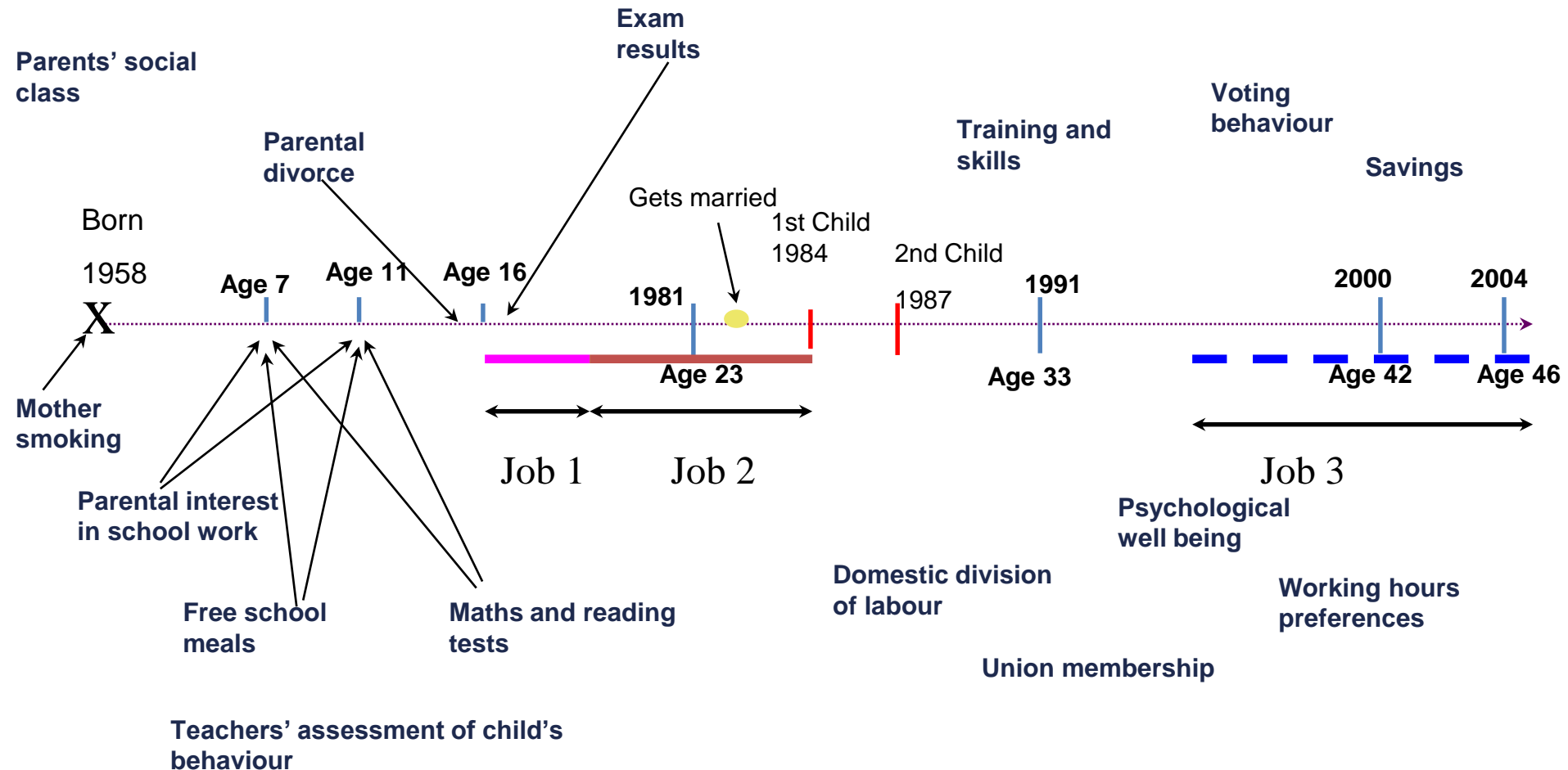


See, for instance, Rehbein et al's comparative study of Laos, Germany and Brazil

3: A case study: class in the age of Brexit

- The National Child Development Study is a remarkable source tracing the lives of Britons born in one week of 1958.
- As well as the resources of the panel survey we can use 220 linked qualitative interviews which I collected with Andrew Miles, Jane Elliott and Sam Parsons in 2008

Hypothetical life history



Multiple correspondence analysis:

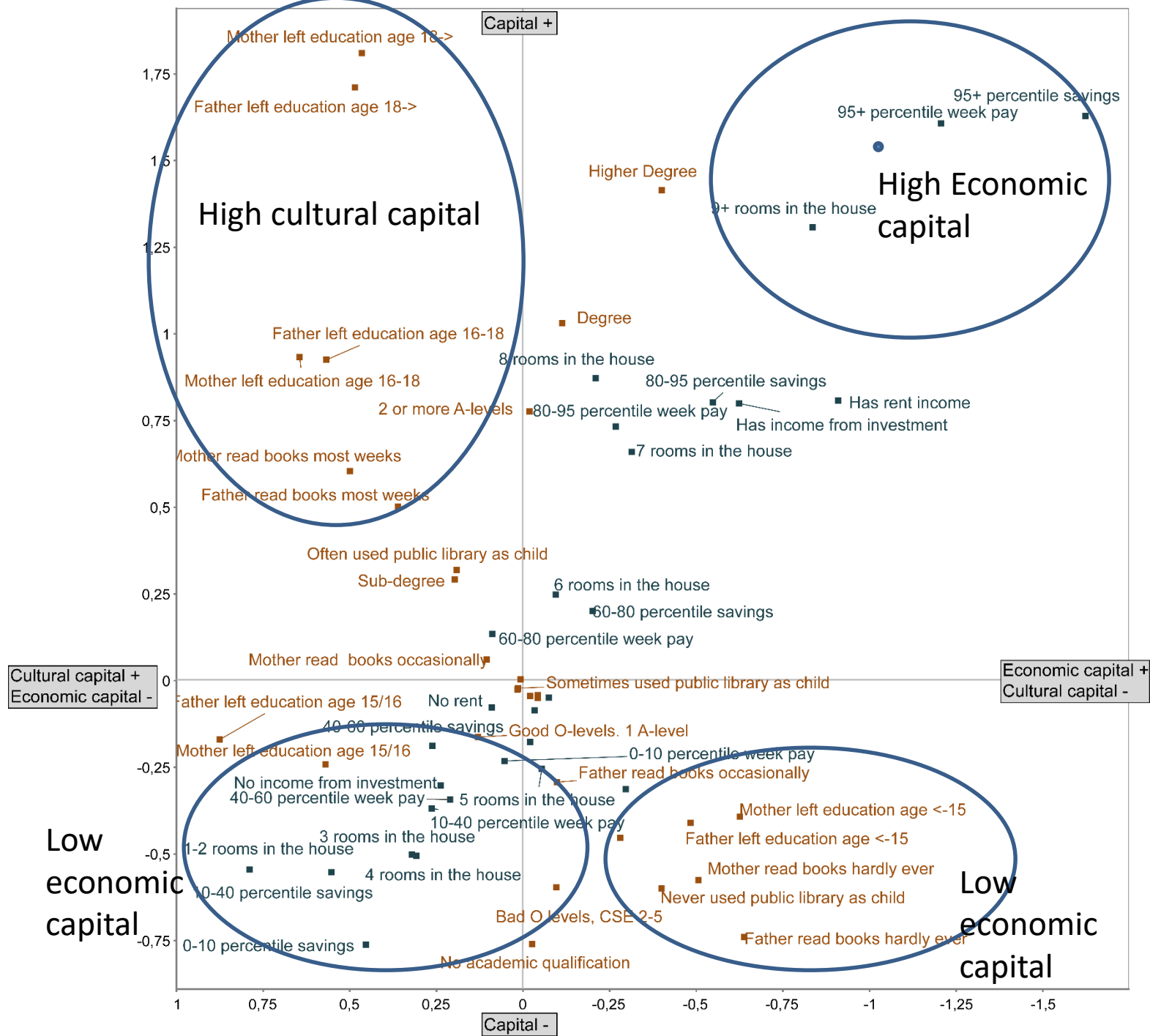
Active variables

Economic capital (2004/8)

- Number of rooms in home
- Income from investments
- Income from rent
- Total amount of savings
- Weekly pay

Cultural Capital (from childhood data)

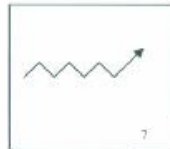
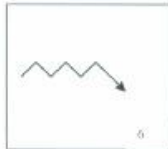
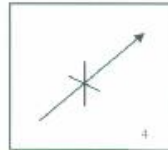
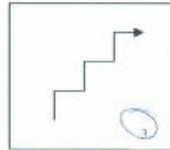
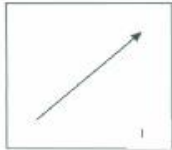
- Highest academic qualification (1991,2000,2004,2008)
- Age of father and mother when leaving full time education
- Father and mother spare-time reading books
- Use of public library in last 12 months (as a child)



Life Trajectories

Project specific serial number: 1307

Date: 13.1.10

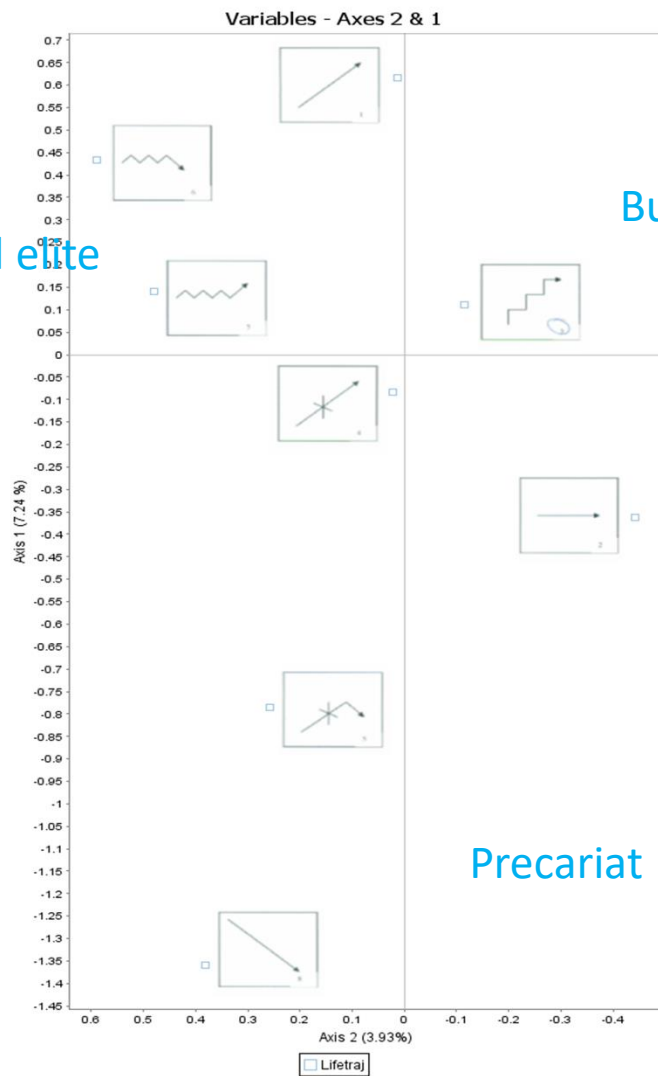


If you had to represent your life through a diagram, which of these would it be?

Cultural elite

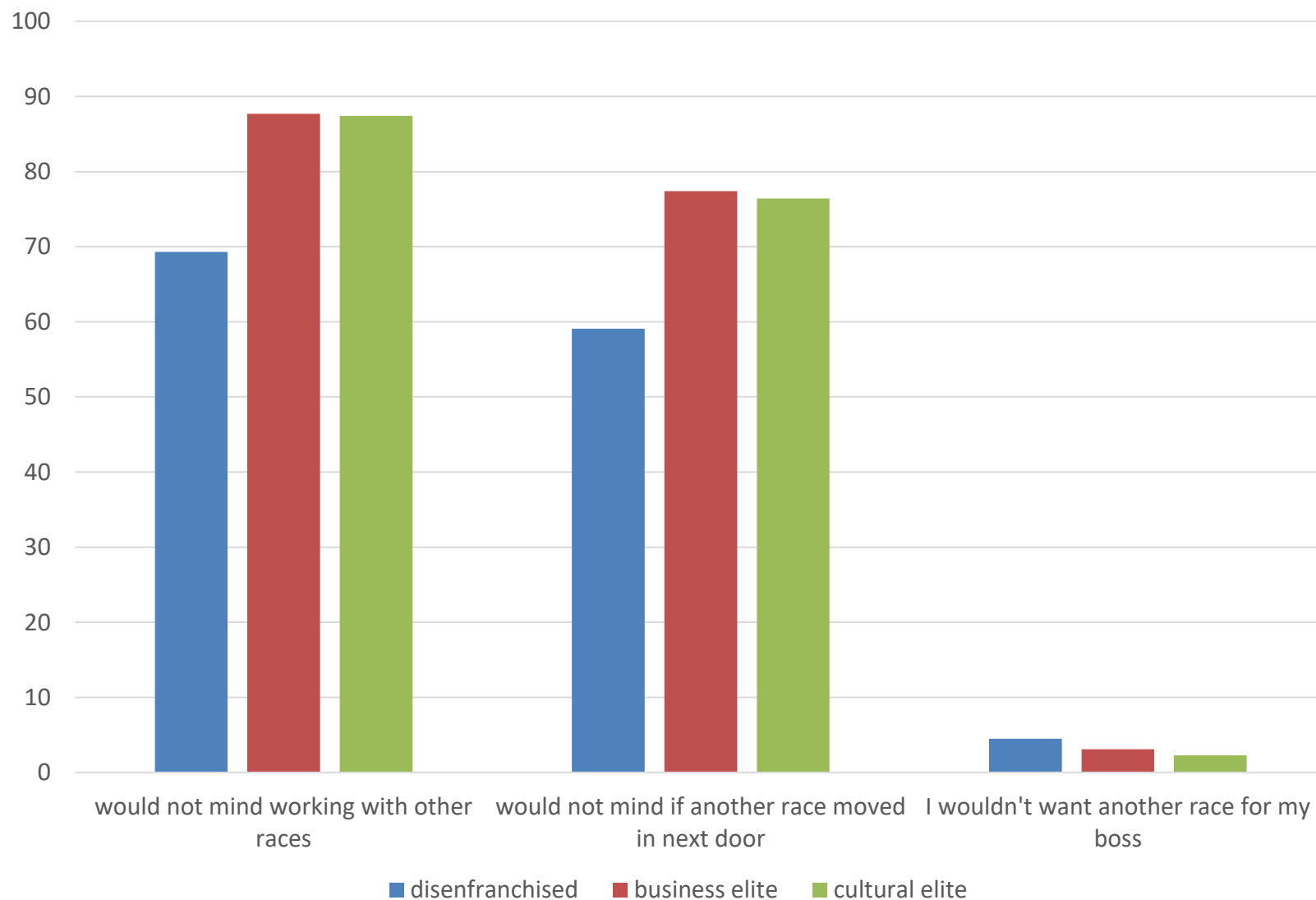
Business elite

Precariat

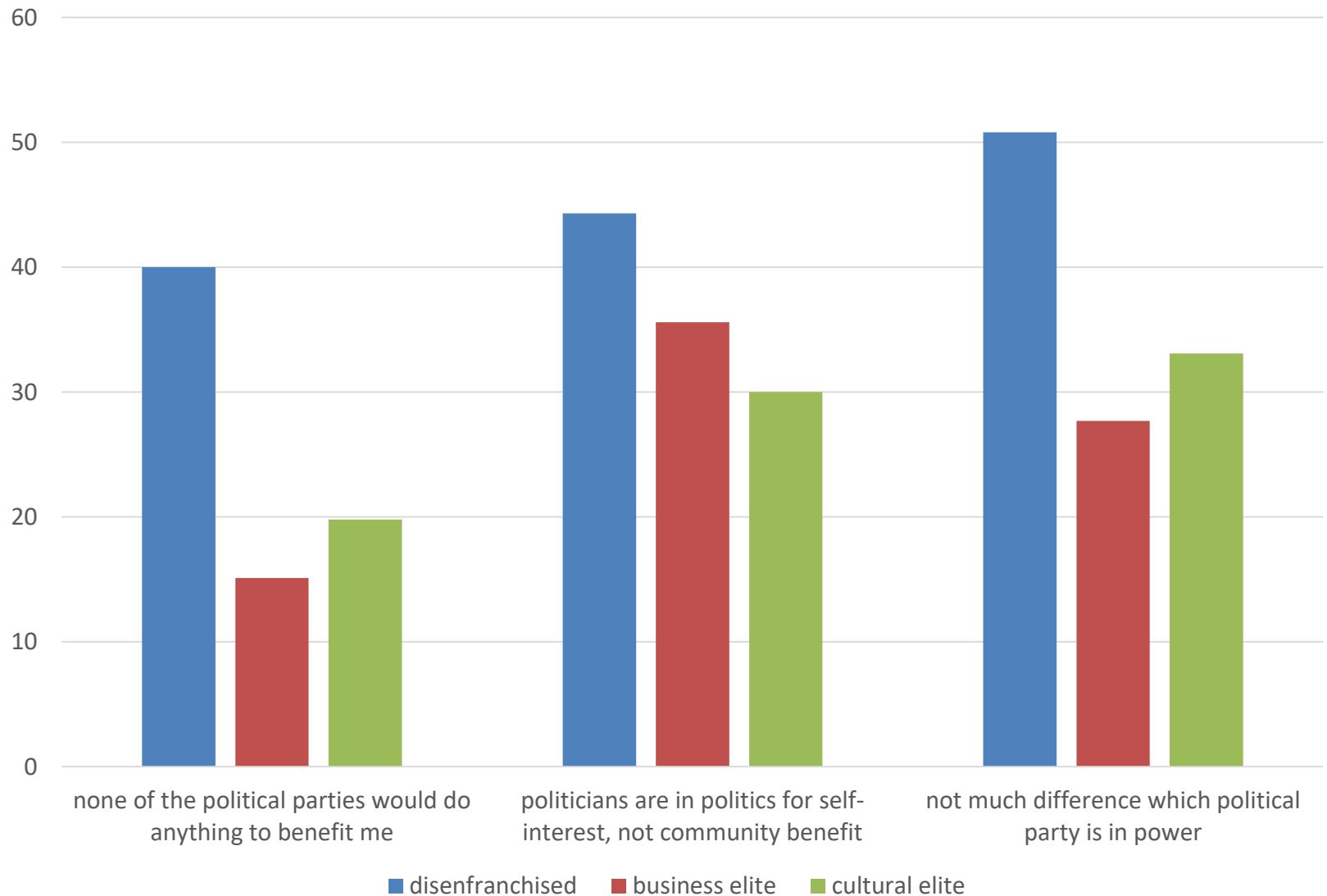




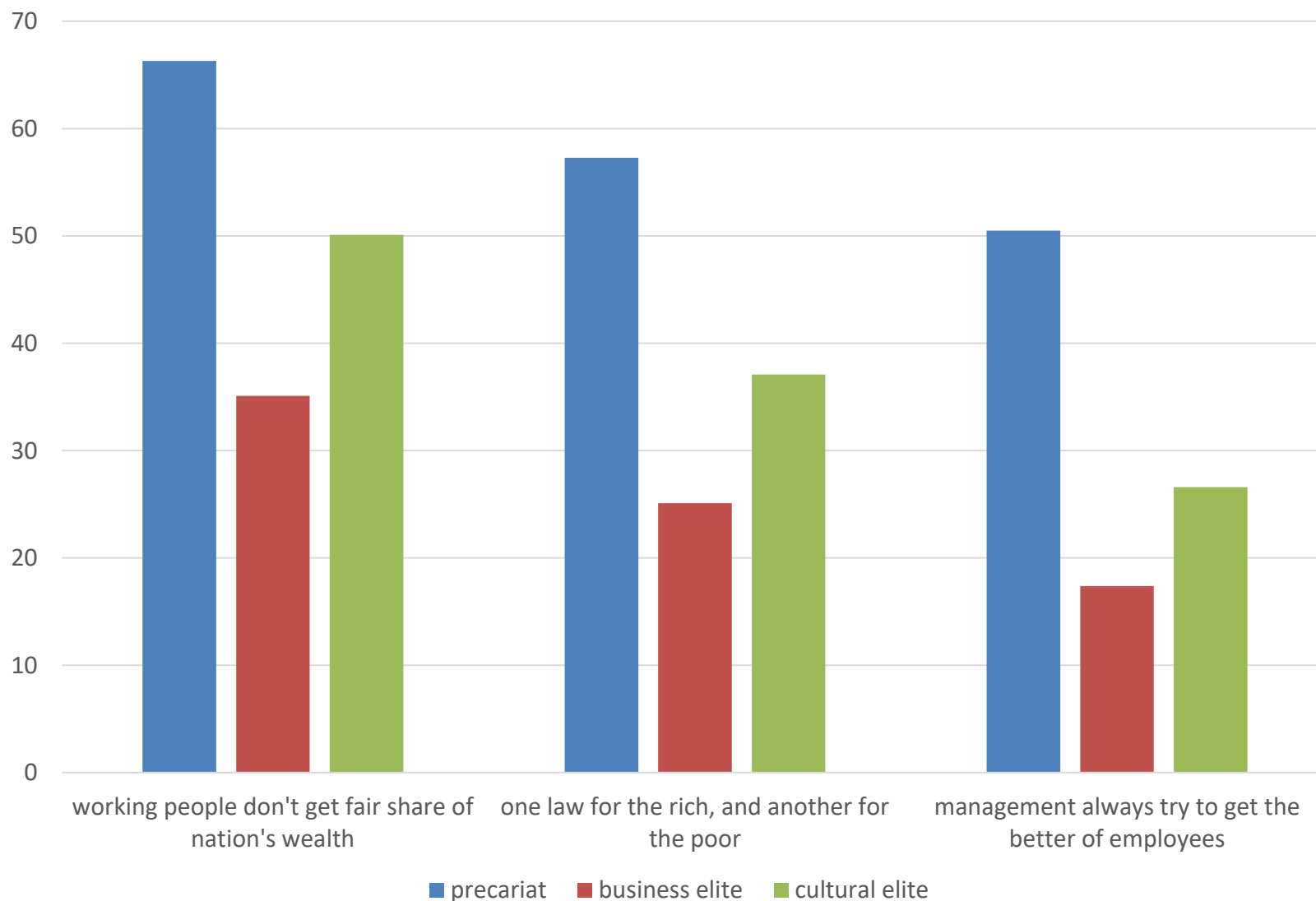
Attitudes to race



Attitudes to politics



Attitudes to economic equity



Sub-Repertories	Cluster	IMPERIAL RACISM Indicative quotes
Imperial nationalist	3 Economic elite	I would say British is a leader for a lot of things.... I think we've got strong values and it leads the way.... my friend's married to a girl from Africa. I think that that has gone a bit serious, I think it's too serious. (479)
	2 Cultural elite	I watch the Olympics and things, more recently, I've been very pleased to see the British coming out well... I think we're the best, personally (Feeling British....) is important.... watching (daughter) on the podium... and them playing the national anthem... it sends shivers down your spine, you know, it's just--, it's nice to--, to be British. Yeah... I'm quite proud to be British... there is--, good things about British culture.... (1090)
		I think it's generally still a very polite and ordered and fairly homogenous society, with some things I think people can be proud of being British for. We've done a lot of good things as a country..... (713)
Nostalgic imperial racism	1 Economic elite	(Wife) said all these different coloured faces, some are good, some are bad, I don't know, but we've just lost it, and as for industry and government, we've--, it's out the window isn't it really? (740)
	2 cultural elite	I do take the view that in recent years we perhaps should have stood up more for the sort of more traditional British values. I do believe that we should not be giving in to some of the minorities who want us to change our way. And I don't mean that disrespectfully to any individual, but I do think we have traditions and standards in British life and those are I think sometimes being eroded by people from ethnic minorities (607)
		I don't have a problem when Muslim women working with us at all, but they shouldn't be wearing veils in this country, that religious crap should just be got rid of, just like the French ban it, you know, it's just stupid what we're letting people get away with. (394)

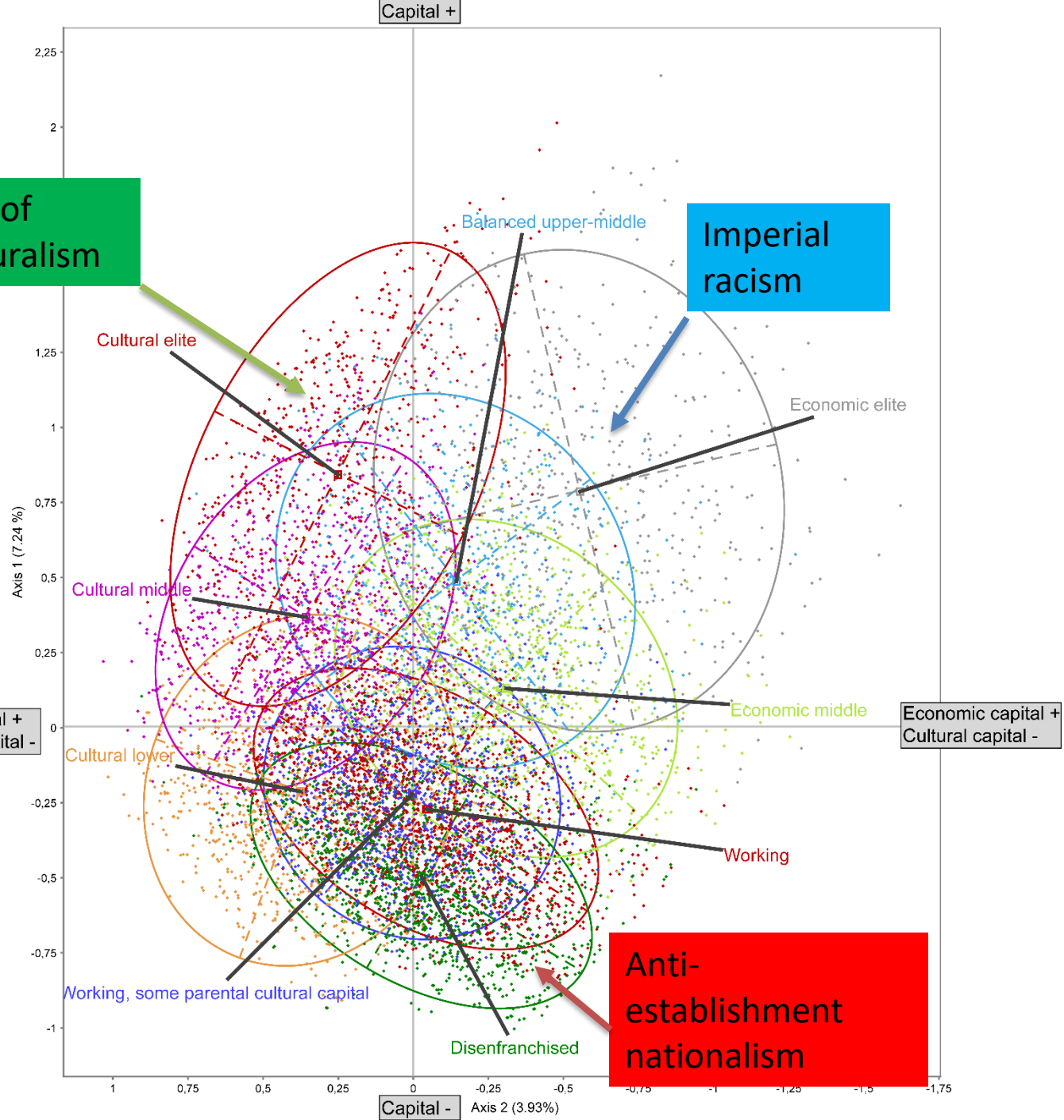
EUCROSS SURVEY 2012	Denmark	Germany	Italy	Romania	Spain	UK	Total
Feeling neither European nor citizen of the world	26.1%	23.4%	21%	20.8%	11.8%	39.7%	23.7%
Feeling citizen of the world but not European	6.1%	7%	13.8%	18.9%	14.2%	23.4%	13.8%
Feeling European but not citizen of the world	27.2%	27.2%	14.3%	9.3%	8.2%	10.4%	16.2%
Feeling European and citizen of the world	40.7%	42.4%	50.8%	51%	65.8%	26.4%	46.3%
Total	100% (n=986)	100% (n=974)	100% (n=970)	100% (n=957)	100% (n=986)	100% (n=951)	100% (n=5824)

Sub-repertoires	Clusters	ANTI ESTABLISHMENT NATIONALISM
Strong Scots	4 precariat	It's because of the way of life that we have, the scenery we have, we are more.... Obliging, we tend to try and help, we're not the scroungers or the people that the English portray us as (461)
Strong British	1 precariat	It's so lovely, that's to me being British and seeing daffodils in the spring and, you know, I love all that, I couldn't live anywhere else, I don't think, because of that
Ambivalent	11 precariat	Personally I think that everyone's the same, you know. It doesn't matter in terms of race, creed or colour, if you're born in this country and that's your allegiance, you're British... I just see myself as British and don't think of I'm very patriotic at all, no. If they asked me to stand up tomorrow and swear allegiance to the queen, I don't think I would (430)
	2 cultural elite	I'm not out with my flags waving at big royal events or anything like that. No, I mean... quite frankly at the moment... I'd rather be anywhere than England. I just think it's the most depressing place (441)

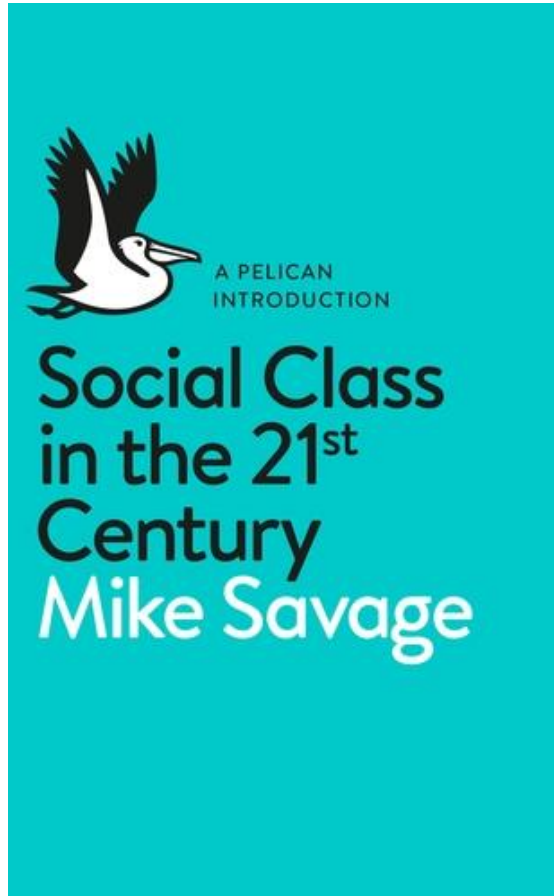
Sub-repertoires	cluster	MASTERY OF MULTICULTURALISM
Managers of diversity	3 cultural elite	<p>I did a lot of equality and diversity stuff at work... it all fitted in beautifully, it was a black and minority ethnic led association, it was my thing. (61)</p> <p>He (manager) was a terrible racist himself and he used to say the most outrageous things in public, sometimes in writing to people. And so I spent a lot of time getting people to sign compromise agreements so they couldn't take us to a tribunal (154)</p> <p>I got kind of head hunted to go into a community team in London where they wanted someone with good anti-racist credentials.... I actually was quite sound on that issue, I was working for the union at the time as an anti-racist officer and I knew my stuff... I'm kind of uncomfortable with the notion of British (444)</p>
Personal mastery - white	2 cultural elite	<p>Well I was very lucky to be born and raised as a child in (Africa), where I felt I was an innocent child... because I was a foreigner, a white person living in a black country, there was that difference immediately. I grew up with it without knowing anything else (584)</p> <p>I'm not terribly sort of nationalistic or I don't feel very strongly about those things really, no. In some ways it is because when I went to Australia there was a very anti [Pom] type of feeling and a lot of that was tongue in cheek but some of it wasn't.... sometimes you can feel a bit defensive because obviously you're not very well respected in all different countries. (254)</p>
Personal mastery – black immigrant experience	1 cultural elite	<p>I mean, obviously I'm not an English, you know, white skin guy, I mean, I had to work a lot harder to be where I was, to be recognised at my capabilities and everything, compared to everybody else. And I've also noticed through life that a lot of the work that was done was never actually commended by the other people, whereas if it was an English guy or a white guy, it was always a letter to say, "Oh well done mate, you know, you've done well on this and that," and when you turn round and say, "Hang on, who actually fixed this or who actually did this?" And then you realise that it was just a routine for them to send it to everybody else.... yes I am quite happy (being British). I was given a home here when nobody else wanted us anywhere, so no, no we're British but I call myself a British East African Asian. (581)</p>

Managers of multi-culturalism

Cultural capital +
Economic capital -



CONCLUSION



‘The old class war may be over: the new politics of class is just beginning. The widening fracture between the wealthy elite and the rest is a huge threat to our social fabric’

theguardian