

Department of Sociology and International Inequalities Institute public lecture

Social Class in the 21st Century

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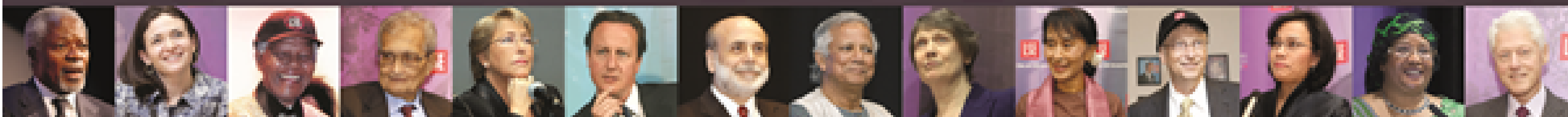
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LSE events

Suggested hashtag for Twitter users: **#LSEclass**



LSE

THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*



Manchester
Metropolitan
University



Durham
University



A PELICAN
INTRODUCTION

Social Class
in the 21st
Century
Mike Savage

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The Great British
Class Survey

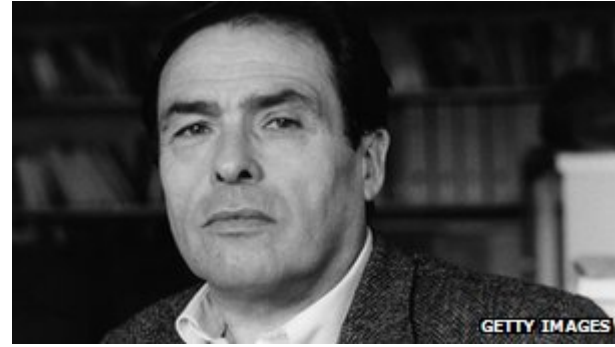


The BBC's pitch



It's said that the British are obsessed with class, but does the traditional hierarchy of 'working', 'middle' and 'upper' class really exist anymore? And does social class even matter in 21st century Britain?

Capitals Approach to Class



- BBC approached Mike Savage in 2009 to conduct web survey of class in conjunction with Lab UK
- Mike and Fiona associated with a 'capitals approach' to class defined in terms of economic, cultural and social capital
- Influenced by the work of French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, and his ideas on the significance of 'cultural capital' in stratifying contemporary society
- Draws on the work of leading sociologists at CRESC (Tony Bennett, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde)

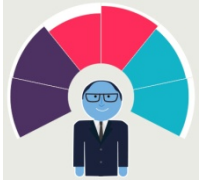
Launch of Web Survey



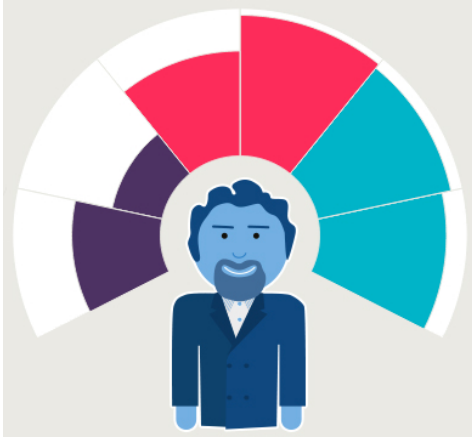
- Web survey contained questions on income, the value of home and savings, cultural interests and activities and the number and status of people they know.
- Survey launched in January 2011 in conjunction with the BBC. Enjoyed considerable media attention including a spot on The One Show by Mike. Completed by over 161,000 respondents by April 2011
- Followed up with additional face to face survey of 1,026 respondents by survey organisation GfK to ensure representativeness. Additional 50 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted by the team in 2014.

The (in)famous seven classes (2013)

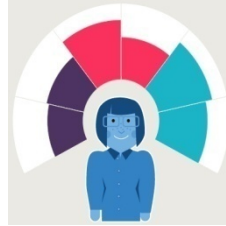
Elite 6%



Established mc 25%



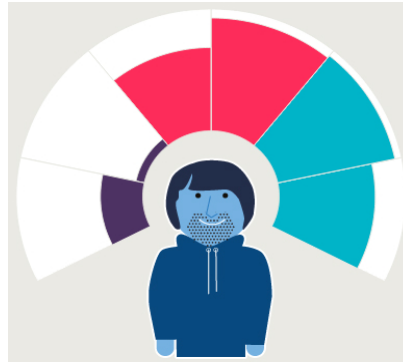
Technical mc 6%



New affluent workers 15%



Emerging service workers 19%



Traditional wc 14%



Precariat 15%





The Key Messages



- **POLARISATION** between top and bottom with identification of advantaged **ELITE** and a disadvantaged **PRECARIAT**
- **FRAGMENTATION** in the middle with the divide between the established middle class and traditional working class not so clear cut
- Class of early 21st century is **NOT** the same as class of early 20th century. Classes and class boundaries have **CHANGED** over time.

Public Response



- A further 164,000 members of the public completed the online survey taking the total sample to over 325,000
- Over 9M people had completed the 'class calculator' by the end of 2014. Extensive sharing via facebook and twitter
- The story went global with reportage in the *New York Times* and press interest in countries such as Brazil, Russia, China and Australia.

The Dynamics of Class Divisions

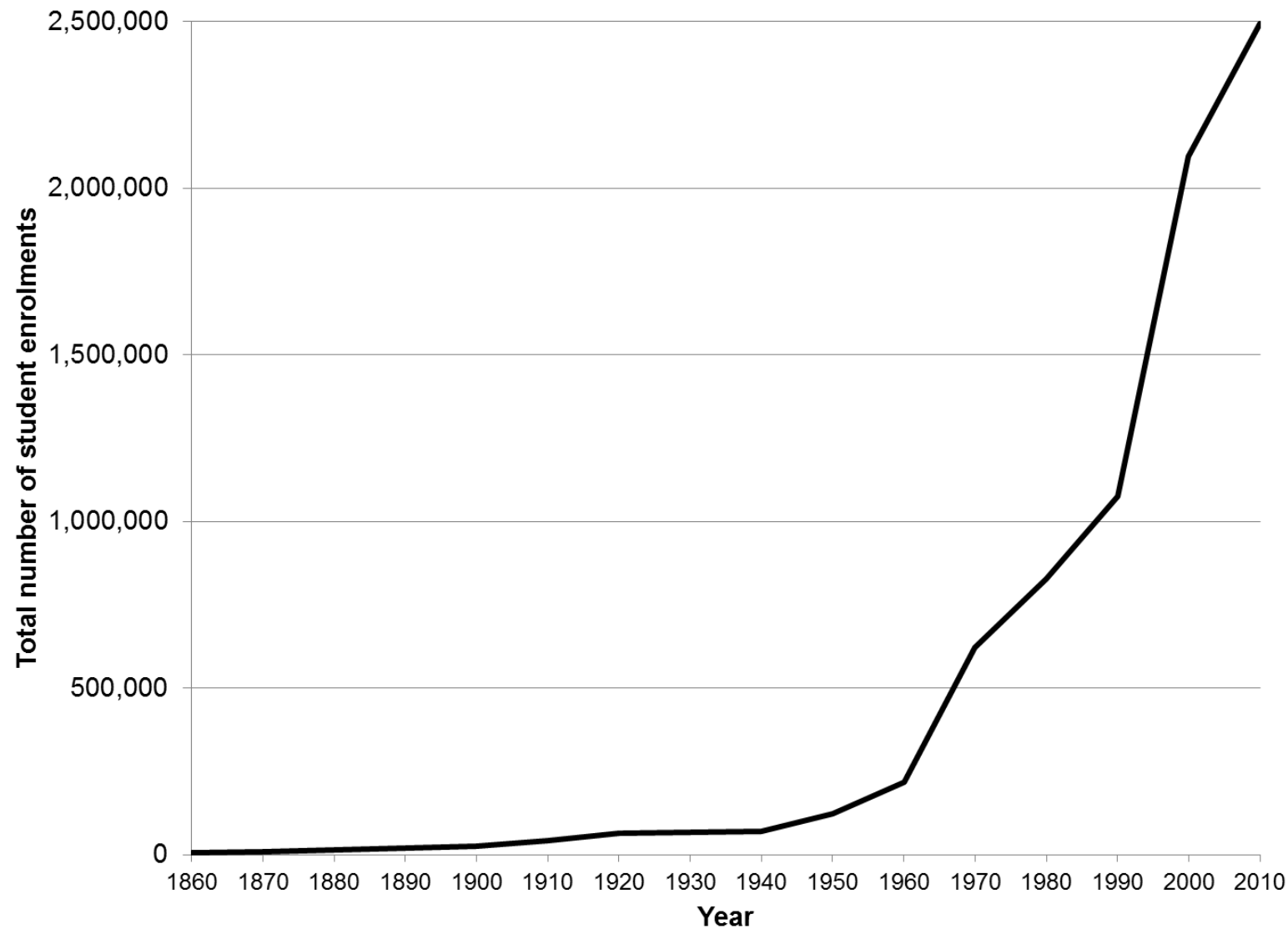


- Discussion of elite chimes with focus on grouping pulling away confirmed by Thomas Piketty 's book on wealth concentration
- Discussion of precariat captures the vulnerable working poor who do not have a living wage and are fearful of the loss of tax credits
- Middle groups feel insecure with growing concern that social mobility is declining and getting onto the housing ladder is getting more difficult.

Chapter 7

A Tale of Two Campuses?

Who goes to university?

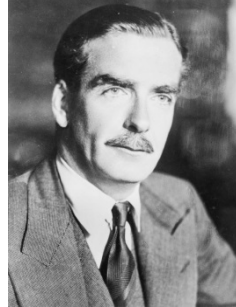


Universities and the British establishment



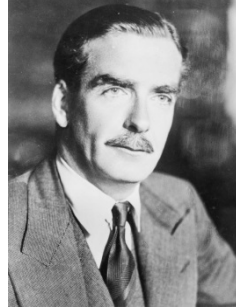
Post WWII Prime Ministers

Universities and the British establishment



Post WWII Prime Ministers...of whom graduates

Universities and the British establishment

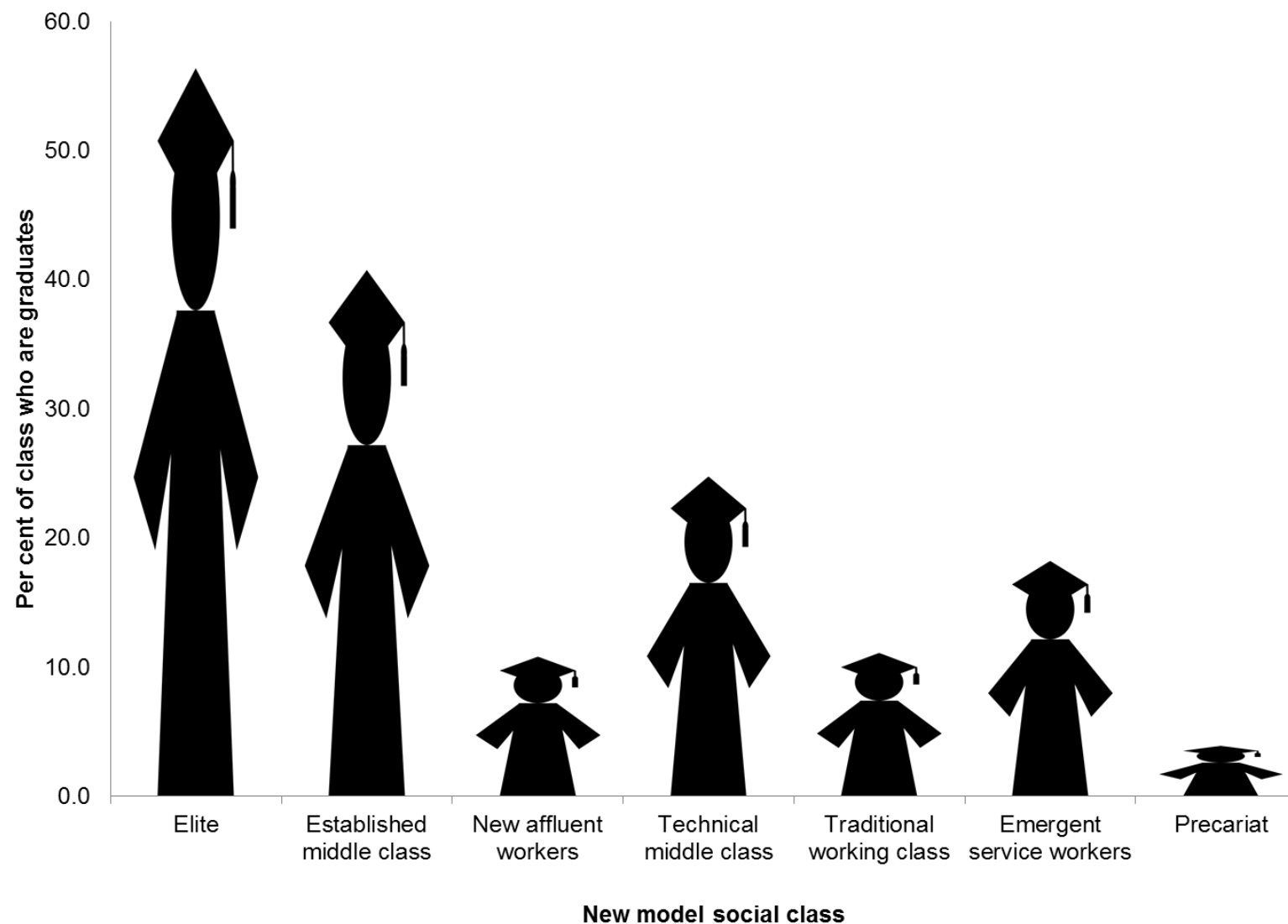


Post WWII Prime Ministers...of whom graduates of the University of Oxford

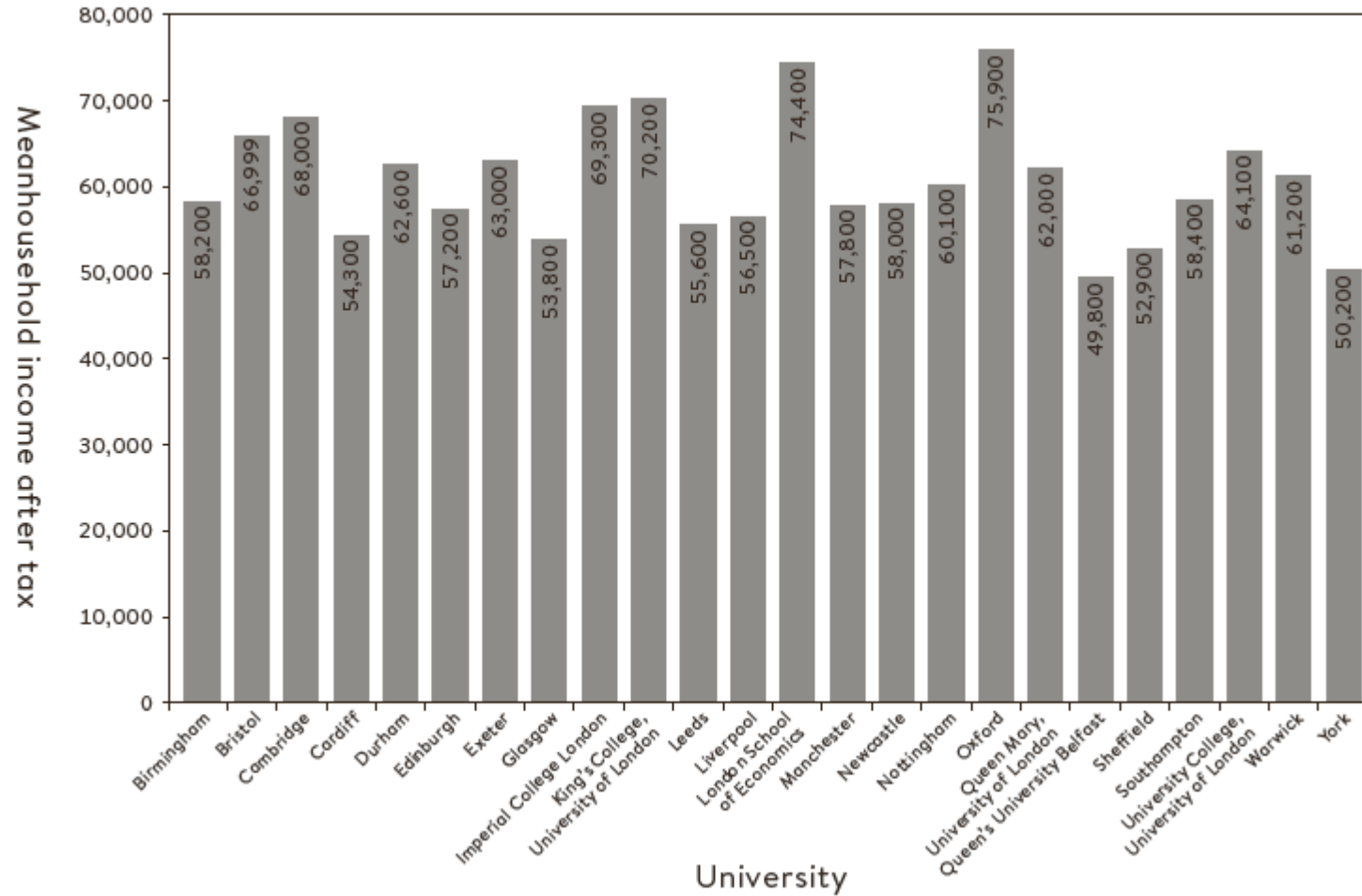
Graduates in the Great British Class Survey

- Outside studies of specific elite occupations (judges, politicians, bishops, armed forces 'top brass' etc), little is known about outcomes for graduates of different universities
- By contrast, much known about inequalities of access (class, ethnicity) to different universities
- GBCS Wave I has 80,000+ graduates, with university name. Unique opportunity to investigate how university attendance affects social mobility

Graduates in the GBCS 7 classes



Alma matters



Alma matters

University of London	47%	University of Westminster	31%
City University, London	47%	Aston University	31%
University of Oxford	44%	University of Surrey	30%
London School of Economics	41%	Non-university institution	29%
University of Cambridge	40%	University of Durham	29%
King's College London	39%	University of Manchester	29%
Imperial College London	39%	University of Reading	28%
London South Bank University	38%	University of Sussex	28%
University of Bristol	36%	Heriot-Watt University	28%
University College London	35%	University of Southampton	28%
Queen Mary, University of London	31%	University of Birmingham	27%
University of Exeter	31%	University of Nottingham	27%
Non-UK institution	31%	University of Edinburgh	27%

Elite as per cent of a university's graduates (GBCS)

Creating and re-creating hierarchies

- Do universities create, or simply act as conduits for inequalities?
- Global elites, mission groups, rankings and league tables
- Key message: the elite is a graduate class, but most graduates are not elite
 - Kelsall *et al.*'s (1972) *Graduates: the Sociology of an Elite*

Chapter 11: The Precarious Precariat: The Visible, Invisible People



The missing
Who was not in
the survey

And why?

And what we
did

Your neighbourhood

One of the things this study is looking at is the way people form groups, and how those groups live together. To start with, please tell us a little about your neighbourhood.

From this selection of pictures, pick the one that looks most like the neighbourhood where you live.



→ NEXT

Cultural life.....

Bingo



Opera



Distinction

A Good Meal



????????



Snobbery?

One's Funny



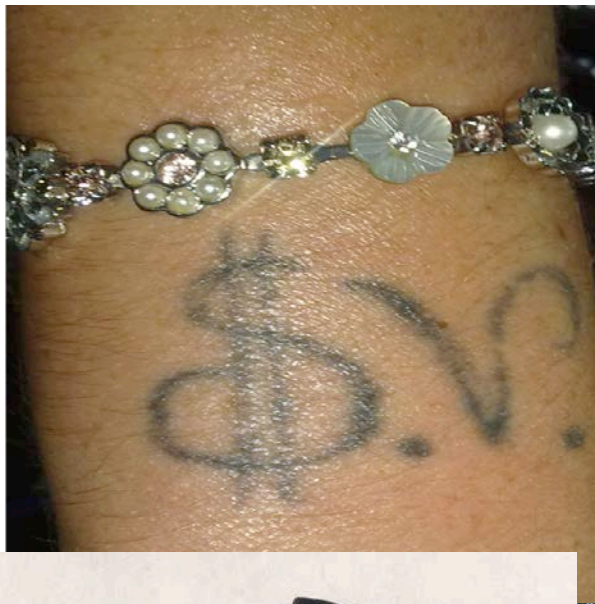
One's Boring



Class distinction and snobbery

Who is valued, what is valued, and why?

Who is de-valued, what is de-valued and why?





**“SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE IS VIOLENCE WIELDED
WITH TACIT COMPLICITY BETWEEN ITS
VICTIMS AND ITS AGENTS, INsofar AS BOTH
REMAIN UNCONSCIOUS OF SUBMITTING TO OR
WIELDING IT.”**

PIERRE BOURDIEU

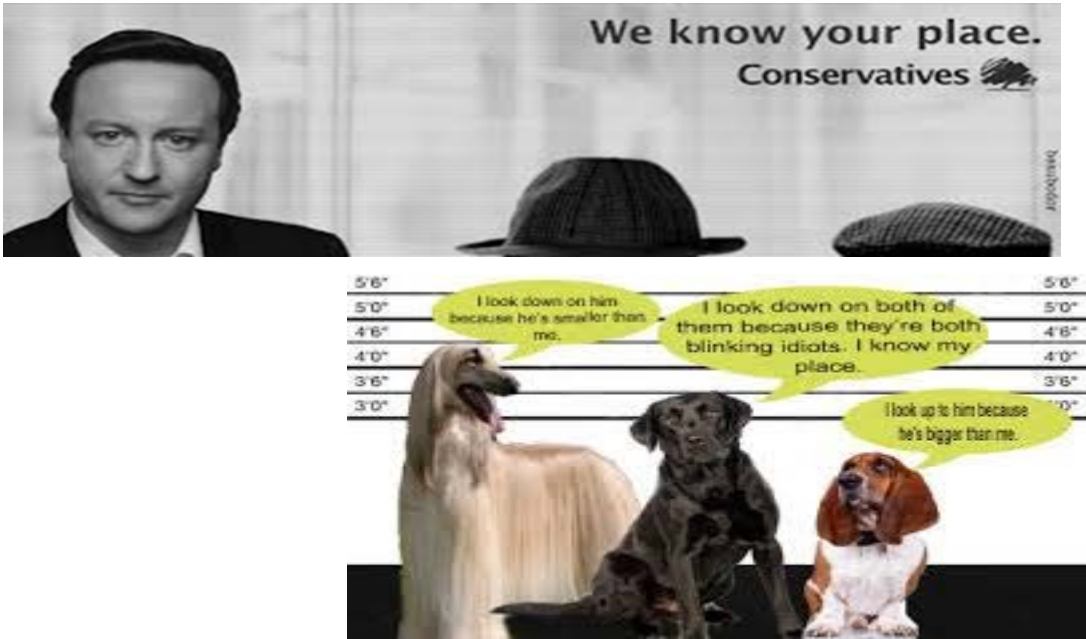
Conclusions: The class war is over, the new politics of class is only just beginning.



The politics of classification

- People don't feel class solidarity or loyalty, and the old solidaristic politics of class identification is now weak
- However, this allows the proliferation of class imagery, and the mobilisation of stigmatising labels and identifications
- This allows the educated middle classes to powerfully mobilise their 'emerging cultural capital' to generate pervasive forms of class snobbery

Image of John Cleese and the Two Ronnies



Satirical takes on the class calculator – ‘a knowing mode of cultural capital’

You

Which of these cultural activities do you take part in
Select all of the activities you do sometimes or often

<input type="checkbox"/> Eating hummus	<input type="checkbox"/> Buying shallots
<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying Will.I.Am	<input type="checkbox"/> Saying "it's even better than The Wire"
<input type="checkbox"/> Ordering Flat Whites	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexting
<input type="checkbox"/> Vajazzling	<input type="checkbox"/> 'Pimping' natural yoghurt
<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidating people on buses	<input type="checkbox"/> Watching Miranda
<input type="checkbox"/> Buying Superdry	<input type="checkbox"/> Masturbating over Nigella
<input type="checkbox"/> Listening to Blackout Crew	<input type="checkbox"/> Saying 'Chorizo' correctly
<input type="checkbox"/> Nodding earnestly at Owen Jones' tweets	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking proudly with an Aldi bag

Coloured wedges represent your details, select icons to find out more.

< **NEXT** >



Economic £ Social 👤 Cultural 🏠 Your result ✓

You

Which of these people do you know socially?
Select all the people who you know

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farm worker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nurse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chief executive
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Software designer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cleaner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Call centre worker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University lecturer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Postal worker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Artist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scientist
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electrician	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lorry driver
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accountant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Solicitor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shop assistant

Coloured wedges represent your details, select icons to find out more.

< NEXT >

Economic £ Social 👤 Cultural 🏠 Your result ✓

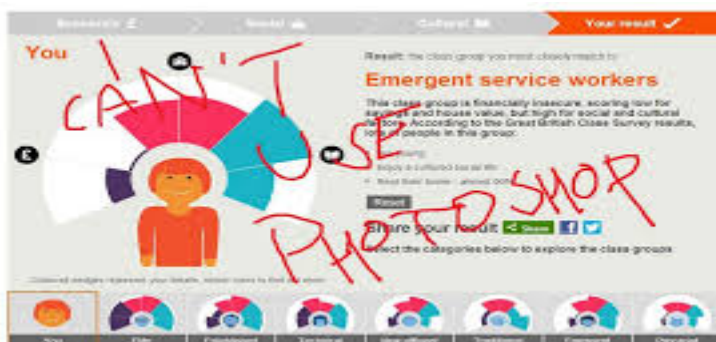
You

Result: the class group you most closely match is:

Drug Dealer

This class group sells drugs to everyone.

Stigma and the creation of
'abject' categories



The Great British class calculator

Traditional British social divisions of upper, middle and working class seem out of date in the 21st Century, no longer reflecting modern occupations or lifestyles.

The BBC teamed up with psychologists from leading universities to analyse the modern British class system. They interviewed more than 10,000 people and carried out a large-scale study on class and identity. Find out what you fit in our this calculator online.

Economic £ Social 👤 Cultural 🏠 Your result ✓

You

Result: the class group you most closely match is:

Total fucking scumbag.

This class group scores low for economic, social and cultural factors. But they do have some financial security. According to the Great British Class Survey results, lots of people in this group.

- Generally poor people
- Low status
- Repeat crime involving with people prone to harassment

Share your result

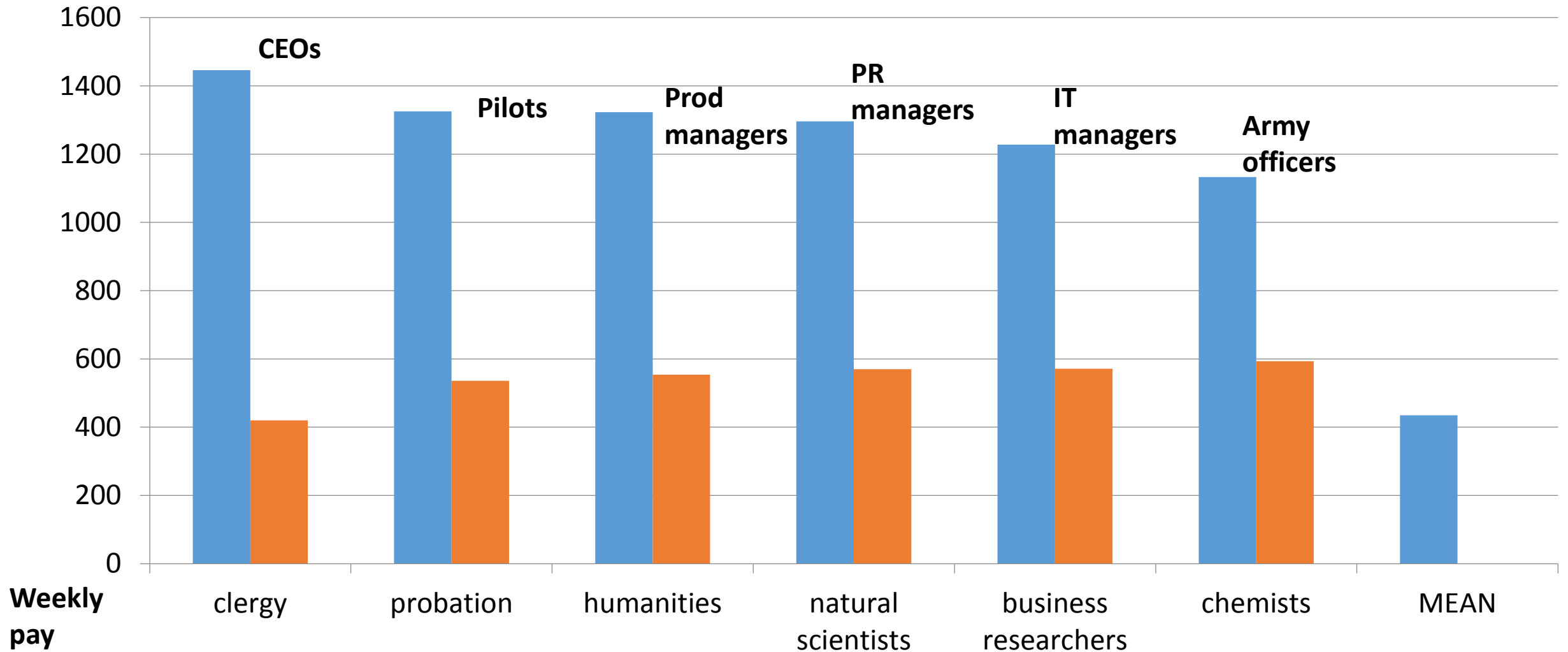
Based on the categories below to explore the class groups:

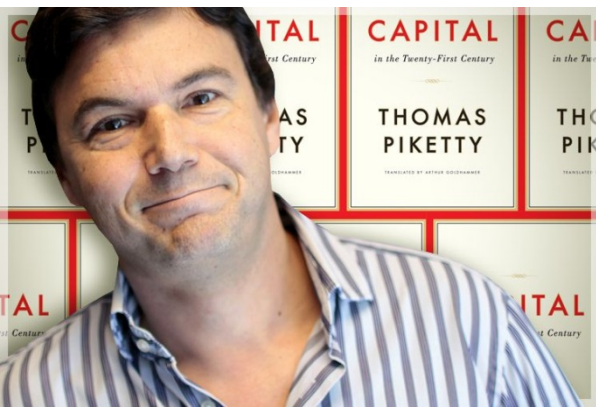
Coloured wedges represent your details, select icons to find out more.

The crystallisation of elite politics

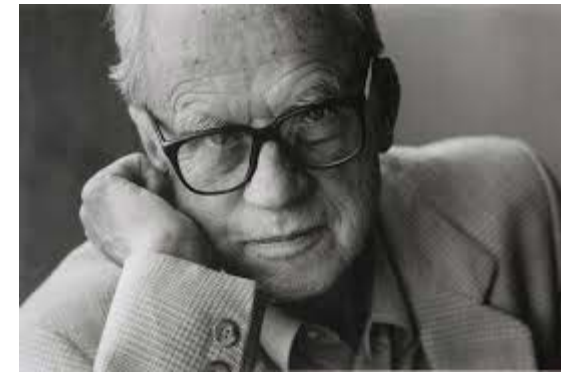
- A new and confident wealth elite frames the political landscape and the old boundary between middle and working class boundary is losing political prominence
- The wealth elite is not a simple reworking of the old upper class, but a new corporate urban formation implicated in the economic transformation of Britain over recent decades
- There are spiralling and re-inforcing 'top end effects' where those at the apex pull away from those beneath them

Best and worst paid 'higher professional and managerial' class jobs





The travails of meritocracy



- Enhancing mobility within the competitive education system will enhance, not reduce class inequality since those able to draw on the greatest resources will do better.
- There is a powerful 'class ceiling' where those upwardly mobile tend not to reach the most elite positions
- Educational institutions are themselves implicated in growing inequalities and 'better education' will not be a solution.

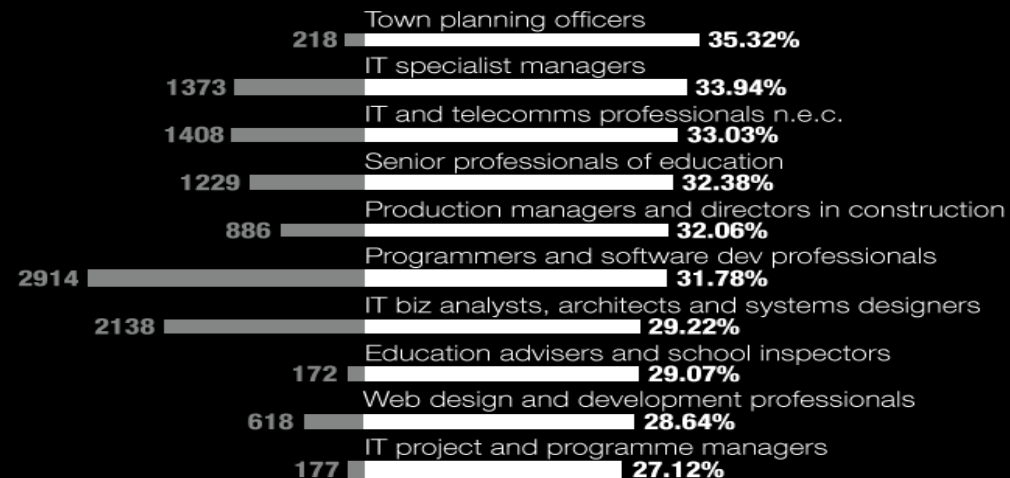
graph 6.1

AMOUNT OF RESPONDENTS PERCENTAGE FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT BACKGROUNDS

THE TEN JOBS WITH THE **HIGHEST** PERCENTAGE OF SM BACKGROUNDS



THE TEN JOBS WITH THE **LOWEST** PERCENTAGE OF SM BACKGROUNDS



Conclusion

The steady accumulation of economic, social and cultural capital at the top is posing challenges to 21st century society akin to the challenge of climate change

We will not address this challenge without questioning meritocratic assumptions that improving access is enough.

We need to find ways of renewing a politics of redistribution



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LSE events

Suggested hashtag for Twitter users: **#LSEclass**

