UNEQUAL DEMOCRACIES

Working paper n°20

July, 2020

Cabinet Ministers and Inequality

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ABSTRACT:

Scholars and commentators increasingly wonder whether governments' failure to address socio-economic inequalities is the result of unequal representation. Recent literature on policy responsiveness in the United States and Europe finds evidence that party and parliamentary policy proposals and actual policy outcomes are closer to the preferences of the rich than of the poor. However, the extent and character of such unequal representation remains thinly understood. Among the most thinly understood are the mechanisms: the political conditions that link socio-economic inequalities to unequal representation. This article thickens our understanding of (unequal) representation by investigating the class composition of parliamentary cabinets and its effect on social welfare policy. With the aid of a new dataset, the article shows that responsiveness to the social welfare preferences of poorer voters varies by cabinet ministers' professional backgrounds, above and beyond the partisan orientation of the government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Introduction

Does it matter whom we elect to office? Does the class background of cabinet ministers predict how responsive governments are to voters' social welfare preferences? Research on policy responsiveness finds that when policies are strongly supported by public opinion they tend to be enacted (Brooks and Manza 2006; Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov 2019). Given that citizens' policy preferences across income groups correlate highly (Soroka and Wlezien 2009), governments appear unconditionally responsive to voters' preferences. However, citizens do not always converge in their policy preferences. When preferences diverge among income groups, governments are found to be more responsive to richer voters (Gilens 2012)[1]. Unequal responsiveness is found not only in majoritarian, liberal markets economies such as the USA (Gilens 2012) but also in consensual and corporatist political systems, such as the Netherlands (Schakel 2019). This is puzzling as there is significant institutional variation across political systems.

Money and powerful interest groups (Gilens and Page 2014), party competition and electoral realignment (Blyth and Katz 2005; Gingrich and Häusermann 2015) but also trade union membership (Moene and Wallerstein 1999; Pontusson and Rueda 2010) are known to be catalytic factors for representation. Less understood is the role of descriptive representation, despite an important line of research that suggests that the demographic, ethnic and socio-economic background of politicians should matter for representing the electorate's divergent preferences (Bianco 1994; Bratton and Ray 2002; Carnes 2013).

Across countries and political systems, members of parliament are significantly more educated than citizens, holding views and policy preferences that diverge from the views of

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[1] Although this finding is debated by scholars who find that governments are responsive to the middle class (Elkjær and Iversen 2020).

the average (Bovens and Wille 2017). They are mostly male dominated (Krook and O'Brien 2012; Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer 2018), representing primarily the professional classes and under-representing the working-class (Carnes 2013; Carnes and Lupu 2015; O'Grady 2018).

The socio-economic backgrounds of legislators and cabinet ministers might explain why governments of variable ideological leanings are more responsive to the richer and more educated. Scholars have yet to study whether descriptive representation in governments conditions policy representation. In parliamentary democracies, cabinet ministers, not legislators, make policy and are the most visible politicians to voters. Yet, little is known about the changing profiles of cabinet ministers and whether they make governments more or less receptive to citizens' policy preferences. Even though individual politicians are constrained by electoral necessities and share common policy preferences in line with party ideology, the intensity of their individual policy preferences is often predicted by their professional and socio-economic background (Alexiadou 2016; O'Grady 2018).

This article investigates whether the professional background of cabinet ministers might determine how receptive and responsive governments are to the social welfare preferences of different income groups, above and beyond party government ideology. I focus on social welfare policy because it is one of the few policy areas where we observe persistent differences in preferences across income groups (Gingrich and Häusermann 2015; Kitschelt and Rehm 2014). Preferences over redistributive policies tend to diverge among income groups, with lower income earners generally preferring higher levels of redistribution (Gingrich and Häusermann 2015; Meltzer and Richard 1981; Rueda 2018). Therefore it is not surprising that when it comes to social welfare reforms, governments

have mostly been more responsive to the preferences of high income voters over the preferences of lower income earners (Schakel, Burgoon, and Hakhverdian 2020).

With the aid of a new dataset on the professional backgrounds of cabinet ministers in eighteen parliamentary democracies over sixty years, two datasets on welfare benefit generosity (Lee et al. 2020; Scruggs, Detlef, and Kuitto 2013b) and social welfare preferences (Schakel, Burgoon, and Hakhverdian 2020; Soroka and Wlezien 2009), I test how the professional composition of cabinets affects welfare generosity, both directly and conditionally on welfare preferences. The results are robust independently of the sample size and time period.

The article innovates in two ways: it predicts policy responsiveness as a function of descriptive representation in government. Building on the rich literature on the policy and political preferences of occupational groups (Häusermann and Kriesi 2015; Kitschelt and Rehm 2014; Manza and Brooks 2008), it identifies backgrounds of cabinet ministers that are more and less likely to be receptive to the social welfare preferences of poorer citizens. By doing that, it also provides new insights on the relationship between government ideology, the professional background of cabinet ministers and their combined effect on the welfare state.

The article speaks to the literature on policy responsiveness (Gilens 2012; Rasmussen, Reher, and Toshkov 2019; Schakel, Burgoon, and Hakhverdian 2020), the literature on descriptive and substantive representation (Carnes and Lupu 2015; O'Grady 2018), and the debate on the political causes of inequality (Iversen and Soskice 2019; Rueda 2018).

Next, I present the data on the occupational backgrounds of ministers across 18 parliamentary democracies over sixty years. The following section discusses why social class

matters for one's economic and social welfare preferences and presents data from the European Social Survey (Waves 1 to 8). In the third part, I predict social welfare reforms as outcomes of cabinet composition and welfare preferences.

The professional background of cabinet ministers in 18 industrialised democracies

I use a new dataset on the appointments and personal background of select cabinet ministers in 18 parliamentary democracies[2], starting as early as 1945.[3] The dataset consists of ministerial appointments to the portfolios of the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, the ministers of foreign affairs, economics, finance, budget- when applicable- health, employment and social affairs. The central aim of the dataset is to identify the individual minister who is responsible for the policies of foreign affairs, economics, finance, health, employment and social affairs.[4] This information has been collected manually by multiple coders over the course of six years (2008 to 2014) by relying first, on formal governmental websites, second on the international Who's Who, and third on Wikipedia. Each country has been independently coded by two coders and checked by the principal

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[2] Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK.

[3] Table 1 of the Appendix presents the country/years included in the dataset.

[4] The unit of analysis is individual ministers nested in cabinets, which in turn are nested in governments. In other words, the dataset is structured at four different levels; individual ministers, cabinets, governments and countries. An original feature of this dataset is that it traces ministerial changes within the life of a government. This includes both individual ministerial reshuffles and cabinet wide-reshuffles, but only with respect to the 8 portfolios under study. Thus, in countries where ministerial and cabinet reshuffles are very common, the number of ministerial appointments can be substantially higher than in countries where ministers have longer tenures in a portfolio[4]. Furthermore, the number of appointments is often different from the actual number of ministers since a new appointment is coded every time there is a reshuffle in one of the 8 portfolios under study.

investigators. Where information was hard to find, the coders looked at newspaper archives and obituaries.

The data include biographical information on the educational, professional and political background of cabinet ministers. Regarding the occupational information that is of interest here, three different professions have been coded, with the primary profession being the one they spent the most time at.

Figure 1 provides a first glance at the primary professions of the cabinet ministers in the sample. The graph on the left summarises ministerial professions since 1945 whereas the graph on the right provides an overview since 2000. Three professional qualifications appear to have been the most prominent among the cabinet ministers across time: lawyers, academics and civil servants. On average, most cabinet ministers (about 17 percent) exercised the legal profession prior to entering politics. This is hardly surprising as lawyers are knowledgeable in constitutional affairs and are generally gifted orators, a skill that is critical for elected politicians. Perhaps what is more surprising is that the second most common profession is the academic, which includes university professors and teachers, alike. Together academics and former bureaucrats constitute more than a quarter of all cabinet ministers.

[Figure 1 about here]

[Figure 2 about here]

Beyond the top three professions, significant differences arise across time. While in the full sample (left graph), the fourth most common occupational group is former leaders of trade unions (constituting around seven percent), the fourth most common profession since 2000 is local politics, followed by those ministers whose only professional experience is in politics. Since 2000, former trade union leaders moved down to the eighth place, with professional politicians[5] and executives overtaking them. Trade unionists and ministers with blue collar backgrounds add up to just under ten percent of all ministers in the full sample and under five percent in more recent years. In contrast, ministers with predominantly political background, those with a career in local politics and those who have had no other professional experience outside politics, became the fourth most common professional background of cabinet ministers across the 18 countries.

To sum up, those with legal, political and academic backgrounds have dominated parliamentary cabinets since 1945. While ministers with a background in the union movement have also featured prominently in the past, their numbers have declined significantly in the last two decades. Immediately it becomes obvious that parliamentary cabinets have never been representative of society in descriptive terms, and that they are becoming even less representative over time.

In Figure 2 I try to replicate the occupational groups of cabinet ministers for European citizens in the 15 West European democracies in the ministerial sample. For that, I use data from the European Social Survey, from 2002 to 2016 (Waves 1-8). In Figure 2 we

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[5] Those whose primary occupation was either in elective office in local government or who never had a job other than elective office at the national level or as full-time party members (those included in the 'off politics' category). These two categories, together, add up to more than ten percent of all cabinet ministers, making them the fourth largest group and right next to top civil servants.

see that educators account for less than 2 percent of the population, and lawyers are an even smaller group. In contrast, production, service and skilled workers, who are the largest occupational group, hardly ever make it to government offices. Ministers with a blue-collar background are the least common occupational group in cabinets during the same time period.

Figures 1 and 2 provide a very clear picture about the professional groups that are over- and under-represented in parliamentary cabinets: workers, who are the largest occupational group in society, are particularly under-represented in government, while professionals are clearly over-represented. These findings only confirm what Carnes and Lupu (2015) found regarding legislators in Latin American democracies.

Even though governments are not representative bodies, the astounding absence of policymakers with a working class background raises questions about politicians' ability to respond to the concerns and policy preferences of the under-represented groups of citizens. Unlike executives in presidential systems, parliamentary cabinets are responsible for both initiating and implementing policies, therefore they are the ones deciding what enters the policy agenda. The next section addresses the differences in redistributive policy preferences across occupational groups and classes.

Class representation in cabinets and economic preferences

Education and income strongly correlate with occupation but are not the same. Building on political economy models, such as the Meltzer-Richard (1981), much of empirical work uses income as the main predictor for redistribution preferences (Elkjær and Iversen 2020; Gilens and Page 2014; Rueda 2018). However, income alone fails to capture important effects of socialisation through the workplace but also other non-monetary determinants of one's

standard of living. Occupation is the strongest predictor of political identity (Kitschelt and Rehm 2014; Manza and Brooks 2008). The workplace provides a forum of political engagement and important social-networks such as professional associations and trade-union membership (Kitschelt and Rehm 2014; Manza and Brooks 2008), above and beyond material comfort and standard of living.

Consequently, occupation is most commonly chosen as the main determinant of class in studies of descriptive representation (Carnes and Lupu 2015; O'Grady 2018). In a sample of 18 Latin American democracies, Carnes and Lupu (2015) find that legislators from working-class backgrounds, much like citizens, are more supportive of state intervention than businesspeople and professionals. O'Grady (2018) finds similar effects within the British Labour party; working class legislators have significantly stronger pro-welfare policy preferences than their white-collar and professional colleagues.

However, O'Grady also finds that there is group of legislators whose pro-welfare preferences are closer to the preferences of their working-class than their professional colleagues; those working in the public and voluntary sectors. This finding is consistent with extensive work that studies the policy preferences across social classes. This work identifies sociocultural professionals, those whose work involves inter-personal and social interactions such as teaching, nursing or counselling (Oesch and Rennwald 2018), as strong supporters of the welfare state (Gingrich and Häusermann 2015).

Unlike liberal professionals, who are part of the employer or managerial class, sociocultural professionals hold liberal cultural views and strongly pro-welfare preferences. The literature identifies three main drivers for the pro-welfare preferences of sociocultural professionals; their egalitarian and solidaristic values that are fostered by the interpersonal nature of their work, the fact that they are directly employed by the state and the atypical

and insecure employment situation they often face themselves (Gingrich and Häusermann 2015). As a result, sociocultural professionals are as likely to support redistributive policies as production workers (Häusermann and Kriesi 2015) and have become the core electorate for social democratic parties (Gingrich and Häusermann 2015).

The distinction between liberal and sociocultural professionals could be particularly useful when investigating the responsiveness of governments to citizens' divided policy preferences. If cabinets cannot represent voters descriptively, could they be representative substantively by being more or less in tune with the policy priorities and concerns of voters from different class backgrounds? I am not suggesting that individual politicians alone are responsible for the government's agenda. Parliamentary governments are still party governments and compete elections along partisan and programmatic platforms (Caramani 2017; Stokes et al. 2013). Nonetheless, given that the majority of cabinet ministers are either liberal professionals (lawyers, executives, bankers) or sociocultural professionals (professors, teachers but also journalists), it is important to have clear theoretical expectations about how ministers' preference biases might affect policy outcomes, above and beyond their partisan ideology and the government's stated government agenda.

Taking two of the largest professional groups in politics, educators and lawyers, it is worth investigating if the first have consistently stronger pro-redistributive preferences than the latter, as found in the literature (Oesch and Rennwald 2018). To test this, I use the a question on redistributive preferences that has been asked in every ESS wave and is also one that has been used in several studies (Rueda 2018). The question asks: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement. The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels". The respondents are given a range of answers from 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree. I create a dichotomous

variable where 1 is strongly agree and 0 otherwise. This way I code one's strong redistributive preferences.

[Table 1 about here]

Table 1 confirms what the literature tells us: employers and liberal professionals are less supportive of income redistribution than workers and sociocultural professionals. Specifically, lawyers and bankers are the least supportive of income redistribution (15 and 17 percent, respectively), while manual workers are the most supportive (32 percent). In between we find sociocultural professionals, professors, teachers and journalists, with over a quarter of them strongly supporting redistribution. Interestingly, ESS respondents classified as politicians, top civil servants or administrators have libertarian economic views.

To proceed with a more systematic investigation of the descriptive and policy representation of social classes, I classify the occupational groups of citizens and cabinet ministers into upper, middle and working class in a six-class schema that builds on the class schema by Oesch and Rennwald (2018). The first class is the *executive and capital owning class*. This builds directly on the "independent work logic" by Oesch and Rennwald (2018). This class includes *large employers and liberal professionals*, such as self-employed lawyers. The self-employed, small business owners and farmers are also part of the capital owning class but separate from the liberal professionals. In parliamentary cabinets, liberal professionals and executives (lawyers, bankers and executives) constitute a substantial group of policymakers, so I code them separately from the self-employed, the businessmen and farmers. I call the first group *liberal professionals* and the latter as *owning class*.

Within the middle class, Oesch and Rennwald (2018) identify three different groups: the *sociocultural professionals,* the *technical professionals* and the *managerial professionals.* According to that schema, *sociocultural professionals* include teachers, social workers and public sector doctors. I follow a similar categorisation, but I exclude doctors because the employment status of doctors can vary significantly by country (e.g. doctors having outside income through private practice in some countries but not others). Specifically, within the sociocultural professional group I included everyone in *education, in the humanities and journalists. Doctors* are included with other *health professionals, consultants, technicians, engineers* and *scientists* in the group of *technical professionals.* Finally, *managers, administrators* and *accountants* are coded as *managerial professionals.*

Production workers, such as carpenters, and *service workers*, such as waiters, are classified as *working class*[6] as per Oesch and Rennwald (2018). I also coded the "in-between" class of clerks but also unskilled and precarious labour as working class. Table 2 summarises the class schema for the ESS data, while Table 3 summarises the class categorisation for cabinet ministers. Since there is not perfect correspondence between the ESS professional categories and the ministerial data, there are some differences in the coding of the working class. Specifically, I include salaried employees as working class when applying to the ministerial data. Nonetheless, there is good correspondence between liberal professionals and sociocultural professionals, which constitute the two largest classes of cabinet ministers. Figures 3 and 4 provide an overview of the distribution of the class schema for citizens and ministers, alike. Once again, the discrepancy in the distribution of

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[6] This definition of the working class is quite different from the one adopted by Evans and Tilley (2017), for whom working class citizens are those who have low job security, low earnings, their earnings depend on the hours of work and overtime, they work in shifts and have no control of their conditions of work.

classes between citizens and politicians is striking, with liberal and sociocultural

professionals constituting the largest groups in politics but a small minority in society.

[Table 2 about here]

[Table 3 about here]

[Figure 3 about here]

[Figure 4 about here]

To investigate the gap in the redistributive preferences between sociocultural and

liberal professionals, I subtracted the average preference (by country and survey wave) of

liberal professionals from the average preference of sociocultural professionals. Figure 5

reports the gaps over the 2002-2016 period. The results are quite striking. The difference in

redistributional preferences between sociocultural professionals and working-class

respondents is 4 percent. In contrast, the difference between liberal professionals and

working-class respondents is over 15 percent. Consequently, sociocultural professionals are

significantly closer to the policy preferences of the working class than to the preferences of

liberal professionals.

[Figure 5 about here]

The findings replicate what has been already discussed in the literature (Gingrich and

Häusermann 2015). The closeness in the social policy preferences between sociocultural

professionals and the working class is seen as the reason for the shift of middle-class voters

towards social democratic parties, as the vote of the working class declined. As a result,

sociocultural professionals become core voters of social democratic parties, while technical professionals and the self-employed went to right parties (Gingrich and Häusermann 2015; Häusermann and Kriesi 2015). Here I provide evidence that this divergence in policy preferences is particularly strong between sociocultural and liberal professionals as defined by Oesch and Rennwald (2018). The comparison between these two groups could be particularly relevant for predicting the policy preferences of parliamentary governments in economically advanced parliamentary democracies, above and beyond standard measures of left-right party ideology.

A class-based measure of government ideology

Government ideology is strongly linked to the development of the welfare state. Liberal and conservative parties favour a slimmer welfare state while social democrats and Christian democrats have supported a more generous welfare state (Esping-Andersen 1990; Korpi and Palme 2003; Manow and Kersberger 2009). Government ideology is also directly linked to social classes, with Christian democrats historically appealing to religious and more affluent voters (Dalton 2008) while social democratic parties appealing to working-class and more recently middle-class voters (Gingrich and Häusermann 2015).

Political parties' class support and electoral re-alignment are central in parties' electoral strategies as they strive to win elections (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). While Downesian models of electoral competition see parties as free to shift their positions to the policy position of the median voter (Downs 1957), partisan models see parties as like-minded organisations that are constrained by their members and party leadership (Wenzelburger and Zohlnhöfer, forthcoming.). The empirical evidence is mixed with some scholars finding that government policies reflect the preferences of the middle class (Elkjær

and Iversen 2020; Iversen and Soskice 2019), while others finding clear partisan effects (Allan and Scruggs 2004; Korpi and Palme 2003). Against that debate, a third line of research points to a persistent policy bias that favours higher income voters. Not only policies are found to reflect the policy preferences of the rich (Gilens 2012; Schakel 2019), but policy biases are already identified at the party level, when parties draft their party manifestos. Political parties, across the ideological spectrum, appear to prioritise policies that are of higher saliency to higher income voters (Giger, Rosset, and Bernauer 2012).

This article contributes to the debate on the role of parties in welfare state development by conceptualising parties as like-minded organisations whose policy priorities are strongly shaped by the policy preferences of their members and elites (Wenzelburger and Zohlnhöfer, forthcoming). While party and elite membership is endogenously determined (Wenzelburger and Zohlnhöfer, forhcoming), it can also be strategic in that parties seek to commit to a set of policies through candidate recruitment (Becher 2016). Moving one step up, from the party to party government, cabinets can be conceptualised as decision-making bodies that are constrained by party ideology and their electoral promises (Hübscher 2018; Mansergh and Thomson 2007; Thomson 2001) but also and crucially by the individual preferences of their members, namely cabinet ministers (Alexiadou 2016; Wenzelburger and Staff 2017). Thus, this article asks: does the class composition of cabinets have a concrete and distinguishable impact on social welfare policy? If so, Is ministers' class background a conditional or an additional factor of government ideology?

The class composition of cabinets might be an additional, or a conditional factor of cabinet ideology to the partisan and manifesto-based measures of government ideology. The class composition of cabinets could potentially be a mechanism that conditions how responsive executives are to the policy preferences of different groups of citizens. Figure 6

provides the breakdown of the social classes of parliamentary cabinets in center-left and center-right cabinets. While governments across the ideological spectrum include all six classes, there is strong partisan bias. Over a third of cabinet ministers in center-right cabinets are liberal professionals, and together with the owning class they constitute almost 40% of cabinet ministers. In contrast, the largest class groups in left of center governments, is sociocultural and technical professionals, with liberal professionals constituting under 20 percent, on par with the working class.

[Figure 6 about here]

There is some evidence that the backgrounds of policymaker (Adolph 2013) for policy outcomes under certain conditions. Alexiadou (2016) finds that when it comes to welfare generosity, the professional and political background of social welfare ministers predicts their policy effectiveness. Social democrats and former trade unionists have significantly higher policy impact than social democrat lawyers. Building on that work, but with a focus on the class composition of cabinets as discussed earlier rather than the professional and partisan background of individual cabinet ministers, I formulate the following hypotheses:

Cabinets with a larger number of ministers identified as sociocultural professionals or working class have a positive impact on social welfare generosity. Equivalently, cabinets with a larger number of ministers identified as liberal professionals are associated with cuts in welfare state generosity (H1).

Left governments increase the positive policy effect of ministers identified as sociocultural professionals or working-class, while right governments increase the negative policy effect of ministers identified as liberal professionals (H2).

The welfare preferences of lower income citizens have a larger impact on welfare generosity, as the number of cabinet ministers identified as sociocultural professionals or working-class is higher. In contrast the preferences of lower income citizens have a smaller impact on welfare generosity as the *number of ministers identified as liberal professionals is higher (H3)*.

The social-welfare effects of cabinets' class composition

Data and empirical strategy

I test the hypotheses on three different dependent variables, in three different country samples. First, I test the policy effects of cabinets in a sample of 18 parliamentary democracies over forty years. For this, I utilise cross-country, annual data constructed by Scruggs and Kuitto (2013a) on *Total Welfare State Generosity*. This indicator codes welfare generosity accounting for benefit replacement rates, qualifying conditions and coverage rates for public pensions, unemployment and sickness insurance. It is the most comprehensive and updated measure for welfare state generosity, which does not rely on actual spending. Aggregate spending measures are not suitable for the current analysis which seeks to evaluate whether citizens' preferences for more or less generous welfare provisions matter for policy outcome. This is because spending measures vary with GDP and fail to capture the generosity of benefits in terms of the actual replacements rates, the qualifying conditions and the coverage rates (Scruggs, Detlef, and Kuitto 2013a). These models constitute the core of the analysis testing Hypotheses 1 and 2.

The empirical strategy involves the estimation of an Autoregressive Distributed Lag model (ADL)[7] that excludes the contemporaneous regressors. ADL models are appropriate when the time series are strongly auto-regressive and near integrated (Keele, Linn, and Webb 2016). All the regressors are lagged by one year, which is a common practice for these types of empirical models, as political decisions take time before they become policy (Franzese 2002; Soroka and Wlezien 2009). All policy models include country fixed effects to remove unobserved country heterogeneity.

Second, I replicate the policy effects of cabinets on welfare generosity in a smaller sample of countries that includes data on the social welfare preferences of citizens at the 10, 50 and 90th decile of income distribution. The data are constructed and provided by Schakel et al (2020), who predict the effect of the welfare preferences across income groups in welfare state generosity. Schakel et al (2020) coded repeated questions in the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) dataset and estimated the welfare preferences across income groups. They then regressed changes in welfare generosity, as coded by Scruggs and Kuitto (2013a) (the Comparative Welfare Entitlements Dataset, CWED), over a period of four years after the survey was completed. In their study, they find that welfare changes are more responsive to higher income earners, those at the top 10 income percentile and least responsive to those at the bottom ten decile. These data are used to primarily test Hypothesis 3.

I estimate the model with a mixed effects model, like they do, and robust standard errors by country. I also include fixed effects for the survey waves and the type of welfare benefit (unemployment and pension). However, after merging my data with theirs, I have 104 instead of 130 country/year observations, therefore the results should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively small size of the sample.

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[7] $Y_t = a_i + a_1 Y_{t-1} + b_1 X_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t$

Finally, I test whether the hypotheses hold in a single country over a longer period to time. I am able to do this by using data constructed and provided by Lee et al (2020) who code all positive legislative changes in pension provisions in the United Kingdom since 1945. This is a particularly appropriate measure to use as it codes actual legislation along 13 dimensions regarding pension benefits. The indicator on pension generosity counts all positive reforms every year. As a count variable, the appropriate estimator is negative binomial for over-dispersed count data. The negative binomial regression has the same structure as the Poisson regression but with an extra parameter to model the over dispersion.

<u>Findings</u>

Table 4 reports the policy effects of cabinets in six models. The three first models report the direct and unconditional effects of cabinet class composition on welfare generosity, while the last three models interact class composition with the number of left seats in the cabinet. Specifically, Model 1 reports the effects of ministers with a background as sociocultural professionals, Model 2 the effects of those with a working-class background and Model 3 the effects of those ministers with a background in liberal professions. As discussed above, the dependent variable is total welfare generosity and the control variables are lagged generosity, unemployment level, economic globalization, wage bargaining coordination and left cabinet seats (Armingeon et al. 2012).

Two classes of cabinet ministers stand out and have substantively and statistically significant policy effects: sociocultural and liberal professionals.[8] A unit increase in the number of socio-cultural professionals is associated with a 0.3 unit increase in welfare generosity in the short-run, or a 5 unit increase in the long run. For cabinets that have a high

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[8] These findings are replicated when welfare generosity is replaced with pension or unemployment benefit generosity.

number of ministers with a background in liberal professions, the negative effect on welfare generosity is even higher, with a short-run negative effect of 0.45 units and a long-run effect of 7.5 units.[9] These findings are consistent with Hypotheses 1. However, there is no evidence that ministers with a working-class background have a positive effect on welfare generosity.

[Table 4 about here]

In Models 1 and 3, the class composition of cabinets has stronger predictive power than the ideological composition of cabinets. However, Models 1-3 do not tell us whether the effects of ministers' class background is conditioned by the partisan ideology of the government. Is the positive effect of sociocultural ministers conditioned by the number of seats left parties control in the cabinet? Or does the working-class background fail to reach significance because we do not condition on partisan ideology? Models 4 to 6 provide some answers to these questions.

In Model 4 we find that partisan ideology has a positive conditional effect on the role of sociocultural ministers on welfare generosity. The positive and statistically significant interactive term indicates that the more left parties control government, the more positive the impact of sociocultural professionals is on welfare generosity. Somewhat surprisingly, this is not the case for policy effect of working-class ministers; for them, the number of left seats does not have a modifying effect. Finally, Model 6 provides some particularly surprising results, with liberal professionals having a even larger, and statistically significant negative effect on welfare generosity under left governments. This finding goes against my expectation that liberal professionals should have an even larger negative effect under right-wing governments. Overall, Table 4 provides strong support on the policy effects of ministers' class background

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[9] On the short and long-run effects of ADR models refer see (Boef and Keele 2008).

and some mixed results on the role of government ideology and its conditioning effects. Nonetheless, Table 4 does not tell us if these cabinets are more receptive to the preferences of citizens. To evaluate that we need data on citizens' welfare preferences and an empirical model that interacts cabinets' class composition with the underlying welfare preferences of citizens.

Table 5 reports the policy impact of cabinets' class composition, controlling for the welfare preferences of the bottom 10 percent while Table 6 reports whether the class composition of cabinets matters for responding to these welfare preferences. Tables 5 and 6 use data compiled by Schakel et al (2020) which code the welfare preferences across income deciles. These data, at discussed already, have only a fifth of the observations of Table 4 but they are unique in that they directly measure the welfare preferences of voters by income group.

[Table 5 about here]

Despite the different sample in both countries and time periods, Table 5 replicates the findings of Table 4. Cabinets with a higher number of sociocultural professionals are associated with positive changes in welfare generosity, while cabinets with a higher number of liberal professionals are associated with cuts in welfare generosity, just like in Table 4. Similarly, cabinets with a larger number of ministers with a working-class background do not have a discernible policy effect. These results hold, even after controlling for the welfare preferences of the bottom 10 percent income earners, as measured in the ISSP surveys. This means that although public opinion matters for policy change as found in the literature (Brooks and Manza 2006; Soroka and Wlezien 2005), the composition of cabinets is also a significant and independent factor for social welfare policy.

Table 6 reports the interaction effects of cabinets with the social welfare preferences of the bottom 10 percent income earners. The results are mixed. The only conditional effects

in the expected direction are in Model 1, where we find that the policy preferences of the bottom 10 percent have a larger and positive effect on welfare generosity when cabinets have a higher number of sociocultural professionals.[10]

[Table 6 about here]

[Figure 7 about here]

According to Model 1, the welfare preferences of lower income citizens are associated with changes in welfare generosity *only when* number of sociocultural ministers increases. This can be seen clearly in Figure 7. According to Figure 7, only when over a third of cabinet ministers are sociocultural professionals, the preferences of low-income citizens have a policy effect. Therefore, there is some but not overwhelming evidence that the class composition of cabinets matters for policy responsiveness. In contrast, the policy preferences of the bottom 10 percent earners have more positive effect on policy when the number of ministers with working-class background is lower, not higher, as indicated by the negative interactive term in Model 2 of Table 6. However, given the low number of cases and the low numbers of ministers with a working-class background, these results should be read with caution. Finally, there is no evidence that the policy preferences of the bottom 10 percent condition in any way the policy effects of cabinets that have a higher number of ministers with a background in liberal professions. These cabinets are consistently associated with cuts in welfare generosity.

In the final part of the empirical analysis, I look at policy changes in pension generosity over a period of 70 years in the United Kingdom. The negative binomial models report on the policy effects of cabinets on positive changes on pensions every year since 1945

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[10] In these models we do not include the preferences of other income groups as done by Schakel et al (2020).

(Lee et al. 2020). Given the small sample but also due to the fact that this is a single country analysis, I only control for government ideology, as measured by the left-right rile indicator, to control for parties' electoral positions (Klingemann et al. 2006). According to Table 6, British cabinets with a larger number of sociocultural professionals are associated with 3.5 more positive changes in pension generosity than average. Similarly, cabinets with a higher number of ministers with a working-class background are associated with 2.5 more positive changes on pension generosity, as predicted by Hypothesis 1. In contrast and in line with expectations, cabinets with more ministers who are former liberal professionals are associated with fewer positive policies on pensions than average.

In other words, the British sample replicates the cross-country findings. In addition, it provides a new insight: in the British case, cabinets with more working-class ministers make a difference in pension generosity.

[Table 7 about here]

Discussion

With the aid of a new dataset on ministers' professional background, this article attempts to address two questions: does the class background of cabinet ministers matter to the shaping of policy outcomes, and are governments more responsive to the policy preferences of lower income citizens as ministers' class backgrounds vary? The answer to the first question is strongly affirmative. Cabinets that have a higher number of cabinet ministers identified as liberal professionals are consistently associated with cuts in welfare generosity. In contrast, cabinet ministers who are identified as sociocultural professionals

are consistently associated with positive changes in welfare generosity. These effects hold even when we control for government ideology and social welfare preferences.

The answer to the second question is mixed. There is some evidence that cabinet composition conditions the policy effects of social welfare preferences. The welfare preferences of lower income citizens predict policy change when cabinets have a sufficient number of ministers who are identified as sociocultural professionals (over a third). However, a higher number of ministers with a working-class background or a background as liberal professionals does not alter the policy impact of preferences, and neither do preferences condition the policy impact ministers with a background in liberal professions: these are consistently and across samples associated with cuts in welfare generosity.

These findings are novel as they rely on very new data. Accordingly, they will have to be replicated in future studies. Nonetheless, they were made possible only thanks to new datasets on the social welfare preferences of different income groups, across countries and time periods (Schakel, Burgoon, and Hakhverdian 2020), long-time series of legislative changes on welfare policy (Lee et al. 2020), and new data on the professional backgrounds of cabinet ministers.

A number of questions remain. What explains the class composition of cabinets? With the aid of the new dataset on the professional and political background of cabinet ministers presented here, we will have the opportunity to better understand what drives the changes in the socio-economic background of cabinet ministers and, an in turn the descriptive representation of parliamentary governments.

The findings in this article have potentially important implications. Why are cabinet ministers with a background in liberal professions (banking, law and business) associated with cuts in social welfare? Is this linked to revolving door politics or to ideology? Second, if

the class profile of cabinets has a direct policy impact, could it be used as an additive measure to government ideology (Becher 2016; Wenzelburger and Zohlnhöfer, forthcoming.)? This might be an attractive suggestion as political competition is expressed along the two dimensions of redistributive left-right policies and libertarian/authoritarian values (Häusermann and Kriesi 2015; Kitschelt and Rehm 2014). Moreover if voters are affected by candidates' and politicians' background as found by Heath (2015), the linkage between socio-economic representation and trust in politicians is theoretically plausible. To the extent that voters draw inferences about politicians' motives on the basis of their socio-economic background, they could be less trusting of elites that are socio-economically dissimilar.

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Table 1: Pro-redistribution Preferences of Professional Groups, as per cabinet ministers' professional backgrounds

Professional Groups	% Pro-redistribution	Income decile	Years of Education
Lawyers	**0.15**	**7.9**	**18.4**
Politicians & Top Civil Servants	0.17	7.5	15.2
Finance/Banking	**0.17**	**7.1**	**16.0**
Engineers	0.16	7.1	16.5
Businessmen	0.14	6.9	13.2
Humanities	**0.24**	**6.8**	**16.6**
Medical Doctors	0.19	6.7	16.7
Professors & Teachers	**0.25**	**6.6**	**16.9**
Managerial & Skilled/Technical	0.21	6.5	14.2
Scientists	0.24	6.4	16.4
Journalists	**0.27**	**6.4**	**16.3**
Military	0.18	6.2	13.7
Self Employed & Farmers	0.24	5.7	12.3
Other	0.25	5.1	11.8
Consultants	0.25	5.8	13.1
Skilled Workers	0.29	4.6	11.1
Routine & Precarious	0.49	4.1	9.5
Manual & Low-Skill Workers	0.32	3.8	9.8
Total	0.26	5.33	12.45

Table 2: A six class schema for citizens: ESS survey data, Waves 1-8

EXECUTIVE & CAPITAL OWNING	MIDDLE CLASS			WORKING CLASS	
<u>Liberal Professionals</u>	<u>Sociocultural professionals</u>	<u>Technical professionals</u>	<u>Managerial professionals</u>	<u>Production and service workers</u>	<u>Unskilled workers</u>
Finance	Humanities	Consultants	Managers	Skilled	Routine
Executives	Teachers	Technician	Administrators	Semi-skilled	Precarious
Lawyers	Journalists	Engineer	Accountants		
		Scientist	Clerks		
		Health Sector			
<u>Self-employed</u>		Athletes			
Small Business		Military			
Farmers					

EXECUTIVE & CAPITAL OWNING	MIDDLE CLASS			WORKING CLASS
<u>Liberal Professionals</u>	<u>Sociocultural professionals</u>	<u>Technical Professionals</u>	<u>Managers</u>	
Finance	Humanities	Consultants	Civil Servants	Salaried Employee
Economists	Teachers	Policy Advisors		Blue Collar
Executives	Journalists	Economists		Trade Union
Lawyers		Engineers		
		Scientists		
<u>Self-employed</u>		Doctors		
Business		Military		
Farmers				

Table 4: Welfare generosity, 18 OECD countries, annual data, 1970-2011, country effects, robust std. errors

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Welf.Gen.	Welf.Gen.	Welf.Gen.	Welf.Gen.	Welf.Gen.	Welf.Gen.
Generosity (t-1)	0.944***	0.946***	0.944***	0.940***	0.943***	0.945***
	(0.0244)	(0.0251)	(0.0244)	(0.0268)	(0.0252)	(0.0243)
Unemployment	-0.0300**	-0.0289**	-0.0279**	-0.0314**	-0.0280**	-0.0284**
	(0.0131)	(0.0136)	(0.0122)	(0.0129)	(0.0131)	(0.0123)
Globalisation	-0.00715	-0.00672	-0.00572	-0.00667	-0.00608	-0.00678
	(0.00590)	(0.00596)	(0.00574)	(0.00610)	(0.00591)	(0.00585)
WBC	-0.00765	-0.0100	-0.0207	-0.00157	-0.0101	-0.0266
	(0.0568)	(0.0557)	(0.0591)	(0.0552)	(0.0552)	(0.0614)
Left Seats Cabinet	-0.0869	-0.0879	-0.0869	-0.140	-0.0866	-0.0651
	(0.0628)	(0.0664)	(0.0657)	(0.0844)	(0.0633)	(0.0550)
Sociocultural Prof.	**0.313****			**0.186**		
	(0.142)			**(0.163)**		
Working Class		0.0117			0.223	
		(0.182)			(0.214)	
Liberal Prof.			**-0.451****			**-0.341***
			(0.168)			**(0.169)**
Socio*Left				**0.151***		
				(0.0858)		
Working*Left					-0.0683	
					(0.0605)	
Liberal*Left						**-0.0967***
						(0.0467)
Constant	2.641***	2.664***	2.806***	2.769***	2.671***	2.851***
	(0.710)	(0.726)	(0.681)	(0.786)	(0.744)	(0.701)
Countries	18	18	18	18	18	18
Observations	509	509	509	509	509	509

Table 5: 16 OECD countries, random intercept and slope models of changes in welfare generosity (average change from T+1 to T+4).

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Generosity (t+1-t+4)	Generosity (t+1-t+4)	Generosity (t+1-t+4)
Generosity (t)	-0.206**	-0.180	-0.224**
	(0.0974)	(0.119)	(0.0992)
GDP	-2.769	-2.755	-2.332
	(1.837)	(2.181)	(1.705)
Growth	-0.0966	-0.170	-0.0715
	(0.293)	(0.293)	(0.270)
Left Gov.	-0.00269	-0.00122	-0.0177*
	(0.00985)	(0.0110)	(0.0107)
Welf. Pref. P10	0.0440**	0.0482*	0.0299
	(0.0221)	(0.0259)	(0.0222)
Sociocultural Prof.	**3.238***		
	(1.692)		
Working Class		4.053	
		(3.612)	
Liberal Prof.			**-5.764***
			(1.945)
Constant	28.56	28.59	28.25
	(19.54)	(22.71)	(18.53)
Observations	104	104	104

Table 6: 16 OECD countries, random intercept and slope models of changes in welfare generosity (average change from T+1 to T+4).

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Generosity (t+1-t+4)	Generosity (t+1-t+4)	Generosity (t+1-t+4)	Generosity (t+1-t+4)
Generisity (t)	-0.212**	-0.204*	-0.233**	-0.202*
	(0.0983)	(0.120)	(0.103)	(0.110)
Left Gov.	-0.00250	-0.00261	-0.0178*	-0.00701
	(0.00962)	(0.0113)	(0.0104)	(0.0182)
GDP	-2.648	-2.319	-2.227	-2.507
	(1.803)	(2.120)	(1.607)	(1.999)
Growth	-0.0929	-0.136	-0.0731	-0.122
	(0.297)	(0.291)	(0.274)	(0.283)
p10	0.0265	0.0769**	0.0399	0.0357
	(0.0194)	(0.0356)	(0.0357)	(0.0242)
Sociocultural Prof.	**1.003**			
	(2.196)			
Socio-cultural*p10	**0.0523***			
	(0.0273)			
Working Class		**10.75***		
		(6.425)		
Working*p10		**-0.205***		
		(0.121)		
Liberal Prof			**-4.685***	
			(2.795)	
Liberal*p10			**-0.0274**	
			(0.0542)	
Left Gov*p10				0.000223
				(0.000294)
Constant	28.09	23.14	26.82	26.97
	(19.41)	(22.16)	(17.11)	(21.41)
Observations	104	104	104	104

Table 7: Positive Changes in pension generosity (1945 to 2014, UK). Negative binomial model, robust std. errors

	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**
	Positive Changes	Positive Changes	Positive Changes
Left-Right Gov	-0.00101	0.0129	0.0231*
	(0.00664)	(0.00841)	(0.0120)
Sociocultural Prof.	**3.558***		
	(1.190)		
Working Class		**2.326***	
		(0.725)	
Liberal Prof.			**-2.549**
			(1.168)
Constant	-0.663**	-0.412*	0.977**
	(0.295)	(0.220)	(0.425)
Observations	69	69	69

Figure 1: Primary Professional Background of Cabinet Ministers

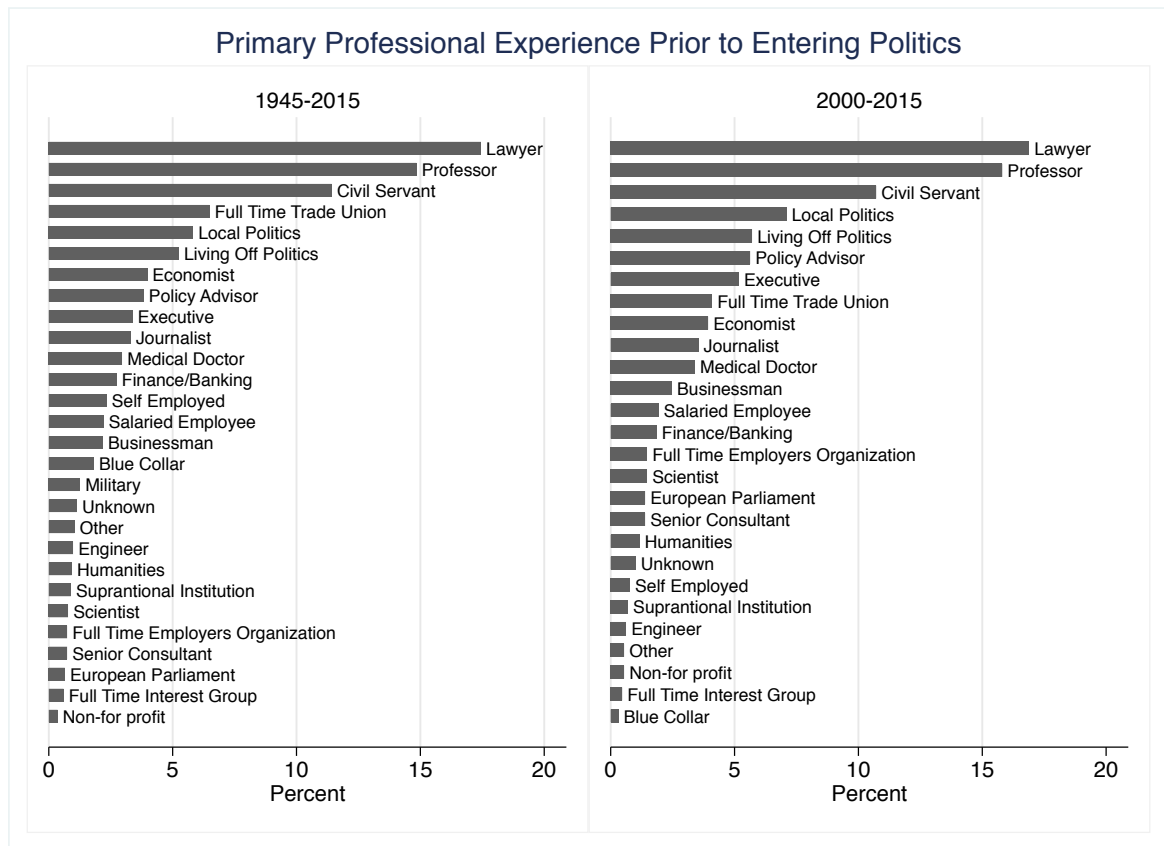Primary Professional Experience Prior to Entering Politics

Figure 2: Professional Groups of Citizens, broken down as for Cabinet Ministers: Data from 15 West European Countries from 2002 to 2016, European Social Survey data.
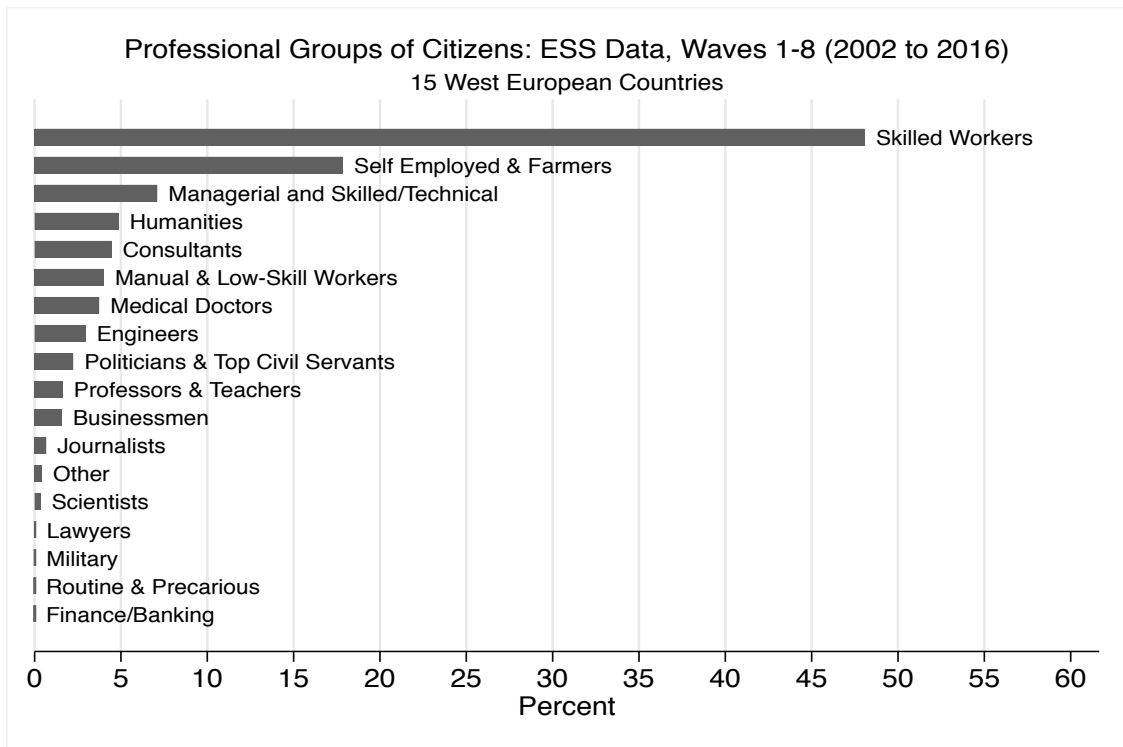

Professional Groups of Citizens: ESS Data, Waves 1-8 (2002 to 2016)
15 West European Countries

Figure 3: Distribution of the six-class schema for citizens

Distribution of Classes: ESS Survey Data
15 European Countries, Waves 1-8, 2002-2016

percent

Legend:
- Liberal Professionals
- Socio-cultural
- Managerial
- Owning Class
- Technical
- Working Class
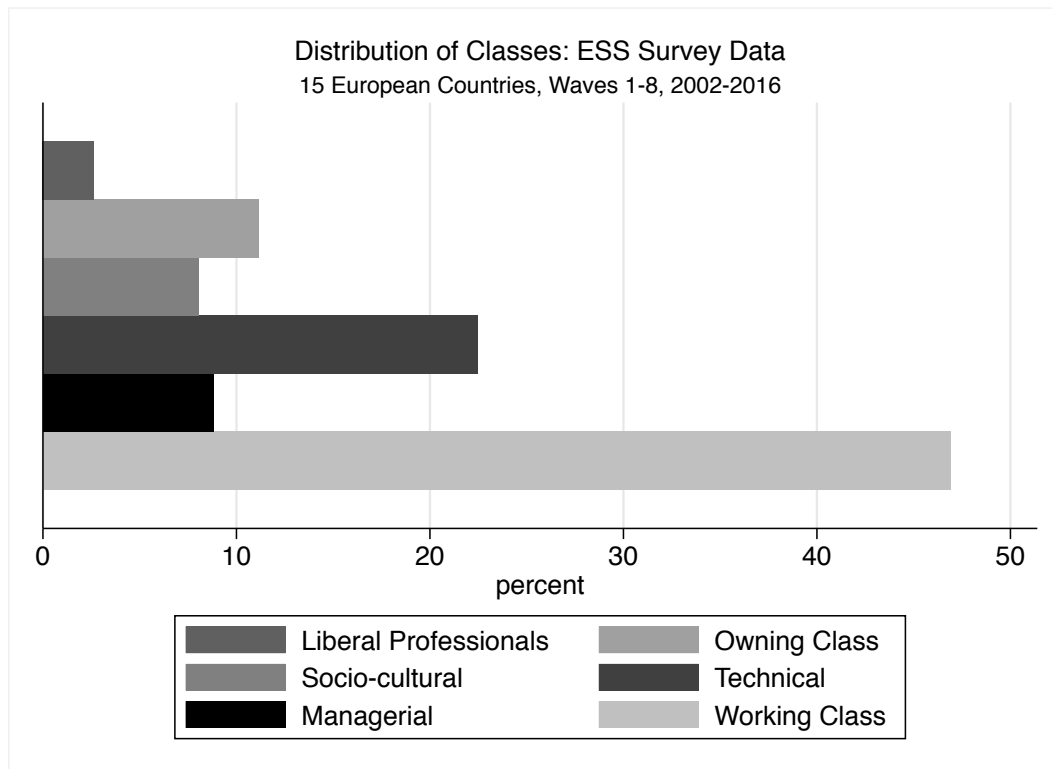
Figure 4: Distribution of the six-class schema for cabinet ministers

Distribution of Classes: Cabinet Ministers
18 Countries, 2000-2015

Legend:
- Liberal Professionals
- Socio-cultural
- Managerial
- Owning Class
- Technical
- Working Class
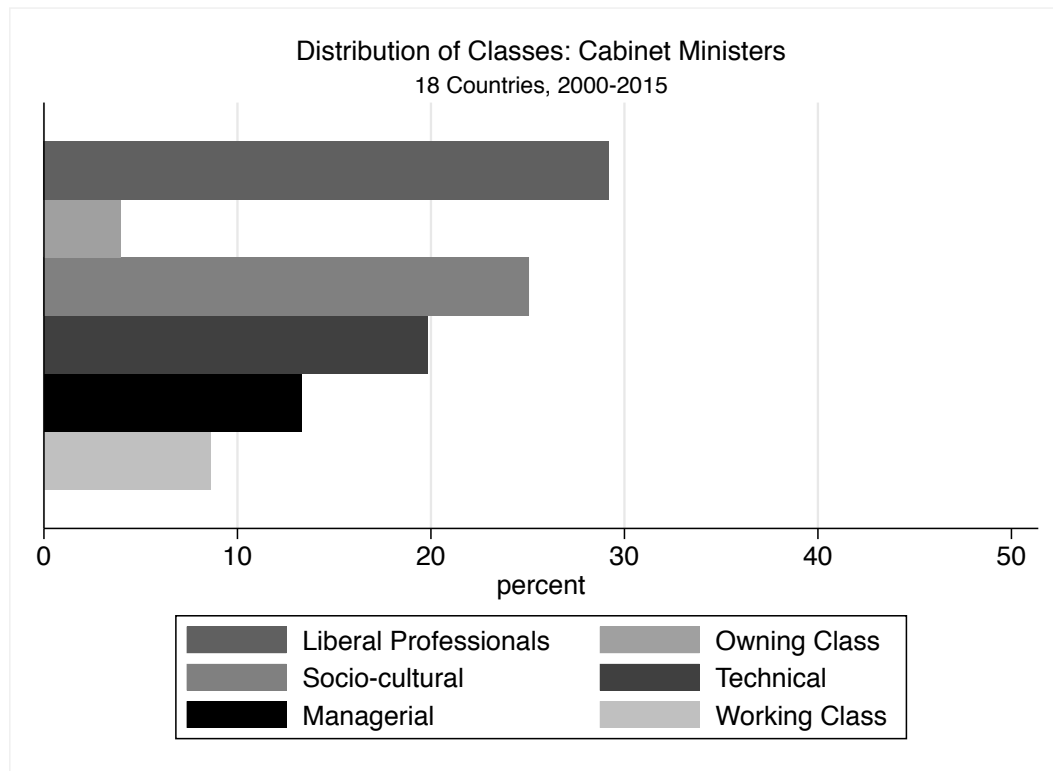
Figure 5: Gap in redistributive preferences between professionals and socio-professionals

Gap in Redistributional Preferences Between Classes
ESS data, Waves 1-8, 2002-2016

Legend:
- Working Class minus Sociocultural Professionals
- Working Class minus Liberal Professionals
- Sociocultural minus Liberal Professionals
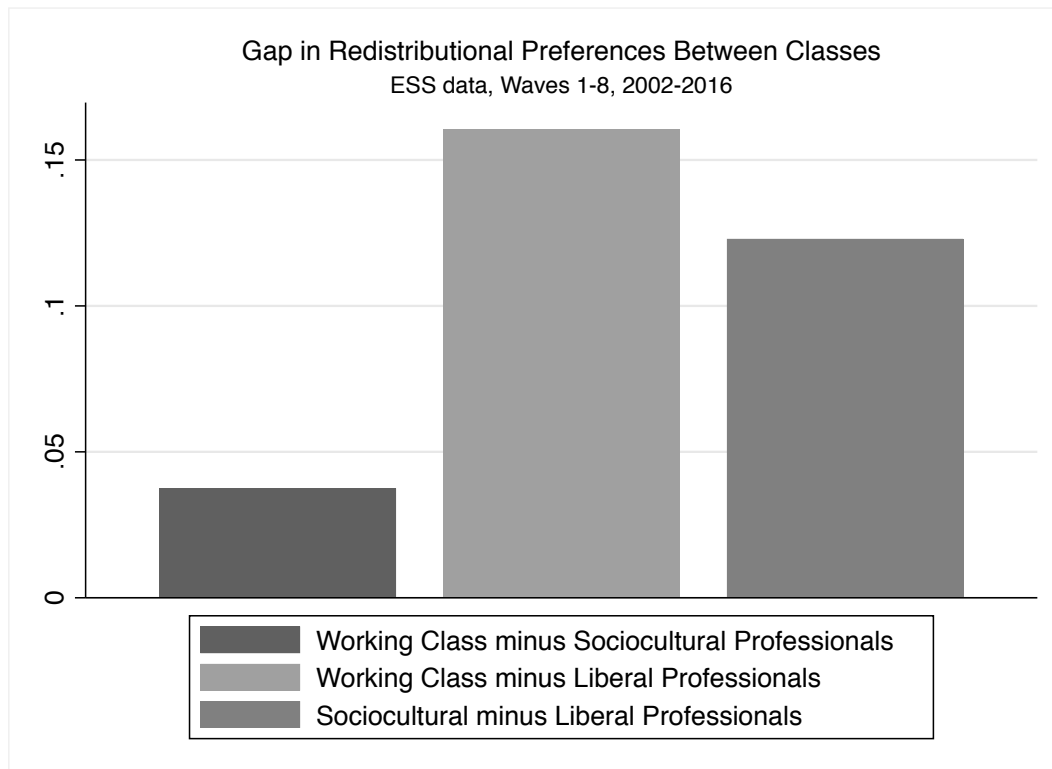
Figure 6: cabinet class composition by partisan ideology

Distribution of Ministerial Classes by Partisan Ideology
18 Countries, 1970-2015
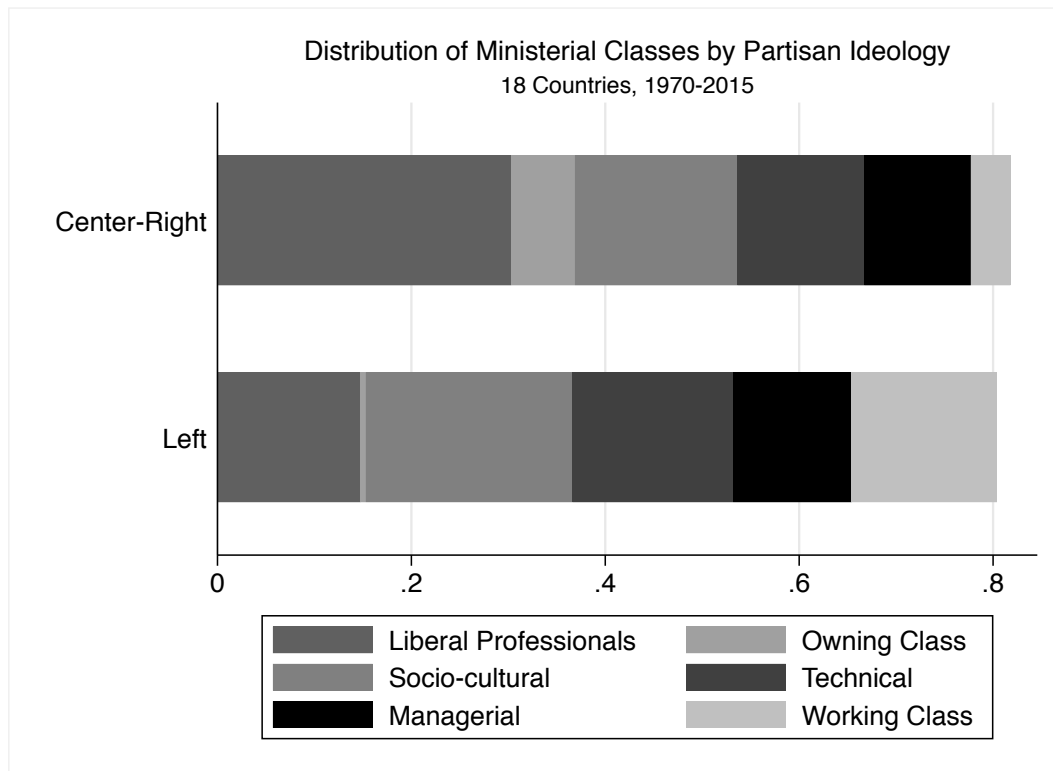
Figure 7: Conditional effect of welfare preferences on sociocultural professional cabinets

Effect of preferences of bottom 10% on welfare generosity as number of sociocultural ministers varies
Dependent variable: Change in Welfare Generosity

Confidence intervals at the 95% level
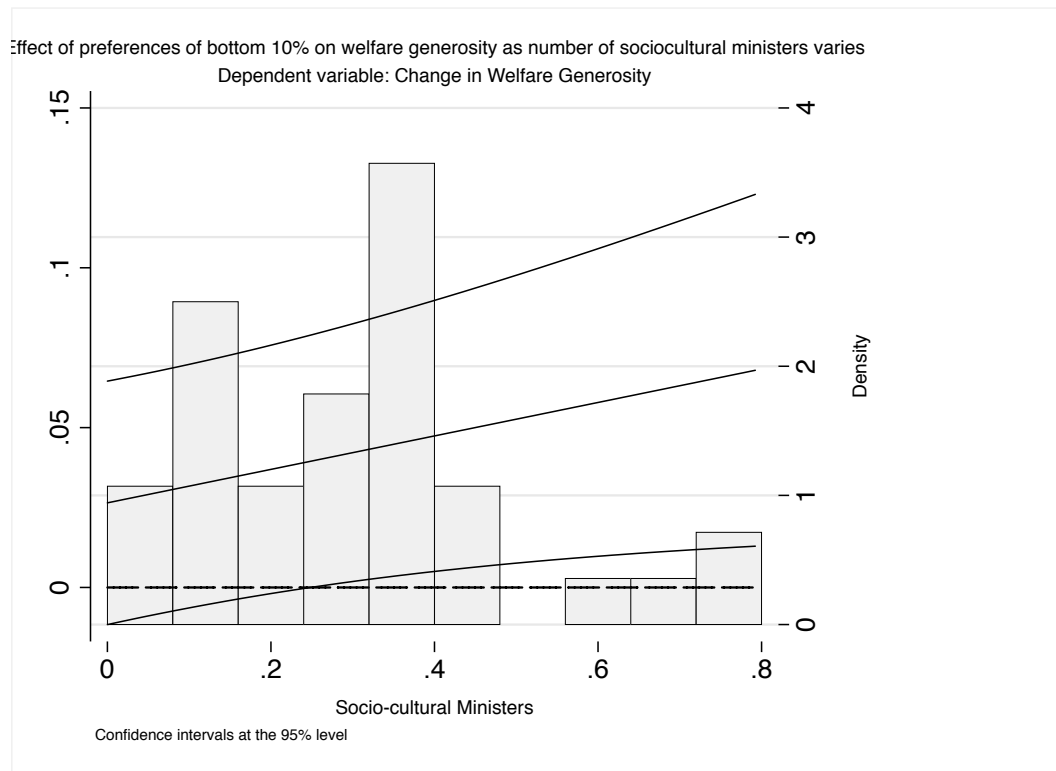
Online Appendix for "Cabinet Ministers and Inequality"

Table 1: Country/Years of Ministerial Dataset

Country	Years
Australia	1945-2015
Austria	1945-2015
Belgium	1972-2015
Canada	1945-2015
Denmark	1945-2015
Finland	1945-2015
France	1959-2015
Germany	1949-2015
Greece	1974-2015
Ireland	1948-2015
Italy	1945-2015
Netherlands	1946-2015
New Zealand	1946-2015
Norway	1945-2015
Portugal	1976-2015
Spain	1976-2015
Sweden	1946-2015
United Kingdom	1945-2015