

Introduction to Economic History :
Capital, Inequality, Growth

(Master APE & PPD)

(EHESS & Paris School of Economics)

Thomas Piketty

Academic year 2025-2026

Lecture 7: Social inequality and party systems
in historical perspective: Europe vs US

(check [on line](#) for updated version)

Roadmap of the lecture

- Beyond left and right: the dimensions of political conflict
- The electoral left: from workers' party to the party of the educated
- The reversal of the education cleavage: the case of France
- Political conflict: education, income, property and identity
- Borders and property: the four-way electorate in France
- Changing political cleavages in the United States
- Changing political cleavages in the United Kingdom
- The cleavage about Europe and globalization

Beyond left and right: the dimensions of political conflict

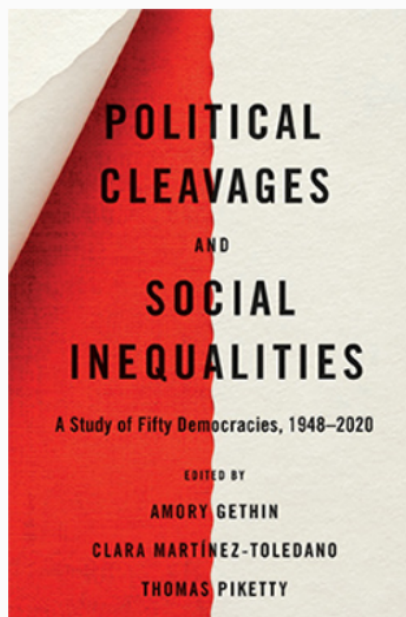
- Main lesson from lectures 1-6: **political and ideological changes play a crucial role in the process of socio-economic development & the evolution of inequality structures.** Successful economic development requires a minimal consensus about the level & structure of social inequality.
- **Therefore it is critical to better understand changing political attitudes and beliefs systems about inequality, the fair economy & the just society**
- It is relatively easier to study beliefs systems in electoral democracies, in the sense that these beliefs systems translate into recorded voting attitudes
- **Key question: what forms do the various political parties & coalitions take in different societies and historical periods, and how do they relate to inequality and redistribution?** What are the different dimensions of political conflict and how do they change over time?
Was there something unique in 1950-1980 left-right party system & why?

- **On-going comparative research program using post-electoral surveys:**
- T. Piketty, [Brahmin Left vs Merchant Right: Rising Inequality and the Changing Structure of Political Conflict. Evidence from France, Britain & the US 1948-2017](#), WID.world WP, 2018
- A. Gethin, C. Martinez-Tolenado, T. Piketty, [Political Cleavages & Inequality. Evidence from Electoral Democracies 1950-2018](#), WID.world, 2019
- A. Banerjee, A. Gethin, T. Piketty, [Growing Cleavages in India? Evidence from the Changing Structure of Electorates 1962-2014](#), Economic and Political Weekly, 2019 ([WID.world WP](#))
- More countries are currently being studied
- **Unfortunately, there exists no post-electoral survey before the 1940s-1950s. In order to study longer time periods, one needs to use other data sources: local-level election results matched with local-level census & fiscal data.**

WORLD POLITICAL CLEAVAGES AND INEQUALITY DATABASE

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THE BOOK



Who votes for whom and why? Why has growing inequality in many parts of the world not led to renewed class-based conflicts, and seems instead to have come with the emergence of new divides over identity and integration? News analysts, scholars, and citizens interested in exploring those questions inevitably lack relevant data, in particular the kinds of data that establish historical and international context. *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities* provides the missing empirical background, collecting and examining a treasure trove of information on the dynamics of polarization in modern democracies.

The chapters draw on a unique set of surveys conducted between 1948 and 2020 in fifty countries on five continents, analyzing the links between voters' political preferences and socioeconomic characteristics, such as income, education, wealth, occupation, religion, ethnicity, age, and gender. This analysis sheds new light on how political movements succeed in coalescing multiple interests and identities in contemporary democracies. It also helps us understand the conditions under which conflicts over inequality become politically salient, as well as the

- **« Standard » view of the left-right party system:**
 - political conflict is about redistribution between social classes
 - lower socioeconomic groups vote for the left, higher groups vote for the right
- **Pb: this « standard » view may apply to certain societies and historical periods (e.g. 1950-1980 in Western electoral democracies), but it is certainly not universal.**
- **First, the different dimensions of socioeconomic cleavages (education, income, wealth, etc.) may not always be aligned.** E.g. they were aligned in 1950-1980, but in 1990-2020 we observe the rise of a « multiple elites » system: educational elite now votes for the left, while wealth elite keeps voting for the right (though less and less so) (Brahmin Left vs Merchant Right)
- **Next, other dimensions of social cleavages, in particular in relation to ethnic or religious identity and foreign origins, can play a central role, in a way that can vary a lot across societies and over time.**

**POLITICAL
CLEAVAGES
AND
SOCIAL
INEQUALITIES**

A Study of Fifty Democracies, 1948–2020

EDITED BY

AMORY GETHIN

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THOMAS PIKETTY

2021

**A
HISTORY
OF
POLITICAL
CONFLICT**

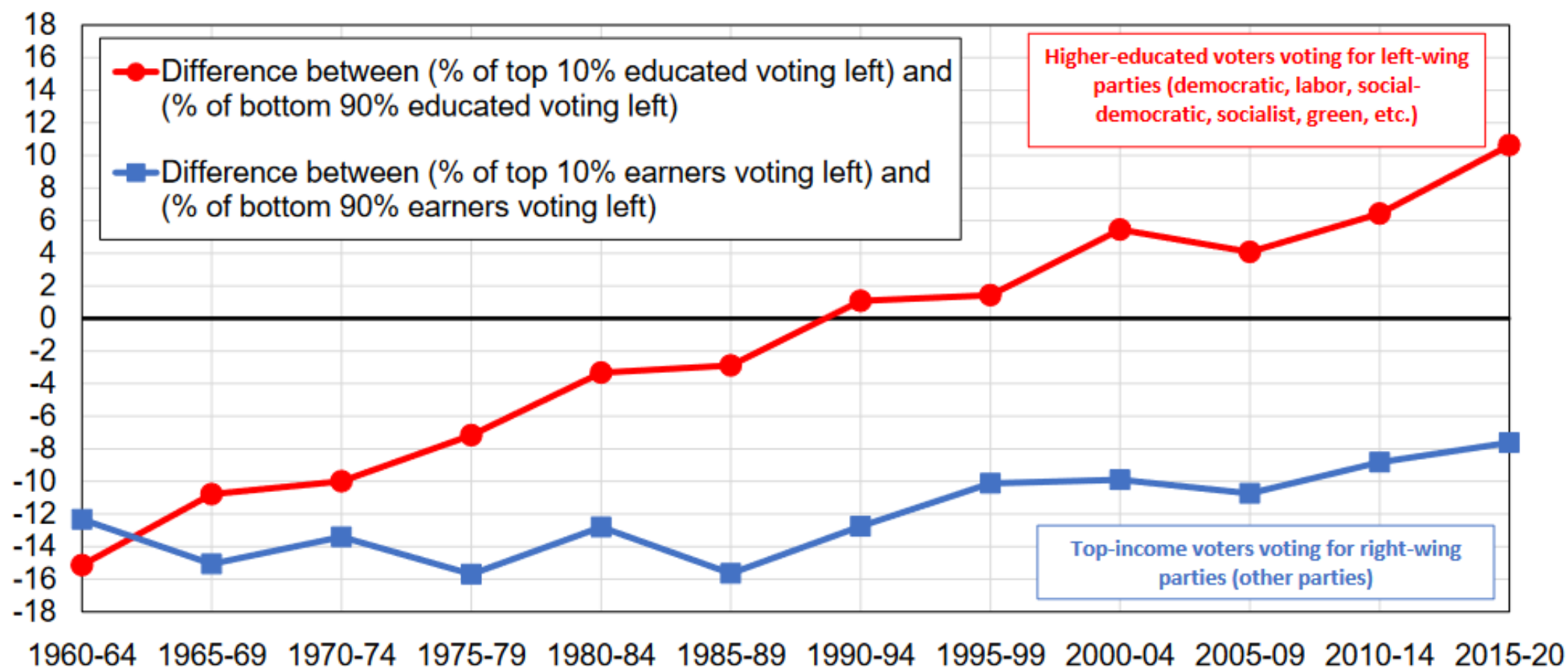
**ELECTIONS &
SOCIAL INEQUALITIES
IN FRANCE, 1789–2022**

**JULIA CAGÉ
THOMAS PIKETTY**

TRANSLATED BY STEVEN RENDALL

2025

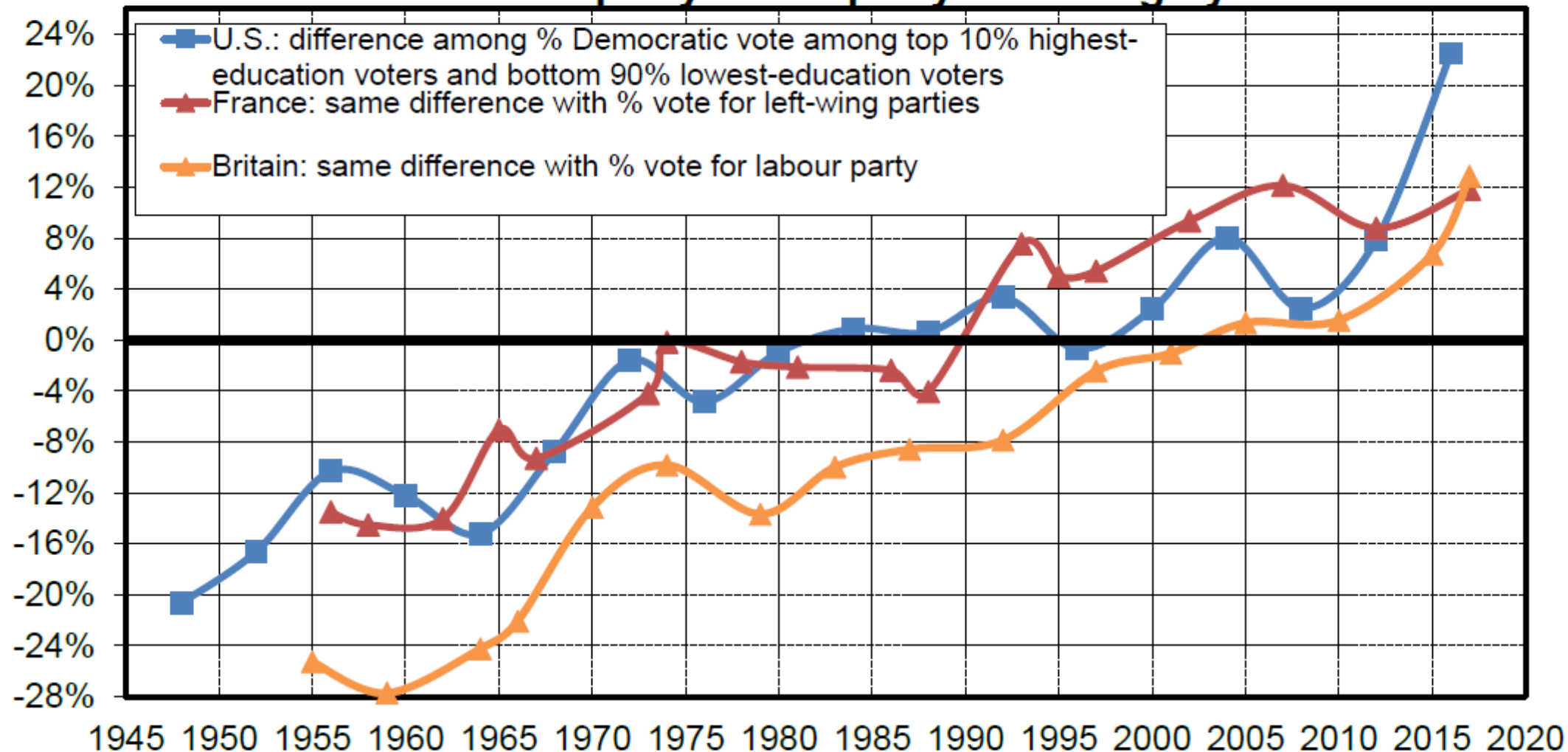
Figure 1 - The emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies



Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

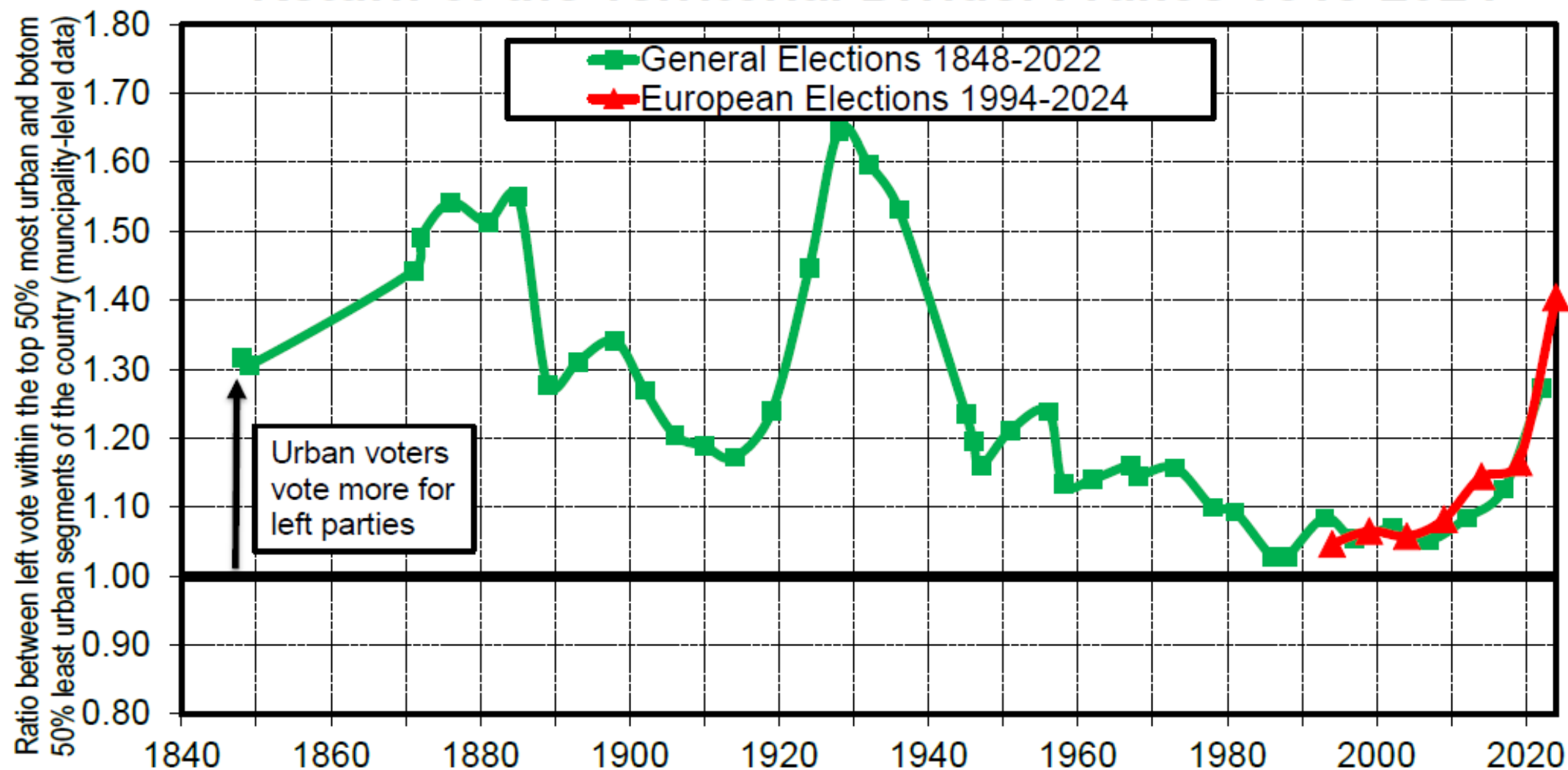
Note: in the 1960s, both higher-educated and high-income voters were less likely to vote for left-wing (democratic / labor / social-democratic / socialist / green) parties than lower-educated and low-income voters by more than 10 percentage points. The left vote has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rise to a "multi-elite party system". Figures correspond to five-year averages for Australia, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the US. Estimates control for income/education, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

The electoral left in Europe & the US, 1945-2020: from the workers' party to the party of the highly educated



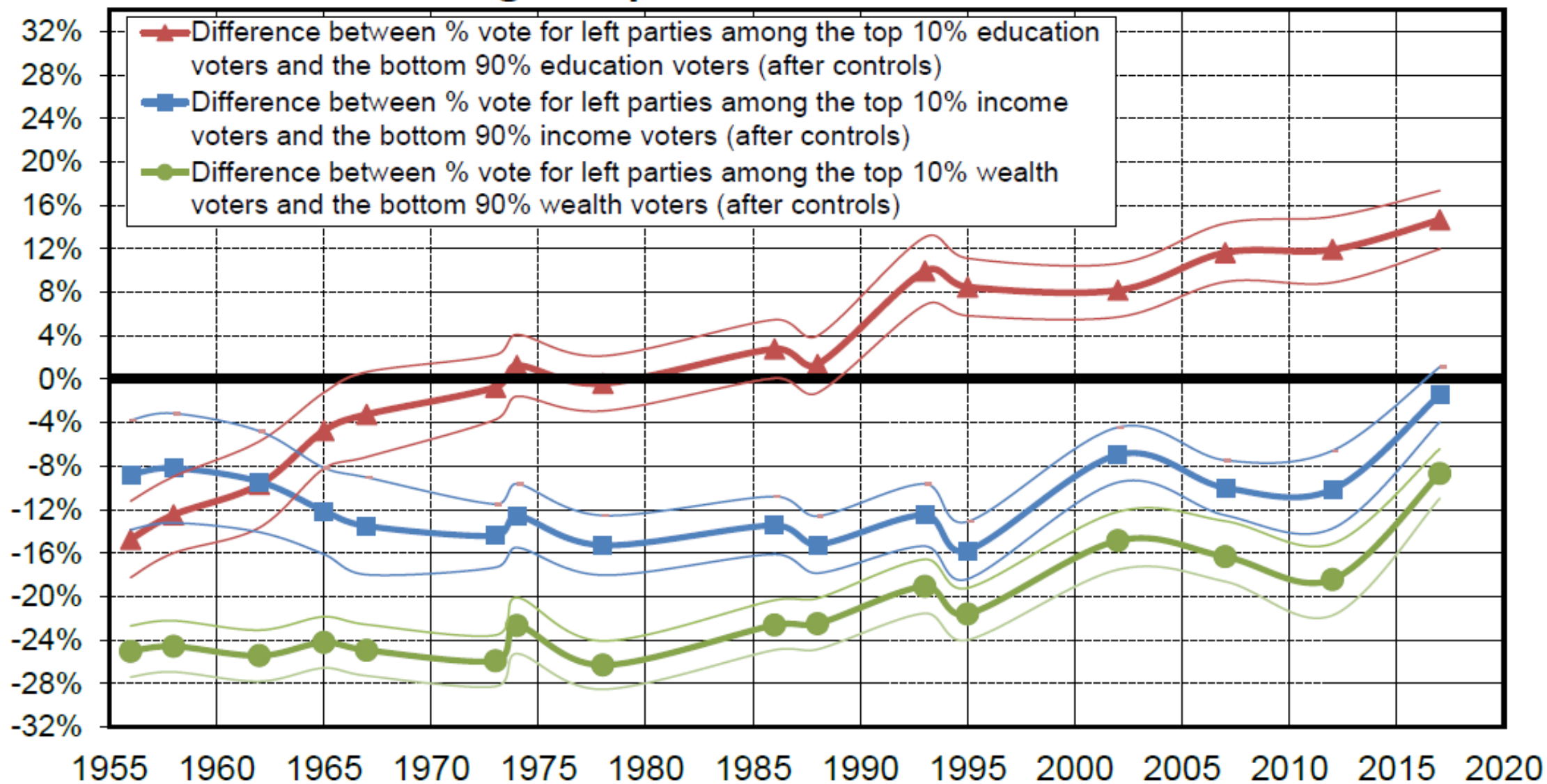
Interpretation. During the 1950-1970 period, the vote for the democratic party in the U.S., left-wing parties in France (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) in France and the labour party in Britain was associated with the voters with the lowest educational diplomas; in the 1990-2010 period it became associated with the voters with the highest education diplomas. The British evolution is slightly lagging behind the French and U.S. evolutions but goes in the same direction. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.13)

Return of the Territorial Divide: France 1848-2024



Interpretation. The territorial divide, as measured by the ratio between left vote share within the top 50% most urban and bottom 50% least urban segments of the country (based on municipality-level voting data and conurbation size), rose enormously in recent decades. It is now back to the levels observed at the end of the 19th century and during interwar period. **Sources & series:** see unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

Social cleavages & political conflict in France 1955-2020

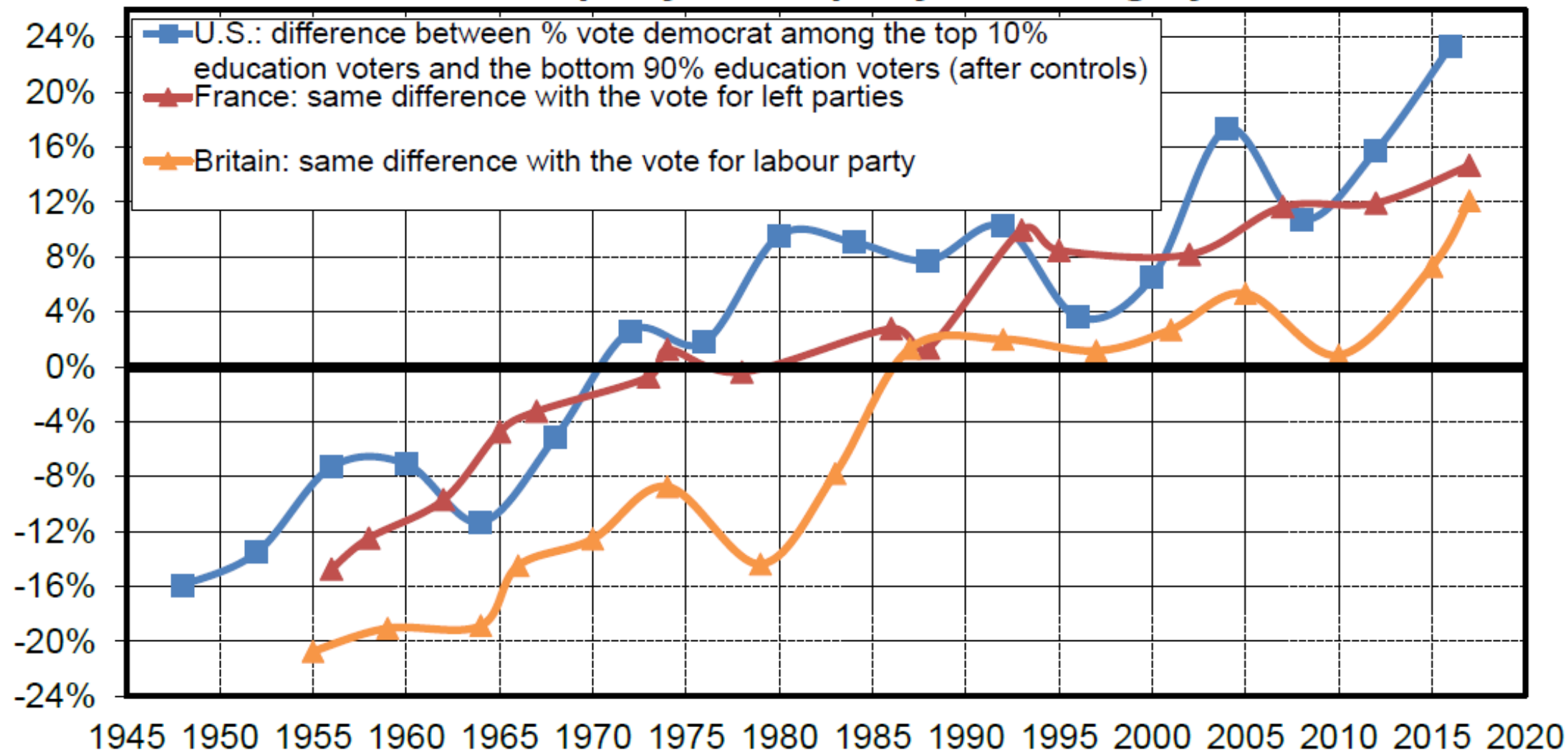


Interpretation. In the 1950-1970 period, the vote for left-wing parties (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) was associated to voters with the lowest education degrees and the lowest levels of income and wealth; in the 1990-2010 period, it became associated to the voters with the highest education degrees. **Note:** fine lines indicate 90% confidence intervals. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.1).

The electoral left: from workers' party to the party of the educated

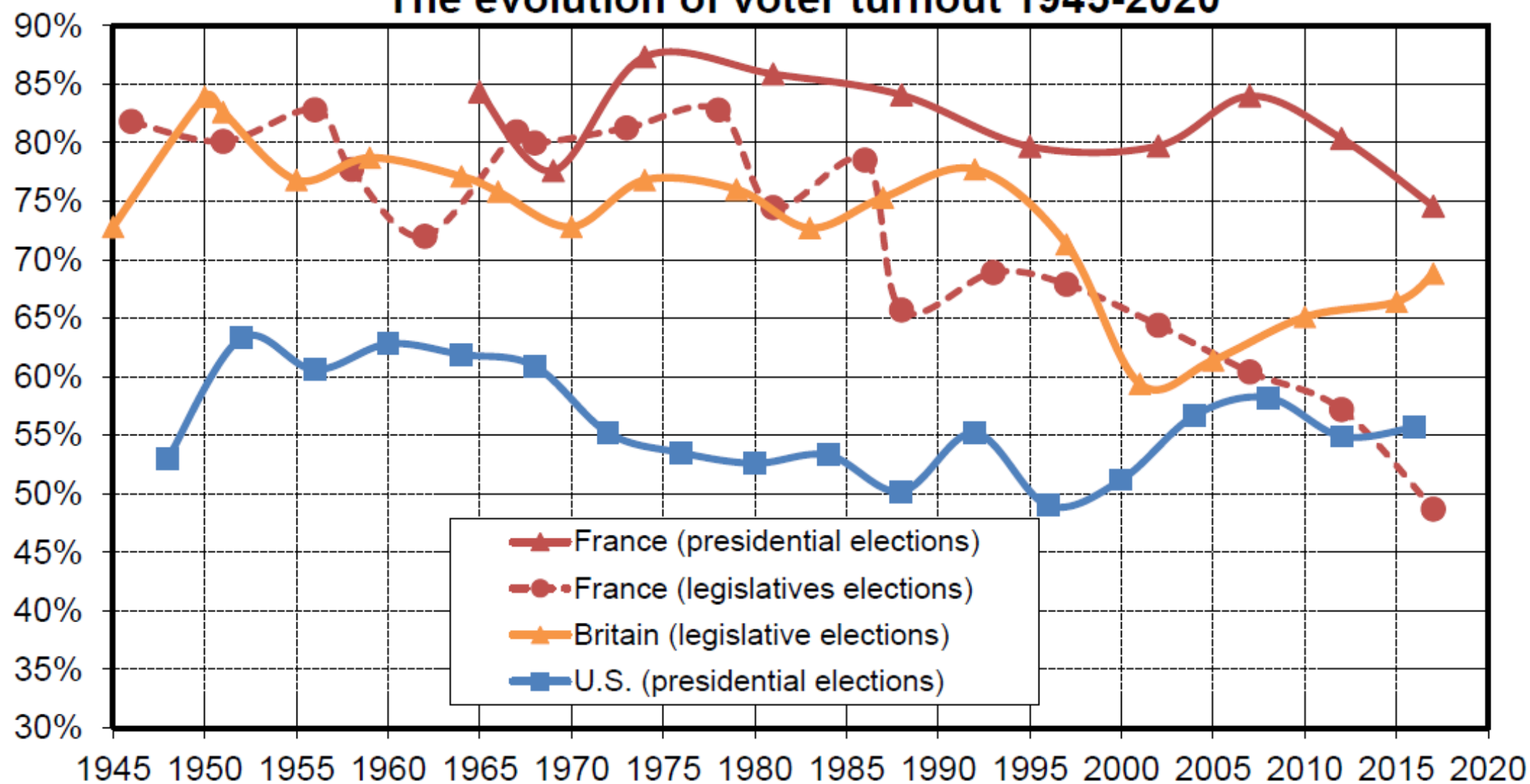
- **Key transformation over the 1950-2020 period: a complete reversal of the education cleavage.**
- I.e. in 1950-1970 period, the less educated voters vote more for the « left » than the more educated. In the 1990-2020 period, it is the opposite.
- Very gradual change happening in all Western electoral democracies over the 1980-2020 period (in particular US, UK, France), in spite of the many historical differences in party systems
- **At the same time, one observes in recent decades a fall in electoral participation among lower socioeconomic groups**

Electoral left in Europe and the U.S. 1945-2020: from the workers' party to the party of the highly educated



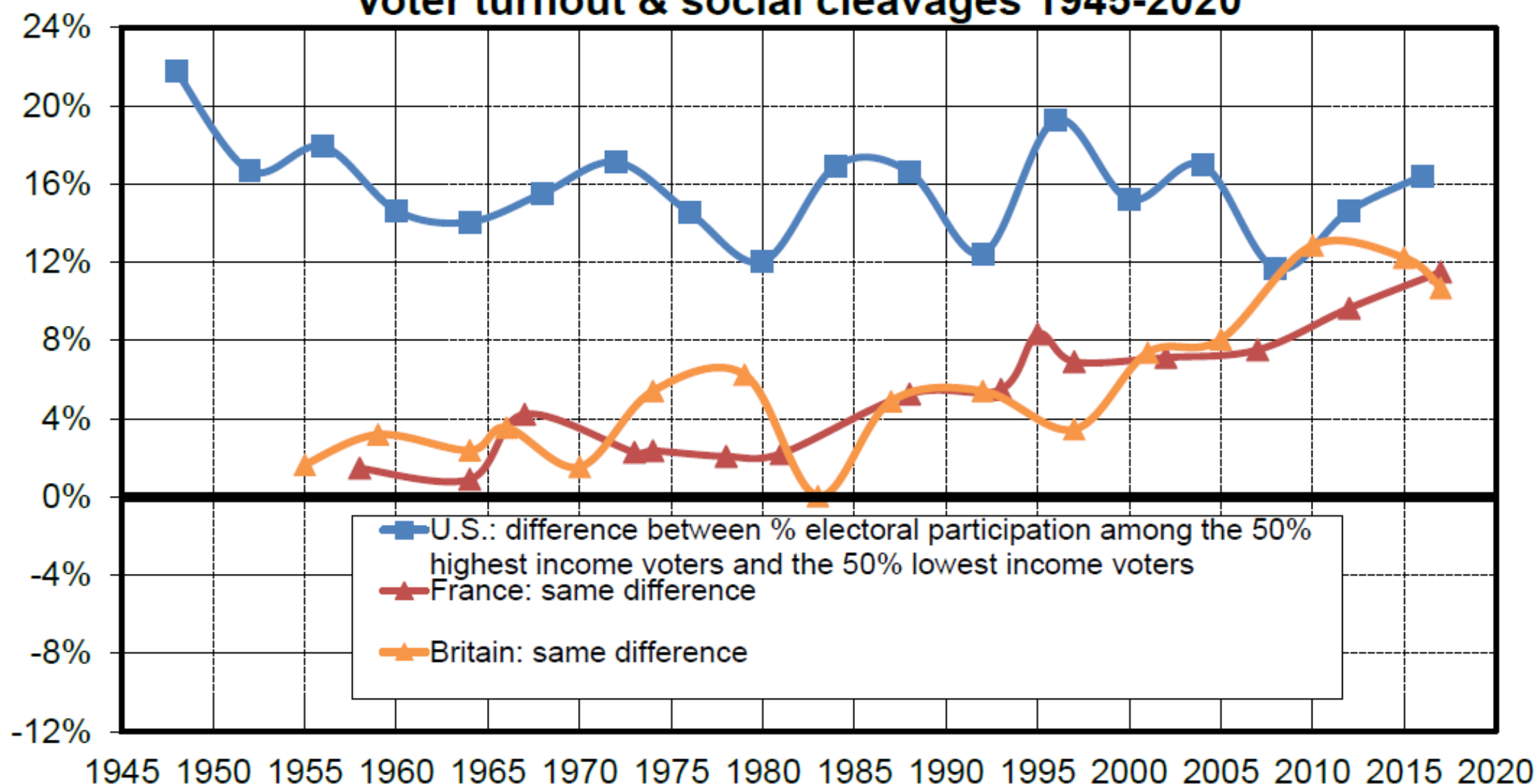
Interpretation. In the 1950-1970 period, the vote for the democrats in the U.S., left-wing parties (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) in France and the labour party in Britain was associated to voters with the lowest education; in the 1990-2010 period, it became associated to the voters with the highest education degrees. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.2).

The evolution of voter turnout 1945-2020



Interpretation. Voter turnout has been relatively stable around 80%-85% in French presidential elections since 1965 (with however a small fall to 75% in 2017). The fall has been much stronger in legislative elections, which was around 80% until the 1970s, and was less than 50% in 2017. Electoral participation dropped in Britain before rising again since 2010. In the U.S., it has generally fluctuated around 50%-60%. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.7).

Voter turnout & social cleavages 1945-2020



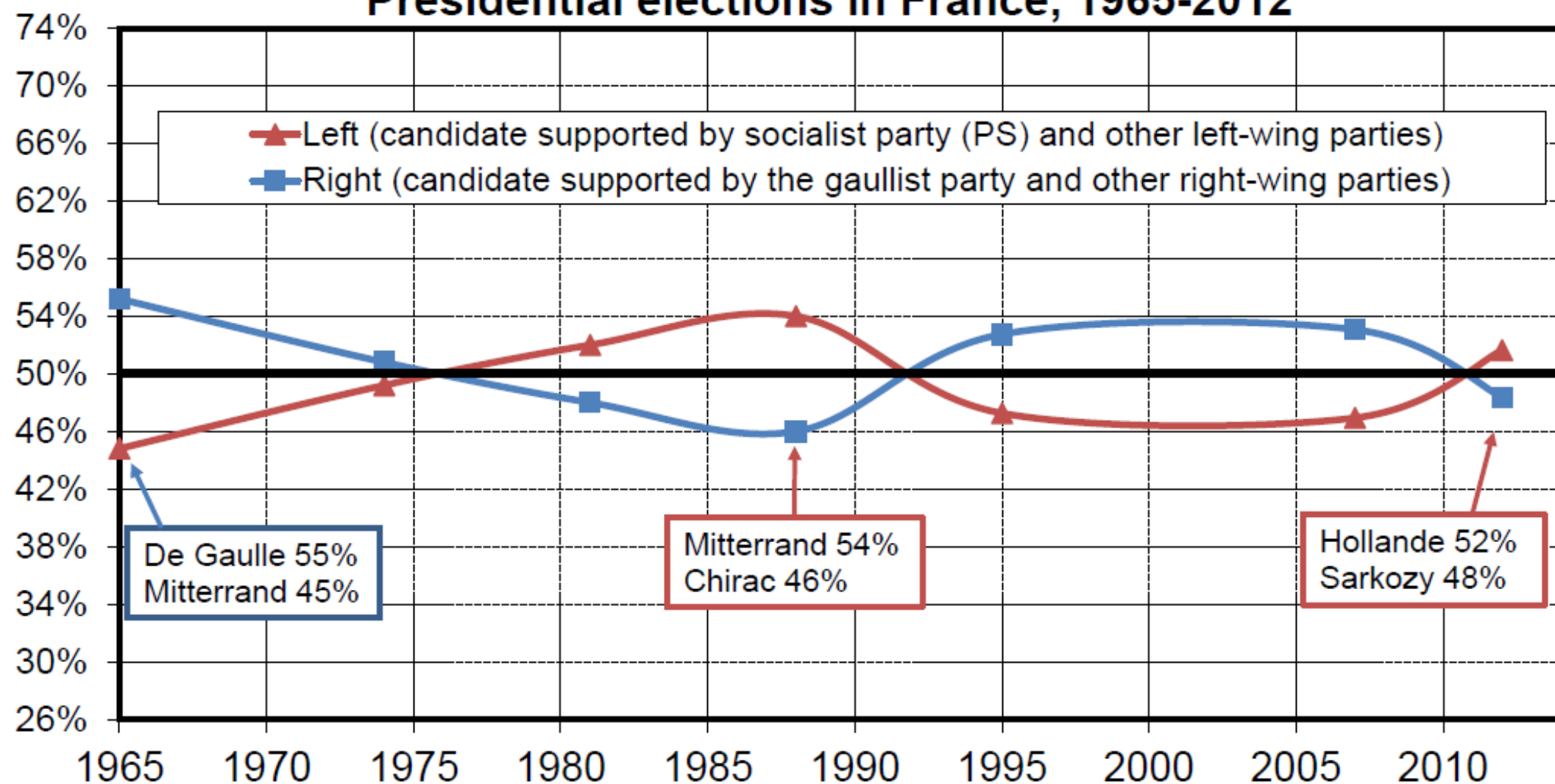
Interpretation. During the 1950-1980 period, electoral participation in France and Britain was at most 2%-3% higher among the 50% highest income voters than among the 50% lowest income voters. This gap rose significantly since the 1980s and reached 10%-12% in the 2010s, thereby approaching the levels historically observed in the U.S. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.8).

- **Why did lower socioeconomic groups stop voting for the « left »?**
- US-centered explanation: « poor white flight » away from the Democrats following the Civil Rights movement. I.e. the poor racists abandoned the left.
- Problem with this explanation: the same gradual evolution happened in Europe, even though there was no Civil Rights movement in the 1960s
- Potentially more convincing: **« left » parties gradually changed their policy platform & abandoned lower socioeconomic groups.** Or, to put it in a more positive way, they were unable to adjust their platform to economic changes.
- **Large and persistent inequalities in access to education.** With the rise of higher education, left parties became the party of the highly educated. Possible explanation: it was easier to design an egalitarian education platform at the time of primary & secondary education than with higher education.
- **Decline in tax progressivity and redistribution since 1980s-1990s:** tax competition, lack of international coordination and financial transparency.
- **Rise of post-colonial identity-based conflict & xenophobic right in Europe & US since 1980s-1990s** reinforced the evolution but was not the primary factor.

The reversal of the education cleavage: the case of France

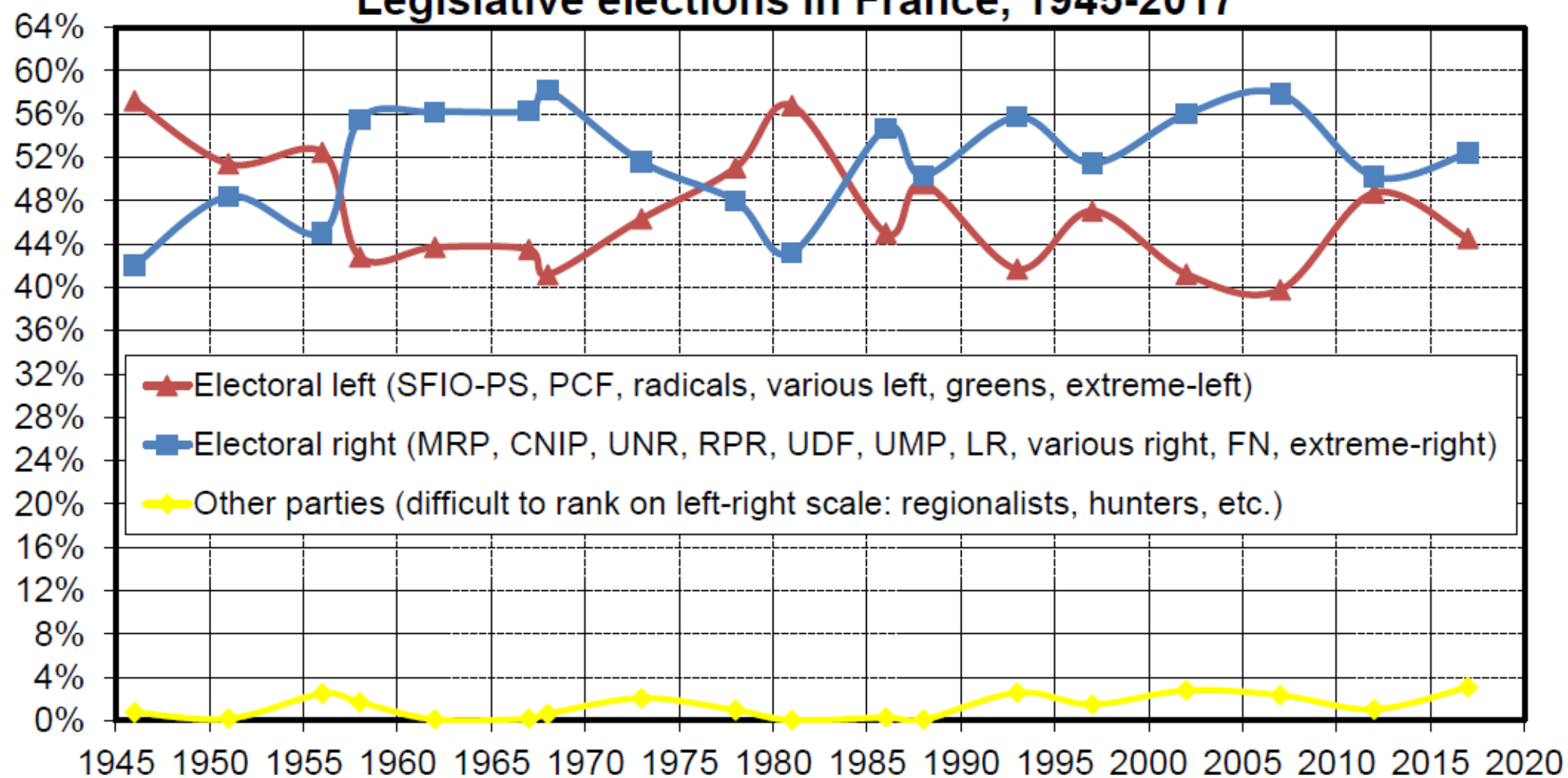
- **Very robust finding**
- True both for presidential and legislative elections
- True all along the primary-secondary-higher education hierarchy
- True before and after controls for other variables: age, gender, income, wealth, etc.

Presidential elections in France, 1965-2012



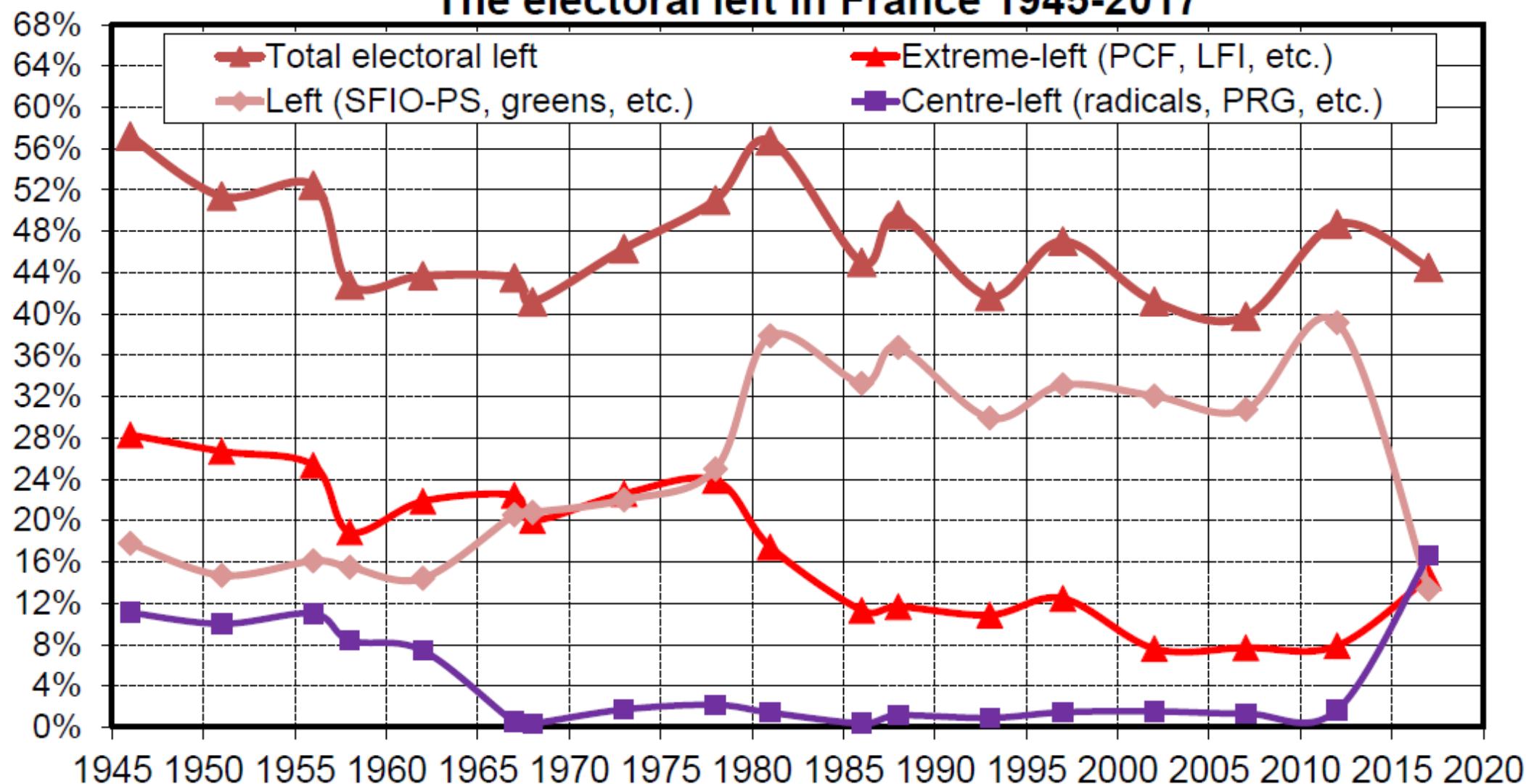
Interpretation. The scores obtained during the second rounds left-right of French presidential elections reported here are the following 1965 (De Gaulle 55%, Mitterrand 45%), 1974 (Giscard 51%, Mitterrand 49%), 1981 (Mitterrand 52%, Giscard 48%), 1988 (Mitterrand 54%, Chirac 46%), 1995 (Chirac 53%, Jospin 47%), 2007 (Sarkozy 53%, Royal 47%), 2012 (Hollande 52%, Sarkozy 48%). Other second rounds (opposing the right, the center and the extreme-right) were not reported here: 1969 (Pompidou 58%, Poher 42%), 2002 (Chirac 82%, Le Pen 18%), 2017 (Macron 66%, Le Pen 34%). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.6).

Legislative elections in France, 1945-2017



Interpretation. The scores obtained by left-wing parties (all parties from the center-left, left and extreme-left) and right-wing parties (all parties from center-right, right and extreme-right combined) have oscillated between 40% and 58% of the votes in the first rounds of legislative elections conducted in France over the 1945-2017 period. **Note:** the score obtained by the LREM-MODEM coalition in 2017 (32% of votes) was divided 50-50 between center-left and center-right (see figures 14.4-14.5). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.3).

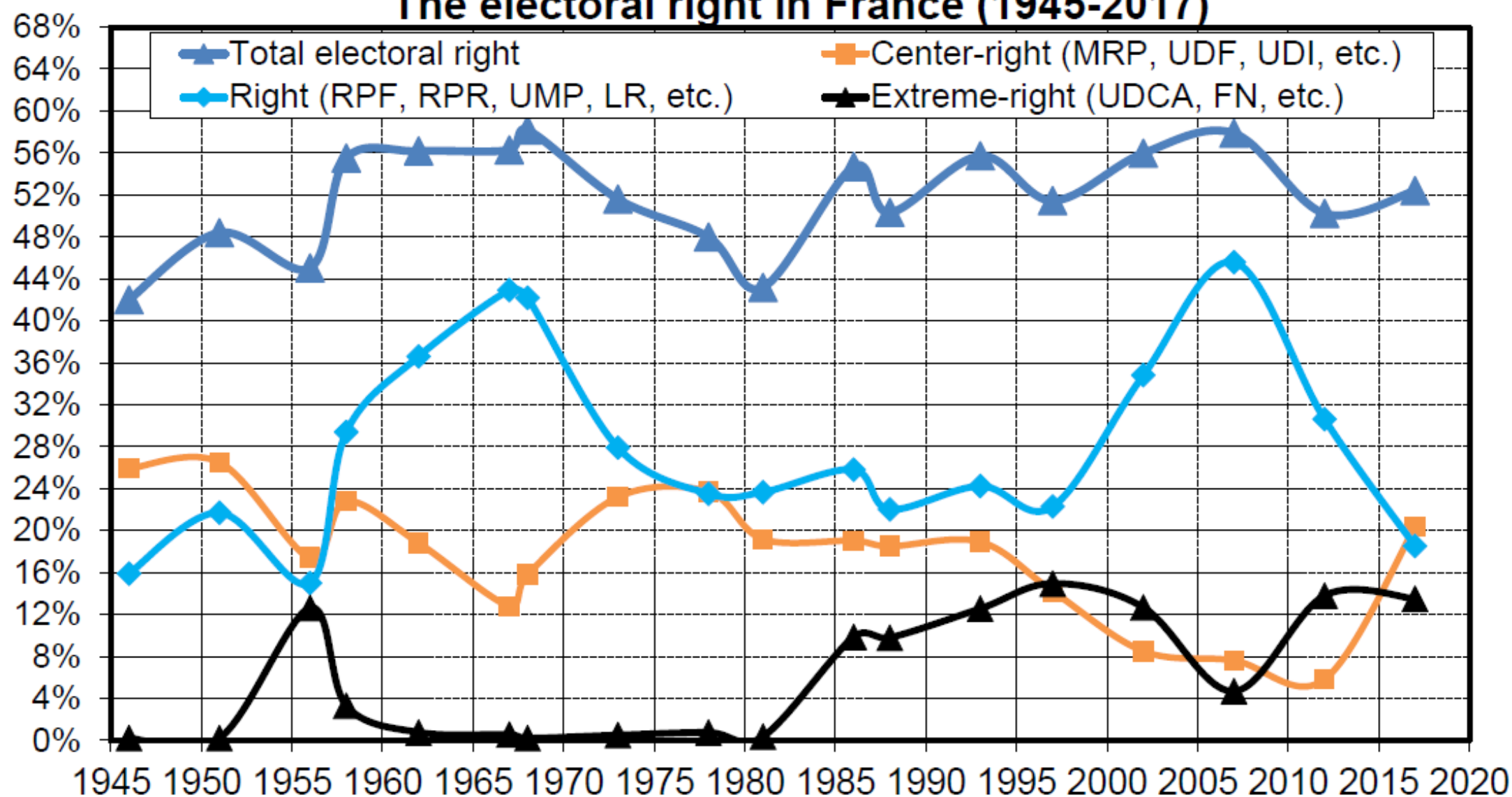
The electoral left in France 1945-2017



Interpretation. The score obtained by left-wing parties (socialistes, communistes, radicals, greens and other parties from the center-left, left and extreme-left) has oscillated between 40% and 57% of the votes in the first rounds of legislative elections conducted in France over the 1945-2017 period. **Note:** the score obtained by the LREM-MODEM coalition in 2017 (32% of votes) was divided 50-50 between center-left and center-right.

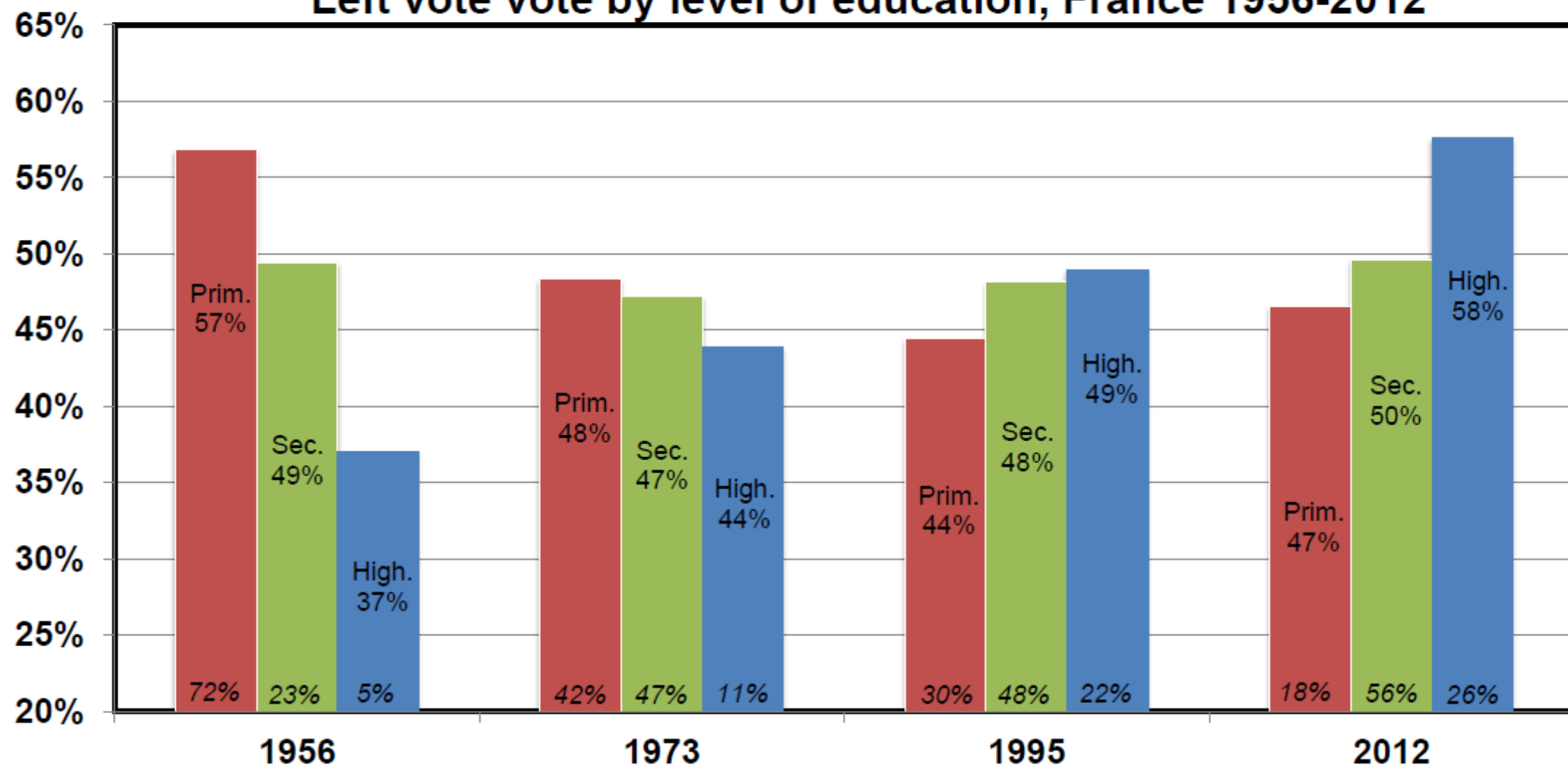
Sources and series: see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.4).

The electoral right in France (1945-2017)



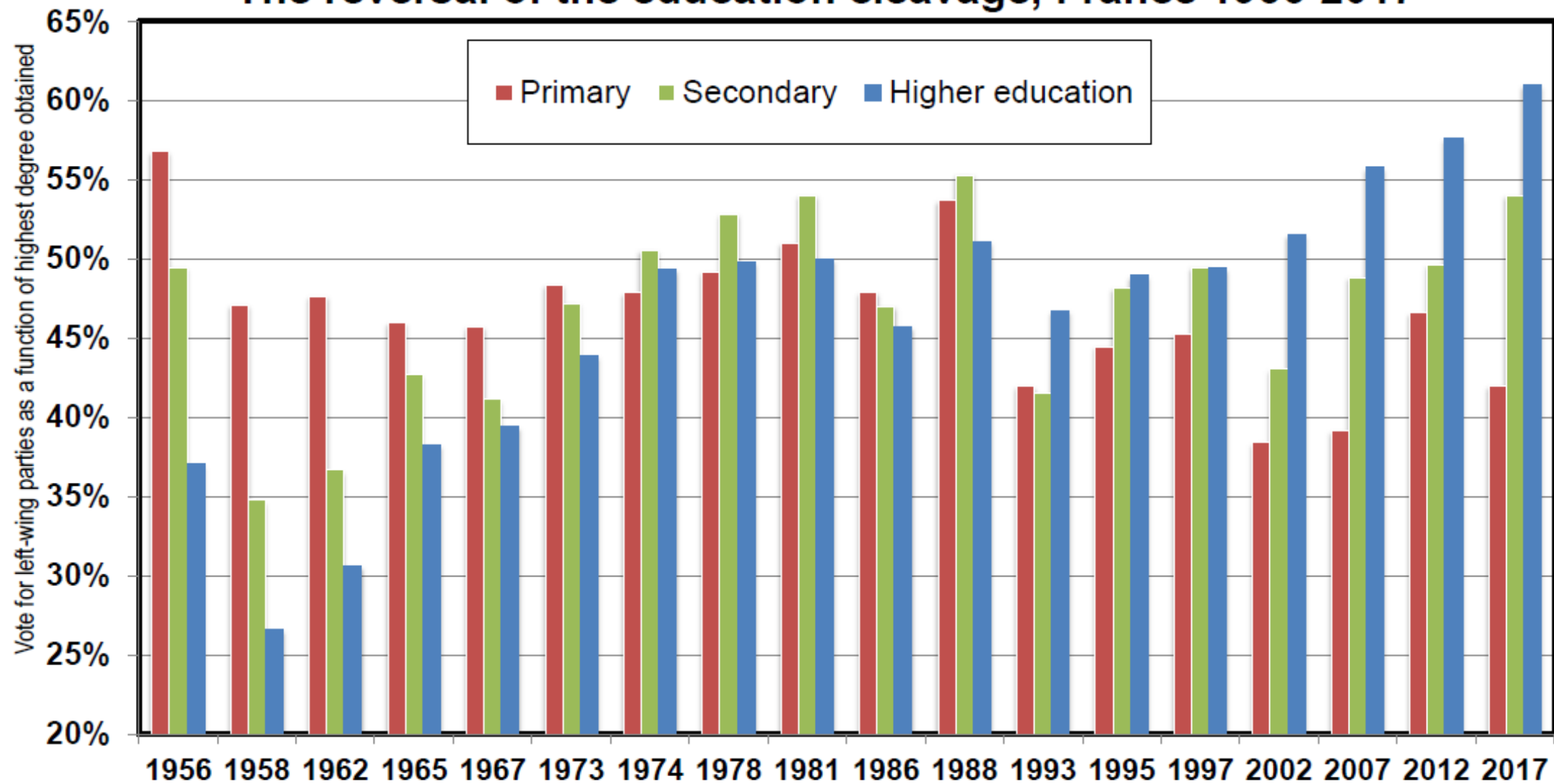
Interpretation. The score obtained by right-wing parties (all parties from the center-right, right and extreme-right combined) varied between 40% and 58% of the votes in the first rounds of legislative elections conducted in France over the 1945-2017 period. **Note:** the score obtained by the LREM-MODEM coalition in 2017 (32% of votes) was divided 50-50 between center-left and center-right. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.5).

Left vote vote by level of education, France 1956-2012



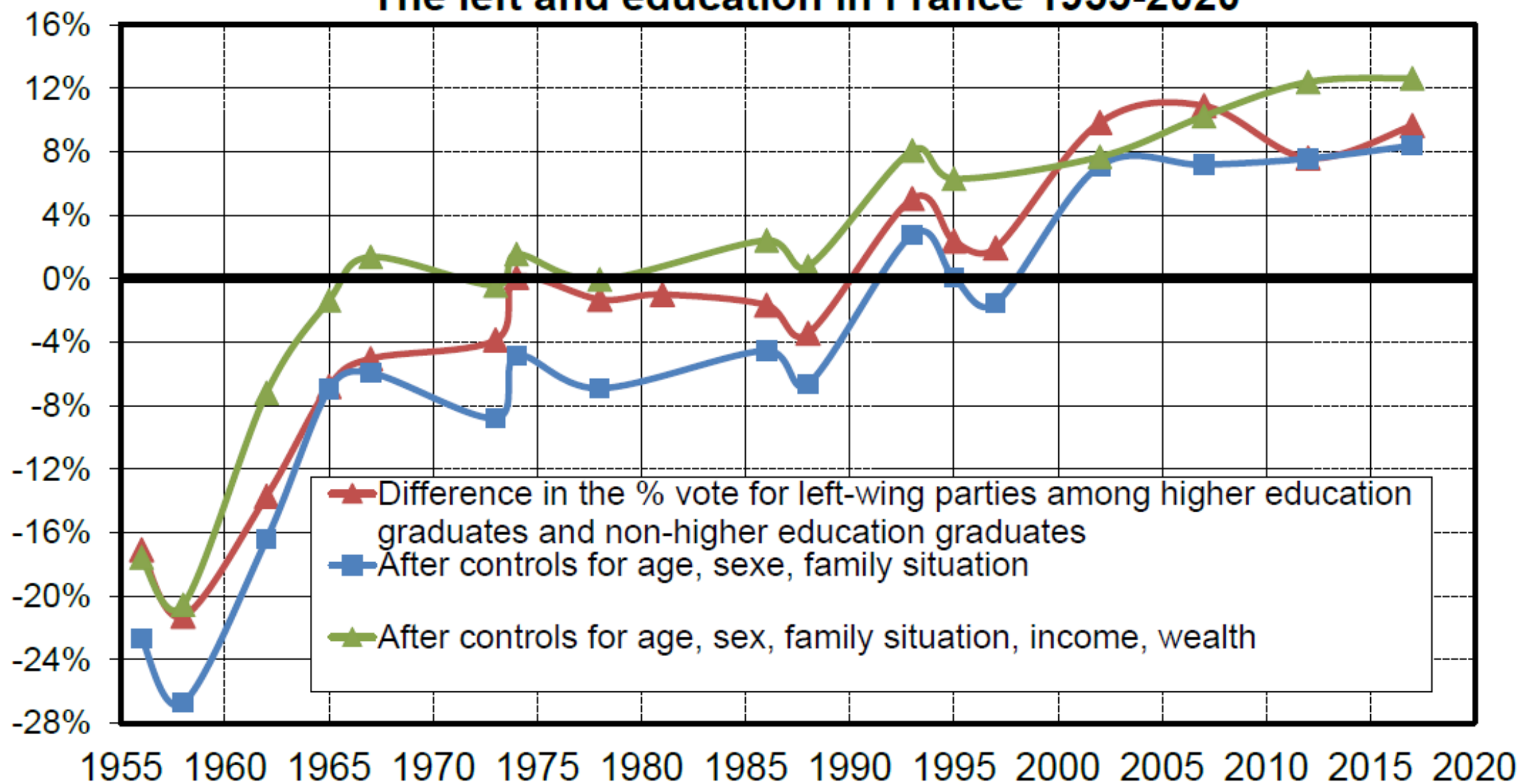
Interpretation. In the 1956 legislative elections, 57% of voters with a primary education or less (certificat d'études primaires) (i.e. 72% of the electorate at the time) voted for left-wing parties (socialists-communists-radicals), vs. 50% of voters with secondary diplomas (23% of the electorate) and 37% of voters with higher education diplomas (5% of the electorate). In the 2012 presidential elections, the education cleavage was totally reversed: the left-wing candidate obtained 58% of the vote in the second round among voters with higher education diplomas, vs 47% of the vote among voters with primary education only. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.9).

The reversal of the education cleavage, France 1956-2017



Interpretation. During the 1950s and 1960s, the vote for left-wing parties (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) was highest among voters with no degree (except primary education degrees), then fell among secondary and higher education degree holders. In the 2000s and 2010s, the pattern is completely reversed. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.10).

The left and education in France 1955-2020

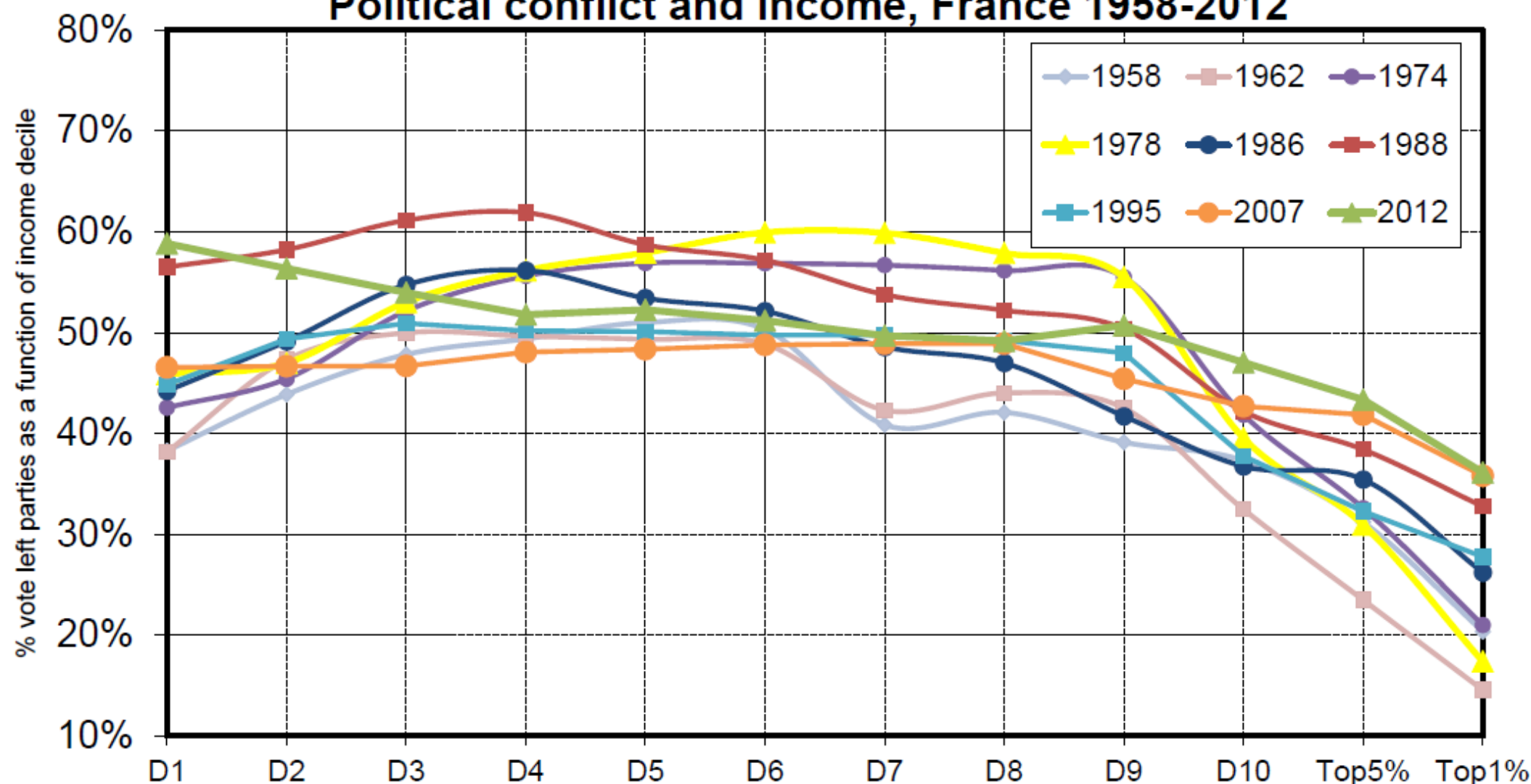


Interpretation. In 1956, left-wing parties (socialists-communists-radicals) obtained a score that was 17 points lower among higher education graduates than among non-higher education graduates; in 2012, this score was 8 points higher among higher education graduates. Controlling for other variables does not affect the trend (only the level). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.11).

Political conflict: education, income, property and identity

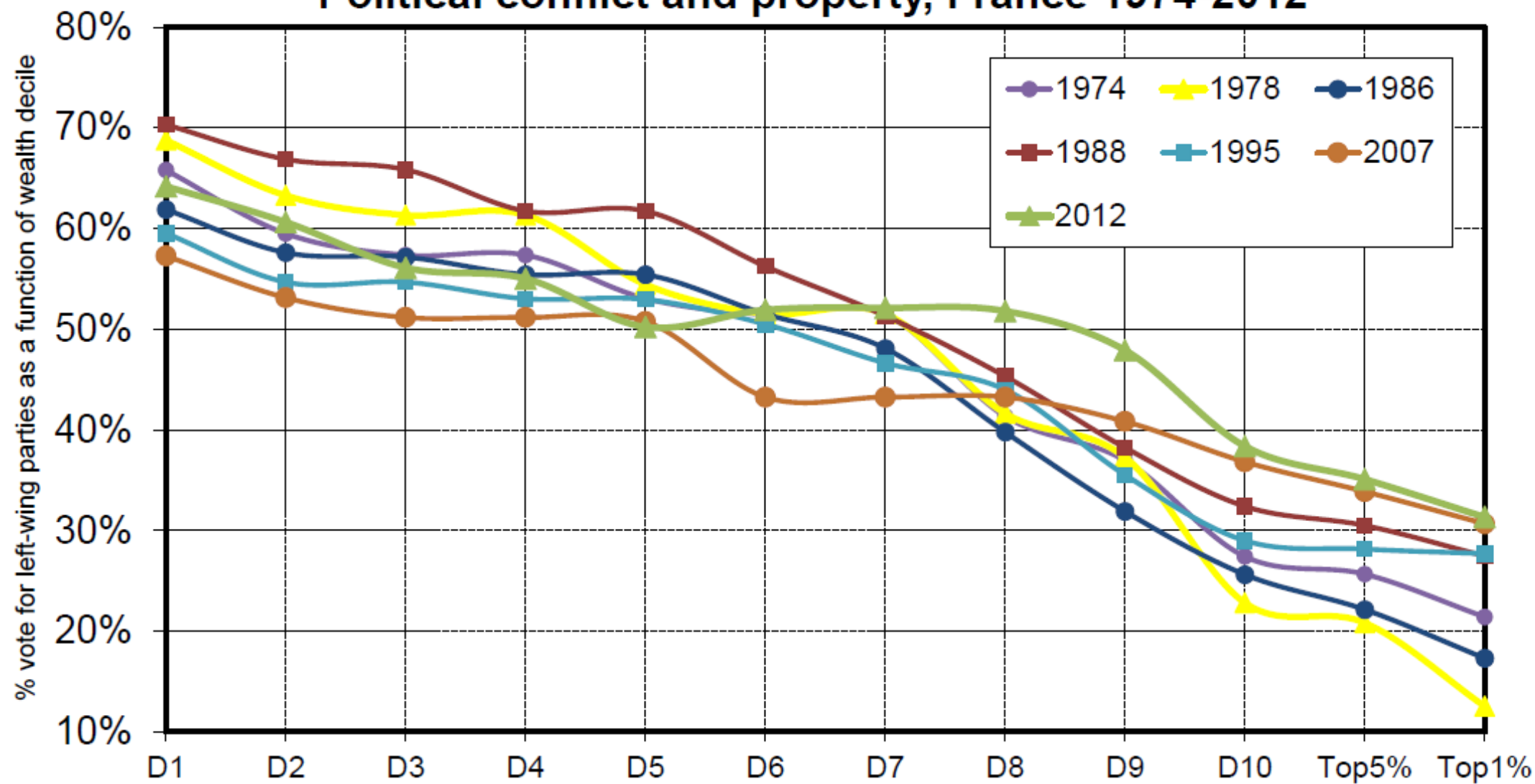
- **Unlike high education groups (which have turned to the left), high wealth groups have kept voting for the right (though less and less so).**
High income groups are between the two: human capital and financial capital have opposite effects and are not fully correlated.
- **New cleavages based upon ethnic-religious identity and foreign origins have started to play a more important role since the 1980s-1990s**

Political conflict and income, France 1958-2012



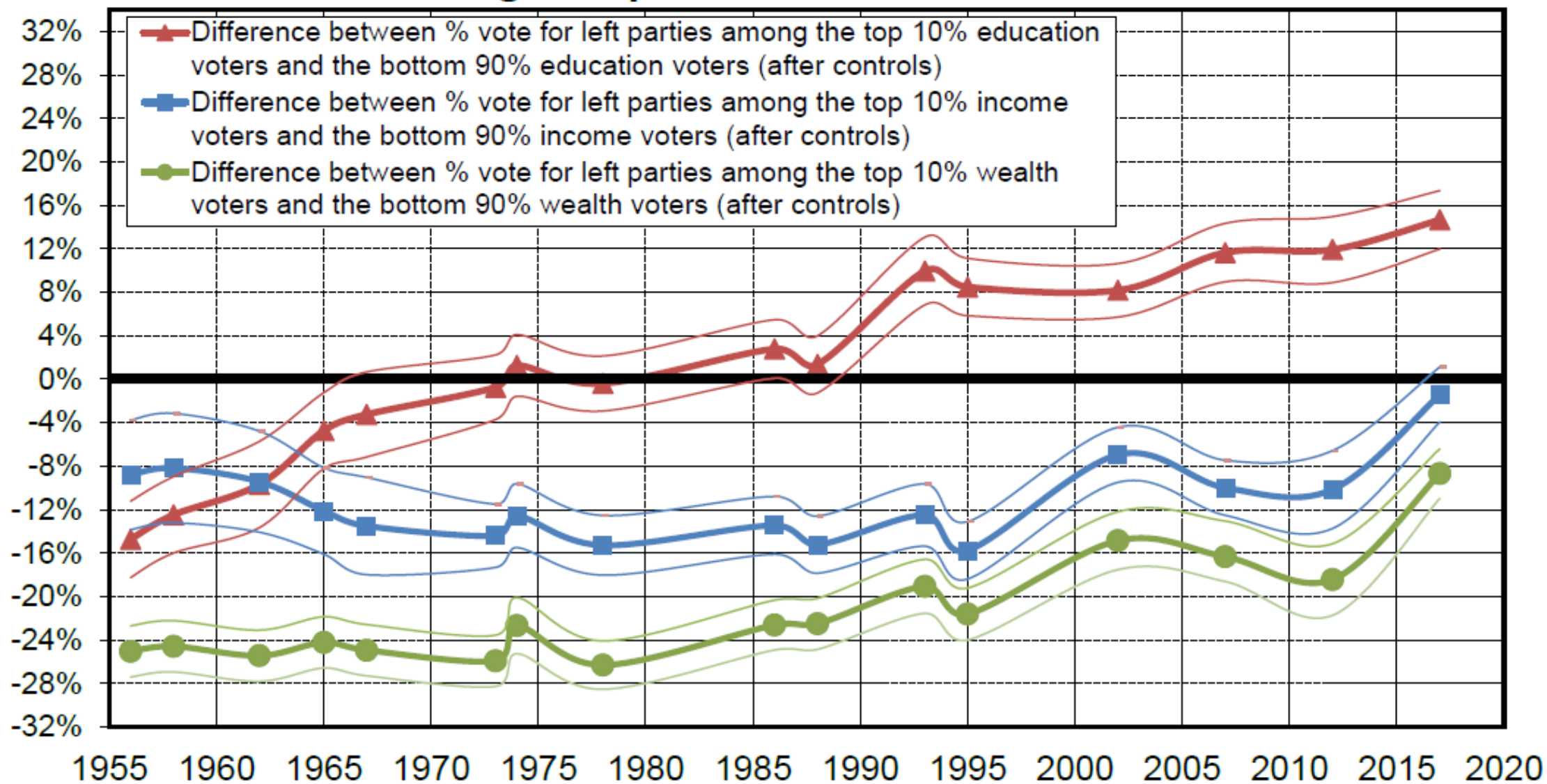
Interpretation. In 1978, left-wing parties (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) obtained 46% of the vote among bottom 10% income voters, 38% among top 10% income voters and 17% among top 1% income voters. Generally speaking, the left vote profile is relatively flat among the bottom 90% income voters, and strongly decreasing among top 10% income voters, especially at the beginning of the period. **Note:** D1 refers to the 10% lowest incomes, D2 to the next 10%,..., and D10 to the 10% highest incomes. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.12).

Political conflict and property, France 1974-2012



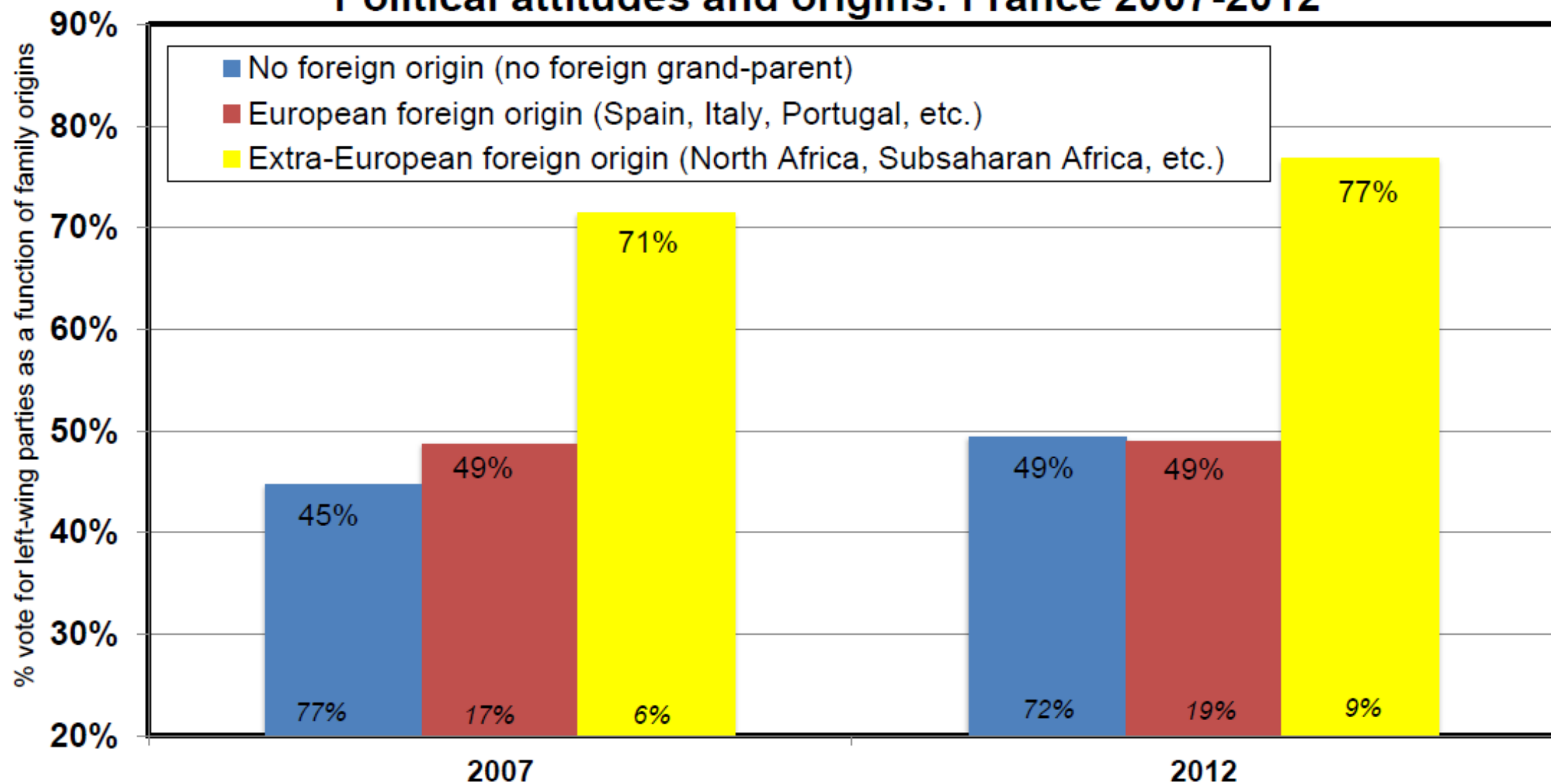
Interpretation. In 1978, left-wing parties (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) obtained 69% of the vote among bottom 10% wealth voters, 23% among top 10% wealth voters and 13% among top 1% wealth voters. Generally speaking, the left vote profile with respect to wealth is sharply declining (much more strongly than with respect to income), especially at the beginning of the period. **Note:** D1 refers to the 10% lowest wealth holders, D2 to the next 10%,..., and D10 to the 10% highest wealth holders. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology. (figure 14.13)

Social cleavages & political conflict in France 1955-2020



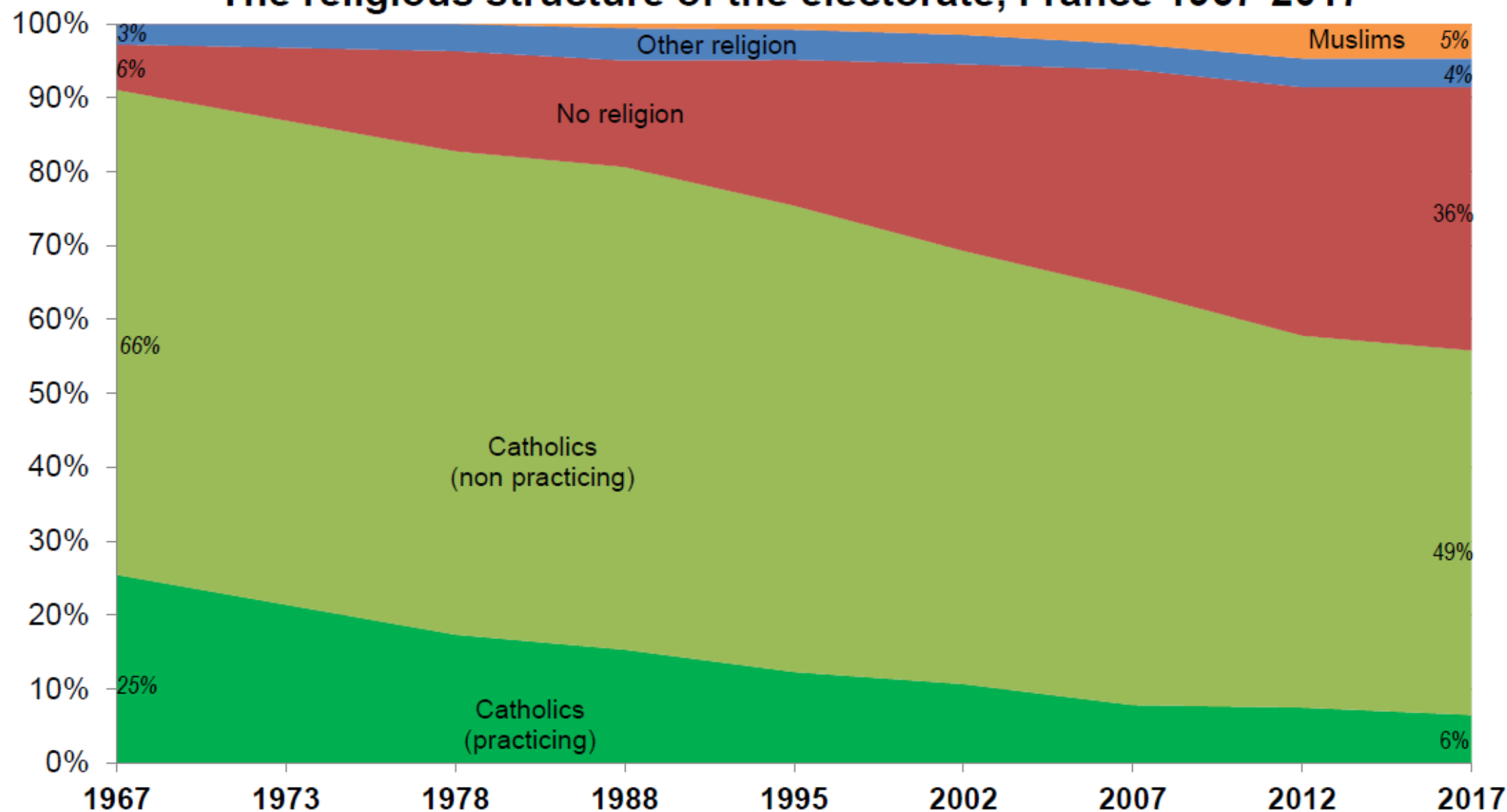
Interpretation. In the 1950-1970 period, the vote for left-wing parties (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) was associated to voters with the lowest education degrees and the lowest levels of income and wealth; in the 1990-2010 period, it became associated to the voters with the highest education degrees. **Note:** fine lines indicate 90% confidence intervals. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.1).

Political attitudes and origins: France 2007-2012



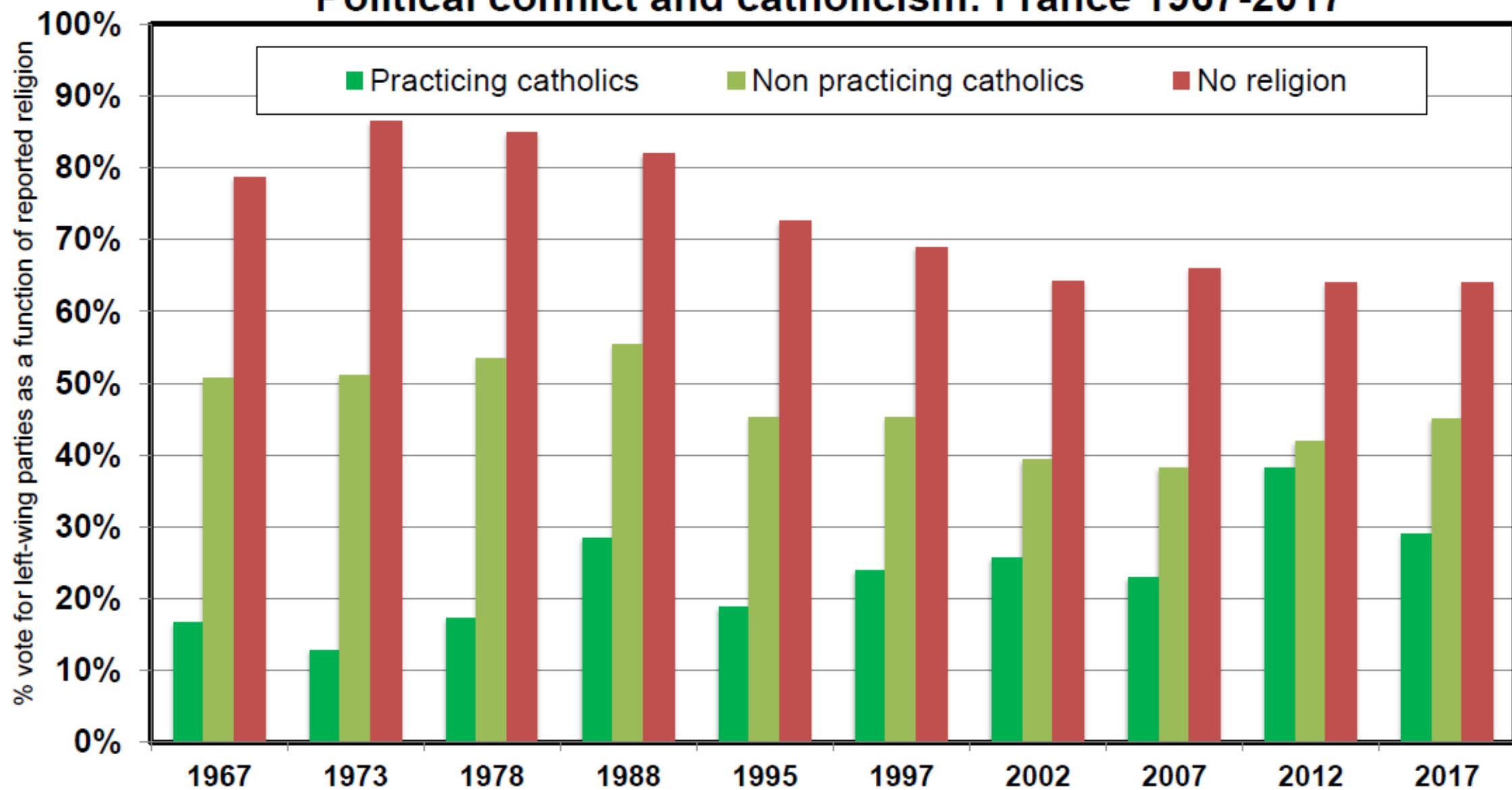
Interpretation. In 2012, the socialist candidate received 49% of the vote among voters with no foreign origin (no foreign grand-parent), 49% of the vote among voters with European foreign origin (in practice mostly Spain, Italy, Portugal) and 77% of the vote among voters with extra-European foreign origins (in practice mostly North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.18).

The religious structure of the electorate, France 1967-2017



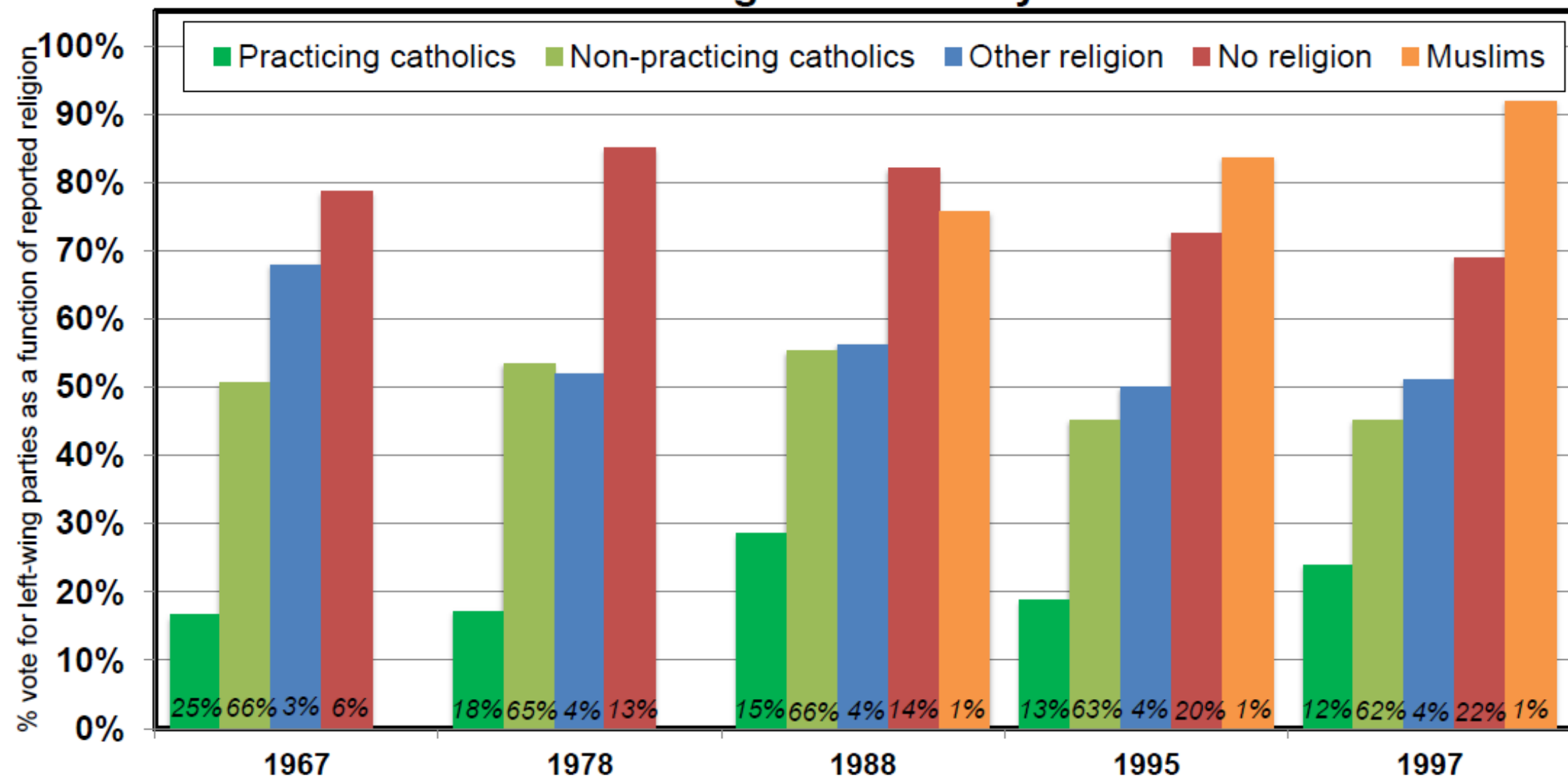
Interpretation. Between 1967 and 2017, the proportion of the electorate reporting to be practicing catholic (going to the church at least once per month) dropped from 25% to 6%. Non practicing catholics dropped from 66% to 49%, those reporting no religion increased from 6% to 36%, other religions (protestantism, judaism, buddhism, etc., except islam) from 3% to 4%, and muslims from less than 1% to about 5% of the electorate. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.14).

Political conflict and catholicism: France 1967-2017



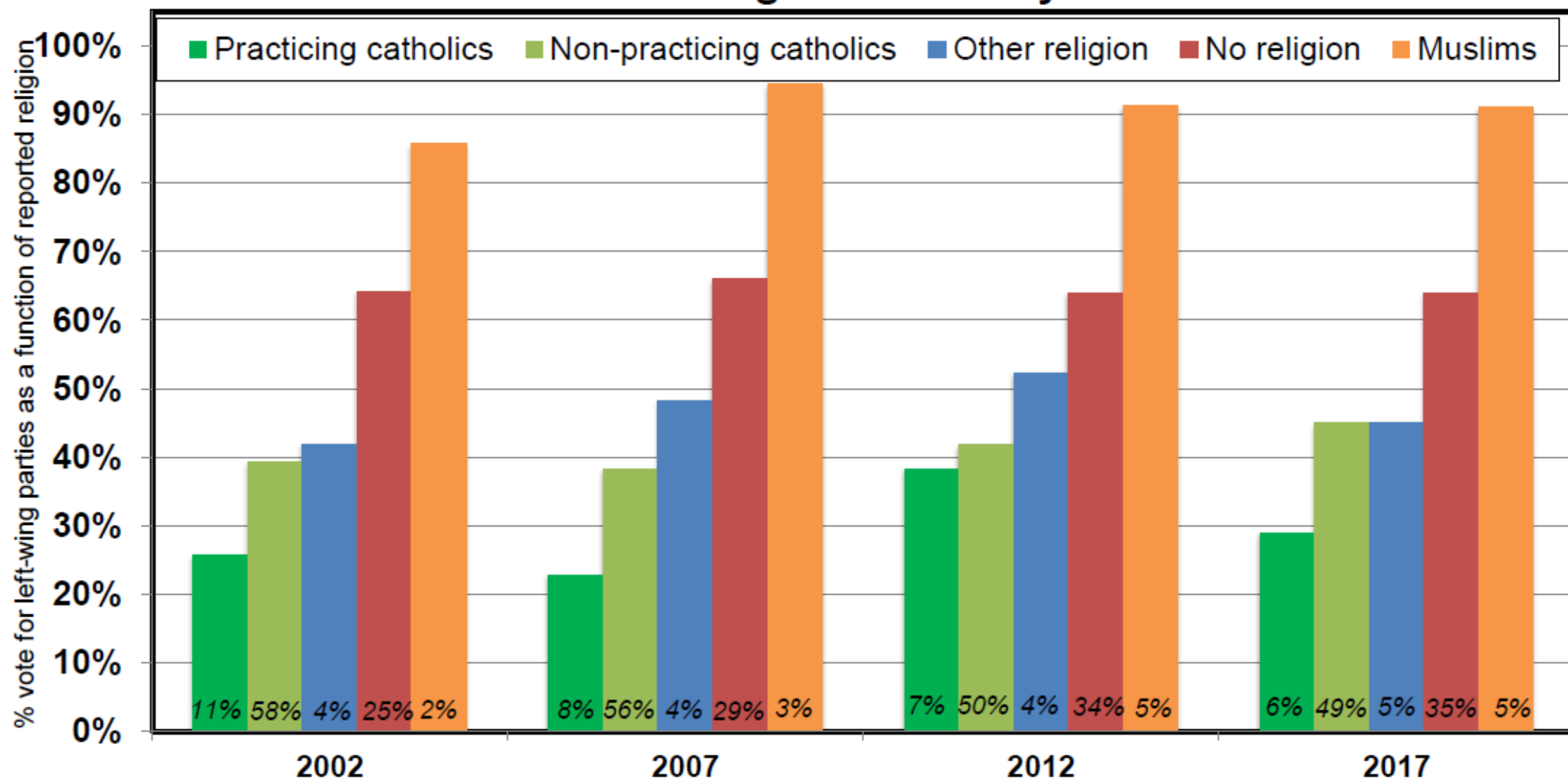
Interpretation. Self-reported practicing and non-practicing catholic voters have always voted less strongly for left-wing parties than voters reporting no religion, but the gap has reduced over time. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.15).

Political conflict & religious diversity: France 1967-1997



Interpretation. Self-reported muslim voters vote significantly more for left-wing parties than voters with no religion beginning in 1997. Before 1988, muslims were classified with other religions (protestantism, judaism, buddhism, hinduism, etc.), and made less than 1% of the electorate. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.16).

Political conflict & religious diversity: France 2002-2017



Interpretation. About 80%-90% of self-reported muslim voters vote for left-wing parties in all elections in France since the 1990s. Before 1988, muslims were classified with other religions (protestantism, judaism, buddhism, hinduism, etc.), and made less than 1% of the electorate. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.17).

Borders and property: the four-way electorate in France

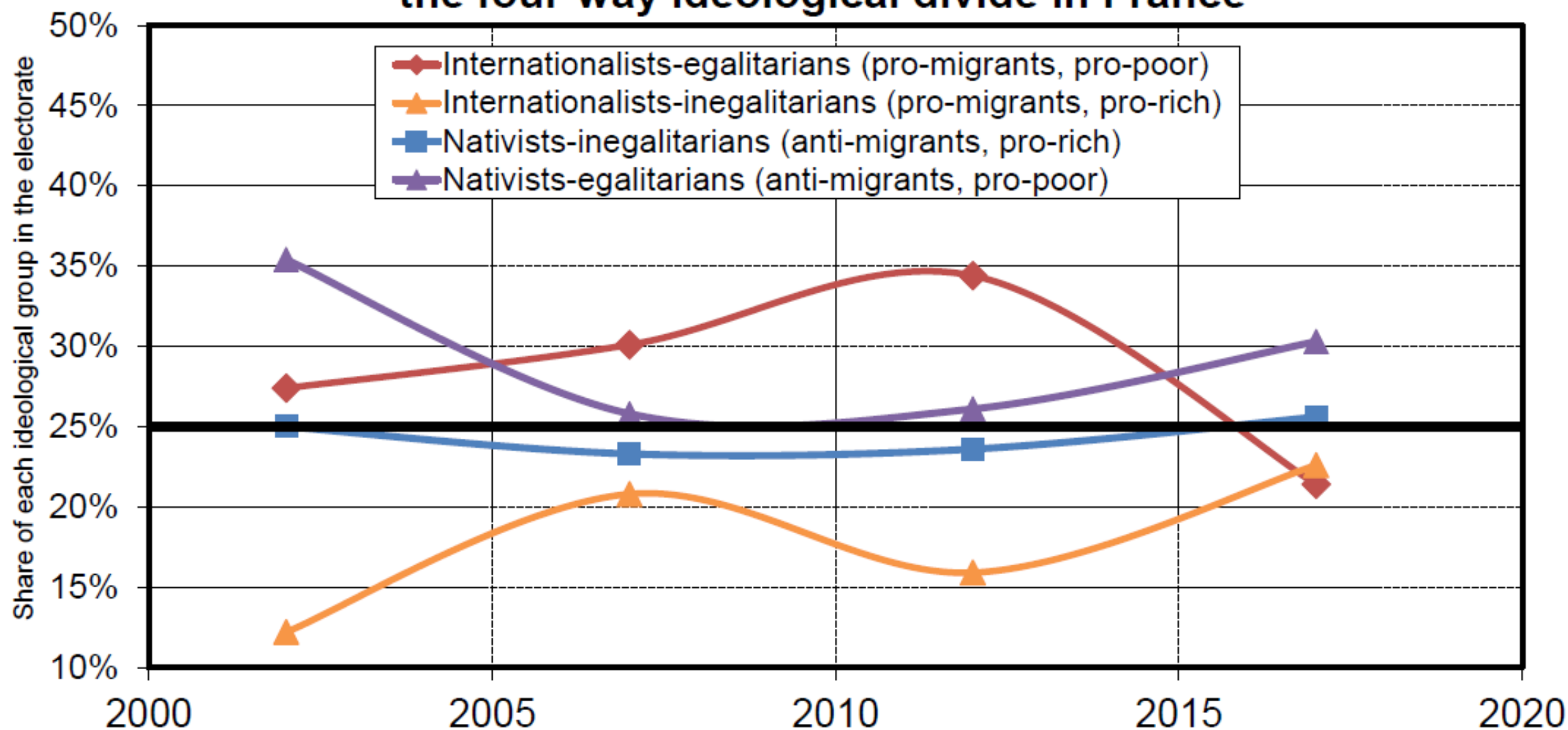
- The current political conflict in France can be summarized with two main dimensions: **support or hostility to redistribution** between rich and poor, and **support or hostility to migrants**.
- I.e. conflict about wealth vs conflict about borders.
- The striking point is that these two dimensions have little correlation in the distribution of voters preferences, so that in effect the electorate is divided between four quarters of comparable size.
- → **very unstable situation** (as exemplified by first round of presidential election 2017: very tight race between four candidates)
- **Future evolution will depend on which of the two dimensions will appear to matter the most**: if redistribution is considered to be impossible (e.g. due to tax competition), then the conflict will be mostly about borders

Politico-ideological conflict in France 2017: an electorate divided into four quarters

Presidential election 2017 (1 st round)	All voters	Melenchon /Hamon (vote "egalitarian-internationalist")	Macron (vote "inegalitarian-internationalist")	Fillon (vote "inegalitarian-nativist")	Le Pen /Dupont-Aignan (vote "egalitarian-nativist")
	100%	28%	24%	22%	26%
"There are too many migrants in France" (% agree)	56%	32%	39%	62%	91%
"In order to achieve social justice, one should take to the rich and give to the poor" (% agree)	51%	67%	46%	27%	61%
Higher education graduates (%)	33%	39%	41%	36%	16%
Monthly income > 4000€ (%)	15%	9%	20%	26%	8%
Home owners (%)	60%	48%	69%	78%	51%

Interpretation. In 2017, 28% of first-round voters voted for Melenchon-Hamon; 32% of them considered that there are too many migrants in France (vs 56% on average among all voters) and 67% that we should take from the rich and give to the poor (vs 51% on average). In that sense this electorate is ideologically "egalitarian-internationalist", while the Macron electorate is "inegalitarian-internationalist" (pro-migrants, pro-rich), the Fillon electorate "inegalitarian-nativist" (anti-migrants, pro-rich) and the Le Pen/Dupont Aignan electorate "egalitarian-nativist" (anti-migrants, pro-poor). **Note:** the votes for Arthaud/Poutou (2%) and Asselineau/Cheminade/Lassalle (2%) were added to Melenchon/Hamon and Fillon. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (table 14.1).

Borders and property: the four-way ideological divide in France

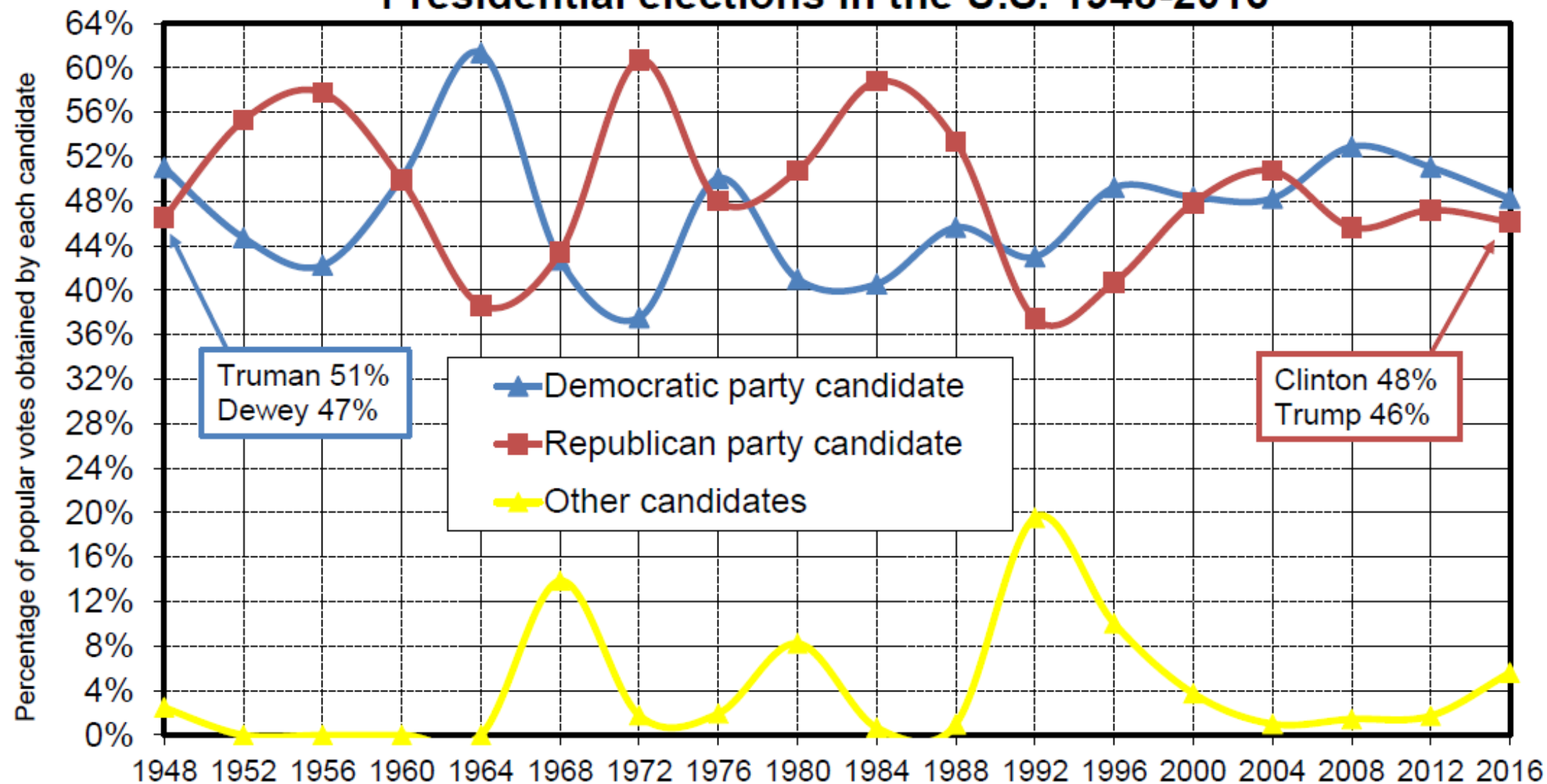


Interpretation. In 2017, 21% of voters can be classified as "internationalists-egalitarians" (they consider that there are not too many migrants and that inequalities between the rich and the poor ought to be reduced); 26% as "nativists-inegalitarians" (they consider that there are too many migrants and that there is no need to reduce the inequalities between the rich and the poor); 23% as "internationalists-inegalitarians" (pro-migrants, pro-rich) and 30% as "nativists-egalitarians" (anti-migrants, pro-poor). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.19).

Changing political cleavages in the United States

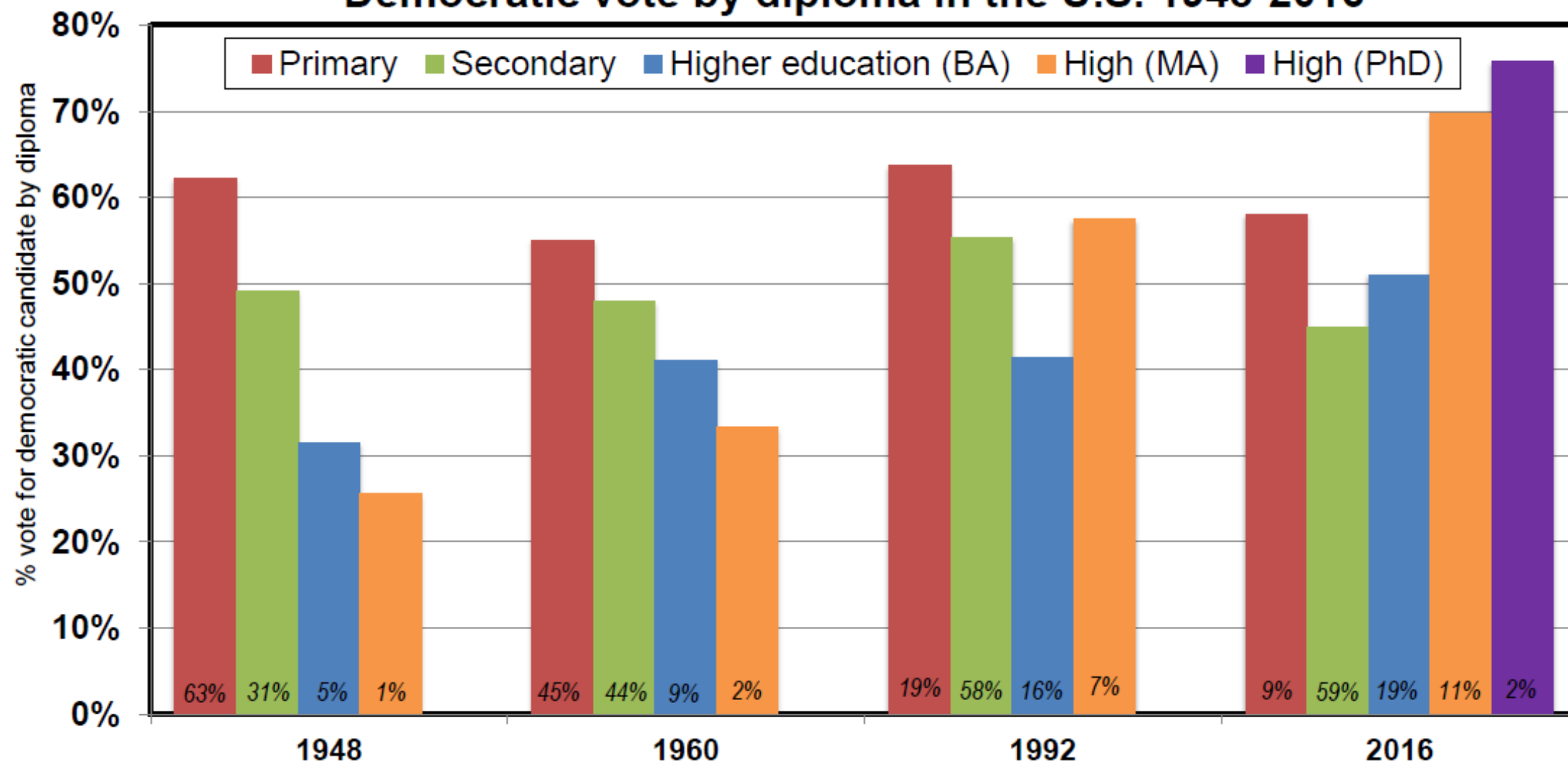
- **Unlike France, US formally has a two-party system:** Democrats vs Republicans (partly due to electoral system)
- **But in practice each party is also divided by major conflicts about redistribution** (some Dems are strongly pro-redistribution, some not) **& migration/ethnicity** (some Reps are strongly anti-minority, some not)
- In the end, the general evolution of the structure of political conflict in recent decades bears a lot of similarity with that of France, including the unstablity of the four-way electorate

Presidential elections in the U.S. 1948-2016



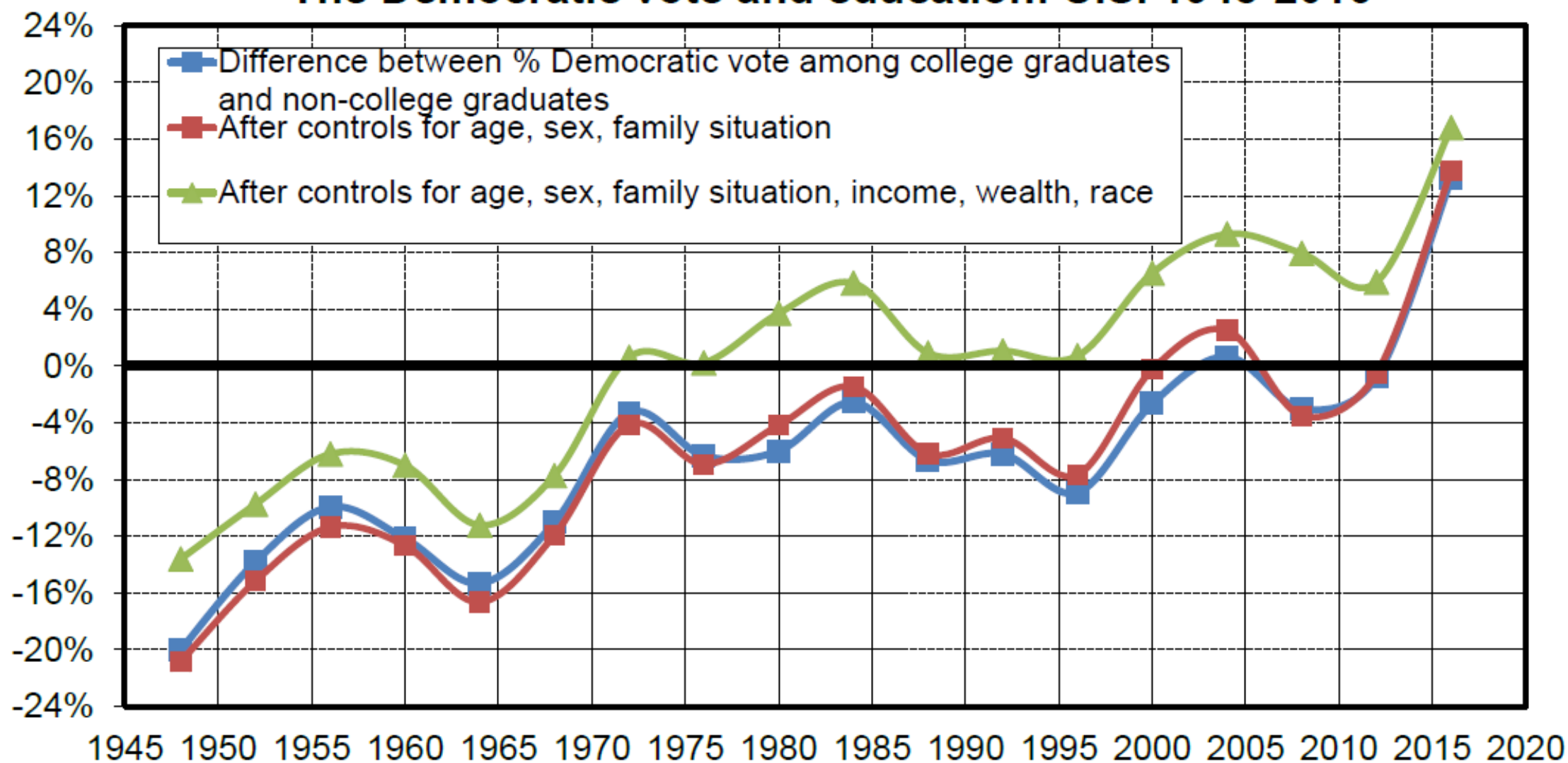
Interpretation. The scores obtained by democratic and republican parties candidates in presidential elections conducted in the U.S. between 1948 and 2016 have generally varied between 40% and 60% of the vote (popular vote, all States combined). The scores obtained by other candidates have generally been relatively small (less than 10% of the vote), with the exception of Wallace in 1968 (14%) and Perot in 1992 and 1996 (20% and 10%). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.1).

Democratic vote by diploma in the U.S. 1948-2016



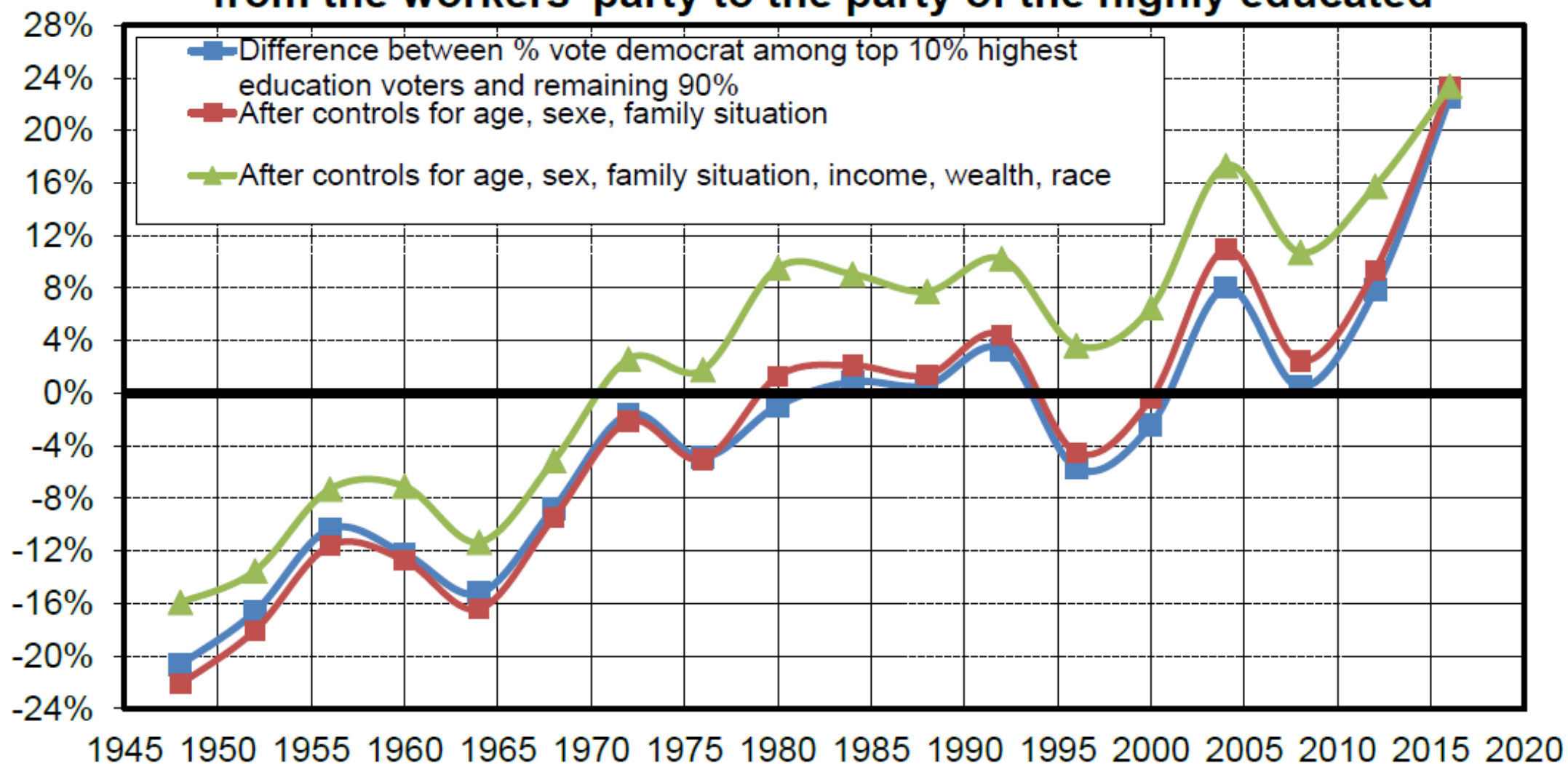
Interpretation. In 1948, the democratic candidate (Truman) obtained 62% of the vote among voters with primary education (no high school diploma) (63% of the electorate at the time) and 26% among voters with advanced higher education diplomas (1% of the electorate). In 2016, the democratic candidate (Clinton) obtained 45% of the vote among voters with secondary education (56% of the electorate) and 75% among those holding a PhD (2% of the electorate). Like in France, we see a full reversal of the educational cleavage between 1948 and 2016. **Note:** BA : bachelor degree or equivalent. MA: master & other advanced degrees (law/medical school). PhD: doctorate. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.2).

The Democratic vote and education: U.S. 1948-2016



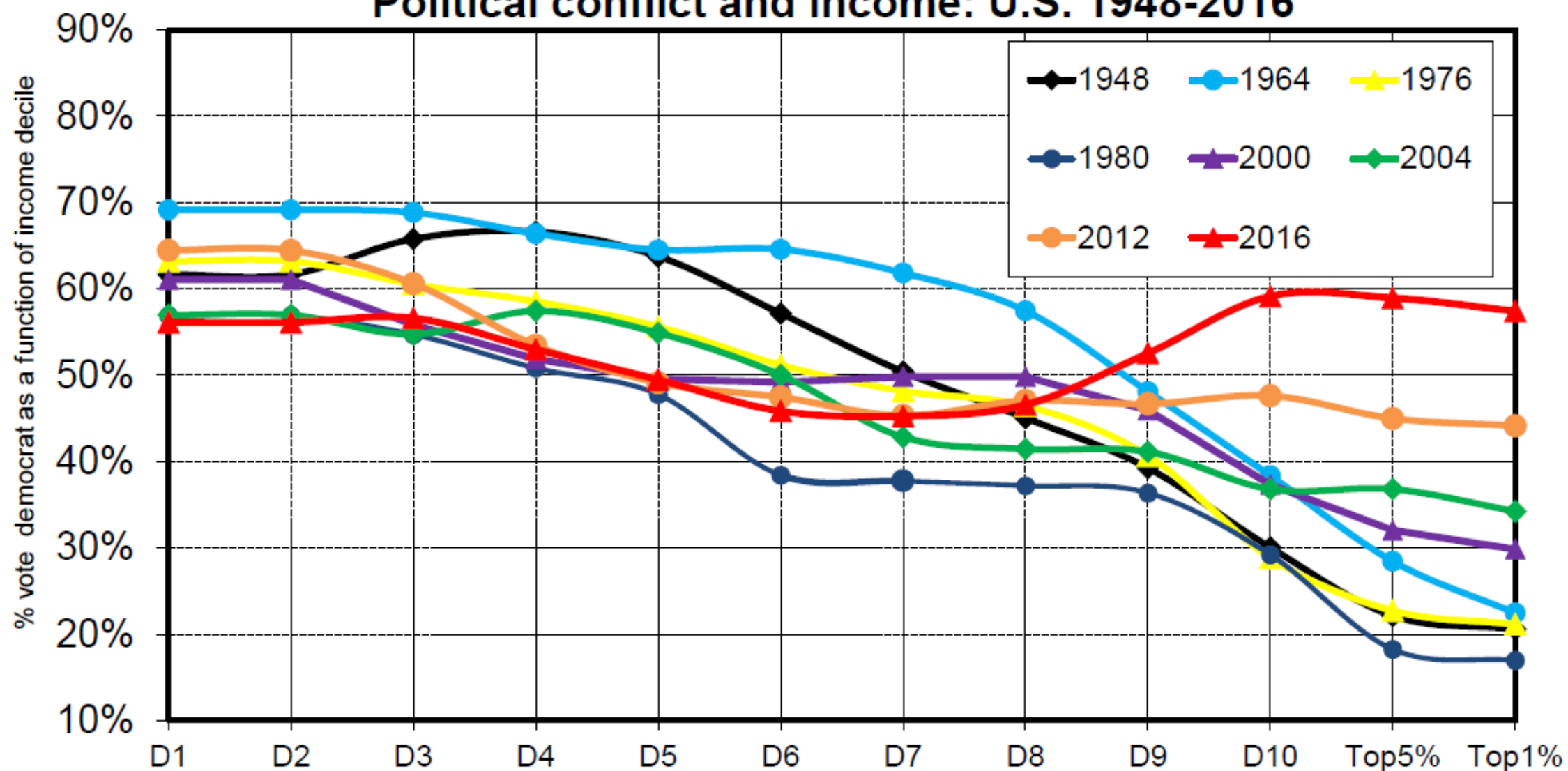
Interpretation. In 1948, the democratic candidate obtained a score that was 20 points smaller among college graduates than among college graduates; in 2016, this score is 14 points higher among college graduates. Controlling for other variables ("other things equal") does not affect the trend (only the levels). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.3).

Democratic vote in the U.S. 1948-2016: from the workers' party to the party of the highly educated



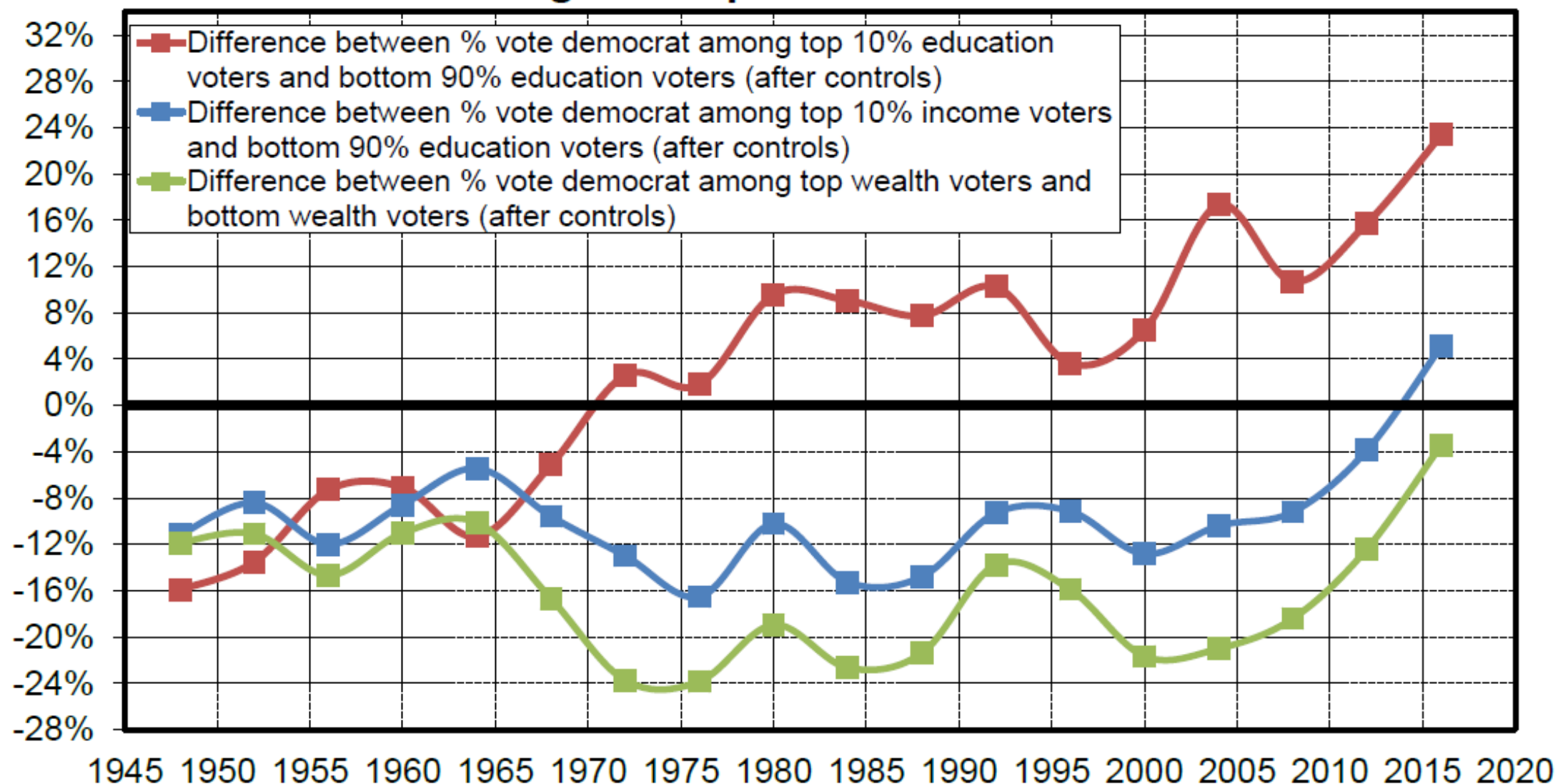
Interpretation. In 1948, the democratic candidate obtained a score that was 21 points smaller among the top 10% highest-education voters than among the remaining 90%; in 2016, this score is 23 points higher among the top 10% highest-education voters. Controlling for other variables ("other things equal") does not affect the trend (only the levels). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.4).

Political conflict and income: U.S. 1948-2016



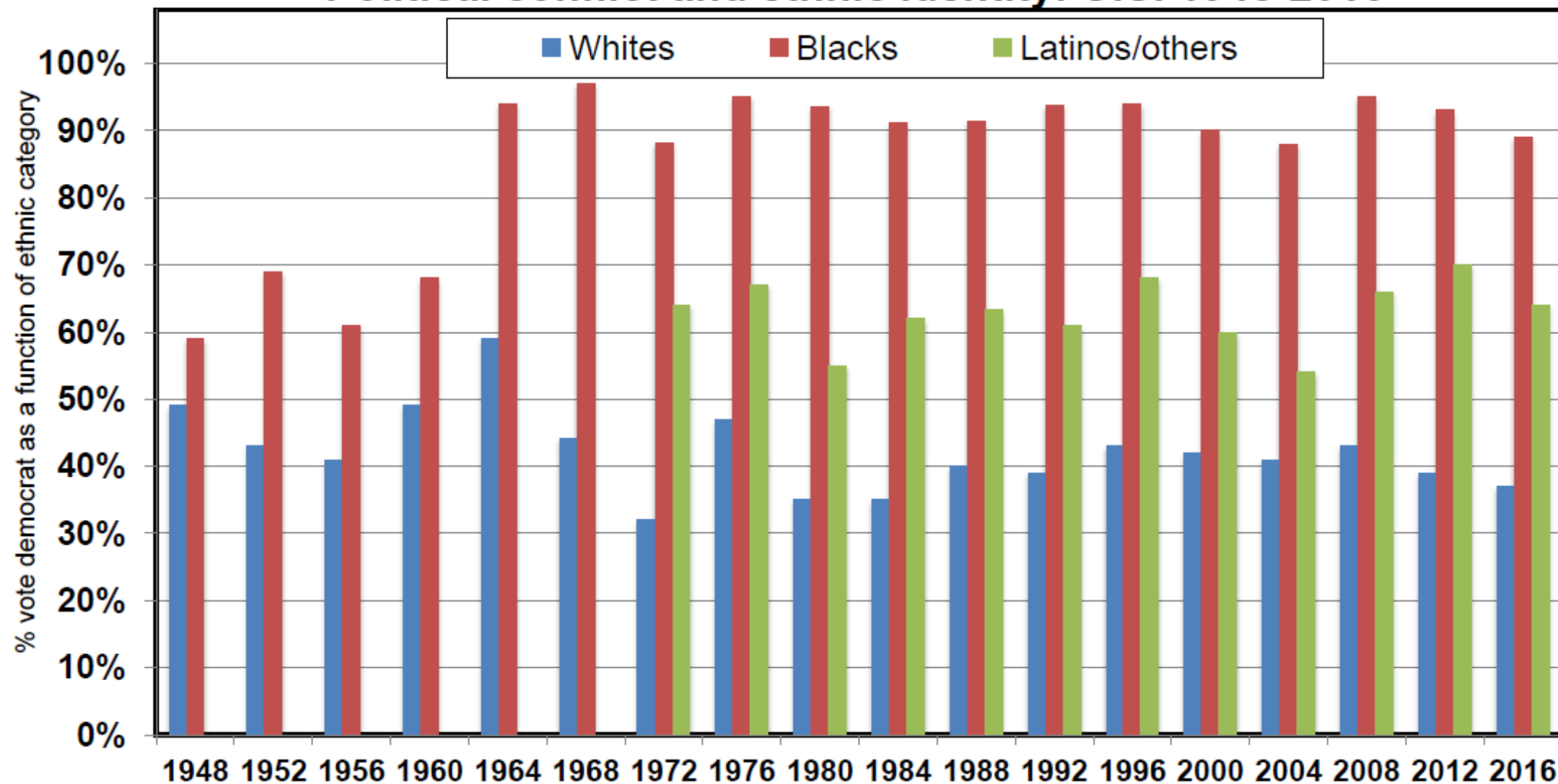
Interpretation. In 1964, the democratic candidate obtained 69% of the votes among the voters with the 10% lowest incomes, 37% of the vote among those with the top 10% highest incomes and 22% among top 1% income holders. Generally speaking, the profile of democratic vote is declining with respect to income, especially at the beginning of the period. In 2016, for the first time, the profile is reversed: 59% of the top income decile voters support the democratic candidate. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.5).

Social cleavages and political conflict: U.S. 1948-2016



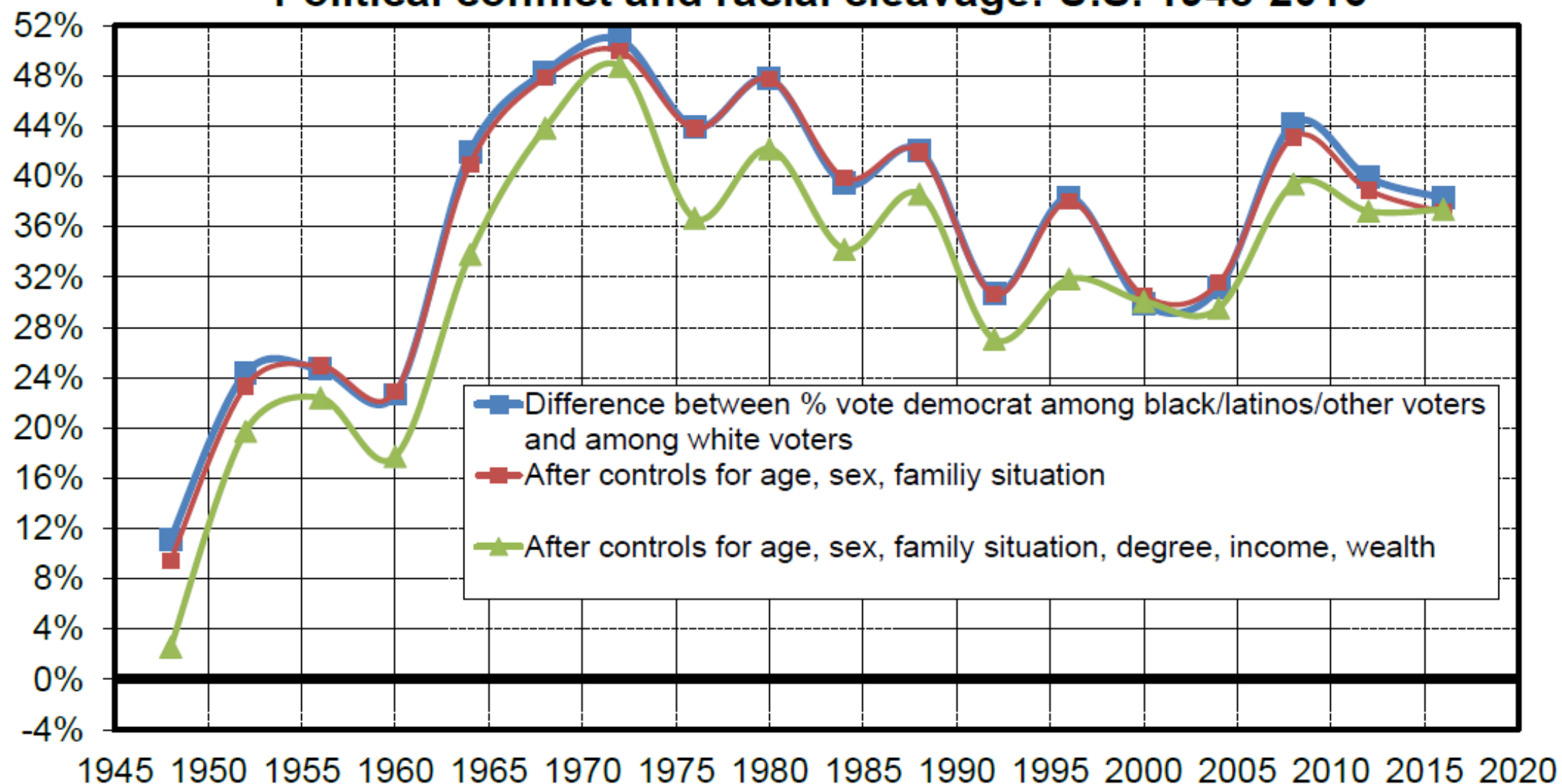
Interpretation. During the 1950-1970 period, the democratic vote was associated to voters with the lowest levels of education and the lowest levels of income and wealth. In the 1980-2010 period it became associated to the voters with the highest diplomas. In the 2010-2020 period, it is maybe close to become associated with the highest income and wealth voters. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.6).

Political conflict and ethnic identity: U.S. 1948-2016



Interpretation. In 2016, the democratic candidate obtained 37% of the vote among white voters (70% of the electorate), 89% of the vote among black voters (11% of the electorate) and 64% of the vote among Latinos and other non-whites (19% of the electorate, including 16% for Latinos). In 1972, the democratic candidate obtained 32% of the vote among whites (89% of the electorate), 82% among blacks (10% of the electorate) and 64% among Latinos and other categories (1% of the electorate). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.7).

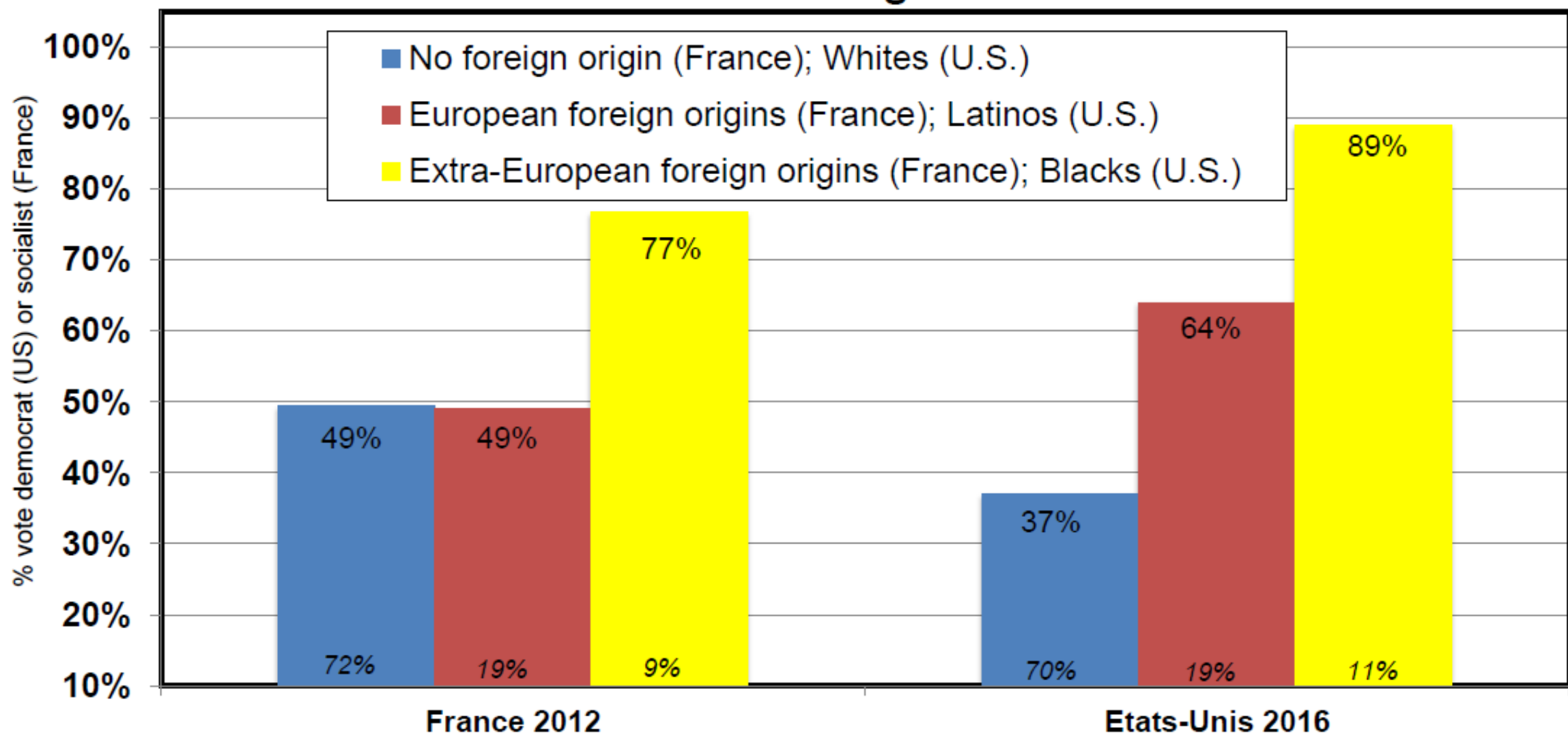
Political conflict and racial cleavage: U.S. 1948-2016



Interpretation. In 1948, the democratic vote was 11 points higher among black and other minority voters (9% of the electorate) than among white voters (91% of the electorate). In 2016, the democratic vote was 39 points higher among black and other minority voters (30% of the electorate) than among white voters (70% of the electorate). Taking into account control variables has a limited impact on this gap.

Sources and series: see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.8).

Political conflict and origins: France & the US

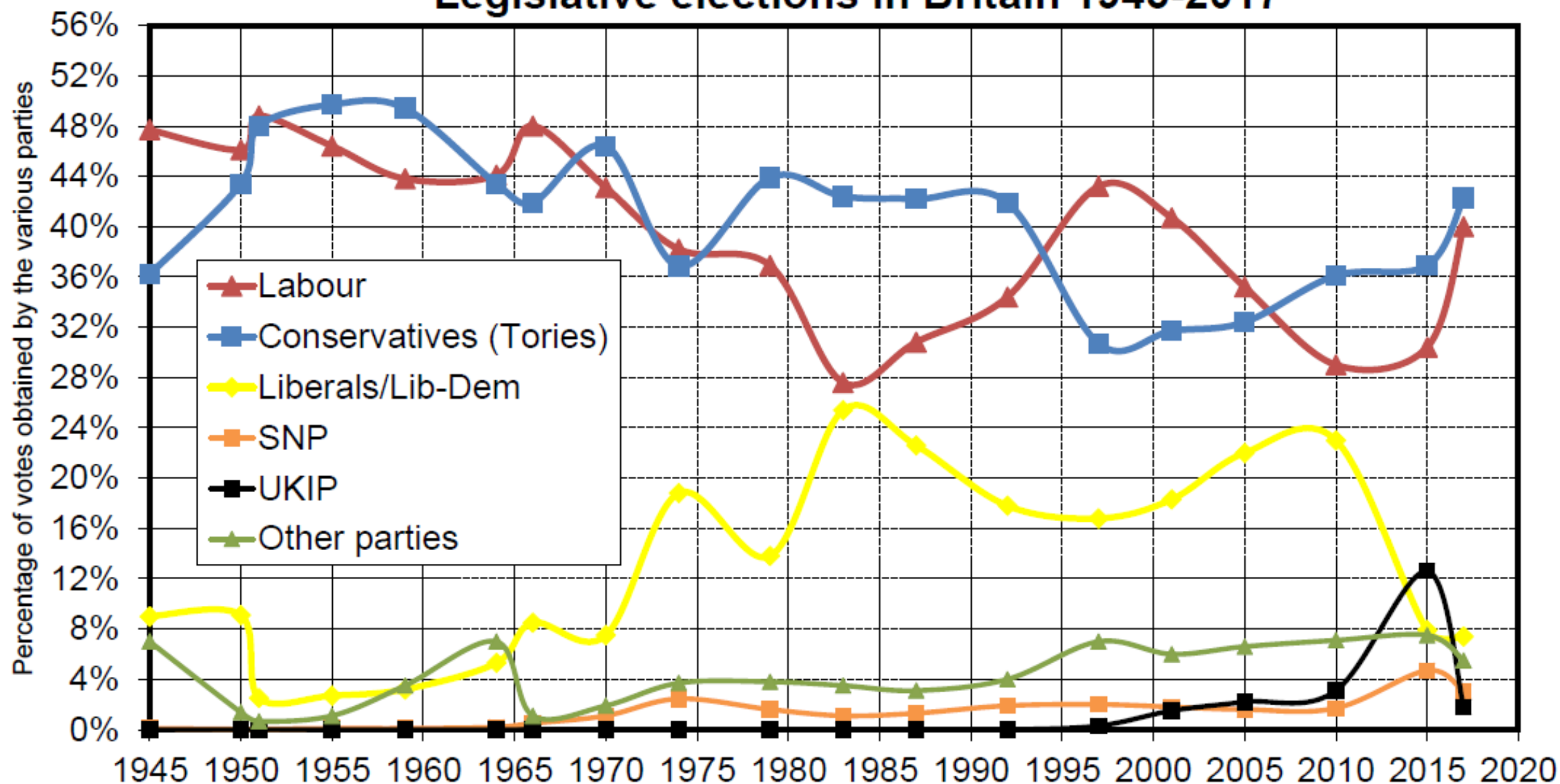


Interpretation. In 2012, the socialist candidate in the second round of the French presidential election obtained 49% of the vote among voters with no foreign origin (no reported foreign grand-parent) and among voters with European foreign origins (in practice mostly Spain, Italy, Portugal) and 77% of the vote among voters with extra-European foreign origins (in practice mostly North Africa and Subsaharan Africa). In 2016, the democratic candidate at the U.S. presidential election obtained 37% of the vote among white voters, 64% among latinos and other minority voters and 89% among black voters. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.9).

Changing political cleavages in the United Kingdom

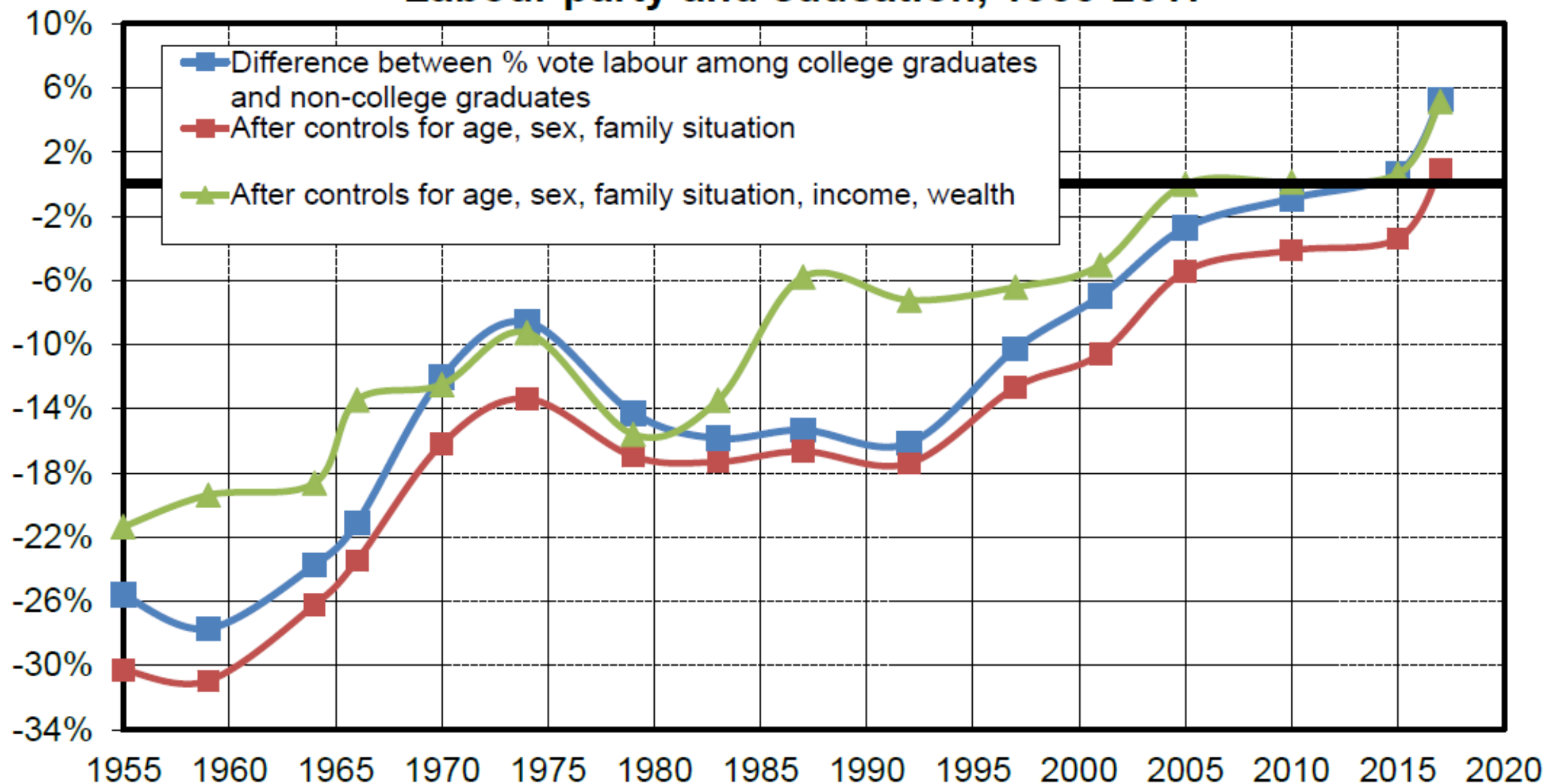
- **Despite the UK, US and French party systems, it is striking to see relatively similar evolutions in all three countries**
- **This expresses the fact that Western electoral democracies have gone through comparable challenges and limitations:**
large & persistent educational inequalities (higher education challenge);
tax competition & globalization; post-communist hyper-capitalism;
post-colonial
- But there are also UK specificities: shifts in Labour party leadership;
rising role of the conflict over Brexit

Legislative elections in Britain 1945-2017



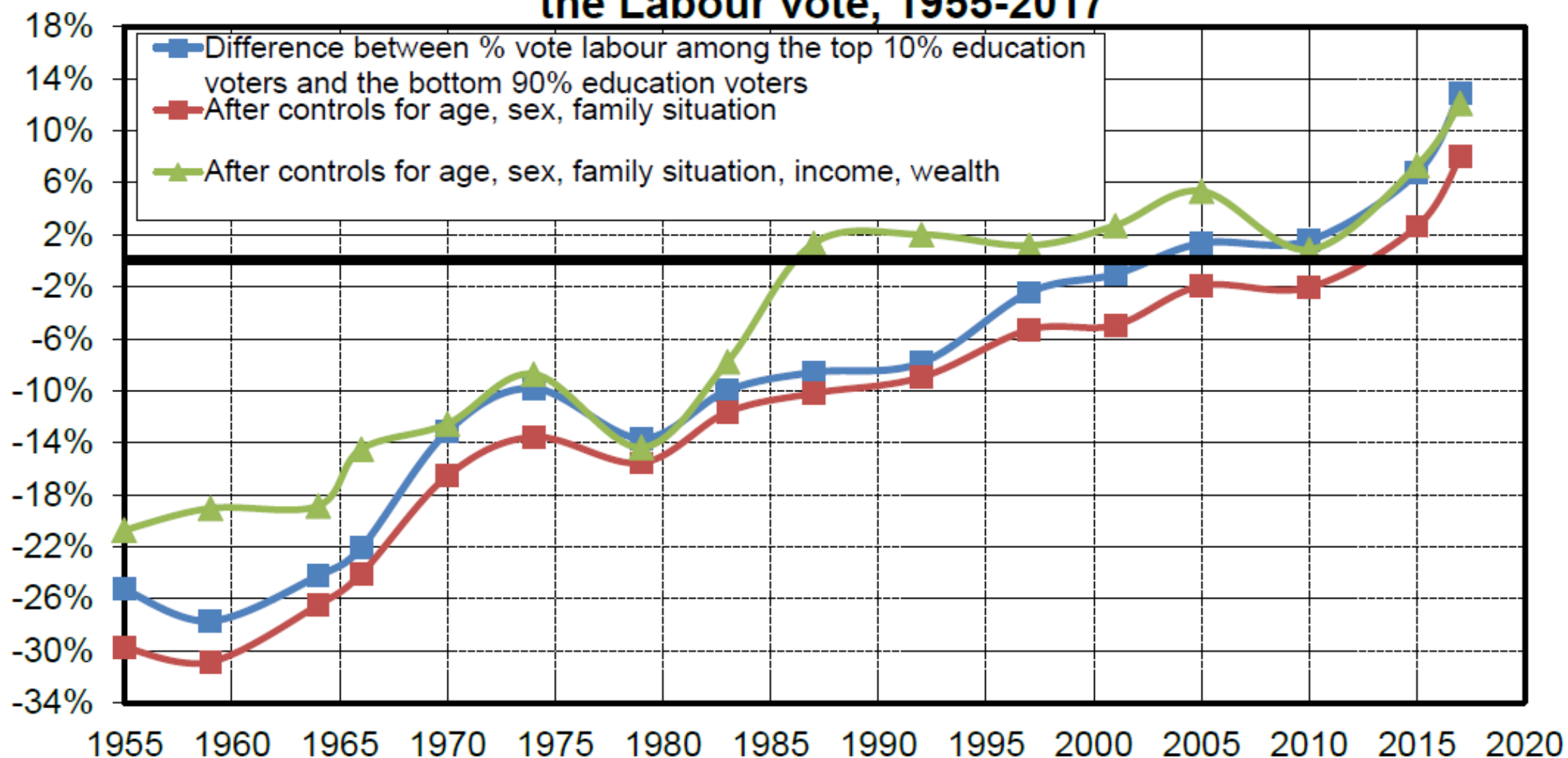
Interpretation. In the 1945 legislative elections, the Labour party obtained 48% of the vote and the Conservatives 36% of the vote (hence a total of 84% of the vote for the two main parties). In the 2017 legislative elections, the Conservatives obtained 42% of the vote, and the Labour party 40% of the vote (hence a total of 82%). **Note.** Liberals/Lib-Dem: Liberals, Liberals-democrats, SDP Alliance. SNP: Scottish National Party. UKIP: UK Independence Party. Other parties include green and regionalist parties. **Sources and séries:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.10).

Labour party and education, 1955-2017



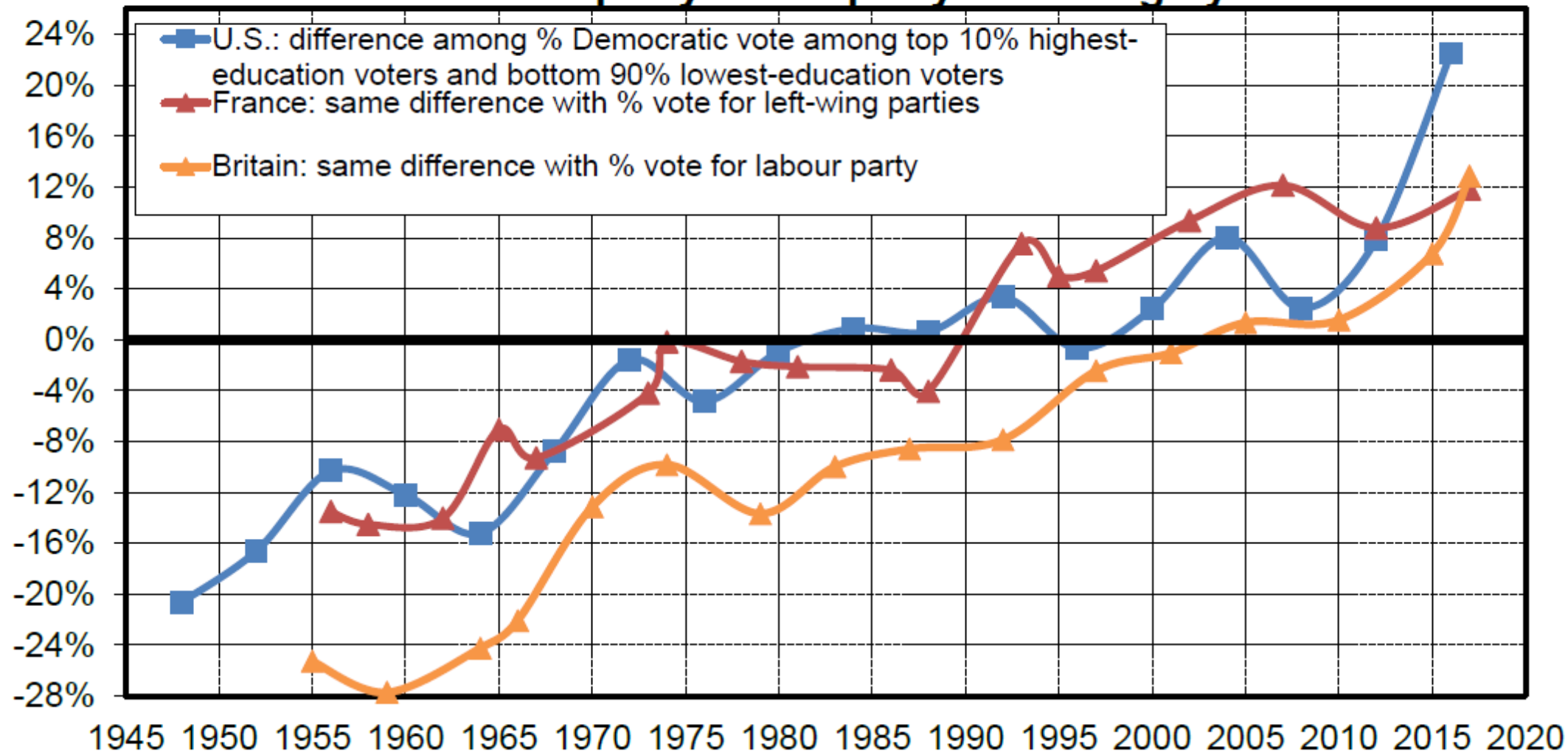
Interpretation. In 1955, the Labour party obtained a score that was 26 points lower among college graduates than among non-college graduates; in 2017, the score of the Labour party was 6 points higher among college graduates. Taking into account control variables does not affect the trend (only the level). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.11).

From the workers' party to the party of the highly educated: the Labour vote, 1955-2017



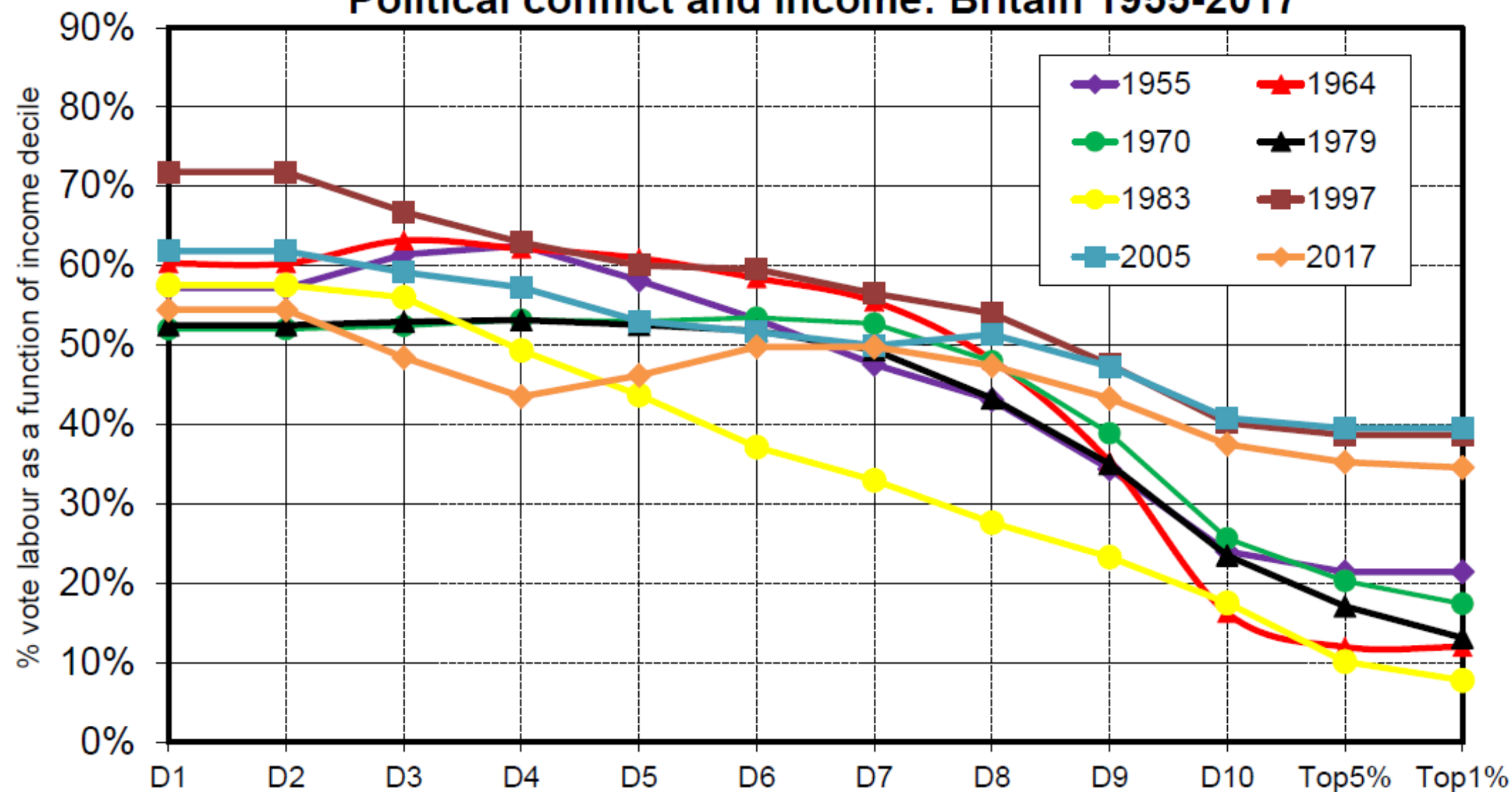
Interpretation. In 1955, the Labour party obtained a score that was 25 points lower among top 10% highest-education voters than among bottom 90% lowest-education voters; in 2017, the score of the Labour party was 13 points higher among top 10% education voters. Taking into account control variables does not affect the trend (only the level). **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.12).

The electoral left in Europe & the US, 1945-2020: from the workers' party to the party of the highly educated



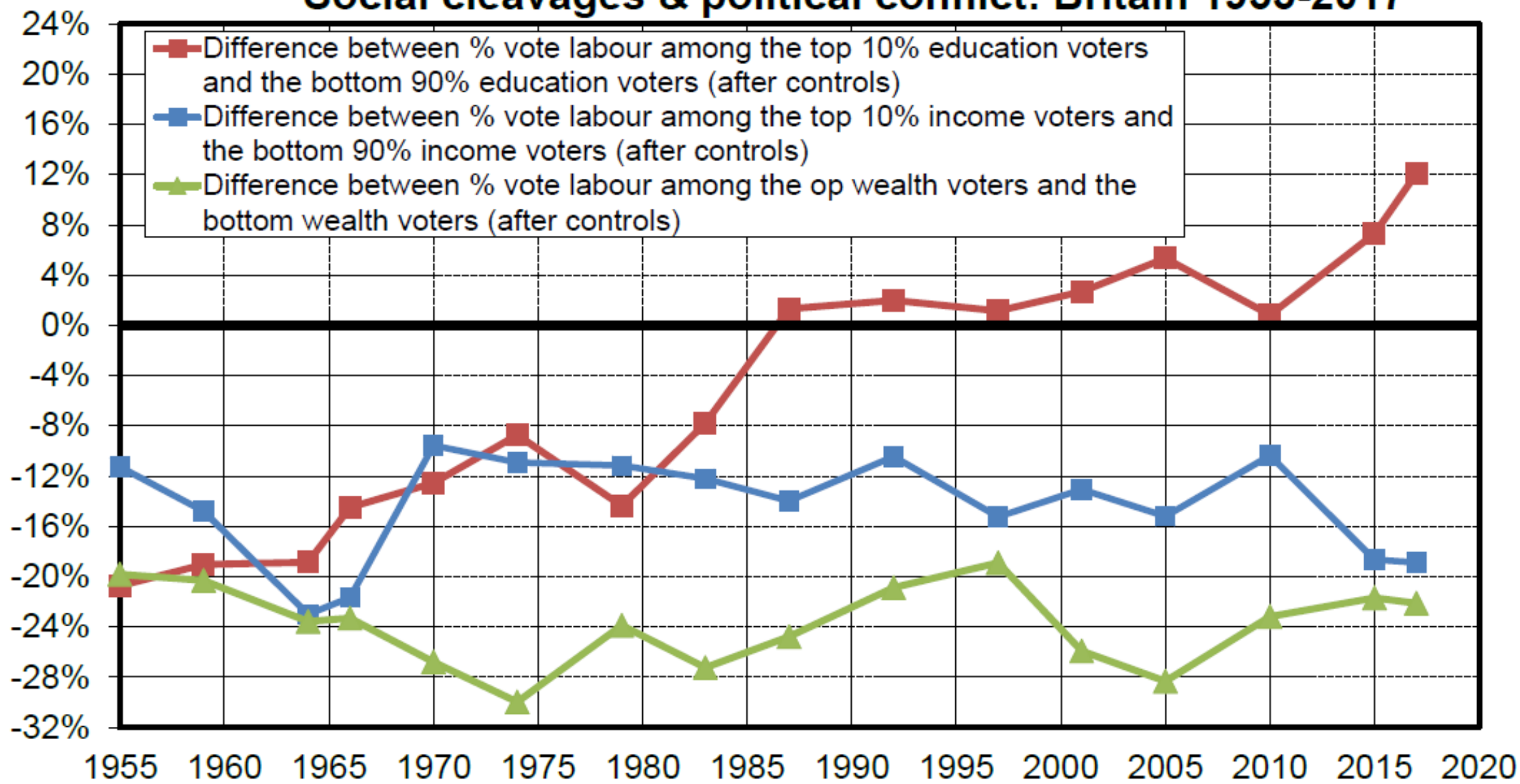
Interpretation. During the 1950-1970 period, the vote for the democratic party in the U.S., left-wing parties in France (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) in France and the labour party in Britain was associated with the voters with the lowest educational diplomas; in the 1990-2010 period it became associated with the voters with the highest education diplomas. The British evolution is slightly lagging behind the French and U.S. evolutions but goes in the same direction. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.13)

Political conflict and income: Britain 1955-2017



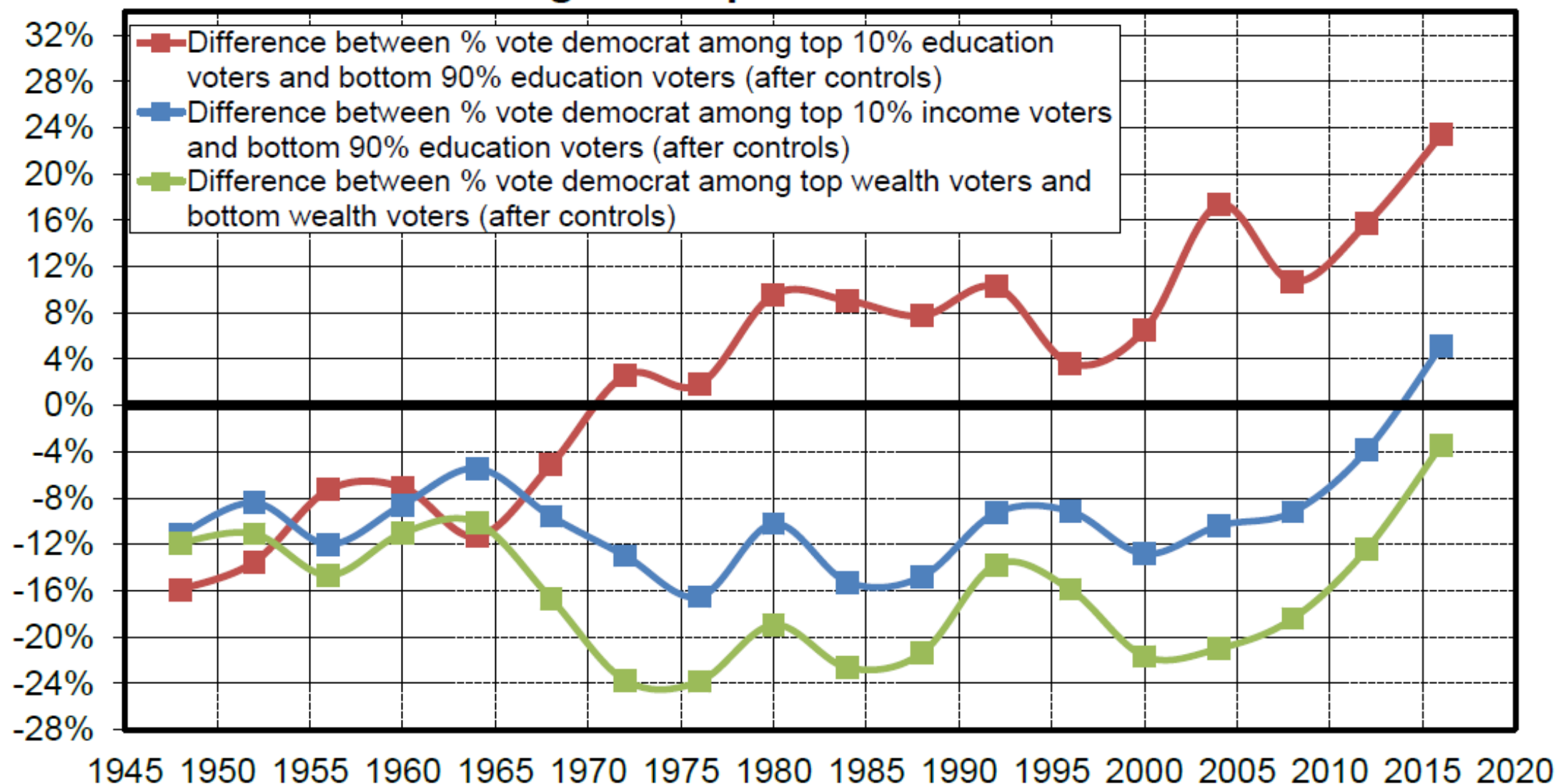
Interpretation. The profile of the vote for the labour party as a function of income decile has generally been strongly decreasing, particularly at the level of the 10% highest incomes, and especially from the 1950s to the 1980s. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.14).

Social cleavages & political conflict: Britain 1955-2017



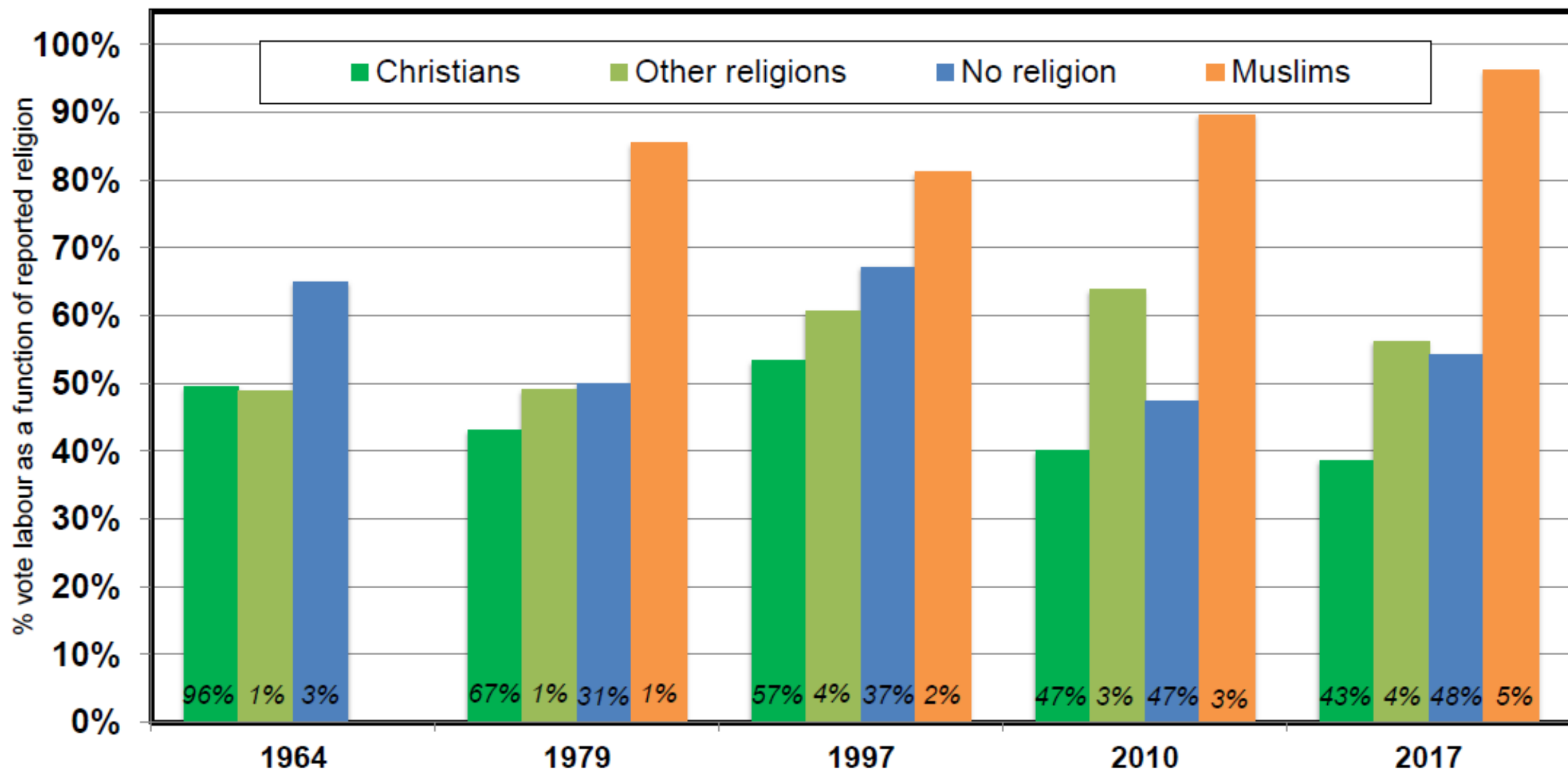
Interpretation. The labour vote was associated during the 1950-1980 period to the voters with the highest diplomas and levels of income and wealth; since the 1990s, it became associated to the highest education degrees. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.15).

Social cleavages and political conflict: U.S. 1948-2016



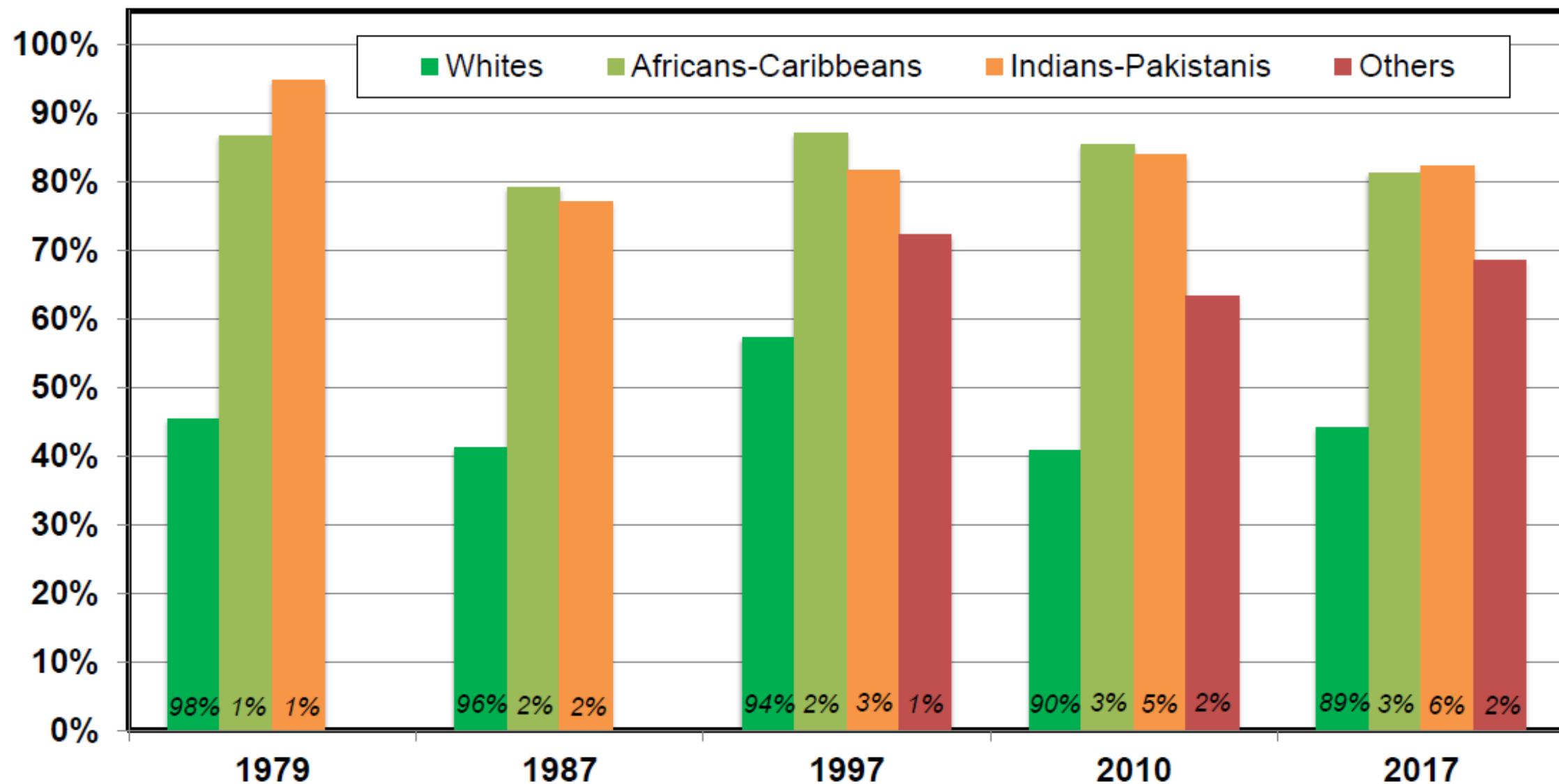
Interpretation. During the 1950-1970 period, the democratic vote was associated to voters with the lowest levels of education and the lowest levels of income and wealth. In the 1980-2010 period it became associated to the voters with the highest diplomas. In the 2010-2020 period, it is maybe close to become associated with the highest income and wealth voters. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.6).

Political conflict & religious diversity: Britain 1964-2017



Interpretation. In 2017, the labour party obtained 39% of the vote among self-reported christian voters (anglicans, other protestants, catholics), 56% among voters reporting other religions (judaism, hinduism, etc., except islam), 54% among voters with no religion and 96% among self-reported muslim voters. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.16).

Political conflict & ethnic categories, Britain 1979-2017

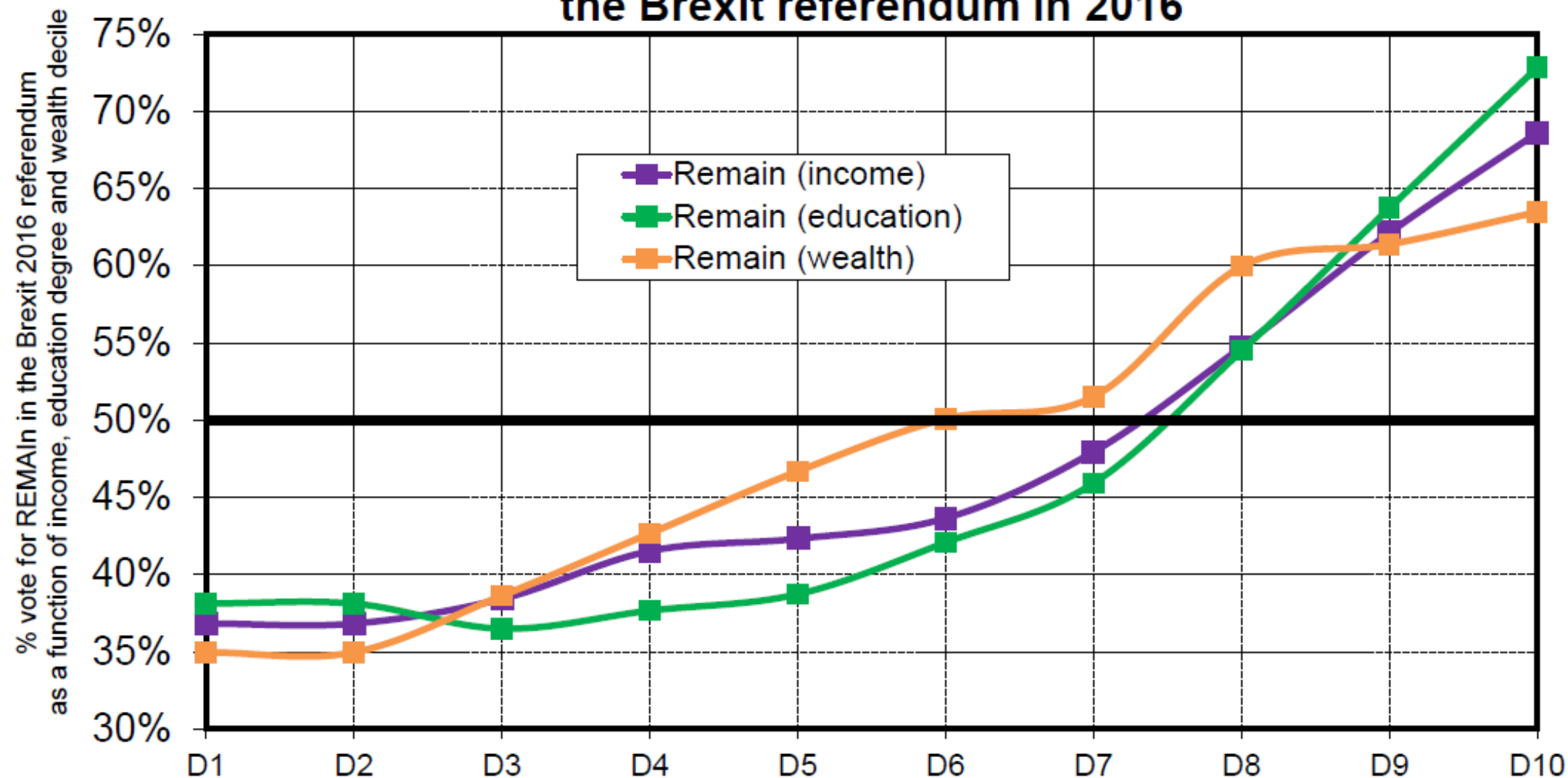


Interpretation. In 2017, the labour party obtained 44% of the vote among voters describing themselves as "Whites", 81% among "Africans-Caribbeans", 82% among "Indians-Pakistanis-Bengladeshis" and 69% among "others" ("Chinese", "Arabs", etc.). In 2017, 5% of the electorate refused to answer to the ethnic question, and 77% among them voted labour. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.17).

The cleavage about Europe and globalization

- In the UK, but also in France and in most European countries, the conflict about European integration has played a more & more important role in recent decades
- **Referendum about Europe in UK 2016 and in France 1992 & 2005:**
in all cases, only top socioeconomic deciles support European Union
- **Conflict about EU cuts across « standard » left-right lines because it is a transnational conflict that is both about redistribution between rich and poor** (EU and the free mobility of capital and goods and services are perceived to favour the most mobile and wealthiest economic actors) **and about borders, identity and migration** (EU membership implies free labor mobility)
- Without some fundamental changes to EU functioning and some form of « **social-federalism** » (common social policies to reduce inequalities: tax justice, education, wages, environment, etc.), it is difficult to see why this will change

The European cleavage in Britain: the Brexit referendum in 2016

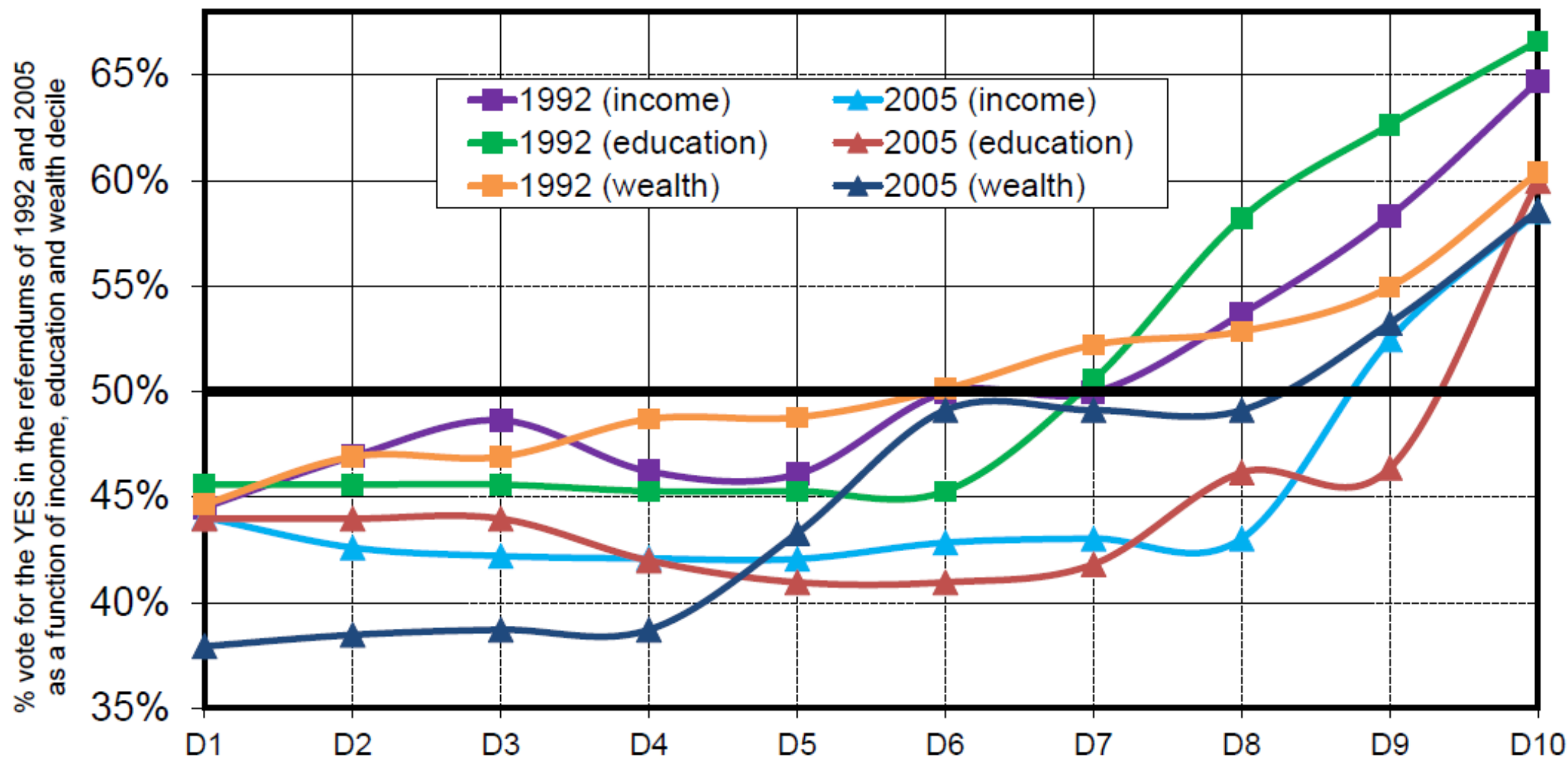


Interpretation. In the 2016 referendum over Brexit (victory of Leave with 52%), one observes a very strong social cleavage of the vote: the top deciles of income, education and wealth vote strongly for Remain, while bottom deciles vote for Leave.

Note: D1 refers to the bottom 10% (either for income, education or wealth), D2 for the next 10%, etc., and D10 for the top 10%.

Sources and series: see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.18).

The European cleavage in France: the referenda of 1992 and 2005



Interpretation. In the 1992 referendum over the Maastricht treaty ("yes" won with 51%) as well as in the 2005 referendum on the European constitutional treaty ("yes" lost with 45%), one observes a very strong social cleavage: top deciles of income, educational degrees and wealth vote strongly for the "yes", while bottom deciles vote for the "no". **Note:** D1 represents the bottom 10% (for the distribution of income, education or wealth), D2 the next 10%, ..., and D10 the top 10%. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.20).