

Introduction to Economic History :
Capital, Inequality, Growth

(Master APE & PPD)

(EHESS & Paris School of Economics)

Thomas Piketty

Academic year 2026-2027

Lecture 8: Political Cleavages, Party Systems & Geosocial
Class Alliances in Historical Perspective

Roadmap of the lecture

- The Construction & Deconstruction of Left-Right Conflict: the Rural Poor & the French Revolution
- Class Conflict vs Territorial Conflict: France 1789-2027
- Class Conflict vs Racial Conflict: US 1776-2028
- Brahmin Left vs Merchant Right: Education Cleavage Reversal in Western Democracies 1948-2026
- Return of Left-Right Conflict: India 1947-2029, Brasil 1988-2026
- Eco-Socialists, Liberal-Globalists & Techno-Nationalists: the Rise of Tripartition & the Divided Elite and People

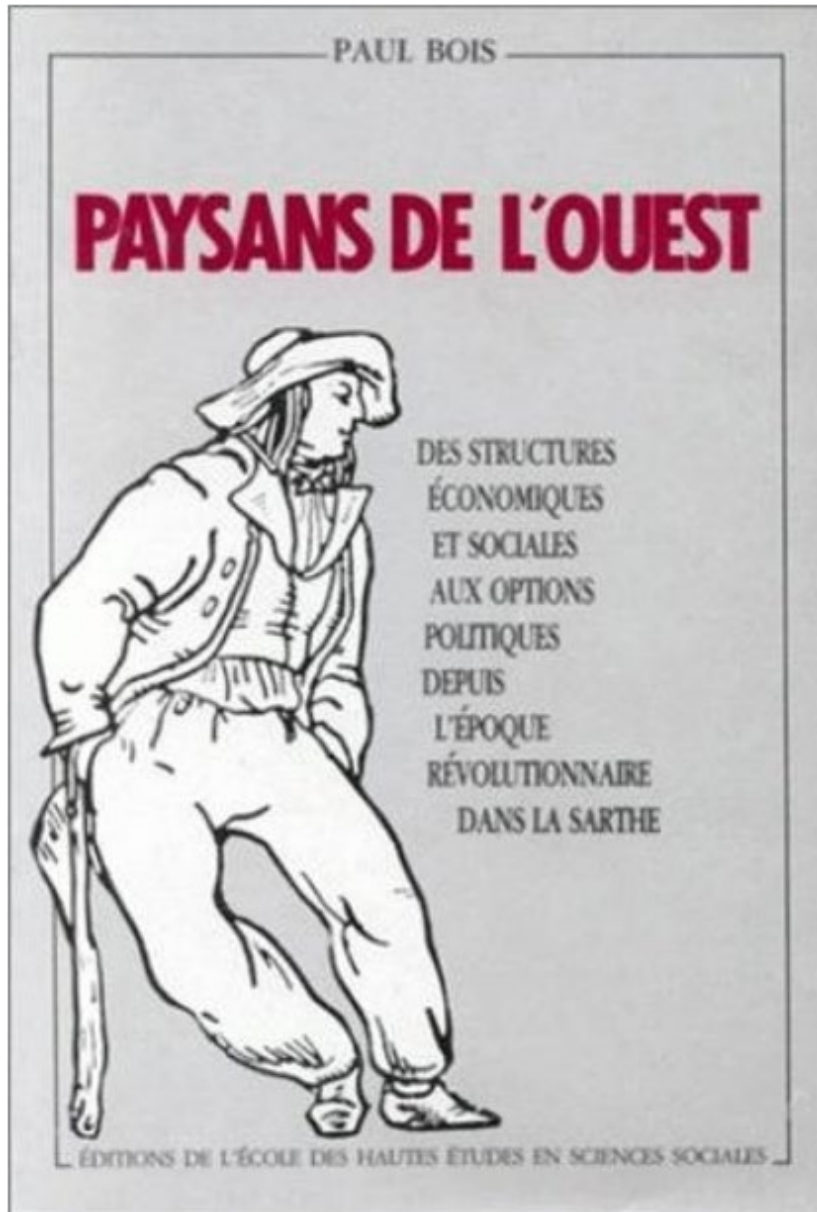
Short Bibliography

- M. Lipset, S. Rokkan, “[Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction](#)”, in Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives, Free Press 1967
- A. Gethin, C. Martinez-Tolenado, T. Piketty, [Political Cleavages & Social Inequalities. A Study of 50 Democracies 1948-2020](#), HUP 2021 ([WPID.world](#))
- ***A. Gethin, C. Martinez-Toledano, T. Piketty, “[Brahmin Left vs Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies](#)”, QJE 2022**
- 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](#))
- ***J. Cagé, T. Piketty, [A History of Political Conflict. Elections & Social Inequalities in France 1789-2022](#), HUP 2025 (*[Online Summary](#))**

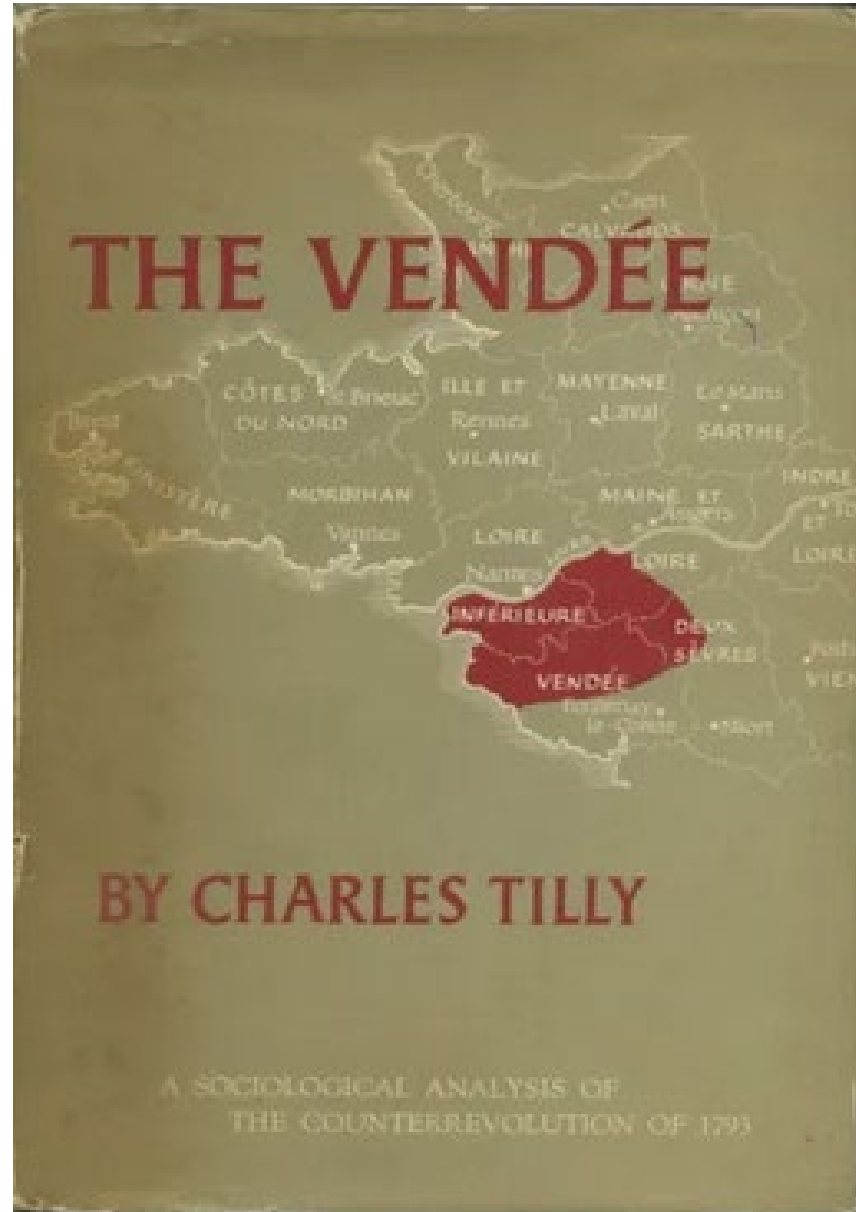
The Construction & Deconstruction of Left-Right Conflict

- **In its purest form, the left-right political conflict is supposed to be about class conflict:** lower classes vote (a lot) more for the left, upper classes vote (a lot) more for the right → **political conflict focuses on the question of social inequalities** → **rise of social State, progressive taxation & public services**
- ≈ more or less **what happened in Western & Nordic Europe & US 1910-1990:** consolidation of electoral democracy, rise of unprecedented prosperity
- **Pb: the class structure is always multidimensional:** wealth (capital ownership), income, education, occupation, sector (manufacturing, agriculture, services), status (wage earner, self-employed), territory (urban/rural), gender, origins, religion, etc. → **building majoritarian alliances with multidimensional geosocial class structures is always a very fragile, complex & never-ending process**
- **French Revolution 1789:** birth of left-right conflict (key fight over king veto power)... & immediate weakening/complexification of cleavage structure: **division btw urban poor (left) vs rural poor (right)** → **key source of political fragmentation until today**

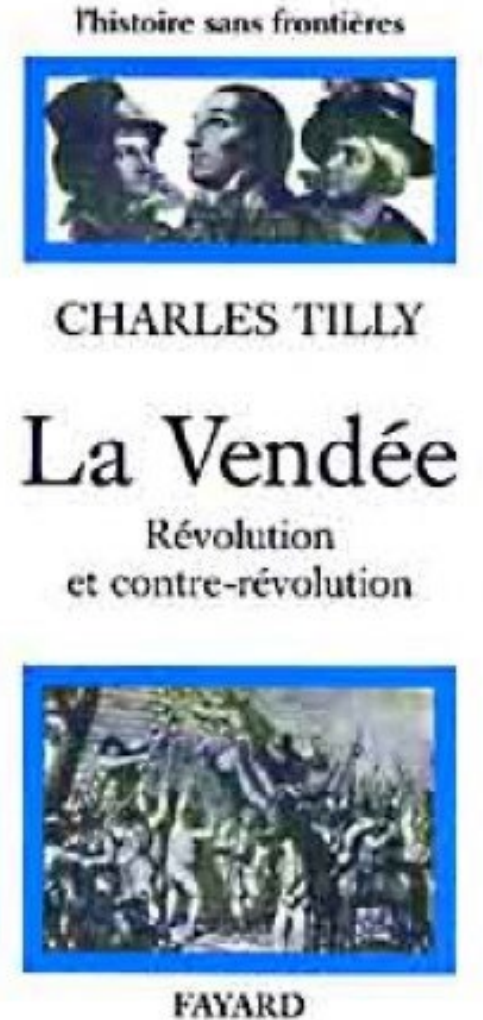
The Rural Poor & the French Revolution: Bois 1960-Tilly 1964



P. Bois, 1960



C. Tilly, 1964



C. Tilly, 1970

PAUL BOIS

PAYSANS DE L'OUEST



DES STRUCTURES
ÉCONOMIQUES
ET SOCIALES
AUX OPTIONS
POLITIQUES
DEPUIS
L'ÉPOQUE
RÉVOLUTIONNAIRE
DANS LA SARTHE

ÉDITIONS DE L'ÉCOLE DES HAUTES ÉTUDES EN SCIENCES SOCIALES

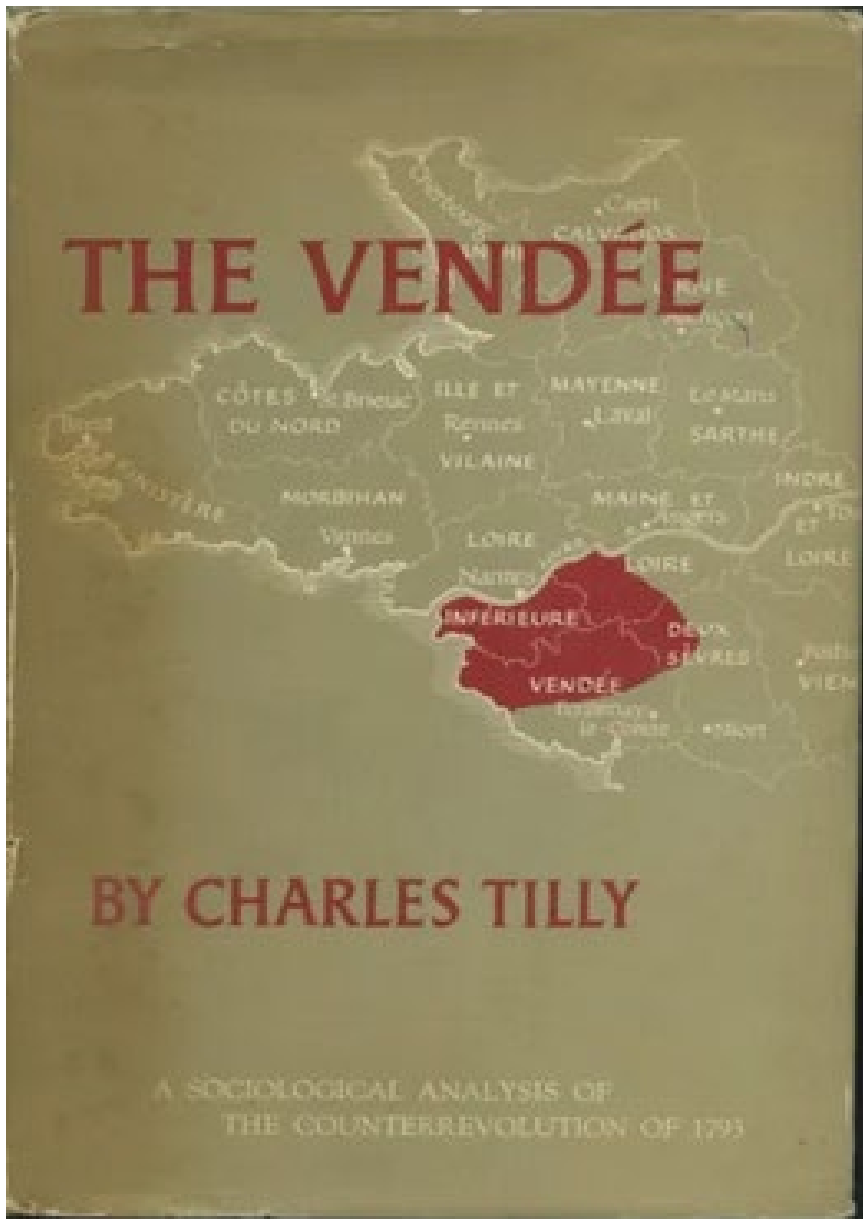
In 1789, peasants were strongly mobilized to get rid of elite power and feudal privileges of the nobility and the clergy. Key role of revolutionary peasantry.

(see Cahiers de doléances 1789; see also 18c rise of peasant revolts studied by Nicolas 2002)

So why did so many peasants turned against the Revolution during the Vendée insurrection of 1793 & kept voting for the conservatives (monarchists, bonapartists & later right-wing groups) in 19c-20c?

Bois 1960. West vs east divide of Sarthe: key role of ecclesiastical property (auctionned to urban elites → peasants turn against Revolution) vs aristocratic property (republicain peasants).

P. Bois, 1960



C. Tilly, 1964

Tilly 1964: analysis of the case of Maine-et-Loire & Vendée, same conclusions as Bois 1960 for Sarthe. Peasants turn against the Revolution in areas where ecclesiastical property was plentiful and was mostly acquired by urban elite in order to pay off the public debt (held by urban elites...)

In Cahiers de doléances 1789, the most revolutionary areas are often those which turned most strongly against the Revolution in 1793-1794

The « conservatism of peasants » should not be viewed as a natural fact, but rather as the outcome of a complex socio-political process involving major rural disappointment after 1789

ANDRÉ SIEGFRIED

*Tableau politique
de la*
FRANCE DE L'OUEST
sous la
III^e République



Seconde édition publiée avec le concours du C.N.R.S.

LIBRAIRIE ARMAND COLIN

Bois 1960-Tilly 1964: very different conclusions (and arguably more convincing) about the formation of political cleavages than Siegfried 1913 (founding book of French political science and electoral geography)

Siegfried collects canton-level electoral data 1871-1910 and argues that right-wing vote (conservatives, monarchists, catholics) is larger and center/center-left vote (republicans) is lower in rural areas with stronger control of the electorate by land owners (higher land concentration) & the clergy (catholic schools).

A. Siegfried, 1913

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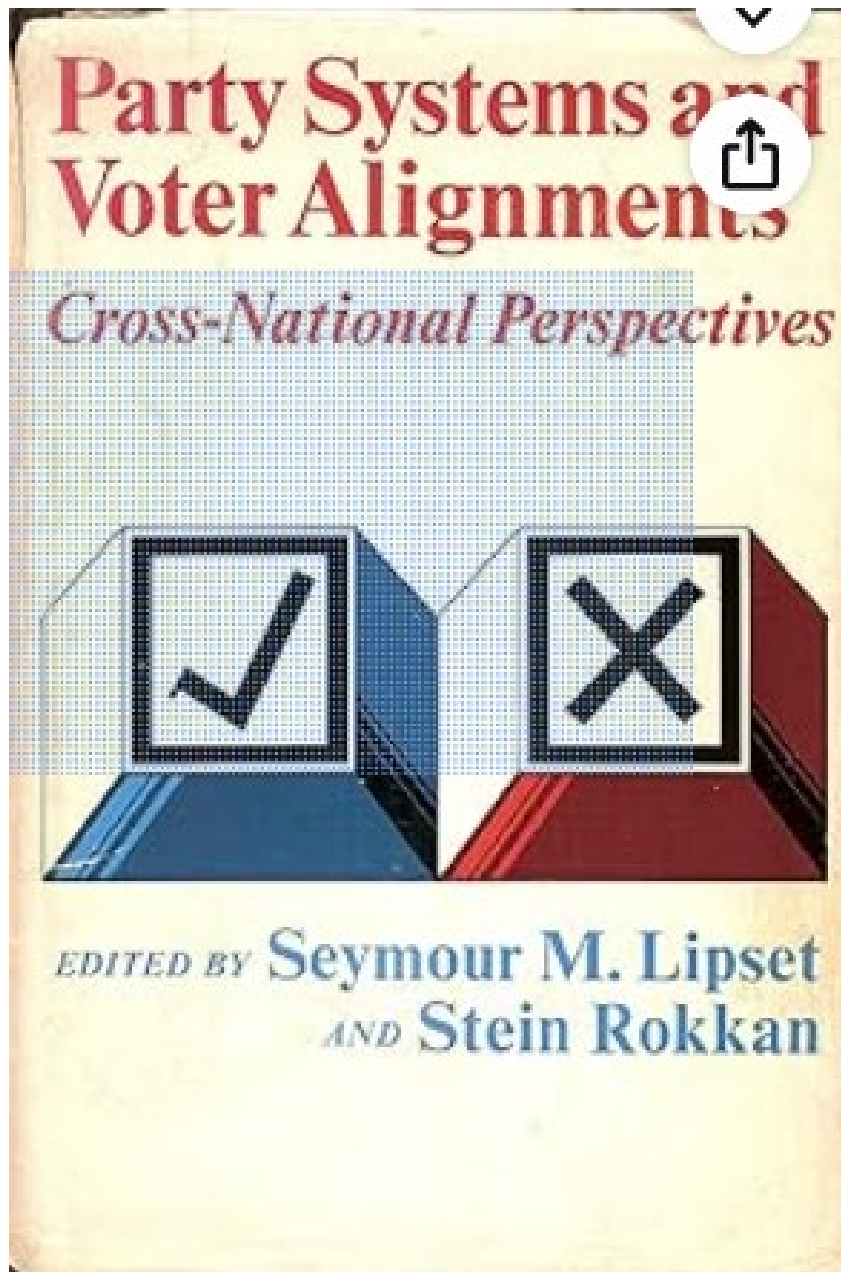
LIBRAIRIE ARMAND COLIN

A. Siegfried, 1913

More detailed sources collected by Bois-Tilly in Cahiers de doléances and electoral registries show that Siegfried's conclusions are not robust Key issue : church property vs aristocratic property in 1789, peasant disappointment on church property

Our book with J. Cagé largely confirms Bois-Tilly conclusions: peasants turn to the right when they are disappointed with the left (& not just because they are controlled by right-wing elites)

This historical perspective is also useful to understand the return of a large rural-urban political divide in the early 21c



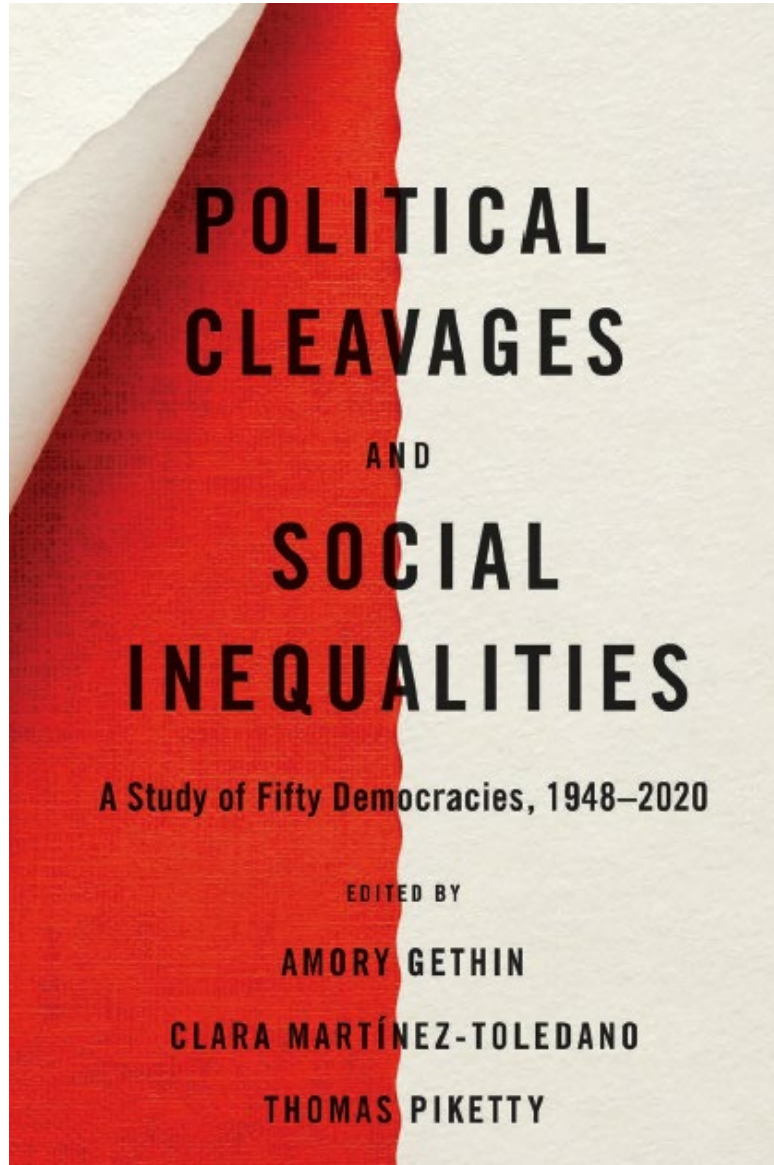
Lipset-Rokkan 1967: founding work on the changing structure of party systems and political cleavages

Main thesis: modern democracies are characterized by two major revolutions – national and industrial – that have generated four main cleavages, with varying importance across countries: center vs periphery; state vs churches; agriculture vs manufacturing; workers vs employers/owners. Country-specific party systems attempt to form majoritarian coalitions based on this complexity.

Limited historical & comparative perspective (Europe-centered, nothing on racial/ethnic conflict), but still very relevant today

Lipset & Rokkan, 1967

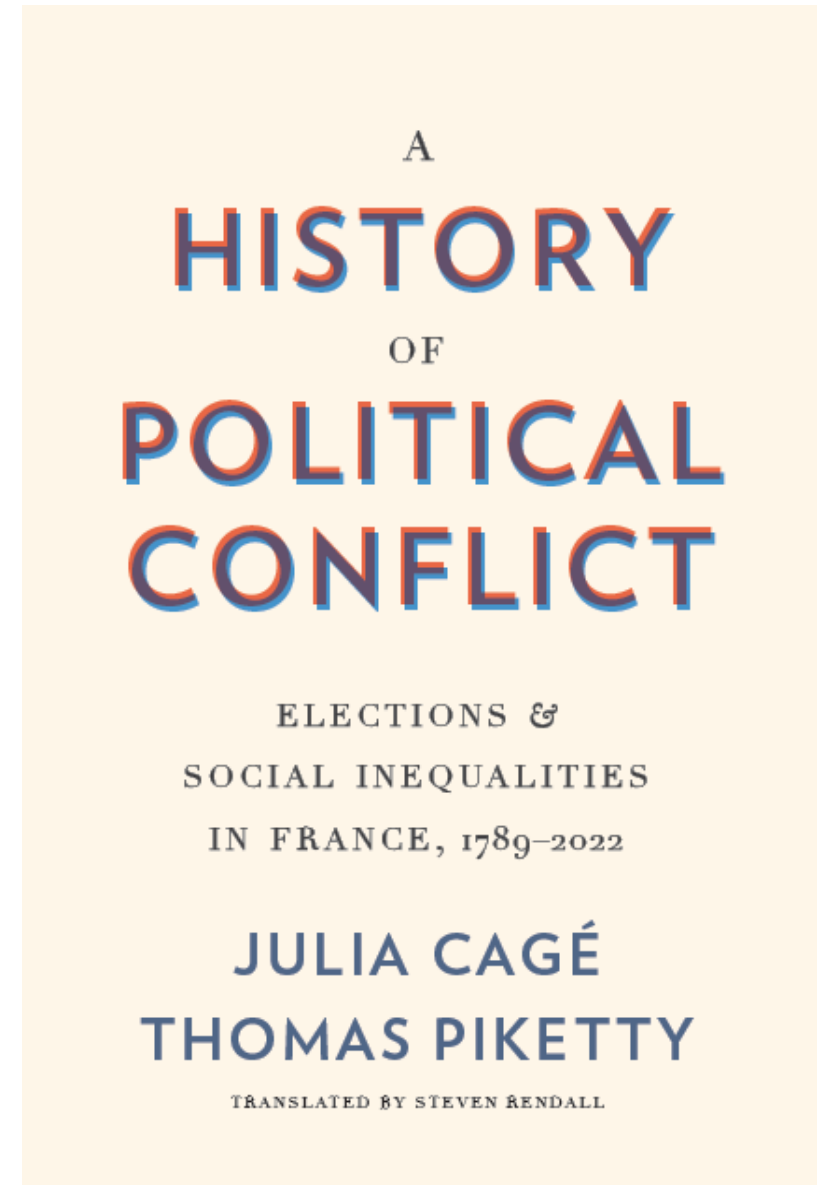
Class Conflict vs Territorial Conflict: France 1789-2027



2021



2023



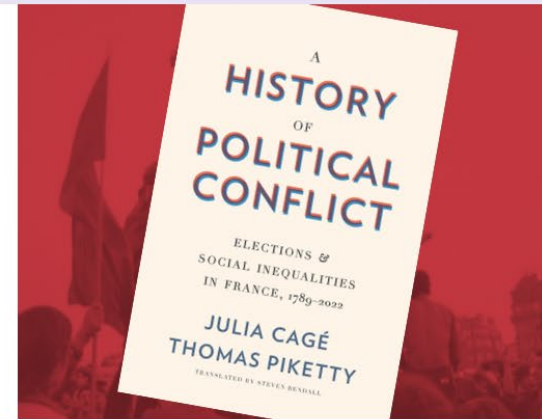
2025

A history of political conflict

Elections and social inequalities in France,
1789-2022

[Learn more about the book](#) →

[Order the book](#) 



See

all data from the book

MAPPING

How have votes
and wealth been
distributed in
France since
1789?



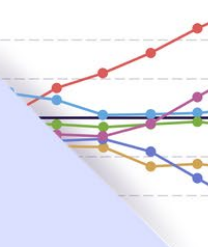
PORTRAIT

How has your
municipality voted over the
past two
centuries and

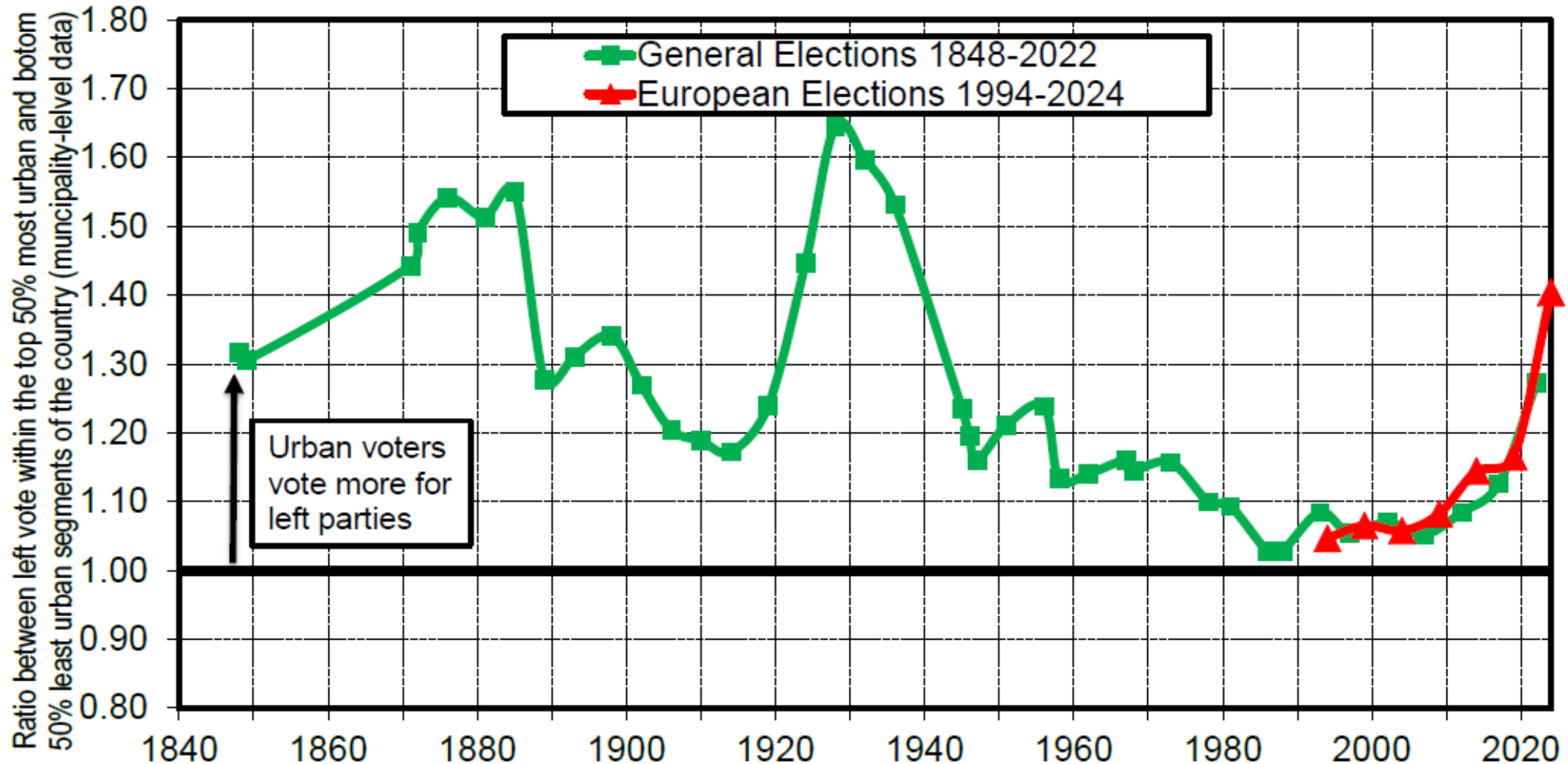


CONFLICT

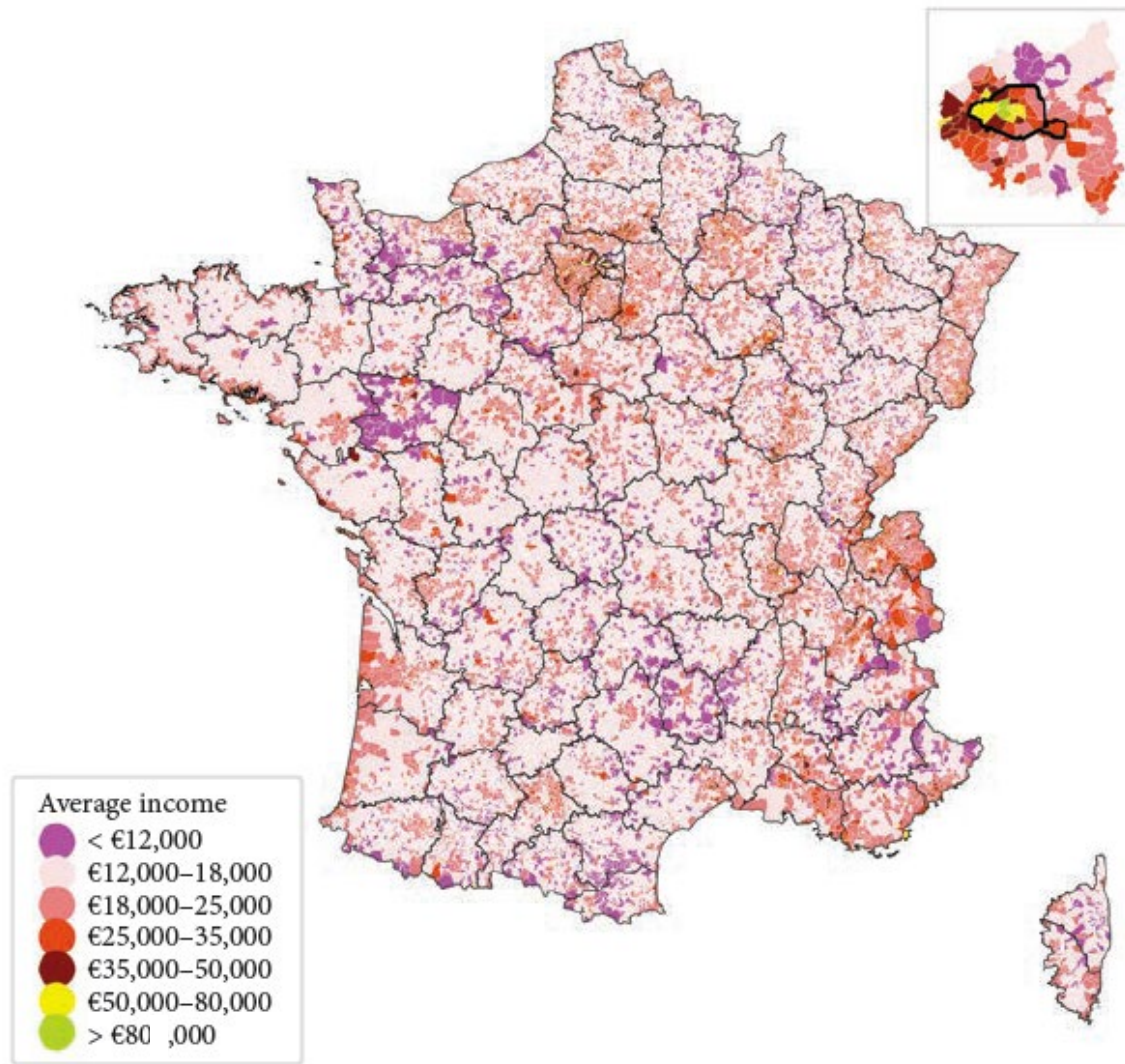
Who has the
most popular
vote and the
most bourgeois
vote?



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

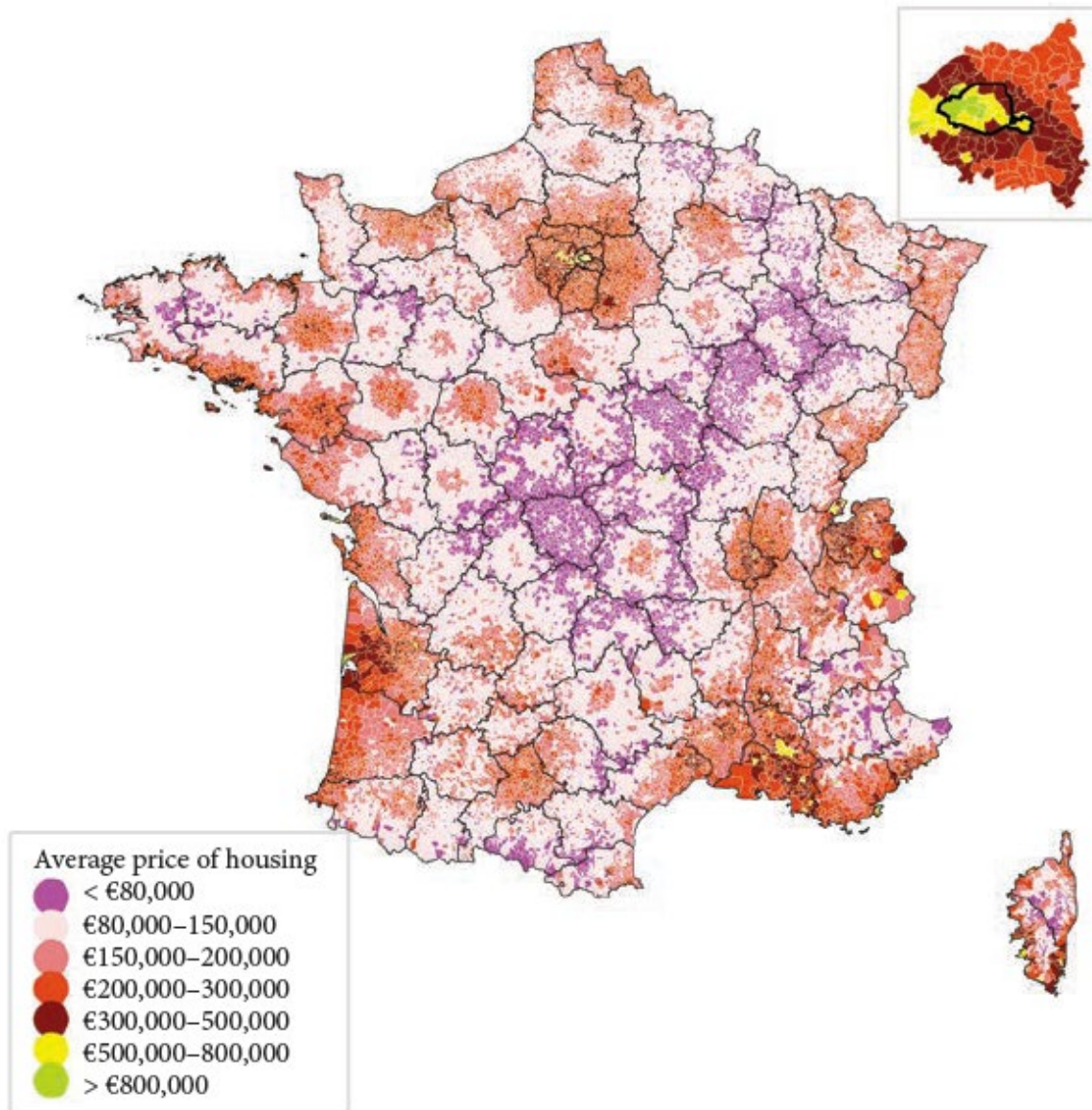


MAP 2.6. The geography of income per inhabitant, 2022

The map represents the average income per inhabitant of each of the municipalities (total taxable income before any deductions, divided by the number of inhabitants, including children; national average: 19,200 euros).

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

- **Very granular data on votes** (all legislative & presidential elections 1848-2022 and referenda 1793-2005) & **sociodemographic variables** (occupation, education, income, wealth, etc.):
- **Exemple with per capita fiscal income in 2022:** 19 200 euros on average in france
- But average per capita income is only 8 900 euros in Roubaix (Nord)
- It reaches 107 600 euros in the 7th arrondissement of Paris
- A gap of 1 to 13

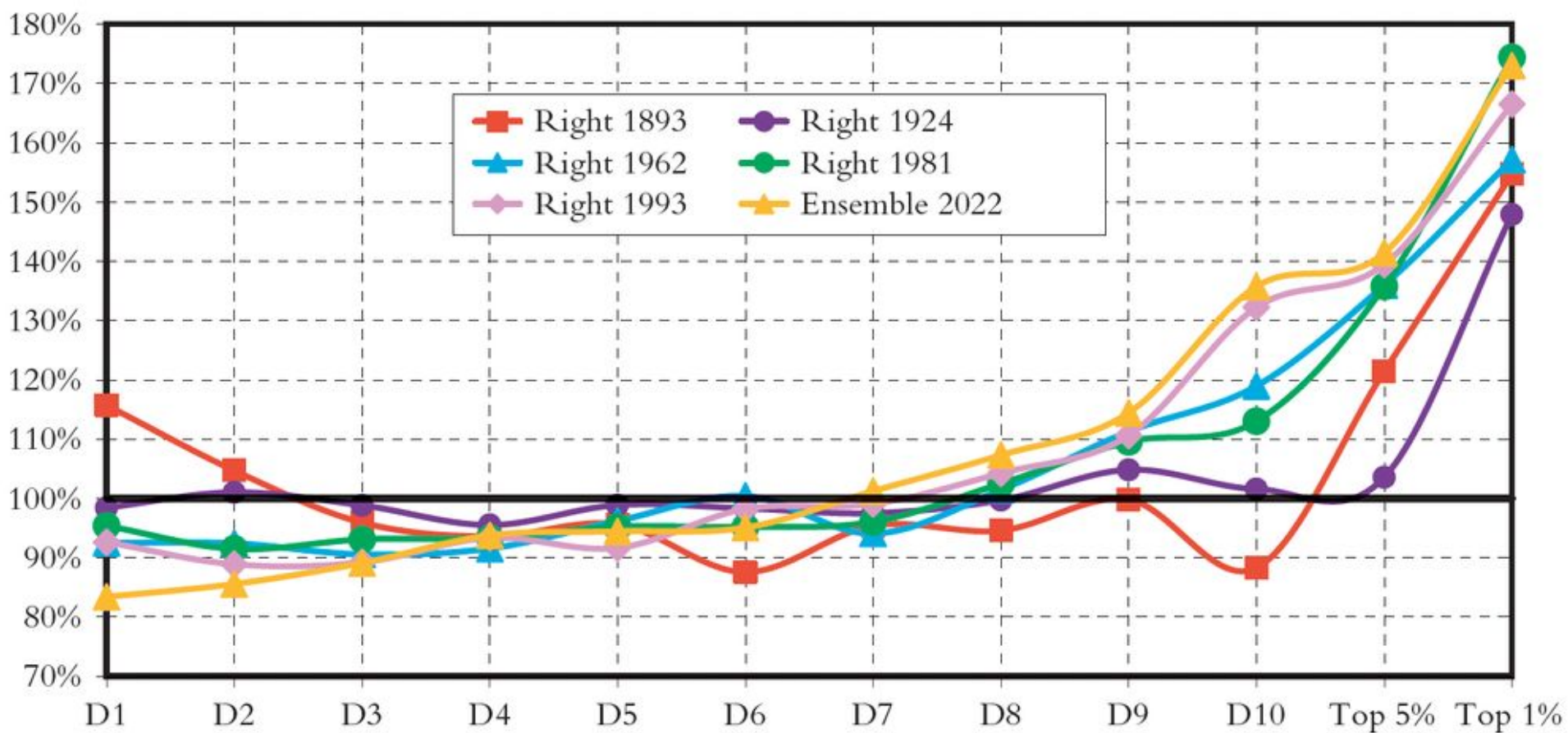


- **Very granular data on votes** (all legislative & presidential elections 1848-2022 and referenda 1793-2005) & **sociodemographic variables** (occupation, education, income, wealth, etc.):
- **Exemple with average real estate value per housing unit in 2022:** 219 500 euros on average in france
- But average real estate value is only 65 400 euros à Vierzon (Cher).
- It reaches 819 300 euros in Saint-Marc-Jaumegarde (Bouches-du-Rhône) & 1 268 500 euros in the 7th arrondissement of Paris
- A gap of 1 to 20

MAP 2.5. The geography of real estate capital

The map represents the average price of housing observed in real estate transactions in the various municipalities (national average: 219,500 euros).

Sources and series: unchistoireduconflitpolitique.fr



Distribution of the population by deciles as a function of municipal income per inhabitant

FIGURE I.1. Was the 2022 Ensemble vote the most bourgeois in French electoral history?

The vote for the Ensemble-UDI bloc in 2022 increases strongly with income. The slope is on the whole comparable with the vote profiles for the right wing observed in the past, with the difference that the latter generally got better results in the poorest municipalities (particularly in the poorest rural municipalities, but not only there).

Note: The results indicated here are after controls for the size of the conurbation and municipality.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

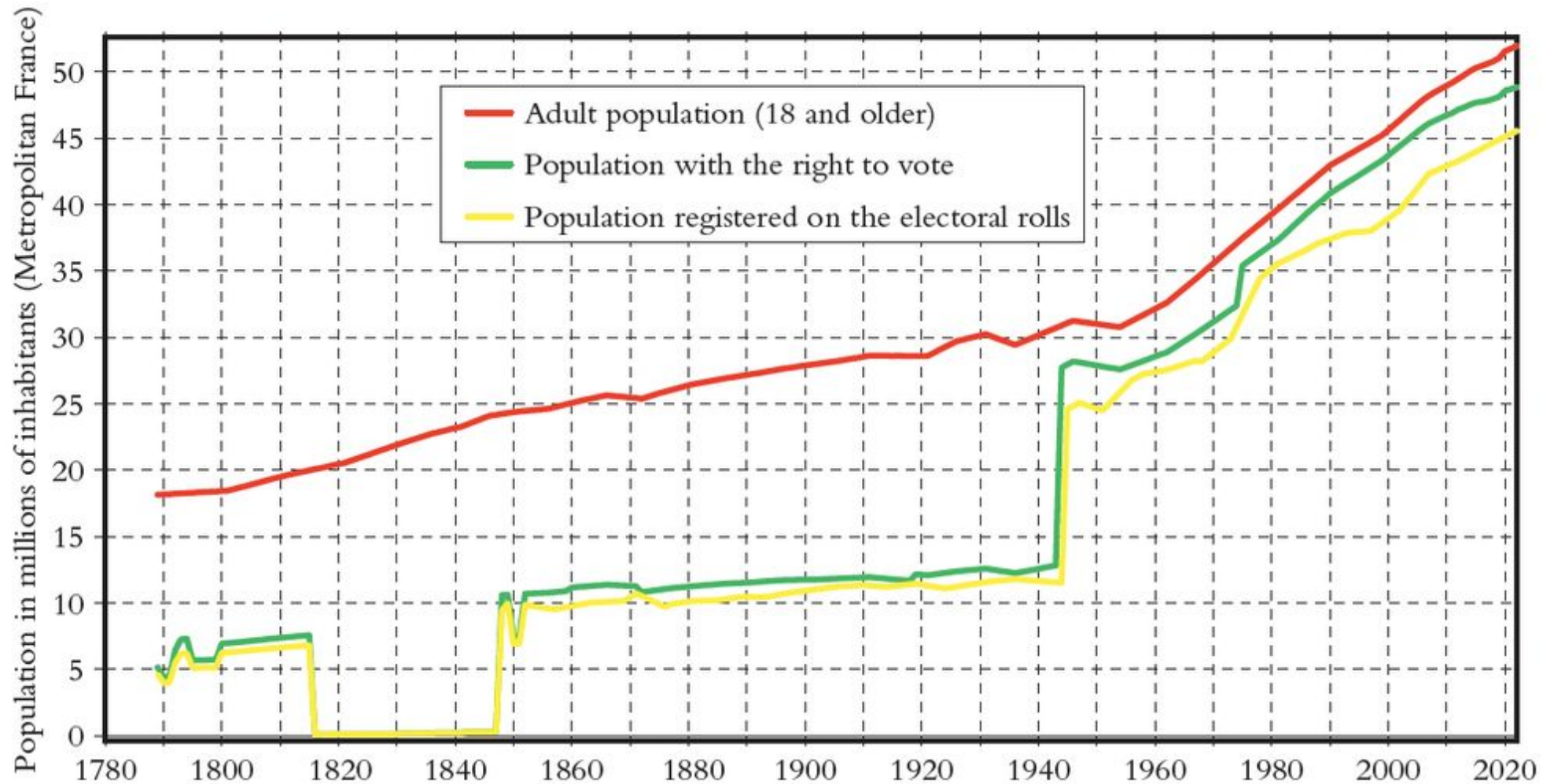


FIGURE 1.1. The right to vote in France, 1789–2022

The population with the right to vote was about 5–6 million in France under the Revolution, fell to 0.1–0.2 million under the Restoration (censitary suffrage), and then grew to more than 10 million in 1848 (universal male suffrage), almost 28 million in 1944 (universal female suffrage), and 48 million in 2022 (for an adult population of 52 million).

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

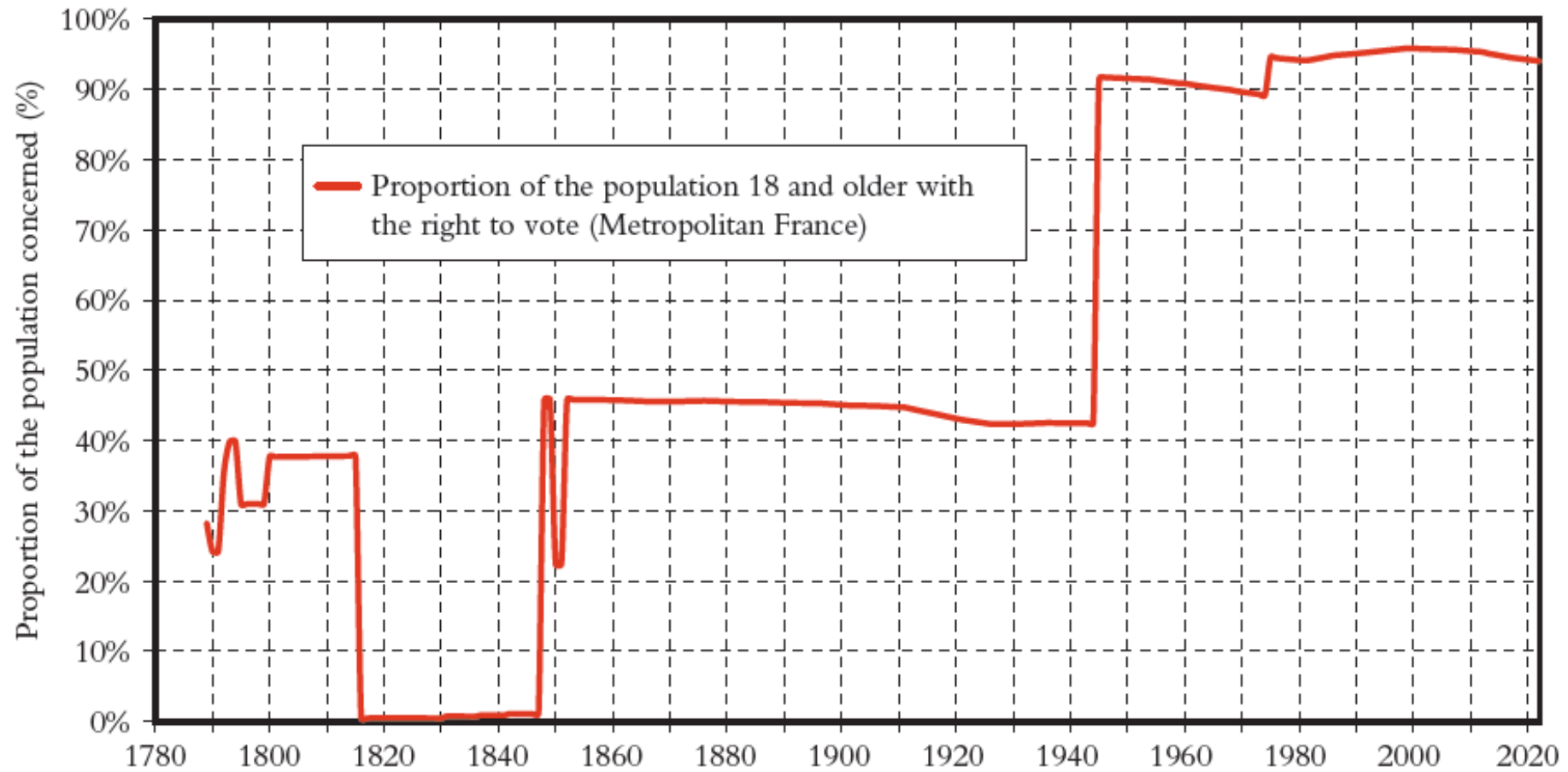


FIGURE 1.2. The long march toward universal suffrage

The proportion of the adult population aged eighteen and over) with the right to vote was about 30–40% in France during the Revolution, fell to 0.5–1% between 1815 and 1848 (censitary suffrage), then grew to about 45% in 1848 with the implementation of universal male suffrage and more than 90% in 1944 with universal female suffrage.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

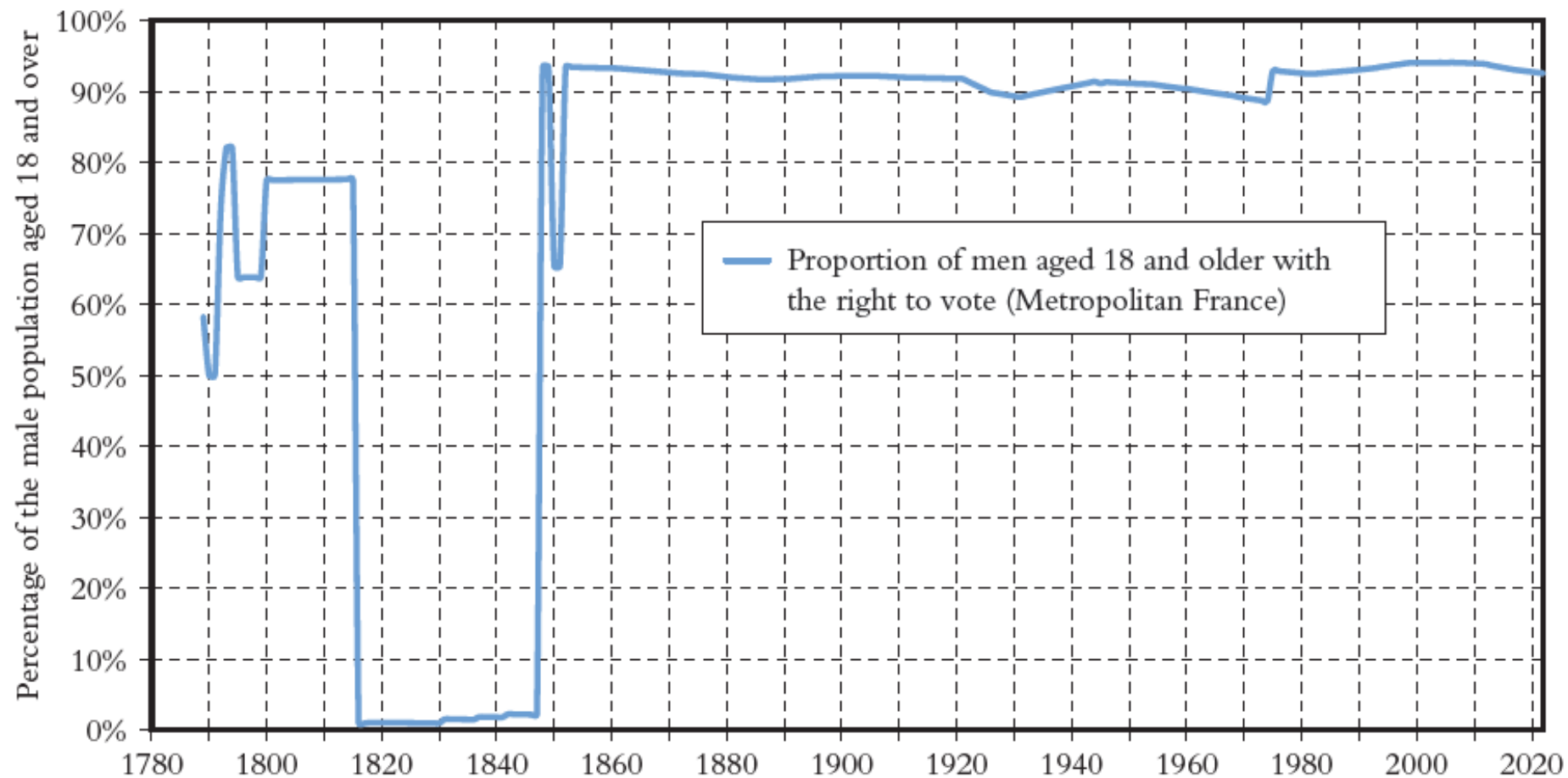


FIGURE 1.3. Male suffrage in France, 1789–2022

The proportion of the adult male population (aged eighteen and over) with the right to vote was about 60–80% in France during the Revolution, fell to 1–2% between 1815 and 1848 (censitary suffrage), then rose to 90% in 1848 with the implementation of universal male suffrage.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

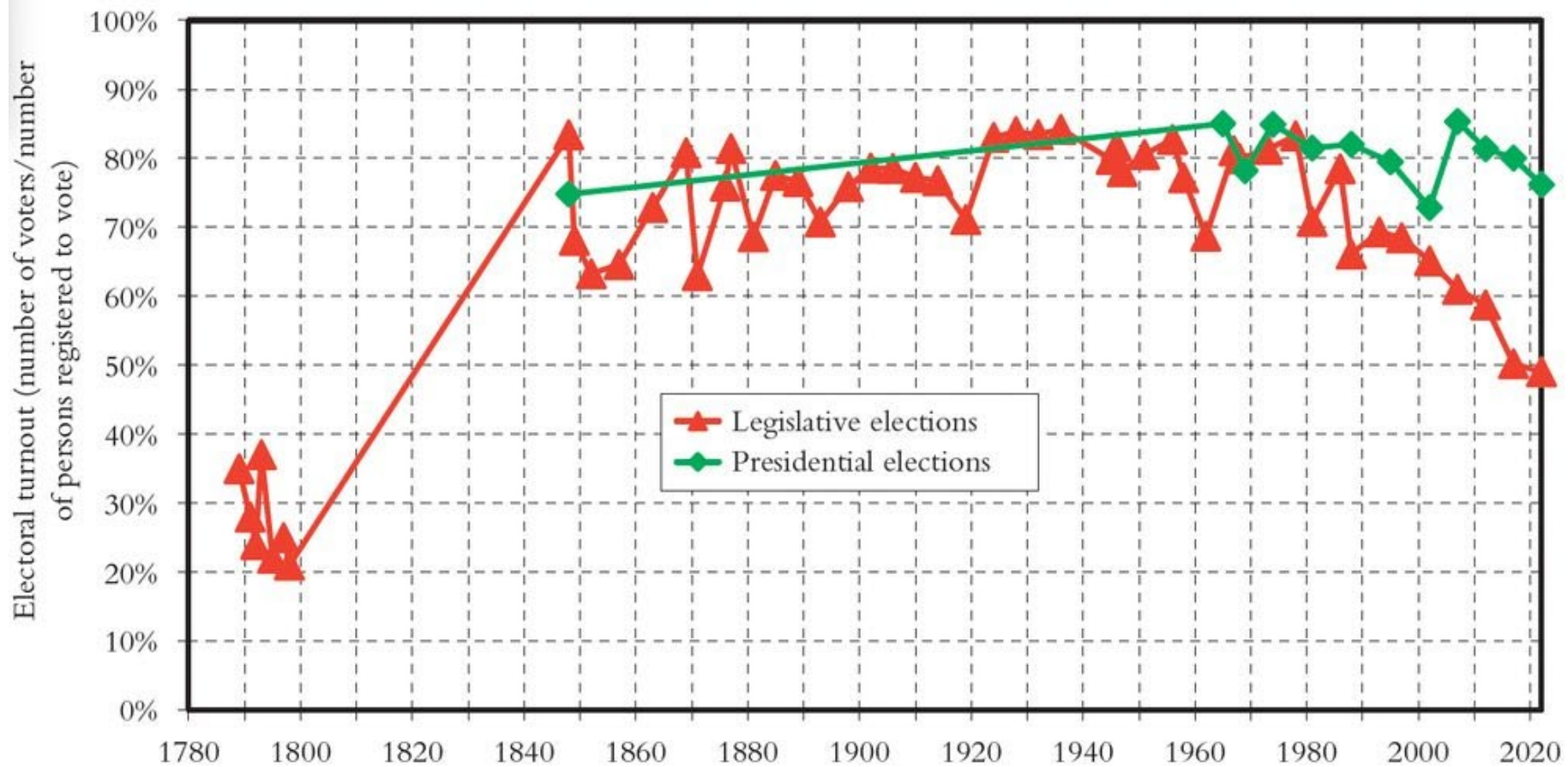


FIGURE 5.1. Electoral turnout, 1789–2022

Turnout in legislative elections was around 30–40% under the Revolution (indirect election). With the establishment of direct election, it oscillated around 70–80% from 1848 to 1980–1990, and has clearly decreased since 2000; it fell below 50% in 2022. Turnout for presidential elections was around 70–80% in 1848, as it was from 1965 to 2022. Note: The turnout indicated here is still the one observed in Metropolitan France for the first round of legislative and presidential elections.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

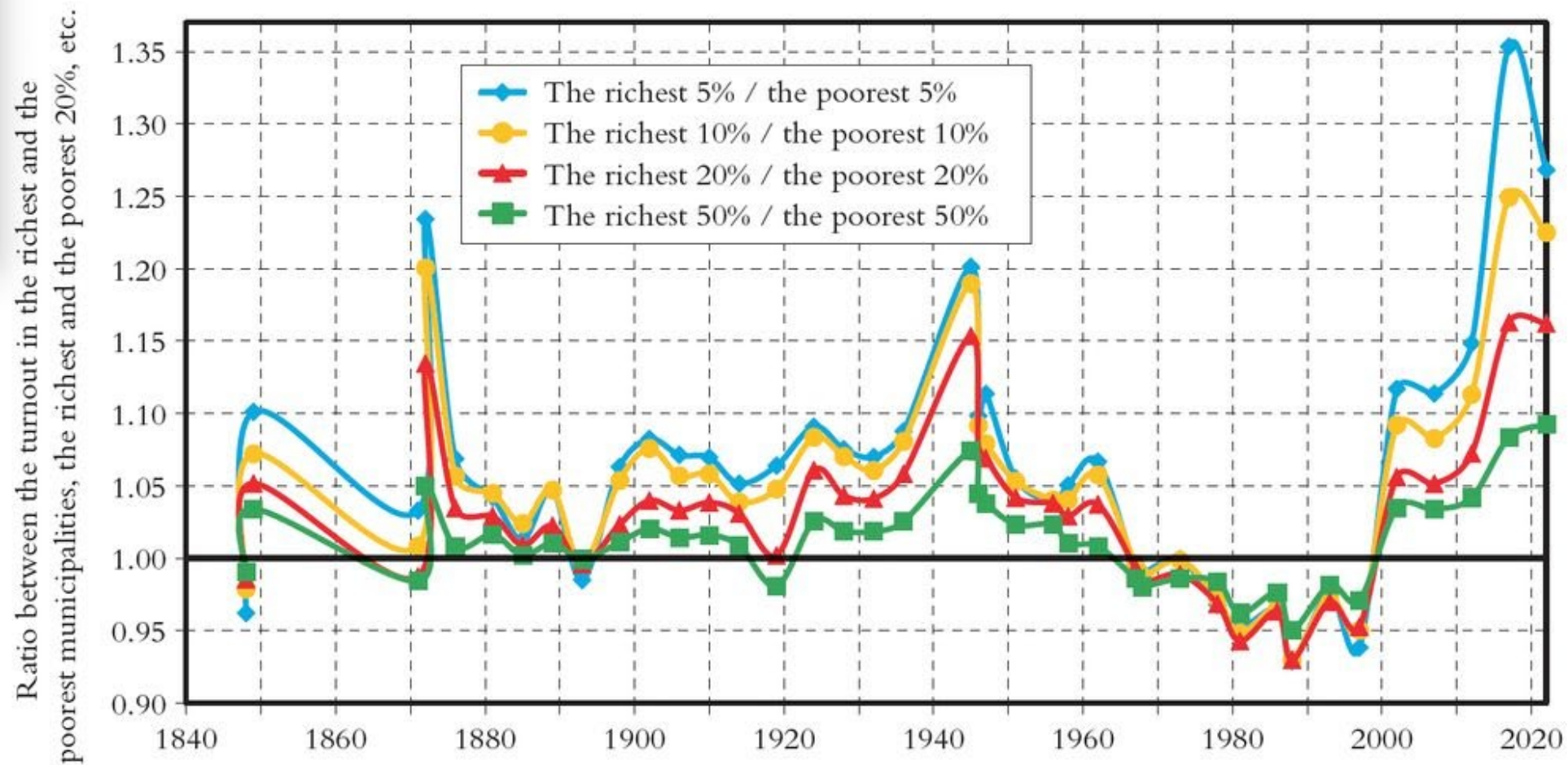


FIGURE 6.1. Disparities in turnout: Rich and poor municipalities (legislative elections, 1848–2022)

In the legislative elections of 2022, the turnout was 1.27 times higher in the richest 5% municipalities than in the poorest 5%. From the legislative elections of 1848 to those of 2022, the turnout has been in general higher in rich municipalities than in poor municipalities, with a very clear broadening of the gap over recent decades.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

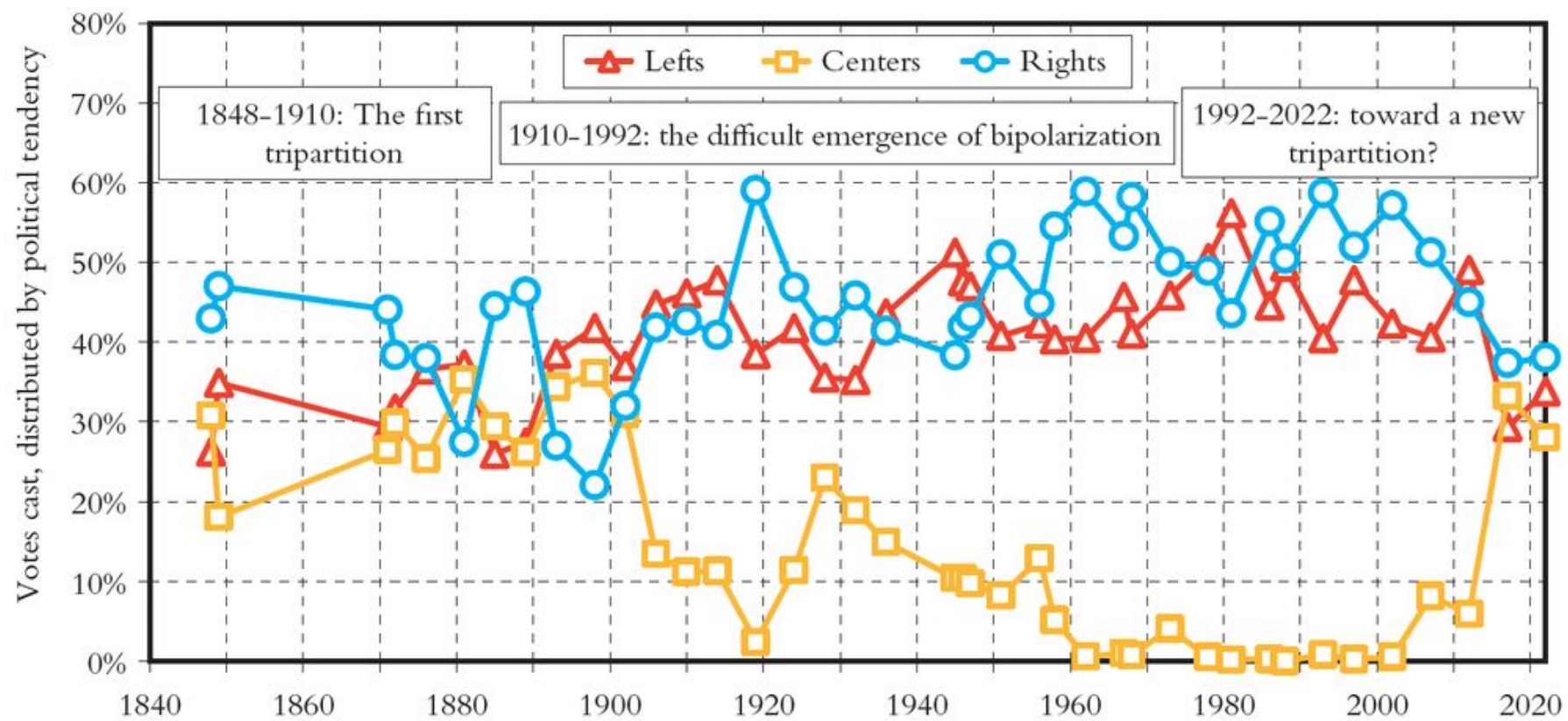
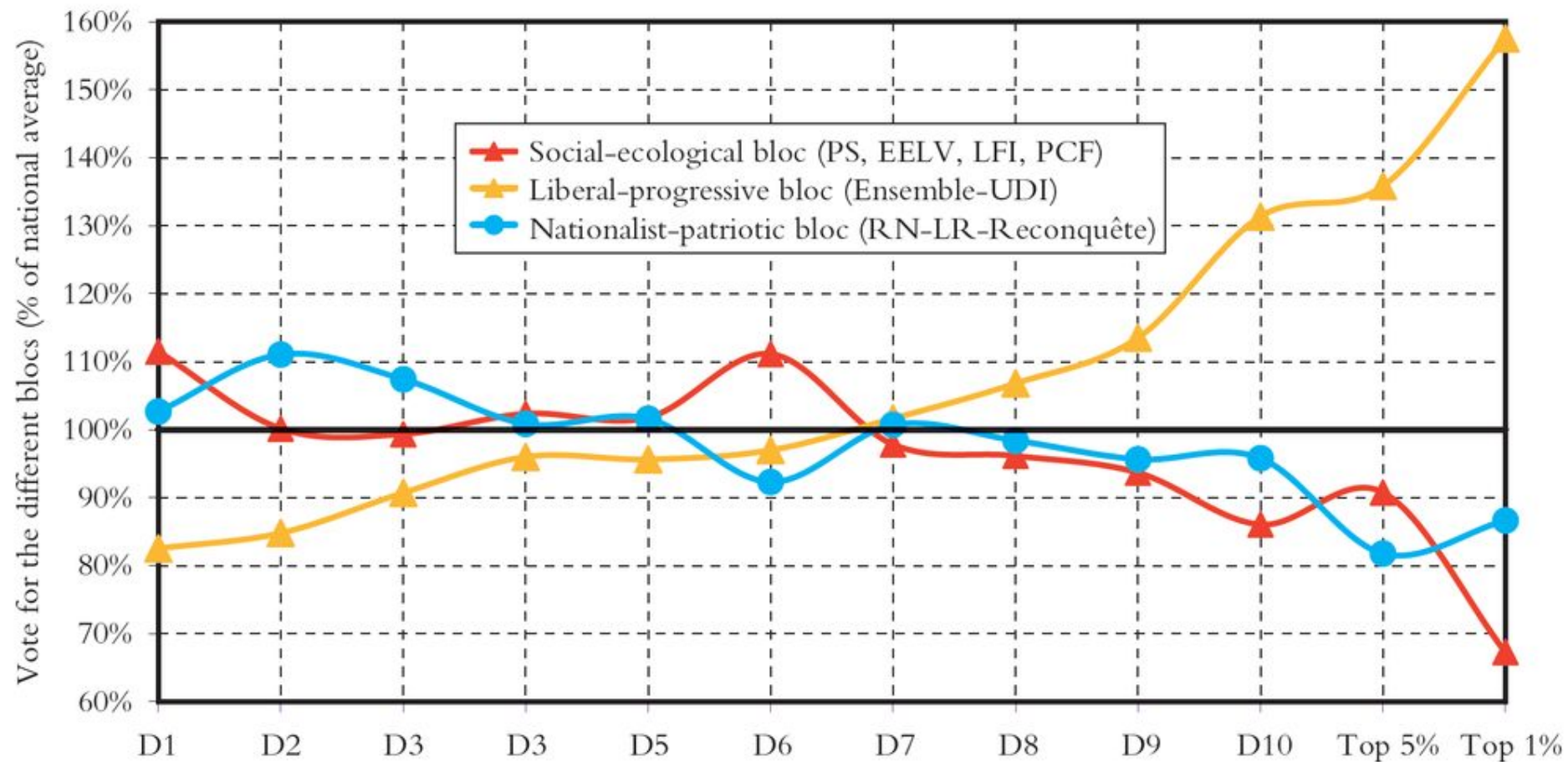


FIGURE 8.1. Between tripartition and bipolarization: Political tendencies in legislative elections in France, 1848–2022

Between 1848 and 2022 the political system oscillated between tripartition (with three poles comparable to Left, Center, and Right), and bipolarization (with two dominant poles, Left and Right). The tendencies classified as Center include the Moderate and Opportunistic Republicans in 1848 and Modem and LREM in 2017–2022. Those classified as Left include the Socialists and Radicals in 1848 and the PCF, PS, LFI, etc. in 2017–2022. Those classified as Right include the conservatives, monarchists, and liberals, etc. in 1848 to 1910, and the RN, LR, etc. in 2017–2022. See table 8.1 on the party regimes. On average, during the period 2017–2022, the Left bloc received 41% of the votes, the Center bloc 14%, and the Right bloc 45%.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr



Distribution of the population by deciles as a function of municipal income per inhabitant

FIGURE 11.27. The legislative elections of 2022: Social tripartition

In the legislative elections of 2022, the liberal-progressive bloc (30% of the votes) was strongly increasing with the average municipal income, whereas the results of the social-ecological bloc (33% of the votes), and to a lesser extent, those of the nationalist-patriotic bloc (37%), diminished with income. Note: The results indicated here are before any controls.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

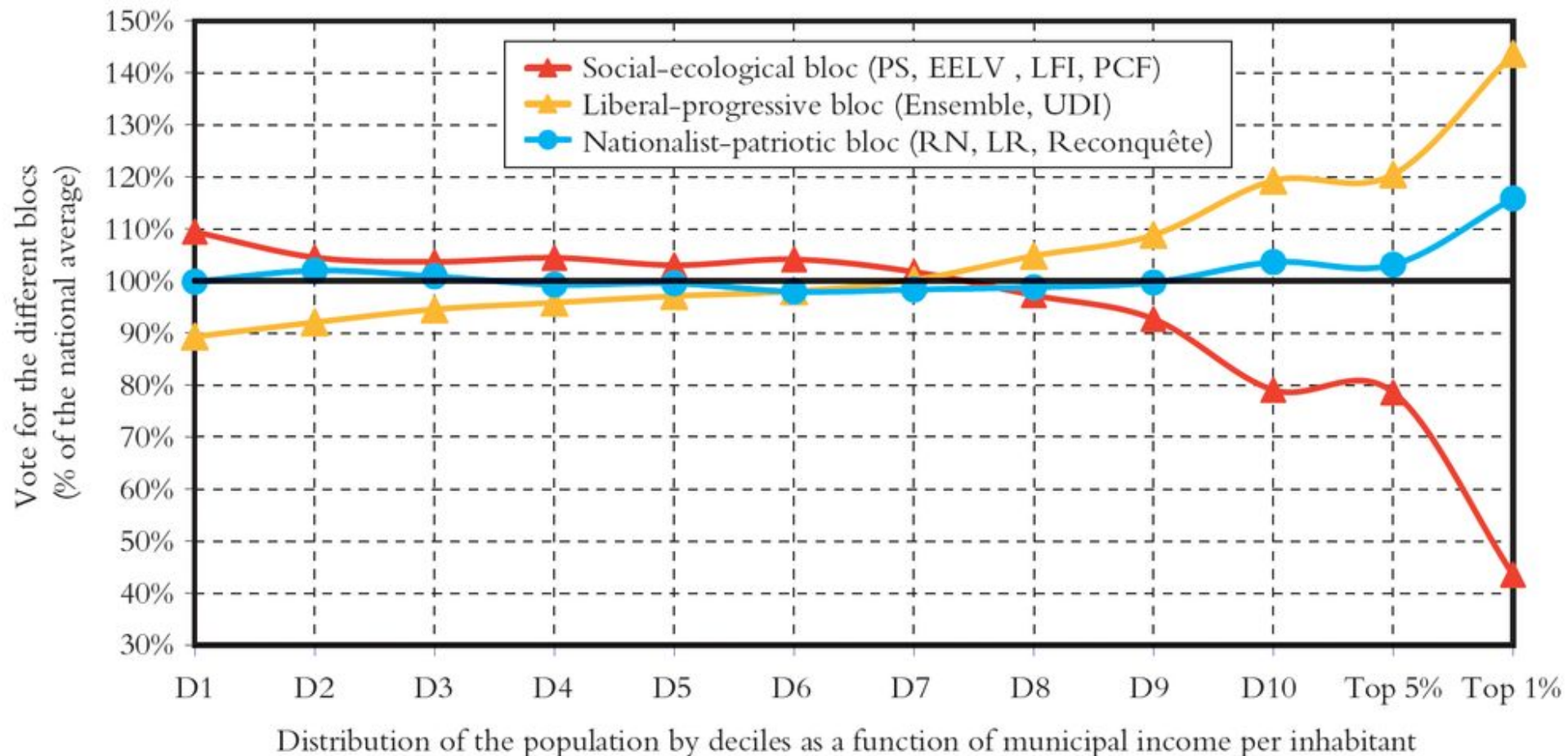
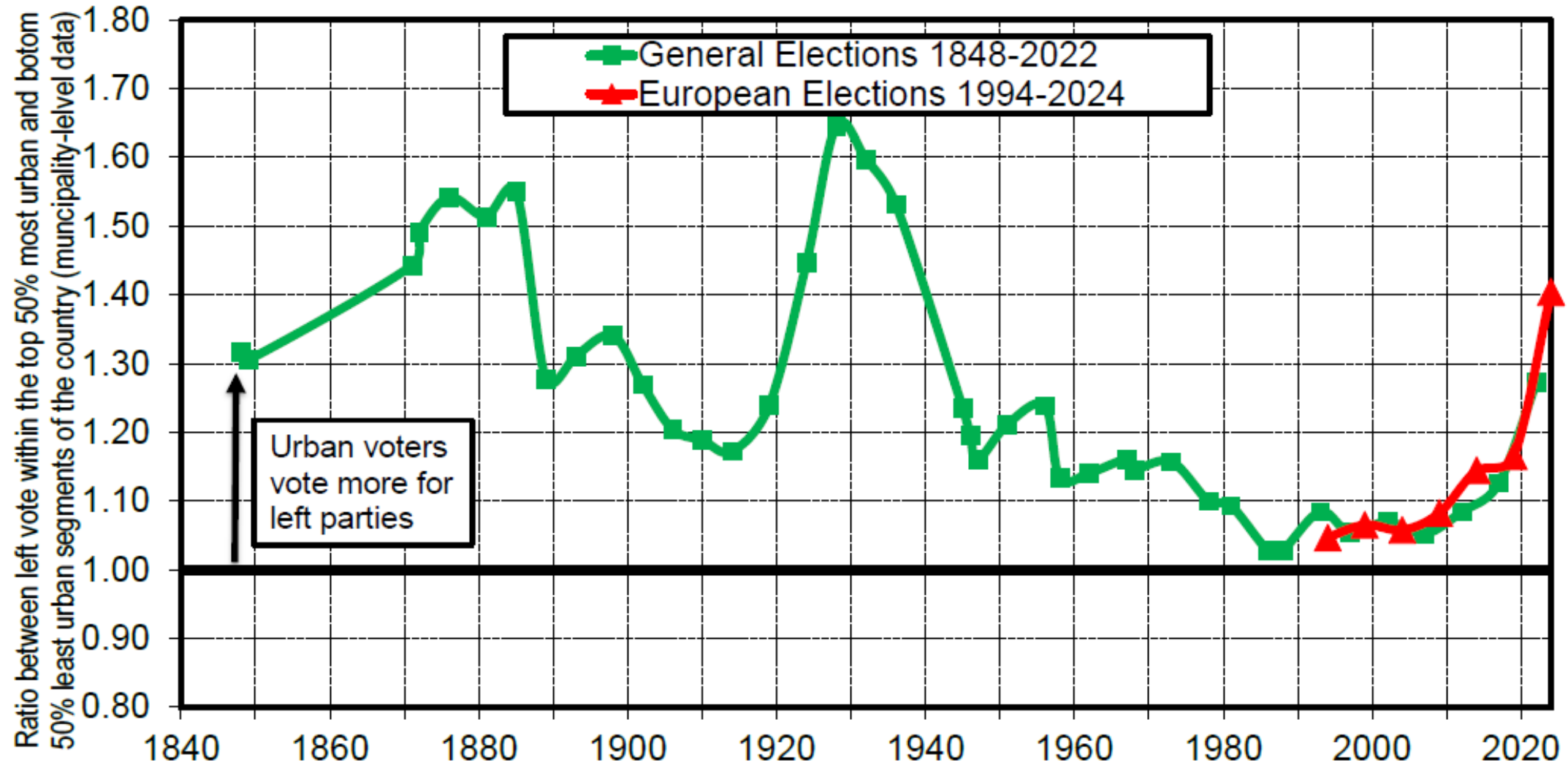


FIGURE 13.20. The presidential election of 2022 (after all sociodemographic controls)

In the presidential election of 2022, the social tripartition between the three blocs appears even more plainly when we control for all the other sociodemographic characteristics (size of the conurbation, occupations, diplomas held, etc.). Note: The results indicated here are after the introduction of all the sociodemographic controls.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

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

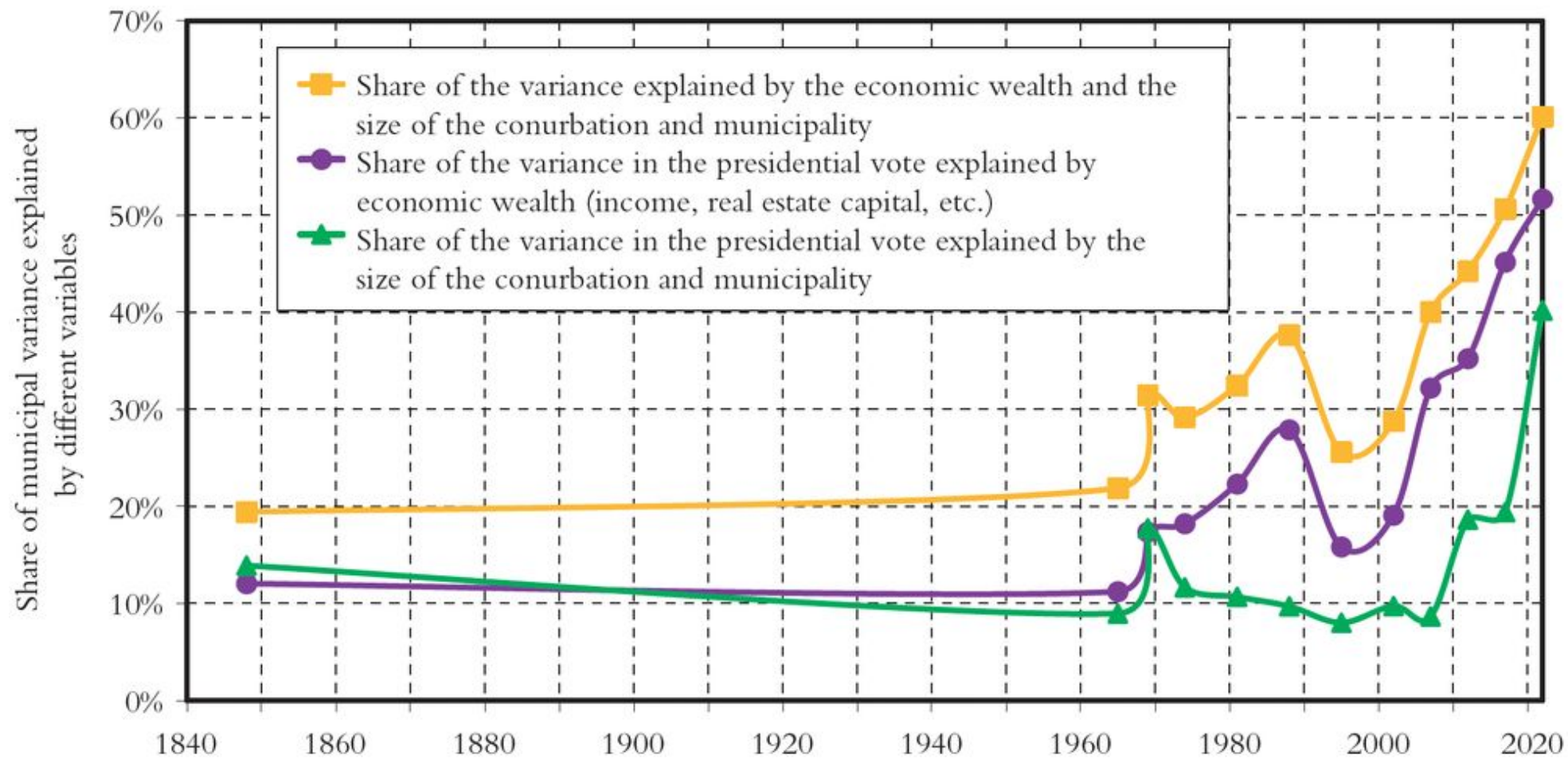


FIGURE 13.23. The geosocial determinants of the presidential election

The explanatory power of the variables connected with economic wealth (income, real estate capital [the total value of housing], the proportion of homeowners, and the concentration of real estate) to account for the disparities in the Left-Right presidential vote from 1848 to 2022 has greatly increased in the course of recent elections, even more greatly than that of the size of the conurbation. In all, geosocial class (wealth and territory) explains 60% of the variance in 2022.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

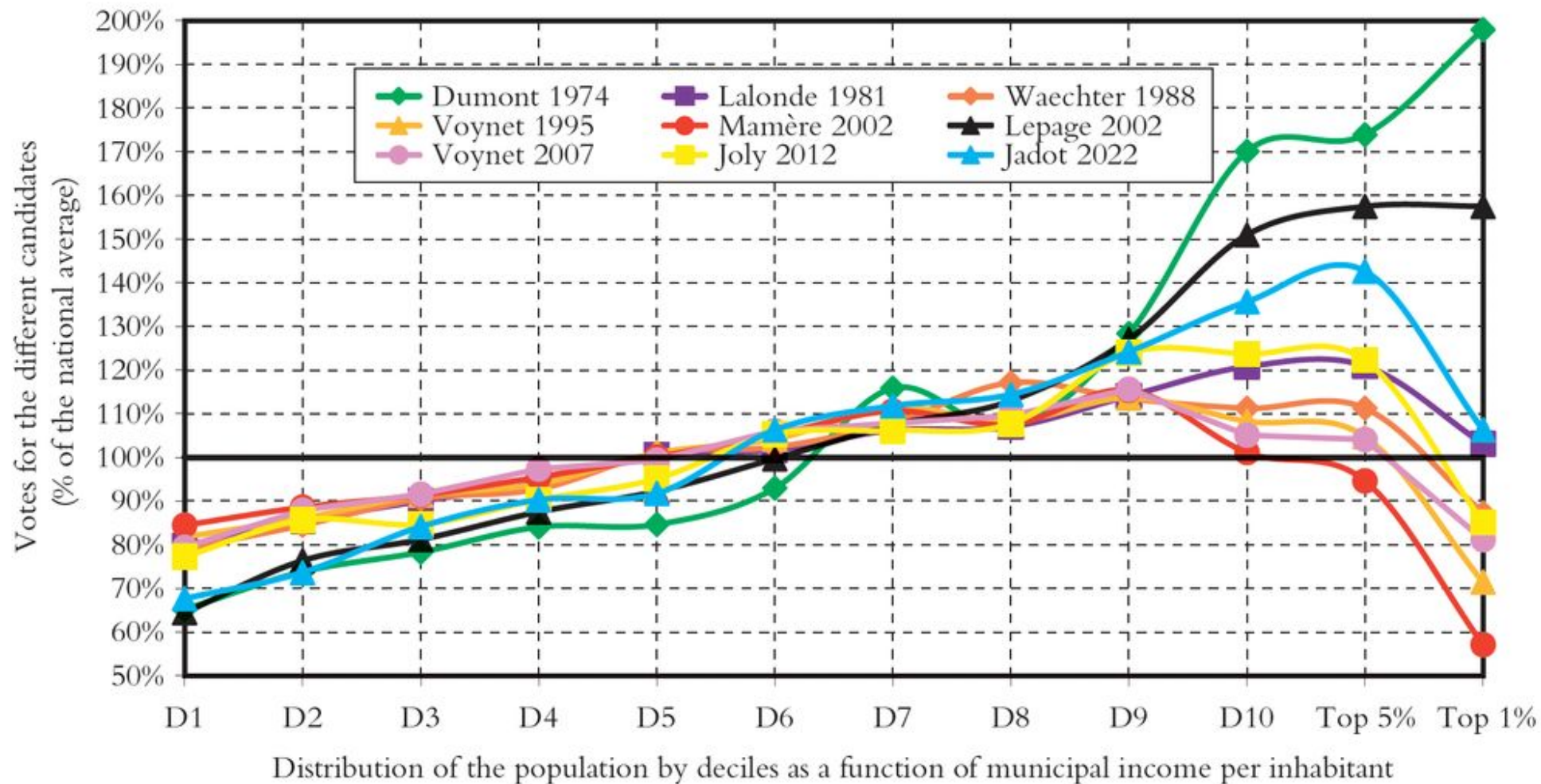
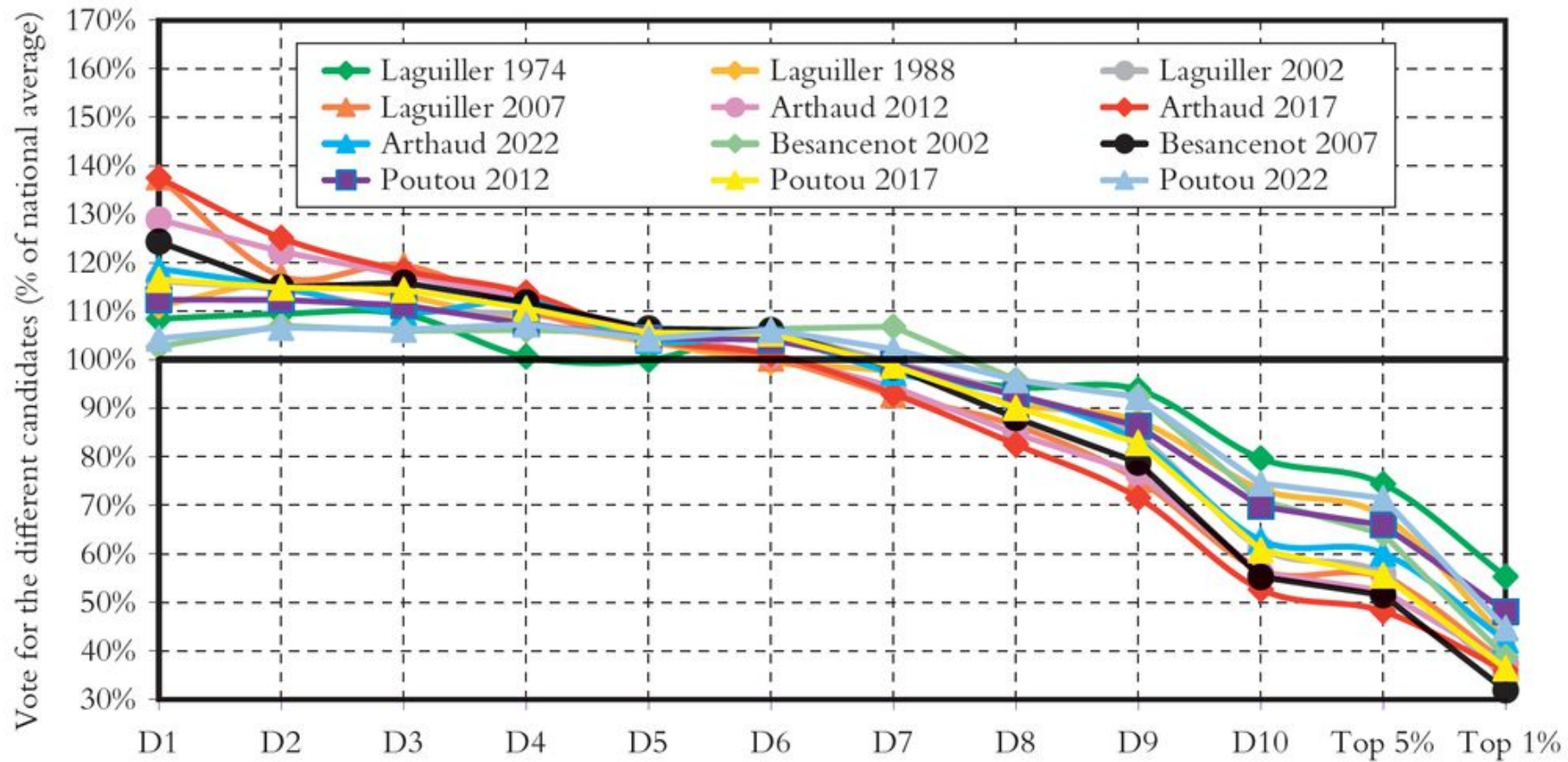


FIGURE 12.23. Political ecology and wealth, 1974–2022

In the 1974 presidential election, the vote for Dumont was a sharply increasing function of the municipality's income, all through the distribution. Subsequently, the vote for the ecological candidates was generally an increasing function of municipal income, except for the richest municipalities. Note: The results indicated here are after controls for the size of the conurbation and municipality.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr



Distribution of the population by deciles as a function of the municipal income per inhabitant

FIGURE 12.25. Trotskyism and wealth, 1974–2022

From the presidential election of 1974 to that of 2022, the Trotskyist candidates have systematically had a vote profile that sharply decreases as a function of municipal wealth, whether it is a question of the LO candidates (Arlette Laguiller or Nathalie Arthaud), the LCR candidate (Olivier Besancenot), or the NPA candidate (Philippe Poutou). Note: The results indicated here are after controls for the size of the conurbation and municipality.

Sources and series: unehistoireduconflitpolitique.fr

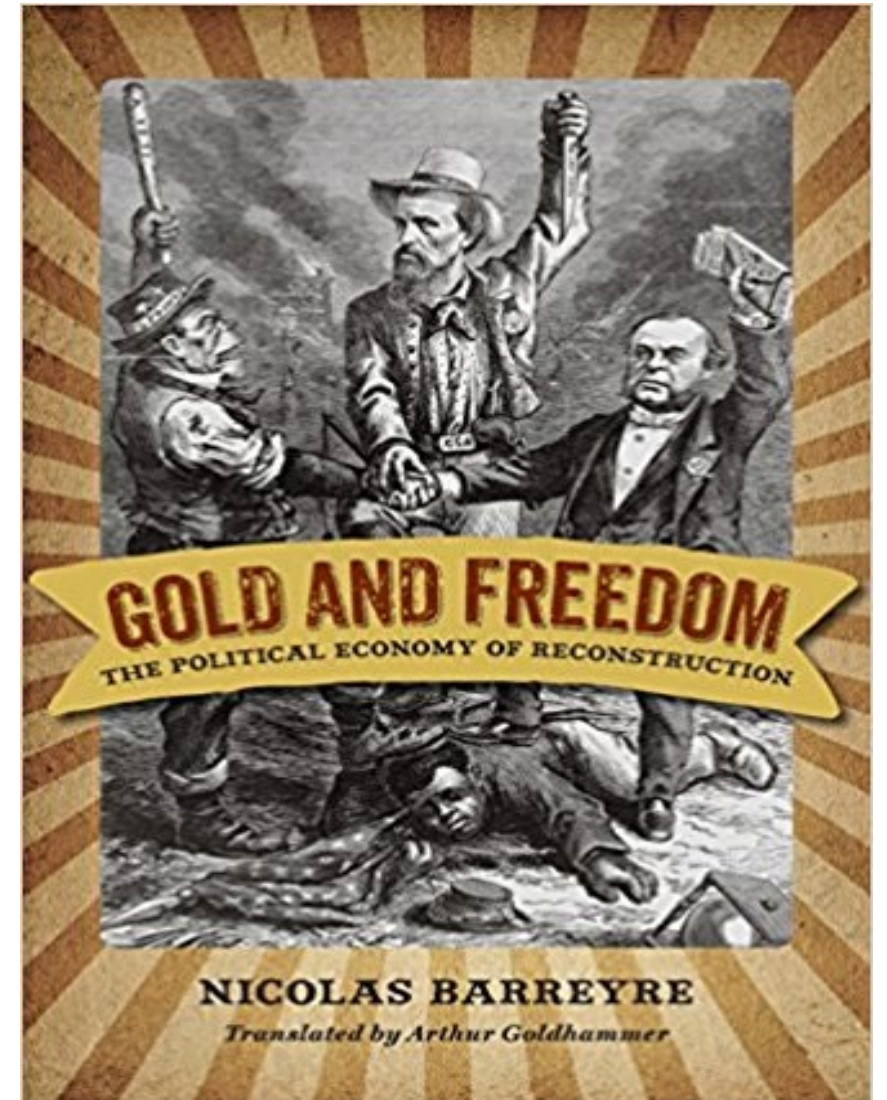
Class Conflict vs Racial Conflict: US 1776-2028

- The US party system is often viewed as very bizarre from the perspective of « European », « standard » left vs right view of politics. But maybe it is not so bizarre if we take a very long-run perspective.
- How is it that the pro-slavery party (Democrats in 1860) gradually became the New Deal party (Roosevelt 1932) and the Progressives/Civil Rights/Left-wing party (Kennedy/Clinton/Obama)?
And also more recently the high-education, high-income party.
- And conversely how is it that the free-labour party (Lincoln's Republicans in 1860) gradually became the pro-business pro-laissez-faire party (Hoover 1928) and the anti-minority party (Trump 2016 & 2024)?
And also more recently the pro-white-poor party (≈Democrats 19c).
- To understand these evolutions one needs a multi-dimensional view of politics: income vs race vs regionalism vs money vs free-trade etc.
- There is nothing « normal » in one-dimensional class-based conflict

- N. Barreyre, *L'or et la liberté – Une histoire spatiale des Etats-Unis après la guerre de sécession* (Ed. EHESS 2014)

Gold and freedom – The political economy of reconstruction (Un.Virginia Press 2015)

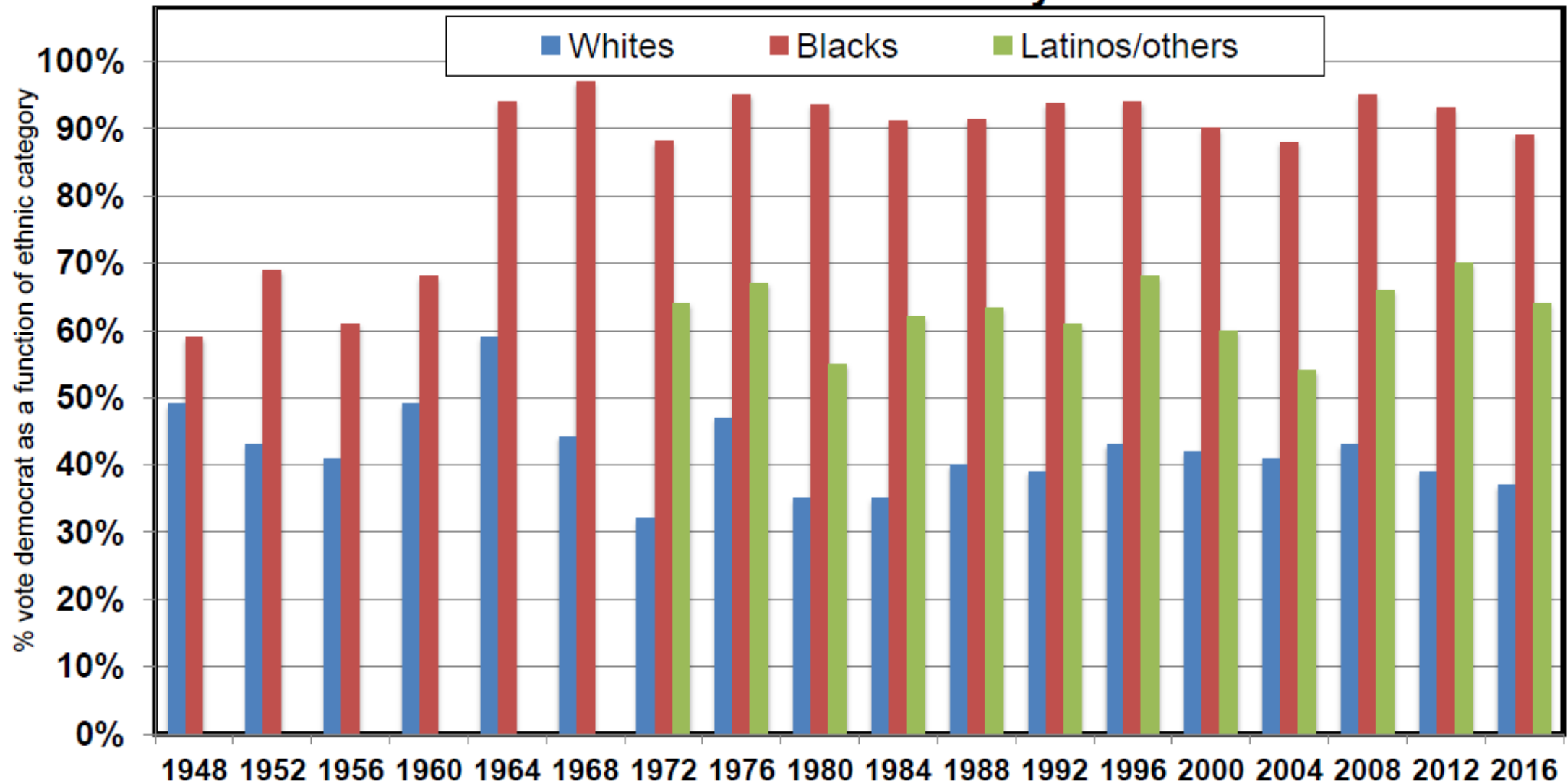
- **Very interesting book on the changing structure of US political conflict 1860-1884**
- Q.: How did the Democrats (who lost 1860 election against Lincoln's Republicans and lost the Civil War) manage to reconstruct themselves and win the 1884 presid. election?
- A.: New South-Midwest coalition against the blacks and against the North-East financial elite (free-labour capitalism Republican ideology not well suited to adress all issues).



- **Free-labour Republican coalition quickly loses its majority, first because divided Reps soon abandon the South to segregationists democrats:** by 1868-1870, end of any serious attempt to impose racial equality and black suffrage; 14th amendment never applied, partly because Reps were strongly attached literacy tests on Irish migrants in Mass and NY (Democrats favour Irish naturalization & white migrants in the North and black lynching in the South)
- **And next because on the two other major policy issues of the day** (war debt repayment: hard vs soft money, interest vs veteran pension; manufacturing protection/federal tariff vs free trade/no federal tax), **Democrats are able to attract lower-class & middle-class white voters from the West and the North-East by describing the Republicans as captured by North-East financial/manufacturing elite**
- **1884 Democrat winning coalition: already the flavour of the New Deal « left-wing » 1932 coalition... except that strongly anti-black** (until 1960-1964, when South vote turn from Dems to Reps)

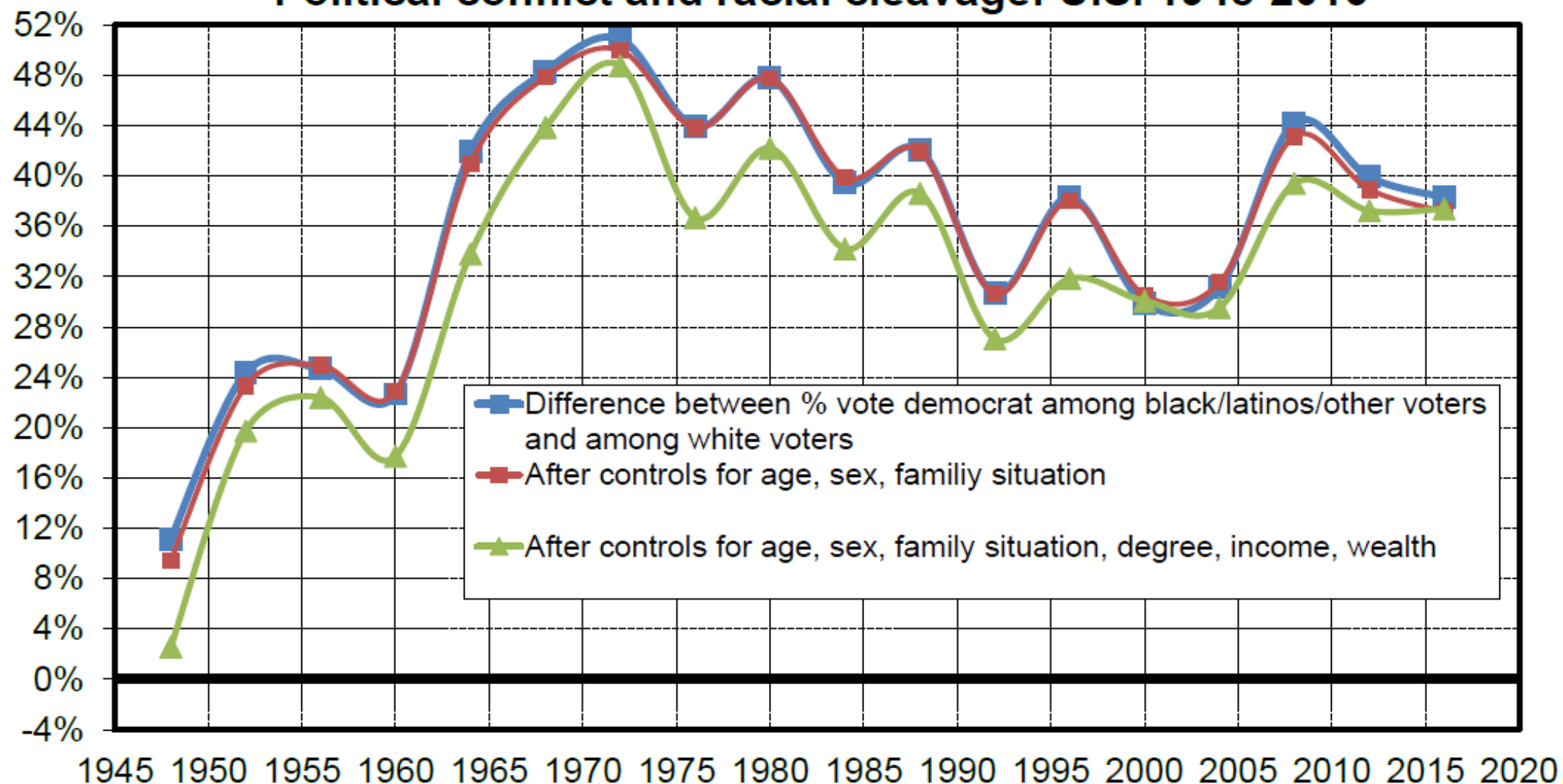
- **Between the 1940s and 1960s, Democrats choose to turn pro-Civil rights and to loose the South. Why?**
 - **International factors:** post-WW2 cold war context, anti-Nazi coalition with Soviet Union, decolonization, competition with USSR for moral leadership and prestige. Being openly racist is very costly on the international scene in the 1950s-1960s. In the 1980s, Reps still oppose sanctions against Apartheid regime in South Regime, but not the Democrats: complete change as compared to 1860-1930.
 - **Domestic factors: the post-Great-Depression New Deal social policy platform** (social security, health and unemployment insurance, progressive taxation, etc.) **favours all the poor, black and white;** so it makes little sense for the New Deal party to seek support from poor whites and not from poor blacks
- **the rise of New-Deal class-based conflit in the US 1930-1980... but racial conflict never disappeared & made a come-back from Nixon-Reagan in the 1970s-1980s to Trump 2010s-2020s** (welfare, crime etc. rather than segregation)

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).

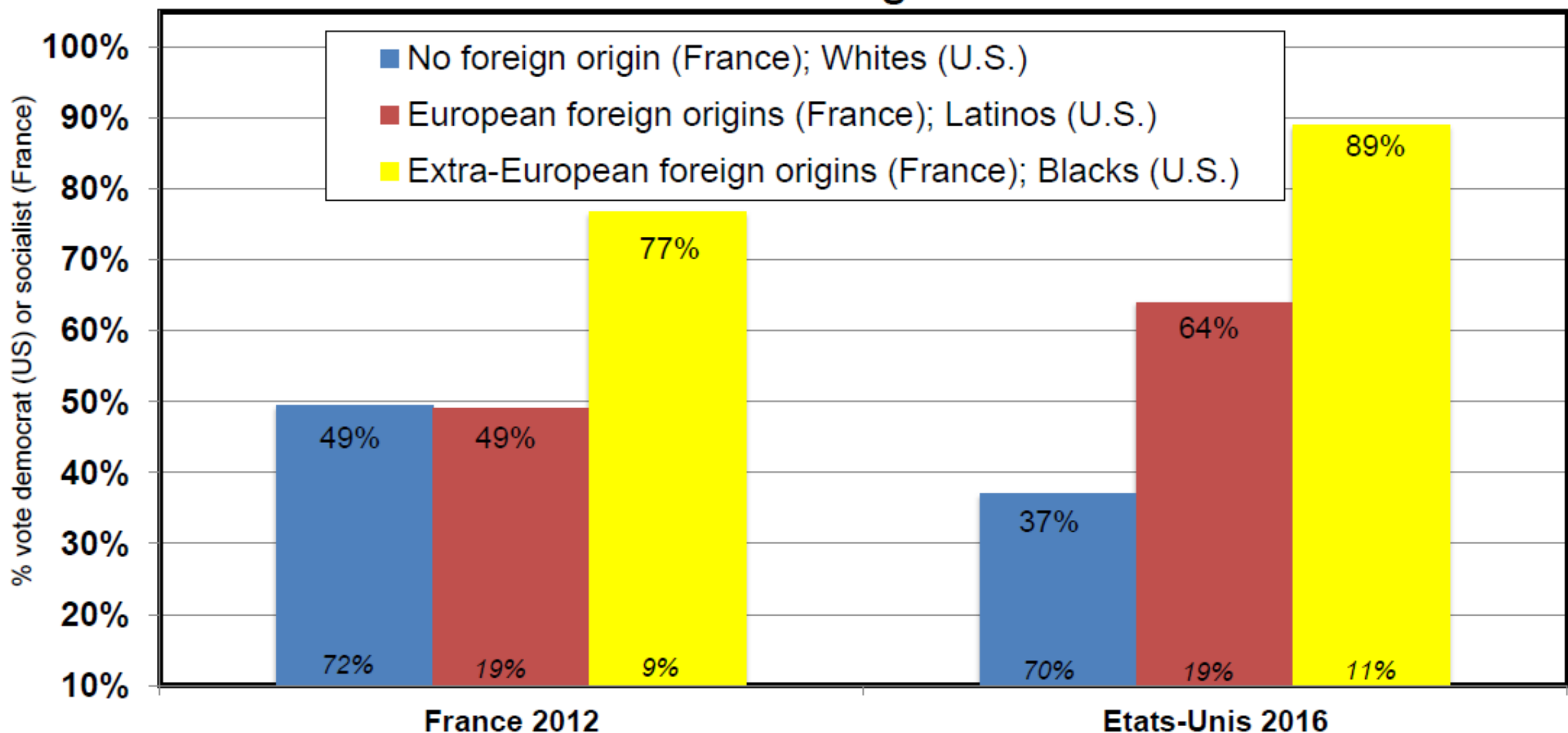
Political conflict and racial cleavage: U.S. 1948-2016



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.

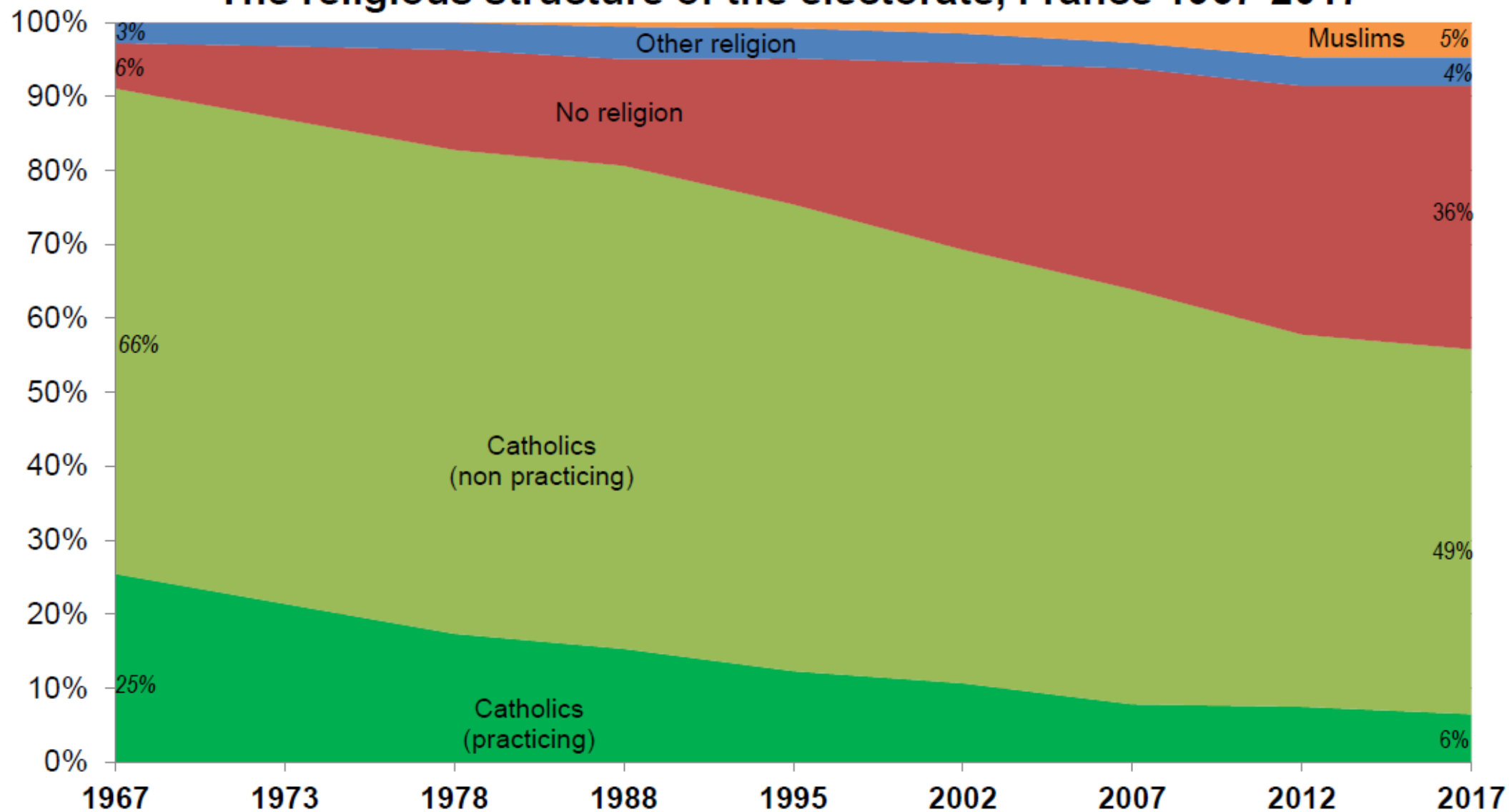
Sources and series: see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 15.8).

Political conflict and origins: France & the US



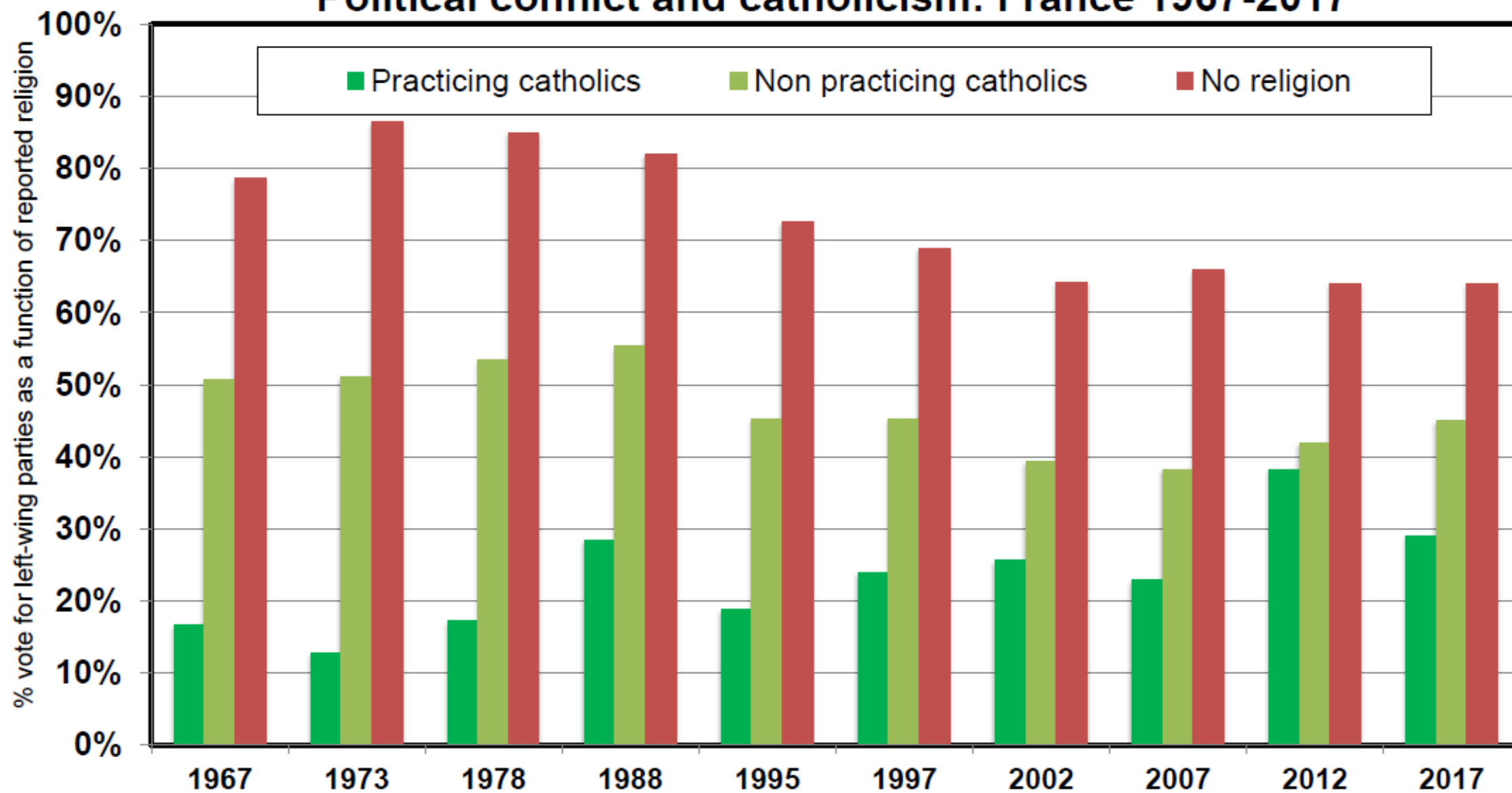
Interpretation. In 2012, the socialist candidate in the second round of the French presidential election obtained 49% of the vote among voters with no foreign origin (no reported foreign grand-parent) and among voters with European foreign origins (in practice mostly Spain, Italy, Portugal) and 77% of 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).

The religious structure of the electorate, France 1967-2017



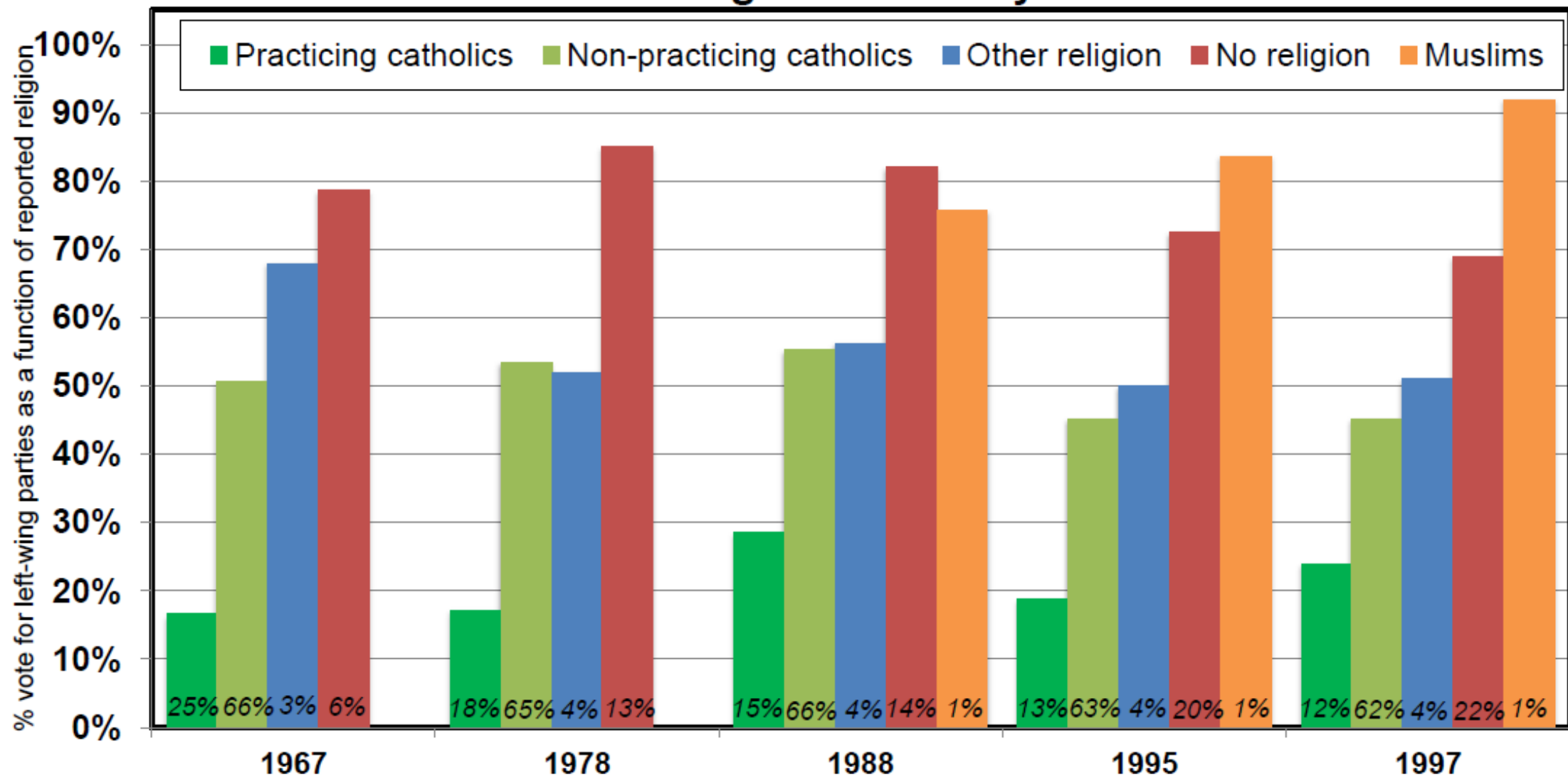
Interpretation. Between 1967 and 2017, the proportion of the electorate reporting to be practicing catholic (going to the church at least once per month) dropped from 25% to 6%. Non practicing catholics dropped from 66% to 49%, those reporting no religion increased from 6% to 36%, other religions (protestantism, 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



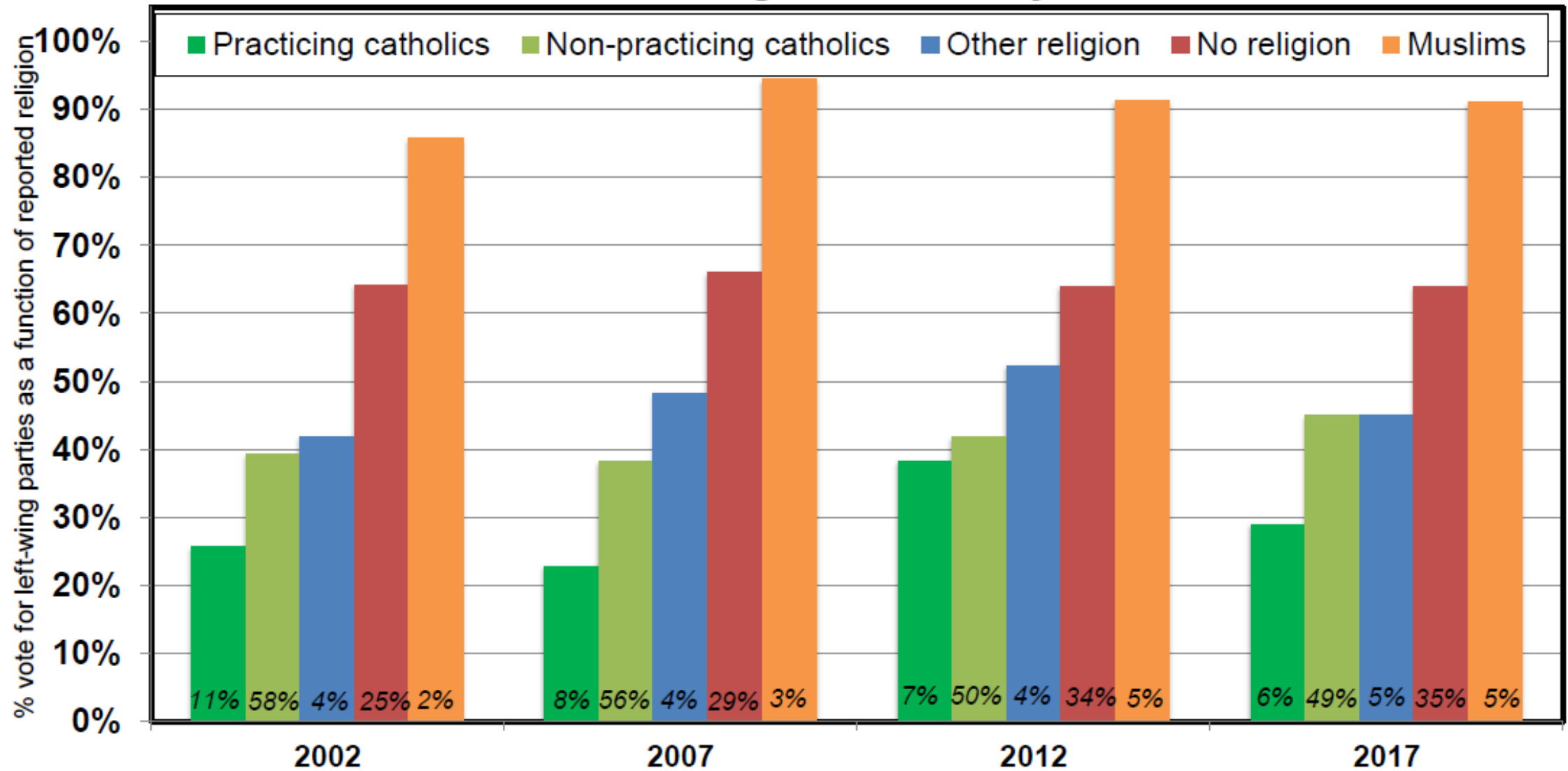
Interpretation. Self-reported practicing and non-practicing catholic voters have always voted less strongly for left-wing parties than voters reporting no religion, but the gap has reduced over time. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 14.15).

Political conflict & religious diversity: France 1967-1997



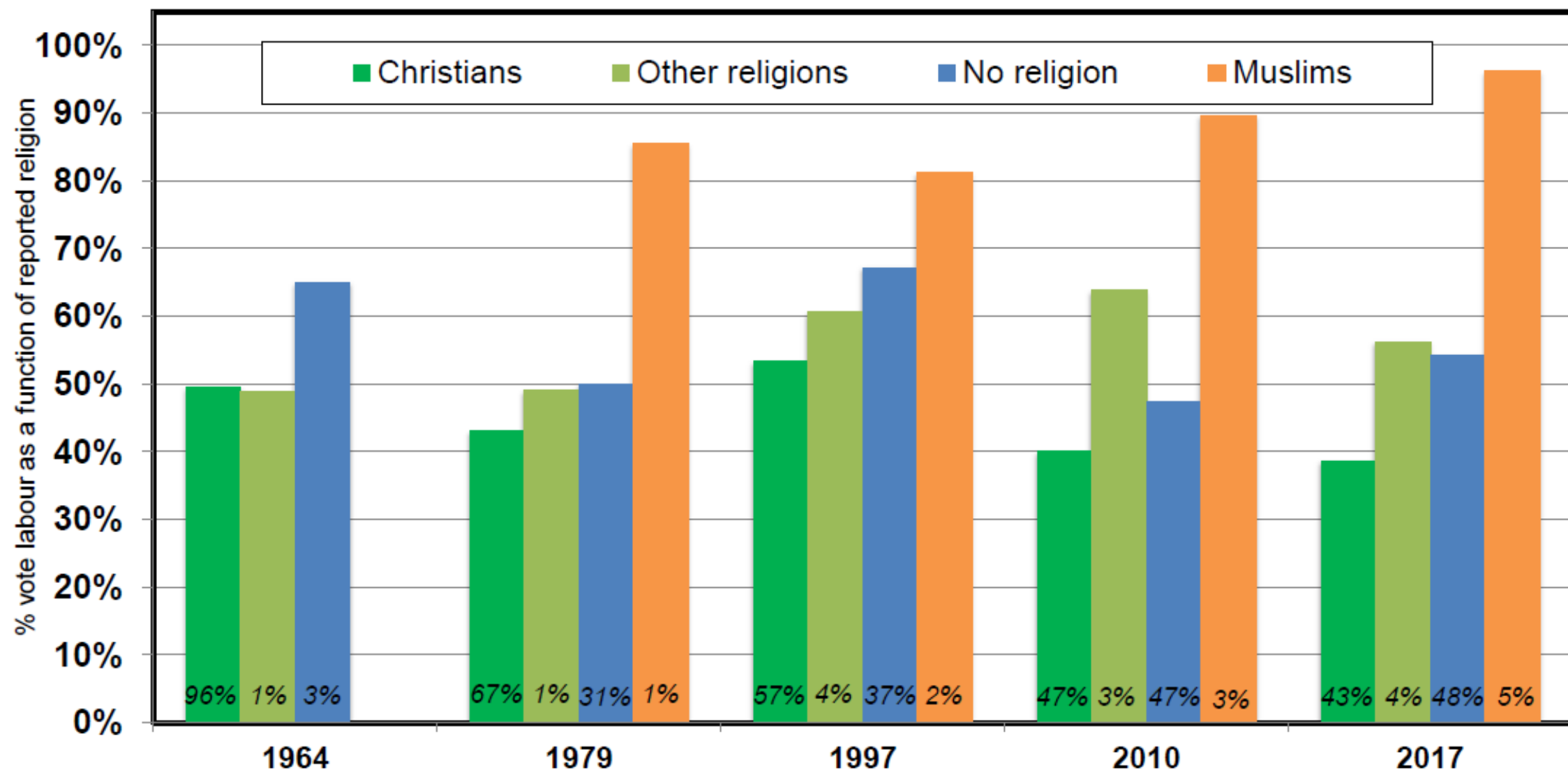
Interpretation. Self-reported muslim voters vote significantly more for left-wing parties than voters with no religion beginning in 1997. Before 1988, muslims were classified with other religions (protestantism, judaism, buddhims, hinduism, etc.), and made less than 1% of the electorate. **Sources and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

Political conflict & religious diversity: France 2002-2017



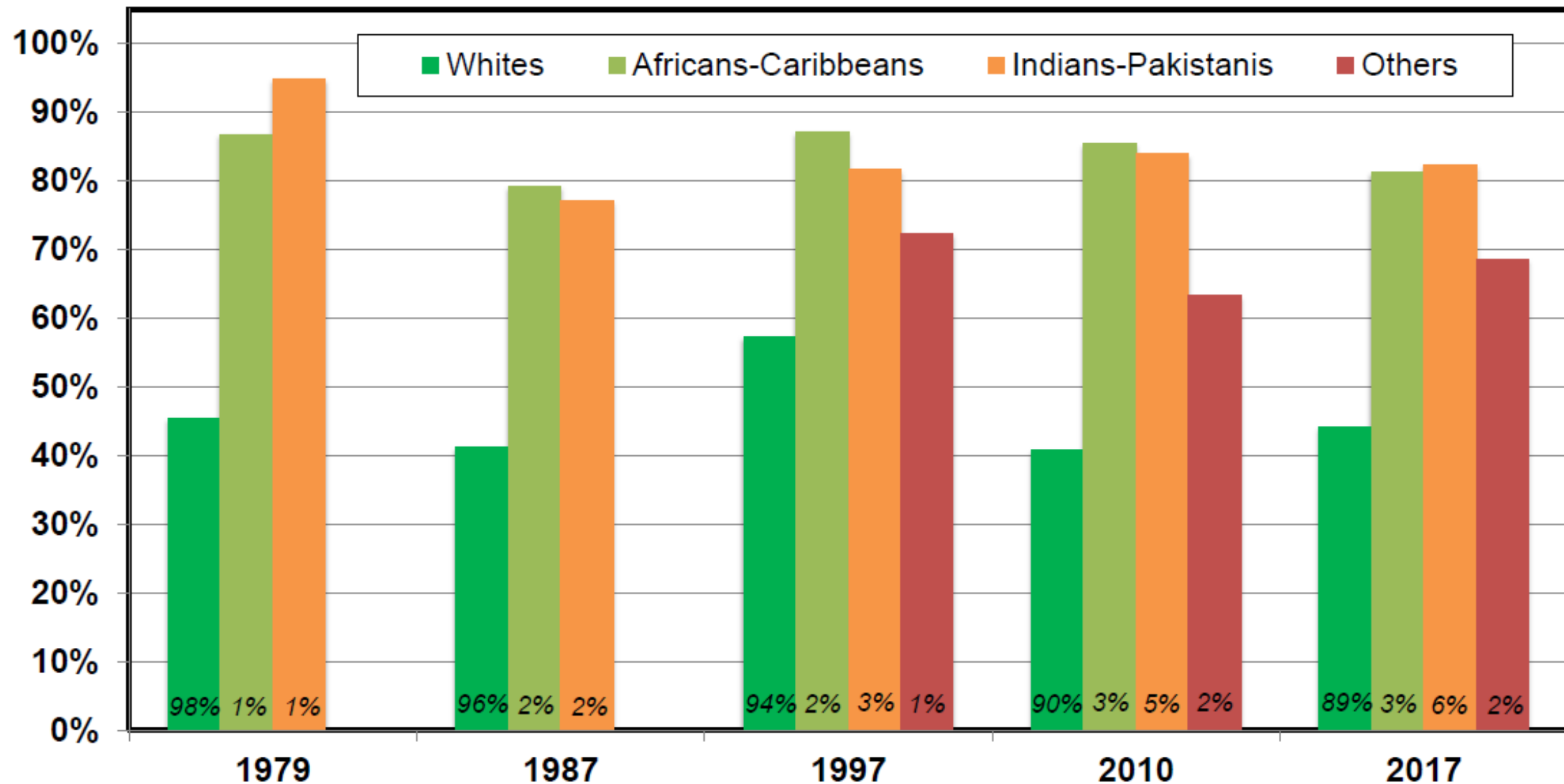
Interpretation. About 80%-90% of self-reported muslim voters vote for left-wing parties in all elections in France since the 1990s. Before 1988, muslims were classified with other religions (protestantism, judaism, buddhims, hinduism, etc.), and made less than 1% of the electorate . **Sources and series:**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

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



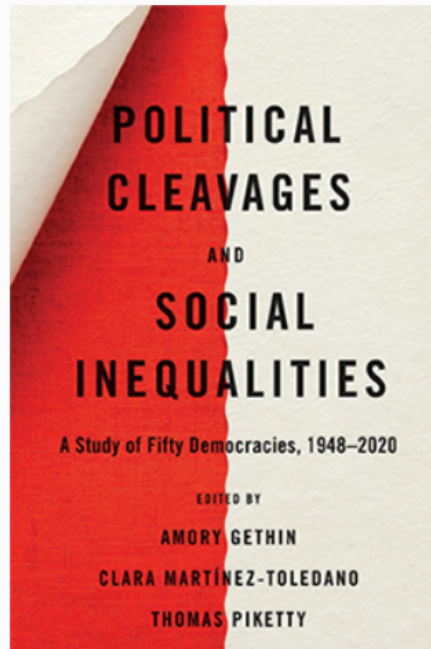
Interpretation. In 2017, the labour party obtained 44% of the vote among voters describing themselves as "Whites", 81% among "Africans-Caribbeans", 82% among "Indians-Pakistanis-Bengladeshis" and 69% among "others" ("Chinese", "Arabs", etc.). In 2017, 5% of the electorate refused to answer to the ethnic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

Brahmin Left vs Merchant Right: Education Cleavage Reversal in Western Democracies 1948-2026

WORLD POLITICAL CLEAVAGES AND INEQUALITY DATABASE

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THE BOOK

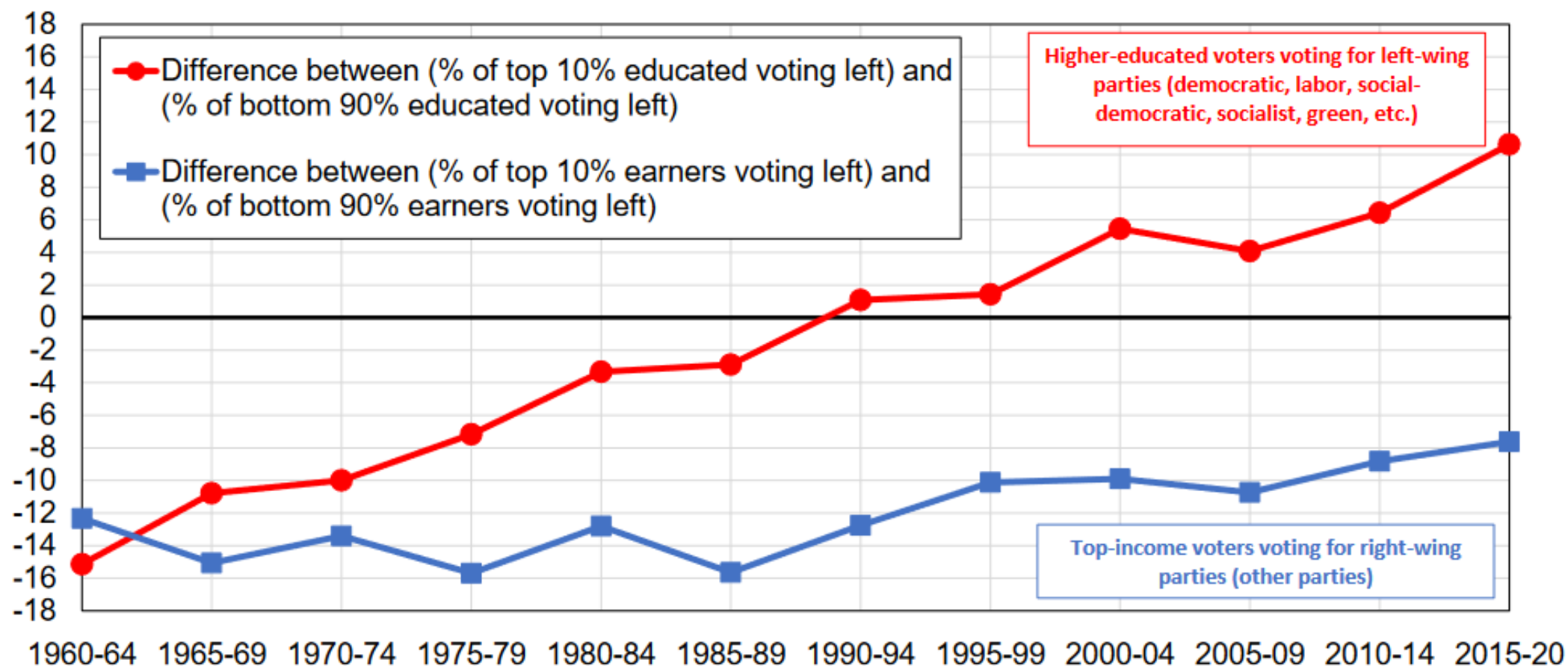


Who votes for whom and why? Why has growing inequality in many parts of the world not led to renewed class-based conflicts, and seems instead to have come with the emergence of new divides over identity and integration? News analysts, scholars, and citizens interested in exploring those questions inevitably 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

- **WPID: based upon post-electoral surveys from 50 countries over 1948-2026**
- Unfortunately, these post-electoral surveys have limited sample size. In addition, there exists no survey at all before the 1940s-1950s
- **In order to study longer time periods & to provide more detailed decompositions of socioeconomic cleavages vs territorial cleavages, one needs to use other data sources: granular local-level election results matched with local-level census & fiscal data.** Requires a lot more work, country by country.
- The key advantage of WPID is that surveys are easily available & allow us to identify a striking transformation: **the rise of Brahmin Left vs Merchant Right multiple-elite cleavage structure, i.e. the reversal of the education cleavage in nearly all Western democracies since 1980s-1990s**
- A central finding to be further investigated with more granular data

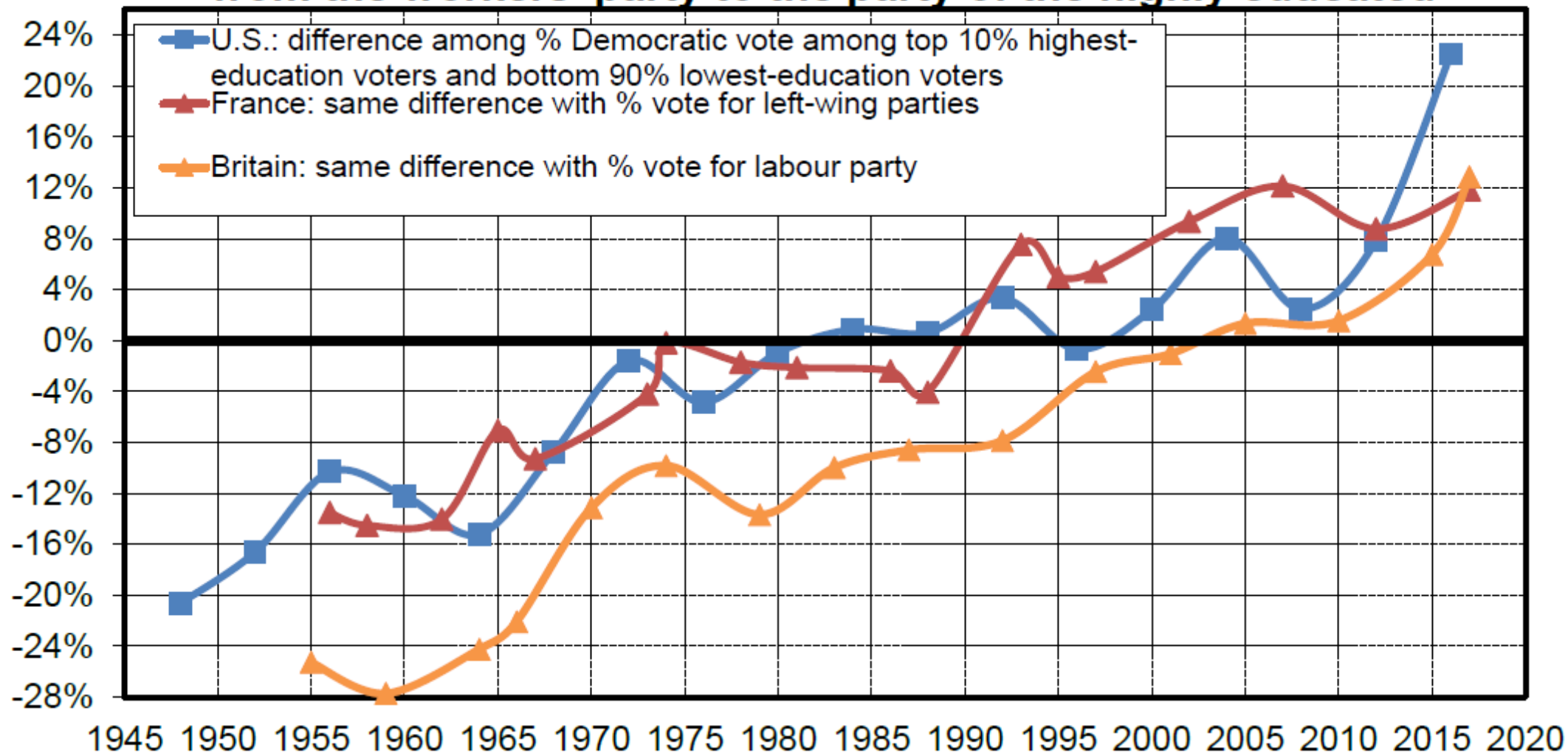
Figure 1 - The emergence of multi-elite party systems in Western democracies



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

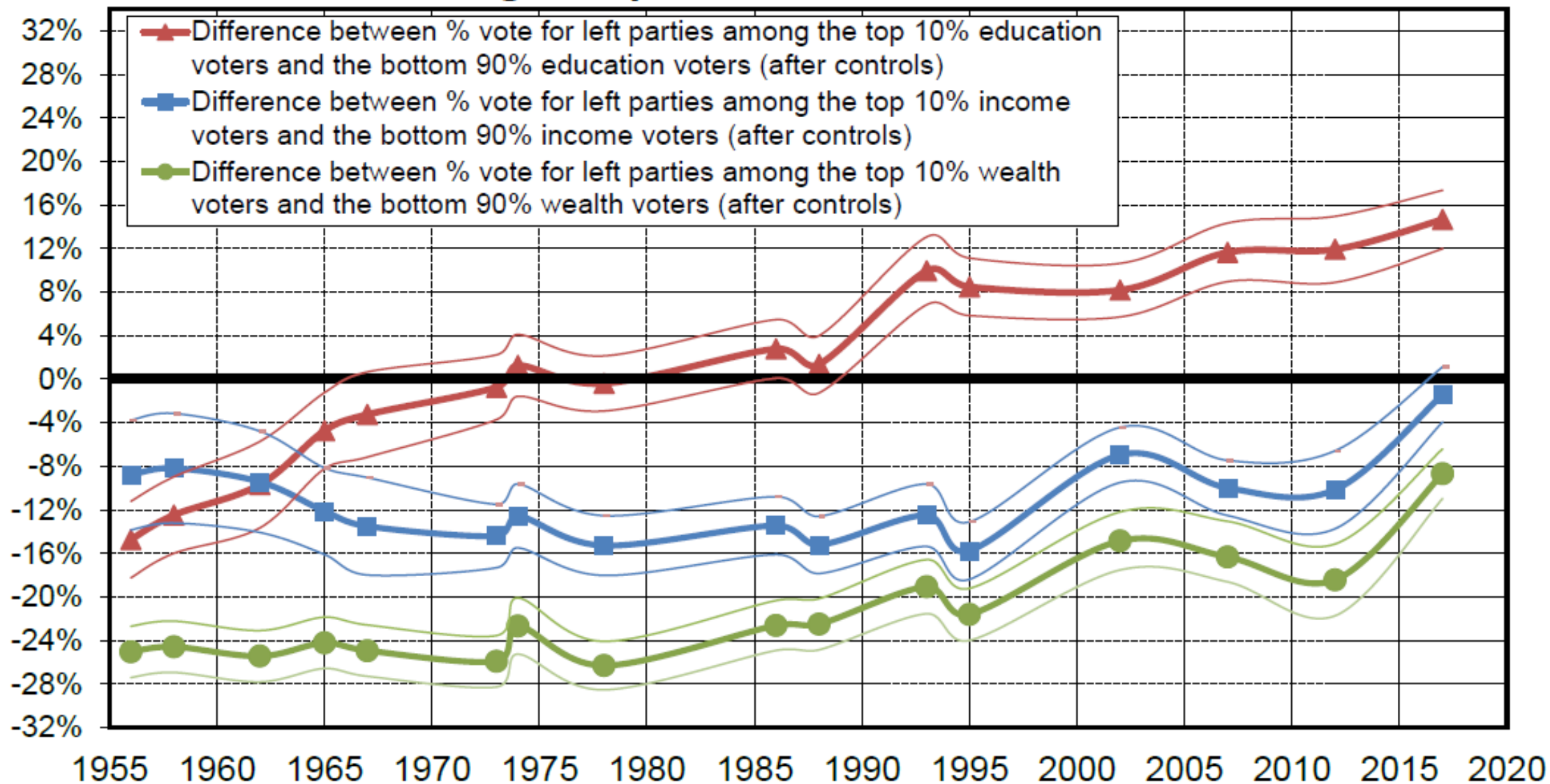
Note: in the 1960s, both higher-educated and high-income voters were less likely to vote for left-wing (democratic / labor / social-democratic / socialist / green) parties than lower-educated and low-income voters by more than 10 percentage points. The left vote has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rising 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



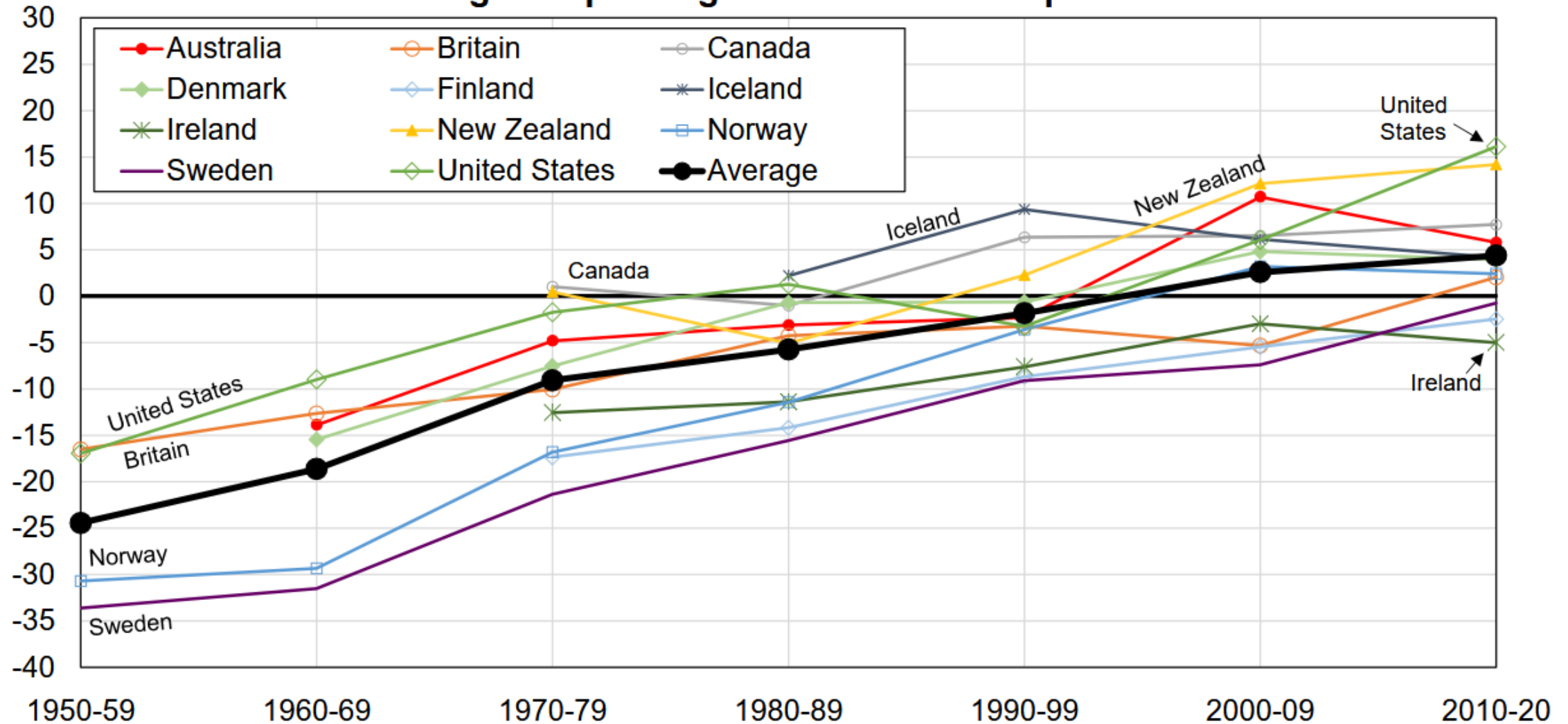
Interpretation. During the 1950-1970 period, the vote for the democratic party in the U.S., left-wing parties in France (socialists-communists-radicals-greens) in France and the labour party in Britain was associated with the voters with the lowest educational diplomas; in the 1990-2010 period it became 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)

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).

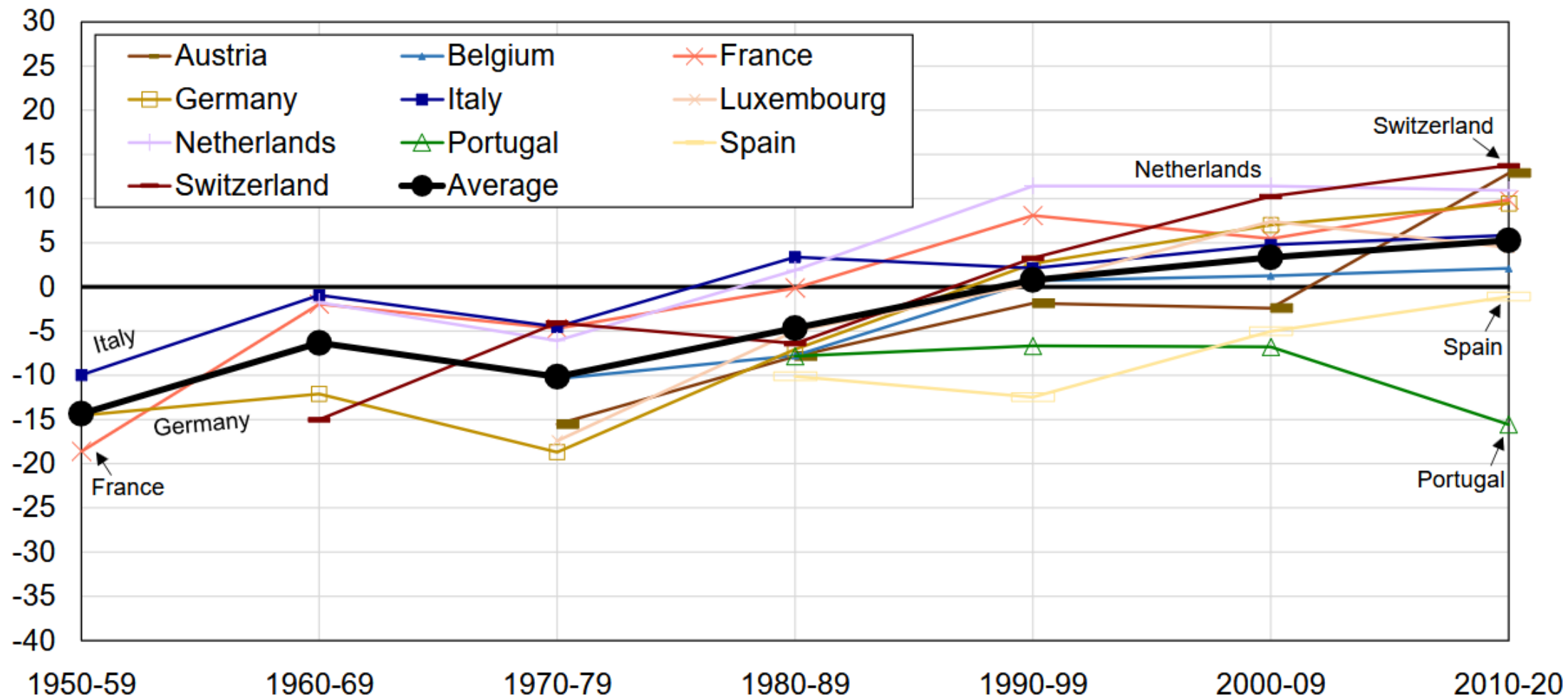
**Figure 2 - The reversal of educational divides in Western democracies.
Panel A. English-speaking and Northern European countries**



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

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties in English-speaking and Northern European countries. In nearly all countries, higher-educated voters used to be significantly more likely to vote for conservative parties and have gradually become more likely to vote for these parties. Estimates control for income, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

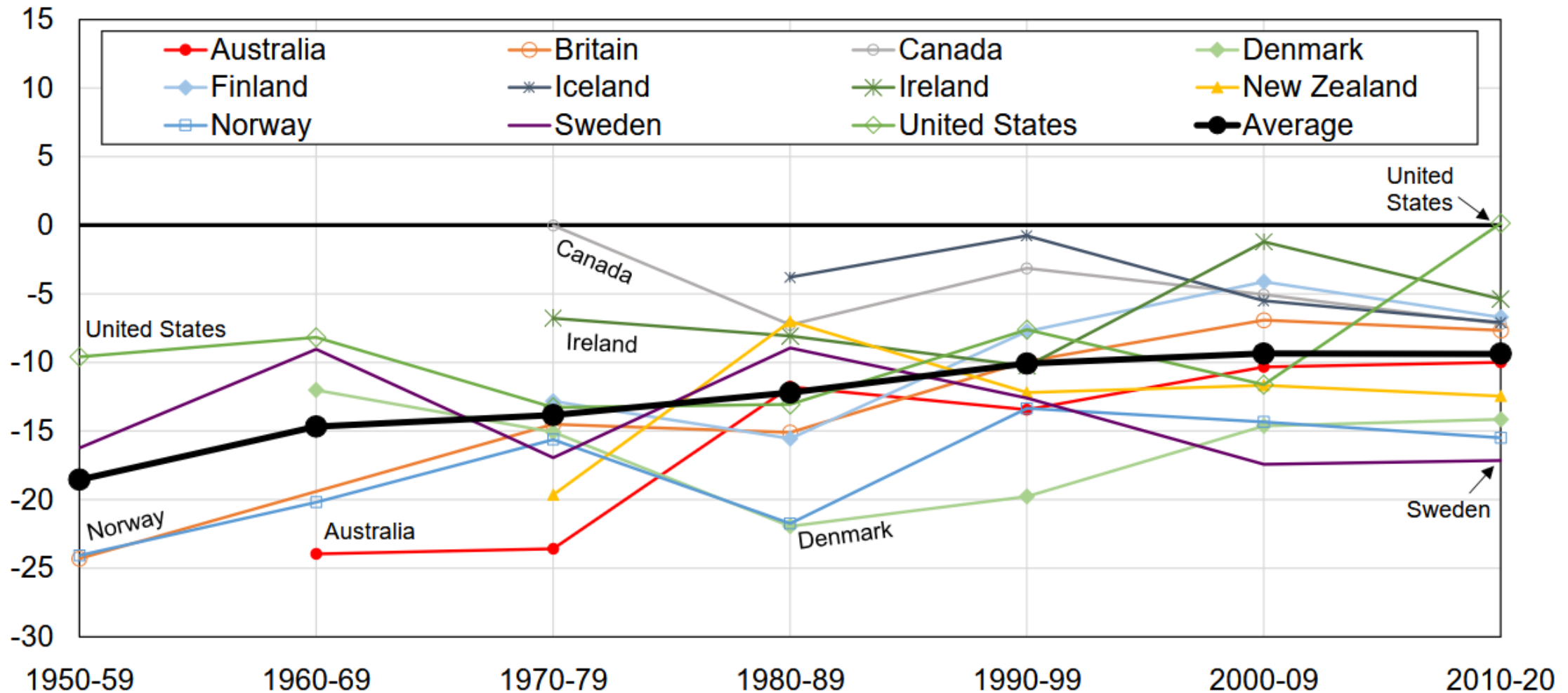
**Figure 2 - The reversal of educational divides in Western democracies.
Panel B. Continental and Southern European countries**



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

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties in Continental and Southern European countries. In nearly all countries, higher-educated voters used to be significantly more likely to vote for conservative parties and have gradually become more likely to vote for these parties. Estimates control for income, age, gender, religion, church attendance, rural/urban, region, race/ethnicity, employment status, and marital status (in country-years for which these variables are available).

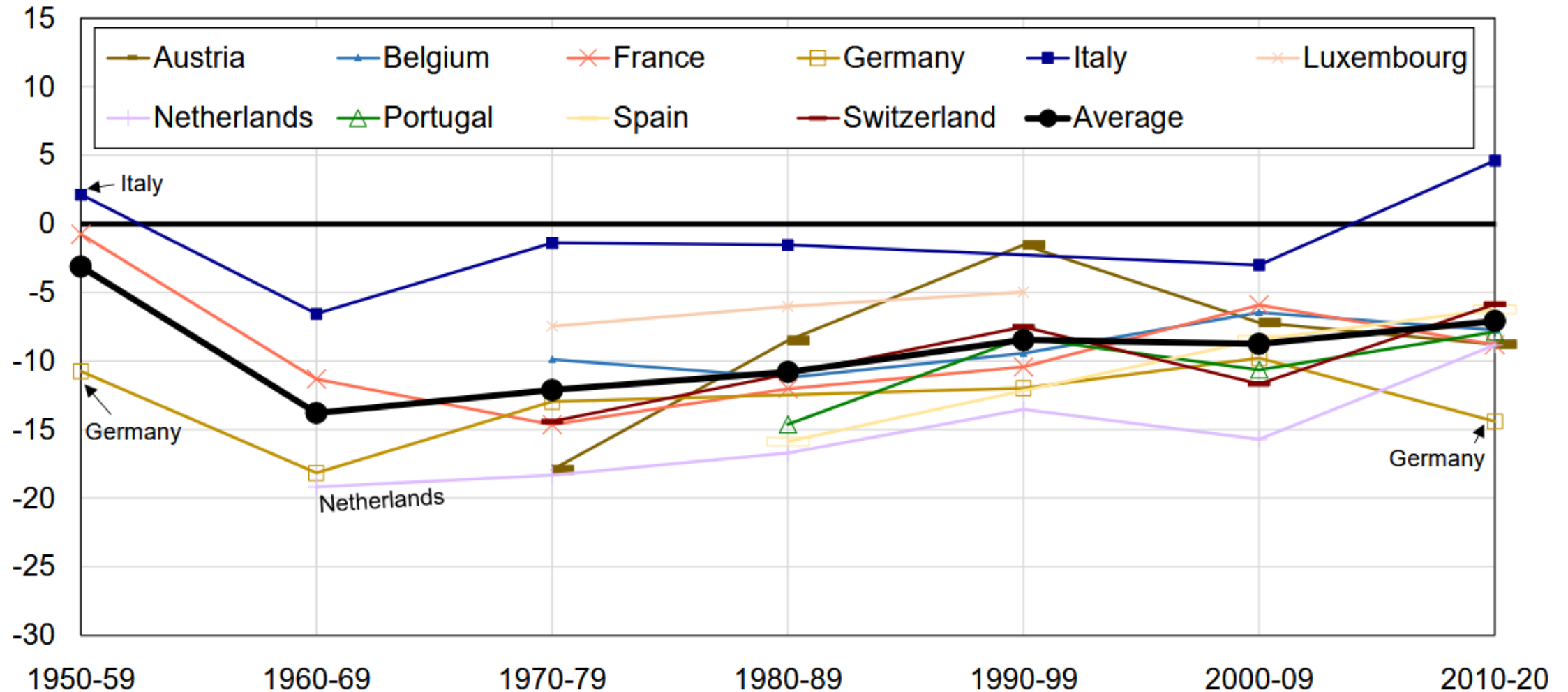
**Figure 3 - The stability/decline of income divides in Western democracies.
Panel A. English-speaking and Northern European countries**



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

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties in English-speaking and Northern European countries. In all countries, top-income voters have remained significantly less likely to vote for these parties than low-income voters. Estimates control for 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).

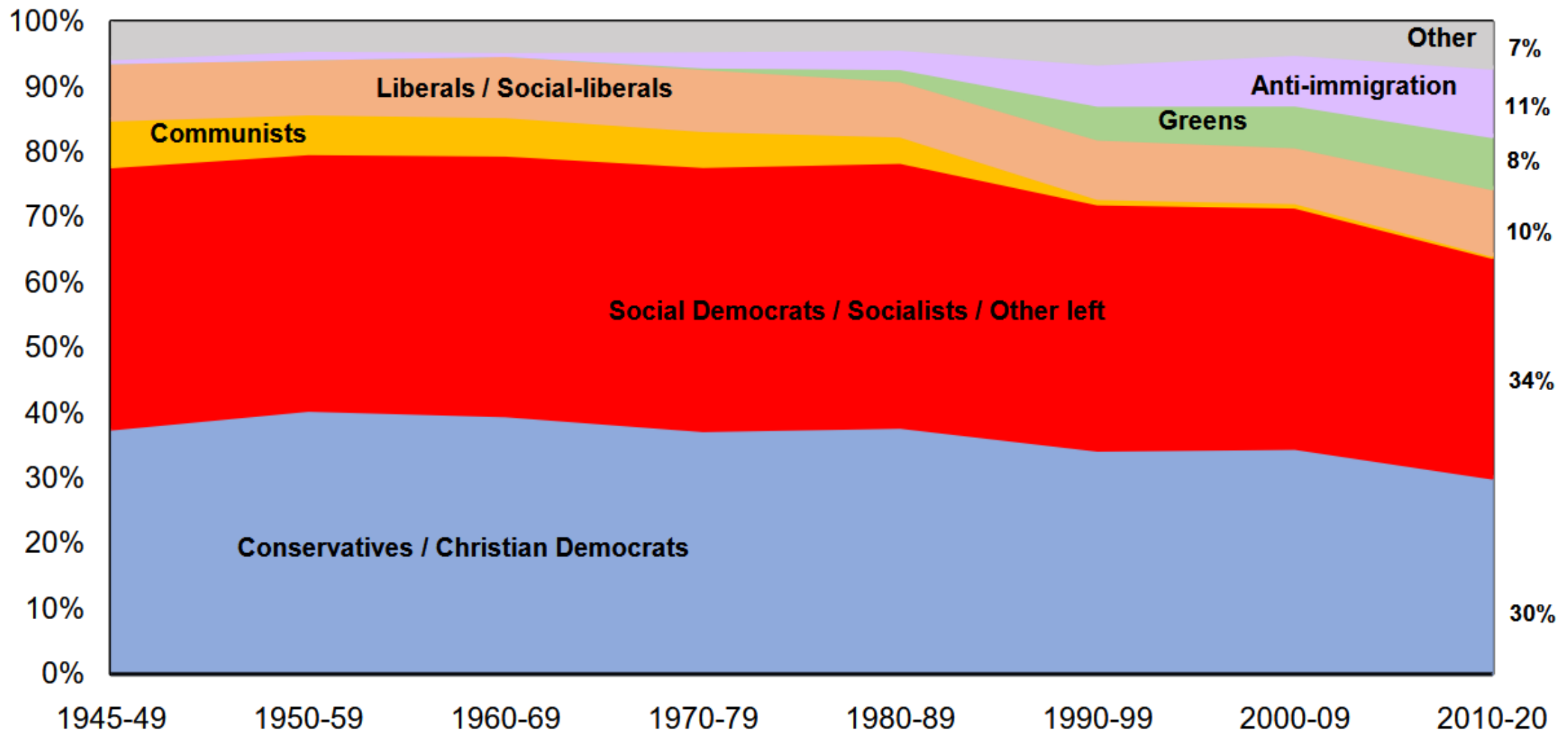
**Figure 3 - The stability/decline of income divides in Western democracies.
Panel B. Continental and Southern European countries**



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

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for democratic / labor / social democratic / socialist / green parties in Continental and Southern European countries. In all countries, top-income voters have remained significantly less likely to vote for these parties than low-income voters. Estimates control for 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).

Figure 4 - The transformation of Western party systems, 1945-2020

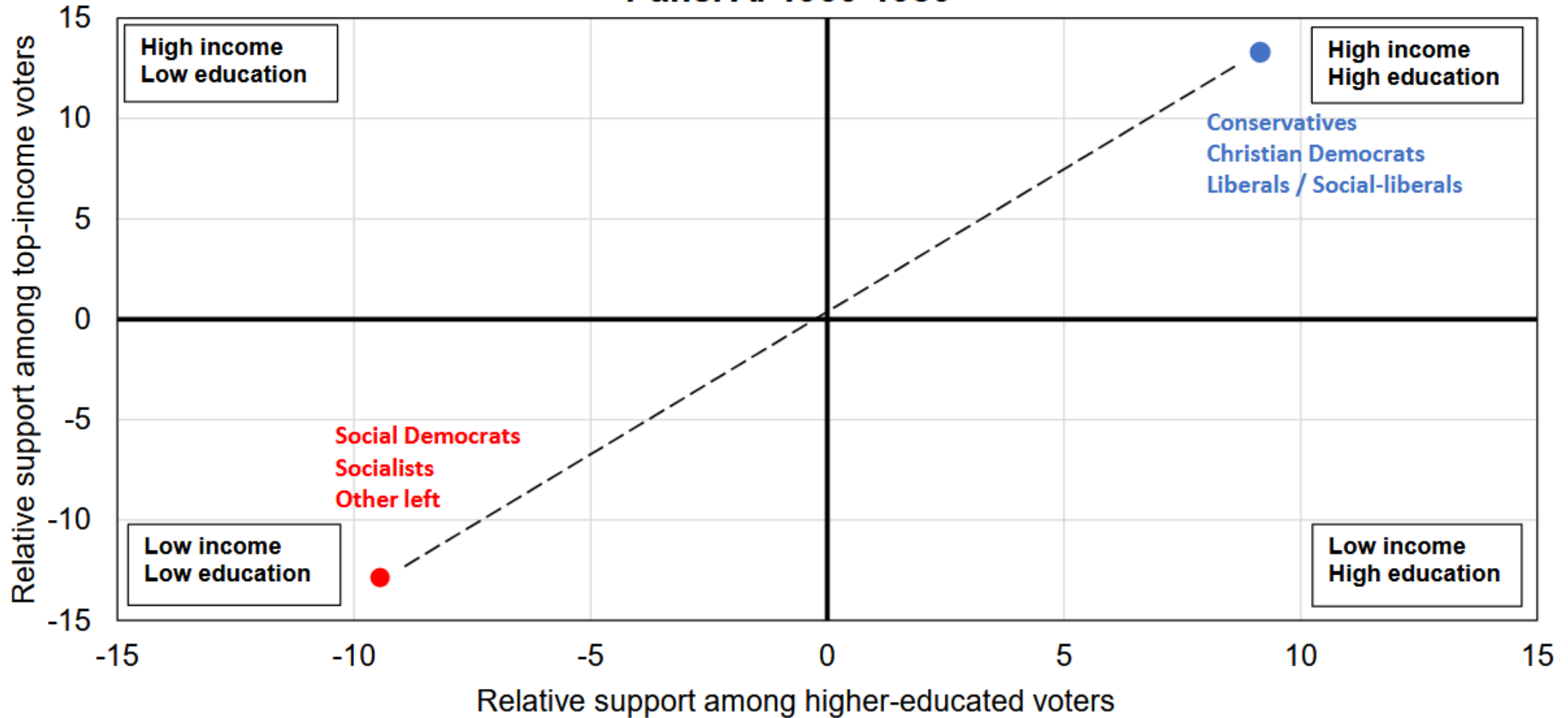


Source: authors' computations using official election results data.

Note: the figure represents the average share of votes received by selected families of political parties in Western democracies between the 1940s and the 2010s. Communist parties saw their average scores collapse from 7% to less than 0.5%, while green and anti-immigration parties have risen until reaching average vote shares of 8% and 11% respectively. Decennial averages over all Western democracies except Spain and Portugal (no democratic elections before 1970s) and the United States and the United Kingdom (two-party systems).

Figure 5 - The fragmentation of Western cleavage structures.

Panel A. 1960-1980

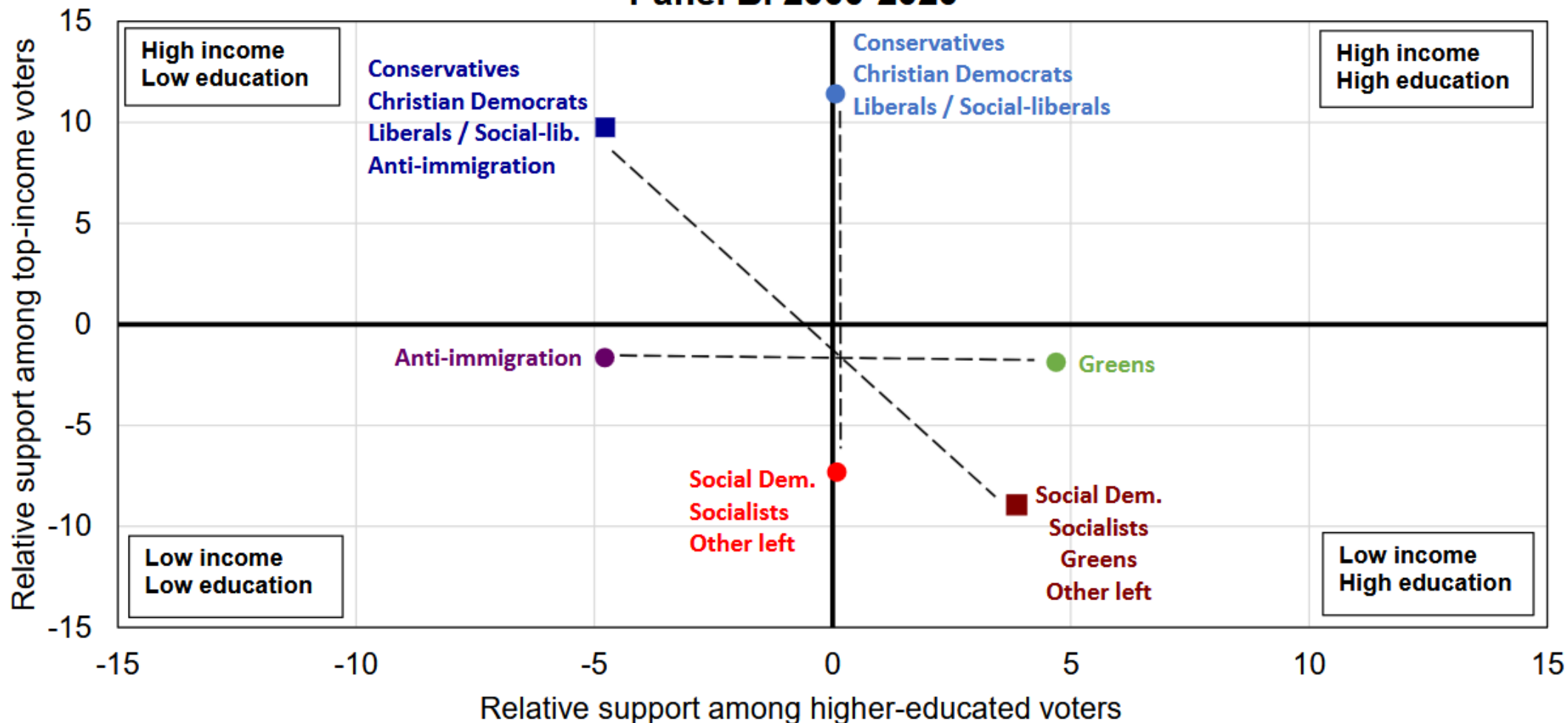


Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis. In the 1960s-1980s, socialist and social democratic parties were supported by both low-income and lower-educated voters, while conservative, Christian, and liberal parties were supported by both high-income and higher-educated voters. Averages over all Western democracies. 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).

Figure 5 - The fragmentation of Western cleavage structures.

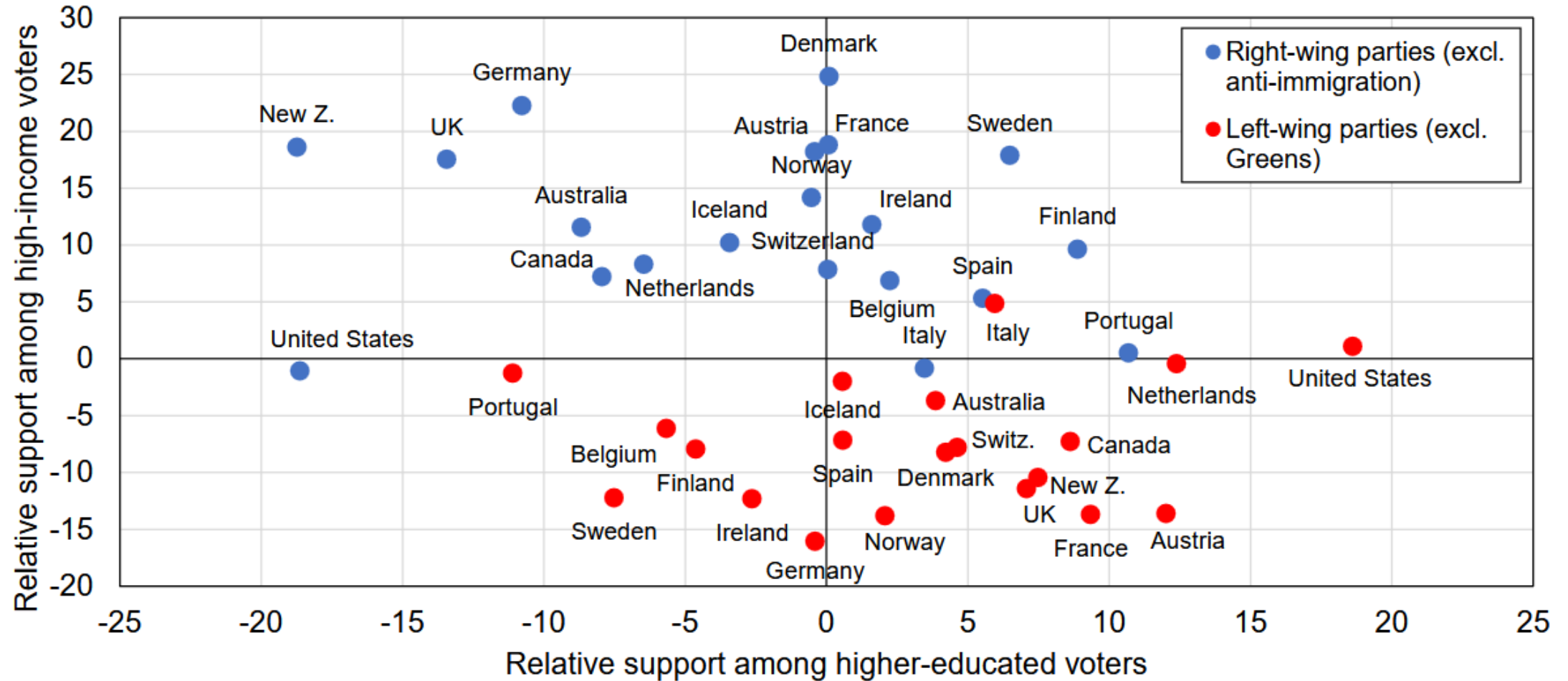
Panel B. 2000-2020



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

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis. Education most clearly distinguishes anti-immigration from green parties, while income most clearly distinguishes conservative and Christian parties from socialist and social-democratic parties. Averages over all Western democracies. 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).

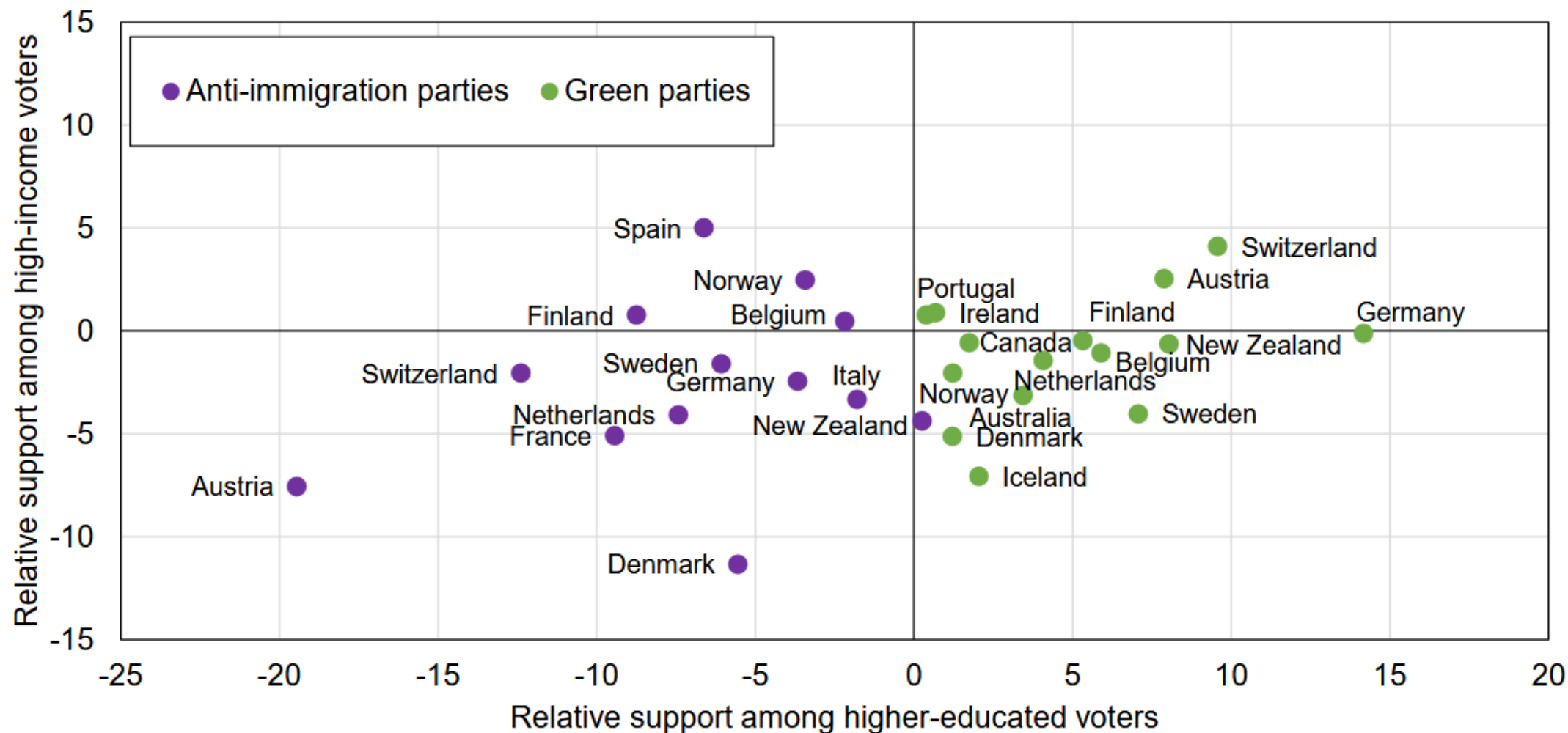
Figure 6 - Decomposing multi-elite party systems, 2010-2020
Panel A. Social Democrats / Socialists vs. Conservatives / Christians



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

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis, over the 2010-2020 period. 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).

Figure 6 - Decomposing multi-elite party systems, 2010-2020
Panel B. Green vs. Anti-immigration parties



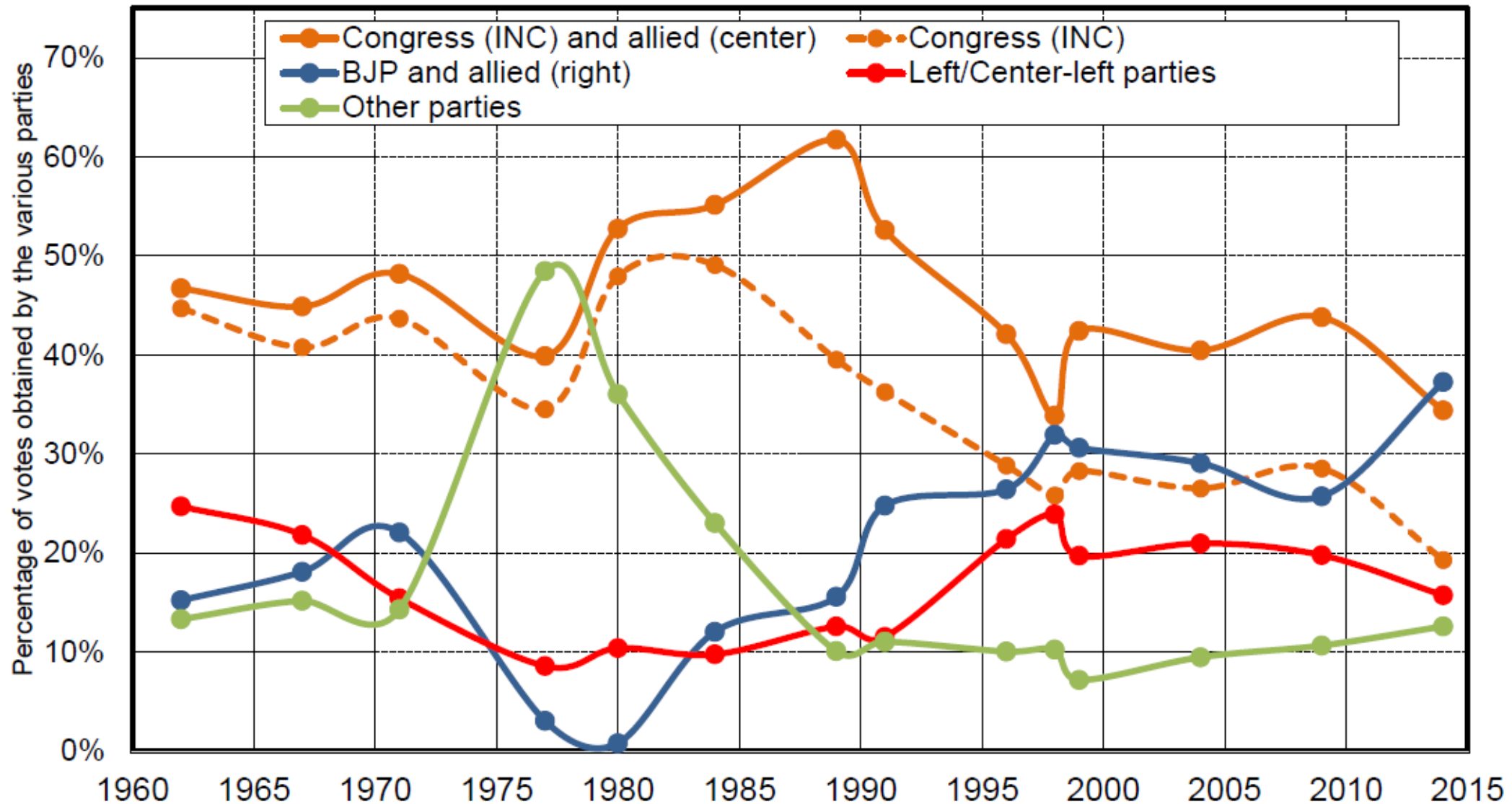
Source: authors' computations using the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database.

Note: the figure represents the difference between the share of high-income (top 10%) and low-income (bottom 90%) voters voting for selected groups of parties on the y-axis, and the same difference between higher-educated (top 10%) and lower-educated (bottom 90%) voters on the x-axis, over the 2010-2020 period. 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).

Return of Left-Right Conflict: India 1947-2029, Brasil 1988-2026

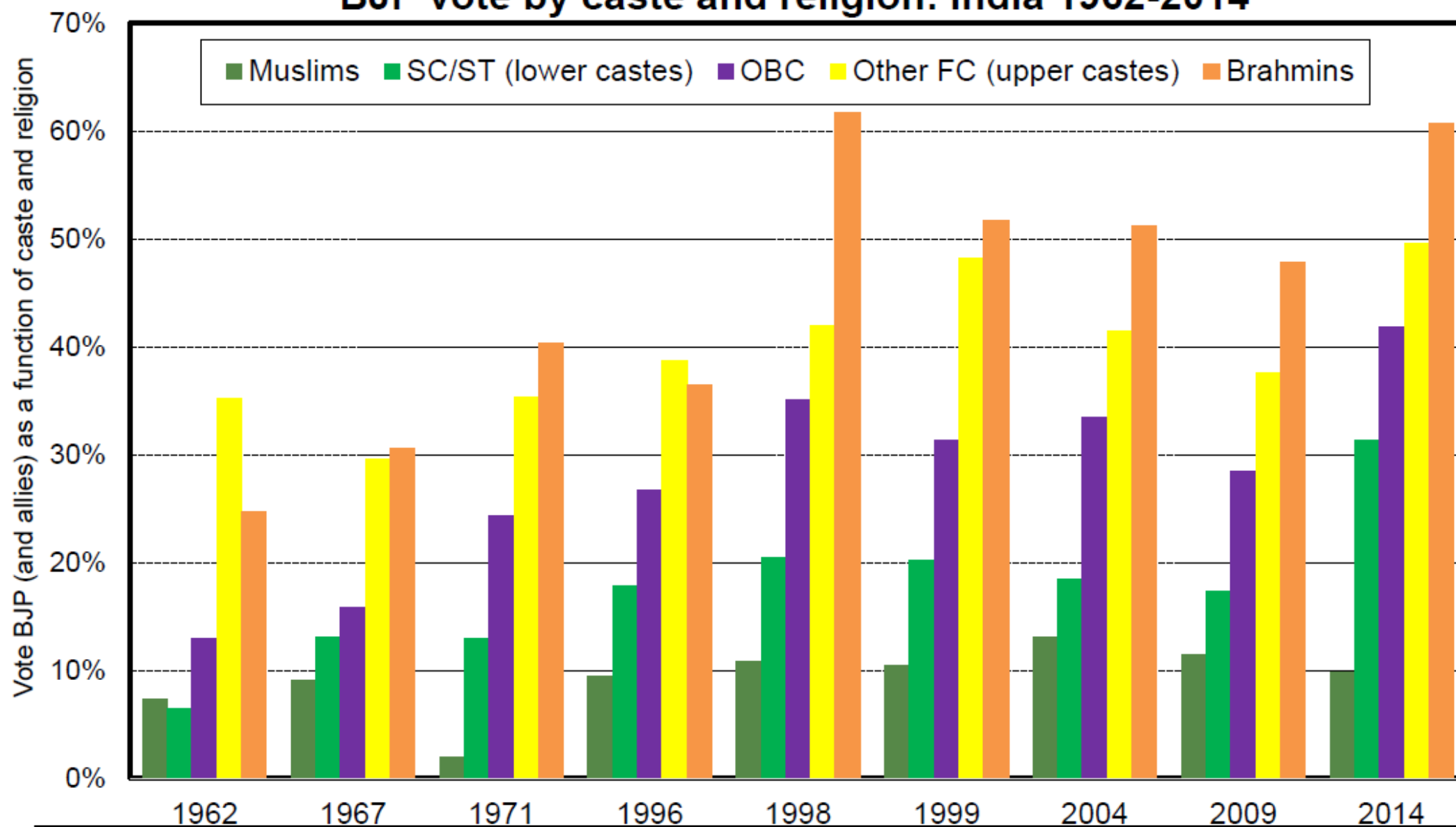
- **It is critical to look at changing political cleavages outside the West**
- The breakdown of the left-right class-based party system observed in the West between 1950-1980 and 1990-2025 does not hold everywhere. **E.g. in India or Brasil, one observes a move toward a more class-based party system since the 1980s-1990s (to some extent, and despite adverse international trends making redistributive policies hard to conduct & structure rise of new ecological-territorial conflict).** I.e. different political strategies and coalitions can make difference.
- The structure of class-based vs identity-based conflict can take various forms and ought to be analyzed in a comparative spirit. **E.g. anti-Muslim cleavages play a key role in India & are in a way closer to the European identity-based conflicts than to the US racial divide.**

Legislative elections in India (Lok Sabha), 1962-2014



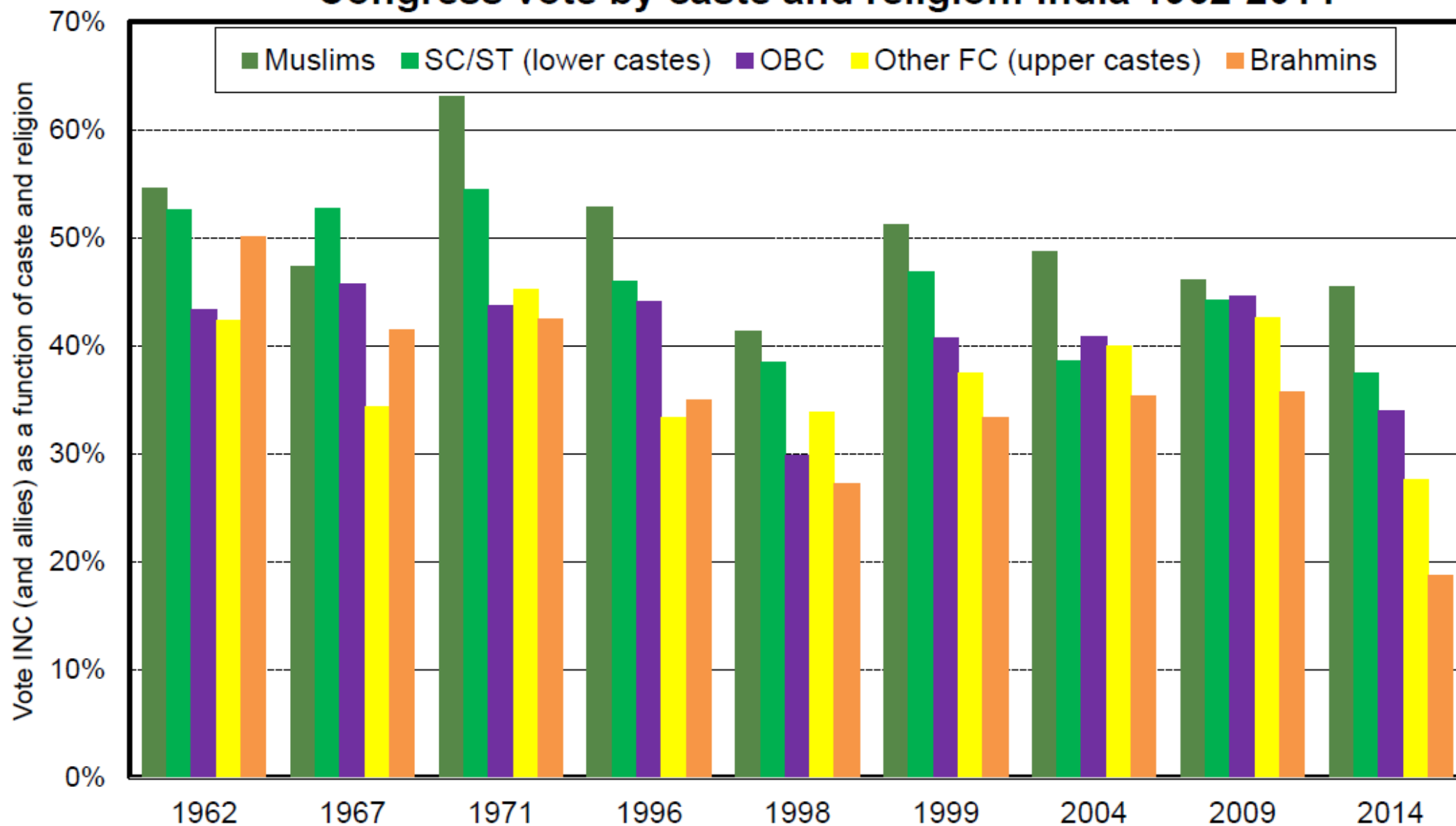
Interpretation. In the 2014 legislative elections, the Congress party (INC, Indian National Congress) and its allied parties (center) obtained 34% of the vote (including 19% for INC alone), the BJP (hindus nationalists) and its allied parties (right) 37% of the vote, the left and center-left parties (SP, BSP, CPUI, etc.) 16% of the vote and other parties 13% of the vote. **Note:** in the 1977 elections (post-emergency), the Janata Dal included all opponents to INC (from left and right), and it classified here with "other parties". **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.7).

BJP vote by caste and religion: India 1962-2014



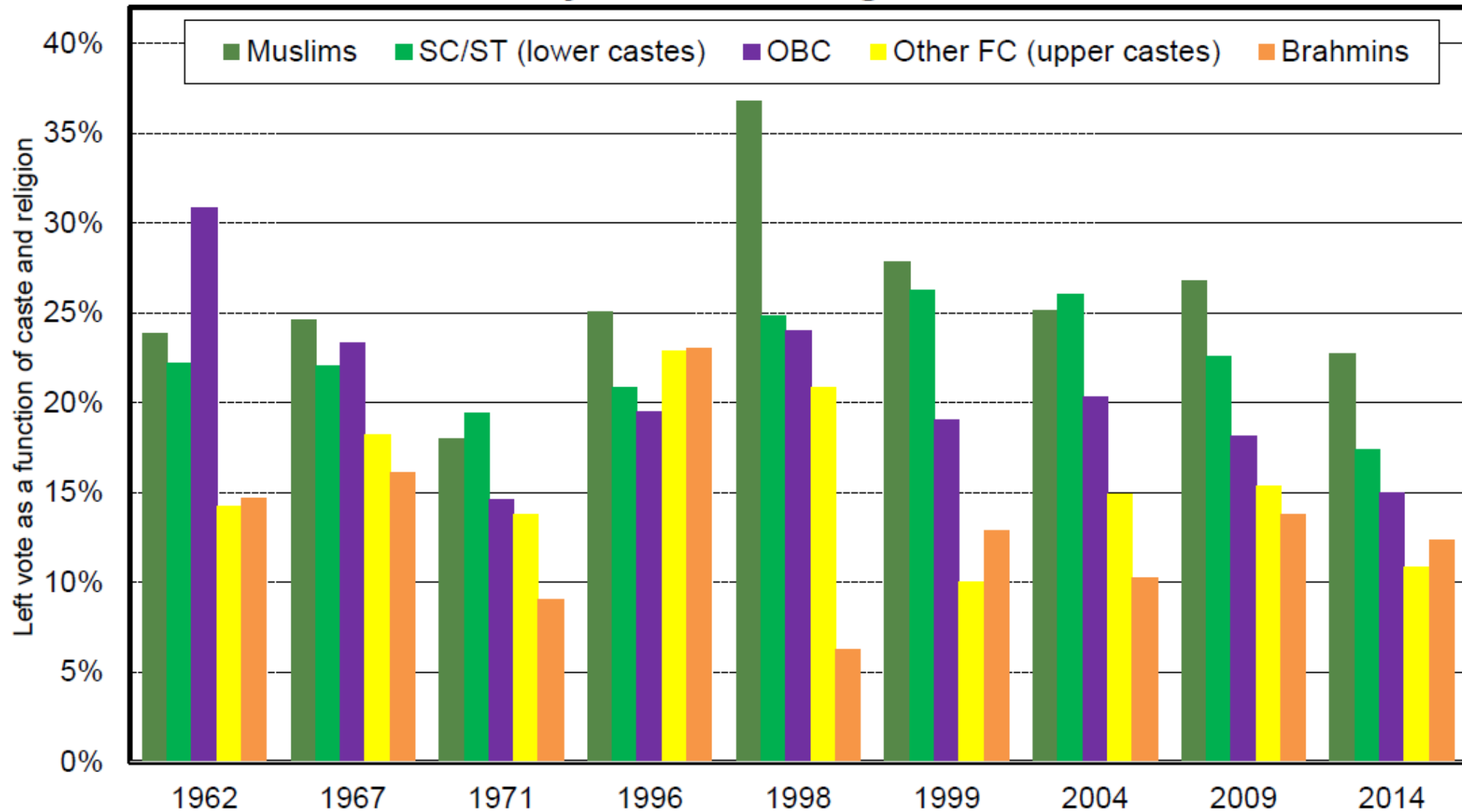
Interpretation. In 2014, 10% of muslim voters voted for the BJP (hindus nationalists) and allied parties, vs 31% among SC/ST (scheduled castes/ scheduled tribes, lower castes), 42% among OBC (other backward classes, intermediate castes), 49% among other FC (forward castes, upper castes except brahmins) and 61% among brahmins. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.8).

Congress vote by caste and religion: India 1962-2014



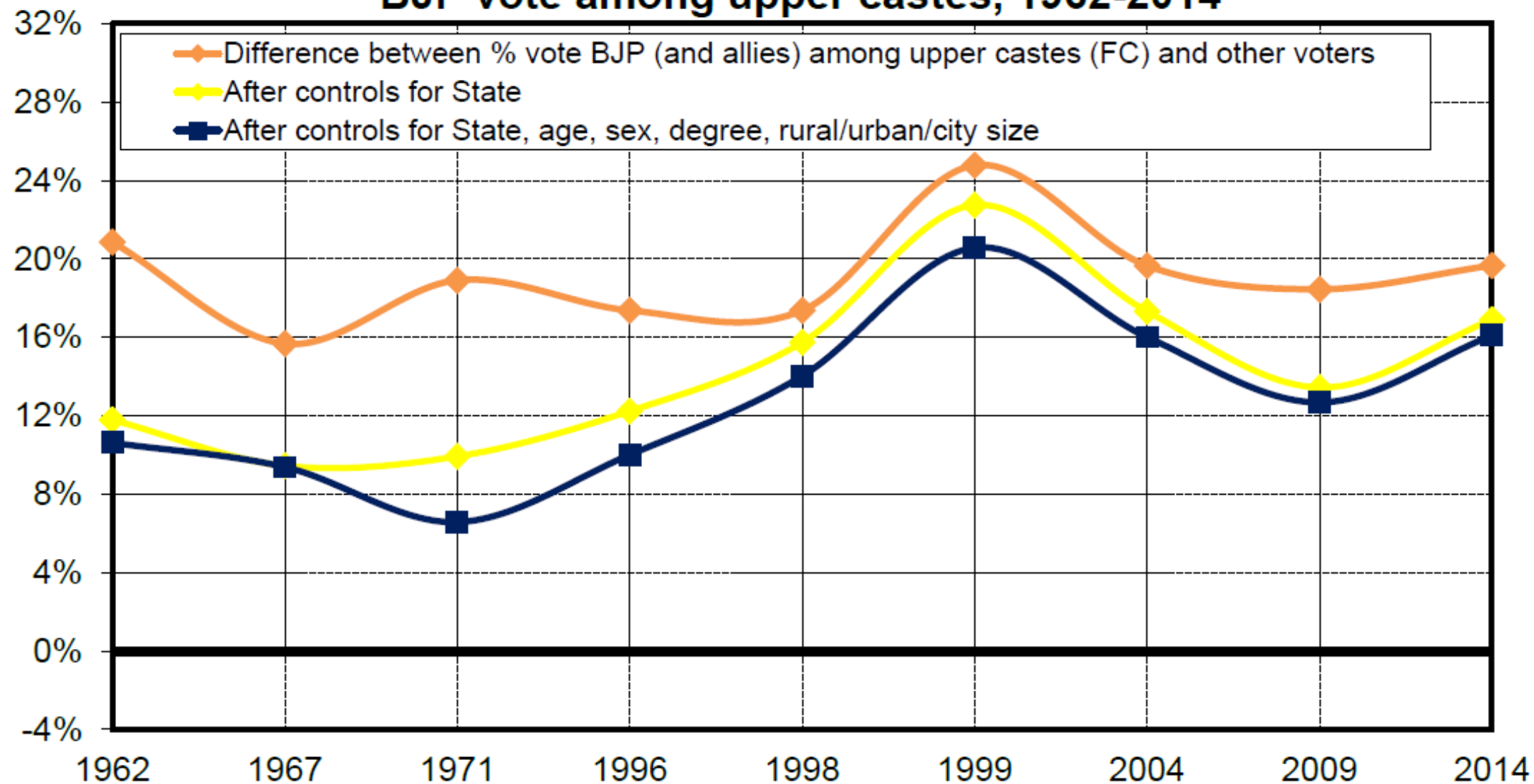
Interpretation. In 2014, 45% of muslim voters voted for the Congress (Indian National Congress) and allied parties, vs 38% among SC/ST (scheduled castes/ scheduled tribes, lower castes), 34% among OBC (other backward classes, intermediate castes), 27% among other FC (forward castes, upper castes except brahmins) and 18% among brahmins. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.9).

Left vote by caste and religion: India 1962-2014



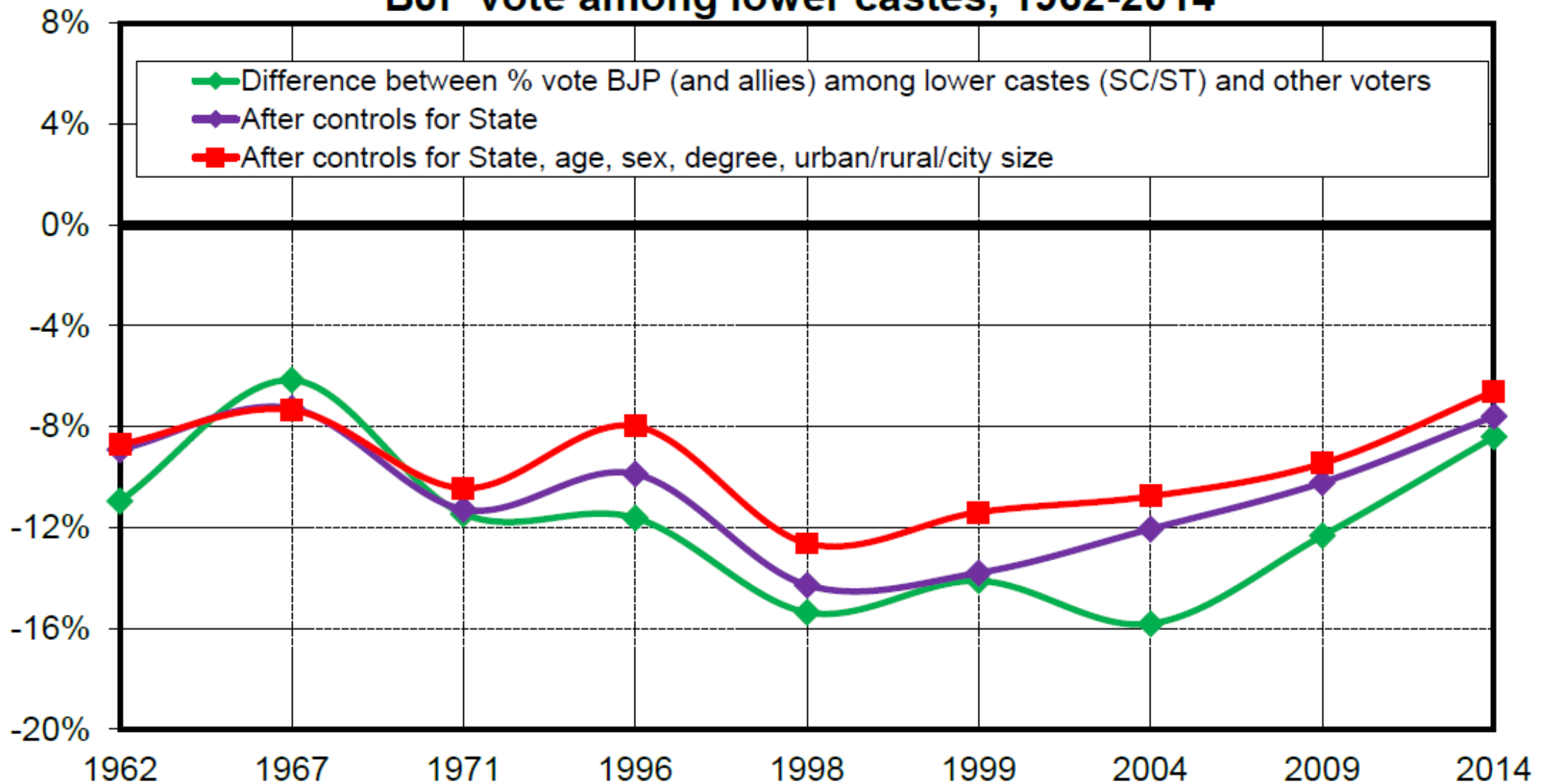
Interpretation. In 2014, 23% of muslim voters voted for the left and center-left parties (SP, BSP, CPI, etc.), vs 17% among SC/ST (scheduled castes/ scheduled tribes, lower castes), 15% among OBC (other backward classes, intermediate castes), 11% among other FC (forward castes, upper castes except brahmins) and 12% among brahmins. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.10).

BJP vote among upper castes, 1962-2014



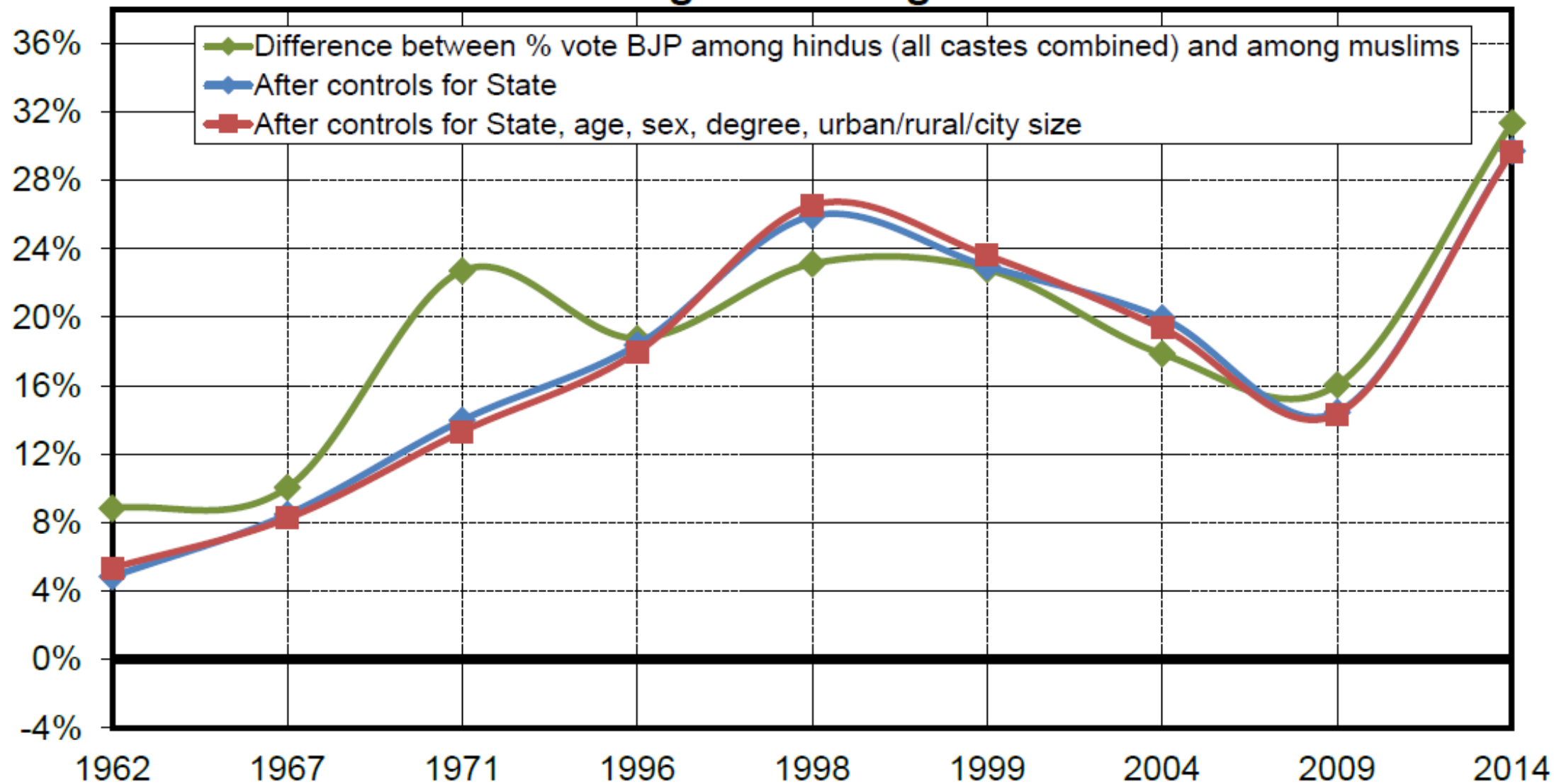
Interpretation. During the 1962-2014 period, upper caste voters (FC, forward castes) have always voted more than others for the BJP (and allies), before and after taking into account control variables. The impact of caste (after taking into account other variables) appears to have become more important over time. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.11).

BJP vote among lower castes, 1962-2014



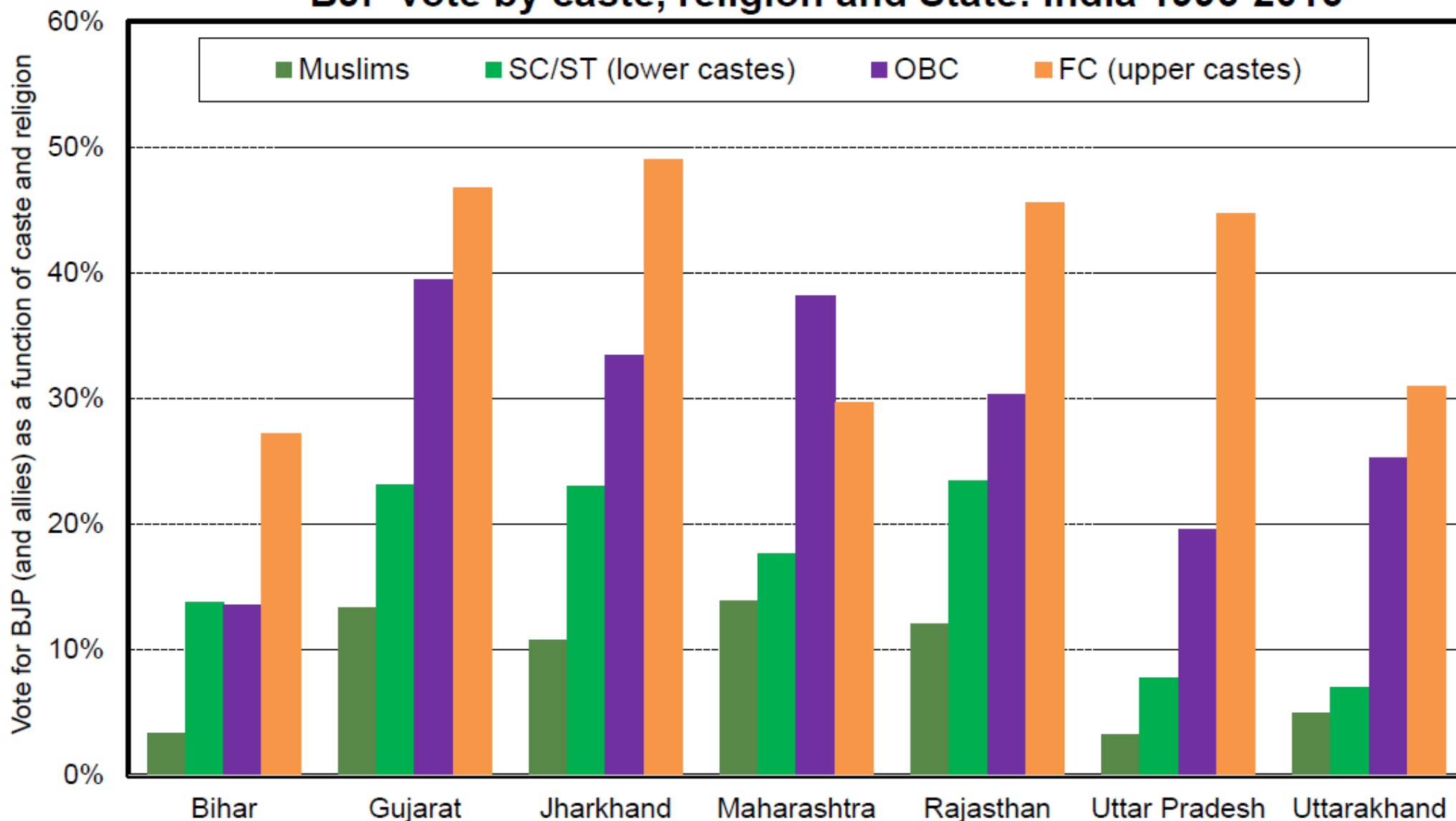
Interpretation. During the 1962-2014 period, lower caste voters (SC/ST, scheduled castes/scheduled tribes) have always voted less than others for the BJP (and allies), before and after taking into account control variables. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.12).

The BJP & the religious cleavage: India 1962-2014



Interpretation. During the 1962-2014 period, hindus voters (all castes combined: SC/ST, OBC and FC) have always voted more than muslim voters for the BJP (and allies), before and after taking into account control variables. The magnitude of the religious cleavage has strongly increased over time. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.13).

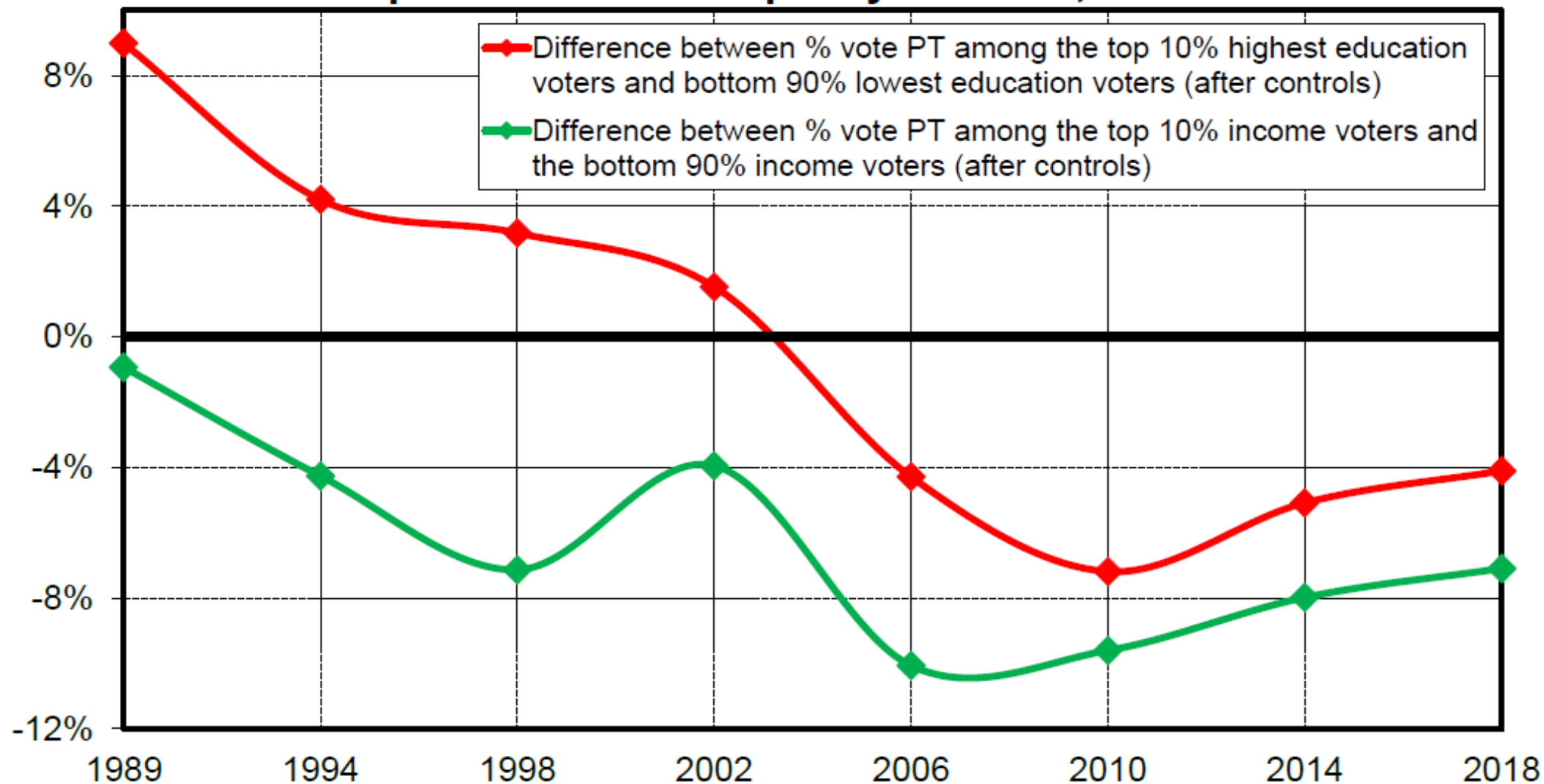
BJP vote by caste, religion and State: India 1996-2016



Interpretation. In all Indian States, the BJP (and allies) always obtains a higher score among upper castes (FC, forward castes) than among OBC (other backward classes, intermediate castes), SC/ST (scheduled castes/scheduled tribes, lower castes) and muslim voters. **Note:** the results reported here refer to the average regional elections conducted over the 1996-2016 period. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.14).

- **The case of Brazil is very different, but also illustrates a case of gradual policy-based development of a class-based conflict**
- The first elections with universal suffrage took place in 1989 in Brazil (1890-1964: suffrage restricted to literate population; 1964-1985: military dictatorship)
- Many political parties, including PT (Workers Party), which initially attracted urban wage earners from manufacturing sector & intellectuals
- It is during PT's experience in power in 2002-2014 that the PT electorate started to concentrate upon lower-income and lower-education voters (following redistributive policies: Bolsa Familia, minimum wage, etc.)
- **Like India, Brazil's experience also shows that it is difficult to develop a redistributive policy agenda in the current global ideological context, that is more favourable to identity-based conflict and nationalists**

The politisation of inequality in Brasil, 1989-2018



Interpretation. During the 1989-2018 period, the vote in favour of PT (Workers Party) in Brasil has become more and more associated with voters with the lowest levels of income and degrees, which was not the case in the first elections conducted after the end of the military dictatorship. **Sources and series:** see piketty.pse.ens.fr/ideology (figure 16.15).

Conclusion of Lecture 8 and Course.

Eco-Socialists, Liberal-Globalists & Techno-Nationalists: the Rise of Tripartition & the Divided Elite and People

- **The Industrial Revolution & the Global Climate Crisis** have generated deep multi-dimensional socioeconomic conflict & development cleavages. Building majoritarian coalitions to address these challenges is inherently complicated & unstable.
- **Socialism, liberalism, nationalism**: key ideological tripartition since 18c-19c, still very relevant for 21c
- **Democratic deliberation & confrontation were able to overcome these complications in the past, and hopefully will do the same in the future.** Research in social sciences/economic history/economics/historical political economy can play a useful role in this process!