

The subjective implications of social class: Evidence from 38 countries

Edward Haddon

Edward.haddon@alumni.ubc.ca

Department of Sociology

University of British Columbia



a place of mind

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Outline

Research Question

Data used

Concepts operationalised

Ordered logistic regression: Odds ratios, predicted probabilities

Implications

Research Question

What explains how individuals locate themselves and others in a broader structure of inequality?

Objective position

Class

Education

Occupation

Employment
status

Subjective Class



Death of class?

- Class as a “zombie” concept (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002)
- “Ascribed” characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality are more important than social class (Giddens 1991)
- Connection between objective and subjective class is weak

Data used

- International Social Survey Programme (ISSP)
- 1987, 1992, 1999, and 2009 Social Inequality Modules



International Social Survey Programme



Variables

Independent variables

- Class
- Education

Dependent variable

- Subjective class

Control variables

- Age
- Gender

Class

- Class is operationalised using the European Socioeconomic Classification (ESeC)
- Based theoretically on a Weberian interpretation of class
- Based conceptually on Goldthorpe's class schema
- ESeC represents a composite measure of class
- Component variables include: occupation, employment status, supervisory status, number of employees and size of establishment.

Basic SEC positions

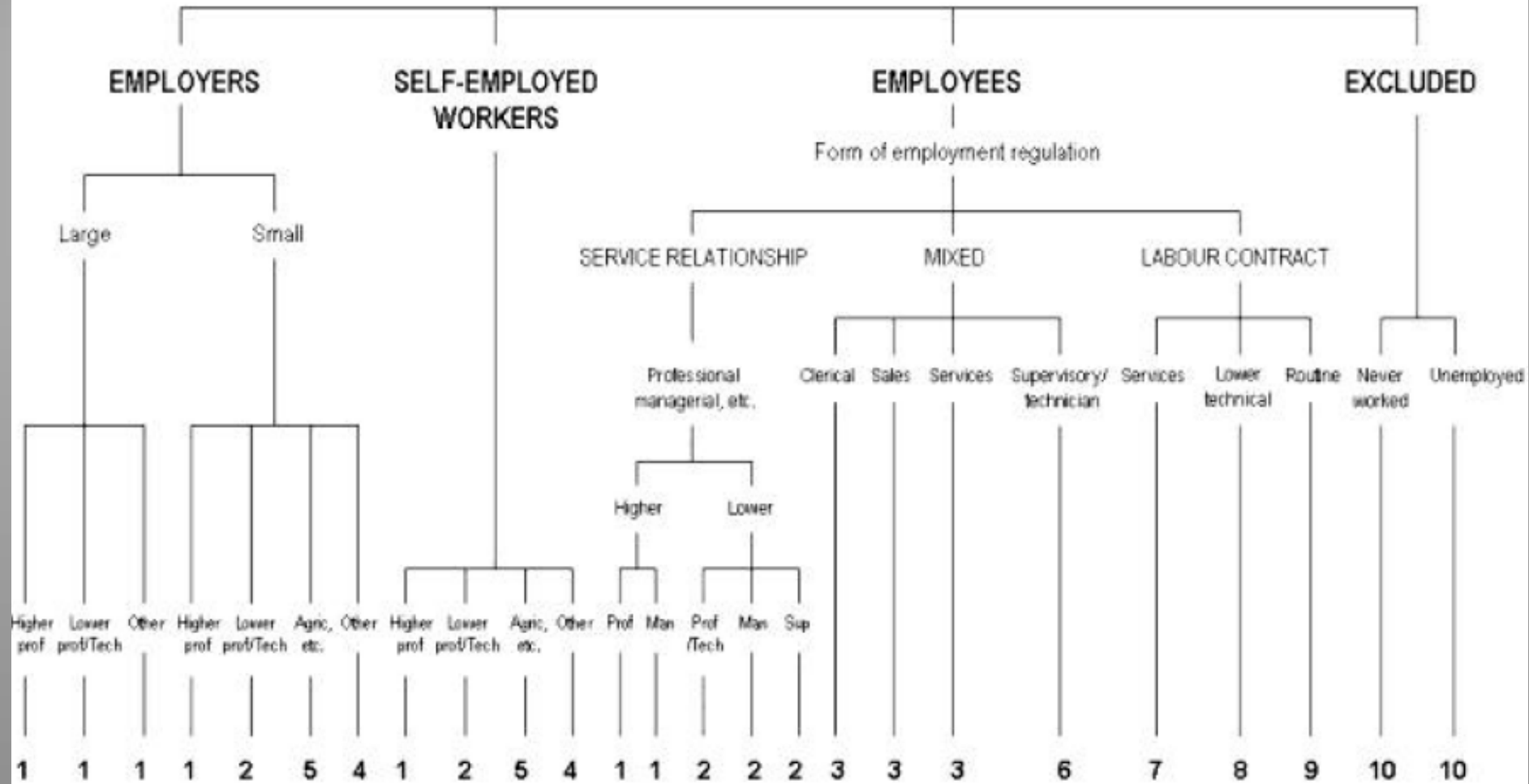


Figure 1.2 The conceptual derivation of ESeC

Source: (Pp. 22) Rose, David and Eric Harrison, eds. 2010. *Social Class in Europe : An Introduction to the European Socio-Economic Classification*. Oxon: Routledge.

Class Compositions

	Global	China	Denmark	Spain	Australia	Sweden	Russia	U.S.
Large employers, higher mgrs/professional	11.57%	11.29%	16.61%	8.07%	17.52%	12.21%	16.11%	13.31%
Lower mgrs/professionals, higher supervisors/technicians	19.62%	6.03%	24.98%	9.01%	31.73%	29.45%	18.75%	25.38%
Intermediate occupations	9.84%	1.61%	12.78%	13.92%	9.83%	9.13%	6.51%	10.43%
Small employers and self-employed (non-agriculture)	6.76%	12.75%	2.6%	8.07%	2.30%	2.05%	.29%	5.05%
Small employers and self-employed (agriculture)	3.66%	33.83%	.51%	2.46%	.22%	.09%	.72%	.72%
Lower supervisors and technicians	9.53%	9.17%	12.2%	.82%	15.43%	12.21%	7.59%	8.39%
Lower sales and service	12.32%	8.51%	12.13%	20.47%	9.48%	16.68%	12.31%	12.26%
Lower technical	10.02%	6.32%	4.91%	15.44%	4.67%	6.24%	14.75%	6.23%
Routine	16.68%	10.49%	13.29%	21.75%	8.83%	11.93%	22.98%	18.23%
Missing Cases	8774	273	133	360	133	64	206	56
Total	46464	2737	1385	855	1393	1073	1397	1525

Source: ISSP 2009

3-Class version

<i>ESeC class</i>	<i>10-class version</i>	<i>6-class version^a</i>	<i>5-class version</i>	<i>3-class version</i>
Higher salariat	1	1+2	1+2	1+2
Lower salariat	2			
Higher white collar	3	3+6	3+6	3+4+5+6
Petite bourgeois	4	4+5	4+5	
Small farmers	5			
Higher grade blue collar	6	3+6	3+6	
Lower white collar	7	7	7	7+8+9
Skilled manual	8	8	8+9	
Semi-/non-skilled	9	9		
Unemployed	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)

Note
^a A 7-class version could be created by not combining classes 1 and 2, of course.

Source: (Pp. 21)Rose, David and Eric Harrison, eds. 2010. *Social Class in Europe : An Introduction to the European Socio-Economic Classification*. Oxon: Routledge.

Subjective class

22. Most people see themselves as belonging to a particular class. Please tell us which social class you would say you belong to?

Lower class

Working class

Lower middle class

Middle class

Upper middle class

Upper class

Subjective Class Responses

	Global	China	Denmark	Spain	Australia	Sweden	Russia	U.S.
Lower Class	8.48	24.75%	2.07%	3.63%	2.95%	1.43%	6.96%	4.15%
Working Class	27.09%	22.06%	17.54%	40.05%	21.46%	24.04%	29.84%	35.91%
Lower Middle Class	17.66%	20.93%	13.99%	18.99%	18.51%	12.06%	16.24%	13.2%
Middle Class	38.99%	30.07%	51.67%	35.09%	44.27%	48.61%	43.39%	39.03%
Upper Middle Class	7.24%	2.03%	14.19%	2.15%	12.54%	12.87%	3.45%	6.82%
Upper Class	.54%	.17%	.54%	.08%	.27%	.98%	.13%	.89%
Missing Cases	5829	-	24	4	34	18	8	13
Total	49409	3010	1494	1211	1491	1119	1595	1568

'Middling' tendencies?

- Reference group processes (Merton 1957, Evans and Kelley 2004)
- Class shame (Sennett and Cobb 1973)
- Class disidentification (Skeggs 1997)

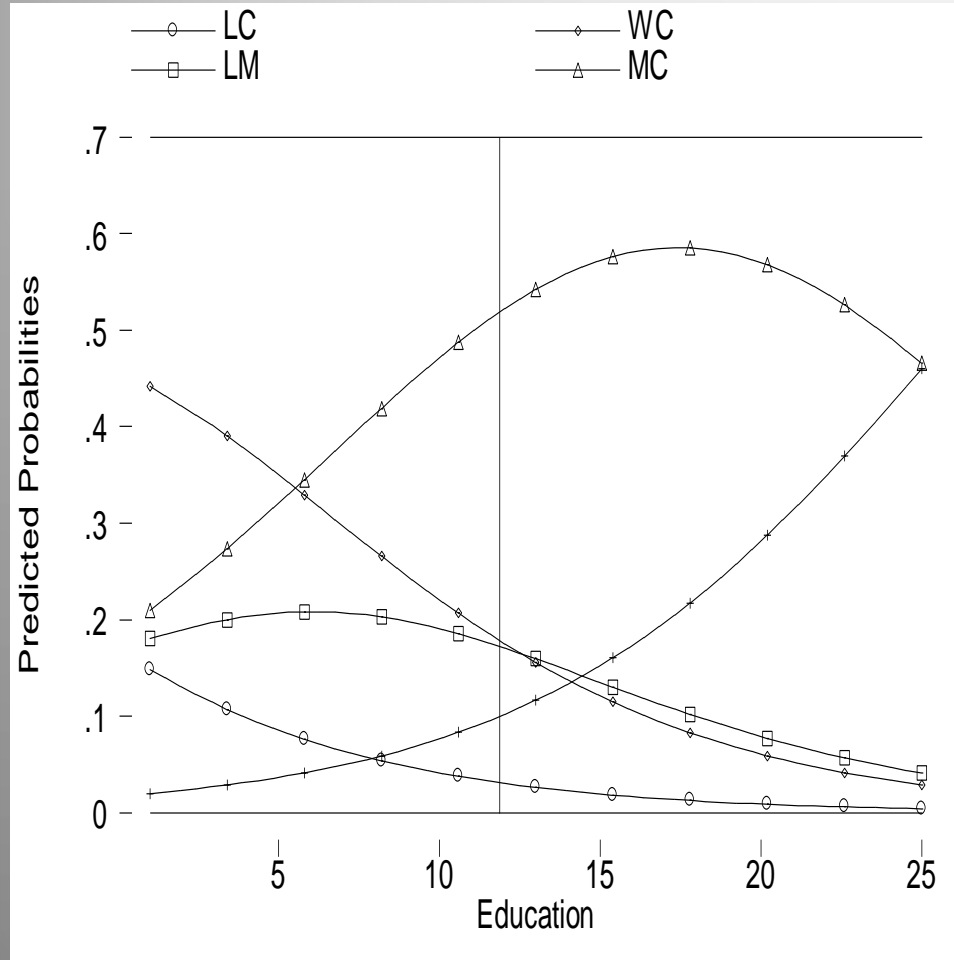
Odds ratio for subjective class responses

	Global	China	Denmark	Spain	Australia	Sweden	Russia	U.S.
Intermediate Class (Salaried class as referent)	.49***	.46***	.45***	.59*	.53***	.43***	.67*	.80
	(.03)	(.10)	(.14)	(.22)	(.13)	(.17)	(.16)	(.13)
Working Class	.25***	.40***	.12***	.30***	.23***	.15***	.27***	.43***
	(.03)	(.11)	(.14)	(.21)	(.14)	(.17)	(.13)	(.12)
University Degree (no degree as referent)	2.73***	1.49*	6.19***	2.74***	2.48***	7.97***	2.69***	3.85***
	(.03)	(.16)	(.18)	(.20)	(.13)	(.16)	(.14)	(.13)
Female	1.04*	1.07	.89	1.10	1.04	.96	.84	1.06
	(.02)	(.07)	(.11)	(.13)	(.10)	(.12)	(.11)	(.10)
Age	1.00***	.99*	1.00	1.00	1.00	.99	.98***	1.02***
	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)	(.00)
Likelihood ratio Chi ²	7548.79***	115.29***	442.28***	118.15***	252.82***	264.03***	350.74***	306.43***
Pseudo R ²	.06	.01	.13	.06	.07	.10	.09	.08
N	41276	2733	1375	845	1340	1049	1393	1494

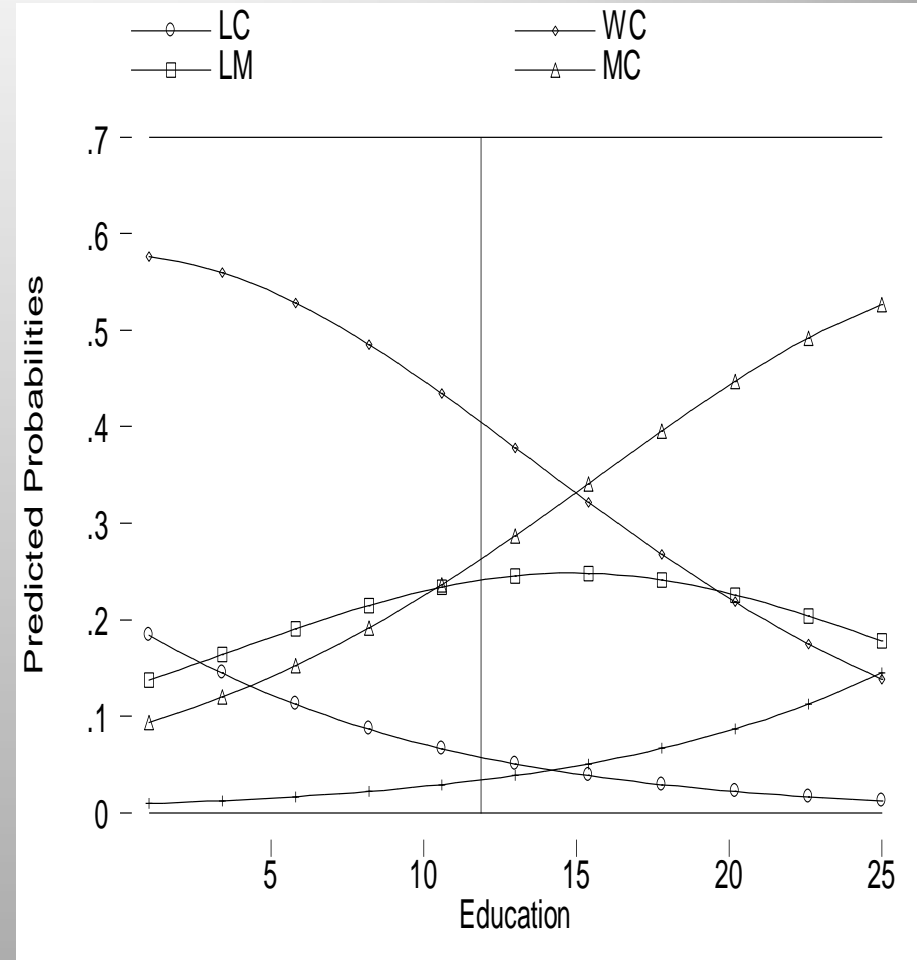
Note: standard errors in parentheses; *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Source: ISSP 2009

Global

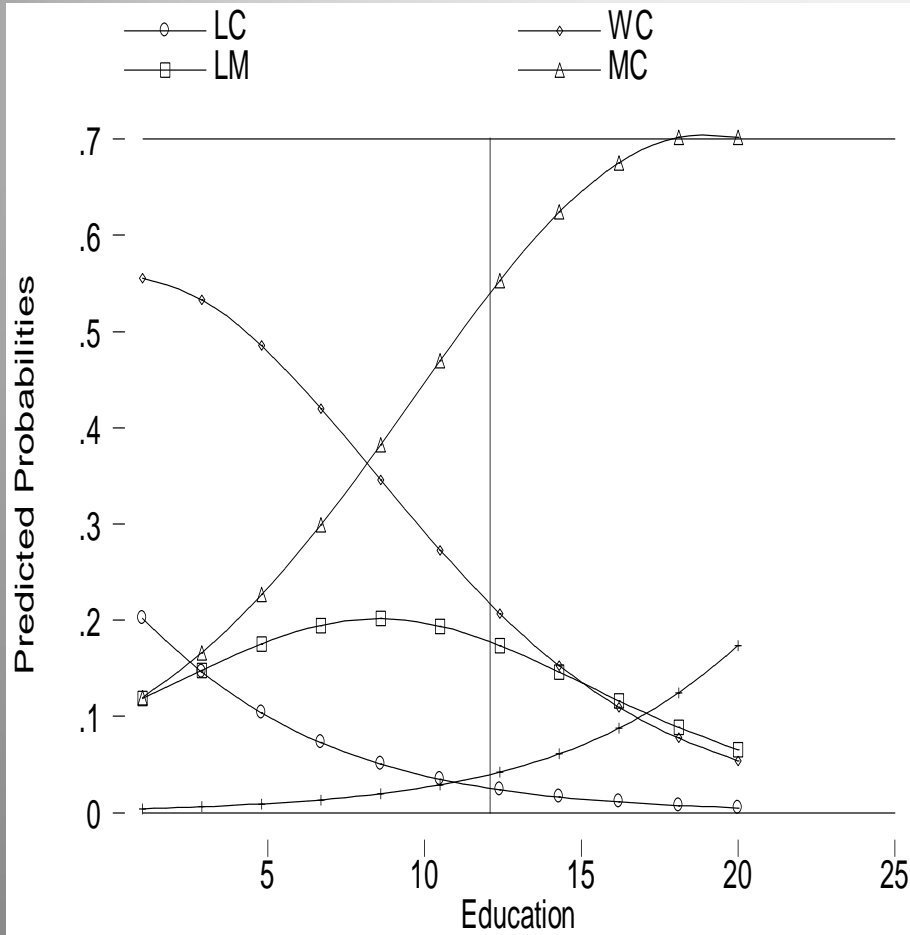


Sariat Class

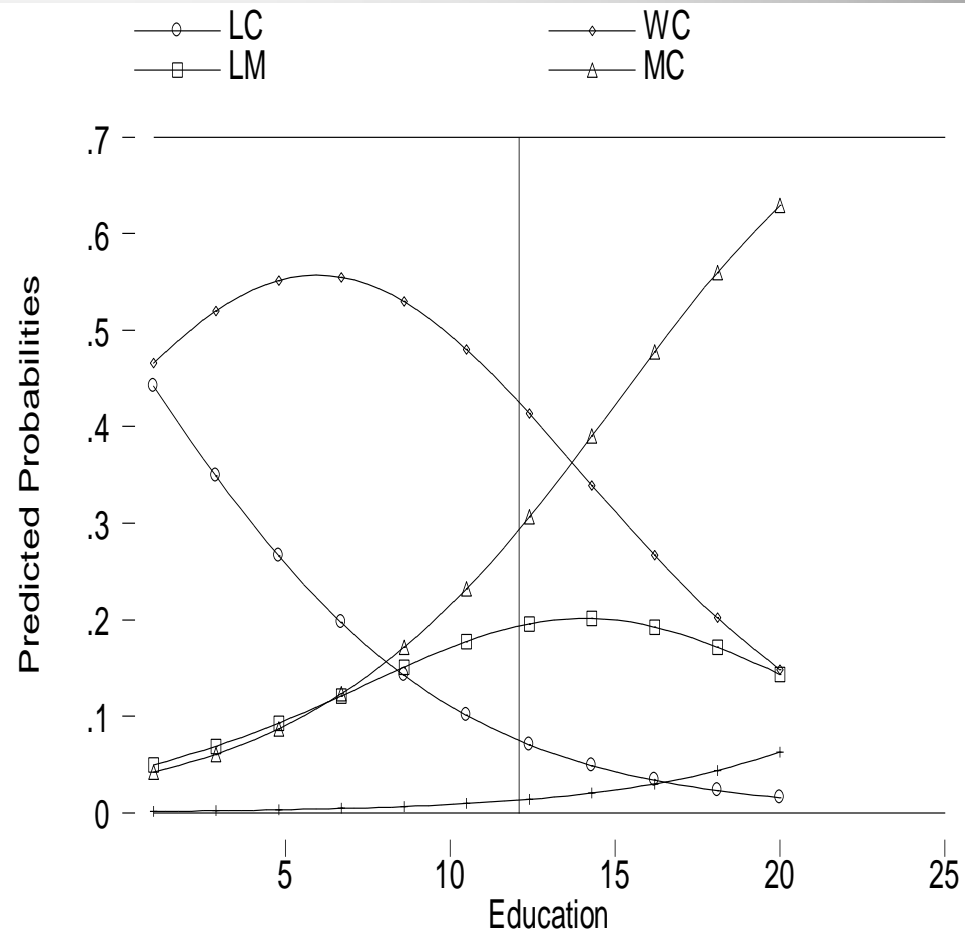


Working Class

Russia

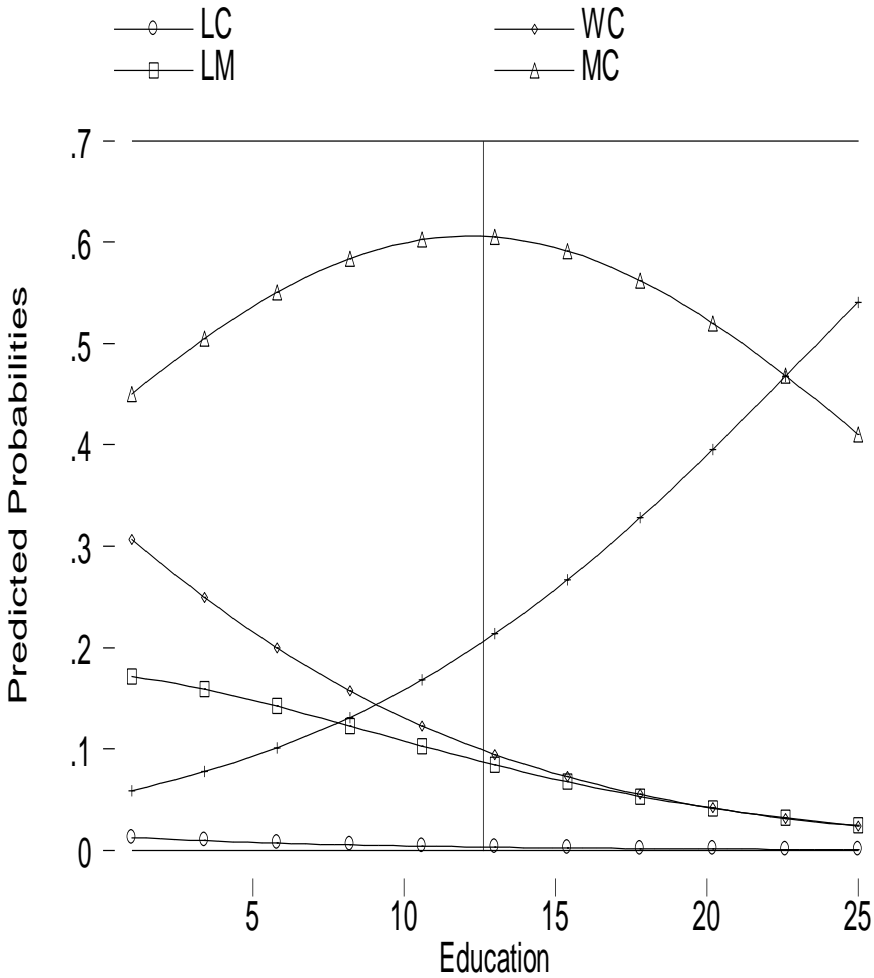


Sariat Class

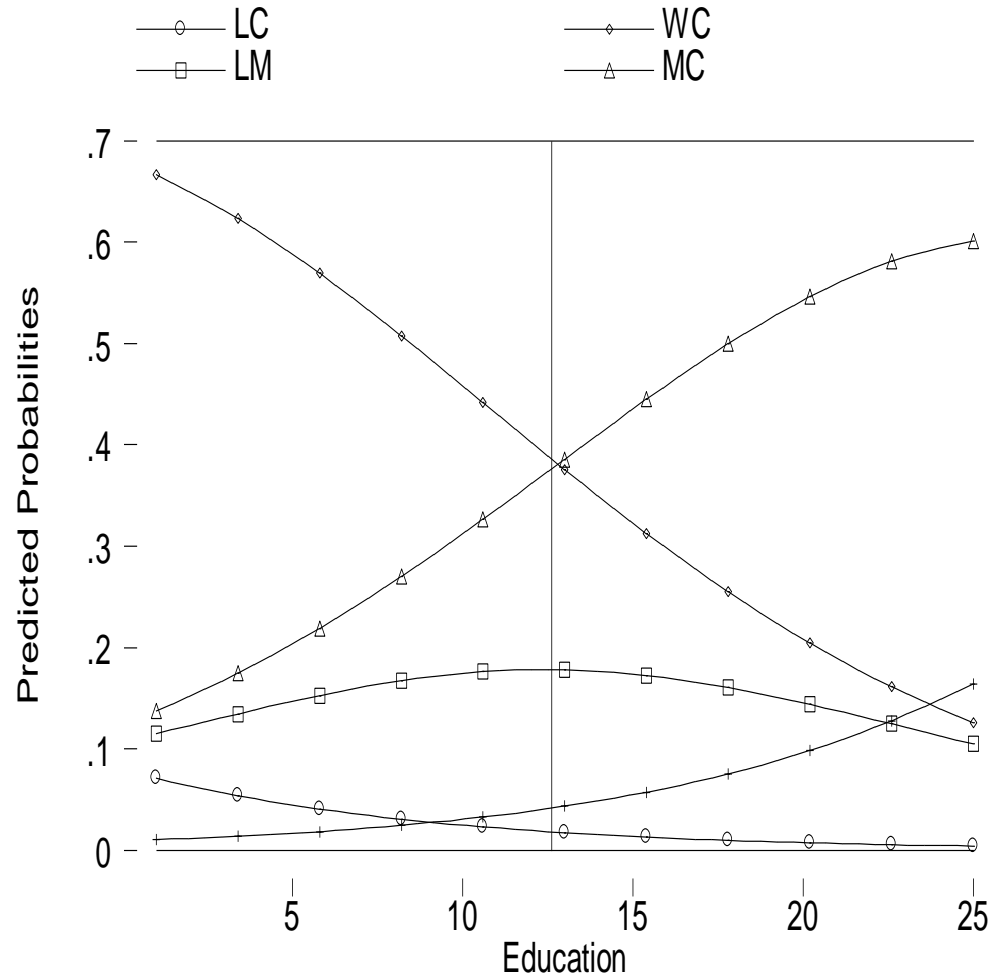


Working Class

Sweden

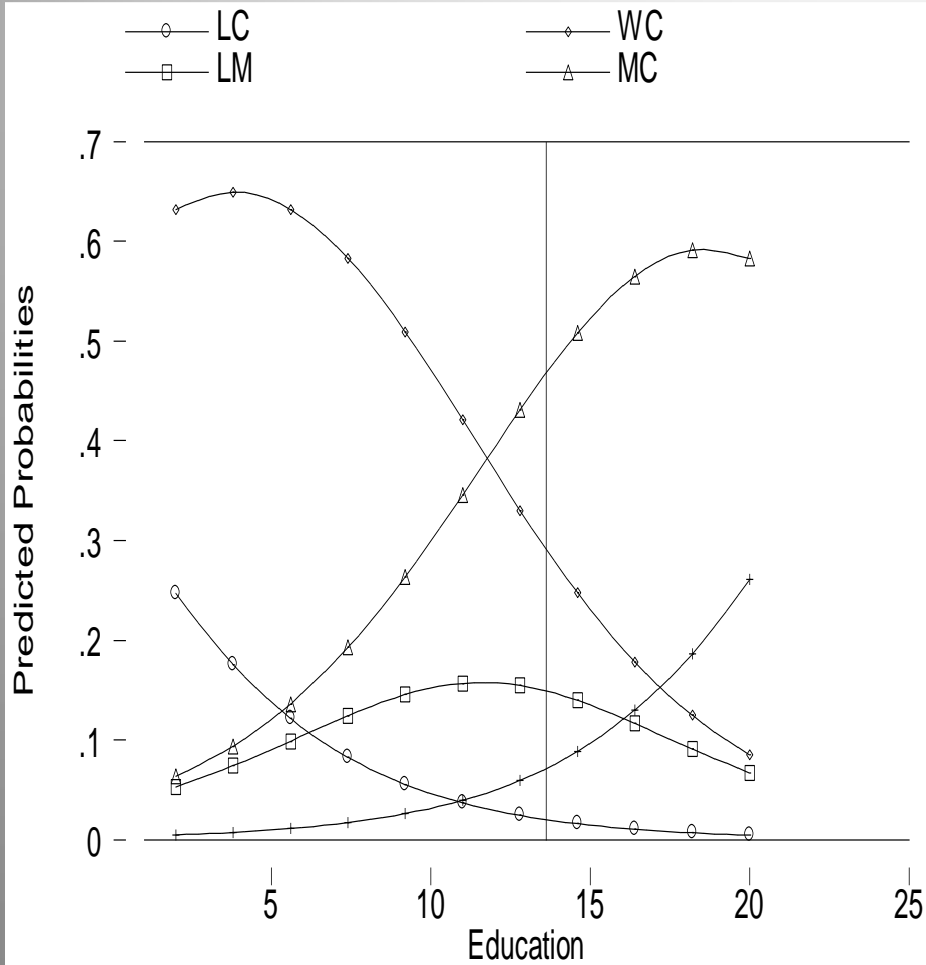


Salaried Class

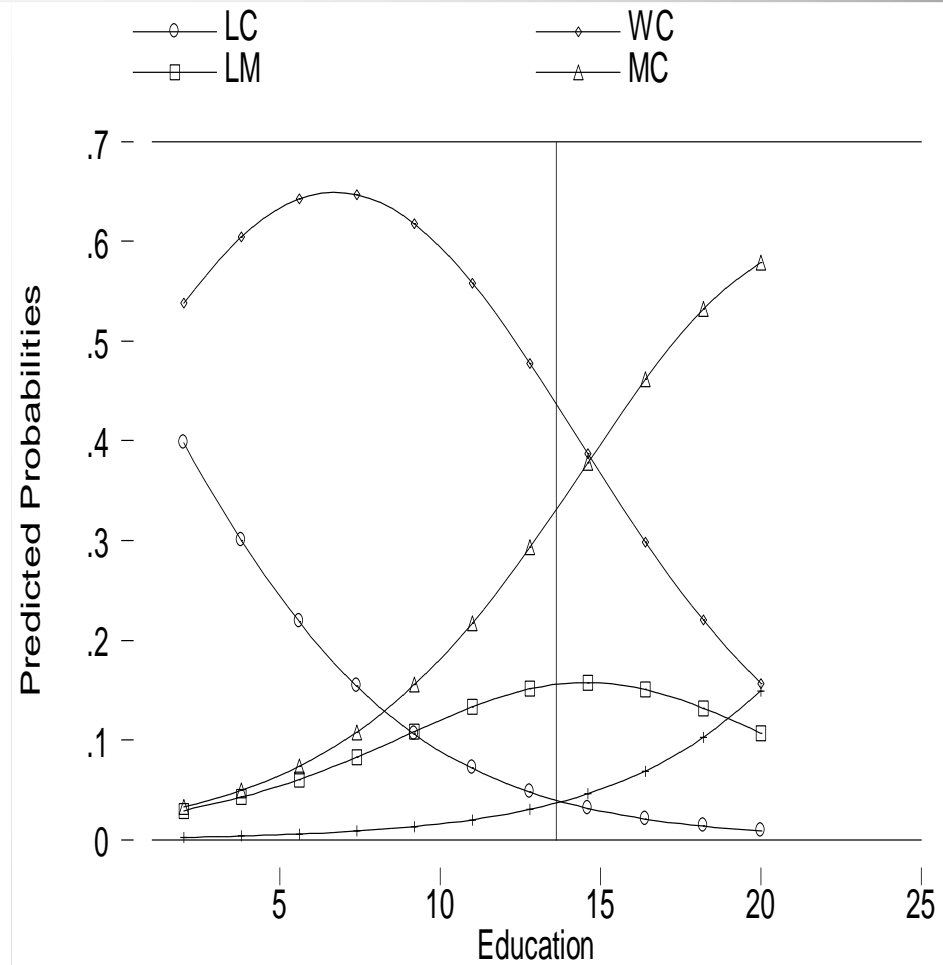


Working Class

U.S.



Salaried Class



Working Class

Preliminary Implications

- Class matters in terms of subjective self-placement
- Middle class responses tend to increase with education
- Working classes identify with the “correct” class when they have limited education
- Highly educated salariat are likely to identify with the positions they objectively occupy
- Relationship between objective class position and self-placement is “crystallised” at the limits of class and education

Next Steps . . .

Edward.haddon@alumni.ubc.ca



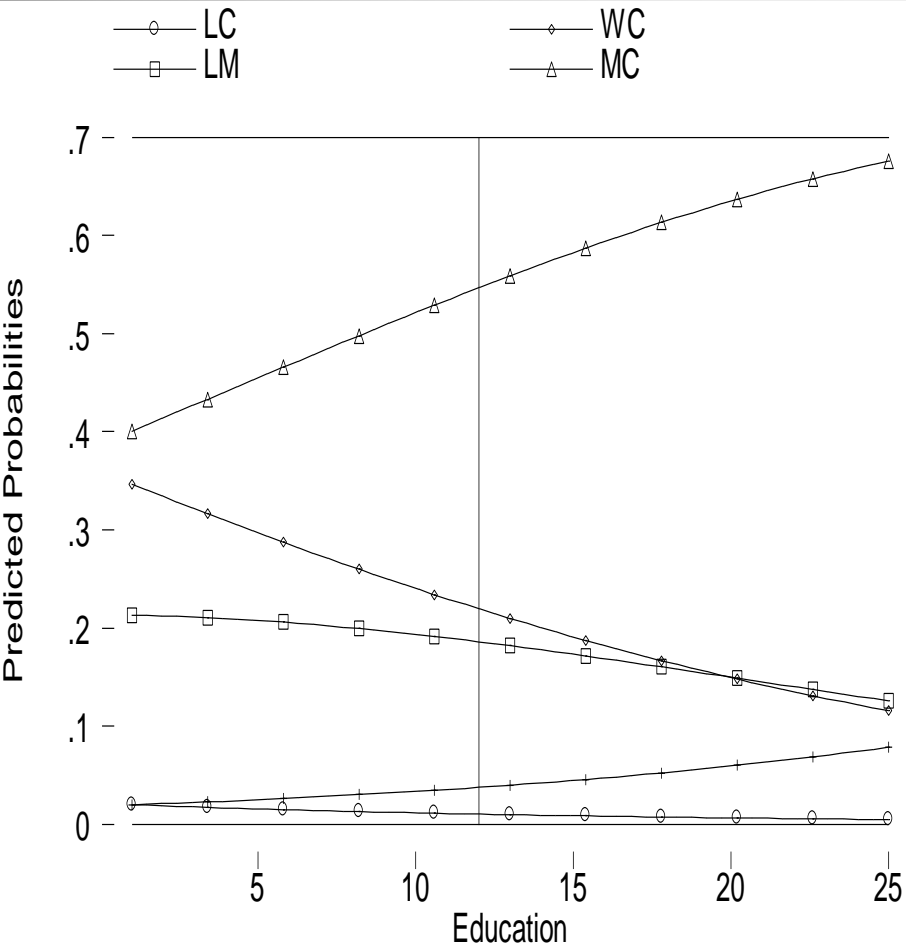
a place of mind

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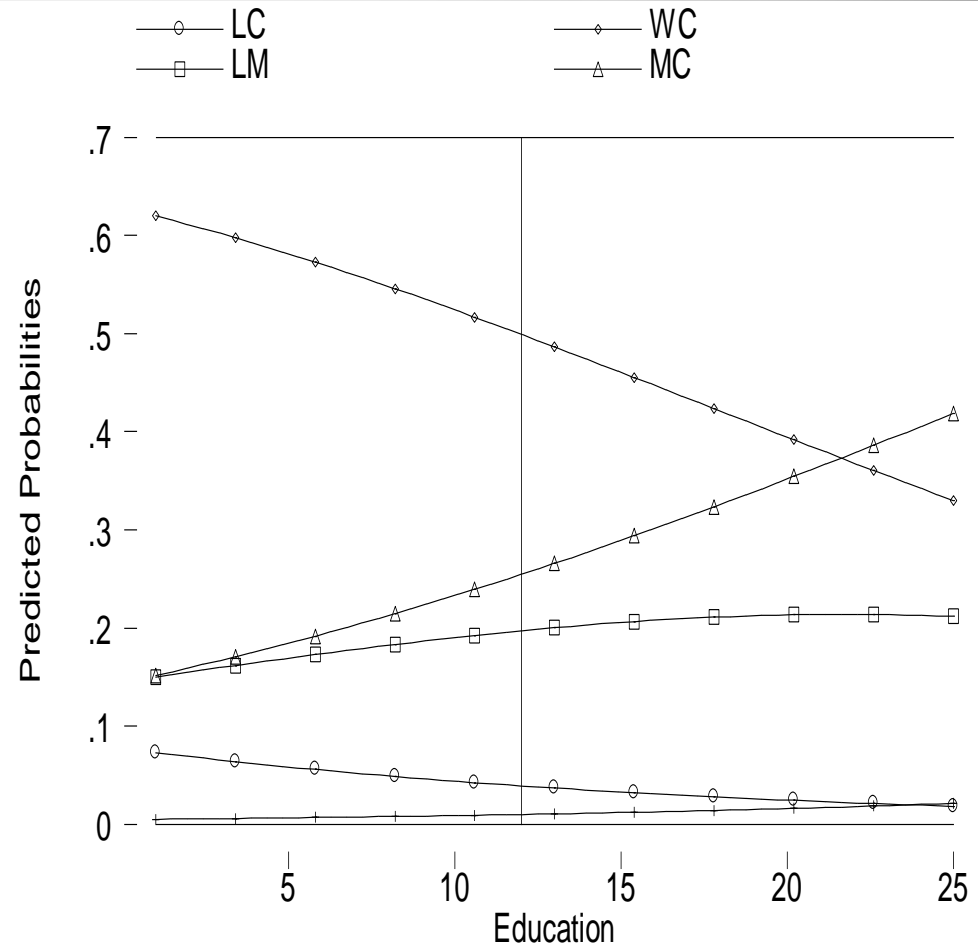
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Spain

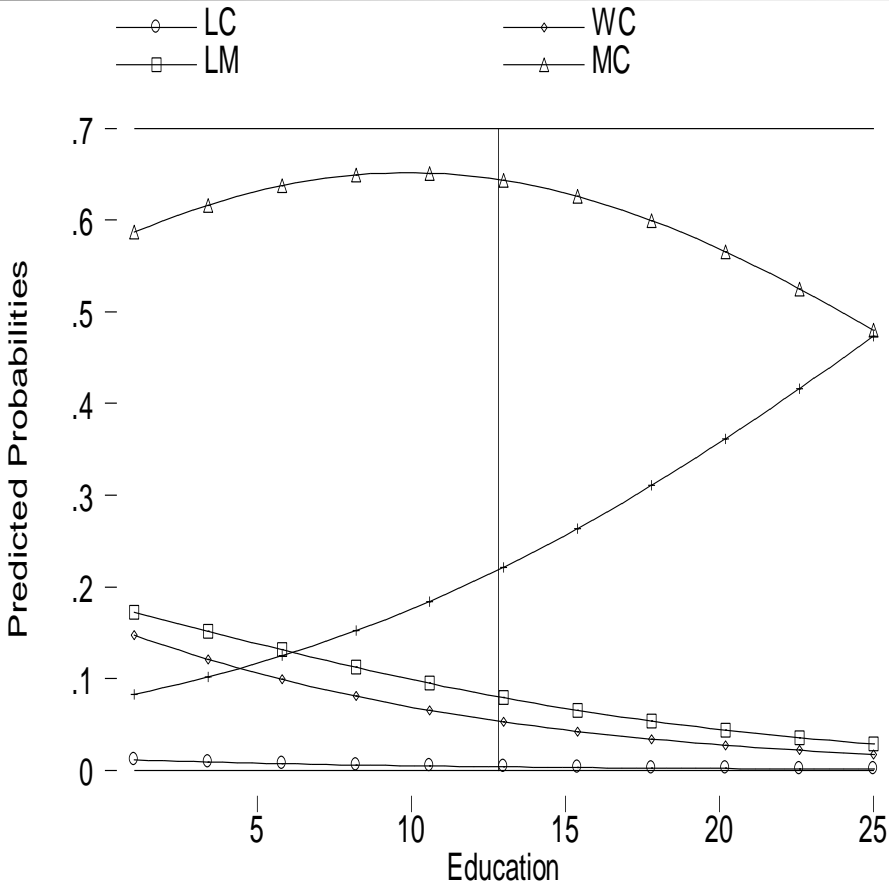


Salaried Class

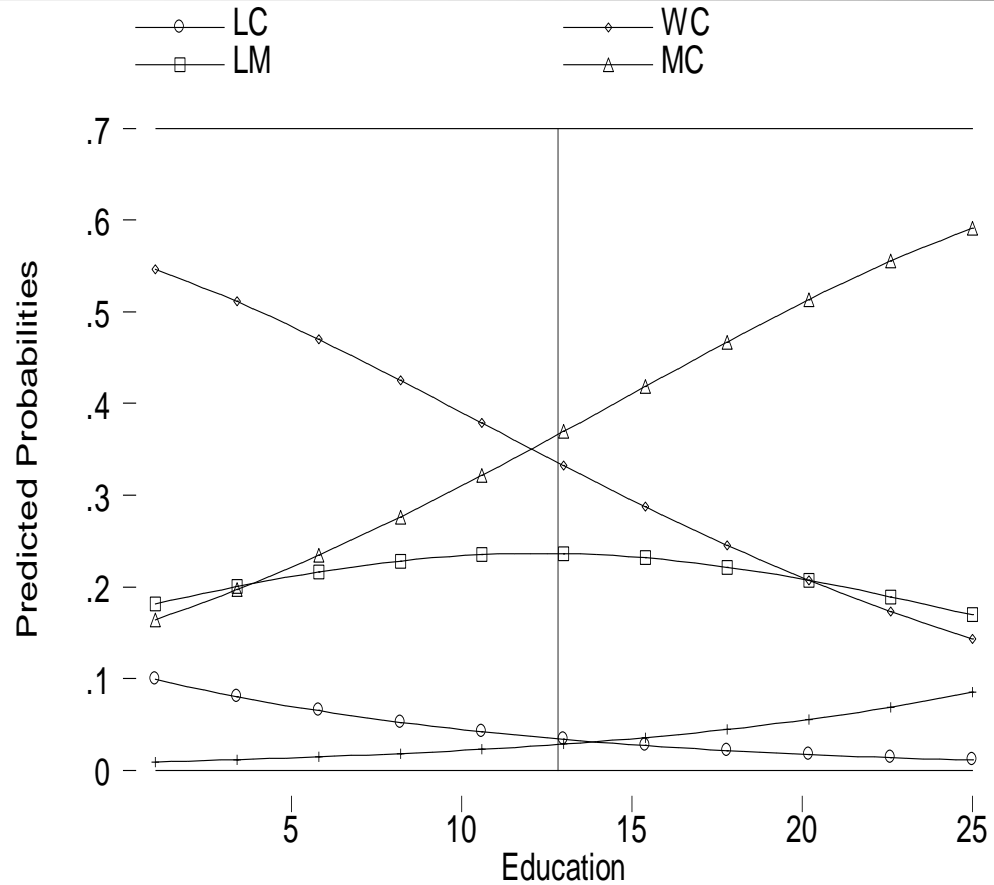


Working Class

Denmark

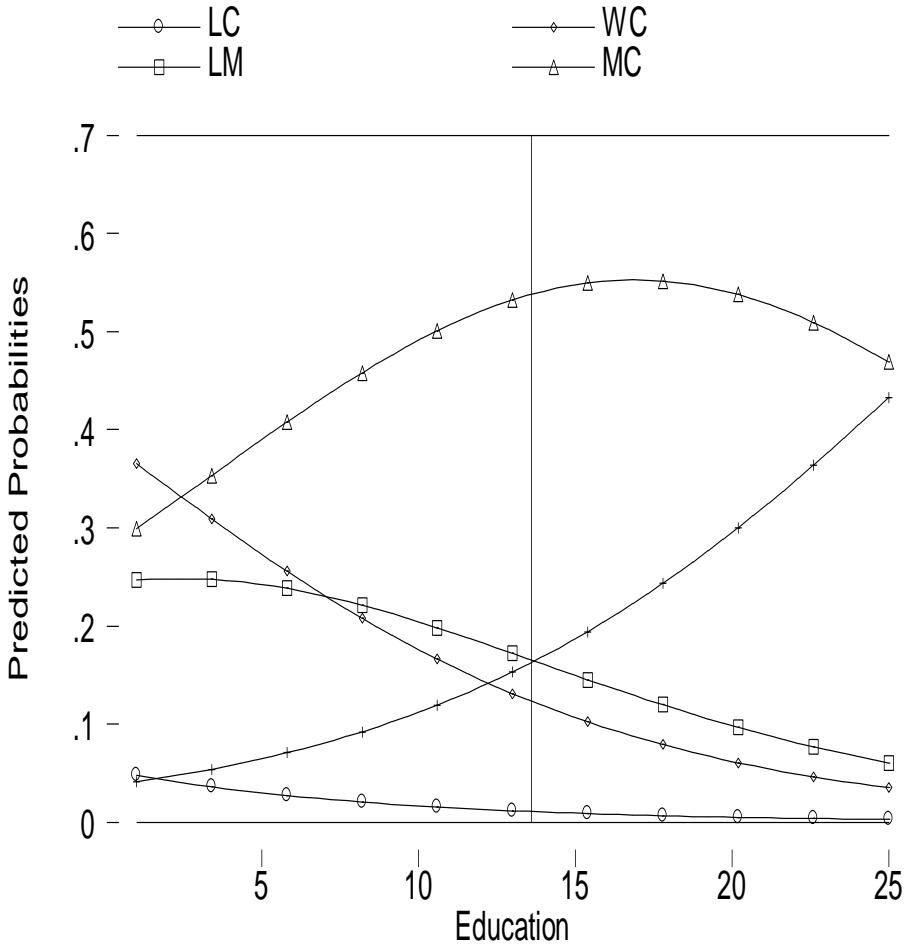


Salaried Class

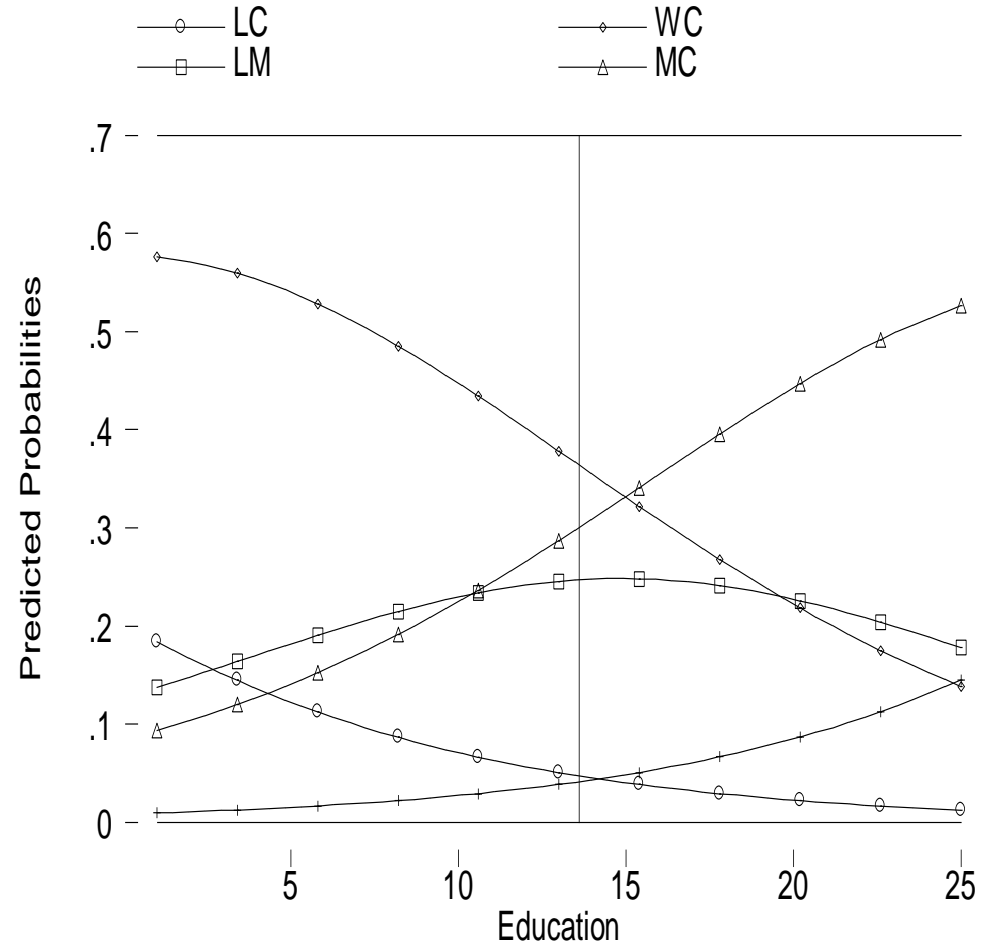


Working Class

Australia

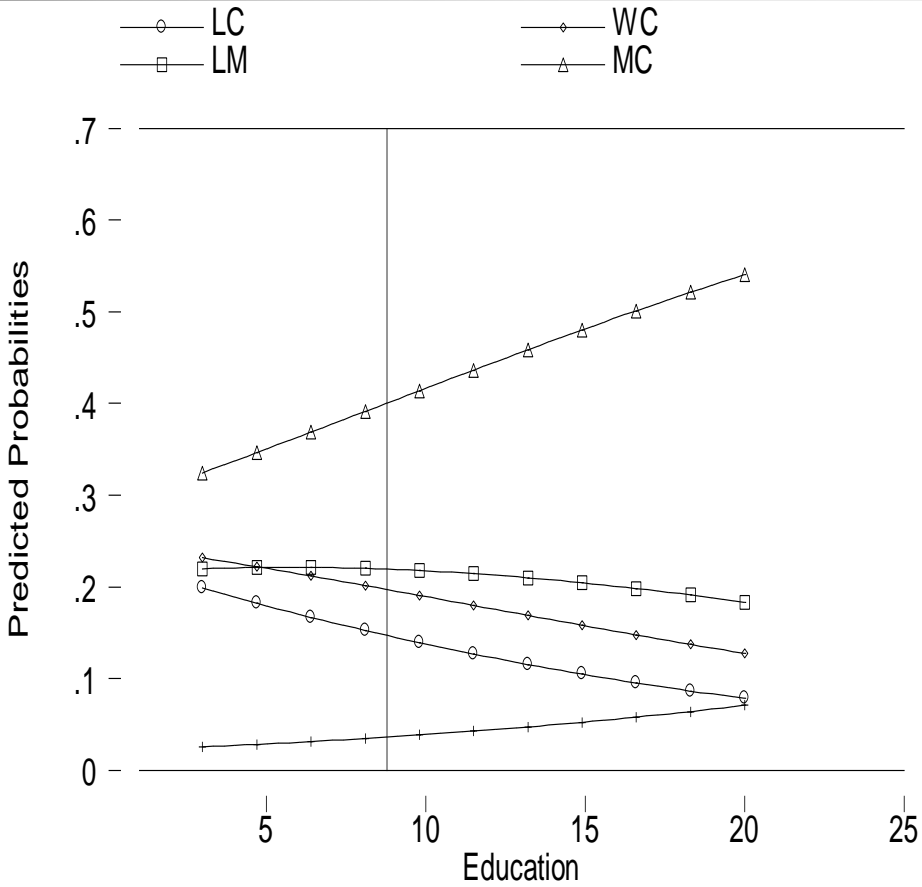


Saliariat Class

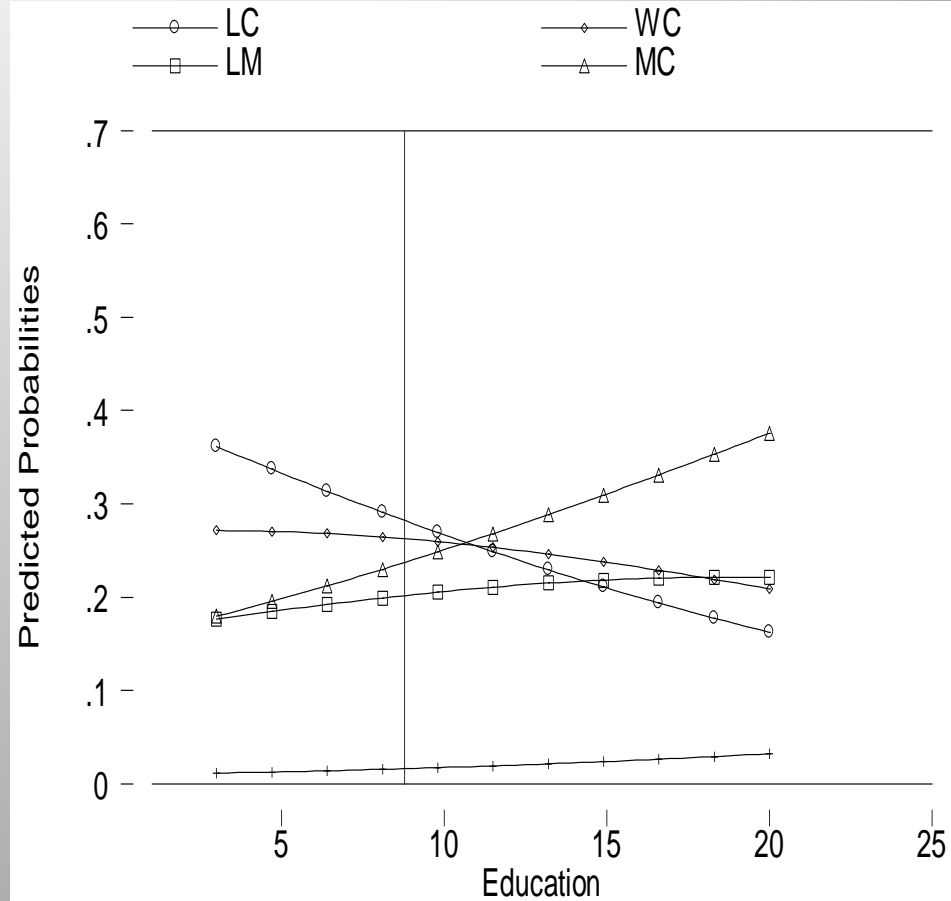


Working Class

China



Sariat Class



Working Class