

Silent Revolution, Counter-Revolution, or Cultural Conflict?

Political Cultural Change and its Influence on Class Voting in Western Countries (1956-1990)¹

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Summary

First we investigate how the political culture in western countries has changed over time. Three theoretical views are put to the test using data on party-manifestos. The first predicts that only new-leftist issues will increase in salience. The second predicts that both new-leftist and new-rightist issues will emerge at the same time. The third, which is empirically corroborated, predicts that first new-leftist issues will emerge followed by the rise in new-rightist issues.

Second, we investigate how the emergence of these new issues has affected the traditional class-party alignments. Using the International Mobility and Stratification File we show that the middle class increasingly votes left wing as new-leftist issues become more important and that the working class increasingly votes right wing as new-rightist issues become more important. What's more, the middle class appears to alienate from the traditional party of their class as new-rightist issues rise in salience.

1 Introduction

With their polemically titled article ‘Are Social Classes Dying?’ Clark and Lipset (1991) sparked a lively debate on the relevance of class for voting behavior (cf. Evans, 1999; Clark and Lipset 2001). In this discussion Nieuwbeerta showed that traditional class party alignments in western societies are fading: the working class increasingly supports right-wing parties whereas the middle class increasingly supports parties on the left (1995; 2001; De Graaf en Nieuwbeerta, 1995; see also: Clark & Lipset, 1991; Dalton, 1988; Dogan, 1995; Franklin, 1985; Heath et al., 1996; Rose & McAllister, 1986). Most political sociologists nowadays agree that class voting – the relationship between class position and voting behavior – has declined in the post-war era, and that future studies should therefore aim at explaining this downward trend (Nieuwbeerta 2001: 133).

Of course, Nieuwbeerta tried to explain the decline in class voting using hypotheses derived from class analysis. What is striking, however, is that his efforts point out that the class approach to politics is by and large impotent in explaining why this decline has occurred in the first place and why the strength of the relationship between class and voting differs between countries (see Nieuwbeerta, 1995; Nieuwbeerta et al. 2000; Nieuwbeerta en Ultee, 1999). Other scholars relate the declining relevance of class for voting behavior to the rise of a ‘post-modern’ (Inglehart, 1997a), ‘post-industrial’ (Clark and Rempel 1998) or ‘new’ political culture (Clark, 2001a, 2001b, see also: Achterberg, 2004, 2005). They all argue that non-economic or cultural issues of individual freedom and social order have become more salient.¹ This resulted in a ‘new’ cultural cleavage existing parallel to the ‘old’ class cleavage in the political domain, giving rise to rightist voting behavior by the working class and leftist voting behavior by the middle class (cf. Achterberg and Houtman, 2005; Elchardus, 1996; Houtman, 2003; Inglehart, 1997a).

The ‘new political culture’ approach thus seems promising for explaining the declining relationship between class and party preference. However, fundamental disagreement about two issues still exists. There is disagreement about the exact nature of change in political cultures and about the exact mechanism through which the changing political cultures lead to a declining relationship between class and voting. Therefore, in this article we will investigate how the new political culture developed and how it led to a rightist

voting working class and a leftist voting middle class. Hence, in the first part of this article we will test how political culture has developed in recent decades. In the second part of this article we will assess whether, and if so, in what way, this affects the voting behavior of the working class and the middle class.

2 The changing political culture

There are roughly three different views in the debate about the changing nature of political culture. All argue that cultural issues have increased in salience in the political culture of western societies. However, these three views differ considering the period of this development and the nature of these issues. In the first, it is argued that only progressively natured cultural issues (i.e. libertarian issues) have generally grown in salience (Inglehart, 1977, 1997a; see also: Clark, 2001a). Inglehart, one of the most dominant proponents of this view, describes the changes in political culture, in Inglehart's terms the rise of a 'postmodernist' political culture, as follows: "Postmodernism is the rise of *new* values and lifestyles, with greater tolerance for ethnic, cultural, and sexual diversity and individual choice concerning the kind of life one wants to lead." (1997a: 23 italics in original). According to this argument individual freedom, self-actualization, and cultural heterogeneity are increasingly considered valuable issues. In other words, Inglehart uses new left (stressing libertarian issues) and new politics virtually as synonyms to each other (Flanagan, 1987: 1305)

Inglehart argues that libertarian issues have risen in salience because of the emphasis put on them by younger age cohorts, induced by their socialization in times of great prosperity and material security. Inglehart (1977) labelled this process the 'silent revolution'. This reasoning has face value because in the sixties all kinds of libertarian natured social movements, such as the peace movement, and movements for the emancipation of women, homosexuals, and ethnic minorities, have risen (cf. Kriesi, 1989). Since then these movements have been active in public discourse and are increasingly represented in parliaments by new-leftist or libertarian parties. And, according to Inglehart (1997a: 251), authoritarian issues are bound to die out because 'they do not represent the wave of the future'.

In the second view it is argued that in the same period in which libertarian issues increased in salience, cultural issues of a conservative nature (i.e. authoritarian issues) have risen in salience as well (Lyons, 1996; Klatch, 1999). Some consider right-wing populist movements of the fifties as the predecessor of these authoritarian tendencies (Plotke, 2001). According to this view the new political culture is characterized by an increasing cultural conflict in recent decades in which both libertarian and authoritarian issues have risen in salience simultaneously (cf. Hunter, 1991; see also Layman, 2001).

The third view theorizes that the rising salience of libertarian issues induced a countermovement. According to Ignazi (1992, 2003; see also: Flanagan, 1987; Veugelers, 2000) this authoritarian countermovement rose in the late seventies as a reaction to the rising salience of new leftist libertarian movements in the sixties and seventies: *‘However, the same process of class and value de-alignment provoked by post-industrialism has produced different and even opposite concerns. While on one side the post-material agenda and its political by-products – the left-libertarian and green parties – expressed the drive for self-affirmation, on the other, a different set of post-industrial outcomes such as the weakening of the state – and national – authority in the domestic and international arena, the erosion of traditional social bonds, the perceived collapse of conventional moral standards and sexual mores, and the waning of an ordered, hierarchical, homogeneous, and safe society fuelled the need for self-defence and self-reassurance’* (Ignazi, 2003: 201 italics in original).

Many deem the erosion of the social order that is characteristic for modern society as problematic. The rise of values stressing individual freedom and cultural heterogeneity leads to feelings of insecurity and disturbance: ‘The need for being taken care of, being part of an aggregate, and being provided with an identity have fermented in Western countries for quite some time with no political interpretation. They had remained ‘silent’ because of a lack of interpreters, contrary to what happened on the left side. They propelled a form of ‘silent counter-revolution’ in attitudes’ (Ignazi, 2003: 201). This ‘silent counter-revolution’ refers to the rise of neo-conservatism and of the new-right since the mid-seventies. These political movements: “Reflected the demands for identity (hence nationalism), for homogeneity (hence xenophobia), and for order, hierarchy, and strong leadership (hence authoritarianism)” (Ignazi, 2003: 202). According to Ignazi, the genesis of postmodern society, and the emphasis on libertarianism have led to a counter-movement in which feelings of insecurity and

uncertainty have been converted into an authoritarian political agenda, which is put forward in the political arena by the new-right.

Summing up, the views on political cultural change differ with respect to its nature and the chronological order in which they argue changes are taking place. The difference between the first and the last two views on the changing political culture concerns its nature. The first view puts forward that changes in political culture in Western societies since the sixties merely concern the rising salience of libertarian or new-leftist issues. This will be tested with the first hypothesis: *libertarian issues rise in salience where authoritarian issues do not*. The other two views suggest that as libertarian issues rise in salience authoritarian issues rise in salience as well. The difference between the second and the third vision concerns the chronological order of this process. Whereas the second view argues that libertarian and authoritarian cultural issues rise in salience at the same time, i.e. a rising cultural conflict, the third view argues that the rise in salience of libertarian issues precedes the rise in salience of authoritarian issues, i.e. a counter-revolution. The second hypothesis tests which view is supported: *authoritarian issues rise later in salience than libertarian issues do*.

3 Data and measurement

To test the hypotheses one has to measure the salience of libertarian and authoritarian issues. Following the work of Clark (2001b) and Achterberg (2006) for this purpose we use the Party Manifesto Data (provided by: Budge et al., 2001). In this data set policy priorities have been quantified for twenty-five Western countries between 1946 and 1998 using party manifestos. All sentences and quasi-sentences have been classified in 56 policy priorities. The relative importance of each policy priority has been weighed by the percentage of the votes for the party of the manifesto under consideration. This method avoids that policy priorities of splinter parties have a disproportionate impact. Subsequently, for every policy priority an annual total has been calculated. This means that the salience of each policy priority for every country within an election year has been determined.

We constructed an index for the salience of libertarian and for the salience of authoritarian issues for fifteen countries.² This led to 234 country/year-combinations for

which the relative importance of each policy priority has been calculated. The four issues used by Achterberg (2006) for a cultural issue salience-index will be split in libertarian and authoritarian issues.

authoritarian issue salience-index – The authoritarian issues used by Achterberg are: ‘Traditional Morality: Positive’ and ‘Law and Order’. The first item measures the attention paid in Part Manifesto’s to “favourable mentions of traditional moral values; prohibition, censorship and suppression of immorality and unseemly behavior; maintenance and stability of family; religion” (Budge et al., 2001: 227). The second item measures the attention paid to issues like “enforcement of all laws; actions against crime; support and resources for police; tougher attitudes in courts” (ibid.). A *authoritarian issue salience-index* is made with these two items. A higher score on this index means greater salience of authoritarian issues in a given country/year-combination.³

authoritarian issue salience-index – The progressive cultural issues in Achterberg’s index are: ‘traditional morality: negative’ and ‘underprivileged minority groups’. The first item is the antipode of ‘traditional morality: positive’, which is used in the *authoritarian issue salience-index*. It concerns: “opposition to traditional moral values; support for divorce, abortion etc.; otherwise as [traditional morality: positive], but negative” (ibid.). The second item is the attention in the party manifesto’s paid to: “favourable references to underprivileged minorities who are defined neither in economic nor in demographic terms, e.g. the handicapped, disabled, homosexuals, immigrants, refugees etc.” (Budge et al., 2001: 228). A *libertarian issue salience-index* is made with these two items. A higher score on this index stands for more salience of libertarian issues in a given country/year-combination.⁴

4 Results

To test hypothesis one – *libertarian issues rise in salience where authoritarian issues do not* – the score of every country/year-combination on the *libertarian issue salience-index* and the *authoritarian cultural issue salience -index* will be plotted in scatterplots (figures 1 and 2). Each scatterplot contains a linear regression line. The comparison of the regression lines in the scatterplots shows that both libertarian and authoritarian issues have risen in salience in recent decades.

The trends have been split by country in table 1. In nine countries libertarian issues have significantly become more salient in recent decades. In only one country, Finland, it has declined in salience in this period. The salience of conservative cultural issues has risen significantly in eight countries as well, while in one country, the Netherlands, it shows declining salience that is *almost* significant. At aggregated as well as country level both progressive *and* conservative cultural issues have risen in salience. Subsequently hypothesis one is rejected.

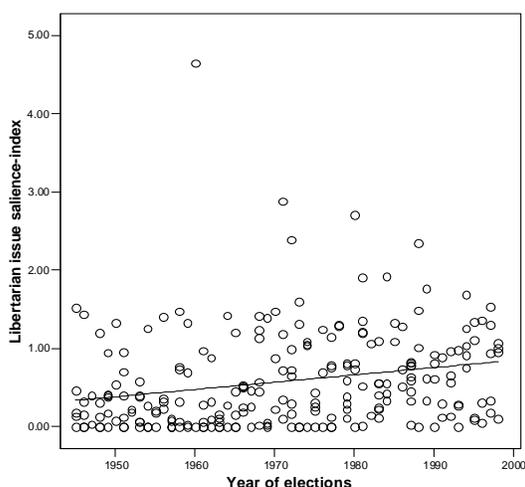


Figure 1 Libertarian issue salience, 1946 through 1998.

Pearson's $r = 0.234^{**}$ (1% one-sided)

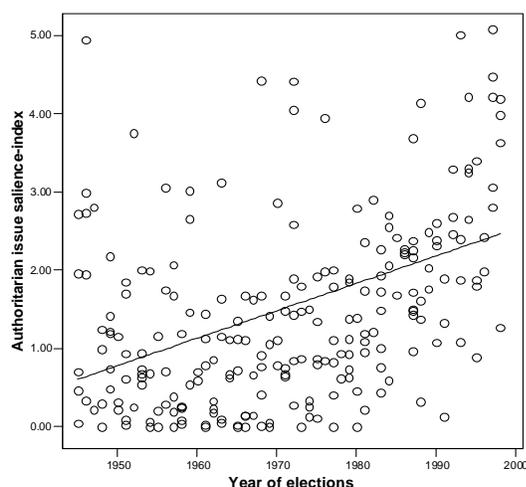


Figure 2 Authoritarian issue salience, 1946 through 1998.

Pearson's $r = 0.399^{**}$ (1% one-sided)

Table 1 Correlations between cultural issue-indices with year of elections by country (1946-1998)

Country	Libertarian issues	Authoritarian issues	N
Australia	0.407*	0.524**	22
Austria	0.423	0.686**	15
Belgium	-0.194	0.062	17
Canada	0.550*	0.545*	17
Denmark	0.447*	0.817**	21
Germany	0.802**	0.631**	14
Finland	-0.657**	-0.056	15
France	0.600*	0.344	14
Great-Brittain	0.003	0.843**	14
Ireland	0.630**	0.781***	15
Italy	0.425	0.388	14
The Netherlands	0.871**	-0.423	16
Norway	0.327	0.107	14
United States	-0.069	0.827**	13
Zwitserland	0.772**	0.048	13
Totaal	0.234**	0.399**	234

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ one sided

The question remains whether authoritarian issues rise in salience at the same time as libertarian issues, or if they rise in salience later, as a *reaction* to the risen salience of libertarian issues. This is put to the test with the second hypothesis. Therefore the postwar period is split into two era's. The first from 1946, the year of the first scores, to 1975, the second from 1976 to 1998. 1975 has been chosen as a braking point because Ignazi states that the new-right has come up since the mid-seventies as a reaction to the rise of the new-left. (2003: 204). Again, each scatterplot contains a linear regression line. This makes it possible to control if the salience of libertarian and authoritarian issues develops as argued in the second hypothesis. Figure 3 shows the scores on the index for the salience of libertarian issues for all countries under consideration from 1946 to 1975. Figure 4 shows these scores for the years 1976 to 1998.

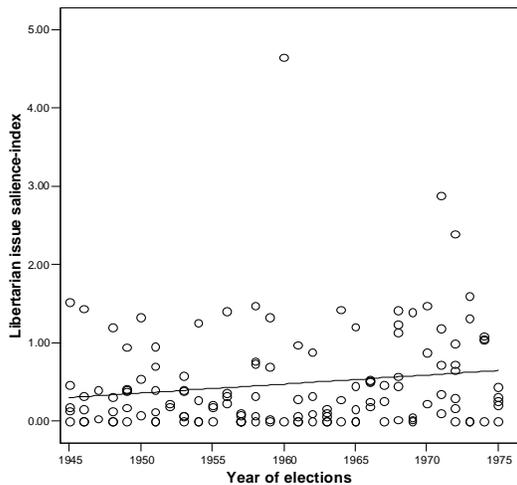


Figure 3 Libertarian issue salience, 1946 through 1975.
 Pearson's $r = 0.163^*$ (5% one-tailed)

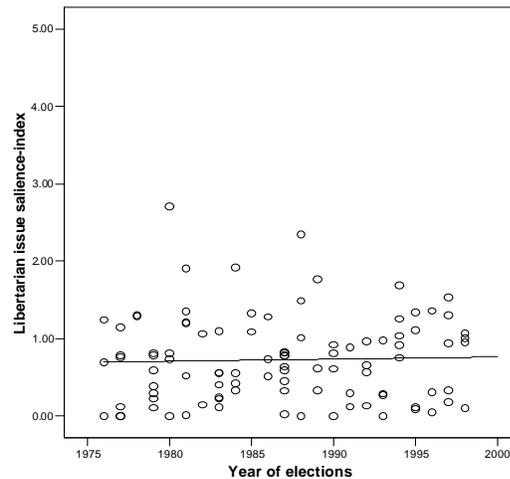


Figure 4 Libertarian issue salience, 1976 through 1998.
 Pearson's $r = 0.033$ (n.s.)

Comparison of the regression lines shows that the rise of libertarian issues only takes place before 1975. Moreover, the rise until 1975 is significant.⁵ After 1975 there is no significant increase whatsoever: libertarian issues maintain at the same level of importance.

According to Ignazi the silent counter-revolution begins around 1975. To test this assumption, in figure 5 the scores on the *authoritarian issue salience-index* of each election year from 1946 to 1975 have been plotted. Figure 6 shows these scores for the years 1976 through 1998. Comparison of the regression lines in figure 5 and 6 shows that the rise of salience of authoritarian issues can be attributed to the *post-1975* period. In the *pre-1975*

period the salience of these issues actually declines.⁶ The correlations confirm this perception. The declining salience of the authoritarian issues is insignificant, while the rising salience after 1975 is significant.

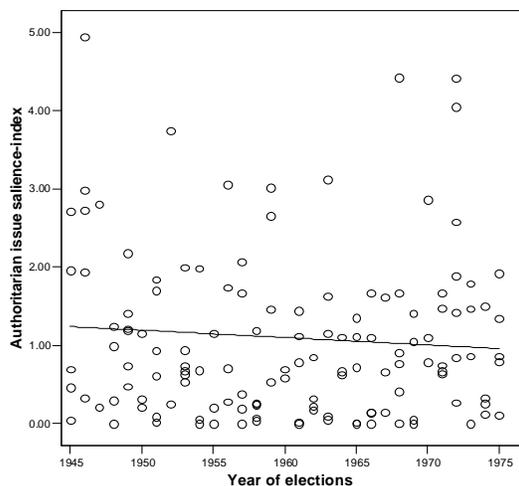


Figure 5 Authoritarian issue salience, 1946 through 1975.
Pearson's $r = -0.076$ (n.s.)

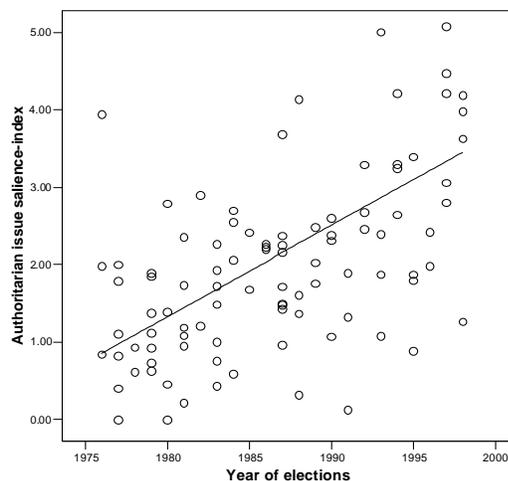


Figure 6 Authoritarian issue salience, 1976 through 1998.
Pearson's $r = 0.547^{***}$ (0,1% one-sided)

Table 2 Correlations between cultural issue-indices with year of elections by country (1946-1998)

Country	Libertarian issue salience until 1975	N	Authoritarian issue salience until 1975	N	Libertarian issue salience after 1975	N	Authoritarian issue salience after 1975	N
Australia	-0.165	13	0.116	13	0.187	9	0.470	9
Austria	0.036	9	0.271	9	0.324	6	0.537	6
Belgium	0.276*	10	-0.690*	10	-0.376	7	0.727*	7
Canada	0.505	11	-0.427	11	0.021	6	0.777*	6
Denmark	0.223	12	0.705**	12	0.561	9	0.797**	9
Germany	-0.217	7	0.587	7	0.718*	7	0.755*	7
Finland	-0.631*	10	-0.423**	10	-0.199	5	-0.462	5
France	0.720 *	8	-0.573	8	-0.272	6	0.876*	6
Great-Brittain	0.476	9	0.711*	9	-0.711	5	0.843*	5
Ireland	0.423	8	0.255	8	0.750**	7	0.861***	7
Italy	0.694*	7	-0.354	7	-0.400	7	0.684*	7
The Netherlands	0.762**	9	-0.862**	9	0.313	7	0.954***	7
Norway	0.783**	8	-0.803**	8	-0.755*	6	0.523	6
United States	0.444	7	0.874**	7	-0.171	6	0.799*	6
Zwitslerland	0.434	8	-0.472	8	0.351	5	0.427	5
Total	0.163*	137	-0.067	137	0.033	99	0.547 ***	98

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$ one sided

In Table 2 the four trends are split by country. The results lead to the same conclusions as on aggregated level. Six of the trends in libertarian issue salience between 1946 through 1975 are significant. Of these six countries only the trend in Finland is negative: in Finland

libertarian issues have declined in salience. The remaining five significant trends are in line with hypothesis two. From 1976 through 1998 there are only three significant trends in libertarian issue salience, two positive, one negative.

There are seven significant trends in authoritarian issue salience from 1946 through 1975. Three out of these seven trends are positive, four are negative: obviously, a trendless fluctuation. In contrast, ten of these trends are significant in the period after 1975. What's more, they are all positive as predicted in hypothesis two. Just as on aggregated level, the trends for authoritarian issue salience for countries separately show a rise *after* the rise of the trends in progressive cultural issue salience. Subsequently, hypothesis two – *authoritarian issues rise later in salience than libertarian issues do* – is confirmed.

After testing the first two hypotheses the theory of Ignazi can be confirmed. Changes in political culture in the west cannot merely be attributed to the rising salience of libertarian issues as argued by Inglehart. The salience of authoritarian issues has risen just as well. Clearly, the trends show that these changes concern a silent counterrevolution because conservative cultural issues have risen in salience later than progressive cultural issues.

It is clear that from the sixties onwards libertarian as well as authoritarian issues have risen in salience. These trends consider the same countries, but not the same period. The correlation between the trends in progressive cultural issue salience before 1975 and the trends in conservative cultural issue salience after 1975 is 0.69 ($p < 0.01$), which confirms this pattern. Every other combination of trends does not lead to significant correlations. This means that a *strong* rising trend in new-leftist libertarian issues in a country before 1975 leads to *strong* rising counter-trends in new-rightist authoritarian issues after 1975.

5 The changing political culture and its influence on class voting

As argued in the introduction several scholars assessing the fading relationship between the working class and left-wing parties and between the middle class and right-wing parties point out that this is caused by a changing political culture. However, these scholars differ in opinion how this happens. In the literature there roughly are two different mechanisms – that of *appellation* and that of *alienation*.

In the first place, the appellation mechanism refers to the changing appeals of political parties due to the changing political culture causing a realignment of the traditional pattern of a leftist working class and a rightist middle class. Inglehart argues that the rise of 'postmaterialism' is in fact the rising salience of middle class values: "Within any given society, Postmaterialist values will be most widespread among the more secure strata: the wealthier and better educated will be most likely to hold a whole range of Postmodern values, including Postmaterialism" (1997b: 59). Political parties of the left will, generally spoken, be more libertarian in their appeals to the electorate, whereas rightist parties will accentuate authoritarian issues to appeal voters. According to Inglehart the middle class is inclined to vote for a left-wing party because of their libertarian beliefs (Inglehart, 1997a). As left-libertarian issues become more important, and as such appeal more to the libertarian beliefs of the middle class, it may be expected that the middle class increasingly votes left as libertarian issues are more important in the political culture. In the contra-revolution perspective the same line of reasoning leads to the argument that the working class will be more inclined to vote for a right-wing party because of the rising salience of authoritarian issues in the political culture (compare Ignazi, 2003).

Bringing these two lines of reasoning together with the results of the first part of this article leads to the perspective that before 1975 the middle class will increasingly vote left-wing because of the rising salience of libertarian issues, while the working class will be voting just as left as ever. After 1975 the middle class will not be inclined to increasingly vote for leftist parties, while the working class will increasingly vote right-wing because of the rising salience in authoritarian issues. Consequently, the changes in political culture will expectedly lead to a fading pattern of a right-wing voting middle class and a left-wing voting working class.

Second, the mechanism of alienation refers to the repulsion of the traditional class base of political parties due to the changing political culture causing the political parties to alienate their traditional class base. In 1972 Ransford showed that the working class in the early seventies demonstrated a right-authoritarian reaction to protests of blacks and libertarian students (Ransford, 1972). Clark (Clark, 2001b:281) describes this mechanism for the presidential elections of 1972 in the United States. In his campaign for presidency, the candidate for the Democrats – George McGovern – strongly emphasized culturally progressive issues, alienating the traditional supporters of the Democratic party – members of

the working class. Because they massively supported the Republicans instead, the inevitable result that year was a historically low degree of class voting.⁷ The growing salience of libertarian issues in left-wing parties thus leads to, apart from an increasing proportion of the middle class voting left, the alienation of the working class from left-wing parties that traditionally represent their class interests. Consequently, this leads to increasing proportions of the working class voting for right-wing parties instead of left-wing parties (Brint, 1984; Lipset, 1981). The same mechanism, in opposite direction, can occur when authoritarian issues are being emphasized: Not only will a party emphasizing authoritarian issues appeal to support from the working class but also alienate members of the middle class, who are more libertarian.

In short, in this mechanism the working class increasingly votes right because the increasing salience of libertarian issues alienates them from leftist parties. The middle class will increasingly support parties on the left because the growing attention for authoritarian issues increasingly alienates them from the traditional parties of their class – the right-wing parties. The two perspectives thus both predict that the working class and the middle class increasingly support rightist respectively leftist parties. Because in the political culture of western countries the rise of authoritarian issues followed that of the libertarian issues, we can empirically test whether either of the two perspectives can account for the fact that the middle class has increasingly voted for leftist and the working class has increasingly voted for rightist parties.

Following the first mechanism of appellation, we expect that the middle class increasingly votes left in the period before 1975 (hypothesis 3a) due to the rising salience of libertarian issues that appeals them to vote left (hypothesis 3b). We also expect that the working class increasingly votes right from 1975 onwards (hypothesis 4a) due to the rising salience of authoritarian issues that appeals them to vote right (hypothesis 4b). Following the mechanism of alienation, we expect that in the period preceding 1975 the working class increasingly votes right (hypothesis 5a) due to the rising salience of libertarian issues that alienates them from the left (hypothesis 5b). Furthermore, we expect that from 1975 onward the middle class increasingly votes left (hypothesis 6a) due to the rising salience of authoritarian issues that alienate them from the right (hypothesis 6b).

6 Data and measurement

Class – To test the hypotheses above we use the data-file Nieuwbeerta has used for his research on the declining relationship between class and voting behavior (Nieuwbeerta & Ganzeboom, 1996). The variables that are necessary to test the hypotheses are available for 15 countries. The number of data files for each separate country varies from one to twenty-five, and covers a period from 1956 to 1991.⁸ The famous and often-used EGP-class schema in these files consists of ten separate classes, which have been collapsed by us to seven classes conform the method provided by Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992: 38-39). The seven classes are: 1: Managers, 2: Professionals, 3: Non-manual routine workers, 4: Petty Bourgeoisie 5: Skilled manual workers, 6: Semi-skilled manual workers, 7: Unskilled manual workers. Some classes cannot easily be ordered into a working class – middle class distinction. The non-manual routine workers are for example sometimes seen as working class and sometimes seen as middle class. Because the economic position of this class is not as strong as that of the managers and professionals (Wright, 1979; 1985), we do not consider this class as an exponent of the middle class. Due to of their relatively favorable economic position we consider the classes of the managers, professionals, and petty bourgeoisie as exponents of the middle class. Because of their relatively poor economic position, we consider the working class to be constituted by the classes of semi- and unskilled manual workers. For the class of the skilled manual workers it is less obvious whether they are working class workers. Goldthorpe describes this class as “a latter-day aristocracy of labour, or a ‘blue collar’ elite” (cited by Houtman, 2003: 31).

Voting behavior – Like Nieuwbeerta (1995: 35), we use three different types of questions on voting behavior: data about the party one would vote for if elections were held today (or soon), about the party one has voted for in the past, and the party one identifies with. If valid answers to all of these three questions were available, we used the first one, i.e., voting intention. If valid answers to only the last two were available, we used party identification. We do *not* use Nieuwbeerta’s crude left versus non-left distinction, because it creates more or less arbitrary decisions in coding parties in the political center. We instead scale voting behavior according to left-right self-placement, so as to produce a continuous variable with high scores indicating rightist voting. Next to the arbitrary classification of parties in the political centre Nieuwbeerta’s dichotomie suffers another flaw: new-leftist parties are classified as non-left parties. Given massive support for those parties from the

middle class (Hoffman-Martinot 1991, Inglehart 1997a: 273-288), it needs no further argument that this decision produces a less dramatic decline of the relationship between class and voting than has actually occurred.

A higher score on the new left-right voting behavior variable stands for a more rightist party.⁹ In the analyses all respondents with missing values on either right-wing voting behavior or EGP-class position have been deleted listwise which results in a dataset containing 128,977 respondents distributed over 94 country/year combinations.

7 The cultural voting behavior of EGP-classes

In studies of class voting there is an almost overwhelming attention for the leftist (or rightist) voting behavior of classes relative to other classes. This method unables investigation into the questions whether, and why particular classes have altered their voting behavior. Consequently if we are to investigate whether the middle class has moved to the left in the period before 1975 we should only investigate the voting behavior of this particular class and not compared to the voting behavior of the working class (compare Manza and Brooks, 1999). Therefore, we split up the dataset into 14 subsets (for each class in each period one subset) to test hypotheses 3a, 4a, 5a, and 6a using multi-level techniques. Multi-level techniques allow to split the variance of the dependent variable into several levels. In our models three levels are involved: individual level, year level and country level. In this way we can control for resemblance within years and countries in the way in which people vote left or right. As independent variable we use the variable election year. In Table 3 the results of the fourteen multilevel analyses are summarized. It shows that the unskilled manual workers, semi-skilled workers, the professionals and the managers have increasingly been voting for a leftist party in the period before 1975.

Above we explained that we consider the classes of the managers, petty bourgeoisie, and professionals as the most pure exponents of the middle class and the classed of the semi- and unskilled manual workers as the most pure exponents of the working classed. Hypothesis 3a can thus be confirmed: the middle class has indeed increasingly been voting for a leftist party in the period before 1975. The theory that the working class is alienated by the rise of

libertarian issues before 1975 can be rejected, as the working class moves more to the left. In the period after 1975 the middle class (the professionals and the petty bourgeoisie) continues

Table 3 Multi-level regression analysis for each class in the period through 1975 and the period after 1975 (1956-1990). Dependent is right-wing voting behavior (Method: Maximum likelihood)

<i>Subset</i>	<i>Independent variable: election year</i>	<i>Standard errors</i>	<i>N Individual level</i>	<i>N Country/year combinations</i>
<i>Before 1975</i>				
Managers	-0.042**	(0.019)	2,341	33
Professionals	-0.027*	(0.014)	5,584	33
Non-manual routine	-0.019	(0.014)	7,259	33
Petty Bourgeoisie	-0.012	(0.015)	4,570	33
Skilled manual workers	-0.027	(0.020)	625	33
Semiskilled manual workers	-0.019*	(0.010)	6,046	33
Unskilled manual workers	-0.018**	(0.009)	8,634	33
<i>After 1975</i>				
Managers	-0.003	(0.006)	8,145	62
Professionals	-0.014**	(0.005)	19,375	62
Non-manual routine	-0.003	(0.005)	23,166	62
Petty Bourgeoisie	-0.017**	(0.007)	7,399	62
Skilled manual workers	0.013	(0.009)	3,004	62
Semiskilled manual workers	0.007*	(0.004)	14,151	62
Unskilled manual workers	0.001	(0.004)	18,678	62

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001 one-sided

to increasingly vote left, confirming hypothesis 6a. Only the class of the semi-skilled workers increasingly votes for rightist parties in the period after 1975, which confirms hypothesis 7a.

To test whether the rising salience of authoritarian and libertarian issues has anything to do with the changing patterns in voting behavior of these classes a different sort of analysis needs to be done. After all, the strengthening of the ties between the working class and leftist parties before 1975 may also be caused by the growing libertarian appeals drawing working class support for the leftist parties. In such case, the silent revolution would not be middle class phenomenon, but a general cultural phenomenon instead.

To test 3b, 4b, 5b, and 6b again we estimate some multi-level models (see Table 4).¹⁰ Now all seven classes have been included in the analyses. Model 1 shows the effects of class position and the three contextual variables (election year, libertarian issue salience, and authoritarian issue salience) on voting for a rightist party. To a very large extent the class position determines whether a person votes left or right. Compared to the class of the managers (which is the reference category) the petty bourgeoisies votes more right-wing

Table 4 Explaining right-wing voting behavior by class, election year, and indicators for political culture (Multi-level analysis; N=128,977 in 94 country/year combinations within 15 countries; method: Maximum likelihood; 1956-1990).

<i>Independents</i>	<i>Null-Model</i>		<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>	
Constant	48.122**	(1.970)	48.042**	(1.911)	48.025**	(1.912)
Managers	REF		REF		REF	
Professionals			-0.950****	(0.192)	-0.977****	(0.192)
Non-manual routine			-1.592****	(0.290)	-1.486****	(0.285)
Petty Bourgeoisie			0.592****	(0.299)	0.623****	(0.306)
Skilled manual workers			-0.965****	(0.179)	-0.939****	(0.173)
Semiskilled manual workers			-3.325****	(0.525)	-3.249****	(0.513)
Unskilled manual workers			-3.326****	(0.586)	-3.214****	(0.577)
<i>Context</i>						
Election year			-0.112	(0.207)	-0.111	(0.207)
Salience of authoritarian issues			-0.053	(0.265)	-0.060	(0.264)
Salience of libertarian issues			-0.111	(0.245)	-0.112	(0.244)
<i>Interactions</i>						
<i>Managers</i>						
Professionals X libertarian issues					0.020	(0.098)
Non-manual routine X libertarian issues					0.150	(0.100)
Petty bourgeoisie X libertarian issues					0.120	(0.097)
Skilled manual workers X libertarian issues					0.134*	(0.069)
Semiskilled manual workers X libertarian issues					0.186*	(0.098)
Unskilled manual workers X libertarian issues					0.183*	(0.101)
<i>Managers</i>						
Professionals X authoritarian issues					-0.026	(0.094)
Non-manual routine X authoritarian issues					0.265**	(0.094)
Petty bourgeoisie X authoritarian issues					0.085	(0.093)
Skilled manual workers X authoritarian issues					0.063	(0.063)
Semiskilled manual workers X authoritarian issues					0.170*	(0.090)
Unskilled manual workers X authoritarian issues					0.265**	(0.093)
Var. Country level	56.07***	(21.16)	52.72***	(19.92)	52.72***	(19.94)
Var. Year level	4.11****	(0.69)	3.44****	(0.60)	3.42****	(0.58)
Var. Individual niveau	231.03****	(0.91)	214.75****	(0.85)	214.75****	(0.85)
<i>Var. Random slopes country level</i>						
<i>Managers</i>						
Professionals			REF		REF	
Non-manual routine			0.293*	(0.174)	0.289*	(0.170)
Petty Bourgeoisie			0.921**	(0.426)	0.882**	(0.407)
Skilled manual workers			1.071**	(0.470)	1.071**	(0.484)
Semiskilled manual workers			0.299**	(0.154)	0.268**	(0.140)
Unskilled manual workers			3.774**	(1.480)	3.585**	(1.407)
<i>Var. Random slopes year level</i>						
<i>Managers</i>						
Professionals			REF		REF	
Non-manual routine			0.157***	(0.056)	0.126**	(0.050)
Petty Bourgeoisie			0.095**	(0.046)	0.077*	(0.043)
Skilled manual workers			0.212***	(0.065)	0.214***	(0.065)
Semiskilled manual workers			0.033	(0.029)	0.032	(0.029)
Unskilled manual workers			0.106*	(0.048)	0.096*	(0.045)
Deviance	1068332		1059396		1059327	
Δ DF			21		12	

*p< 0.1 ** p< 0.05; *** p< 0.01; **** p< 0.001

while all other classes prefer more left-wing parties. The traditional ties between class and party preference are confirmed in this model: compared to the working class the middle class has a stronger preference for rightist parties. There are no significant effects for the context variables, which means that there is no general tendency to increasingly vote for a leftist or rightist party among the electorate, and that there is no general tendency of in the voting behavior of electorates in particular countries where libertarian or authoritarian issues are of particular salience.

In model 1 we also checked whether the effects of class position on voting behavior significantly varies between the years and countries, which proves to be the case.¹¹ At the country level, all slopes vary significantly between countries, at the year level all slopes significantly vary except for that of the skilled manual workers. This means that class membership does not affect voting behavior similarly across countries and in time. Put differently, the degree to which the working class votes left and the degree to which the middle class votes right depends on the country and on the election year in which they vote. The question is whether these differences can be explained by differences in political culture.

To answer this question, in model 2 we will test whether the classes decreasingly tend to vote according to traditional class party alignments in political contexts in which authoritarian and libertarian issues are of great importance. To this end, in model 2, the interaction effects of all classes with the salience of both authoritarian and libertarian issues are estimated.¹² The variances of the random slopes show, in most cases, a decline compared to the variances of these slopes in model 2. This means that the degree to which class affects voting behavior can be explained by the saliences of libertarian and authoritarian issues. In model 2 we see that as libertarian issues are more important in a context the middle class votes more for leftist parties. Compared to the classes of the managers the three manual classes are more inclined to vote for rightist parties as libertarian issues are more important. Or, put differently, compared to the manual classes, all middle-class parties are more inclined to vote for leftist parties as libertarian issues are more important. This confirms hypothesis 3b: the middle class decreasingly votes for the traditional parties of their class as libertarian issues are more important.

Because the working class has not moved right in the period before 1975, hypothesis 5b – explaining why the working class should move right – cannot be verified anymore. So, for the period before 1975, there simply cannot be an alienating effect of the rising salience of

libertarian issues. Moreover, above we found that the working class in this period also moved to the left, but this move to the left is not attributable to the rising salience of libertarian issues. But what about the move to the right of the working class in the period after 1975? Can this change in party-preference be explained by the rising salience of authoritarian issues?

Compared to the class of the managers, the classes of the routine non-manual workers, the semi-skilled workers, and the unskilled workers are more inclined to vote for right-wing parties in contexts where authoritarian issues are more important. The middle class (managers, professionals, and petty bourgeoisie) thus increasingly votes left in contexts in which authoritarian issues are more important. Above we found that the middle class has continued to move left in the period after 1975. Combined with the rising salience of authoritarian issues in this period, and the fact that the middle class increasingly votes left in contexts in which these issues are salient, hypothesis 4b can be confirmed. Because the working class has increasingly been voting right in the period after 1975, authoritarian issues have become more important in this period, and members of the working class are more inclined to vote right in contexts where authoritarian issues are important, the last hypothesis can also be confirmed.

In short, the middle class has moved left in the periods before and after 1975. Before 1975, they moved left because new left libertarian issues appealed to them, and afterwards because new right authoritarian issues alienated them from right. Only from 1975 onwards the working class has moved right because of the rising salience of authoritarian issues appealing them to do so. The working class, however, did not alienate from leftist parties in periods in which libertarian issues were increasing in salience.

8 Conclusions

In this article we investigated the questions in what way the political cultures of western countries have changed and how this has led to a rightist working class and a leftist middle class. We showed that only in the period before 1975 libertarian issues have increased in importance but not afterwards. The reverse is true for the salience of authoritarian issues: before 1975 there was little to no change and after 1975 the importance of authoritarian issues

increased very rapidly. The changes in political culture can therefore best be described by the revolution – counterrevolution perspective of Ignazi (2003), and the other two perspectives need to be rejected. Because of the changes in the political culture, a rising salience of libertarian issues preceding that of authoritarian issues, the classic pattern of a leftist voting working class and a rightist voting middle class has lost ground. As libertarian issues rise in salience members of the middle class increasingly vote left, and as authoritarian issues rise in salience both members of the middle class and of the working class left the traditional parties of their classes. The mechanism of appellation – that with growing appeals sections of the middle class and working class will increasingly abandon the traditional class parties – is therefore strongly supported, while the mechanism of alienation – that political parties estrange their traditional class electorate by focussing on other issues – is confirmed only for the middle class.

In his thesis Nieuwbeerta argued that the theory provided by Inglehart that covers issues of political and cultural change, is no full-blooming and promising alternative for explaining differences in class voting (Nieuwbeerta, 1995: 201). We disagree with Nieuwbeerta in this respect, and think that it provides a good alternative to explain why so many members of the working class increasingly vote for rightist parties and why so many members of the middle class increasingly vote for leftist parties. However, this does not mean we totally agree with Inglehart's theory on the changing nature of political cultures. His view that cultural issues are increasingly becoming important causing traditional class party alignments to cave in, has basically been confirmed in this paper. However, the notion that new politics is basically new leftist or libertarian politics has to be refuted: new rightist, or authoritarian issues, are new politics as well.¹³

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Notes

¹ After an exploration of the available literature Achterberg (2004) concludes that there are roughly two types of new issues in the new political culture: cultural issues and ecological issues. Ecological issues are those referring to environmental protection and sustainable development. Since for ecological issues it is unclear whether they can be distinguished from the old issues of class (those who can, are more willing to pay to protect the environment), they are not considered in this article.

² In the second part of this article we will investigate the influence of the rise of the new political culture on the degree to which the working class and the middle class vote respectively left and right. This will be done using the same data Nieuwebeerta has used to show that traditional class party alignments have declined over the years. These data contain information for sixteen countries, of which we shall use fifteen countries for which the proper information for our measurements is available. For these fifteen countries we create an index to measure the salience of libertarian and authoritarian issues.

³ Principal component analysis on these two items rendered a factor explaining 54% of the variance in both separate items. The factor loadings of the items on this factor are 0.74.

⁴ Principal component analysis on these two items rendered a factor explaining 51% of the variance in both separate items. The factor loadings of the items on this factor are 0.71.

⁵ The peak in 1960 is the remarkable salience of libertarian issues in the United States. If this peak is left out of the analysis the same picture of a rising salience of libertarian issues arises for this period, and is the trend even stronger (Pearson's $r = 0.200^{**}$).

⁶ This is primarily due to the salience of authoritarian issues during the first decade after World War II in which issues of social order obviously were more important since they were missing since the war.

⁷ See also Inglehart (1997: 244) who points to the negative reactions of the working class to the new-leftist political climate causing considerable working-class support for the conservative De Gaulle in 1968 (in Fance).

⁸ Data files for each country/ year combination (1956-1990)

<i>Country</i>	<i>1956-1970</i>	<i>1971-1980</i>	<i>1981-1990</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Period</i>
Australia	2	2	5	9	1967-1990
Austria	-	1	3	4	1974-1980
Belgium	-	1	-	1	1975
Canada	-	-	1	1	1984
Denmark	-	1	-	1	1972
Finland	-	2	-	2	1972-1975
France	-	1	-	1	1978
Germany	1	6	6	13	1969-1990
Great Britain	3	2	7	12	1964-1990
Italy	1	1	1	3	1968-1985
The Netherlands	1	6	7	14	1970-1990
Norway	1	2	4	7	1975-1990
Switzerland	-	2	-	2	1972-1976
United States	7	8	9	24	1956-1990
Total	16	35	43	94	1956-1990

⁹ Because of this slightly differing measurement for voting behavior, and especially because of the use of the left-right self-identification, not all original data files of Nieuwebeerta are used. Nineteen of 113 original files are no longer used (see note 8)

¹⁰ The dependent variable has been multiplied by 10 in comparison to the analyses in table 3 for a better interpretation of the coefficients of the random slopes at year level.

¹¹ In total twenty-one degrees of freedom were used for model one, giving a reduction of 8936 in deviance. Model one clearly improves the fit of the model.

¹² Twelve degrees of freedom were used for model two, giving a reduction of 69 in deviance. This model two clearly improves the fit of the model.

¹³ That Inglehart totally ignores this is due to the fact that he uses the Postmaterialism-index to measure political cultural change (cf. Houtman, 2003: 136-138). This measurement simply does not allow for rightist post-materialists.