Brahmin Left vs Merchant Right: Rising Inequality and the Changing Structure of Political Conflict
Evidence from France, Britain & the US, 1948-2017

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• Key question: why hasn’t democracy slowed rising inequality?
• We observe rising inequality in most world regions since 1980
• One could have expected rising political demand for redistribution
• So why do we see more xenophobic populism and identity-based politics (Brexit, Trump, Le Pen, Modi, AfD, etc.), rather than more class-based (income-based and wealth-based) politics?
• Was there something unique about 1950-1980 egalitarian period? Why did it happen and why did it end? Will it happen again?
• Do we need extreme circumstances (wars, crisis, revolutions, etc.) to produce the kind of Social-Democratic/New-Deal political coalitions which led to the reduction of inequality during 1950-1980 period?
• Politics drive inequality trends (both downturns and upturns). So we need to better understand political attitudes on inequality
Income inequality rises almost everywhere, but at different speeds.

Source: World Inequality Report 2018, Figure 2.1.1. See wir2018.wid.world for data sources and notes.

Top 10% income shares across the world, 1980-2016

Source: World Inequality Report 2018, Figure 2.1.1. See wir2018.wid.world for data sources and notes.
USA: The collapse of the bottom 50% income share
The top decile income share was higher in Europe than in the U.S. in 1900-1910; it is a lot higher in the U.S. in 2000-2010. Sources and series: see piketty.pse.ens.fr/capital21c and WID.world updates.
Top inheritance tax rates in rich countries, 1900-2017

Source: Piketty (2014) and updates. See wwr2018.wid.world for data series and notes.
According to the median-voter model, rising inequality (e.g. lower median/mean income ratio) should lead to more redistribution.

So why is this not working?

One possible explanation: globalisation & competition between countries make vertical redistribution more difficult to organize → end of class-based redistributive politics, rise of identity-based conflict.

Probably part of the explanation, but not enough: too mechanical. Nothing in globalization makes redistribution technically impossible.

Unequal globalization is a choice: countries & governments choose to sign treaties with free trade/capital flows with no common redistributive taxation/regulation (though they might not always anticipate all consequences of what they sign).
• More generally, the pb with the median-voter model of elections is that it is far too simplistic: politics is about ideas and beliefs in a just world, not simply about conflicting interests and poor vs rich.

• History of inequality is political and ideological. E.g. the history of progressive taxation in 20c involves sharp reversals in beliefs systems, unexpected political bifurcations, and unstable institutional tinkering

→ in order to analyze the future of redistribution, one first needs to better understand the changing multi-dimensional structure of political-ideological conflict about inequality & redistribution

We first need to construct historical series on electorates & political cleavages; we know very little

Exemple from French post-electoral surveys 1958-2012: the income-profile of left-vs-right vote has always been relatively flat within the bottom 90%; but the wealth-profile has always been stronger
Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Reading: in 1978, left-wing parties (PS, PCF, Rad., various left, greens, extr. left) obtain 46% of the vote among voters with bottom 10% income, 23% of the vote among voters with top 10% income, and 17% among top 1% income holders. Generally speaking, the profile of left-wing vote by income percentile is relatively flat within the bottom 90%, and strongly declining for the top 10%, especially at the beginning of the period.
Left-wing vote by wealth decile in France, 1974-2012

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 1978, left-wing parties (PS, PCF, Rad., various left, greens, extr. left) obtain 69% of the vote among voters with bottom 10% wealth, 23% of the vote among voters with top 10% wealth, and 13% among top 1% wealth holders. Generally speaking, the profile of left-wing vote by wealth percentile is strongly declining, all along the distribution, especially at the beginning of the period.
What I do in this research

• Main contribution is empirical/historical

• I construct long-run series on the changing structure of the electorate, i.e. who votes for which parties depending on different dimensions of inequality: income vs wealth vs education (also age, gender, religion, origins, etc.)

• Main data sources: (1) post-electoral surveys (available since 1940s-1950s); (2) local-level election results matched with census & other data (since 1800s)

• Today I first present detailed results for France, and then for the US & Britain

• Currently being extended to Germany and gradually to other countries

• Secondary contribution is theoretical: I present simple two-dimensional models of inequality & redistribution (vertical redistribution vs attitudes toward globalization/migration, i.e. domestic vs external inequality; inequality in education vs inequality in wealth) which can help interpret some of the findings
Main empirical/findings:

• In the 1950s-60s, the vote for left-wing parties in France or Britain and democratic party in the US used to be associated with lower education & lower income voters.

• It has gradually become associated since 1970s-80s with higher education voters, giving rise to a multiple-elite party system: high-education elites vote for left, while high-income/high-wealth elites for the right. I.e. intellectual elite (Brahmin left) vs business elite (merchant right). Other groups might feel left behind → populism?

• High-education & high-income voters might also unite in the future, giving rise to a complete realignment of the party system: « globalists » (high-education, high income) vs « nativists » (low-education, low-income). E.g. like Rep vs Dem US 19c.

• Elections US 2016/France 2017: exception to the multiple-elite party system or new normal? With many-dimensional political conflict, multiple bifurcations are possible.

• Third possibility: a return to « normal » class-based conflict (socialist-internationalist party vs business-nationalist party) is not impossible, but it would require a new form of internationalist/egalitarian platform. There’s nothing particularly « normal » in the internationalist/egalitarian alignment.
Left-wing vote in France, 1956-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

Difference between (% univ. graduates voting left) and (% non-univ. graduates voting left)

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PCF, Rad., various left, green, extreme-left) obtain a score that is 17 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates; in 2012, their score is 8 points higher among university graduates.
Voting for left-wing & democratic parties in France and the US, 1948-2017:
from the worker party to the high-education party

- France: Difference between (% univ. graduates voting left) and (% non-univ. graduates voting left) (after controls)
- US: Same with democratic party vote (after controls)

Source: author's computations using French and US post-electoral surveys 1948-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Reading: In 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PC, Rad., green, extr.-left) obtain a score that is 14 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates in France; in 2012, their score is 13 points higher among university graduates (after controls for age, sex, income, wealth, father's occupation). The evolution is similar for the democratic vote in the US.
Voting for left-wing & democratic parties in France, Britain, US 1948-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

Source: author's computations using French, US and British post-electoral surveys 1948-2017 (presidential & legislative elections)
Reading: in 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PC, Rad., etc.) obtain a score that is 14 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates in France; in 2012, their score is 13 points higher among university graduates (after controls for age, sex, income, wealth, father's occupation). The evolution is similar for democratic vote in the US and Labour vote in Britain.
Political conflict in France, 1956-2017: toward a multiple-elite party system, or a great reversal?

Difference between (% univ. graduates voting left) and (% non-univ. graduates voting left)
Difference between (% high income voters (top 10%) voting left) and (% bottom income voters (bottom 90%) voting left)
Difference between (% high wealth voters (top 10%) voting left) and (% low wealth voters (bottom 90%) voting left)

Source: author’s computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: the left vote used to be associated with lower education and lower income voters, it has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rise to a “multiple-elite” party system (education vs wealth), it might also become associated with high-income voters in the future, giving rise to a great reversal or realignment of the party system.
Relation to the literature

• Enormous political science literature using party platforms, parliamentary debates, electoral surveys, etc. in order to study the evolution of party systems and electoral cleavages.

• Lipset-Rokkan 1967, *Cleavage structures, party systems and voter alignments*. 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. No racial/ethnic dimension?

• Bornshier 2010, *Cleavage Politics and the Populist Right*. The rise of universalist/liberal vs traditionalist/communitarian values since 1980s-90s, following the rise of higher education, has created the conditions for a new cleavage dimension, and for the rise of the Populist Right.
• I build upon this political science/historical literature

• Main novelty: **systematic use of historical survey and electoral data in order to construct long-run series on voting profiles by education and income/wealth deciles, so as to recover long-run changes in cleavages structure.**

• Previous studies looked at shorter periods and do not decompose the income, wealth and education dimensions in a systematic manner. Often relied on categories (like blue-collar workers) which are highly relevant to characterize a given period but do not allow for long-run comparisons. Better to use education and income/wealth deciles for long-run analysis. Same issue as for inequality series.

• Racial/ethnic cleavages are not new. E.g. US 19c: Democrats gradually shifted from slavery party to the party of the poor whites, the New Deal party, and finally the party of the rich whites and the poor minorities. Strange from a European 19c-20c party-system perspective, but relevant for Europe 21c.

• **Bottom line:** one needs long-run historical comparative series to study the political economy of inequality and redistribution. And other issues as well.
Outline of the talk

1. Evidence from French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017

2. Evidence from US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016

3. Evidence from British post-electoral surveys 1955-2017

4. Two-dimensional models of inequality and redistribution (domestic vs external inequality; education vs income/wealth) (building upon my paper « Social Mobility and Redistributive Politics », QJE 1995))

(5. Next steps. 19c-20c series. Other countries.)
1. Evidence from France


• Typically about 4000 observations/survey, with dozens of questions on income/education/wealth (& religion/foreign origins in recent surveys)

• Micro-files are available for most surveys

• I start by presenting results on changing voting patterns by education, then income, then wealth, and finally religion/foreign origins
Political conflict in France: presidential elections 1965-2012 (2nd round)

- Left (candidate of socialist party (PS) or other self-designated left-wing parties)
- Right (candidate of gaullist party (RPR, UMP, LR etc.) or other right-wing parties)

Presidential second rounds opposing left and right: 1965 (De Gaulle 55%, Mitterrand 45%), 1974 (Giscard 51%, Mitterrand 49%), 1981 (Mitterrand 52%, Giscard 48%), 1988 (Mitterrand 54%, Chirac 46%), 1995 (Chirac 53%, Jospin 47%), 2007 (Sarkozy 53%, Royal 47%), 2012 (Hollande 52%, Sarkozy 48%). Other second rounds (opposing right, extreme-right and center) were not represented here: 1969 (Pompidou 58%, Poher 42%), 2002 (Chirac 82%, Le Pen 18%), 2017 (Macron 65%, Le Pen 35%).
Political conflict in France: legislative elections 1956-2017 (1st round)

Vote shares in legislative elections 1956-2017 (1st round). The vote shares of parties that are difficult to classify along left-right dimension (regionalist parties, etc.) were split 50-50 between both sides. These votes always represent less than 2% of the vote, except in 2017, when the vote share of LRM-Modem reaches 32% (here split 50-50 between left and right).
• Key finding: reversal of the education cleavage

• Complete reversal of education gradient over 1956-2017 period. At the beginning of the period, the more educated, the more right-wing. At the end of the period, the more educated, the more left-wing.

• Highly significant. Robust to controls.

left\_it = \sum_t \beta_{ht} higheduc\_it \text{1}_{elec=t} + \sum_t \beta_{t} \text{1}_{elec=t} + \sum \beta_{ct} c_{it} \text{1}_{elec=t} + \varepsilon_{it} + cte

left\_it = 1 if left-wing vote, 0 if right-wing vote

higheduc\_it = 1 if higher education degree, 0 otherwise

c_{it} = control variables (age, sex, family situation, income, wealth, father’s occupation, etc.)

• With no controls: \beta_{ht} = E(left\_it=1, higheduc\_it=1) - E(left\_it=1, higheduc\_it=0)

• Gradually adding the control variables: no impact on trend (level is affected, not the trend)
Left vote by education in France 1956-2017: election by election

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 1956, left parties (SFIO-PS, PCF, Rad., various left, greens, extr. left) obtain 57% of the vote among voters with no degree (other than primary), 54% among voters with secondary school degrees (Bac, Brevet, Bep, etc.) and 37% among university graduates. In 2012, the left-wing candidate (Hollande) obtains 47% of the vote among voters with no degree, 50% among voters with secondary degree and 57% among university graduates (higher education).
Left vote by education in France 1956-2017: election par election

- **Primary**
- **Secondary**
- **Higher**

**1956**
- Primary: 55%
- Secondary: 50%
- Higher: 35%

**1958**
- Primary: 45%
- Secondary: 35%
- Higher: 25%

**1962**
- Primary: 55%
- Secondary: 45%
- Higher: 35%

**1965**
- Primary: 50%
- Secondary: 40%
- Higher: 30%

**Source:** author’s computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

**Reading:** In 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PCF, Rad., various left, greens, extreme-left) obtain 57% of the vote among voters with no degree (apart from primary education), 54% among voters with secondary degrees (Bac, Brevet, Bep, etc.) and 37% among university graduates (higher education).
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Left vote by education in France 1973-2017: short vs long higher education

- Primary
- Secondary
- Short higher educ.
- Long higher educ.

Source: author’s computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 2012, the left-wing candidate (Hollande) obtains 47% of the vote among voters with no degree (other than primary), 50% among voters with secondary degrees (Bac, Brevet, Bep, etc.), 53% among voters with short higher education (bac+2) and 59% among voters with long higher education (bac+3 or more). Note: 1973-1978, short high. = university, long high= grande école. 1986-2012: short high. = bac+2, long high. = bac+3 or more.
Left-wing vote in France, 1956-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

Difference between (% univ. graduates voting left) and (% non-univ. graduates voting left)

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PCF, Rad., various left, green, extreme-left) obtain a score that is 17 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates; in 2012, their score is 8 points higher among university graduates.
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**Left-wing vote in France, 1956-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party**

- **Difference between (% univ.graduates voting left) and (% non-univ.graduates voting left)**
- **After controlling for age, sex**
- **After controlling for age, sexe, income, wealth**

**Source**: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections).

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Left-wing vote in France, 1986-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party


Reading: in 1956, left-wing parties obtain a score that is 17 point lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates; in 2012, their score is 8 points higher among university graduates. Including control variables does not affect the trend (only the level).
• I now present changing voting patterns by income and wealth deciles

• The income-profile of left-vs-right vote has always been relatively flat within the bottom 90% (multiple compensating effects: young vs old, urban vs rural, self-employed vs wage-earners, public vs private etc.), but strongly downward-sloping at the level of top 10%

  → look at top 10% income vs bottom 90% income voting patterns

• The wealth-profile has always been much stronger than the income profile: inequality in property and wealth more important than inequality in income

  → look at top 10% wealth vs bottom 90% wealth voting patterns
Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 1978, left-wing parties (PS, PCF, Rad., various left, greens, extr. left) obtain 46% of the vote among voters with bottom 10% income, 23% of the vote among voters with top 10% income, and 17% among top 1% income holders. Generally speaking, the profile of left-wing vote by income percentile is relatively flat within the bottom 90%, and strongly declining for the top 10%, especially at the beginning of the period.
Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Reading: in 1978, left-wing parties (PS, PCF, Rad., various left, greens, extr. left) obtain 69% of the vote among voters with bottom 10% wealth, 23% of the vote among voters with top 10% wealth, and 13% among top 1% wealth holders. Generally speaking, the profile of left-wing vote by wealth percentile is strongly declining, all along the distribution, especially at the beginning of the period.
Political conflict in France, 1956-2017:
toward a multiple-elite party system, or a great reversal?

- Difference between (% university graduates voting left) and (% non-univ graduates voting left)
- Difference between (% high income voters (top 10%) voting left) and (% low income voters (bottom 90%) voting left)

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

*Reading:* The left vote used to be associated with lower education and lower income voters; it has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rise to a "multiple-elite" party system (education vs. wealth); it might also become associated with high-income voters in the future, giving rise to a great reversal or realignment of the party system.
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Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Reading: fine lines indicate confidence intervals at 90% level.
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• I now present results on voting patterns by religion/foreign origins
• One common interpretation of the reversal of the education cleavage is the rise of globalisation/universalism/immigration: low-education felt abandoned by left-democratic parties and threatened by competition with foreign countries/workers
• This will also make the transition to the US case: relatively new for Europe, not for the US
The structure of the electorate by religion in France, 1967-2012


Reading: between 1967 and 2012, the fraction of the electorate reporting to be "practicing catholic" (going to church at least once a month) dropped from 25% to 6%, the proportion reporting to be non-practicing catholic dropped from 66% to 49%, the proportion reporting no religion rose from 6% to 35%, the proportion reporting another religion (protestantism, juadism, budhism, etc., except islam) rose from 3% to 5%, and the proportion reporting islam rose from 0% to 5%.
Left-wing vote by religion in France 1973-2012

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 2012, the left-wing candidate (Hollande) obtains 38% of the vote among voters reporting to be practicing catholics (going to church at least once a month), 42% among non-practicing catholics (less than once a month), and 64% among voters with no religion.
Political conflict in France, 1956-2017: a persistently strong cleavage between non-believers and catholics

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Left-wing vote by religion in France 1973-2012: the role of Islam

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Reading: in 1995, left-wing parties (PS, PCF, Rad., etc.) obtain 19% of the vote among practicing catholics (at least once a month), 45% among non-practicing catholics, 50% among voters reporting another religion (protestantism, judaism, buddhism, etc., except islam), 73% among voters with no religion and 84% among muslims. Islam is classified with "other religion" in 1973-1978.
Left-wing vote by religion in France 1973-2012

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 2012, the left-wing candidate (Hollande) obtains 38% of the vote among practicing catholics (at least once a month), 42% among non-practicing catholics, 52% among voters reporting another religion (protestantism, judaism, buddhism, etc., except islam), 64% among voters with no religion and 91% among muslims. Islam is classified with "other religion" in 1973-1978.
Political conflict in France, 1986-2012: Muslim vote leans to the left

Source: Author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Political conflict in France, 1986-2012: Muslim vote leaning to the left

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Left-wing vote by national origin in France 2007-2012

- No foreign origin (no foreign grand-parent)
- Foreign origin Europe (Spain, Italy, Portugal, etc.)
- Foreign origin non-Europe (Maghreb, Subsaharan Africa, etc.)

Source: author's computation using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 2012, the left-wing candidate (Hollande) obtained 49% of the vote among voters with no foreign origin (no foreign grand-parent), 49% of the vote among voters with European foreign origins (in practice mostly Spain, Italy, Portugal, etc.), and 77% of the vote among voters with extra-European foreign origins (in practice mostly Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa).
Decomposition of the Muslim vote in France 2007-2012

- Difference between (% Muslims voting left) and (% non-Muslims voting left)
- After controls for age, sex, education, income, wealth, father's occupation
- After controls for age, sex, education, income, wealth, father's occupation + foreign origins (detailed geographical zone)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Before Controls</th>
<th>Controls for Age, Sex, Education, Income, Wealth, Father's Occupation</th>
<th>Controls for Age, Sex, Education, Income, Wealth, Father's Occupation + Foreign Origins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017

Reading: in 2012, the left-wing candidate (Hollande) obtained a score among Muslim voters that was 42 points higher than among non-Muslim voters; this gap falls to 38 points after controls for age, sex, education, income, wealth, father's occupation, and 26 points if we add controls for foreign origins (broken down by detailed geographical zone: Italy, Spain, Portugal, other Europe, North Africa, Subsaharan Africa, Asia, other non-Europe).
Political conflict in France 1988-2012: the rising salience of immigration

Too many immigrants? Totally agree/mostly agree
Too many immigrants? Totally disagree/mostly disagree

% voting left

1988: 70% 30%
1995: 76% 24%
1997: 64% 36%
2002: 61% 39%
2007: 49% 51%
2012: 50% 50%

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Reading: in 2012, the left-wing candidate (Hollande) obtained 31% of the vote among voters believing that there are too many immigrants in France (50% of the electorate), and 71% of the vote among voters believing the opposite (50% of the electorate).
2. Evidence from US

• Long tradition of post-electoral surveys: 1948-2016 biannual survey ANES series; homogenous micro-files; limited sample size (4000 obs/survey in recent years, but 1000-2000/survey for most of the series)

• 1972-2016 post-electoral surveys organized by media consortium (distributed by Roper): much bigger sample size (20-50000 obs/survey), but much smaller number of questions and income brackets

• Unfortunately US surveys usually do not ask questions on wealth

• I start by presenting results on changing voting patterns by race, then move to education, then income, so as to compare multiple-elite result with France
Political conflict in the USA: presidential elections 1948-2016

- Democratic candidate
- Republican candidate


- Kennedy 50% Nixon 50%
- Reagan 55% Carter 45%
- Clinton 53% Bush 47%
- Clinton 51% Trump 49%

Percentage of popular vote obtained by democratic and presidential candidates in US presidential elections 1948-2016 (excluding other candidates).
Vote for democratic party by ethnic origin in the US, 1948-2016

Source: author's computations using US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016 (presidential elections)

Reading: in 2016, the democratic party candidate (Clinton) obtains 37% of the vote among white voters, 89% of the vote among black voters and 64% of the vote among latino and other voters.
Political conflict and national-ethnic origins: France vs the US

- No foreign origin (France); White (US): 72%, 70%
- European foreign origin (France); Latino/other (US): 19%, 18%
- Extra-European foreign origin (France); Blacks (US): 9%, 12%

Source: author’s computation using French and US post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 2012, the French left-wing candidate (Hollande) obtained 49% of the vote among votes with no foreign origin (no foreign grand-parent), 49% of the vote among voters with European foreign origins (in practice mostly Spain, Italy, Portugal, etc.), and 77% of the vote among voters with extra-European foreign origins (in practice mostly Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa). In 2016, the US democratic party candidate (Clinton) obtains 37% of the vote among white voters, 64% of the vote among Latino and other voters, and 89% of the vote among Black voters.
Minority vote in the US, 1948-2017: before and after controls

- Difference (% voting democrat among minority voters (black/latinos/other)) - (% voting democrats among whites)
- After controls for age, sex
- After controls for age, sex, education, income

Source: author’s computations using US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016 (presidential elections) (ANES surveys)

Reading: In 1948, the democratic candidate obtained a score that was 11 points higher among minority voters than among whites; in 2016, the democratic candidate obtained a score that was 39 points higher among minority voters.
Voting for the democratic party in the US, 1948-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

Source: author's computations using US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016 (presidential elections) (ANES surveys)
Reading: in 1948, the democratic candidate obtained a score that was 17 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates; in 2015, the score of the democratic candidate is 13 points higher among university graduates.
Vote for democratic party by education in the US, 1948-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Higher (BA)</th>
<th>Higher (MA)</th>
<th>Higher (PhD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Reading: in 2016, the democratic party candidate (Clinton) obtained 45% of the vote among high-school graduates and 75% among PhDs.

Voting for left-wing & democratic parties in France and the US, 1948-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

- France: Difference between (% univ. graduates voting left) and (% non-univ. graduates voting left)
- US: Same with democratic party vote

Source: author's computations using French and US post-electoral surveys 1948-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)
Reading: in 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PC, Rad., green, extr.-left) obtain a score that is 17 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates in France; in 2012, their score is 9 points higher among university graduates. The evolution is similar for the democratic vote in the US.
Voting for left-wing & democratic parties in France and the US, 1948-2017:
from the worker party to the high-education party

- **France**: Difference between (% univ. graduates voting left) and (% non-univ. graduates voting left) (after controls)
- **US**: Same with democratic party vote (after controls)

*Source*: author's computations using French and US post-electoral surveys 1948-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

*Reading*: In 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PC, Rad., green, extr.-left) obtain a score that is 14 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates in France; in 2012, their score is 13 points higher among university graduates (after controls for age, sex, income, wealth, father's occupation). The evolution is similar for the democratic vote in the US.
Voting for left-wing & democratic parties in France and the US, 1948-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

Source: author’s computations using French and US post-electoral surveys 1948-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: in 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PC, Rad., green, extr.-left) obtain a score that is 17 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates in France; in 2012, their score is 9 points higher among university graduates. The evolution is similar for the democratic vote in the US.
Vote for democratic party by income decile in the US, 1948-2016

Source: author's computations using US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016 (presidential elections) (Anes surveys, current election)

Reading: the profile of voting for the democratic party candidate by income percentile is generally downward sloping, especially at the level of the top 10%, and particularly at the beginning of the period (from the 1950s to the 1980s). Since the early 1990s, the profile of the vote at the top is relatively flat.
Vote for democratic party by income decile in the US, 1948-2016

Source: author's computations using US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016 (presidential elections) (Anes surveys, current election)

Reading: the profile of voting for the democratic party candidate by income percentile is generally downward sloping, especially at the level of the top 10%, and particularly at the beginning of the period (from the 1950s to the 1980s). Since the early 1990s the profile is really flat at the top.

In the 2016 presidential election, the profile is reversed: for the first time, top 10% voters support the democratic party candidate.
High-income vote in the US, 1948-2017:
before and after controls

Source: author's computations using US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016 (presidential elections) (ANES surveys)
Reading: In 1948, the democratic candidate obtained a score that was 22 points lower among top 10% income voters than among bottom 90% income voters; in 2016, the score of the democratic candidate is 10 points higher among top 10% income voters.
Political conflict in the US, 1948-2017: toward a multiple-elite party system, or a great reversal?

Difference between (% voting democrat among university graduates) and (% voting democrats among non-university graduates) (after controls)

Difference between (% voting democratic among top 10% income voters) and (% voting democrats among bottom 90% bottom voters) (after controls)

Source: author's computations using US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016 (presidential elections) (ANES surveys)

Reading: the democratic vote used to be associated with low education and low income voters; it has gradually become associated to high education voters, giving rise to a "multiple-elite" party system (education vs income); it might also become associated with high income voters in the future, giving rising to great reversal and complete realignment of the party system.
Political conflict in the US, 1948-2017:
toward a multiple-elite party system, or a great reversal?

Source: author’s computations using US post-electoral surveys 1948-2016 (presidential elections) (ANES surveys)

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Political conflict in France, 1956-2017:
toward a multiple-elite party system, or a great reversal?

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: the left vote used to be associated with lower education and lower income voters; it has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rise to a "multiple-elite" party system (education vs wealth), it might also become associated with high-income voters in the future, giving rise to a great reversal or realignment of the party system.
The great geographical reversal of US political conflict, 1860-2016

- Ratio between average income of democrat and republican states

Democrats obtain their best scores in the poorest states (South). Republicans obtain their best scores in the richest states (North-East, California).

Source: author's computations using US presidential election results 1860-2016 and state-level series for average incomes.

Reading: from the 1860s to the 1950s, the average income of states where democrats obtained their best score (half of states with best score for democratic candidate) is lower than the average income of states where republicans obtained their best scores (other states); beginning in the 1960s, and systematically since the 1980s, the opposite pattern prevails.
3. Evidence from Britain

- Long tradition of post-electoral surveys: 1963-2017 BES surveys (with retrospective questions on 1955-1959 votes); limited sample size (4000 obs/survey in recent years, but 1000-2000/survey for most of the series)

- Unfortunately British surveys ask few questions on wealth (more than in the US, but less than in France)

- I start by presenting results on changing voting patterns by education, then income, so as to compare multiple-elite result with France and US

- Britain: very different origins of party system as compared to France (socialist-communist split) and US (democrats=ex-slavery party), but same evolution of education vs income cleavage since 1950s: very striking

- Same pattern as France regarding muslim vote: from <1% of the electorate in 1980s-90s up to 5% in 2017, with 80-90% vote for labour (not shown here)
Political conflict in Britain: legislative elections 1945-2017

Percentage of popular vote obtained by labour, conservative, liberal/lib-dem and other parties in British legislative elections 1945-2017. SNP: Scottish National Party. UKIP: UK Independance Party. Other parties include greens, other regionalist parties, etc.
Political conflict in Britain: labour vs conservative (elections 1945-2017)

Labour
Conservative

Percentage of popular vote obtained by labour and conservative parties in British legislative elections 1945-2017 (excluding other parties).
Voting for the labour party in Britain, 1955-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

- Difference between (% voting labour among univ. grad.) and (% voting labour among non-univ grad)
- After controls for age, sex
- After controls for age, sex, income, ethnic group

Source: author's computations using British post-electoral surveys 1963-2017 (general elections) (BES surveys)

Reading: in 1955, the labour party obtained a score that was 26 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates; in 2017, the score of the labour party is 6 points higher among university graduates. Controls alter levels but do not affect trends. Note: here "university graduates" include both technical and general higher-education degrees.
Voting for the labour party in Britain, 1955-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

- **Difference between (% voting labour among top 10% education voters) and (% voting labour among bottom 90% education voters)**
- **After controls for age, sex**
- **After controls for age, sex, income, ethnic group**

**Source:** author's computations using British post-electoral surveys 1963-2017 (general elections) (BES surveys)

**Reading:** In 1955, the labour party obtained a score that was 25 points lower among top 10% education voters than among bottom 90% education voters (registered voters are ranked by highest degree); in 2017, the score of the labour party is 13 points higher among top 10% education voters. Controls alter levels but do not affect trends.
Voting for the labour party in Britain, 1955-2017: from the worker party to the high-education party

Source: author's computations using British post-electoral surveys 1963-2017 (general elections) (BES surveys)

Reading: in 1955, the labour party obtained a score that was 26 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates; in 2017, the score of the labour party is 6 points higher among university graduates. Controls alter levels but do not affect trends. Note: here "university graduates" include both technical and general higher-education degrees.
Voting for left-wing & democratic parties in France, Britain, US 1948-2017:
from the worker party to the high-education party

France: Difference between (% univ.graduates voting left) and (% non-univ.graduates voting left) (after controls)
US: Same with democratic party vote (after controls)
Britain: same for labour party vote (after controls)

Source: author's computations using French, US and British post-electoral surveys 1948-2017 (presidential & legislative elections)
Reading: in 1956, left-wing parties (SFIO-PS, PC, Rad., etc.) obtain a score that is 14 points lower among university graduates than among non-university graduates in France; in 2012, their score is 13 points higher among university graduates (after controls for age, sex, income, wealth, father's occupation). The evolution is similar for democratic vote in the US and labour vote in Britain.
Vote for labour party by income decile in the UK, 1955-2017

Source: author's computations using UK post-electoral surveys 1963-2017 (general elections) (BES surveys)

Reading: the profile of voting for the labour vs. conservative party (excluding other votes) by income percentile is generally downward sloping, especially at the level of the top 10%, and particularly at the beginning of the period (from the 1950s to the 1980s).
High-income vote in Britain, 1955-2017: before and after controls

- Difference between (% voting Labour among top 10% income voters) and (% voting Labour among bottom 90% voters)
- After controls for age, sex
- After controls for age, sex, education, ethnic group

Source: author's computations using British post-electoral surveys 1963-2017 (general elections) (BES surveys)

Reading: in 1955, the Labour party obtained a score that was 30 points lower among top 10% income voters than among bottom 90% income voters; in 2017, the score of the Labour party is 12 points lower among top 10% income voters.
High-income vote in Britain, 1955-2017: before and after controls

Source: author's computations using British post-electoral surveys 1963-2017 (general elections) (BES surveys)

Reading: in 1955, the labour party obtained a score that was 30 points lower among top 10% income voters than among bottom 90% income voters; in 2017, the score of the labour party is 12 points lower among top 10% income voters.
Political conflict in Britain, 1955-2017:
toward a multiple-elite party system, or a great reversal?

- Difference between (% voting Labour among university graduates) and (% voting Labour among non-university graduates) (after controls)
- Difference between (% voting Labour among top 10% income voters) and (% voting Labour among bottom 90% bottom voters) (after controls)

Source: author's computations using British post-electoral surveys 1963-2017 (general elections) (BES surveys)

Reading: the Labour vote used to be associated with low education and low income voters; it has gradually become associated to high education voters, giving rise to a "multiple-elite" party system (education vs income); it might also become associated with high income voters in the future, giving rising to great reversal and complete realignment of the party system.
Political conflict in Britain, 1955-2017: toward a multiple-elite party system, or a great reversal?

Difference between (% voting Labour among university graduates) and (% voting Labour among non-university graduates) (after controls)

Difference between (% voting Labour among top 10% income voters) and (% voting Labour among bottom 90% bottom voters) (after controls)

Difference between (% voting Labour among home owners) and (% voting Labour among non-home owners) (after controls)

Source: author's computations using British post-electoral surveys 1963-2017 (general elections) (BES surveys)

Reading: the Labour vote used to be associated with low education and low income voters; it has gradually become associated to high education voters, giving rise to a "multiple-elite" party system (education vs income); it might also become associated with high income voters in the future, giving rise to great reversal and complete realignment of the party system.
Political conflict in France, 1956-2017: toward a multiple-elite party system, or a great reversal?

- Difference between (% univ.graduates voting left) and (% non-univ.graduates voting left) (after controls)
- Difference between (% high income voters (top 10%) voting left) and (% bottom income voters (bottom 90%) voting left)
- Difference between (% high wealth voters (top 10%) voting left) and (% low wealth voters (bottom 90%) voting left)

Source: author's computations using French post-electoral surveys 1956-2017 (presidential and legislative elections)

Reading: the left vote used to be associated with lower education and lower income voters; it has gradually become associated with higher education voters, giving rise to a "multiple-elite" party system (education vs wealth), it might also become associated with high-income voters in the future, giving rise to a great reversal or realignment of the party system.
4. Multi-dimensional models of inequality & redistribution

- A simple one-dimensional model of beliefs-based political conflict on redistribution: « Social Mobility and Redistributive Politics », QJE 1995

- One needs to introduce other dimensions into the model in order to account for what we observe:

  Vertical redistribution vs attitudes toward globalization/migration
  i.e. domestic vs external inequality

  Inequality in education vs inequality in wealth
• A quick summary of « Social Mobility and Redistributive Politics »
• Two possible income levels: $y_0 < y_1$
• $y_0 =$ low-paid job; $y_1 =$ high-paid job
• Probability ($y_i=y_1$) = $\pi_0 + \theta e_i$ if parental income = $y_0$
• Probability ($y_i=y_1$) = $\pi_1 + \theta e_i$ if parental income = $y_1$

With $e_i =$ effort, $\theta =$ index of how much individual effort matters, $\Delta \pi = \pi_1 - \pi_0 =$ index of how much inequality in social origins matters (better access to education, connexions to find jobs, etc.)

Different beliefs in effort and luck (partly determined by different income mobility trajectories) determine different political preferences for redistribution

Assume we start from initial policy conflict about domestic redistributive tax rate $t_L ($left$) > t_R ($right$), with the poor having more left-wing beliefs than the riche about effort, luck/education, and taxes (on average)
Two-dim model 1: domestic inequality vs external inequality

• Introducing globalization: in addition to the policy dimension $t$ (redistributive domestic tax rate between rich and poor), assume there’s also some other policy dimension: openness/migration $o_L > o_R$

• Further assume that globalization makes it easier to evade taxes: by putting dissimulation effort effort effort $f$ then high-income taxpayers can pretend that they have income $y_0$ instead of $y_1$ and be undetected with proba $\beta f$ to be undetected

• With $\beta$ large enough, then the policy conflict about redistributive taxation converges toward 0: both $t_L^*$ and $t_R^*$ close to 0

• Conflict about $o_L > o_R$ becomes salient (end of colonial empires in Europe, rise of civil rights/latinos in US); the poor vote for the right, assuming preferences for $o_L > o_R$ are correlated with income
Two-dim model 2: education inequality vs wealth inequality

• Introducing educational expansion: with rise of higher education, not possible to provide everyone with same education spending $s$; depending on educational effort $f$, one face different chances to be admitted to higher education (education $E_1$ rather than $E_0$)

• Assume Probability ($E_i = E_1$) = $\pi_0 + \phi f_i$ if parental education = $E_0$

• Probability ($E_i = E_1$) = $\pi_1 + \phi f_i$ if parental education = $E_1$

• Probability ($y_i = y_1$) = $\pi_0 + \theta e_i + s$ if parental income = $y_0$ & $E_i = E_1$

• One can end up with a multiple-elite equilibrium: the left believes in education-related effort parameter $\phi$, while the right believes in business-related effort parameter $\theta$
Open question n°1: could the transition to a multiple-elite party system have happened without globalisation/immigration cleavage?

• The rise of the globalisation/immigration cleavage certainly facilitates the transition: vertical redistribution more difficult + association between high educ & universalist/multicultural values; key role of racism/anti-minority strategy in rise of Nixon/Reagan/Thatcher, and later of LePen/Brexit/Trump

• But multiple-elite party systems can also happen without the external-inequality dimension: strength of education effort vs business effort cleavage

• Some of the oldest party systems are multiple-elite: e.g. Tories/Conservatives vs Whigs/Liberals in UK 18c-19c (landed elite vs urban-business elite)

• Of course this was the time of restricted suffrage (only top 1% could vote); but today’s universal suffrage is limited by unequal political finance, control of the media by high-business and high-education elite, etc.: Brahmin vs Business

• Do we see multiple-elite cleavages in countries less exposed to globalisation/immigration? On-going research on emerging & developed democracies. Brasil, India, Japan, Germany.
Open question n°2: can multiple-elite systems persist, or will the high-education and high-income voters unite in the long-run?

• To the extent that high educ commands high income/high wealth in the long-run, multiple-elite party systems are inherently unstable: elites tend to unite

• US 2016, France 2017 : evidence that we may be moving toward a complete realignment of the party system, « globalists » (high-education, high-income) vs « nativists » (low-education, low-income). E.g. like Rep vs Dem US 19c.

• This itself could be unstable: in the US, pro-slavery/segregationist democrats gradually became the New Deal Party (defending poor whites can lead to develop policies which also benefit poor blacks). **Racist left trajectory?**

• **We are not there yet: multiple-elite party systems can persist because of different careers and values (high educ doesn’t always lead to high income).** And rise of new internationalist-egalitarian platform is also possible.

• With many-dimensional politics, many bifurcations are possible. Actors matter.
Conclusions

• Globalisation (domestic vs external inequality) and educational expansion (education vs property inequality) have created new multi-dimensional conflicts about inequality and redistribution

• Why didn’t democracy reduce inequality?

• Because multi-dimensional coalitions are complicated

• Without a strong egalitarian-internationalist platform, it’s difficult to have the low-education, low-income voters from all origins vote for the same party. Racism/nativism = powerful force dividing the poor if there’s no strong uniting platform.

• Politics has never been a simple poor vs rich conflict; one needs to look more carefully at the content of political cleavages

• Social sciences can help