

Are schools making things worse?: The social reproduction of inequalities in political engagement.

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Social Inequalities in Political Engagement UK

Turnout by social class in UK 2017 General Election

- Managerial (AB) 69%
- Administrative (C1) 68%
- Skilled manual (C2) 60%
- Manual & unemployed (DE) 53%
- Increase social inequalities in voter turnout from 2015 general election

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2017-election>

Social Inequalities in Political Engagement UK

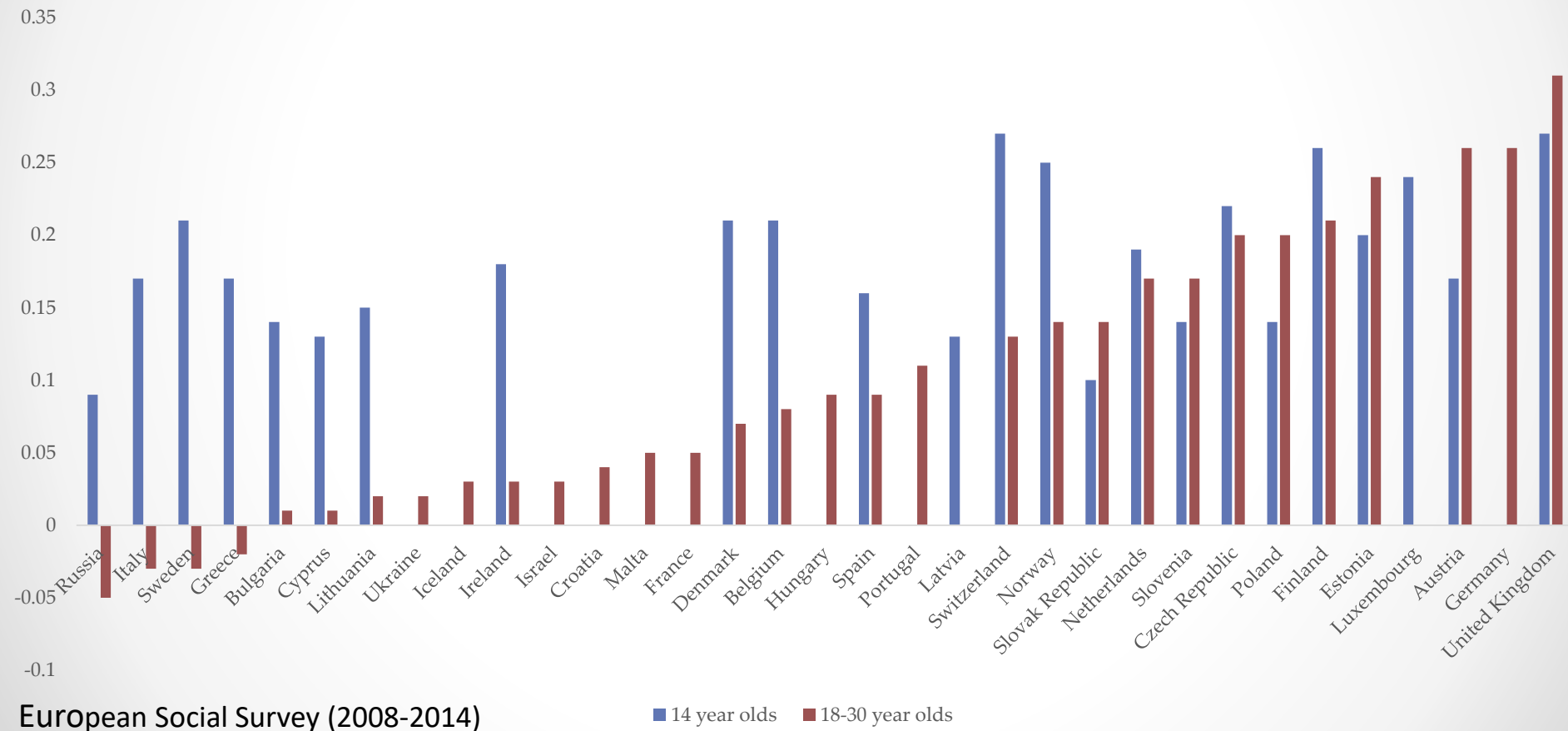
Turnout by social class for 18-34 age
2017 election

- AB 61% (-8) (Comparison with overall voter turnout for the particular social class)
- C1 64% (-4)
- C2 49% (-11)
- DE 35% (-18)

(Ipsos Mori 2017)

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2017-election>

Relationship between social background & voting in Europe



ICCS 2009 for the 14 year olds;

SES measured parents education & occupation

Relationship between social background & engagement in Europe

	Voting	Legal protest	Political parties	Illegal protest
England	0.31***	0.21***	0.07***	-0.13***
Switzerland	0.30***	0.21***	0.10***	-0.02
Ireland	0.25***	0.18***	0.07***	-0.12***
Sweden	0.24***	0.17***	0.07***	-0.11***
Italy	0.23***	0.15***	0.10***	-0.04*
Poland	0.16***	0.12***	-0.00	0.01

Correlations between SES and an engagement outcome using ICCS 2009 data

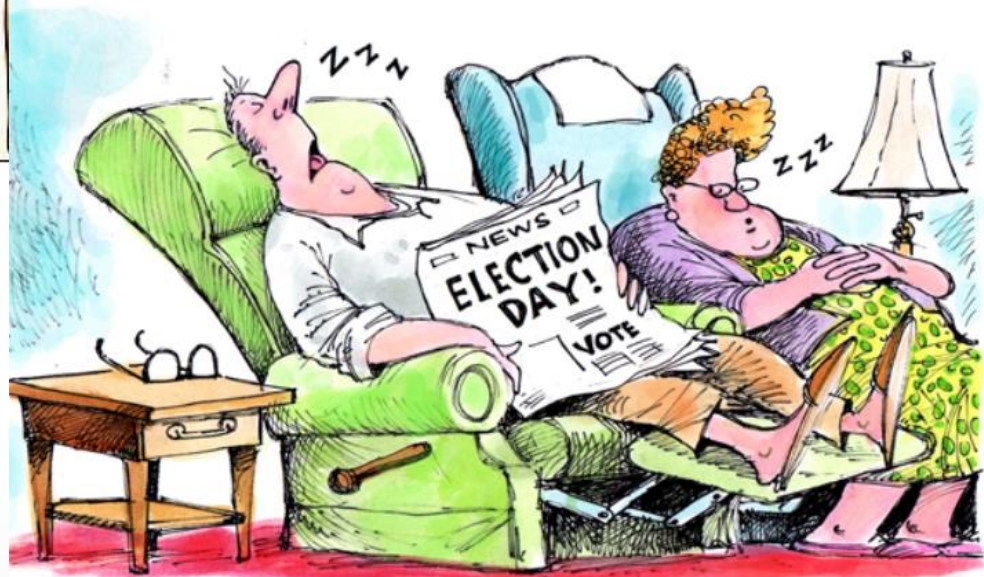
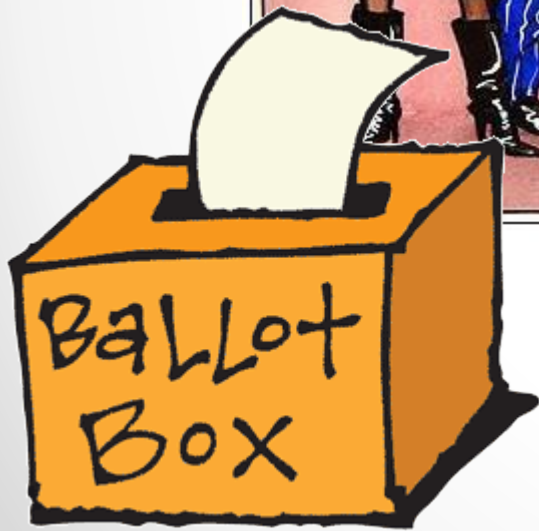
* P=0.05;
 ** P=0.01;
 *** P=0.001.

Inequalities in political engagement

- Democratic institutions lose responsiveness and legitimacy to non participatory groups
- ‘Diploma democracy’ (Bovens & Wille 2017)
- Disadvantaged youth;
 - Alienated,
 - Powerless &
 - Distrustful of politicians
- Vulnerable to populism

Meanwhile in Europe...





Lack of social mobility in political engagement

- ‘Political mobility’ (Brady et al 2015)
- Social reproduction of inequalities in political engagement
- Transfer within the family
 - economic
 - human
 - social
 - cultural
- As blocked as other forms of social mobility
- Yet considerably less research

Role of school in this process?

Political learning happens in school in two forms;

- 1) Participatory learning processes; School councils/parliaments, debates, mock elections and an open learning environment*
- 2) Knowledge acquisition; Citizenship education classes with specific learning outcomes and assessment*

Role of school in this process?

Contribution of school to social reproduction of inequalities in political engagement;

- 1) *Not providing the same access to learning*
 - 1) *Barriers within the school*
 - 2) *Schools with lower social status offering fewer political learning opportunities*

- 2) *Providing learning opportunities that benefit middle class more*

Form of Learning	Access?	Effective?
<p>Citizenship Education</p> <p>How much received;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not at all • a little • a lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compulsory? • School dependent? • Some students offered more? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High SES gain more because they start off knowing more <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low SES opportunity to catch up
<p>Open Classroom climate</p> <p>In class do;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students bring up issues for discussion • Students encouraged to make up own minds • Students feel free to express opinions • Teachers present several sides of an issue • Teachers respect students' opinions • Students feel free to disagree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reported student experience dependent on student-teacher relationship • Expect high SES family open home environment 'know the rules of the game' to access this • Teachers skills to enable all students to feel this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High SES gain more because of familiarity of this experience <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low SES opportunity to catch up

Form of Learning	Access?	Effective?
<p>Political activities inside school (sum)</p> <p>In last year have you taken part in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student council • Debating club • Electing council • Mock elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual <i>choice</i>? (peer pressure) • School decision? • Teacher selection? • Class vote? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High SES gain more because of familiarity of this experience & know more about politics <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low SES opportunity to catch up

Citizenship Education Longitudinal dataset

- **National representative sample** of young people in schools
 - R 1 11-12 2003
 - R2 13-14 2005
 - R 3 15-16 2007
- **N 7123 (38% attrition)**
- Contains **political learning opportunities at school**
- Contains political engagement items
- Country comparisons ICCS 2009

Methods & Variables

Opportunities for learning political engagement

Methods: OLS Regression and MLA

- Citizenship Education
- Open classroom climate
- Political activities inside school
 - Student councils, Debating, Electing council, Mock elections

Mitigation or Acceleration effects

Methods: OLS Regression

- **SES *each of these learning methods**
- **Political engagement**
 - Voting intentions
 - Protesting intentions
 - Political parties

Political Activities

	Year 7 11-12	Year 9 13-14	Year 9 13-14 (M2)	Year 11 15-16	Year 11 15-16 (M2)
Social Background	0.073***	0.068**	.071**	0.160***	0.107***
Gender*	-0.091***	-0.027	-0.013	-0.01	-0.007
Ethnicity (white British)	-0.06**	-0.007	-0.007	-0.073***	-0.093***
Prior Round			0.139***		0.282***
R²	0.018	0.004	0.024	0.032	0.104

P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; ***P < 0.001. Gender 1= male and 2=female

Open Classroom Climate

	Year 9 13-14	Year 11 15-16	Year 11 15-16 (M2)
Social Background	0.079***	0.090***	0.066***
Gender*	0.074***	0.076***	.047**
Ethnicity (white British)	-0.014	-0.03	-0.028
Prior Round			0.363***
R ²	0.011	0.014	0.145

P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; ***P < 0.001. Gender 1= male and 2=female

Citizenship Education

	Year 7 11-12	Year 9 13-14	Year 9 13-14 (M2)	Year 11 15-16	Year 11 15-16 (M2)
Social Background	-0.007	0.038*	0.019	0.01	-0.005
Gender*	0.032	0.067	0.047*	0.031	0.025
Ethnicity	-0.024	-0.031	-0.017	-0.039	-0.031
Prior round			0.214***		0.194***
R ²	0	0.006	0.048	0.002	0.039

P < 0.05; **P < 0.01; ***P < 0.001. Gender 1= male and 2=female

Access to learning

- Disadvantaged students report lower levels of participation in participatory forms of learning political engagement
 - Political activities in school
 - Open classroom climate
- Citizenship Education
 - Little evidence that it influences quantity

Compare in Europe

	Participatory activities	Open climate
England	0.30***	0.17***
Switzerland	0.13***	-0.03
Ireland	0.17***	0.12***
Sweden	0.23***	0.12***
Italy	0.10***	0.09***
Poland	0.17***	0.04*

ICCS 2009

Controlled for gender & ethnicity

* P=0.05;

** P=0.01;

*** P=0.001.

School Composition

School level (social composition of school and learning experiences offered in England)

Schools that have a higher disadvantaged intake;

- **Offer fewer opportunities for participating in political activities**
- **Fewer experiences open classroom climate**
- Not all countries

Mitigating effects on voting

	Year 7 Age 11-12	Year 9 Age 13-14	Year 11 Aged 15-16
Gender	0.013	-0.04	-0.58***
Ethnicity (white British)	0.023	-0.025	0.029
Prior Round voting intentions		0.340***	0.411***
Social Background (SES)	0.142***	0.176***	0.157***
Citizenship Education	0.029	0.048	0.055**
SES x Citizenship Ed	0.016	-0.02	-0.038*
Political Activities	0.062*	0.064*	0.1
SES x PA	0.011	-0.029	-0.019
Open classroom climate		0.100***	0.107***
SES x OCC		0.002	0
R ²	0.023	0.195	0.288

Mitigating effects

Political outcomes	SES x Cit. Edu	SES x Political Activities	SES x Open Climate
Vote	Mitigating		
Parties	Mitigating		
Protest	Mitigating		

Mitigating effects?

Individual level

- No methods benefited middle class children more
- Citizenship Education found to benefit disadvantaged more

What can schools do?

- Open classroom climate and political activities in school is likely to be effective for enhancing political engagement
- They are **NOT** equally accessible to all social groups
 - **More accessible to students from higher SES**

What can schools do?

How to enable LOW SES students access to these experience?

- **Compulsory political activities in all schools for all students**
- **Teachers to encourage disadvantaged students to participate**
- **Greater focus on these activities in in low SES schools**
- **Improve teacher training including focusing on disadvantage by social class**

What can schools do?

- Citizenship education can be seen to be effective for enhancing voting intentions
 - It is equally accessible to all social groups
 - **Compulsory**
 - Mitigates inequalities in political engagement
 - **Low SES opportunity to catch up**
 - **More & compulsory C.E. until 18**
 - **In vocational education and training**

Conclusion

- **What is school for?**
- **What are the long term effects of neglecting social gaps in political engagement?**

Research

- [Hoskins, B., Janmaat, J.G., and Melis, G, \(2017\) 'Tackling inequalities in political socialisation: A Systematic analysis of Access to and Mitigation Effects of Learning Citizenship at School'](#) Social Science Research.
- <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2017.09.001>