

Political Class Consciousness in Eastern Europe

Scholars hypothesize that class consciousness is the foundation of class action: it is necessary for the working class to enhance their access to stratification resources and increase their mobility chances and it is considered to be the basis for revolutionary social change (Mann 1973; Morris 1979; Brooks 1994). Traditionally, class consciousness has been considered a Marxian concept, and the focus has been on class consciousness of *economic* interests. In his well-known cross-national study on the subject, neo-Marxist Erik Olin Wright (1997: 4) defines class consciousness as “the understanding by people within a class of their class interests.” Although this seems like a rather broad definition that is inclusive of many types of interests, in this and most studies of class consciousness, the focus is on the relationship between class struggle and economic resources: working class consciousness of *economic* interests influences their access to and acquisition of *economic* resources (Mann 1973; Evans 1994; Surridge 2007).

In the class consciousness literature, the theoretical importance of political power -- as a resource analytically distinct from the economic sphere and as a social force capable of structuring class relations, granting access to other stratification resources, and enhancing class mobility -- has been overlooked. In Marxian conceptualizations, political power is treated as a secondary characteristic of the capitalist economic order. In contrast, stratification theorists such as Weber (1946) and Lenski (1966) argue that the distribution of political power strongly influences the distribution of economic resources. Korpi’s (1983) power resource theory explains that class relations are an outcome of the “democratic class struggle” in the political sphere. Class voting implies that classes have definite and distinct political interests that, when realized, improve the life chances of

social class members (e.g. Hout et al 1995; for more recent and comparative work, see Domanski 2007). Indeed, some class consciousness researchers disagree that Marxian theory is central to conceptualizing and measuring class consciousness, and thus are open to a broadening of the definition of class interests to include other stratified resources (Fantasia 1995: 272-273). To date, there is little empirical work on the concept and measurement of classes' distinctively political interests and on the extent to which classes are conscious of these interests.

The objective of this paper is to conceptualize and measure class consciousness of *political* interests. Considering that the class consciousness literature does not focus directly on the issue, this paper is concerned with addressing three basic, yet key questions: (1) What are the oppositional political interests of social classes? (2) To what extent are classes conscious of these interests? And (3) To what extent are measures of these interests related to one another?

In my synthesis of the literature I develop three main arguments aimed at marrying Marxian notions of class struggle with a broader view of class interests. First, class consciousness of political interests can be analytically distinct from consciousness of other interests, e.g. economic. Second, for consciousness of political interests to be class based, the notion of class struggle is required: classes must be conscious that their political interests are in opposition to that of the other classes. Third, class consciousness can be analytically separated from class action, as the relationship between the two is a matter for empirical investigation, not *a priori* assumption.

To develop measures of class consciousness of political interests, I analyze unique survey data. Specifically, I use NORPOL 2005, a representative dataset of

contemporary Poles, to construct measures of political interests and to examine the extent to which classes in contemporary Poland are conscious of the class struggle over parliamentary representation.

Social Class and Political Inequality of Representation

Social classes differ in their access to and amount of political resources, i.e. there is class-based political inequality. Representation is a particularly important political resource. It is through representation that the interests of the citizenry are accounted for in the crafting of policy (Przeworski et al 1999). Class struggle over policy influences the distribution of economic and political resources, i.e. social stratification (Korpi 1983). Social background shapes the thoughts and actions of representatives who make policy (Xydias 2008). The extent of class homogeneity of the legislative body is of concern, as it translates into a situation in which one class controls the state. When one class dominates the legislature, voices of the other classes are muted (APSA 2004). The class that dominates the state apparatus biases policy in favor of itself (Domhoff 2000).

Some argue that descriptive representation – e.g. the extent to which the parliament resembles the demographics and experiences of the citizenry -- is a critical factor in whose voice is heard, when, and how loud in the legislature (Mansbridge: 1999: 628). Descriptive representatives (those who embody a demographic and/or experiential subset of the population) translate shared experiences into substantive representation – i.e. representation of interests. For example, women legislators are said to be the best representatives of women constituencies because they can draw upon a shared gendered experience; research shows that women parliamentarians are more likely to introduce women's interest policy than their male colleagues (Swers 2002). Drawing from the

empirically established relationship between descriptive and substantive representation for women, one can argue that it is in the political interest of all groups, including social classes, to enhance their own descriptive representation in the state apparatus.

In modern democracies, the upper class has more upper class representatives than there are upper class members in the class structure, i.e. the upper class has the most favorable ratio of class members to parliamentarians. Thus, the upper class controls the state apparatus and policy tends to reflect their interests.

What facilitated class imbalance in descriptive representation? The answer, in short, is class action. Five major mechanisms or “class actions” through which political inequality in descriptive representation arises can be identified: (1) class voting; in this case, voting for descriptive representatives (see also Domanski 2008), (2) being politically active, e.g. through campaign contributions and other forms of political participation (Gallego 2008; APSA 2004), (3) associating with politicians and other members of the state within elite networks in order to influence members of the state’s political elite (Domhoff 2000), (4) controlling the party apparatus, e.g. gate keeping and control of the supply of descriptive representatives of certain classes (see Paxton and Kunovich 2003), and (5) forming class-based political organizations, such as parties (van den Berg and Janoski 2005).

Class Consciousness of Political Interests

Class consciousness is hypothesized to be a foundation of class action (Mann 1973; Brooks 1994). Classes vary in the degree to which they possess class consciousness and thus vary in the degree to which they act, i.e. class consciousness of political interests enables class political action.

Notions of Class Consciousness

In the contemporary class consciousness literature, there is a rather fierce debate over conceptualization and measurement. To efficiently analyze the literature, I divide it into two main camps: the constructivists and the survey-analysts (for a similar typology, see Surridge 2007). Each camp contributes to our understanding of class consciousness, but because my data come from a sociological survey of political representation, I lean toward the survey-analysts' side. However, my conceptualization and measurement is significantly informed by the constructivist approach.

The constructivists believe that class consciousness is a latent idea in the minds of class members that arises only in “strategic encounters” where class is at the forefront, such as strikes and other class-based interactions (Fantasia 1995: 278). They employ constructivist methods, where signs of class consciousness are found in actors' explanations for their behavior in class struggle situations (Fantasia 1995; Savage 2000). Constructivists assume that class action is embedded in conflict events that take place in the sphere of economic production, i.e. class action *is* class consciousness. Action is assumed to be the cultural expression of consciousness (Savage 2000). Following their conceptualization, constructivist methods focus on analysis of class struggle events.

The survey-analysts have a different set of beliefs about class consciousness. First, they believe that consciousness exists whether or not the actor is currently engaged in a strike or other protest. They employ quantitative analyses of survey data, where respondents are asked a series of questions positing hypothetical class struggle situations and then asked about their class allegiances (e.g. Wright 1989). In contrast to the constructivist approach, a respondent's class location is considered to have objective

indicators (Brooks 1994; Wright 1996; SurrIDGE 2007). Survey-analysts argue that class action flows from class consciousness, but that action and consciousness are two analytically distinct phenomena whose relationship is a matter for empirical discovery (Brooks 1994). Survey-analysts may not be expressly Marxist, but they focus on economic interests.

For both camps, identity and opposition are central to class consciousness. In his widely cited conceptualization, Mann (1973:13) argues that there are four successive, hierarchical levels of class consciousness: (1) class identity, (2) class opposition (perception that capitalists are the opponent), (3) class totality, e.g. that class is an all-consuming aspect of social existence, and (4) class alternatives, the visualization of a different means of organizing economic production (e.g. socialist-communism). Survey-analyst literature echoes this typology. For example, Evans (1994: 233-4) interprets the class consciousness literature as ranging from class identification to class ideology and is focused on the exploration of the working class' consciousness of economic interests.

More than the survey-analysts, the constructivists have a broad view of what constitutes class interests. Constructivists see consciousness within culture, broadly construed, and thus are open to the idea that class consciousness can be based outside of purely economic interests. There has been some attention to identifying class interests that are not based in the economic production sphere. According to Brooks (1994), "several studies have broached questions about the extent to which class interests and identities organize citizens' allegiances *outside the workplace*" (168) [emphasis mine]. And as SurrIDGE (2007) argues, anti-capitalist attitudes are not the only attitudes that are pertinent to class-consciousness.

The majority of survey-analysts' measures of class consciousness focus on class struggle in the sphere of economic production, but some are based on the idea that political interests are related to economic interests. In a classic study, Glantz (1958) identifies class consciousness through a series of survey items that address respondents' "politico-economic" interests. Many of his measures relate to economic issues within the government, such as policy over taxation, national health care, and rent control, among others. For example, one questionnaire item was stated, "if your senators or your congressmen voted to end rent control, they voted to take money out of your pocket." Similarly, Marshall et al (1988) (as cited in Evans 1994) measure class perception with a question that makes specific reference to the relationship between classes and "political affairs:" "In the past there was a dominant class which largely controlled the economic and political system, and a lower class which had no control over economic or political affairs. What do you think, has it changed or stayed the same?" Marshall et al (1988) assumed that classes are aware that the political system helps to shape life-chances. Wright's (1989) class consciousness schema includes mostly conflicts within the economic sphere, though one of his class consciousness dimensions is the power of economic dominants, and is measured with the following Likert-response questionnaire item: "Big corporations have far too much power in ... society today" (as cited in Brooks 1994 and Gerteis and Savage 1998). None of the above measure political interests directly.

For the purpose of empirical analysis, political interests can be distinguished from economic ones, with recognition that the economic and political spheres are often tightly linked. Borrowing from the constructivists, one can claim that there are as many interests

as there are cultural expressions; borrowing from the survey-analysts, one can claim that there are as many interests as there are stratification resources.

From the constructivist and survey-analyst positions, class struggle is central to class consciousness. There is a sense that one entity, presumably populated by the upper class -- Glantz's senators, Marshall et al's dominant class, and Wright's big corporations -- is actively struggling with (and winning against) other, presumably lower, classes. Like economic interests, political interests are class-based if they reflect the struggle inherent in class relations (i.e., classes have as many interests as there are class struggle situations). Empirical analysis of class consciousness should seek to understand the democratic class struggle along with the economic struggle.

Due to divergent conceptualization of the relationship between class consciousness and class action, constructivists and survey-analysts advocate different research methods. At heart, this is a debate over whether questionnaire items in traditional survey research validly measure class consciousness. Constructivist and survey-analyst camp positions have been adequately stated in Brooks (1994), Fanstasia (1995) and, more recently, Surridge (2007). I will not restate the debate in its entirety here, but instead will focus on how the approaches can be synthesized.

Despite what constructivists see as the shortcomings of survey research in measuring class consciousness (an argument which, by extension, can be extended to measuring anything with surveys), surveys can be useful proxies for strategic encounters in particular instances. Constructivist emphasis on studying class action events hides the daily and seemingly ordinary experiences that are the building blocks of class consciousness (Morris 1979: 29). Thus, class consciousness may be a latent idea (see

Mann 1973: Chapter 6), but it should not be assumed that dramatic conflict situations are the only situations that allow class members to express class consciousness.

A possible synthesis between the survey-analyst and constructivist positions can be as follows. The survey situation is something like a classic experiment: “the survey response process should ... be conceptualized as an experiment in which survey questions (the stimuli) are manipulated by the interviewer under controlled conditions (the interview) to make inferences about the mechanism of interest (in this case, class consciousness)” (Brooks 1994: 174). When subjects are asked specifically about class situations, they think in terms of class, and will respond as class members. Thus, when asked about class and class interests in the same question, a measure of class consciousness can emerge. With appropriate questionnaire items, survey situations can be valid proxies for constructivists’ strategic encounters.

Theoretical Propositions and Hypotheses

The study of class consciousness of political interests is based on the following propositions and hypotheses. First, class consciousness influences class action; the greater the consciousness, the more likely classes will think and act in accordance with their class interests. Second, class action influences the distribution of political resources; classes that act will acquire more political resources than classes that do not act.

Class-Specific Hypotheses

In this paper, I examine class consciousness of political interests in Poland. I conceptualize Poland’s class structure as having four main classes: upper, middle,

working, and farmer. I focus on the extreme ends of the class structure, with upper class at the one end, and working class and farmers at the other.

Consistent with the idea that the upper class is cohesive and coherent in terms of political outlook (Domhoff 2000), I hypothesize that the upper class possesses the highest level of class consciousness. Conversely, the working class possesses the lowest level of class consciousness. Farmers possess a significant degree of class consciousness, higher than the working class but less than that of the upper class.

Class Consciousness and the Political History of Farmers and the Working Class

The class consciousness of farmers in modern democracies is understudied, which is unfortunate because they present an interesting comparison to both upper and working classes (but see Gorlach and Mooney 1998 and Forys 2005). While farmers and the working class differ in key areas relating specifically to occupational issues in industry and agriculture, that they both have similarly lower access to stratification resources – economic, status, and political – makes them more similar in interests than oppositional. Of course, farmers are in opposition to the upper class.

Farmer and working class consciousness is tied to communist- and post-communist-era economic and political history, particularly in the extent to which they maintained a distinct political identity during the period of radical social change. In Poland, as in many post-communist states, agricultural sector workers had a peculiar economic history. During the Communist-era, farmers had semi-private ownership of their land (Gorlach and Mooney 1998). Contracts with the state provided protections from the global agricultural market and economic downturns caused by bad weather. After state breakdown, farmers were exposed to market forces and due to funding and

ideological shifts on what to do with the agricultural sector, farmers lost the security of statist attitudes toward the peasantry.

Meanwhile, Solidarity's gradual defeat had the unintentional effect of bringing in a statist, post-communist party to power while decreasing the ability of the working class to regain any lost status (Ost 2005). Lost status is acutely felt in the labor market: unemployment is high for everyone, and the working class has the highest level.

Over the course of the transition, the working class and the farmers steadily lost descriptive representatives. As Solidarity splintered, so did political allegiances of the working class. While working class consciousness of political interests was potentially high in the late 1980's and early 1990's, by the first decade of the 21st Century, the working class were politically divided (Ost 2005). By 2005, no major political party in Poland spoke specifically to working class economic and political interests.

Unlike their disadvantaged group counterparts, farmers developed and maintained a unified political identity. Their class-wide recognition of economic and political interests can be attributed to their unique traditions, active organizations, and social and political resistance during the communist era (Gorlach and Mooney 1998). During the post-communist era, these elements became embodied in peasant-interest political parties -- Samoobrona and, especially, the Polish People's Party (PSL) – who became the primary voice of farmers in the government (Szczerbiak 2001). Due to their unique history, farmer class consciousness should be higher than their working class counterparts.

What Are the Oppositional Political Interests of the Social Classes?

In this paper I consider three types of political interests with regards to descriptive representation. The first is support for the idea of descriptive representation. This reflects a general interest in having this type of representation without specific reference to how it can be enhanced. The second is the perceived need for descriptive representatives as leaders who come from particular class ranks, such as workers and peasants. This is related to the first, in that it reflects a general interest in descriptive representation, but differs in that it addresses perceived needs for specific groups. The third reflects a general awareness of descriptive representation but with specific reference to how it can be enhanced—in this case, through supporting political parties who offer descriptive representatives.

It is not in the political interest of the upper class to support descriptive representation of all social classes, and they will be least likely to believe that workers and peasants are needed as leaders than the other classes. There are three potential reasons for this: (a) they realize that they are outnumbered by the working class, (b) they feel the working class and peasantry are unfit to rule, and (c) they control the state and as such they possess the greatest awareness of the benefits of rule. It is doubtful that the upper class would declare that they are purposefully trying to limit the political influence of the working class and peasants. Most likely, they will claim that the working class is unfit to lead, and that people from the upper class background are more likely to have the leadership skills. The working class could attempt to institute reforms toward economic redistribution that would dilute upper class wealth; to economic liberals of the upper class, redistribution is detrimental to the well-being of the state. Members of the upper

class have a personal stake in supporting upper class candidates and could gain materially from maintaining the imbalance of power.

As it is in the interests of all classes to have adequate representation, particularly in parliament, all social classes will feel it is important that their preferred parties have candidates who are from their social class.

Because they occupy similar social structural positions, farmers and the working class should share similar political interests. Along these lines, working class and farmers should be supportive for either workers or peasants as leaders, though their political allegiances should tend toward leaders from their class category, e.g. working class for workers, and farmers for peasant leaders.

Data and Variables

Data come from NORPOL 2005, a survey of Polish citizens conducted in April 2005 (N = 4000). It includes a wide range of topics, including cultural and political attitudes. It also includes demographics and attitudes on democracy, descriptive representation, political ideology, which party they voted for in 2001 and their current preferred party. Not all questions were asked of all respondents, creating different sized N's for the variables of interest. To my knowledge, these data are the first to attempt to directly measure dimensions of political interests with regards to descriptive representation.

Variables

Social class is measured by occupational, or SKZ, scores (thus, my sample is restricted to those who have an SKZ score). I assume that classes are social categories

whose boundaries are objectively determined, are conceptually and empirically distinct from the stratification structure, and are engaged in class struggle (Slomczynski and Shabad 2000). My schema can be compared to the nine-class scheme of Slomczynski et al (2007). Upper class includes those from highly skilled positions such as employers, managers and experts. Middle class includes those from somewhat lesser skilled positions that require moderate levels of education, such as supervisors, the self-employed, and technicians. Working class occupations require little formal education, and include both skilled and unskilled manual positions. Farmers are identified as those working in an agricultural and animal husbandry fields (excluding such occupations as agronomy professors and zoologists).

Selected questionnaire items form the basis of the political interest variables. To capture class consciousness of political interests, the items (a) are focused on the political sphere and (b) speak specifically to the respondents' class position. For descriptive representation as an ideal, respondents are asked about the demographic composition of parliament in terms of class. The main question is; "How important is it that the composition of the Sejm reflects the composition of society according to proportions of social classes?" Responses range from very important to very unimportant. As for leadership, respondents are asked about the perceived need of leaders who are from specific class locations. There are two main questions: "How much needed as leaders: [workers] [peasants]?" Respondents were asked to provide a number from 1 [lowest level of need] to 11 [highest level of need]. For support for political parties with descriptive representatives, respondents are asked about party preferences and are asked to respond as a member of a social class. The main question is, "How important is it that

the party you want to vote for has candidates to the Sejm who are from the same social class as you?” Responses range from very important to very unimportant¹.

Political interest variables form the basis of the class consciousness variables which are designed to answer the question, To what extent are classes conscious of their political interests? To obtain a class consciousness score that is comparable across classes, the political interest variables need to be modified as each class will answer the political interest questions differently. For example, the upper class would view descriptive representation as an ideal as bad, and working class and farmers would view it as good. Thus, an upper class member would respond that the ideal is very unimportant (with a score of 4) and a member of the working class would respond that it is very important (with a score of 1). Both would be answering “correctly,” i.e. according to their objective class interests, but the scores on would not be comparable between them.

To obtain a single statistic that demonstrates relative class consciousness of Poland’s social classes, an interval-level variable that takes into account these differences, yet would still show the extent to which the respondent answers according to their objective class interests, is needed. To do this, I modified the original scaling of the political interest variables, such that for each variable, the higher the score, the greater the consciousness.

Specific examples illuminate this modification. Let us take descriptive representation as an ideal: the upper class should oppose this and the working class and farmers should support it. Thus, for the upper class, the higher the score on the political interest variable, the more they oppose the ideal. For the working class and farmers, the

higher the score, the more they support the ideal. In this newly constructed variable, high scores equals high consciousness.

For the leadership variables, the original scale (1 to 11) is truncated for working class and farmers according to their natural political allegiances. For example, the maximum score for working class members supporting the idea of peasants as leaders is nine, a level that reflects some, but not too much support. Since it is not in the political interest of the working class to oppose peasants as leaders, the scale still runs from low to high support. This is in contrast with the upper class, whose version of the leadership scale runs from high support (1) to low support (11). As with the other newly constructed class consciousness variables, the higher the score, the more acute the consciousness.

Analytical Strategy

To answer the question, To what extent are classes conscious of their political interests? I perform three analyses. First, I present the mean and standard deviation for each political interest variable. This will provide an approximation of class interest direction and magnitude. I then present the mean and standard deviation for the newly constructed class consciousness variables; classes can then be ranked based on their class consciousness scores, where the higher the score, the more acute the consciousness. to approximate the magnitude of difference between classes, I calculated averages.

To determine whether responses to the political interest variables are class based or are due to other plausible factors, I employ logistic and ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions with the political interest variables in their original form as the response variables.

Response variables for descriptive representation as an ideal and support for parties with descriptive representatives as candidates are coded very important = 1, otherwise = 0. I dichotomized the variables in this way for two reasons. First, descriptive statistics reveal that 81.1 percent of the respondents provided responses of very important to somewhat important, and that this percentage does not fluctuate dramatically across classes. I suspect that the large support for descriptive representation is due to a social desirability effect, such that respondents said what they felt the interviewer wanted to hear. It is plausible that most respondents did not want to seem insensitive to the plight of disadvantaged groups and feigned interest in representative diversity. Social desirability responses may not reflect the true state of support for descriptive representation. Note, however, while there is evidence for social desirability, a substantial proportion of voters disregard social desirability to the extent that they respond that descriptive representation is unimportant. Therefore, I decided to focus on extreme attitudes (27.7 percent of all respondents claimed that descriptive representation for social classes is very important).

Explanatory variables in each model include both class and controls for political knowledge, including education, urban vs. rural, and interest in politics. Class is dichotomized into upper, working, and farmer categories and the middle class are in the residual category. In the logistic regression equations, education is dichotomized into subcategories of less than high school degree = 1, otherwise = 0 and more than high school degree = 1, otherwise = 0, with attainment of high school degree only in the residual category. Urban vs. rural is coded such that urban = 1, rural = 0. Interest in politics is based on the question, “How interested are you in politics?” with high to very

high = 1, else = 0. For the OLS regressions, education and interest in politics are continuous variables arranged from low to high. For all analyses, I exclude cases of “don’t know” and refusal responses.

To answer the question, to what extent are these measures related? I present a table of correlations for the consciousness variables. Correlation strength and significance determine the relatedness of the measures.

Class consciousness is often measured in an index; on theoretical and analytical grounds, I argue that these concepts are best analyzed separately. On theoretical grounds, these are all plausible class consciousness dimensions, but they clearly are designed to measure separate aspects of political interests regarding descriptive representation. They may not be dimensions of one, monolithic latent construct of descriptive representation in the minds of the classes, but rather they may be separate and distinct latent concepts. On analytical grounds, correlation of class consciousness measures is a matter for empirical discovery, not *a priori* assumptions. A recent study by Evans (1992) empirically demonstrated this point. Evans’ (1992) detailed criticism of Marshall et al’s (1988) class consciousness index was that the items did not fit as a coherent whole (with low inter-item correlation and low Cronbach’s Alpha as evidence). Evans suggested disaggregating Marshall et al’s class consciousness items to determine how each dimension works as a possible class consciousness measure. Gerteis and Savage (1998) lodged a similar complaint against Wright’s analyses of the *Comparative Project on Class Consciousness and Class Conflict* data (267). I adopt the disaggregation approach.

Results

To what extent are classes conscious of their political interests?

Table 1 presents the mean for each political interest variable. Contrary to the hypothesis, the upper class is more likely to support descriptive representation for all social classes. Farmers are more likely to feel it is important that parties have candidates of their social class and to feel the need for workers and farmers as leaders than all other classes. As hypothesized, the upper class is least likely to feel the need for worker and farmer leaders. The magnitude of the means suggest that upper class and farmers possess the highest degree of class consciousness.

-- Table 1 about here --

Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of the class consciousness variables. As the interpretation of the means is straightforward, I will focus on the major findings and anomalies. For the first question, contrary to expectations and as with the means analysis above, the upper class has the lowest level of class consciousness, while farmers have the highest. Farmers also exhibit the greatest level of consciousness. As for leadership, the upper class exhibits the hypothesized level of consciousness.

At the top of the table are averages of the class consciousness of political interest scores per class; this is a single statistic designed to measure the relative magnitude of class consciousness for each social class. Two such averages are derived: one with the “Sejm should reflect” question and the other without that question. This was done because the “Sejm should reflect” question presents an anomaly that may obscure the true nature of relative class consciousness among the social classes of Poland.

In both derivations, it appears that farmers and the upper class have similar levels of class consciousness, both higher than that of the working class. This result is more

pronounced when removing the anomalous results of the measure of descriptive representation as an ideal.

-- Table 2 about here --

Table 3 presents the logistic regression models. Model fit is satisfactory in both cases. In the first model, controlling for political knowledge, social class is not significant and all coefficients for classes are in the opposite direction as indicated by the hypotheses. Interest in politics is the only significant variable. For the second model, farmers class category is significant and all class variables are in the expected directions.

-- Table 3 about here --

Table 4 presents the OLS models. Model fit is satisfactory in both cases. All variables are significant by at least the 0.01 level and are in the expected directions. By and large, urban dwelling, highly educated upper class Poles do not feel that workers or peasants are needed as leaders, an attitude that reflects their objective political interests. In both models, the combined influence of residence and education drowns out the influence of being a member of the working class or being a farmer. However, education alone is not enough to mute the influence of being a farmer in expressing the correct political interest.

-- Table 4 about here --

To what extent are these measures related?

Table 5 present the correlations between the class consciousness variables. It is clear that the dimensions of class consciousness do not hang together. The dimensions of support for descriptive representation as an ideal and as a strategy for enhancing political representation are weakly related. These dimensions are in no way related to general

interest in having workers and peasants as leaders. Interest in worker and peasant leaders are strongly correlated. Thus, there is no basis in creating a single class consciousness index from these variables.

-- Table 5 about here --

Summary and Discussion

The main findings from this study are both methodological and substantive. Methodological findings are as follows. Class consciousness of political interests can be identified in survey research if using appropriate questionnaire items. The NORPOL data set was especially well-suited to identifying class political interests of a particular type – that of descriptive representation. By and large, social classes proved capable of responding according to their political interests. This indicates that the survey situation, in asking respondents specifically about their political interests as a member of a social class, is a valid way of measuring class consciousness.

A lack of cohesion between the dimensions of class consciousness of political interests in this study suggests that the disaggregation approach is prudent. Although indexes comprised of different dimensions of class consciousness are possible, it is not advisable to assume a single, monolithic latent construct of class consciousness of political interests.

As for substantive issues, two main findings are of note. First, the upper class and the farmers have similar levels of class consciousness. On this score, a major anomaly needs to be accounted for: the upper class was more likely to support descriptive representation for all social classes. Is this false consciousness or upper class liberalism?

It is more likely the latter, as the upper class clearly displayed a greater sense of class consciousness in the scores of other variables.

Second, the working class and the farmers share similar political interests, but not the same level of class consciousness. Do these substantive findings suggest that workers and farmers feel solidarity toward each other? It is important to theoretically separate consciousness of self-interests from that of affective solidarity. Political interests, like economic ones, can be a matter of self-interest, rather than affective solidarity (Evans 1992). Class consciousness does not necessarily assume a “we-are-all-in-this-together” feeling, nor an “every-man-for-himself” ideology. It is likely these affectations are a vague conception of doing what is best for oneself mixed with a sense of class belonging (SurrIDGE 2007).

Finally, why do farmers have high class consciousness yet low descriptive representation? One reason is that parties seen as legitimate representatives of social classes serve to heighten class consciousness while diluting the power resources of the class of whom they represent. These political parties profess to serve the interests of the class without providing direct power sharing in the form of descriptive representation. In their organizational culture, parties draw upon the experiences of the subgroup of whom they represent. Thus, class members can perceive parties as possessing the qualities of descriptive representatives. Yet, parties differ from descriptive representatives in that they require constant input from the subgroup to maintain that level of experience. This input declines as the proportion of descriptive representatives declines. For farmers, PSL was perceived as a legitimate representative of their political interests. In essence,

farmers traded their descriptive representation for a delegative party. The result is high farmer consciousness and a decline in farmer power.

Class consciousness has proven to be a durable concept, most likely because of its potential as a parsimonious explanatory variable capable of explaining formation and durability of class structures. To show that class consciousness is relevant, evidence must be marshaled with regard to the relationship between class consciousness of political interests and class action. In future research, I will focus on this relationship.

Table 1 Means for Political Interest Variables for Social Classes (Standard Deviations in parentheses)

| | Upper | Working | Farmer | All |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Sejm should reflect... | 3,03 (0,88) | 2,95 (0,89) | 2,91 (0,89) | 2,95 (0,89) |
| Important that parties have candidates of the same social class as me | 2,97 (0,90) | 2,91 (0,84) | 3,16 (0,78) | 2,92 (0,87) |
| Needed as Leaders... Workers | 4,79 (2,55) | 6,35 (2,98) | 6,79 (2,76) | 5,97 (2,89) |
| Needed as Leaders... Peasants | 4,78 (2,51) | 6,19 (2,97) | 6,82 (2,67) | 5,89 (2,86) |

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Class Consciousness of Political Interest Variables^a

| | Social Class | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| | <i>Upper</i> | <i>Working</i> | <i>Farmer</i> |
| Average Class Consciousness Score | | | |
| With “Sejm should reflect...” | 4.87 | 4.55 | 4.83 |
| Without “Sejm should reflect” | 5.83 | 5.06 | 5.41 |
| | <u>Assumed Class-Interest Answer</u> | | |
| Sejm should reflect... “How important that composition of Sejm reflects composition of society according to proportions of social classes? “ | From Very Important (1) to Very Unimportant (4) Mean = 1.95 St. Dev. = 0.85 | From Very Important (4) to Very Unimportant (1) Mean = 3.03 St. Dev. = 0.77 | From Very Important (4) to Very Unimportant (1) Mean = 3.10 St. Dev. = 0.71 |
| Important that parties have candidates of the same social class as me “How important is it that party you want to vote for has candidates to Sejm who are from your social class?” | From Very Important (4) to Very Unimportant (1) Mean = 3.01 St. Dev. = 0.88 | From Very Important (4) to Very Unimportant (1) Mean = 2.93 St. Dev. = 0.84 | From Very Important (4) to Very Unimportant (1) Mean = 3.15 St. Dev. = 0.79 |
| Needed as Leaders... Workers “How much needed as leaders?” | From 1 = most needed to 11 = least needed Mean = 7.26 St. Dev. = 2.41 | From 11 = most needed to 1 = least needed Mean = 6.39 St. Dev. = 2.90 | From 9 = most needed to 1 = least needed Mean = 6.40 St. Dev. = 2.38 |
| Needed as Leaders... Peasants “How much needed as leaders?” | From 1 = most needed to 11 = least needed Mean = 7.23 St. Dev. = 2.35 | From 9 = most needed to 1 = least needed Mean = 5.86 St. Dev. = 2.53 | From 11 = most needed to 1 = least needed Mean = 6.68 St. Dev. = 2.79 |

^a The higher the score, the more acute the consciousness.

Table 3. Logistic Regression of Political Interest Variables on Selected Variables

| | Sejm should reflect... | | | Important that parties have candidates of the same social class as me | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-------|--------|---|-------|--------|
| | b | S.E. | Exp(B) | b | S.E. | Exp(B) |
| Upper Class | 0.110 | 0.141 | 1.116 | 0.280 | 0.210 | 1.323 |
| Working Class | -0.029 | 0.104 | 0.971 | 0.204 | 0.177 | 1.226 |
| Farmers | -0.125 | 0.161 | 0.883 | 0.734** | 0.239 | 2.083 |
| Education: < H.S. | -0.045 | 0.102 | 0.956 | -0.300 | 0.166 | 0.741 |
| Education: > H.S. | -0.021 | 0.128 | 0.979 | 0.061 | 0.197 | 1.063 |
| Urban =1 | 0.035 | 0.091 | 1.036 | -0.052 | 0.147 | 0.949 |
| Interest in Politics: High | 0.495*** | 0.112 | 1.640 | 0.047 | 0.159 | 1.049 |
| Constant | -1.048*** | 0.109 | 0.351 | -1.141*** | 0.179 | 0.320 |
| Log Likelihood | 3783.306 | | | 1470.260 | | |
| Chi ² | 25.329** | | | 14.436* | | |
| Cox and Snell R ² | 0.01 | | | 0.01 | | |
| N | 3323 | | | 1336 | | |

*** p<0.001 ** p<0.01 *p<0.05 †p<=0.10

Table 4. OLS Regression of Political Interest Variables on Selected Independent Variables

| | Needed as Leaders... | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|------|-------|----------|------|-------|
| | Workers | | | Peasants | | |
| | b | S.E. | B | b | S.E. | B |
| Upper Class | -0.47*** | 0.17 | -0.05 | -0.44*** | 0.17 | -0.05 |
| Working Class | 0.31** | 0.13 | 0.05 | 0.23** | 0.12 | 0.04 |
| Farmers | 0.51** | 0.19 | 0.05 | 0.54** | 0.19 | 0.06 |
| Education | -0.50** | 0.08 | -0.13 | -0.42*** | 0.08 | -0.11 |
| Urban vs. Rural | -0.39*** | 0.11 | -0.06 | -0.56*** | 0.11 | -0.09 |
| Interest in Politics | 0.15*** | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.18*** | 0.05 | 0.06 |
| Constant | 6.40*** | 0.27 | | 6.22*** | 0.27 | |
| R ² | 0.06 | | | 0.06 | | |
| N | 3401 | | | 3405 | | |

*** p<0.001 ** p<0.01 *p<0.05 †p<=0.10

Table 5. Correlation Matrix: Class Consciousness of Political Interests Variables

| | Sejm should reflect... | Important that parties... | Needed... Workers | Needed... Peasants |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Sejm should reflect... | -- | | | |
| Important that parties... | 0.06* | -- | | |
| Needed... Workers | 0.01 | 0.01 | -- | |
| Needed... Peasants | -0.02 | 0.02 | 0.89** | -- |

** p<0.01 *p<0.05

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Endnote

1. A note on the possible effects of question ordering: In the beginning of the survey interview, respondents are first asked if they plan to vote in the next election (which, in the minds of the respondents, was known to be for October 2005) and then for which party for which they plan to vote. Afterwards are questions relating to descriptive representation: first, they are asked to compare parties on the perceived level of descriptive representation. Then they are asked about the importance that their preferred party has candidates who are descriptive representatives. After is the item of descriptive representation as an ideal. The questions about leadership appear much later (in the middle of the interview). Thus, respondents have been asked about class in the beginning, and respondents thought about their class position when asked about parties and leadership.