



How social class can affect one's attitudes towards abortion: The case of the United States

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Purpose of Research

This research explains the relationship between social class and opinions about abortion through the use of the 2010 and 2018 General Social Surveys (GSS), both of which were conducted in the United States. Based on some known research about the subjects, these three hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1: People in higher social classes will be more supportive of abortions than people in lower social classes.

Hypothesis 2: This relationship will not change when controlled for religious fundamentalism.

Hypothesis 3: Political views will determine opinions about abortions, similar to social class.

To better explain the relationship between social class and opinions about abortion, the control variables of level of religious fundamentalism and self-identified political views are used. It should be noted that opinions about abortion were split based on five of the reasons it would be obtained: any reason, a strong chance of fetal defect, the mother's health being seriously endangered, being unable to afford more children, and the pregnancy being a result of rape.



(B11) abany ABORTION IF WOMAN WANTS FOR ANY REASON * class SUBJECTIVE CLASS IDENTIFICATION * Fund HOW FUNDAMENTALIST IS R CURRENTLY Crosstabulation, GSS 2010

		class SUBJECTIVE CLASS IDENTIFICATION				Total
		1 LOWER CLASS	2 WORKING CLASS	3 MIDDLE CLASS	4 UPPER CLASS	
Fundamentalist Abortion if woman wants for any reason	1 Count	2	47	36	51	136
	% within CLASS	21.9%	49.8%	33.9%	0.0%	25.4%
	2 Count	25	116	71	2	214
	% within CLASS	78.1%	71.2%	67.0%	100.0%	70.6%
Total	Count	27	163	107	53	350
	% within CLASS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(C21) ABANY Abortion if woman wants for any reason * CLASS Subjective class identification * POLVIEWS Think of self as liberal or conservative Crosstabulation, GSS 2018

		CLASS Subjective class identification				Total
		1 LOWER CLASS	2 WORKING CLASS	3 MIDDLE CLASS	4 UPPER CLASS	
Extremely Liberal	1 Count	1	29	21	2	53
	% within CLASS	14.3%	60.0%	41.8%	16.7%	7.0%
	2 Count	4	2	2	1	9
	% within CLASS	80.7%	19.0%	16.4%	33.3%	20.0%
Total	Count	5	31	23	3	62
	% within CLASS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(A11) abany ABORTION IF WOMAN WANTS FOR ANY REASON * class SUBJECTIVE CLASS IDENTIFICATION Crosstabulation, GSS 2010

		class SUBJECTIVE CLASS IDENTIFICATION				Total
		1 LOWER CLASS	2 WORKING CLASS	3 MIDDLE CLASS	4 UPPER CLASS	
Abortion if woman wants for any reason	1 Count	32	246	243	13	534
	% within CLASS	35.6%	40.7%	48.8%	43.3%	43.7%
	2 Count	58	359	255	17	689
	% within CLASS	64.4%	59.3%	51.2%	56.7%	56.3%
Total	Count	90	605	498	30	1223
	% within CLASS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(B21) ABANY Abortion if woman wants for any reason * CLASS Subjective class identification * FUND How fundamentalist is R currently Crosstabulation, GSS 2018

		CLASS Subjective class identification				Total
		1 LOWER CLASS	2 WORKING CLASS	3 MIDDLE CLASS	4 UPPER CLASS	
Fundamentalist Abortion if woman wants for any reason	1 Count	11	32	42	2	87
	% within CLASS	31.4%	29.4%	32.3%	18.2%	30.3%
	2 Count	24	125	88	9	246
	% within CLASS	68.6%	70.6%	67.7%	81.8%	69.7%
Total	Count	35	157	130	11	333
	% within CLASS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(A22) ABDEFECT Strong chance of serious defect * CLASS Subjective class identification Crosstabulation, GSS 2018

		CLASS Subjective class identification				Total
		1 LOWER CLASS	2 WORKING CLASS	3 MIDDLE CLASS	4 UPPER CLASS	
Abdefect Strong chance of serious defect	1 Count	95	511	613	42	1161
	% within CLASS	78.5%	75.5%	79.7%	78.2%	77.7%
	2 Count	26	166	131	11	334
	% within CLASS	21.5%	24.5%	20.3%	20.8%	22.3%
Total	Count	121	677	744	53	1495
	% within CLASS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(A21) ABANY Abortion if woman wants for any reason * CLASS Subjective class identification Crosstabulation, GSS 2018

		CLASS Subjective class identification				Total
		1 LOWER CLASS	2 WORKING CLASS	3 MIDDLE CLASS	4 UPPER CLASS	
Abany Abortion if woman wants for any reason	1 Count	48	332	350	31	761
	% within CLASS	39.7%	48.5%	53.4%	57.4%	50.2%
	2 Count	73	353	306	23	755
	% within CLASS	60.3%	51.5%	46.6%	42.6%	49.8%
Total	Count	121	685	656	54	1516
	% within CLASS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(A25) ABRAPE Pregnant as result of rape * CLASS Subjective class identification Crosstabulation, GSS 2018

		CLASS Subjective class identification				Total
		1 LOWER CLASS	2 WORKING CLASS	3 MIDDLE CLASS	4 UPPER CLASS	
Abrape Pregnant as result of rape	1 Count	84	540	522	45	1191
	% within CLASS	72.4%	79.3%	80.9%	86.5%	79.7%
	2 Count	32	141	123	7	303
	% within CLASS	27.6%	20.7%	19.1%	13.5%	20.3%
Total	Count	116	681	645	52	1494
	% within CLASS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(A23) ABHLTH Woman's health seriously endangered * CLASS Subjective class identification Crosstabulation, GSS 2018

		CLASS Subjective class identification				Total
		1 LOWER CLASS	2 WORKING CLASS	3 MIDDLE CLASS	4 UPPER CLASS	
Abhlth Woman's health seriously endangered	1 Count	105	602	601	52	1360
	% within CLASS	87.5%	88.8%	91.3%	96.3%	90.1%
	2 Count	15	76	57	2	150
	% within CLASS	12.5%	11.2%	8.7%	3.7%	9.9%
Total	Count	120	678	658	54	1510
	% within CLASS	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Discussion

The results were considered to be due to differences in community values. Specifically, people who live in less wealthy areas, people in religions with a high level of fundamentalism, and people with politically conservative views are more likely to see abortions as a moral challenge and are more likely to oppose abortions. Likewise, people who live in more wealthy areas, people in religions that are moderate or liberal, and people with politically liberal views are more likely to see abortions as personal choices and are more likely to support abortions. People may be more likely to support abortions obtained due to a strong chance of a serious defect, the mother's health being seriously endangered, or the pregnancy being a result of rape because it seems to be understood that the mother's life would be more difficult or possibly end if she did not obtain an abortion in such cases.

This research shows that social class can affect a person's opinions about abortions, but other factors, such as the reason for obtaining an abortion, fundamentalism of religion, and self-identified political views, can also affect how people support an abortion. Although, some other factors related to opinions on abortions, such as sex, age, race, generation, and type of religion observed, were left out of this research and are open for consideration in the future.

This research also shows that the United States is divided based on cultural and social issues, but not as divided as sometimes claimed. This fact of common ground is true even when considering opinions about abortions. Still, ideological differences and social inequalities divide the American public to a considerable degree. The master statuses of people, such as social class, religion, and political orientation, matter when considering what people think about certain social issues.