

Is there a class issue at LSE?: Episode 2

Following from yesterday's blog, this week at Researching Sociology @ LSE, we will be discussing the **LSE's Social Mobility Society's** panel discussion, 'Is there a class issue at LSE?', which involved student and staff speakers.

This blog will discuss Professor Mike Savage's views on the matter. **To take the Great British Class Survey quiz, [click here](#).**



For guidance, this panel discussion centred around 3 central questions, which were as follows:

- *What does class mean to you?*
- *What does social mobility mean to you?*
- *Is there a class issue at LSE?*

Mike Savage:

'Class is everywhere; it is easier to say what it *isn't*. It is important to understand that class is not just about money, although this is a crucial part of it. Another element of social class outside of economic capital – the property of your house, household income – is an individual's social networks, the friendship patterns they have that are affected by economics. In the Great British Class Survey, we considered these, income, savings, friendship groups, but also cultural capital; the types of interests and activities people engaged in. The working class and the middle class has been broken down. It is much more fuzzy now. There is now an important growth of an elite class; they have an average income of, after tax, £89,000. They tend to have wide social networks of high status people. There were seven types of class in our survey; Lisa McKenzie discussed the precariat, who have little and insecure economic resources. The class structure is moving apart. In the wake of Brexit and now Donald Trump, we need to discuss this popular feeling against the elite.

Social mobility can be defined in lots of different ways; it is different depending on where you begin in the class structure. In terms of long range mobility, it is particularly difficult from the precariat to the elite. There is a lot of mobility in the middle, but from the bottom to the top, this is difficult.

I've been at the LSE for four years now, and I've been at the universities of York, Manchester, Central Lancaster, and I've worked in America too. It's fair to say that LSE is very much characterised by economic capital, especially at master's level. This itself has cultural aspects. We mustn't forget the beliefs that this university was founded upon, despite it being an intense space. It was founded in 1895 on socialist beliefs, it's aim being to help poorer groups. As the Great

British Class Survey researched, the class issue at LSE has economic elements in terms of wealth, cultural capital elements, and social capital elements. Without addressing these, its culture cannot be changed.'

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