

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Bakalářská práce

The Portrayal of Social Class in The British Press

Helena Kožnarová

Plzeň 2013

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

Fakulta filozofická

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Studijní program Filologie

Studijní obor Cizí jazyky pro komerční praxi

Kombinace angličtina – francouzština

Bakalářská práce

The Portrayal of Social Class in The British Press

Helena Kožnarová

Vedoucí práce:

PhDr. Alice Tihelková Ph.D.

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Fakulta filozofická Západočeské univerzity v Plzni

Plzeň 2013

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Plzeň, duben 2013

.....

„Tímto bych chtěla poděkovat paní PhDr. Alici Tihelkové, Ph.D. za velkou laskavost a vstřícnost v průběhu zpracování bakalářské práce, za poskytnutí vlastních materiálů, věcných připomínek a cenných rad a za věnovaný čas.“

Table of Content

1. Introduction	1
2. Definition of Class	2
3. Class Division in Britain	3
3.1. Upper Class	4
3.2. Middle Class	7
3.3. Working Class.....	9
4. Classes as viewed by The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph.....	13
4.1. Upper Class	13
4.2. Middle Class	18
4.3. Working class	23
5. Conclusion	32
6. Endnotes.....	34
7. Bibliography	39
8. Abstract.....	48
9. Resumé.....	49
10. Appendices	50

1. Introduction

The bachelor thesis deals with social classes in Britain, i.e. the upper, middle and working class, and their portrayal in the British press. Great Britain has always been a divided society and class has been considered as one of the most important and powerful factors, which has affected all aspects of life of British citizens.

This topic was selected due to my interest in classes and differences between them, as well as in the current problems caused or influenced by the class division, which are more serious in the contemporary Britain than they were in the previous century.

The thesis consists of three main chapters. The first introductory chapter is devoted to the three types of definition of class. The second chapter provides a brief overview of different models of the arrangement of British society across centuries. The same chapter serves as a separate description of each class through historical aspect, habits, housing, education, accent, leisure activities, dress code or eating habits etc. Finally, the third chapter is devoted to the analysis of the coverage of the class issue by articles published by *The Guardian*, as a left-wing newspaper, and by *The Daily Telegraph*, as a right-wing and more conservative periodical. Each class is analyzed separately again.

The thesis is based on a number of monographs, written by historians and social researchers such as David Cannadine, Ferdinand Mount or Anthony Sampson, and on the electronic versions of the articles of the newspaper mentioned above.

2. Definition of Class

It is important to state that there does not exist only one accurate definition of class. The definition has been changed over time and it depends on the opinion of each individual sociologist. Therefore, three examples of possible definitions are presented below.

Generally, a class is a group of individuals which shares the same characteristics like wealth, income, occupation or education. On the contrary Karl Marx, one of the theoreticians of class, understood class as a collective [and also unified] aggregate of people with common history and common interest. In addition Marx divided society into two classes, class of bourgeoisie and class of proletariat, closed in permanent struggle. [1, 2]

The well known Czech sociologist Jan Keller describes class as “a category of division of society in which people belong to some class according to their offer to the market - it is capital, labour and land. Their income is made by this market and their social position or prestige is determined by this wage”. [3]

A similar concept of class is provided by the authoritative sociological publication *Contemporary British Society* by authors Nicholas Abercrombie and Alan Warde. [4]

3. Class Division in Britain

From the Middle Ages until today, in Britain there have coexisted three different models of the arrangement of society. The oldest one was hierarchical model, which described society as a “ladder” with many levels, ranks or stations where everybody had and also understood its own place, from the monarch on the top to the humblest individuals at the bottom. This model of stratification was supported by clergy, since they believed it had been God who had made this order in society and had allocated to people their place in it. Although hierarchy was associated with monarchy, clergy or aristocrats, the order was accepted by ordinary people. [5]

The second model of dividing society people was three-layered/triadic model with upper, middle and working class that came into being as a result of Industrial Revolution. “The Agricultural and Industrial Revolution brought significant changes in the rural and the urban economy, in productive processes, in occupational structure and in the basic relationship between numbers of people and national resources and massive growth of population” [6]. Moreover, these transformations created a new class in society – working class with manual workers in new industrious areas and reinforced impact of middle class. [7]

Opponents of triadic model claimed that there was not any middle class, that in British society existed only dichotomous model of social division consisting of two groups or nations like upper class and lower class, rich and poor, “us” and “them” or bourgeoisie and proletariat etc. which split into two hostile camps. Benjamin Disraeli, the favourite Prime minister of Queen Victoria, introduced the idea of the so-called Two Nations in his novel *Sibyl*, in which he described rich and poor as ignorant class without sympathy to each other. [8]

However, in contemporary Britain the most important and also the most resonant way of social division is triadic model, because hierarchy during Industrial Revolution entered into period of gradual decrease in dominance and power in the state and finally lost the rest of importance by the end of British Empire, dichotomous model did not correspond with real situation in society, because middle class were increasingly wealthy and powerful, too. When Margaret Thatcher was Prime minister, middle class has been greatly supported and considered as a crucial part of British economy. People in today`s Britain look at themselves especially as belonging to the working class or middle class. Furthermore, triadic model is used by media, by politicians or in culture. This is why this approach is also used in this work. [9]

3.1. Upper Class

In the past, upper class was associated with, monarch and royal family, nobility like dukes, baronets or knights, clergy and scholars. However, membership in upper class has changed, because in recent years, groups of wealthy people, for example bankers, owners of big, international companies but also pop stars, actors or sportsmen, have been considered as upper class due to their property, influence, glory. Their wealth and social position are inherited from generation to generation. A small number of the most powerful owners posses more than one third of national`s wealth. [10]

They are intensely focused on success and high-profile life and being upwardly mobile, everything they do is expected to be good or successful. Furthermore, a typical feature of upper-class individuals is that they make use of the services of others, often hiring staff to take care of their various needs. Life of traditional upper class was based on convention, order, stability and constant values, while for the modern Uppers changes are very important, they exchange jobs, companies or

houses, since this approach helps them to make their life richer thanks to new experience. They need to broad their horizons materially, culturally, spiritually. One way how it could be realized is travelling, the main aim is to visit many countries, not only in Europe or in the United States, but the most remote states, too. All these changes and other plans about housing, education, occupation are collected in "life project". It could be said that there is difference between traditional and today`s upper class identity. A traditional member of this class started career at the bottom, for example by setting up some company, worked hard and then rose to honours late inherited by their descendants across generations, but today in some cases it is possible to be wealthy in a short time, e.g. "during the Telecoms bubble of the 1990s when successful operators accumulated their fortune overnight" [11]. [12]

Typical upper class member study at independent day school or private school as Eton or Harrow and further in Oxford or Cambridge. [13] The first-class education is a starting step in their upward careers as judges, politicians, army, as directors of banks and owners of newspaper or television. Not merely private schooling, they have their own private doctors and clinics as well. In their leisure time they prefer reading books, horse riding, hunting, fishing, playing football, cricket or golf with the most modern and high-tech equipment and clothes available on the market, sometimes the special pitch is possessed. In the past leisure time was originally preserved of the upper class, because only they had time and money. [14] Eating in restaurants, buying organic food is their daily routine. [15]

It is said that dress code of upper class is still different from lower class one although in present rules of dressing are declining as snobbish. Its members wear suits, hats, toppers, for young men jeans or corduroys, tweed jacket and polo shirt are typical, for women especially suits and hats. However, in the past a cloth cap is associated not only with upper class men but also is worn by working class members. [16]

The British upper class is connected with protection of landscape. They do not agree with changing of structure of landscape by using it for farms or villages, especially for council housing, the main objective is to make the landscape conserved without intervention. They live in stately homes, country houses or old cottages equipped by antique furniture, mostly of Victorian type, there can be found lots of portraits of family members. Their large gardens are considered as a proof of living in harmony with nature. Roses, geraniums and other varieties of flowers of light colour along with wild flowers, shrubs and long grass should create a natural impression. [17]

There is one striking thing about upper class housing in Britain, dwellings called “gated community”. It is an estate where houses with their own gardens and surroundings as parkland, river or lake are separated by wall from rest of the world. The electric gates and the roads around are guarded by security men. The reason is simple, upper class members are afraid of lower classes and criminality. [18] Many of them think about lower classes, especially about working class, that “the lower classes are better neither seen or heard, that the best service that they can render to their social superiors is to remain as nearly invisible as possible” [19].

One of the oldest, but in contemporary society vanished feature of upper class was speech and accent, which was affected and more sophisticated, words like “lavatory paper” instead of “toilet paper” or “spectacles” instead of “glasses” were often used. Each noble family had its own linguistic code and syntax. A posh accent was an important symbol of upper class, since it was widely believed that it sounded more attractive and educated. [20] BBC accent is evaluated as posh and today is used only by sport’s commentators in tennis or cricket or in some art programmes. [21]

In contemporary Britain, the group of upper class members which coexists with the old aristocracy was first called Super Class by Andrew

Adonis in 1997 or by British press as The City Fat Cats that included the most successful and highly paid people in private sector - like managers, brokers and corporate directors etc. [22, 23] Unlike the old aristocracy, they succeeded and become wealthy and powerful through their abilities, hard – working and the advantages of opening up of world trade and making international business more easier due to reducing restriction and under treaties of the European Union; super class members are well – educated at the top private schools and universities, prefer living separately in big cities in luxury mansions or new – built stately homes in gated communities - for example in the South of England, owned property and privileges enables them to enjoy the best health service, leisure activities and holidays in remote exotic countries, moreover the intermarriages between them are very common. [24]

A small part of upper class including owners of British newspaper is called media class. It is widely believed that its members are highly paid, respected by politicians and sometimes taken more seriously than politicians. Intermarriage among its members is considered as a norm. [25]

3. 2. Middle Class

British middle class consists of four groups: the higher professionals as doctors, lawyers, architects or accountants, the salaried professionals – teachers or civil servants, the white – dollar workers who work in office daily from nine to five hours and finally the self – employed people, for example shopkeepers, who are responsible for their own work. It is possible to divide it simply into upper middle class and lower middle class. Among lower middle class – clerks, typists as well as petite bourgeoisie are included. [26]

Firstly, in 19th century middle class started to be more and more important and wealthy part of society as a result of changes in economy,

production and also occupational relationship after the Industrial Revolution. Middle class members were described as intelligent, well educated, independent and respectable population. Middle class was an engine of industry, wealth and prosperity of the nation, group of people situating between upper and working class capable to narrow the gap among them. Thanks to the growing power, by the Great Reform Act in 1832, this class got the right to vote and affect policy. [27]

Then, the second period of growing dominance of middle class was during Thatcher`s government. She admired and promoted middle class, since she was born into middle class family; additionally, her father owned grocery, so she knew the world of successful and prosperous business which was so close to her. She characterised middle class through attributes called Victorian values like responsibility, hard-work or self-reliance and she believed that they were the most crucial segment in creating wealth of the nation. [28]

Middle class members generally attend a comprehensive school. However, wealthier sections of the middle class tend to have their children educated in public schools if it is affordable. Afterwards, they continue at university. As regards their dressing habits, these people will often be seen wearing clothers of brands such as Mark & Spencer, Next, The Gap, or Debenhams.

As far as housing is concerned, middle class member mostly live in detached, semi-detached or terraced house with furniture of modern design and often wood, sofas, colourful carpets and reproduction of famous painters of 20th century like Picasso or Warhol. The house is surrounded by smaller garden or yard. Unlike upper class, middle class gardens are more colourful, among popular flowers are begonias or gladiolus. If they can afford the alarm, they are willing to buy it, so that the danger of being burgled has been decreased. Although living suburbs is preferred by lower middle class, because they can decide where/how to live, in the past times, this kind of housing was criticised by intellectuals

as a vulgar and polluting countryside with bad living conditions, low quality of buildings, really nothing to be proud of. [29, 30]

Leisure time is spent by reading books and newspaper, listening to classical or modern music, playing musical instrument or watching football matches. It is also known that they are willing to spend their money for foreign holidays or other kinds of entertainment like going to the theatre or cinema. Rugby is thought as middle class game. [31]

As a result of full time job, they do not have a time to cook or they cannot cook just about a few dishes, so takeouts as fish and chips, kebabs are preferred. [32]

In contemporary British press, middle class often referred to as “coping class” or the “squeezed class”. The term “coping class” was first used in Irish press and then largely adopted also by British media. These people consider themselves to be respectable; in addition, they manage to live without help of the Welfare state. They are described by British press as “people who give nation its life force, who, with their ordinary decent human activities like spending, starting small businesses, having legitimate ambitions for their children, even dreaming their dreams” [33]. However, they feel themselves squeezed by policy of increasing taxation or growing prices. [34]

3.3. Working Class

In the past working class was the most numerous group of people in Britain, including skilled and unskilled manual workers or agricultural workers and people having low - paid jobs. Traditionally they were seen as people having no qualification, speaking by regional accent and members of trade unions. Husband earning money and his wife staying at home and looking after children was a common picture of working class family. [35]

Before the Industrial Revolution workers were considered as peaceful part of society with sense of discipline and solidarity. As a consequence of mass industrialization and working in the first factories, perception of working class has changed, since working conditions were horrible - they work under the unimaginable noise, smoke or smell of not only chemicals but also of human perspiration. Thus it was generally regarded that hard – working people under inhuman conditions had to be listless and demoralised without happy family life and belief. However, it is important to mention the fact that in 19th century the situation of the working class was gradually improving. Despite the material hardships, working class families were largely cohesive units, modest and hardworking, with genuine social interaction that seemed in contrast to the upper class pretense. They supported nonconformist churches, e.g. Dissenters, Methodists, Baptists or Congregationalists, because the Church of England was snobbish and too far away from ordinary everyday life. [36] Working class members, with contributions of churches mentioned above and volunteers, were capable to finance their own school to teach basic skills as literacy, numeracy, religion. Workers were members of organisations called “friendly societies“, where they could regularly save small amount of the wage, so that in case of illness, retirement or hard time they had some provisions. This system of education and organisations like friendly society were damaged by state interventions and the establishment of new state institutions that overthrown them, like Welfare State. [37]

Despite the growing importance of middle class during Thatcher`s cabinet, the highest crisis of working class took place in the same period. She thought about working class as a feckless, idle, narrow minded and failed part of society. [38] Thatcher promoted new service industry instead of heavy industry. In 1980s closing factories in big industrious areas led to a sharp rise of unemployment and also poverty, inequality, strikes, which sometimes caused drug addiction, increase in criminality. To be worker,

especially to be miner – it was considered as a tradition, because father and grandfather were also miners, so they were not prepared to change the job. [39]

Within 19th century, its members lived in slums with awful living conditions. Between the end of 19th and early 20th century these dwellings were replaced by council estates with improved standard like central heating or better accommodation on the one hand, but on the other hand, the architecture was not consulted with people, who lived in them and paid for it and system of allocating council flats on the basis of points and list of applicants caused problem like pregnancy of young girls or making of single-parent family to get the flat. Under Housing Act in 1980, council flats could be sold to their tenants, this right was used on a mass scale. [40, 41] Inside working class homes can be found coloured wallpaper and carpet, family photographs. They are often victims of burglary because they do not have enough money to buy an alarm. [42]

Generally in the last decades their living standard has been improved by higher wages, better education or consumer goods. A typical working class member of today is capable to buy own council or terraced house, car, refrigerator or washing machine. [43] They are educated at comprehensive or state school. Although recently, social occasions such as pub-going have been replaced with entertainment at home, usually watching TV – soap operas are preferred to news, sometimes visiting night clubs or football matches, going abroad started to be popular, too. [44] It is generally thought that working class people eat “junk” food like KFC, McDonalds, fish and chips containing low nutrition and causing children’s obesity, but today their eating habits are improving due to an impact of Jamie Oliver’s TV program. [45]

It is important to mention that working class members have traditionally been considered as the core voters of the Labour Party, that support has diminished over recent years, especially with the arrival of the New Labour project, believed to be too „Thatcherite“. A large number

of working class people feel unrepresented by any of the mainstream political parties and either cast „protest votes“ (to British National Party or UK Independence Party) or do not vote. The Labour Party is still voted by big working class areas, but it lost its voters in the south of England. [46]

In addition to the three classes mentioned, the existence of an “underclass“ can be observed, consisting of some sections of the immigrant population and long-term unemployed people, various welfare dependants and individuals with criminal behaviour. They have no job, no education and safe, familial surroundings and easily fall to criminality or drug abuse. For example “underclass teenage boys have nothing to fear because they have nothing to lose” [47]. The very poor urban cities including Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and some parts of London deal with problems like drug addiction or diseases. [48]

4. Classes as viewed by The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph

4.1. Upper Class

Both *The Daily Telegraph* and also *The Guardian* are interested in the behaviour of upper class people. It is widely believed that in Britain there has always existed a code of conduct in society. *The Daily Telegraph* article called “Non-judgmentalism – the new upper-class hypocrisy”, deals with “non – judgmentalism” as a new approach in the behaviour of some upper class members. The children of this part of upper class are taught to respect opinions, race, gender, sexuality, cultural practices or nationality of everyone else. They have to avoid using derogatory labels, for example for people considered as not hard-working or for criminals, but with exception of people of different political views, rural white working class and fundamentalist Christians. However, the motive why these groups are excluded is not mentioned in the article. The reason for this change in behaviour is explained by *The Daily Telegraph* as a loss of self – confidence in the rightness of the customs and values of the upper class and some words of judgment lose their power. However, non-judgmentalism is considered as a baffling and hypocritical feature of the upper class and it is not followed by large majority of people. Actually, people demand from a dominant minority so that they practise what they usually preach. In addition, people want to preserve a certain standard of behaviour. [49]

It could be said the hypocrisy is not the only negative characteristic of upper class behaviour. As *The Guardian* reports, upper class members often show worse behaviour than of the lower classes. Research presented in the article called “Upper class people are more likely to

behave selfishly, studies suggest” shows that upper class people tend to be more self-centred, less warm-hearted and self-sacrificing, less aware and without empathy to others. Moreover, more frequently they tell lies, cheat, ignore other people and do not stop for pedestrians while crossing. [50] Paul Piff, a social psychologist, and his colleagues at the Institute of Personality and Social Research stated ‘that self-interest may be a “more fundamental motive among society’s elite”, they say selfishness may be “a shared cultural norm”’ [51]. As the article also reports it was furthermore found that there exists a connection between social status and greed. Wealthy people are better resourced and they have enough money to pay expensive insurance or hire some professionals to perform services for them, for example lawyers. Thus they might not be so conscious of effects of their behaviour. [52]

On the one hand, as mentioned above, *The Guardian* describes upper class as egoistic and less altruistic social group, but on the other hand the same newspaper has published articles dealing with attacks against upper class members and their social position. Although upper class people are often ridiculed by the media and advertisers as being ridicule and less flattering, Mary Killen, author of the article called “When posh came to shove”, explain her opinions on the importance of the role played by upper class in the whole society. They have some beneficial qualities to offer. Thus, she is not in opposition to the upper class and as an example, she makes reference to Prince William, who cleaned lavatories during the gap year. In addition, to have a relationship with a Sloane Ranger means to have a friend, who “is a friend for life who would never drop you even if you served a term of imprisonment for shop lifting” [53]. The term Sloane Ranger was coined by Peter York and Ann Barr in the 1980s to define behaviour, habits and lifestyle of traditional old upper class who lived close to Sloane Square, an opulent part of London [54]. At the beginning of this article there is mentioned the case of Michael Martin, Speaker of the House of Commons, who fired his secretary for

being too „posh“. However, why should poshness in women be considered as negative? Mary Killen disagrees with this view; quite on the contrary, she describes such women as appropriately dressed, polite and efficient, with respect for table manners, careful not to make anyone feel embarrassed. [55]

On top of that, nowadays *The Guardian* observes the rising popularity of everything which is linked to “poshness” especially in the field of policy, fashion, television or food. During the 20th century the falls and rises of upper class could be noticed. After the Second World War, British upper class members were squeezed as a result of creation of a new, welfare-based society, politics and economy. Nevertheless, in the 1970s and 1980s upper class people started to appear in television, the fashion label Mulberry started to sell its clothes and the Sloane Rangers started to be recognizable. This return of upper class or “toffs” could be evaluated like a reaction against the government of the Labour Party, in particular when Britain was under the Thatcher`s cabinet because of the strong support of the middle class. The upper class has always been an important part of society impossible to be defused, since upper class people have owned the land and capital; in addition, because of its historical and traditional background. The reason of this return to upper class culture these days is that in contemporary Britain upper class is found as innocuous part of society famous for its natural protection good table manners and eating habits. Britons have a tendency to demand British products or hand – crafted products, wear fashion labels known as luxurious – for example Barbour, which sells clothes of hunting and fishing style, is today preferred especially by young generation, but in the past the hunting style was closely connected with traditional aristocracy. Aristocratic brands of food like Prince Charle`s Ducky Originals or Daylesford Organic are demanded by the general public. As *The Guardian* also stated in the Parliament can be observed the increase of

politicians coming from upper class background like the Prime Minister David Cameron or Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne. [56]

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the upper class is connected with the protection of landscape. In general, privileged people usually own land and they desire to save nature without effects of industrialisation and impacts of modern style of living, especially of using the land for housing. This is the reason why the leading environmentalists are of wealthy or aristocratic origin as *The Guardian* declares. For example Peter Melchett and Jonathan Porritt are educated at the famous Eton and they come from wealthy families; Baron Melchett is a head of Greenpeace and also director of policy for Soil Association. Other examples include Jonathan Porritt, the son of Lord Porritt, who heads Friends of the Earth or David de Rothschild, a member of a famous banking family. *The Guardian* defines the problem concerning wealthy environmentalists. They publish books and make some recommendations how to save the Planet; they declare that it would be better if we switched the central heating off and wore jumpers instead, if we travelled by bike instead of car and lived rather in smaller houses. However, they themselves live in luxury mansions and travel by the most prestigious cars. The author of the article interested in this topic, Brendan O'Neill, compares the real situation in the contemporary Britain with wealthy priests dressed in silk and gold moralizing about live in poverty as a way how to be virtuous. [57]

The Guardian in its article "Posh performing arts: is theatre becoming a club for upper-class actors?" of 10 February 2012, written by Theo Bosanquet, informs about the danger that acting in theatre will be available only for people coming from wealthy social backgrounds. It is observed that a large amount of rising actors/actresses, like Tom Hiddleston or Eddie Redmayne, are educated at the best (and often private) schools. Firstly, these schools provide a high standard of drama training or have access to theatre or studios, e.g., Eton. Secondly, it is important to consider the risks, because a great amount of money is

needed to pay training fees at the drama schools and then, at the beginning of career the wages are very low, so the initial deposit can be much higher than the first salaries. Of course, the reward of the best actors or actresses is significant, but it takes considerable hard-work and effort. This is why students of lower social backgrounds have a smaller chance to succeed and to manage the adverse financial situation. Some companies are trying to redress this situation by organising evening to find new talents. [58] The same opinions are published by *The Daily Telegraph*. In its article famous Julie Walters, BAFTA, Golden Globe and Emmy awards winning actress, explains her views on posh acting. As Walters says, she is proud of her working class origin and ads, that in this time, rising stars attend posh schools. Julia Walters is concerned about the future, since actors or actresses from working class “will be almost non-existent, because they will not be able to afford to train” [59]. In Britain, there is a lack of government funding for acting; by contrast, in the past it was easier for working class actors or actresses to succeed, since they could obtain government grants. At the end of this article *The Daily Telegraph* gives an example, that actors as Hugh Laurie or Damian Lewis were educated at Eton and Benedict Cumberbatch or Dan Stevens at Harrow. [60]

On the one hand, in the sphere of acting the position and wealth of upper class is advantageous, because the best schools and training is affordable. On the other hand, in the sphere of music, the situation is rather different. As *The Guardian* referred in the article called “An upper-class hero is something to be“, rock music of working class members is highly evaluated, because of poverty and life in the streets expected as well-known by them, which sounds authentic. “Working class bands are often credited (by journalists who have never been skint) with having “nothing to lose“, of being wild and untamed, where the industry is cautious and careerist” [61]. However, upper class music is negatively criticised. According to the author of this article, Tony Naylor, class

cannot be used as indicator of talent and they should get a chance to make the music. [62]

It is generally believed that class plays an important role in the sphere of sport – rugby, as *The Guardian* states. Rugby players and their fans are perceived as being posh. Nevertheless, in fact rugby players come from more modest social backgrounds, they were brought up on farms, in housing estates, their parents have done low-paid jobs. In other countries like France, New Zealand or Australia class in rugby is of no importance. On the contrary it is Premier League, the football competition, should be considered as sport of wealthy people, because nowadays it is affordable for the only well-off people. [63]

An article written by of *The Daily Telegraph* is interested in upper class table manners and its advantage for everybody. "Good table manners are about being aware of your fellow diners: not speaking with your mouth full, using the correct cutlery, not having your elbows on the table.... it all helps you to pace yourself" [64]. As the British Medical Journal confirmed, to keep upper class table manners means to be more healthy, because eating slowly and making conversation with people around give to the brain some time needed to register if we consume enough food or more. As the new study shows, eating quickly can cause problems of obesity. [65]

4.2. Middle Class

As mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis, in contemporary British press, middle class is very often defined as the coping class. This term was initially used by Eoghan Harris, a senator in the Irish Parliament, to describe respectable, hard – working middle class in Ireland, responsible for their own lives, pensions and offspring [66]. However, this term was subsequently adopted by *The Daily Telegraph*

and used in articles dealing with adverse economic and living conditions of middle class during recent years.

According to *The Daily Telegraph*, coping class members earn higher salaries, but they feel themselves less well-off due to a high rate of unemployment in the public sector and among white collar workers, women and elderly people; other causes for concern include rising interest rates, tuition fees, taxation, household costs, Government`s cuts and losing child benefits etc. For example *The Guardian* mentioned the fact that “When Labour came to power in 1997, people were left with 34,5% of their gross income after taxes, national insurance, mortgage or rent, now it is 32,6%” [67]. Moreover, *The Daily Telegraph* adds the information that the number of people paying the highest level of income tax has almost doubled from 2 million to 3, 7 million, since Labour came to power. [68, 69] They feel desperation by the end of month, because of empty bank account, so they hesitate about spending money and start to save money by looking for bargain or shopping at discounts (for example flying with Ryanair instead of British airways). [70] *The Daily Telegraph* published the results of the research of European Social Survey about satisfaction of life of EU population with findings that “in a table of 15 European countries, Britons were rated 9 in happiness and 10 in life satisfaction” [71].

The general feeling of insecurity is deteriorated by the rising rate of unemployment. A great amount of middle class people considered their occupation as stable part of their life, but today they are afraid of notification of losing the job when they enter into office. The government policy of increasing taxation and interests, the loss of various benefits and deep cuts make them worried about the future, and the whole situation is even worse when they are suddenly unemployed. In addition, middle class members are often obligated to pay their mortgages. According to the Commission on Living Standards there is a decline in middle class jobs as a result of new technologies and global competition for business.

In the next decade, in 2020, this commission predicts living standards of people of middle income will be on the same level as they were in 2001. Finally, the Commission made an appeal to government, to create opportunities for unemployed people to gain new skills or support students to learn maths and the English language until the age of 18 and to create new benefits for elderly such as the winter – fuel allowance or free TV licenses. [72]

Middle class or Coping class people are described by *The Daily Telegraph* as a Sandwich Generation facing the responsibility of looking after their children as well as their parents. In the article of 10 October 2010 called “Britain`s coping classes at breaking point”, Trevor Phillips – Chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission stated that “the number of pensioners and adults, who will need informal care from their families is expected to increase by 90% in next 30 years” [73]. A large number of adult are carers. In some cases if aged people live alone, they will have to sell their house to cover the costs of their care; unfortunately value of houses is falling. Sometimes middle class families are struggling, since they cannot afford services like housemaids or “nannies”, so in the case of having small children, grandparents are needed to look after the grandchildren, so that the adults could go to work. [74, 75]

The Daily Telegraph in the article of 10 October 2010 published the discussion between George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Conservative Party, and parents. Mothers in contemporary Britain are forced to face the decision concerning the choice between motherhood and their career. As a result, they feel annoyance, since they have to sacrifice motherhood and rather go to work with the sole motive of maintaining the living standards of their family. Some of them wanted to have more children, but there is no possibility to fulfil this desire taking into consideration the economic situation. In addition, it was widely believed the Conservative Party promised the protection of families. [76] “Survey made by Baby Centre parenting website has shown that a generation of women are

fearful about family finances that 45% will make a decision not to have as many children as they always wanted” [77].

The economic recession and hard financial situation of the contemporary coping class have also an impact on education. In Britain university tuition fees are expected be raised from £3290 to £10,000 [78]. *The Daily Telegraph* published an interview with 18 – year student Martha Hanks dealing with her decision not to go to university. She said she had wanted to go to university, but as a result of the reforms implemented by government she had decided to look for internships and use the opportunity to get the experience on her curriculum vitae. In her opinion one of the main reasons was to not get into debt as a graduate. In Britain about 40% of graduates are unemployed during one year after having finished their university studies. The Independent Commission on Fees and also the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service founded that “18 – years-olds who want places on degree courses are down overall by 1% against last year,” it corresponds to a fall of 15,000 applicants [79]. Because of lower fees or comparable with the domestic ones, European universities, for example in Belgium or Finland, and American Colleges are chosen by coping class students. It is thought that apprenticeships could be another solution, because it brings good prospect of employment. It is interesting that the hard financial problems mentioned above have an impact on education of middle class members, because in Britain there is no offer of bursaries for students from middle class; only for those from the working class. It is expected the number of people from disadvantaged families applying for university studies is approximately constant. [80]

A similar situation can be observed in private secondary education. *The Daily Telegraph* states that: “With the cost of independent schooling having risen 31% over 5 years, compared with rather more modest 15% rise in our salaries, the middle classes are being priced out of the private education market” [81]. In the identical article, there is explained the fear

that private schools will be affordable just only for children coming from wealthy background willing to pay high tuition fees. [82] Moreover this idea is supported by the article written by Alice Philipson and published in February 2013 by *The Daily Telegraph*. This article concerns the decision of wealthy families, mostly from Russia, Eastern Europe or Asia, to pay a great amount of money and housing to the best British tutors in order for their children to be well prepared for the Common Entrance exam, A – levels or GCSE exams and gain places at the best private schools like Eton or Harrow. The salaries of demanded tutors are increasing up to £80,000 – it could be compared with an average income £25,000. [83]

It is striking that on the one hand, mostly middle class look at themselves as not being capable to pay the high fees, on the other hand, chief executive of the Independent Schools Council - David Lyscom declared that middle class usually give preference to education of their children and rather cut other expenses. [84]

When the British government presented its project which concerns the building of 300 new affordable homes in central London as a support of middle and working class, because central London is considered as one of the most expensive areas in Britain, where there live either wealthy people or very poor people in social housing and the middle class are not able to pay for these homes. It is estimated that the plan would cost around £53 million. [85] Jonathan Glanz, Westminster city council's cabinet member for housing and property, declared that "the plan aimed to give hard-working people on average salaries "at least some chance" of living in central London" [86]. Also it was added that "We need to continue ensuring that we provide for a wide range of people and maintain mixed communities, including middle class people on middle – range salaries" [87].

Judith Woods, writer and journalist working for *The Daily Telegraph*, is interested especially in lifestyle of middle class. In her article called "Organic of Fair Trade? The Perils of being Middle Class"

she describes behaviour of contemporary middle class people and mention the book concerning life of middle class for illustration *The Middle Class Handbook*, *The Art of Being Middle Class* or more popular Helen Fielding`s *Bridget Jones`s Diary* or J.K. Rowling`s novel *The Casual Vacancy*. The last mentioned book is evaluated by middle class members as being very critical of about them. According to this article, middle class would like to be seen as humble and grateful part of society being in the middle between rich and poor people worried about causing offence. [88] “Here in the middle class we judge harshly and fully expect to be judged, favourably, in return, on our taste in literature, our choice of holiday destination” [89].

4.3. Working class

The Guardian is highly interested in the working class identity. In the article called “We are all working class know” the main question is - who is or should be a working class member in modern Britain. Generally, people doing low-paid or ordinary jobs or work for their employer are considered as working class. However, most of these people like bus drivers, waiters or shop assistants would disagree, because they would classify themselves as middle class members. The problem is included in the term – working - class itself. For many people this term has negative connotations, it could evoke ordinary life of factory workers living in mining towns, who lack intelligence or cultural experience. This opinion is often assumed by British politicians who tend to evaluate people on the basis of their job. For illustration, *The Guardian* used the comments of Lord Lang, chairman of the advisory committee on business appointments, published by *The Daily Telegraph*. According to Lord Lang “people in ordinary jobs are not sufficiently qualified to pass judgment on the employment of former ministers in the private sector” [90]. The author

of this article, Belinda Webb, looks at herself as a working class woman, because she grew up in working class background in social housing, does not own any capital or property and works for her employer; even though she has a professional job and is studying a PhD. In her opinion, many middle class people in Britain will be identified as working class as a result of government policy of deep cuts, closing libraries or various centres etc. [91]

Moreover, *The Guardian* adds the information that successful people coming from working class family are forced to forget and deny their humble origin as something irrelevant. In contemporary Britain the notion, that belonging to the working class is regarded as something unfortunate, persists. It is incorrectly believed that to escape working class means to escape origin, upbringing or lifestyle, but these people only desire to earn more money and obtain a better job. It could be thought that successful and wealthier people intending to own and retain their working class origin are only posturers, but there is evidence that in Britain there live those who are proud of their humble origin such as actress Julie Walters, who has been mentioned in the chapter dealing with the portrayal of the upper class in the press. In conclusion, it is impossible to disregard more than ten years of the childhood and the formative years of one's life. [92]

According to the State of the Nation report published in *The Guardian*, in today's British society about 60% of people define themselves as working class. It could be compared with the poll carried out in 2011 by Britain, when it was shown that 43% of people consider themselves a middle class and 24% as working class. In 2011, another research found that 66% of people regard themselves as the middle class. The difference among these researches and the report of the State of the Nation emerged as a result of the current policy of British government, which has economically squeezed the middle class through higher taxation and deep cuts. To sum up the increase of people looking

at themselves as working class nowadays has been caused by coping, middle class people who feel rather as working or “upper – working class” than middle class. They are afraid of paying bills, mortgage, tuition fees etc. by the end of each month. This fear was always connected with working class and their lower wages. [93]

In addition, also *The Daily Telegraph* published the research dealing with membership of people of working class. The result of the study almost corresponds with the result mentioned above published by *The Guardian*. About 60% of people in Britain look at themselves as belonging to the working class. It is referred to the articles of *The Guardian* that in contemporary Britain, to be working class means to be “fashionable”. According to the article called “Condemned to be working-class forever” this kind of obsession to be working class is explained as a nostalgia and inspiration by the culture of the working class, not by its political ideology. This tendency is for example observed in the fashion industry. [94]

It was supposed that one of the objections of the BBC was its educational role. *The Guardian* forced the discussion about its effect on the young generation. In recent period, BBC presented the film called “People Like Us” describing the life of working class people living in Manchester, in the Harpurhey district considered as deprived area. The inhabitants of this district criticize the film as being anti – working class, because the film stresses the negative aspects of working class culture as unhealthy lifestyle (alcoholism, smoking, obesity or promiscuity), that does not correspond with the reality. “People round here might not be the poshest but they`re not lacking in spirit“, and they defend themselves in a way that “We`re not all like this from Harpurhey before it comes on, just throwing that out there” [95]. They feel anxiety and shame. If the working class inhabitants of Manchester are presented in this way by BBC programme, how the young generation can think about them? [96]

In general, the position of the “white working class” has changed during fifty years. In 1950s and 1960s it was popular to be a member of working class and it was portrayed in films or music. In the 1970s, the situation has changed, formerly respected people fell into deprivation, lacking cultural experiences. For the more capable members of this class there was a possibility to join to middle class, people leaving behind were considered as part of underclass. [97]

As *The Guardian* mentioned, the white working class is discriminated due to their lifestyle, accent, eating habits, clothing style and postcodes, but it is not in connection with the race. “The report, Who Cares about the White Working Class?, disputes the claim that white working class communities have been directly losing out to migrants and minority ethnic groups” [98]. It should be remind that the real problem or the disadvantage does not concern the ethnic discrimination, it is the matter of class which started to be an issue discussed again in the Parliament after years of disregarding. Class or social division has always been a stable part of the British society across decades. The social and economic background is still highly regarded as a predictor of opportunities and future of one`s life. People and their social status are recognizable due to their allegiance to one of the classes. In addition, during decades, white working class has been disdained without cultural habits acceptable for all. [99]

The Guardian published the article dealing with the white working class as viewed by famous people. A head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission – Trevor Phillips “looks at the white working class and sees a racial minority client group in need of structured help of the social services industry” [100]. Frank Field – a conservative member of parliament “thinks that the defining characteristic of the white working class is that they are socially conservative and opposed to immigration” [101]. Moreover, the Labour deputy John Cruddas suggested they preferred building of the new council houses. Author of this article sums

up the topic by declaration that working class members are of better behaviour and habits then it is believed by politicians. [102]

The Daily Telegraph informs about new part of working class-about foreigners coming from countries like China, Poland, India, Brazilia and Filipinos. These people are used by British citizens to make a service for them in their houses. Even if they are successful, they are still expected to be a part of “new” working class. [103]

Both *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* point out the problems of secondary and further education. *The Daily Telegraph* published the results of a study made by the Organisation for Economic Co – operation and Development. This organisation tested secondary school children in the states across the world in 2009. It was found that “the poorest 25% of pupils perform worse than those in countries such as Australia, France, Spain and the United States” and “Britain was ranked 28th out of 34 nations based on the proportion of deprived children who exceed expectations in exams” [104]. According to OECD, abilities and individual skills of each person are the most important factor that has an impact on getting a good job with a higher income. However, in the countries like The United States and Great Britain, where the level of income inequality is very high, the income of parents and social background affect abilities, skills and finally the career of their children. The research also found that “31% of poor children across the world manage to exceed expectations at school for their social class, in Britain, the proportion falls to 25%” [105]. States as South Korea, Turkey or Portugal were ranked higher than Britain. Pupils are expected to live with support of state after they leave the school as a result of lack of jobs for them. [106]

Where can the problem be located? In the article of *The Daily Telegraph* called “Working-class pupils lose out because they are too polite” is mentioned that children coming from working class origin are taught to be more polite and courteous at school work hard and try to solve the problem alone without help, teacher as an authority is expected

to be respected. As a consequence, these children are shy and they are afraid of making the teacher angry when they ask for help. Moreover, they could be judged as less smart. On the contrary, middle class pupils are taught to ask for help when it is needed. The study shows that working class pupils often lag behind children brought up in wealthy families, they are also more likely to go on to the best universities than poorer pupils. [107]

The Guardian adds other information. Although some working class pupils are considered as bright, coming from families of comfortable and stable income, there is no possibility for them to attend the university. The reason is that they do not dispose of a large number of contacts. *The Guardian* stated that in Britain still exist barriers like income or lower social mobility based on: "it's not what you know, it's who you know", preventing working class smart children to go on university [108]. It was found that "4,500 suitably qualified state school pupils are failing to apply for top degree courses every year" [109]. Alain Milburn, who chairs The Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, made a programme called "Gifted and Talented" with the main aim to support disadvantaged and able pupils to succeed. Strengthening relations between low – attaining schools and universities or access programme at the top universities for disadvantaged and the best GCSE pupils are included in his plans. [110]

The Guardian and *The Daily Telegraph* consider white working class children as a separate disadvantaged group. *The Guardian*, in the article called "Comprehensive schools have failed the working class" and written by Ian Silvera, published the information that it is necessary to deal with white working class children in the same way as with ethnic minorities. Three years ago, Lord Mandelson, New Labour business secretary, declared that "top universities should lower their entry requirements for disadvantaged applicants" [111]. Nevertheless, according to the author of the article Ian Silvera, the recommendation of Lord Mandelson is neither the solution, nor the real problem. Actually, the

real problem should be defined through the system of secondary schooling, since there are about 30 or more pupils in each classroom and their teacher is not able to pay attention or control everybody, so the pupils do not learn as much as could be possible. In addition, the good and successful comprehensive schools are situated in the luxury areas, where the houses are expensive and they are not affordable for working class families, so the best independent schools are attended by about 12% of the well-off pupils. In the article, grammar schools are presented as a solution, because more than 60% of grammar school pupils passed the entry requirements to Oxford University, now it is estimated about 58%. Unfortunately, the grammar schools were closed due to separation of pupils at the early age. [112]

Also *The Daily Telegraph* published the article about the white working class that need to be treated as the ethnic minority by universities. On the basis of statistics, to be poor and white pupil is more disadvantageous than being a member of some ethnic minority. The number of white working class students at universities is falling. The New Labour solution was to consider this group of pupils, now performing worse than others, as a victim. However, the question is whether it is within the powers of the British government to solve this problem, since apart from lower income or poverty, the abilities are influenced by other factors like upbringing, lifestyle, relationship etc. How should the government deal with these determinants? The author of the article gives an example of solution: "to give everyone at 18 a special victim points card where the government calculates how disadvantaged they are in terms of sex, race, sexuality, class and any other protected characteristic, and that should count for 50% of their A-level score" [113]. [114]

In the article of *The Guardian*, of 26 October 2012 written by Patrick Wintour, is mentioned that it seems middle class voters tend to be more leftwing than working class, always estimated as core voters of the left. It is about 36% of middle class members in comparison with 28% of people

coming from working class background who look at themselves as leftwing voters. On the basis of a new YouGov poll, the key factors are overseas aid and immigration. Members of working class are in favour of less support for overseas aid and the immigration, sometimes they would rather prefer to stop all process of immigration, and also the overseas aid. Nevertheless, “middle class voters show 53% to 38% in favour of reducing welfare benefits for the unemployed, but working class voters came out 45% to 40% against the idea” [115]. These facts conclude that working class members still tend to vote for the Labour Party more often than for the Conservative Party, but the main reason is tradition than ideology. [116]

From the foundation of the Labour Party, Great Britain was often governed by Prime Ministers coming from humble backgrounds, for example Harold Wilson, John Major or other ministers like Alan Johnson, Aneurin Bevan, or Norman Tebbit as a deputy to Conservative Party. In contemporary Britain there is observed a decrease of politics of working class origin, as it is mentioned in the chapter above about upper class, policy started to be a sphere of wealthier people. As *The Guardian* stated, in 1979, about 40% of Labour politicians did manual and clerical work, in comparison with the year 2010, when it was estimated about 9%. Today, it is common for politicians to be a journalist or broadcaster. Policy is now considered as a profession requiring very good education, professional experience and time and money that could be invested, because of costs of travel and accommodation. Thus it is affordable mostly for rich people. However, people still believe that the Parliament would be better if it consists of wide range of people with various experiences. [117] In addition, as *The Daily Telegraph* informed, members of the Labour party declared that they would prefer if more working class members were elected into the Parliament, that in the past for miners or manual workers it was common to be a politician. [118]

The article of *The Daily Telegraph* called “PMQs sketch: Ed Miliband, working-class hero” deals with attack of Ed Miliband, the leader of the Labour Party, on the Prime Minister – David Cameron. In his opinion, David Cameron cannot understand to poverty and struggle, because of his own upper class upbringing and wealthy origin. Moreover, he claimed that the Conservative Party is not only the party of privileged people. On the contrary, Ed Miliband was born into working class family, in a Yorkshire mining area. Miliband had to study at Oxford polytechnic school, specializing as a plumber, plasterer and electrician and after school he worked as a television researcher, but today he is also considered as wealthy person. At the end of the article, Miliband even makes jokes about the Prime Minister. [119]

Unlike middle class grandparents, those from working class are observed to be a so-called sandwich generation as *The Guardian* informs. As a result of the higher rate of longevity of elderly parents and the strained economic conditions of their children, who cannot afford to pay nannies or au pairs, grandparents – especially grandmothers are forced to give up their full time jobs, start to provide a childcare and then they cope with the hard economic situation. In the case of working-class grandmothers, there is a high level of probability to become “a grandma” before 60th and even 50th birthday. *The Guardian* stated that “the disparity is most visible in the numbers of grandmothers under the age of 40; that category, accounting for about 4% of middle-class women in 2001, has effectively disappeared by 2007; for working-class women, however, the numbers doubled over the same period” [120]. About 60% of people doing professional job use some kind of childcare, which is compared with just only 6% of working-class families. One of the solutions could be to transform ordinary childcare into a respected profession. [121]

5. Conclusion

The thesis deals with the coverage of social classes in the British press, especially in *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*. As the research shows, Great Britain has a high level of social division, simultaneously, a low rate of social mobility. Moreover, class or social background still plays an extremely important part in the lives of British citizens. This current arrangement of British society causes problems in the sphere of economy, education, healthcare, employment etc.

Firstly, both left-wing *The Guardian* and right-wing *The Daily Telegraph* publish articles concerning the upper class. It could be said that *The Guardian* is much more interested in privileged people, than *The Daily Telegraph*. Among the popular topics could be counted the behaviour of upper class and their role or importance in the current society. On the one hand, upper class members are criticized as being too “posh” and self-centred, with enough money to plan or to do what they intend, but on the other hand, they are talented people, saving land, with healthy table manners. In addition, luxurious brands of clothes have started to be preferred by younger generation across all classes.

Secondly, *The Daily Telegraph* is highly interested in the difficult financial situation of the middle class, which is squeezed by high taxation and tuition fees, unemployment and losing child benefits, as well as concerned about the future and standards of living. In conclusion, many middle class people regard themselves as working class members. *The Guardian* just only comments the situation of squeezed middle class people and the interest of *The Daily Telegraph* in their problems.

Finally, *The Guardian* takes a vivid interest in the working class membership of working class and the way in which working class people are presented to the general public by media and by politicians. *The Daily Telegraph* explains the problems of working class members in the sphere

of secondary and further education. Both newspapers compare the position of the “white working class” with the immigrants in the society.

In conclusion, the result shows that in the case of *The Guardian*, there could be observed a “left-wing bias” to working class members, who are often described, due to lots of examples, as people that should be proud of their humble origin. In addition, *The Guardian* also defines the high rate of discrimination of working class citizens. However, it does not include the articles concerning criminality and antisocial behaviour of the working class or the underclass. Nevertheless, the political impact on the content of these newspapers – *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* is not so significant than it was expected.

6. Endnotes

1. CANNADINE, D. *Class in Britain*, p. 1 - 4
2. MOUNT, F. *Mind The Gap: The New Class Divide in Britain*, p. 115
3. KELLER, J. *Úvod do sociologie*, p. 18
4. ABERCROMBIE, N. and A. WARDE. *Contemporary British Society*, p.168 - 176
5. CANNADINE, op. cit., p. 5 - 189
6. Ibid., p. 59
7. Ibid., p. 59 – 60
8. MOUNT, op. cit., p. 115 – 116
9. CANNADINE, op. cit., p. 5 – 189
10. CHILDS, P. and M. STORRY. *British Cultural Identities*, p. 209
11. MOUNT, op. cit., p. 76
12. Ibid., p. 75 - 77
13. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 210
14. Ibid., p. 116
15. CARPENTER, L. Food and class: does what we eat reflect Britain's social divide?
16. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 192
17. MOUNT, op. cit., p. 15 – 43
18. Ibid., p. 86
19. Ibid., p.43
20. Ibid., p. 18-21
21. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 207, 248
22. Ibid., p. 209
23. SAMPSON, A. *Who Runs This Place?: The Anatomy of Britain in the 21st Century*, p. 333
24. Ibid., p. 333 – 338

25. Ibid., p. 234
26. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 212 – 214
27. CANNADINE, op. cit., p. 59 -60, 172 – 174
28. Ibid., p. 173
29. MOUNT, op. cit., p. 15 – 43
30. BEENY, S. A history of British homes
31. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 112
32. CARPENTER, op. cit.
33. HARRIS, A. The coping class is cast out. We need a stake in our country
34. Ibid.
35. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 217
36. MOUNT, op. cit., p. 167
37. Ibid., p. 186
38. CANNADINE, op. cit., p. 173 -175
39. MOUNT, op. cit., p. 240
40. Ibid., p. 275 – 276
41. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 221
42. MOUNT, op. cit., p. 15 – 43
43. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 222-223
44. ROUANET, H. LE ROUX, B. SAVAGE, M. AND WARDE, A. Class and Cultural Division in the UK
45. CARPENTER, op. cit.
46. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 233
47. MOUNT, op. cit., p. 94
48. CHILDS, STORRY, op. cit., p. 221
49. WEST, E. Non-judgmentalism – the new upper-class hypocrisy
50. SAMPLE, I. Upper class people are more likely to behave selfishly, studies suggest
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.

53. KILLEN, M. When posh came to shove
54. MOUN, op. cit., p. 42
55. KILLEN, op. cit.
56. BECKETT, A. Tory chic: the return of poshness
57. O'NEILL, B. Blue-blooded and green
58. BOSANQUET, T. Posh performing arts: is theatre becoming a club for upper – class actors?
59. HOUGH, A. Julie Walters warns of future where only 'posh' can afford to act
60. Ibid.
61. NAYLOR, T. An upper-class hero is something to be
62. Ibid.
63. MORTIMER, G. Why rugby still has to fight the class
64. DUCHESS OF HAMILTON, J. Secrets of the 'good manners' diet
65. Ibid.
66. WOODS, J. The Coping Classes - Part 1: Why do we all feel so damn poor?
67. WILLIAMS, Z. Myths of the coping class
68. WEAVER, M. Upper-class angst
69. WOODS, J. K recession: how are the Coping Classes faring now?
70. WOODS, op. cit.
71. Ibid.
72. ROSS, T. Middle-class households may be £800 a year worse off by the end of decade
73. ROSS, T. Britain's coping classes at breaking point
74. Ibid.
75. WOODS, J. The Coping Classes - woes at work
76. WOODS, J. The Coping Classes - the middle classes are under siege like never before
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.

79. STANFORD, P. The middle-class pupils giving university a pass
80. Ibid.
81. WEAVER, op. cit.
82. Ibid.
83. PHILIPSON, A. After school tutors priced out the grasp of middle class parents
84. WOODS, op. cit.
85. ROSS, T. New council homes planned 'for middle-class professionals'
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. WOODS, J. Organic or Fair Trade? The perils of being Middle Class
89. Ibid.
90. WEBB, B. We are all working-class now
91. Ibid.
92. ELLEN, B. You stay working class all your life
93. HINSLIFF, G. Britain's new working-class pride could be a bonus for Labour
94. O'NEILL, B. Condemned to be working-class forever
95. BRADY, F. BBC3's People Like Us isn't real life, it's pantomime poverty
96. Ibid.
97. ANTHONY, A. How Britain turned its back on the white working class
98. TRAVIS, A. Class blamed for bias against poor whites
99. Ibid.
100. DAVIES, D. The white working class mirror
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. WEST, E. Why foreigners are the new working class

104. PATON, G. Working-class children do worse at school in Britain than in Estonia, Hungary or Greece
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. PATON, G. Working-class pupils lose out because they are 'too polite'
108. NUNN, G. Young, gifted and working class
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. SILVERA, I. Comprehensive schools have failed the working class
112. Ibid.
113. WEST, E. Quotas for white working-class kids at university
114. Ibid.
115. WINTOUR, P. Middle-class voters 'more leftwing' than the working-class
116. Ibid.
117. SKELTON, D. Where have all the working-class leaders gone?
118. HODGES, D. Ed Miliband's brave new Labour meritocracy: more working-class MPs, fewer people like Ed Miliband
119. DEACON, M. PMQs sketch: Ed Miliband, working-class hero
120. BOWCOTT, O. Are grandchildren making the working class poorer?
121. Ibid.

7. Bibliography

Monograph

1. ABERCROMBIE, N. and A. WARDE. *Contemporary British Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000. ISBN 0-7456-2296-8
2. CANNADINE, David. *Class in Britain*. London: Penguin Books, 2000. ISBN 978-0-140-24954-5
3. CHILDS, P. and M. STORRY. *British Cultural Identities*. London: Routledge, 2002. ISBN 0-415-27860-0
4. KELLER, Jan. *Úvod do sociologie*. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství, 2005. ISBN 80-86429-39-3
5. MOUN, Ferdinand. *Mind The Gap: The New Class Divide in Britain*. London: Short Books, 2004. ISBN 1-904095-94-1
6. SAMPSON, Anthony. *Who Runs This Place?: The Anatomy of Britain in the 21st Century*. London: John Murray, 2004. ISBN 0-7195-65642

Electronic sources

7. ANTHONY, Andrew. How Britain turned its back on the white working class. *The Guardian* [online]. 02-03-2008 [retrieved 2013-04-06] Available from:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/mar/02/britishidentity.guardiancolumnists>
8. BECKETT, Andy. Tory chic: the return of poshness. *The Guardian* [online]. 16-12-2009 [retrieved 2013-03-26] Available from:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/dec/16/the-return-of-poshness>

9. BEENY, Sarah. A history of British homes. *BBC News* [online]. 16-02-2012 [retrieved 2013-01-16] Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-17048794>
10. BOSANQUET, Theo. Posh performing arts: is theatre becoming a club for upper – class actors?. *The Guardian* [online]. 10-02-2012 [retrieved 2013-03-28] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/theatreblog/2012/feb/10/posh-theatre-upper-class-actors?INTCMP=SRCH>
11. BOWCOTT, Owen. Are grandchildren making the working class poorer? *The Guardian* [online]. 22-06-2009 [retrieved 2013-04-11] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/search?q=Are+grandchildren+making+the+working+class+poorer%3F§ion=society>
12. BRADY, Fern. BBC3's People Like Us isn't real life, it's pantomime poverty. *The Guardian* [online]. 10-02-2013 [retrieved 2013-04-10] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/feb/10/bbc-people-like-us-poverty-reality?INTCMP=SRCH>
13. CARPENTER, Louise. Food and class: does what we eat reflect Britain's social divide?. *The Observer* [online]. 13-03-2011 [retrieved 2013-01-16] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2011/mar/13/food-class-social-divide-diet>
14. DAVIES, Daniel. The white working class mirror. *The Guardian* [online]. 29-11-2008 [retrieved 2013-04-10] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/nov/29/socialmobility?INTCMP=SRCH>

15. DEACON, Michael. PMQs sketch: Ed Miliband, working-class hero. *The Telegraph* [online]. 01-02-2013 [retrieved 2013-04-05] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9868413/PMQs-sketch-Ed-Miliband-working-class-hero.html>
16. DUCHESS OF HAMILTON, Jill. Secrets of the 'good manners' diet. *The Telegraph* [online]. 24-11-2008 [retrieved 2013-03-29] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/3511751/Secrets-of-the-good-manners-diet.html>
17. ELLEN, Barbara. You stay working class all your life. So be proud of it. *The Guardian* [online]. 26-02-2012 [retrieved 2013-04-07] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/feb/26/barbara-ellen-your-class-stays-with-you>
18. GUTHRIE, Jonathan. UK's 'coping classes' feel financial pinch. *Financial times* [online]. 28-02-2008 [retrieved 2013-01-20] Available from: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/54c0a656-e589-11dc-9334-0000779fd2ac.html#axzz2JpHILXah>
19. HARRIS, Anne. The coping class is cast out. We need a stake in our country. *The Independent* [online]. 12-02-2012 [retrieved 2013-01-20] Available from: <http://www.independent.ie/opinion/analysis/anne-harris-the-coping-class-is-cast-out-we-need-a-stake-in-our-country-3016986.html>
20. HILL, Amelia. Hobbies key to class, says study. *The Guardian* [online]. 26-01-2011 [retrieved 2013-01-26] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/jan/26/hobbies-british-class-survey>

21. HINSLIFF, Gaby. Britain's new working-class pride could be a bonus for Labour. *The Guardian* [online]. 13-01-2013 [retrieved 2013-04-07] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/13/britons-working-class-fear-tory-voters>
22. HODGES, Dan. Ed Miliband's brave new Labour meritocracy: more working-class MPs, fewer people like Ed Miliband. *The Telegraph* [online]. 18-07-2012 [retrieved 2013-04-05] Available from: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/danhodges/100171555/ed-milibands-brave-new-labour-meritocracy-is-obsequious-and-hypocritical/>
23. HOUGH, Andrew. Julie Walters warns of future where only 'posh' can afford to act. *The Telegraph*. [online] 03-09-2012 [retrieved 2013-03-28] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturenews/9515821/Julie-Walters-warns-of-future-where-only-posh-can-afford-to-act.html>
24. KILLEN, Mary. When posh came to shove. *The Guardian* [online]. 06-11-2001 [retrieved 2013-03-26] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/nov/06/gender.uk?INTCMP=SRCH>
25. MORTIMER, Gavin. Why rugby still has to fight the class war. *The Guardian* [online]. 25-11-2007 [retrieved 2013-03-29] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2007/nov/25/features.sport8>
26. NAYLOR, Toni. An upper-class hero is something to be. *The Guardian* [online]. 09-01-2008 [retrieved 2013-03-28] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/musicblog/2008/jan/09/anupperclassheroissomethi?INTCMP=SRCH>

27. NUNN, Gary. Young, gifted and working class. *The Guardian* [online]. 12-09-2009 [retrieved 2013-04-04] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/sep/12/young-gifted-working-class?INTCMP=SRCH>
28. O'NEILL, Brendan. Blue-blooded and green. *The Guardian* [online]. 01-11-2007 [retrieved 2013-03-27] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/nov/01/bluebloodedandgreen?INTCMP=SRCH>
29. O'NEILL, Brendan. Condemned to be working-class forever. *The Telegraph* [online]. 21-01-2013 [retrieved 2013-04-10] Available from: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/brendanoneill2/100199082/condemned-to-be-working-class-forever/>
30. PATON, Graham. Working-class children do worse at school in Britain than in Estonia, Hungary or Greece. *The Telegraph* [online]. 28-04-2012 [retrieved 2013-04-04] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/secondaryeducation/9232696/Working-class-children-do-worse-at-school-in-Britain-than-in-Estonia-Hungary-or-Greece.html>
31. PATON, Graeme. Working-class pupils lose out because they are 'too polite'. *The Telegraph* [online]. 20-08-2012 [retrieved 2013-04-04] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/9487174/Working-class-pupils-lose-out-because-they-are-too-polite.html>
32. PHILIPSON, Alice. After school tutors priced out the grasp of middle class parents. *The Telegraph* [online]. 03-02-2013 [retrieved. 2013-03-18] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/9845101/After-school-tutors-priced-out-the-grasp-of-middle-class-parents.html>

33. ROSS, Tim Britain's coping classes at breaking point. *The Telegraph* [online]. 10-10-2010 [retrieved 2013-03-16] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/8054403/Britains-coping-classes-at-breaking-point.html>
34. ROSS, Tim. Middle-class households may be £800 a year worse off by the end of decade. *The Telegraph* [online]. 30-10-2012 [retrieved 2013-03-15] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9644600/Middle-class-households-may-be-800-a-year-worse-off-by-the-end-of-decade.html>
35. ROSS, Tim. New council homes planned 'for middle-class professionals'. *The Telegraph* [online]. 30-10-2012 [retrieved 2013-03-16] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/council-spending/9644599/New-council-homes-planned-for-middle-class-professionals.html>
36. ROUANET, H. LE ROUX, B. SAVAGE, M. AND WARDE, A. Class and Cultural Division in the UK. *Sage journals* [online]. 03-12-2008 [retrieved 2013-01-03] Available from: <http://soc.sagepub.com/content/42/6/1049>
37. SAMPLE, Ian. Upper class people are more likely to behave selfishly, studies suggest. *The Guardian* [online]. 27-02-2012 [retrieved 2013-03-25] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2012/feb/27/upper-class-people-behave-selfishly>
38. SILVERA, Ian. Comprehensive schools have failed the working class. *The Guardian* [online]. 04-01-2013 [retrieved 2013-04-04] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/04/comprehensive-schools-failed-working-class>

39. SKELTON, David. Where have all the working-class leaders gone? *The Guardian* [online]. 29-12-2011 [retrieved 2013-4-05] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/dec/29/working-class-leaders-politicians>
40. STANFORD, Peter. The middle-class pupils giving university a pass. *The Telegraph* [online]. 10-08-2012 [retrieved 2013-03-18] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/9464357/The-middle-class-pupils-giving-university-a-pass.html>
41. TRAVIS, Alan. Class blamed for bias against poor whites. *The Guardian* [online]. 22-01-2009 [retrieved 2013-4-08] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/jan/22/class-bias-against-poor-whites?INTCMP=SRCH>
42. WALDEN, Brian. The class divide that grips Britain. *BBC News* [online]. 27-01-2007 [retrieved 2013-01-27] Available from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/6303181.stm
43. WEAVER, Matthew. Upper-class angst. *The Telegraph* [online]. 30-01-2008 [retrieved 2013-03-15] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/blog/2008/jan/30/upperclassangst?INTCMP=SRCH>
44. WEBB, Belinda. We are all working-class now. *The Guardian* [online]. 10-02-2011 [retrieved 2013-04-06] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/10/working-class-lord-lang-cuts>
45. WELLS, Steven. Why the upper-classes are different. *The Guardian* [online]. 24-02-2009 [retrieved 2013-01-14] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/blog/2009/feb/24/steven-wells-blog-posh-people-sport>

46. WEST, Ed. Why foreigners are the new working class. *The Telegraph* [online]. 12-08-2010 [retrieved 2013-04-10] Available from: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/edwest/100050448/why-foreigners-are-the-new-working-class/>

47. WEST, Ed. Non-judgmentalism – the new upper-class hypocrisy. *The Telegraph* [online]. 02-03-2012 [retrieved 2013-03-24] Available from: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/edwest/100140724/non-judgmentalism-%E2%80%93-the-new-upper-class-hypocrisy/>

48. WEST, Ed. Quotas for white working-class kids at university. *The Telegraph* [online]. 03-01-2013 [retrieved 2013-04-05] Available from: <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/edwest/100196524/quotas-for-white-working-class-kids-at-university/>

49. WILLIAMS, Zoe. Myths of the coping class. *The Guardian* [online]. 30-01-2008 [retrieved 2013-03-14] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/jan/30/comment.personalfinancenews>

50. WINTOUR, Patrick. Middle-class voters 'more leftwing' than the working-class. *The Guardian* [online]. 26-10-2012 [retrieved. 2013-04-05] Available from: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/oct/26/middle-class-leftwing-working-poll>

51. WOODS, Judith. The Coping Classes - Part 1: Why do we all feel so damn poor?. *The Telegraph* [online]. 29-01-2008 [retrieved 2013-03-14] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/features/3635427/The-Coping-Classes-Part-1-Why-do-we-all-feel-so-damn-poor.html>

52. WOODS, Judith. K recession: how are the Coping Classes faring now?. *The Telegraph* [online]. 23-02-2009 [retrieved 2013-03-16] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/4788246/UK-recession-how-are-the-Coping-Classes-faring-now.html>

53. WOODS, Judith. The Coping Classes - the middle classes are under siege like never before. *The Telegraph* [online]. 09-10-2010 [retrieved 2013-03-16] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/mother-tongue/8051891/The-Coping-Classes-the-middle-classes-are-under-siege-like-never-before.html>

54. WOODS, Judith. The Coping Classes - woes at work. *The Telegraph* [online]. 12-10-2010 [retrieved 2013-03-16] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/8056822/The-Coping-Classes-woes-at-work.html>

55. WOODS, Judith. Organic or Fair Trade? The perils of being Middle Class. *The Telegraph* [online]. 22-11-2012 [retrieved 2013-03-18] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/9695836/Organic-or-Fair-Trade-The-perils-of-being-Middle-Class.html>

8. Abstract

The main aim of the bachelor thesis is to provide an overview dealing with the portrayal of social class in the British press. A left-wing newspaper - *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*, considered as a right-wing and more conservative newspaper, were selected for the research.

The thesis is consists of three main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the different definitions of the class, the second chapter serves as an brief overview concerning various models of the arrangement of the British society across centuries. Then, in the same chapter the classes are described separately, for each class there could be found the information dealing with housing, education or way of clothing, spending of leisure time and eating habits. The third chapter is based on the analysis of the electronic version of the newspaper articles of the press mentioned above. This analysis provides a summary of topics and problems within each class in which the newspapers are interested.

9. Resumé

Cílem bakalářské práce je poskytnout přehled o tom, jak britský tisk nahlíží na sociální třídy v Británii. Pro výzkum byly vybrány noviny – levicový The Guardian a The Daily Telegraph, považovaný za pravicový a konzervativnější.

Práce se skládá se tří hlavních kapitol. První kapitola je věnována různým definicím třídy, druhá kapitola slouží jako stručný přehled o různém sociálním uspořádání britské společnosti napříč stoletími. Následně jsou v této kapitole popisovány třídy jednotlivě, pro každou zvlášť jsou zde uvedeny informace týkající se typu bydlení, vzdělání nebo způsobu oblékání, trávení volného času a stravovacích návyků. Třetí kapitola je založena na analýze elektronické verze novinových článků výše uvedeného tisku. Analýzy poskytují souhrn témat a problémů, kterými se dané noviny zabývají v rámci každé třídy.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1

PMQs sketch: Ed Miliband, working-class hero

Michael Deacon watches Prime Minister's Questions, as Ed Miliband accuses David Cameron of only 'standing up for the few at the top'.

At Prime Minister's Questions, Ed Miliband once again derided David Cameron as a preening, soft-handed millionaire with no experience of poverty or struggle. "All he shows is how out of touch he is!" he shouted.

This is a perfectly legitimate line for the Labour leader to pursue, because, as is well-documented, Mr Miliband's life has in contrast been a gruelling saga of soot-caked deprivation. Unlike Mr Cameron, he has spent his days a shoeless stranger to wealth and privilege.

Born in 1969, Mr Miliband grew up in the working-class Yorkshire mining town of Primrose Hill. Throughout little Ed's childhood, his father Ralph toiled for scant reward in one dead-end job after another: lecturer in political science at the London School of Economics, professor of politics at the University of Leeds, acclaimed author.

Young Ed was desperate to rise above his humble origins, but opportunities for advancement were few. Having endured hardships all too painfully familiar to working-class children – attending primary school with Boris Johnson, doing theatre reviews for a commercial radio station, working as an intern for Tony Benn – he scraped into Corpus Christi, an underfunded Oxfordshire polytechnic. Here he took a course in PPE, short for Plumber, Plasterer and Electrician.

By the time young Ed was ready to enter the world of work, however, jobs in his three dream careers were scarce, so to make ends meet he was forced to become a television researcher, then a speechwriter for Labour's Shadow Treasury team. Ten years ago, times were so tight that for extra cash he had to moonlight as a visiting scholar at Harvard. At one point he even worked as an adviser to Gordon Brown. He had hit rock bottom.

Today, with young mouths to feed, he is just about holding down a minimum-wage job as Leader of Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition. He and his wife barely know where their next million-pound home is coming from.

This afternoon in the Commons Mr Miliband mocked Mr Cameron for having claimed the Conservatives were no longer "a party of privilege". At a fundraising ball only last week, he snorted, the Prime Minister had auctioned a portrait of himself for £100,000.

Mr Miliband plainly thought this a cause for scorn, but surely any decent person's reaction would be one of sympathy. Imagine the poor buyer's fate when he got home that night.

"What sort of time do you call this? Have you been drinking?"

“Look. Darling. My dearest. My love. My angel. I’ve got good news and bad news.”

“Oh God. Go on then. What’s the bad?”

“Well... you know how we were planning to get that new kitchen, and go on holiday, and keep our children in school, and continue paying our mortgage, and eat?”

“Yes?”

“Well, unfortunately we can no longer afford to do any of that. But on the plus side: we’ve now got a massive painting of David Cameron for the downstairs loo, a snip at just six figures!”

Source:

DEACON, Michael. PMQs sketch: Ed Miliband, working-class hero. *The Telegraph* [online]. 01-02-2013 [retrieved 2013-04-05] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9868413/PMQs-sketch-Ed-Miliband-working-class-hero.html>

Appendix 2

How supermarkets prop up our class system

In a new book, Harry Wallop reveals how supermarkets exploit their deep knowledge of class-conscious customers to target those trading up – and sneaking down.

You can tell a lot from a shopping bag. Especially now that so many of them are Bags For Life, or BFLs – permanent luggage tags that proclaim our allegiance to certain retailers. Is it an organic cotton number from Daunt Books, hand-sewn by an Indian co-operative? Or a heavy-duty plastic number from Asda? It's a class thing.

Class used to be about your position in life, your accent and old school tie; now it appears to be about lifestyle – and shopping bags. Take Hayleigh, brought up in a council house, who is accused by her mother of “shooting above her station” because she owns a Sainsbury's hessian BFL. “She says I've forgotten where I came from.” She jokes that she uses it when she visits Iceland – too embarrassed to be seen walking down the street with plastic bags from the discount chain.

I investigated this snobbery about different brands and shops for my book *Consumed: How Shopping Fed the Class System*. This week, to put my theory to the test, I visited a north London branch of Lidl, which – along with its fellow German chain Aldi – has outperformed most supermarkets in recent months. Lidl is famed for cut-price Fray Bentos pies, oddly branded baked beans and discount aftershave. Cheap and not-so-cheerful is the popular perception.

But browsing the fresh pasta aisle, I saw one woman with a Selfridges Food Hall bag. I also found Paul Ramsay, a nurse, with a natty mustard-coloured BFL from Paxton & Whitfield – the most upmarket cheese shop in Britain, an emporium) so chichi you'll find viscounts queuing for the vacherin.

“I love my cheese and I do go to Paxtons. But I live locally to Lidl and it's just so cheap here.” Is the Paxton's bag to hide the shame of his Lidl groceries? He smiles and says, if anything, he likes showing off to friends about the bargains he has found.

He is one of the millions who have started to visit Lidl and Aldi, searching for deeply discounted canned goods as well as surprisingly upmarket groceries. The bestselling item at Lidl over Christmas, after a two-pint bottle of semi-skimmed milk, was champagne. Aldi's Parmigiano Reggiano has won awards, and many rave about its cut-price passata and claret.

Aldi and Lidl's recent success has been partly down to wooing the middle classes. There was an 18 per cent rise in the number of households in the AB socio-economic group – the upper middle class – shopping in Aldi in 2012 compared with 2011, while Lidl has noted the increase in BMWs and Audis in its car park.

Over the past couple of weeks, Britain's big shops have published their Christmas trading figures and it is revealing that the best performers were: Waitrose, confirming its long-running success; Fortnum & Mason, where footmen watch over the Highgrove truffles, and which enjoyed the best sales in its 305-year history; Aldi, with sales up 30 per cent; Lidl and Iceland.

In other words, the most aristocratic and the most plebeian both got a share of the gravy. Yet retailers that tried to be all things to all people struggled. This partly explains why Morrisons had such a terrible Christmas. Tesco performed moderately well, but only after a very poor 18 months.

This supermarket confusion has upset the old order. A generation ago, everyone knew where they stood – and where they shopped. And the really grand didn't shop at all. They had staff for that. Now, Lidl sells caviar, and I know a duchess who is a card-carrying member of Costco.

But one thing remains constant, despite the confusion of who is doing well and who is not: supermarkets are crucibles of snobbery.

This was never meant to happen. Self-service grocery shops, as they were called when they first opened in the Fifties, were supposed to liberate a generation who had only just abandoned ration books. No longer would housewives be met with a patronising stare from the grocer behind the counter; they were free to pop whatever they wanted in their basket.

Back then, food was fuel, and an average family had to spend more than a third of its income on it. Despite recent food inflation spikes, this figure has fallen dramatically and now stands at only 17 per cent. Food remains relatively cheap.

This has left most of us with spare change to spend on the fripperies and spices that mark us out as sophisticates. Most of us may be “all middle-class now”, a promised land foretold by that unlikely prophet, John (now Lord) Prescott. But we need to make sure that we stand out. We once kept up with the Joneses; now, we want to be different from the Joneses.

And supermarkets have helped us by offering an almost unlimited choice of products, from asofoetida to za'atar seasoning. The year after food rationing ended, Sainsbury's sold a total of 700 products. It now sells well in excess of 30,000. There are a mind-boggling 172 different types of coffee on sale in Tesco.

Indeed, when it comes to class, coffee is important. Britain Thinks, a market research company, found that 71 per cent of people defined themselves as middle-class in a wide-ranging survey, a big jump on the 25 per cent figure cited frequently in the Fifties. It then asked some of the people it surveyed to come to a meeting and bring an object that they felt most summed up their middle-classness. Along with a Cath Kidston ironing board cover and house keys, more than one person brought a cafetière. “Posh” coffee, it seemed, was as important as owning your own property.

But even within coffee there are gradations of snobbery. Do you serve your guests a standard plunger filled with Asda Everyday? Or brew them a single-estate special by the Monmouth Coffee Co in one of the difficult-to-wash-up metal Moka pots adored by urban owners of wood-burning stoves? The new consumer elites, with their Mulberry goatskin iPad covers, favour those sleek, showy espresso machines where the coffee comes pre-packaged in a dinky little pod. Indeed, a report this week suggested that sales of kettles have fallen as more households embrace the middle-class crema craze.

The more I looked at the revolution in Britons' lifestyles, the more I realised that the supermarkets themselves were partly responsible for perpetuating the class system.

As well as offering us endless choice, they have also been at the cutting edge of social research, analysing who their customers are, and encouraging us to trade up or sometimes down. It was rumoured that Tesco, thanks to its Clubcard, launched in the mid-Nineties, knew you were expecting a child before your own friends did (the purchase of a pregnancy kit, followed by a sudden drop in white wine consumption, was the giveaway).

There are now two companies, called Acorn and Mosaic, that have gone further. They use census data, retailers' own information, and other sources (all those times you forget to tick the "don't pass on my information" box) to split Britain's 1.9 million postcodes into about 60 different social groupings. All of these categories are given names, some of which are innocuous, such as "summer playgrounds" or "sprawling subtopia". Others are a fairly stark assessment of the householders' prospects: "white van culture" and "multi-ethnic crowded flats". These data are then sold back to retailers to help them chase some customers – and avoid others.

The figures show which shop each household is likely to visit. So, for instance, Acorn's "affluent grey" group of households – who typically are retirees, own two cars, have no mortgage, enjoy gardening and are big recyclers – are just as likely to shop at Lidl as at Marks & Spencer and Waitrose. "High rise hardship" homes where the inhabitant is frequently burdened by debts and unemployment – are firm Iceland shoppers. Few of them have passed through the portals of a Marks & Spencer food hall. This explains the surprising middle-class pride at finding bargains in Lidl (and the corresponding embarrassment about being seen in Iceland).

Such information is a gold mine to shops. They use it to tailor what they stock in store, and what they offer different customers. Do you wonder why, at the till, you are given a voucher for Kentish cobnuts and the woman behind you is given a discount for salted peanuts? It is because the retailer knows where you live and your corresponding tastes and aspirations.

Tesco has even started to tailor its website using data collected from its Clubcard customers. This means that one customer logging on will be shown a different selection of goods on the homescreen to his neighbour. The company calls it "mass personalisation".

The concern is that all of this reinforces class ghettos. Consumers already living in an affluent area are treated to organic elderflower cordial, while those in a deprived postcode are left with Crusha.

Even Waitrose has indulged in some gentle social engineering. When it launched its Essentials line in 2009, most of the products in the range were exactly the same and priced the same as before, just repackaged in basic white boxes and tins. It was designed to shift customers' perception that Waitrose was just for dogger duchesses. Even if shoppers were not aware of this sleight of hand, I did wonder whether they would be embarrassed about popping these cheap-looking products into their shopping basket.

"Far from it," the commercial director told me. "We have found some customers putting their Waitrose goods in Tesco bags, because they are nervous that their neighbours will think they are decadent for shopping at Waitrose."

Snobbery – inverse or otherwise – is a powerful social force, but it is a powerful commercial one, too. I am not sure this is such a bad thing. Being judged for how you

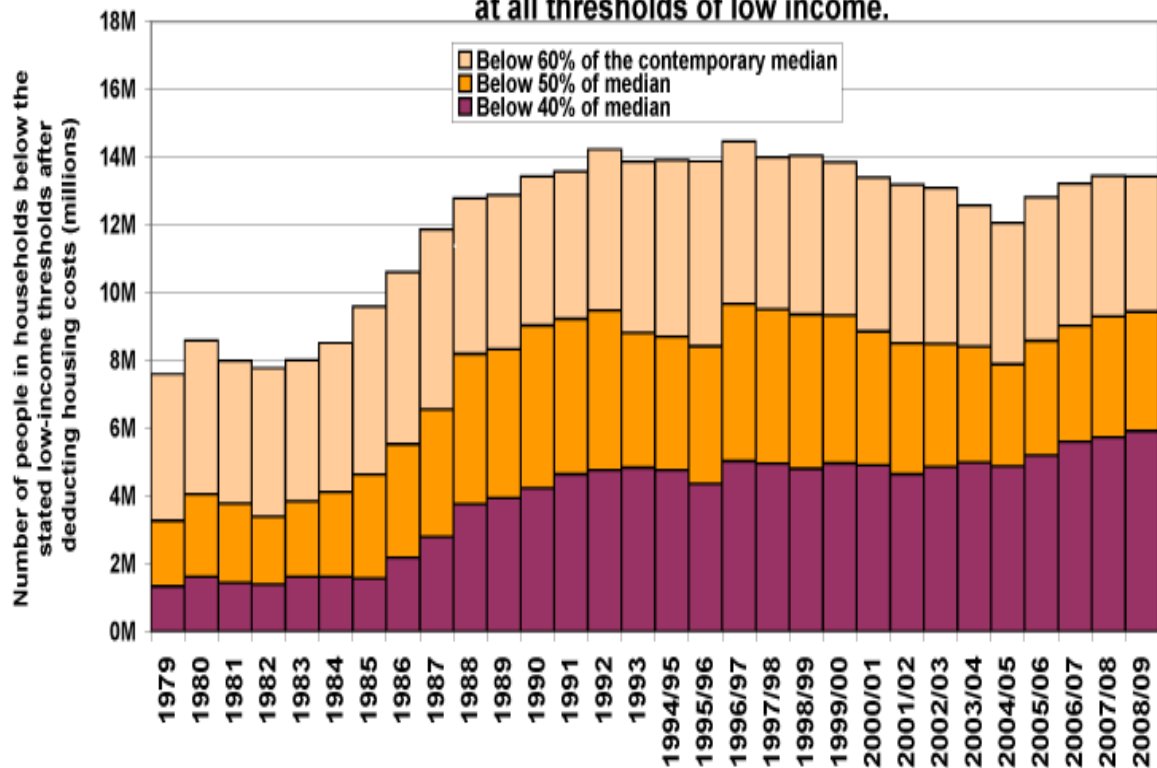
spend your money, rather than how you earn it, seems to me to be progress of some sort.

Source:

WALLOP, Harry. How supermarkets prop up our class system. *The Telegraph* [online]. 18-01-2013 [retrieved 2013-04-17] Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/9808015/How-supermarkets-prop-up-our-class-system.htm>

Appendix 3

The number of people in low-income households in 2008/09 was substantially higher than a few years previously. This rise occurred at all thresholds of low income.

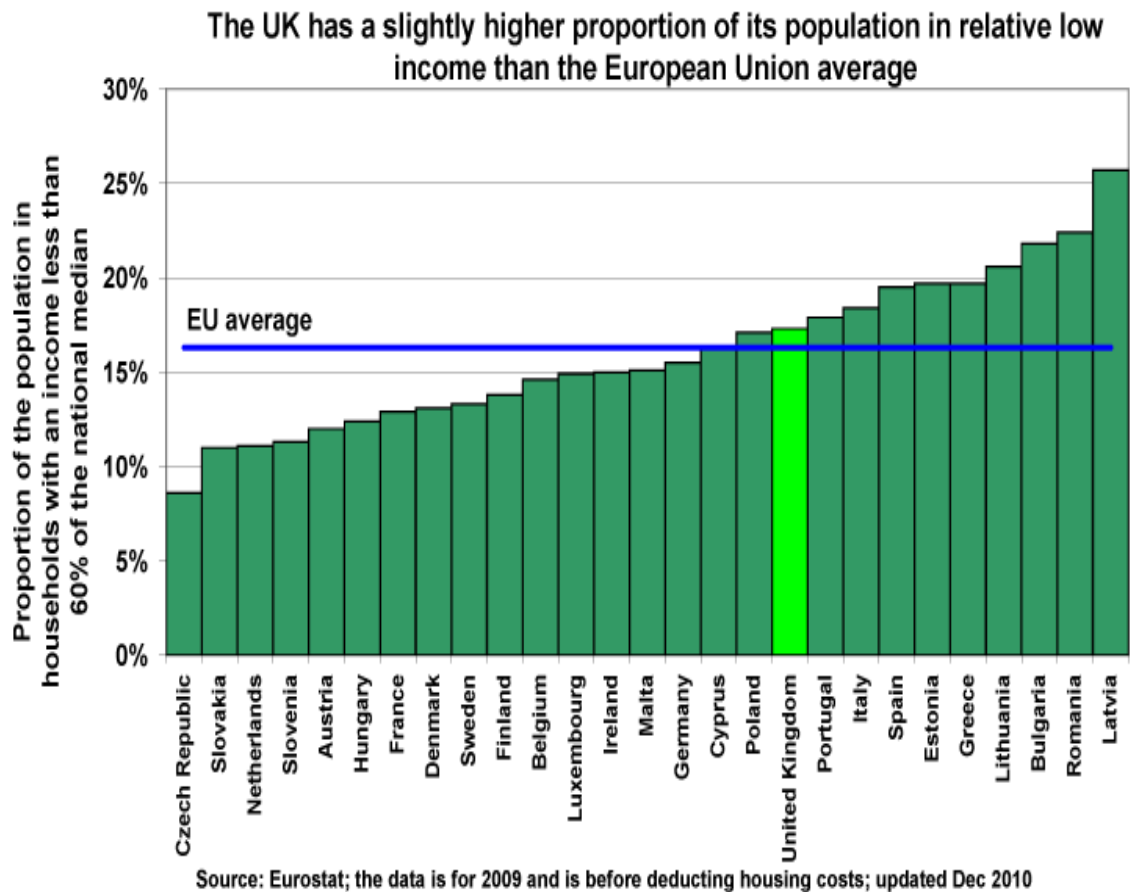


Source: Households Below Average Income, DWP (1994/95 onwards) and the IFS (earlier years); UK; updated Aug 2010

Source:

Graph 1: Over time (numbers). In: The Poverty Site [online]. Guy Palmer. [retrieved 17-04-2013] Available from: <http://www.poverty.org.uk/01/index.shtml?2>

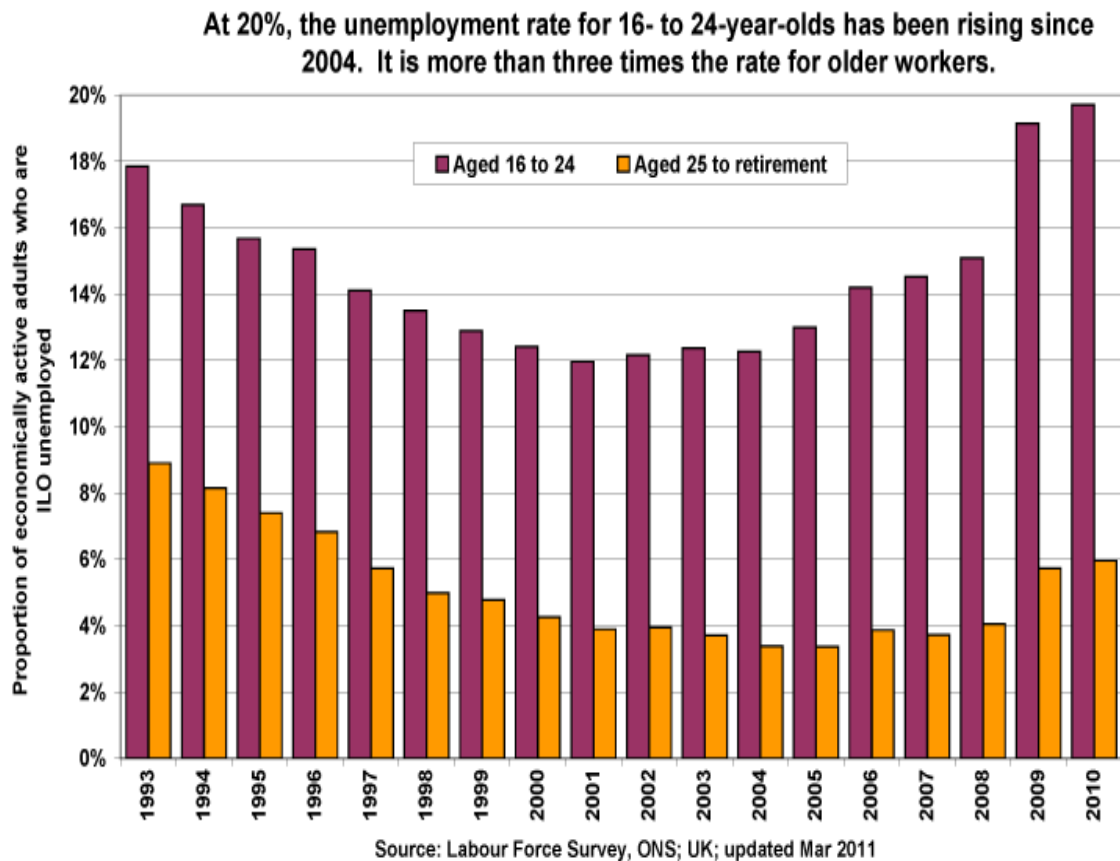
Appendix 4



Source:

Graph 4: Compared to the EU. In: The Poverty Site [online]. Guy Palmer. [retrieved 17-04-2013] Available from: <http://www.poverty.org.uk/01/index.shtml?2>

Appendix 5



Source:

Graph 1: Over time (proportions). In: The Poverty Site [online]. Guy Palmer. [retrieved 17-04-2013] Available from: <http://www.poverty.org.uk/35/index.shtml?2>