

Britons more likely to think they are working class than people in other countries, research says

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Britons are much more likely to say they are working class than the average for citizens of industrialised countries around the world, new research shows.

The British Sociological Association's annual conference in Birmingham was told today [Friday 8 April 2016] that 40% of Britons thought of themselves as working class, compared with an average of 27% in 27 industrialised countries.

Edward Haddon found that generally Britons' view of their social class was accurate, although some highly educated people from working class background regarded themselves as middle class.

Mr Haddon, of the University of British Columbia, Canada, told the conference that he analysed survey response from around 27,000 people in 40 countries, almost 1,000 of them British. The other countries included the US, China, Russia, Japan, Australia, and countries in Europe and South America.

Overall, 27% said they were working class, 17% lower middle class, 41% middle class and 8% upper middle. In Britain 40% said they were working class, 18% lower middle class, 35% middle and 4% upper middle.

Mr Haddon found that the proportion of those saying they were working class in Britain had fallen from 46% in 1987 to 40% in 2009, the year the data he worked on were collected. In that time, the proportion saying they were middle class rose from 27% to 35%.

However, he found that a strong factor behind the increase in the proportion of people regarding themselves as middle class was that working class people were achieving a higher of education. This influenced their belief about what class they were in, even though they were came from a working class background and were in working class jobs.

For more information, please contact:

Tony Trueman
British Sociological Association
Tel: 07964 023392
tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk

Note

The British Sociological Association's annual conference takes place Aston University from 6 to 8 April 2016. Around 600 research presentations are given. The British Sociological Association's charitable aim is to promote sociology. The BSA is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales. Company Number: 3890729. Registered Charity Number 1080235 www.britsoc.co.uk