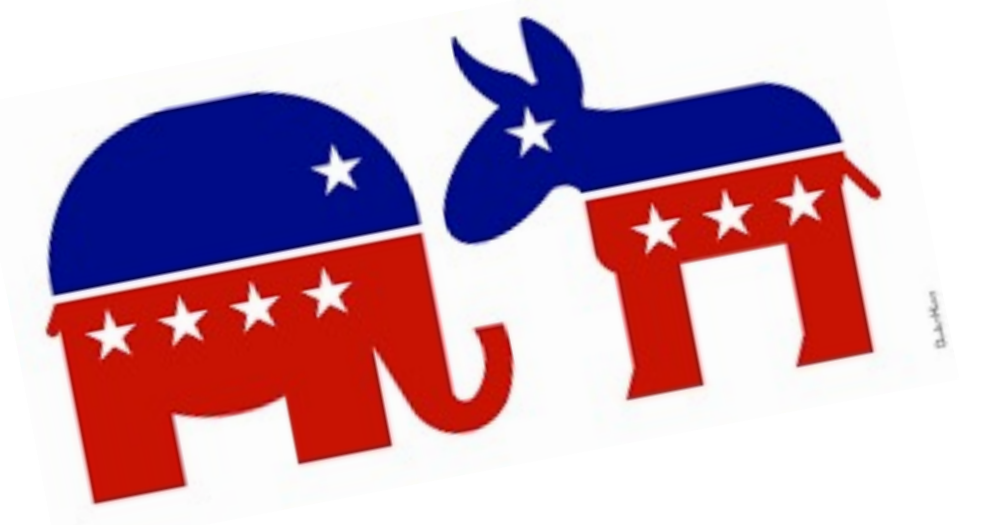




Investigating the Relationship of Socioeconomic Class to Political Affiliation



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Introduction

- In recent years, the partisan gap in the United States has been **wider** than at any point since 2009 (Pew, 2018). Specifically, having a higher degree of educational attainment has become **increasingly associated** with belonging to the Democratic Party (Pew, 2018).
- 47%** of those with no more than a high school degree are Republicans, a major shift from the 1990s when the Democratic Party held the same percentage of voters with a high school degree or less (Pew, 2018).
- The number of years of education, one measure of class, had a **positive correlation with membership to the Democratic party**. However, when they controlled for inherited political parties from their parents, people favored the political party of their **family** (Murphy, R. J., & Morris, R. T., 1961).
- 72%** of people with a college education identify as Republican and **28%** as Democratic (Murphy, R. J., & Morris, R. T., 1961).
- The goals of this study are to 1) establishing the relationship between **socioeconomic class and political party affiliation**; and 2) determine whether **gender and age** changes that relationship.

Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between socioeconomic class and political party affiliation? If so, what is it?
- If there is a relationship, how does it change based on age and gender?

Methods

Sample

- Outlook on Life Survey (2012)**
- 2,294** participants of all ages, races, genders, socioeconomic classes, and education backgrounds were surveyed in the first wave of the study.

Measures

- Political affiliation was measured by: **Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or something else?** Individual socio-economic status was collected by: **People talk about social classes such as the poor, the working class, the middle class, the upper-middle class, and the upper class. Which of these classes would you say you belong to?** Family socioeconomic status was collected by: **Which of these classes would you say most members of your family belong to?**
- Gender options were **male and female**. Ages ranged from **18 to 81**.

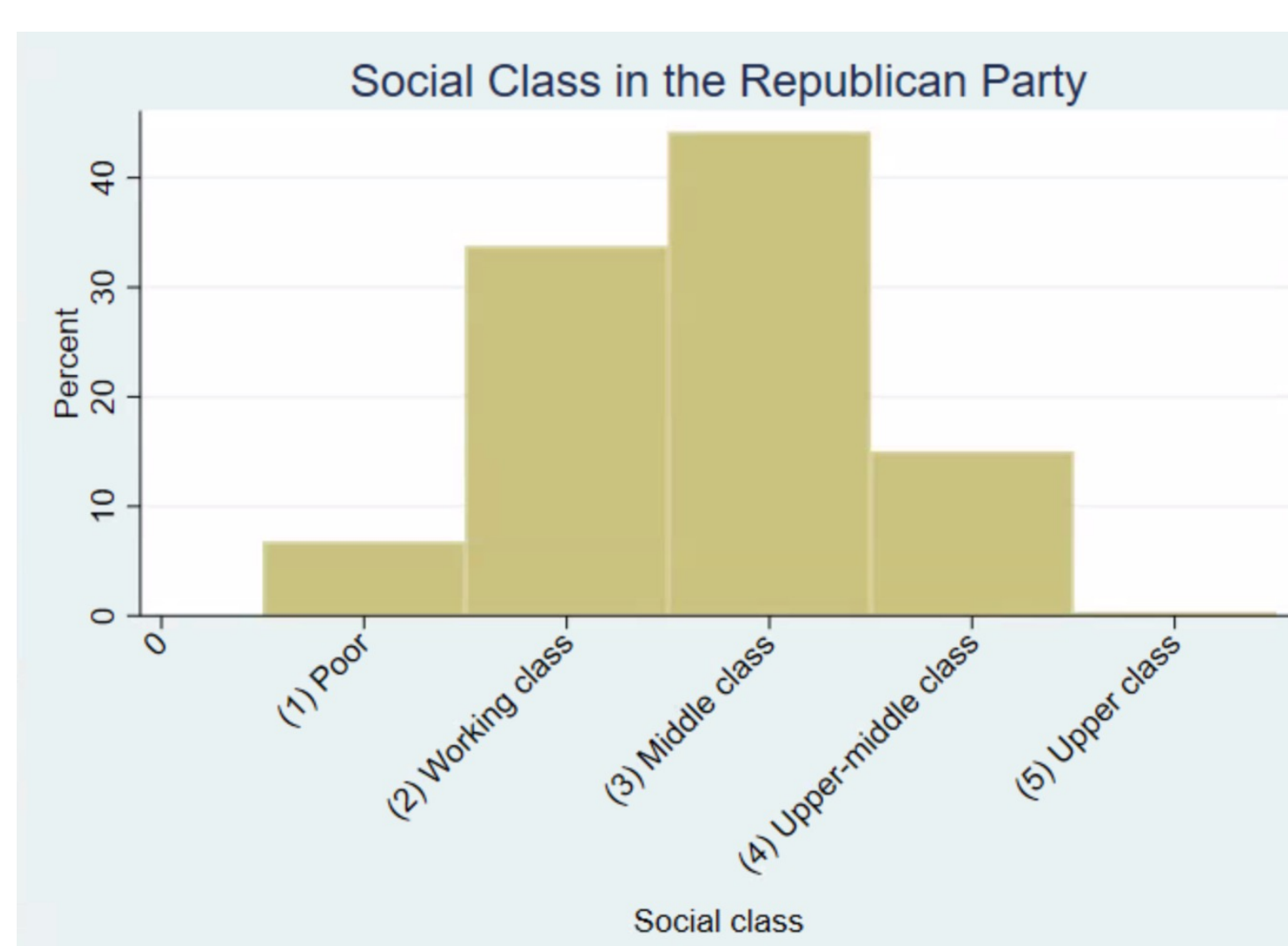


Figure 4: The categorical bar graph shows the distribution of socioeconomic class for the Republican Party.

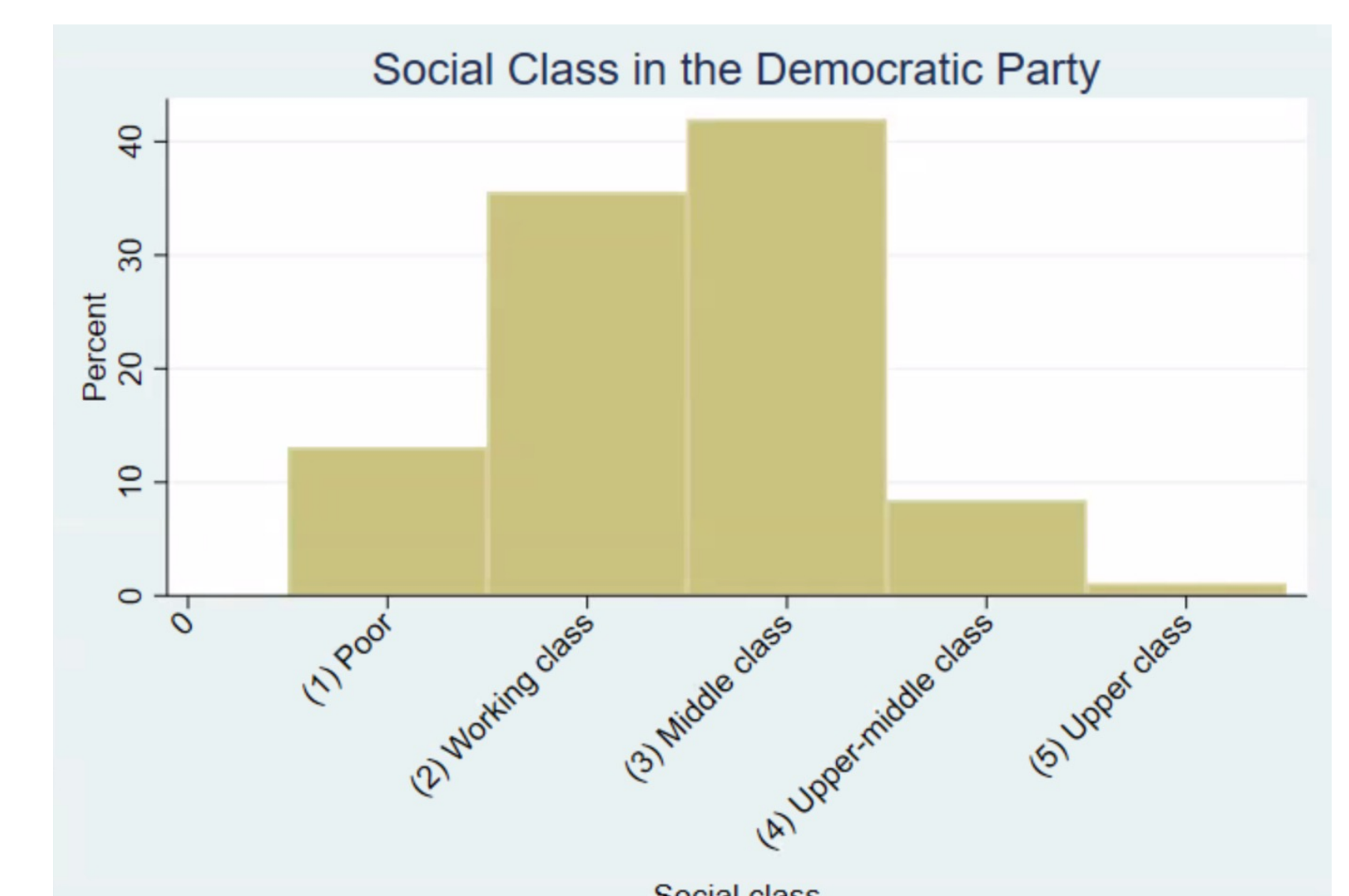


Figure 4: The categorical bar graph shows the distribution of socioeconomic class for the Democratic Party.

Discussion

- Despite my hypothesis that those with higher socioeconomic status will tend to lean Republican and those with lower socioeconomic status will tend to lean Democratic, the data shows that it is the opposite. In fact, the graphical data (figure 2) shows that the the distribution of socioeconomic status is almost identical for each political party and the chi-squared test showed a negative relationship between these two variables.
- Also, the distribution of social classes for the Democratic and Republican Parties are distributed similarly, further supporting that there isn't a clear relationship between socioeconomic class and political party.
- Further testing would need to be done with a data set that is more evenly distributed because ours was skewed extremely Democratic, and there were more Independents than Republicans, which does not reflect the population of the United States accurately.
- The only variable that moderated the relationship was age, so perhaps there is a change in views towards political party and socioeconomic status and people grow older.

Results

Univariate

- 15.49%** of participants are Republican, **58.54%** are Democrat, **25.97%** are Independent
- 11.69%** of participants are poor, **34.21%** are working class, **43.27%** are middle class, **9.7%** are upper-middle class, **1.13%** are upper class.
- 44.99%** of participants are male and **55.01%** are female

Bivariate

- A chi-squared test of independence revealed that individual socioeconomic status is significantly related to political party overall (**p=0.0**).
- Chi-squared revealed it is more likely that poor people are Democrats (**13.08%**) than Republican (**6.75%**).
- Chi-squared showed that it is more likely that upper middle-class people will be Republicans (**15.03%**) than Democrats (**8.39%**).

Multivariate

- A simple linear regression showed a significant ($p=-.07$) negative relationship (slope=-.0128) between socioeconomic class and political party.
- After moderating for gender, the relationship remained the same. Gender is not confounding in this case.
- Age was a moderator. When controlled for age, the relationship between socioeconomic status and political party became positive.

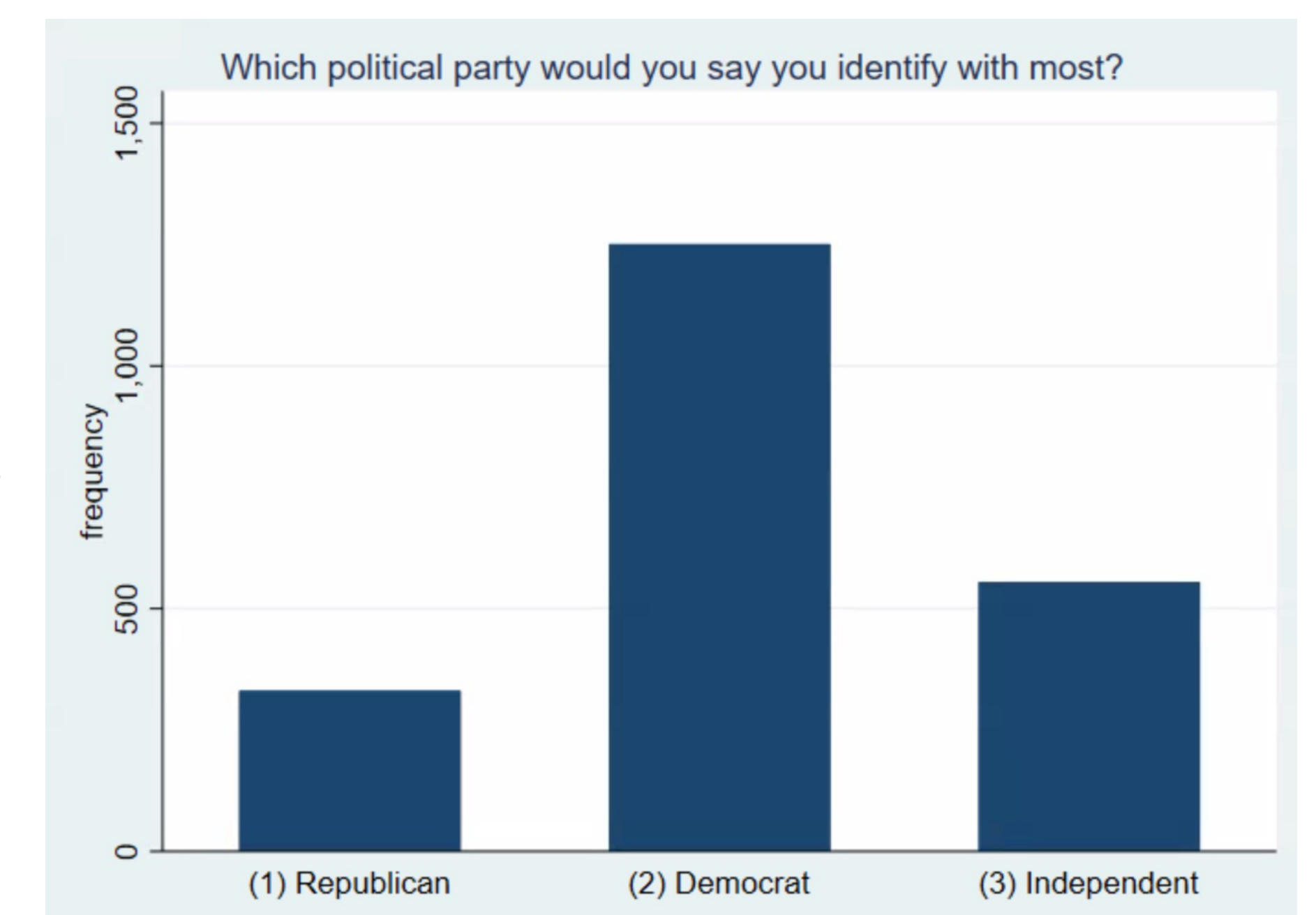


Figure 1: Bar graph displays the frequency of participants in each political party.

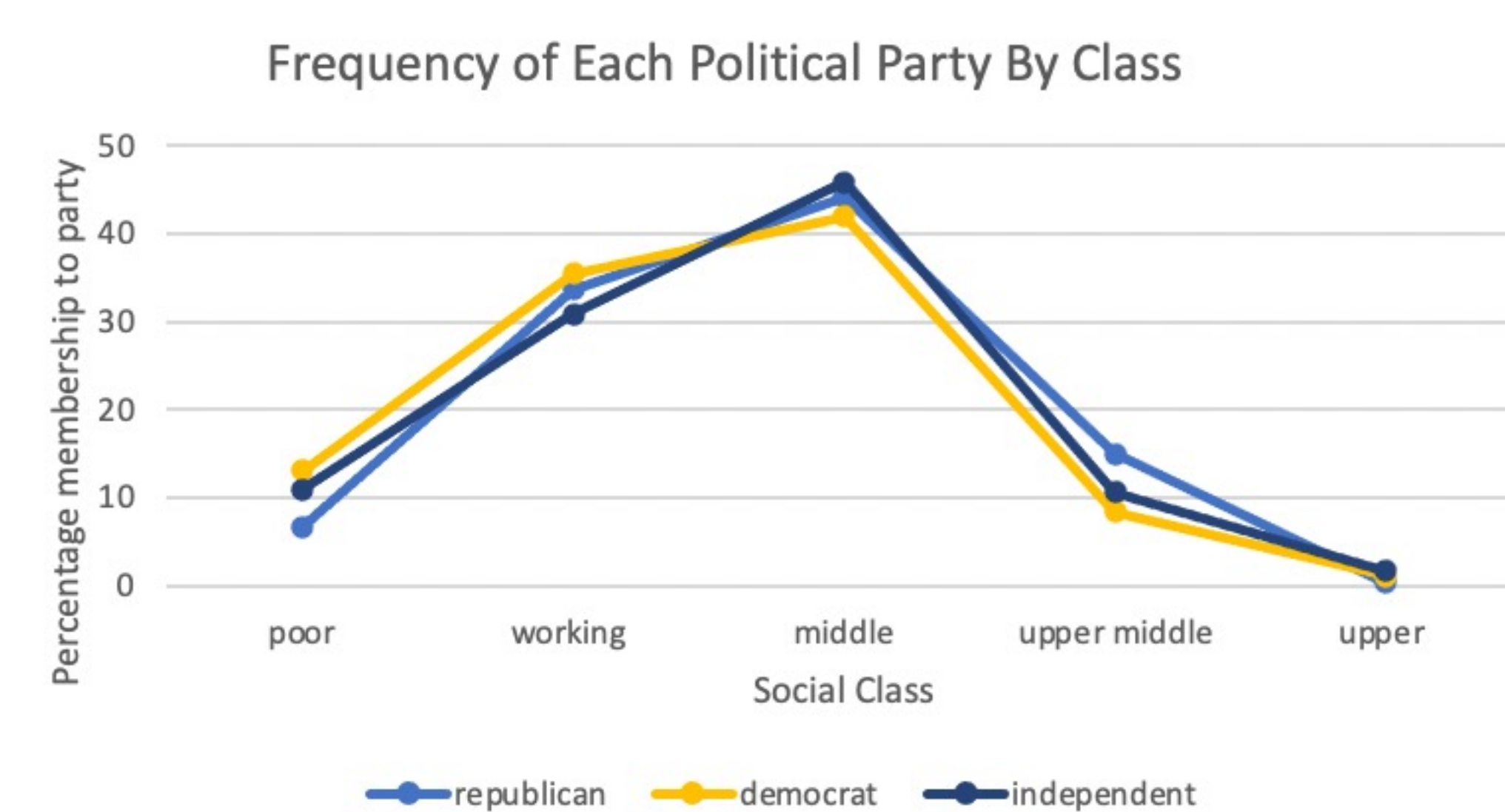


Figure 2: Line graph displays the frequency of each socioeconomic status for each political party.

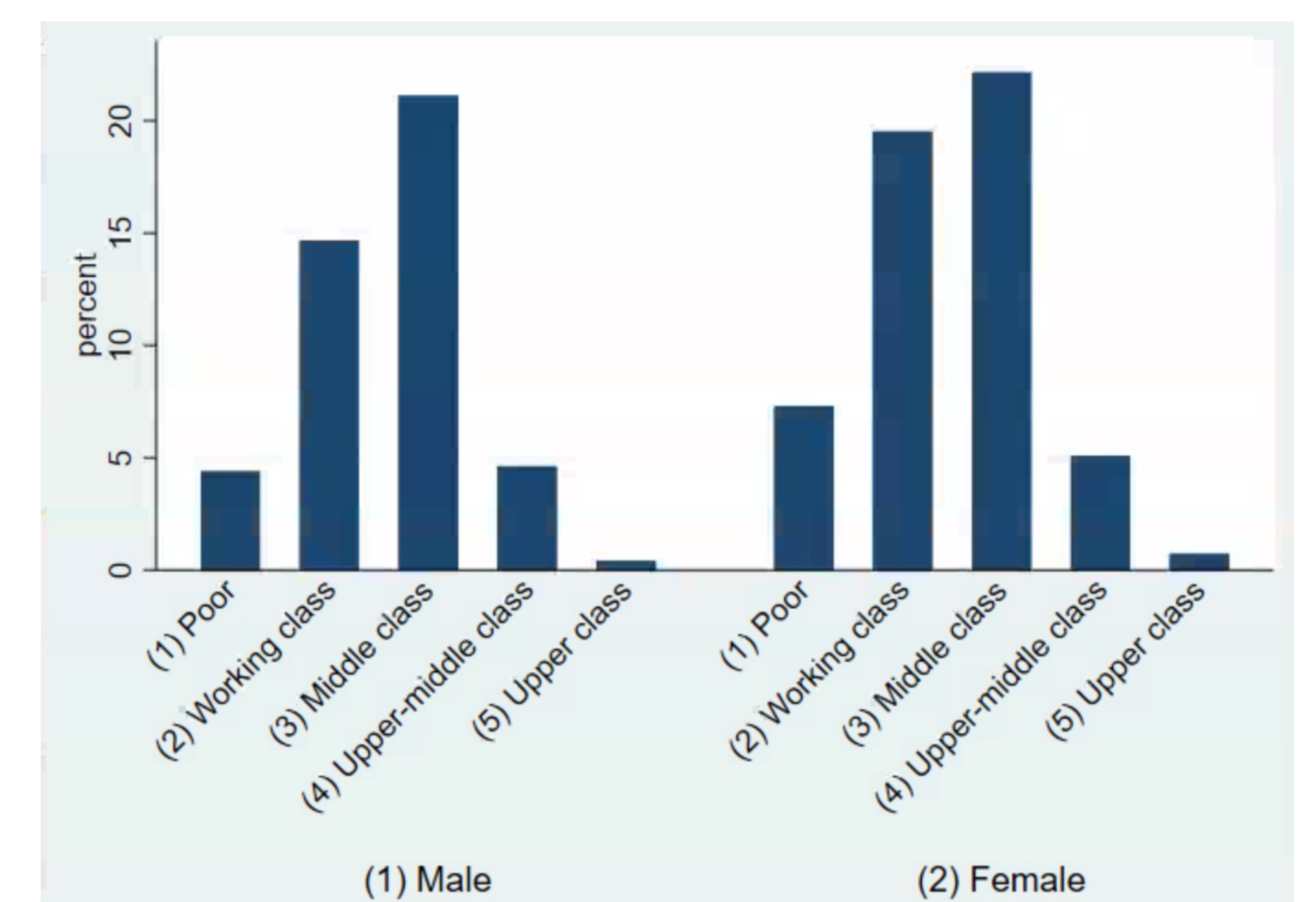


Figure 3: The categorical bar graph shows the distribution of socioeconomic class by gender.