



Technische
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Spatial Polarization and Social Inequality in Germany. Are Social Class Differentials in Place of Residence Increasing?

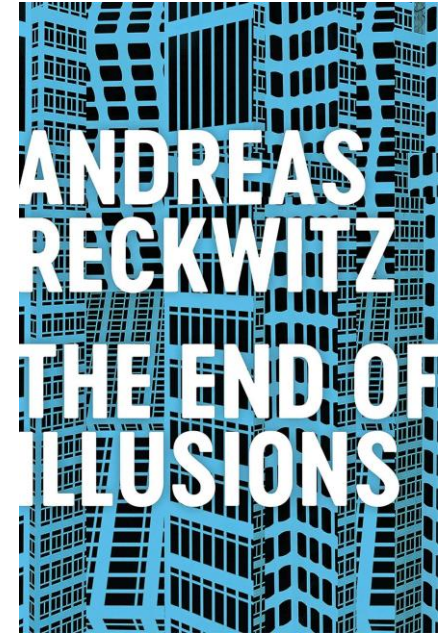
17th Conference “Social Monitoring and Reporting in Europe”. Rising Conflicts and Polarization in European Societies? Indicators, Empirical Evidence, and Future Prospect

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Motivation

“In all Western societies, the post-industrial economy, the expansion of education, and the liberization of values led to the **erosion of the leveled middle-class society**. The latter has since been replaced by a tripartite social structure consisting of *new middle class*, a *new underclass*, and – between them – the *old middle class*, which is a vestige of the leveled middle class society.” (Reckwitz [2019] 2021: 45)



Motivation

The three-class structure according to Reckwitz ([2019] 2021):

- a growing knowledge-based 'new' middle class ('winners' of modernization process)
- a shrinking non-academic 'old' middle class
- a lower class consisting of routine service workers and a shrinking group of unskilled manual workers

Motivation

“The late-modern social structure has an a priori spatial dimension; it is tightly intertwined with the social geography of post-industrial capitalism. Economic polarization and its attendant logic of valuation and devaluation, which characterizes this social structure, go hand in hand with spatial polarization and its consequent spatial logic of valuation and devaluation , which operates on the macro-level of regions as well as on the micro-level of neighborhoods.” (Reckwitz [2019] 2021: 64)

Spatial polarization hypothesis: The 'new' middle class is attracted in prosperous post-industrial metropolises and regional centers, while the disadvantaged classes are 'left behind' in small towns and rural areas (Reckwitz [2019] 2021: 65 ff.)

Research question

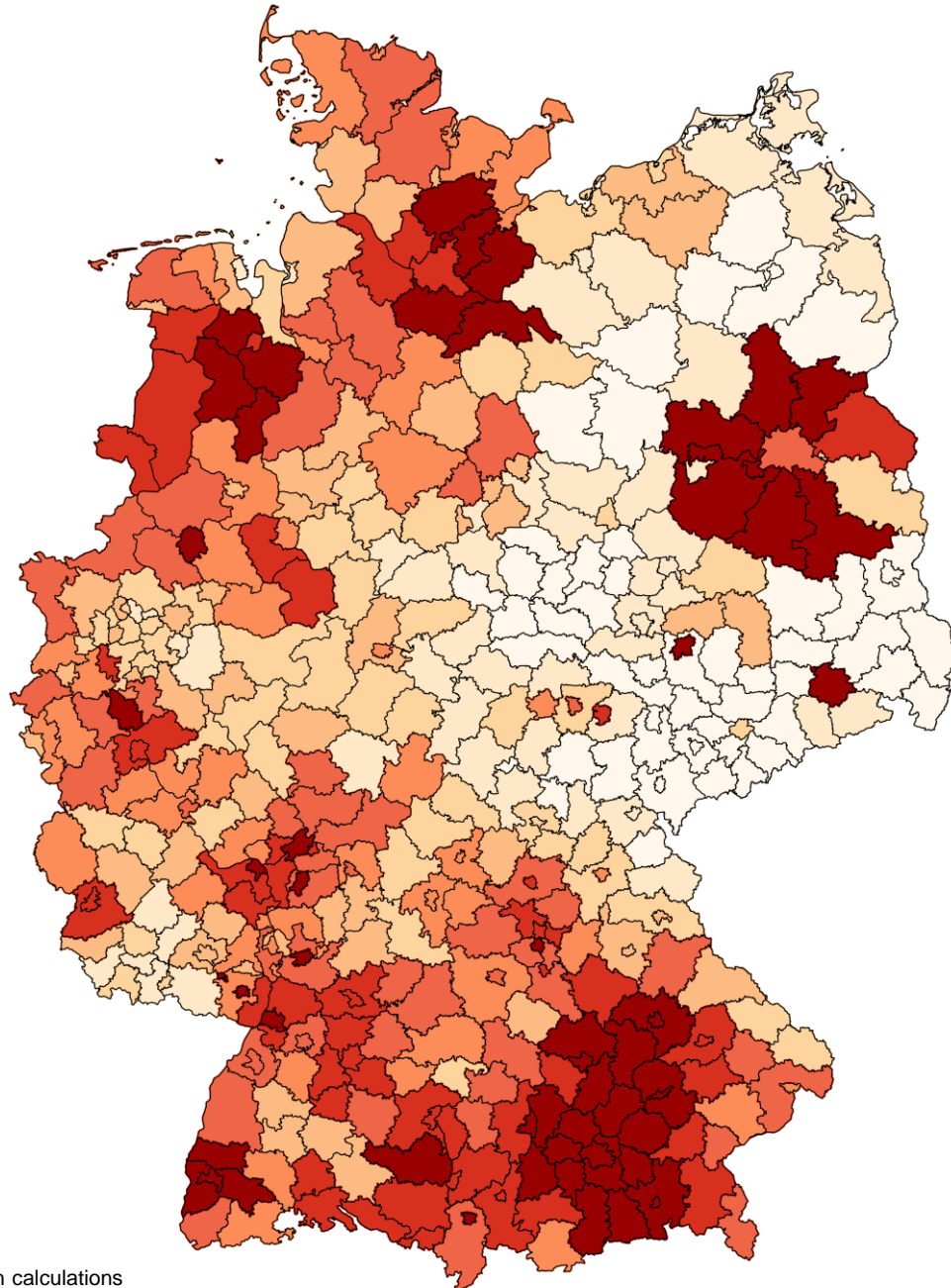
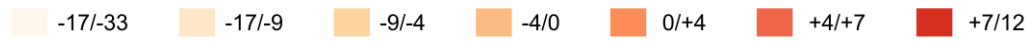
If the statement is empirically correct we would expect that...

- (1) the members of the **'new' middle class** have become more likely to live in metropolises, while members of the so-called **'old' middle class and lower classes** have become less likely to live in these settlement types and more likely to live in small towns and rural areas.
- (2) this trend particularly applies to **younger birth cohorts** (who benefitted from the expansion of tertiary education and are supposed to be the 'forerunners of cosmopolitan lifestyles'?)

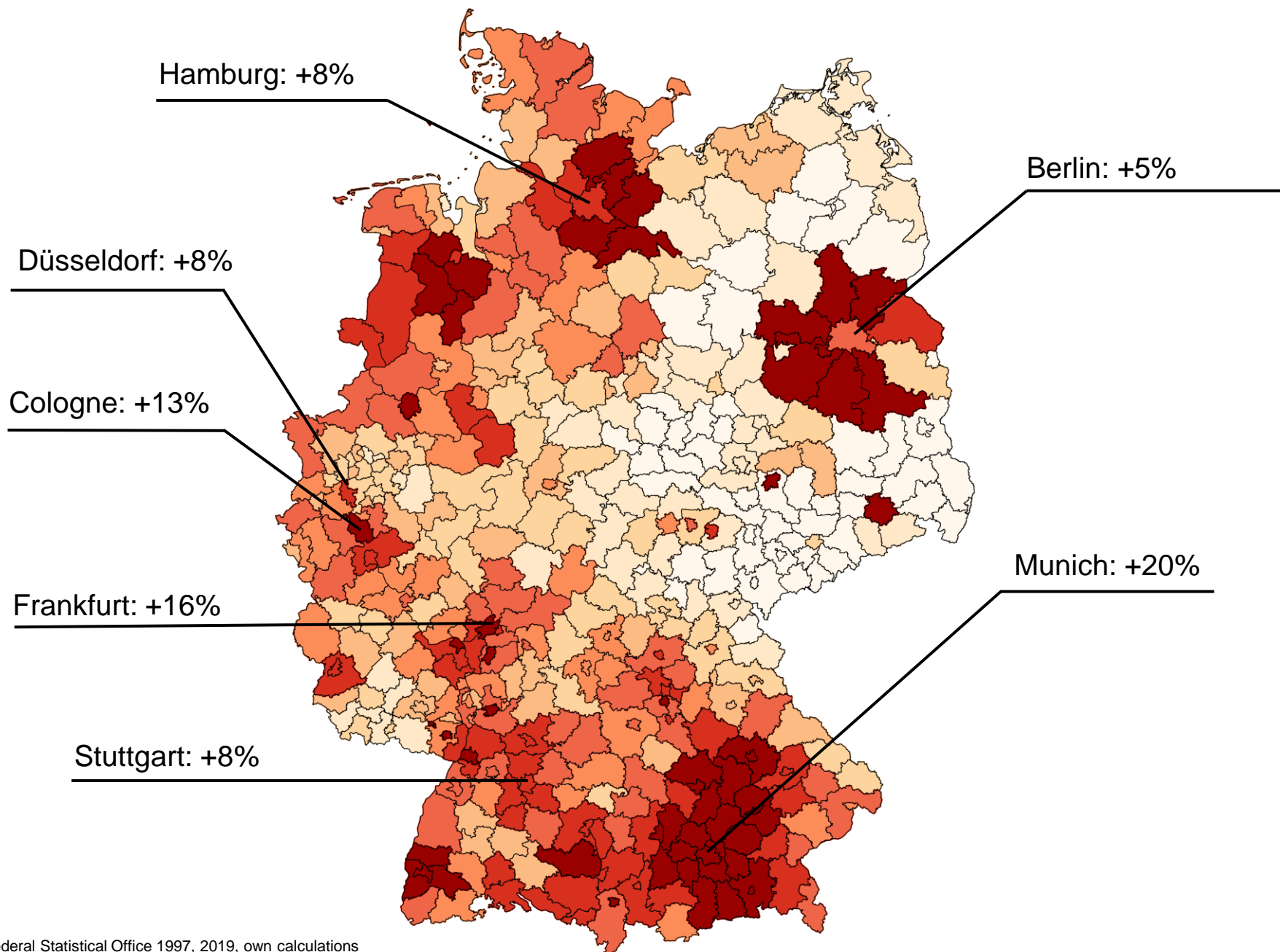
Additional questions:

- Does this trend apply only to **selected metropolises**?
- Do we need to take into account population change in **'hinterlands'** beyond administrative borders?

Population change, 1996-2018 (%)



Population change, 1996-2018 (%)



Data and sample

Data

We use German Microcensus data (on-site version) for 1996 and 2018

- Representative sample of 1% of the German population and households
- Compared to the microcensus SUF, on-site version includes detailed information on the size of the community, the NUTS-3 region (Kreis)
- only available to researchers at the Research Data Centres of the Statistical Offices of the Federal States (*Forschungsdatenzentren*)

Sample

Respondents aged 25 to 64 living in private households (primary residence), 1996 (n = 182,953) and 2018 (n = 406,302)

Variables

Settlement type (number of residents and NUTS-3)

Rural communities (less than 5000 inhabitants), small towns (5,000-20,000 inhabitants), medium-sized towns (20,000-100,000 inhabitants), large cities (100,000-500,000 inhabitants), metropolises (more 500,000 inhabitants)

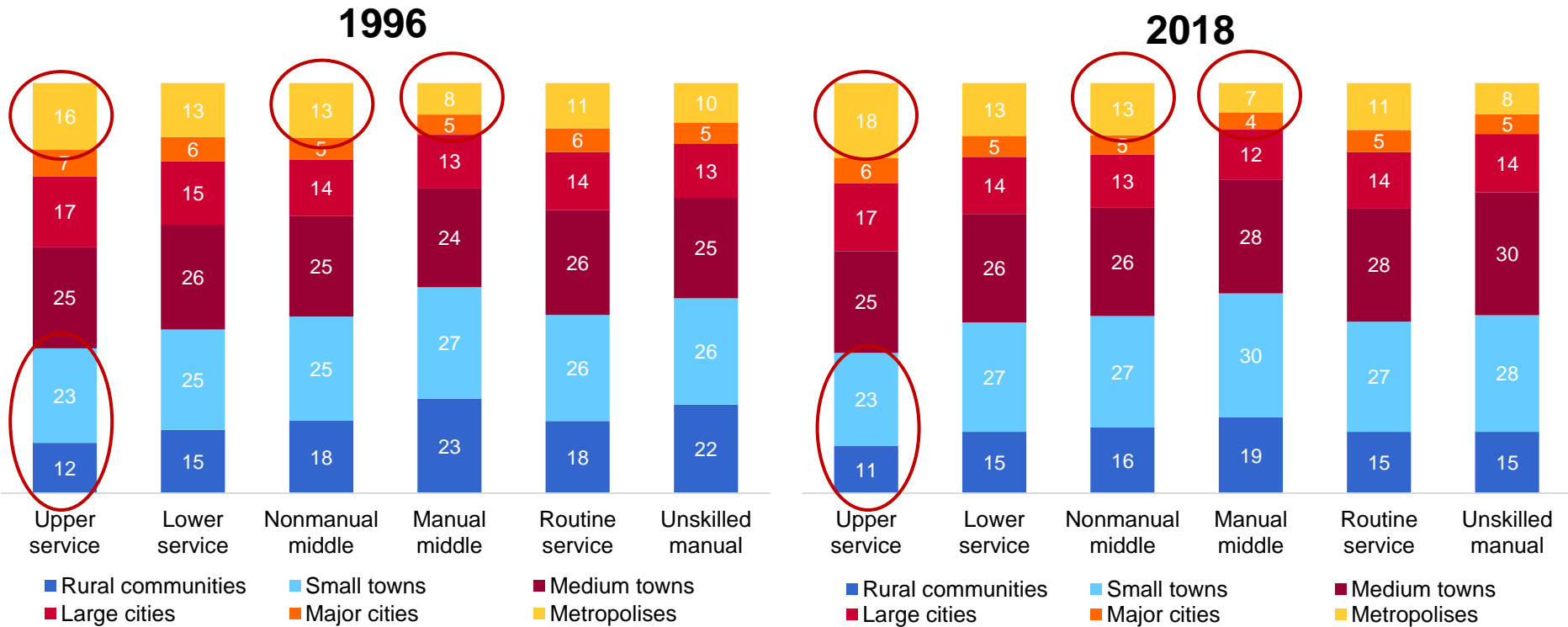
- Metropolises (Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and Düsseldorf, aka. the German „A-metropolises“)
- Major cities (Leipzig, Dortmund, Essen, Bremen, Dresden, Hanover, Nuremberg, and Duisburg)

Social class

Nine ESeC-classes based on ISCO-88 (COM) and ISCO-08

- New middle class (ESeC 1)
- Nonmanual old middle class (ESeC 3, 4, 5)
- Manual old middle class (ESeC 6, 8)
- Other classes: lower service class (ESeC 2), Routine service (ESeC 7), unskilled manual class (ESeC 9)

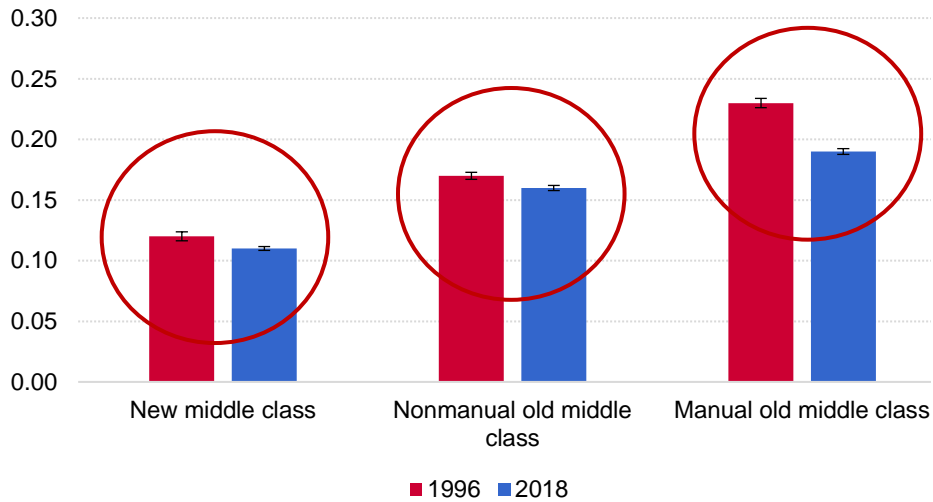
Class-specific differences in place of residence (column percentages)



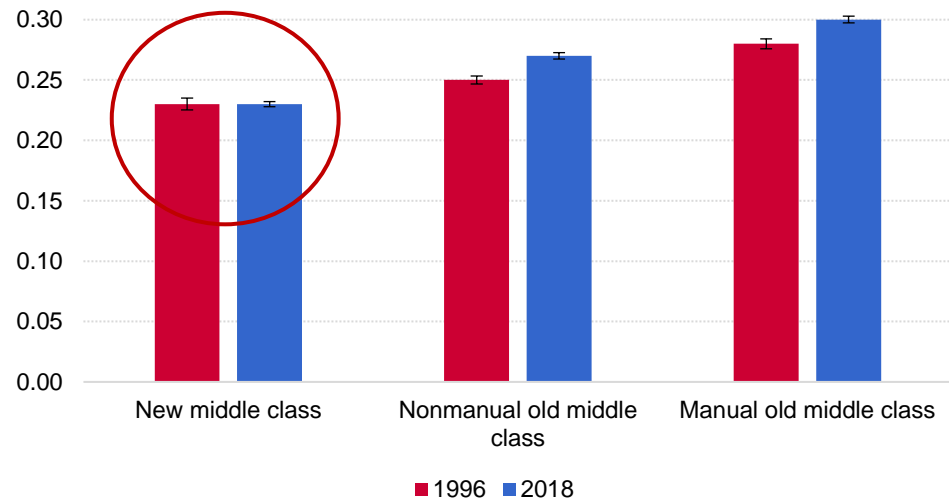
- Compared to other social classes, larger percentages of the 'new' middle class live in the 7 metropolises - but no spatial polarization between classes over time
- No concentration of the 'new' middle class in the metropolises

Class-specific differences in place of residence (predictive margins, controlled for gender, age and migration background)

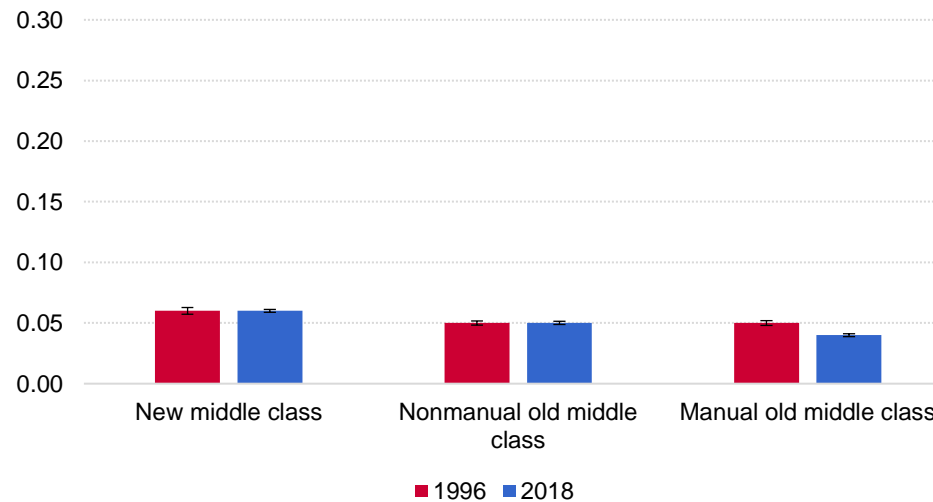
Rural communities



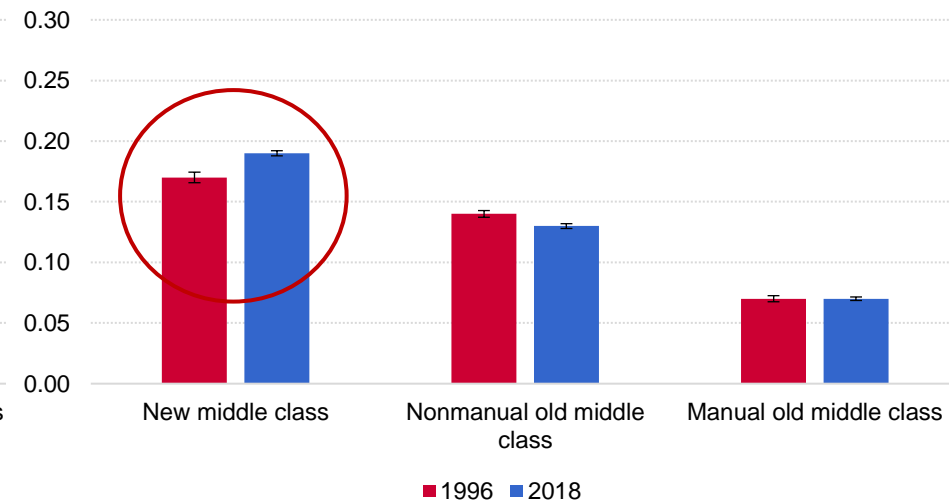
Small towns



Major cities

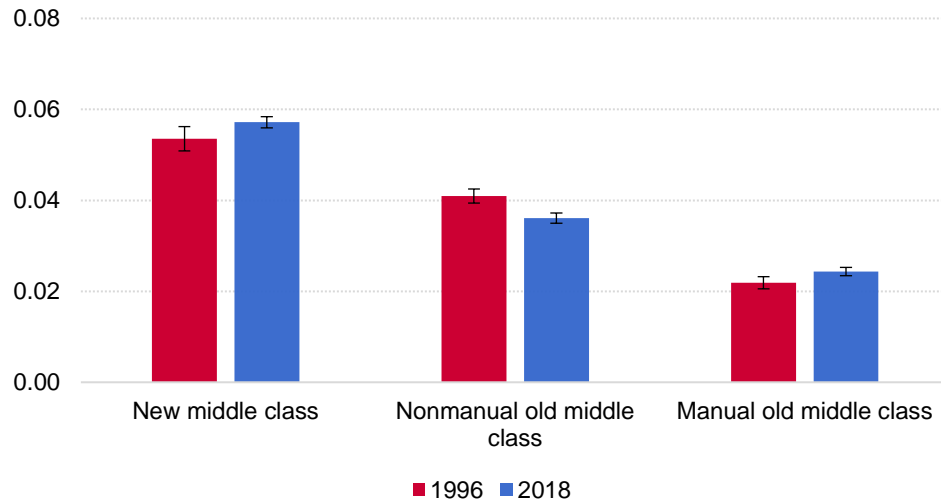


Metropolises

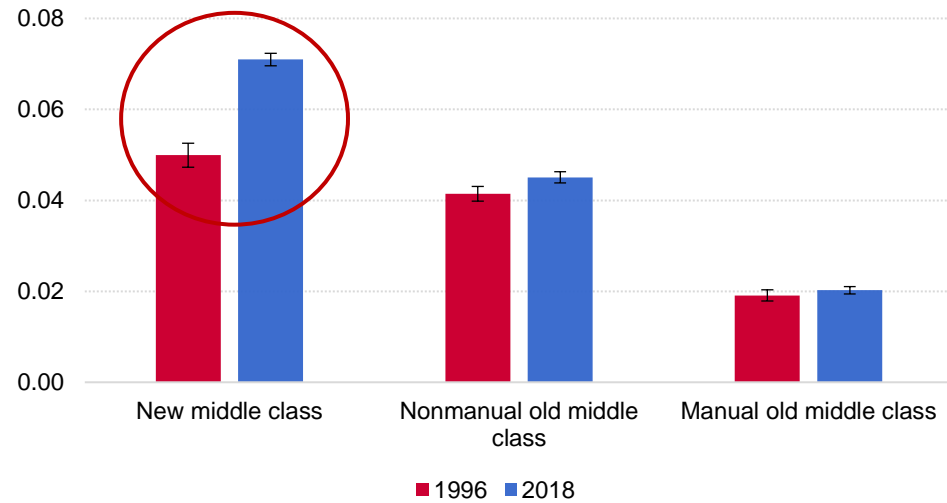


Class-specific differences in place of residence, only metropolises (predictive margins, controlled for gender, age and migration background)

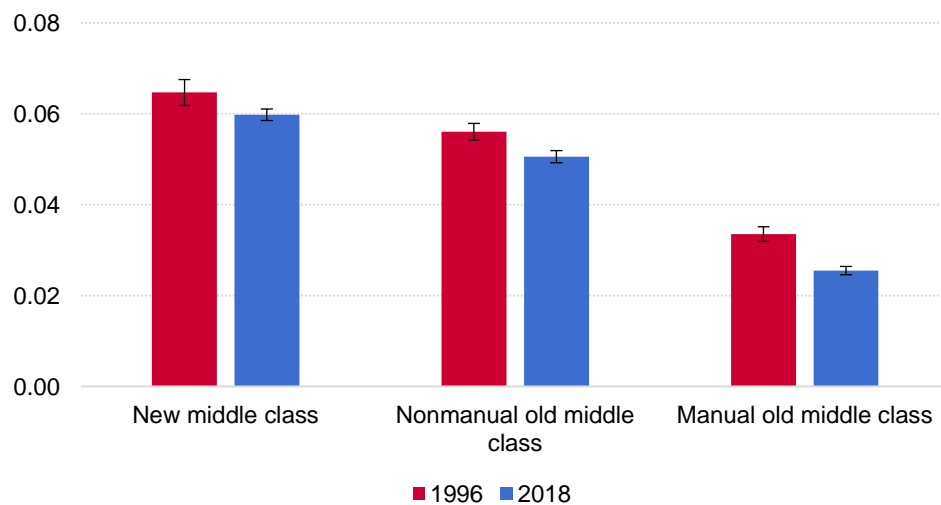
Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart



Munich, Cologne and Frankfurt



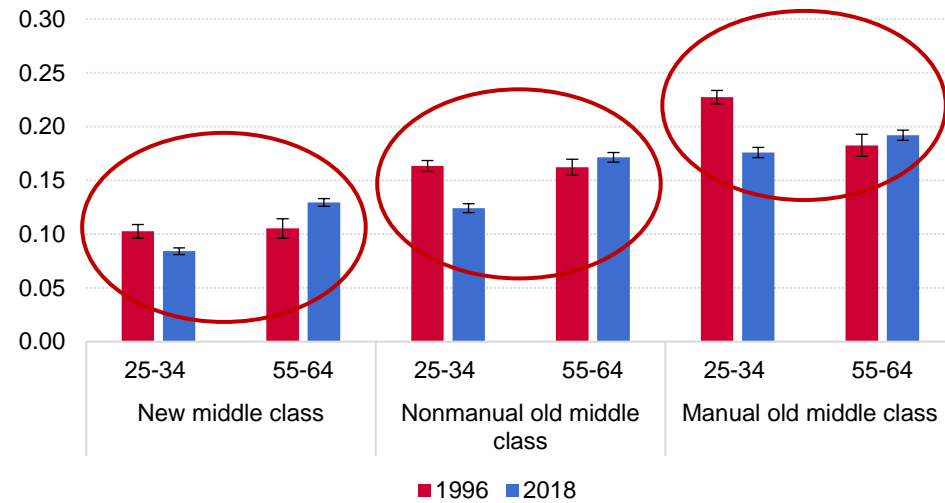
Berlin



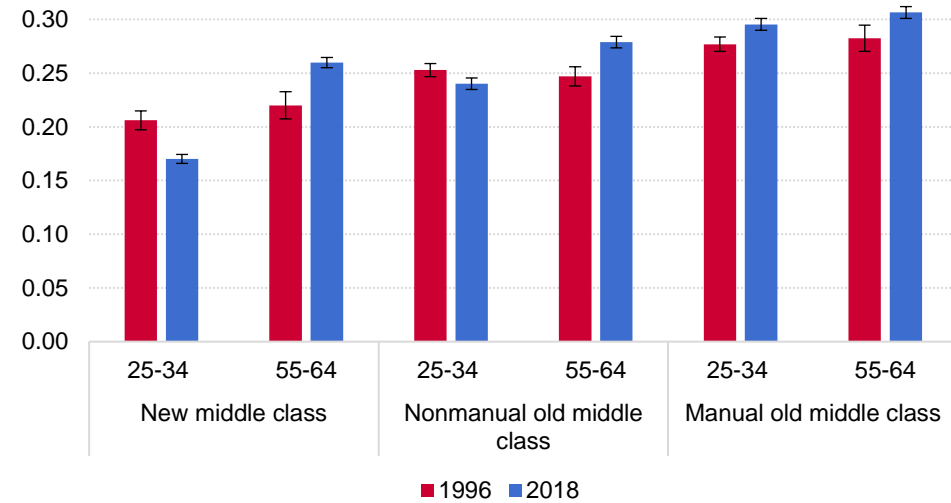
Class-specific differences in place of residence, by age group

(predictive margins, controlled for gender, and migration background)

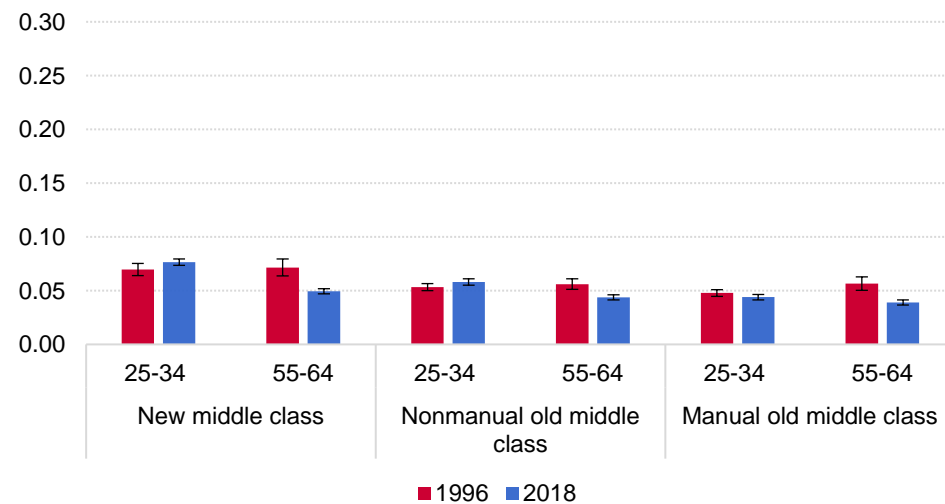
Rural communities



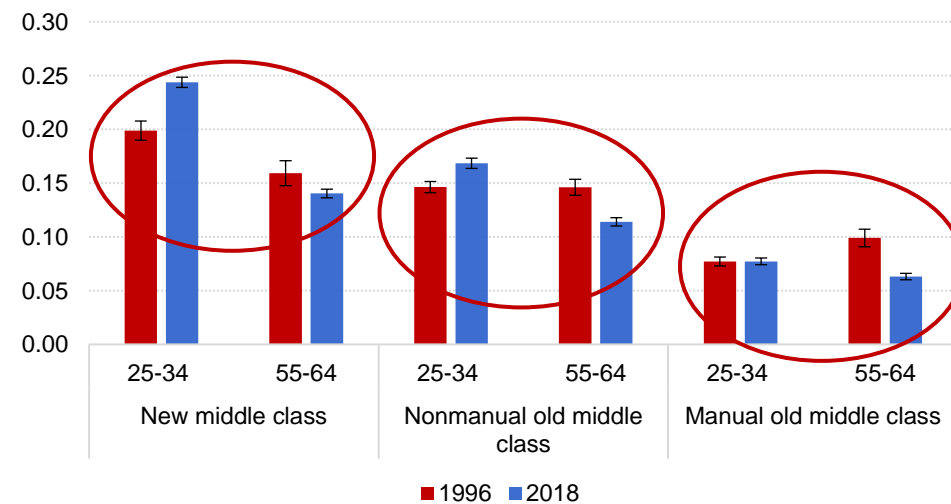
Small towns



Major cities

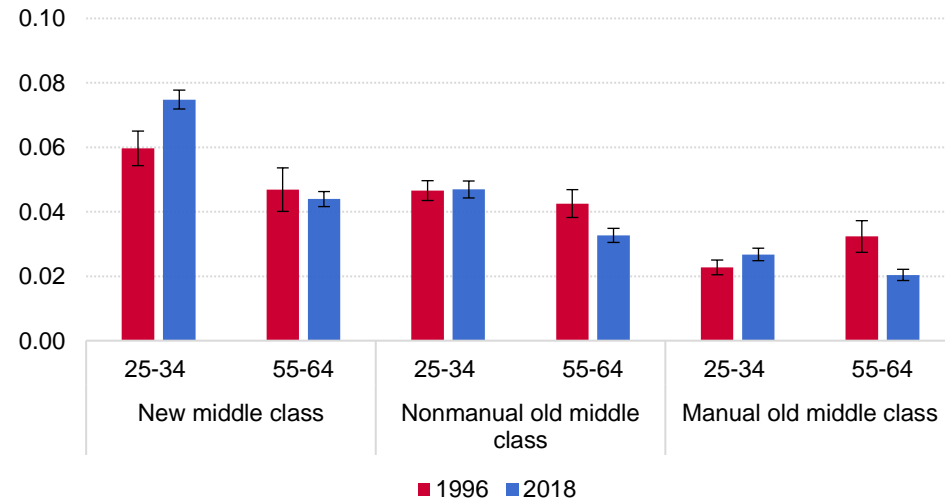


Metropolises

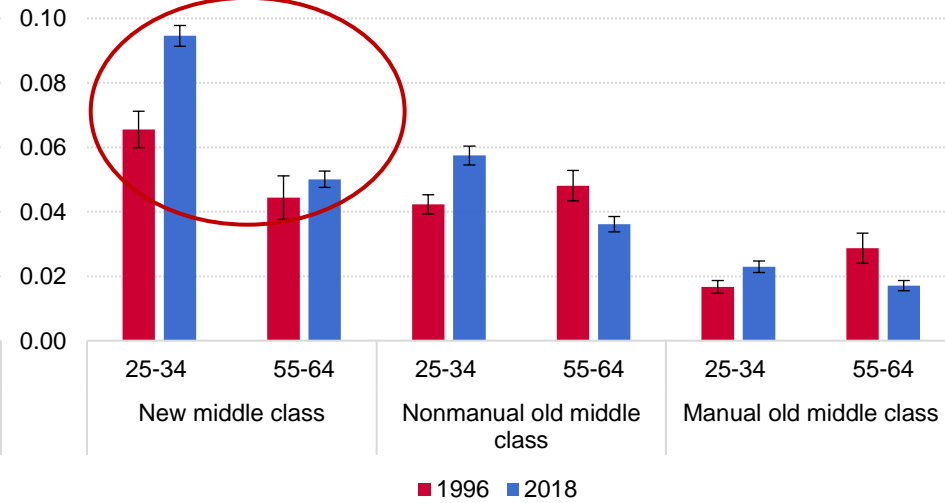


Class-specific differences in place of residence, by age group (predictive margins, controlled for gender, and migration background)

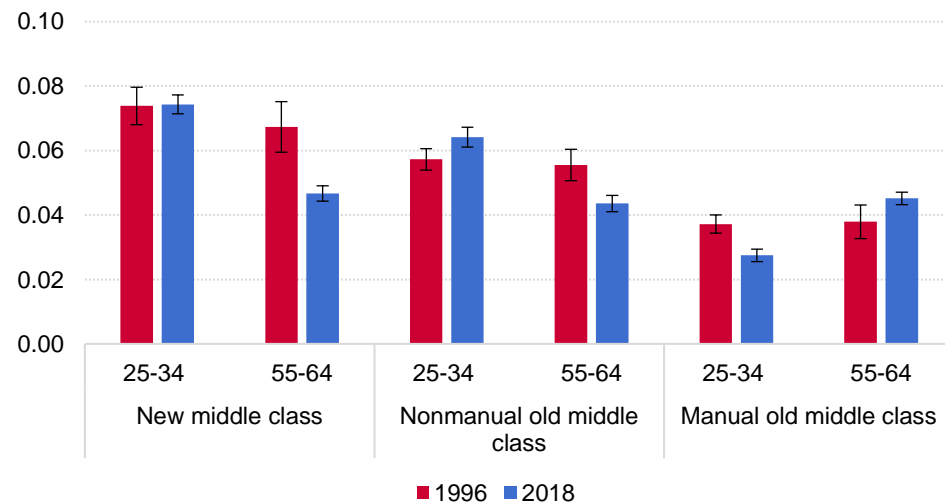
Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Stuttgart



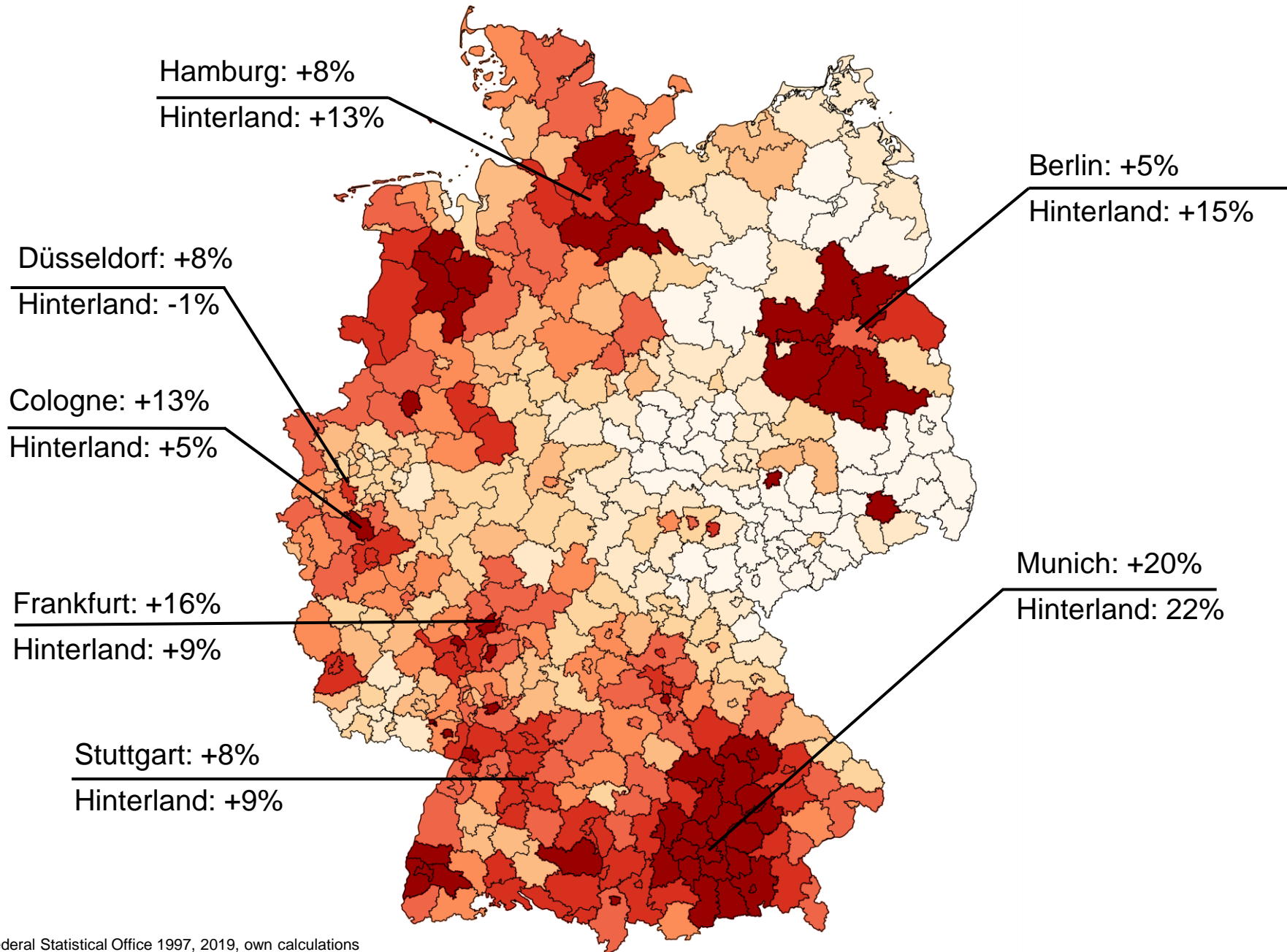
Munich, Cologne and Frankfurt



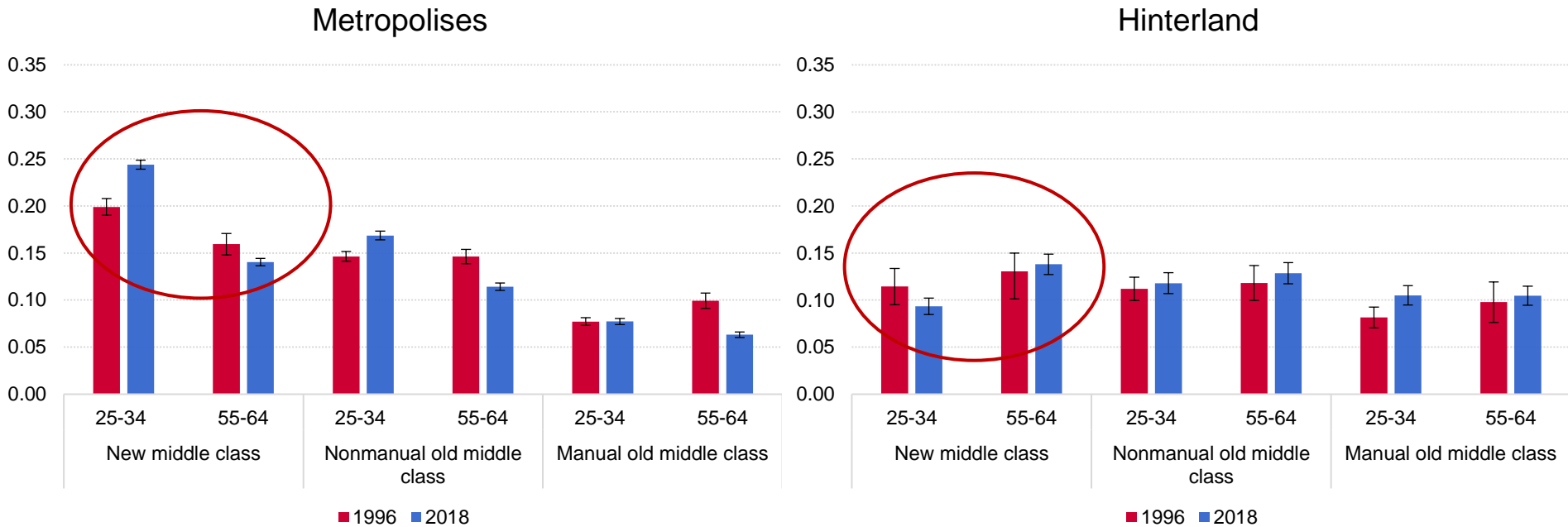
Berlin



Population change, 1996-2018 (%)

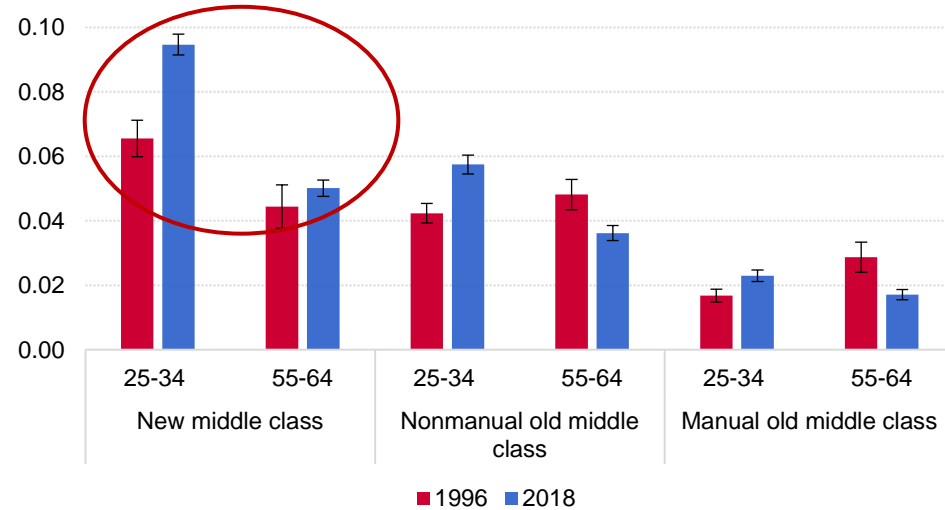


Class-specific differences in place of residence: predictive margins

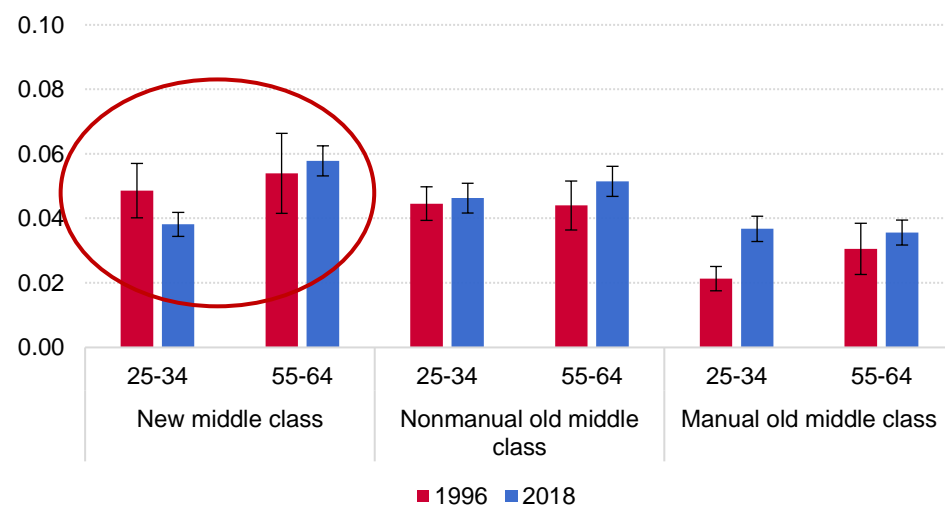


Class-specific differences in place of residence, by age group (predictive margins, controlled for gender, and migration background)

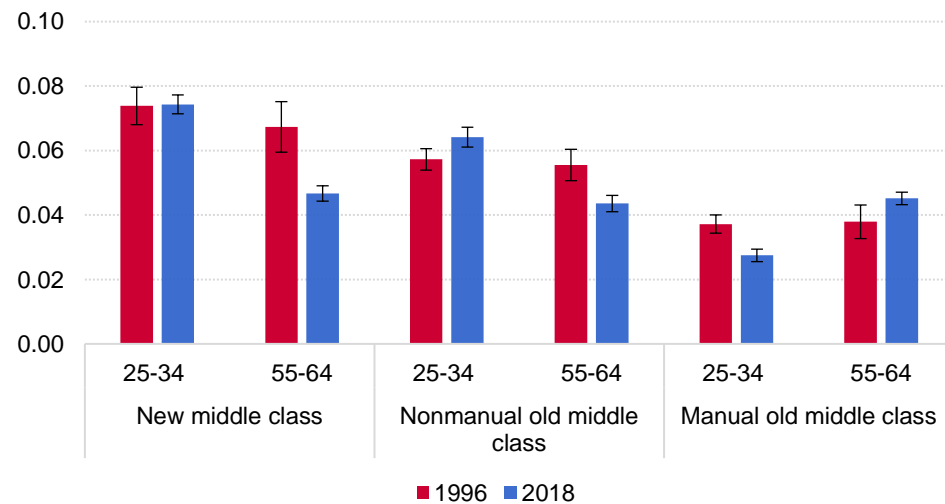
Munich, Cologne and Frankfurt



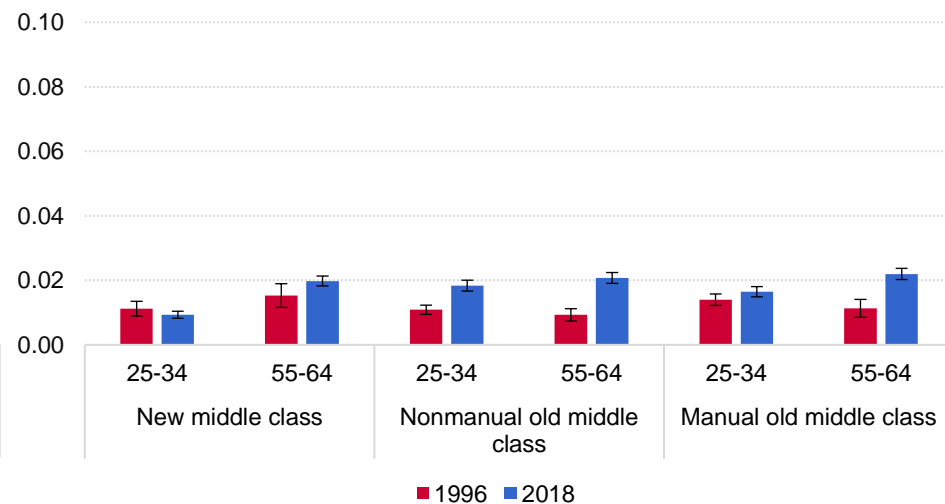
Hinterland of Munich, Cologne and Frankfurt



Berlin



Hinterland of Berlin



Conclusion

We observe changes in residential locations among members of the 'new' and 'old' middle classes but we find **no evidence of spatial polarization**

We **do not find a 'concentration' of the 'new' middle class in the metropolises** (in the youngest age group, only 25% of this class live in the metropolises)

Munich, Cologne, and Frankfurt seem to disproportionately attract the member of the 'new' middle class, but these cities also attract both the manual and nonmanual 'old' middle class

Residential disparities are stronger **among the younger age group** than among the older age group

Between 1996 and 2018, regardless of class, the older people are more likely to live in small towns, while the younger people are more likely to live in metropolises



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Thank you for your attention

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