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Part III

The Structure of Contemporary Stratification

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Theories of Class

► MARK AND POST-MARKISTS

KARL MARX

Alienation and Social Classes

We shall begin from a *contemporary* economic fact. The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces and the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more goods he creates. The *devaluation* of the human world increases in direct relation with the *increase in value* of the world of things. Labour does not only create goods; it also produces itself and the worker as a *commodity*, and indeed in the same proportion as it produces goods.

This fact simply implies that the object produced by labour, its product, now stands opposed to it as an *alien being*, as a *power independent* of the producer. The product of labour is labour which has been embodied in an object and turned into a physical thing; this product is an *objectification* of labour. The performance of work is at the same time its objectification. The performance of work appears in the sphere of political economy as a *violation* of the worker, objectification as a *loss* and as *servitude to the object*, and appropriation as *alienation*.

So much does the performance of work appear as violation that the worker is vitiated to the point of starvation. So much does objecti-

fication appear as loss of the object that the worker is deprived of the most essential things not only of life but also of work. Labour itself becomes an object which he can acquire only by the greatest effort and with unpredictable interruptions. So much does the appropriation of the object appear as alienation that the more objects the worker produces the fewer he can possess and the more he falls under the domination of his product, of capital.

All these consequences follow from the fact that the worker is related to the *product of his labour* as to an *alien object*. For it is clear on this presupposition that the more the worker expends himself in work the more powerful becomes the world of objects which he creates in face of himself, the poorer he becomes in his inner life, and the less he belongs to himself. It is just the same as in religion. The more of himself man attributes to God the less he has left in himself. The worker puts his life into the object, and his life then belongs no longer to himself but to the object. The greater his activity, therefore, the less he possesses. What is embodied in the product of his labour is no longer his own. The greater this product is, therefore, the more he is diminished. The *alienation* of the worker in his product means not only that his labour becomes an object, assumes an *external existence*, but that it exists independently, *outside himself*, and alien to him, and that it stands opposed to him as an autonomous power.

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The life which he has given to the object sets itself against him as an alien and hostile force....

So far we have considered the alienation of the worker only from one aspect; namely, *his relationship with the products of his labour*. However, alienation appears not merely in the result but also in the *process of production*, within *productive activity* itself. How could the worker stand in an alien relationship to the product of his activity if he did not alienate himself in the act of production itself? The product is indeed only the *résumé* of activity, of production. Consequently, if the product of labour is alienation, production itself must be active alienation—the alienation of activity and the activity of alienation. The alienation of the object of labour merely summarizes the alienation in the work activity itself.

What constitutes the alienation of labour? First, that the work is *external* to the worker, that it is not part of his nature; and that, consequently, he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery rather than well-being, does not develop freely his mental and physical energies but is physically exhausted and mentally debased. The worker, therefore, feels himself at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless. His work is not voluntary but imposed, *forced labour*. It is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a *means* for satisfying other needs. Its alien character is clearly shown by the fact that as soon as there is no physical or other compulsion it is avoided like the plague. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Finally, the external character of work for the worker is shown by the fact that it is not his own work but work for someone else, that in work he does not belong to himself but to another person.

Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of human fantasy, of the human brain and heart, reacts independently as an alien activity of gods or devils upon the individual, so the activity of the worker is not his own spontaneous activity. It is another's activity and a loss of his own spontaneity.

We arrive at the result that man (the worker) feels himself to be freely active only in his animal functions—eating, drinking and procreating, or at most also in his dwelling and in personal adornment—while in his human functions he is reduced to an animal. The animal becomes human and the human becomes animal.

Eating, drinking and procreating are of course also genuine human functions. But abstractly considered, apart from the environment of human activities, and turned into final and sole ends, they are animal functions.

We have now considered the act of alienation of practical human activity, labour, from two aspects: (1) the relationship of the worker to the *product of labour* as an alien object which dominates him. This relationship is at the same time the relationship to the sensuous external world, to natural objects, as an alien and hostile world; (2) the relationship of labour to the *act of production* within labour. This is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something alien and not belonging to him, activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as enasculation, the *personal* physical and mental energy of the worker, his personal life (for what is life but activity?), as an activity which is directed against himself, independent of him and not belonging to him. This is *self-alienation* as against the above-mentioned alienation of the thing.

We have now to infer a third characteristic of *alienated labour* from the two we have considered.

Man is a species-being not only in the sense that he makes the community (his own as well as those of other things) his object both practically and theoretically, but also (and this is simply another expression for the same thing) in the sense that he treats himself as the present, living species, as a *universal* and consequently *free* being.

Species-life, for man as for animals, has its physical basis in the fact that man (like animals) lives from inorganic nature, and since man is more universal than an animal so the range of inorganic nature from which he lives is more universal. Plants, animals, minerals,

air, light, etc. constitute, from the theoretical aspect, a part of human consciousness as objects of natural science and art; they are man's spiritual inorganic nature, his intellectual means of life, which he must first prepare for enjoyment and perpetuation. So also, from the practical aspect, they form a part of human life and activity. In practice man lives only from these natural products, whether in the form of food, heating, clothing, housing, etc. The universality of man appears in practice in the universality which makes the whole of nature into his inorganic body: (1) as a direct means of life; and equally (2) as the material object and instrument of his life activity. Nature is the inorganic body of man; that is to say nature, excluding the human body itself. To say that man *lives* from nature means that nature is his *body* with which he must remain in a continuous interchange in order not to die. The statement that the physical and mental life of man, and nature, are interdependent means simply that nature is interdependent with itself, for man is a part of nature.

Since alienated labour: (1) alienates nature from man; and (2) alienates man from himself, from his own active function, his life activity; so it alienates him from the species. It makes *species-life* into a means of individual life. In the first place it alienates species-life and individual life, and secondly, it turns the latter, as an abstraction, into the purpose of the former, also in its abstract and alienated form.

For labour, *life activity*, *productive life*, now appear to man only as *means* for the satisfaction of a need, the need to maintain his physical existence. Productive life is, however, species-life. It is life creating life. In the type of life activity resides the whole character of a species, its species-character; and free, conscious activity is the species-character of human beings. Life itself appears only as a *means of life*.

The animal is one with its life activity. It does not distinguish the activity from itself. It is *its activity*. But man makes his life activity itself an object of his will and consciousness. He has a conscious life activity. It is not a determination with which he is completely iden-

tified. Conscious life activity distinguishes man from the life activity of animals. Only for this reason is he a species-being. Or rather, he is only a self-conscious being, i.e. his own life is an object for him, because he is a species-being. Only for this reason is his activity free activity. Alienated labour reverses the relationship, in that man because he is a self-conscious being makes his life activity, his *being*, only a means for his *existence*.

The practical construction of an *objective world*, the *manipulation* of inorganic nature, is the confirmation of man as a conscious species-being, i.e. a being who treats the species as his own being or himself as a species-being. Of course, animals also produce. They construct nests, dwellings, as in the case of bees, beavers, ants, etc. But they only produce what is strictly necessary for themselves or their young. They produce only in a single direction, while man produces universally. They produce only under the compulsion of direct physical needs, while man produces when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom from such need. Animals produce only themselves, while man reproduces the whole of nature. The products of animal production belong directly to their physical bodies, while man is free in face of his product. Animals construct only in accordance with the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man knows how to produce in accordance with the standards of every species and knows how to apply the appropriate standard to the object. Thus man constructs also in accordance with the laws of beauty.

It is just in his work upon the objective world that man really proves himself as a *species-being*. This production is his active species-life. By means of it nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of labour is, therefore, the *objectification* of man's *species-life*; for he no longer reproduces himself merely intellectually, as in consciousness, but actively and in a real sense, and he sees his own reflection in a world which he has constructed. While, therefore, alienated labour takes away the object of production from man, it also takes away his *species-life*, his

real objectivity as a species-being, and changes his advantage over animals into a disadvantage in so far as his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him.

Just as alienated labour transforms free and self-directed activity into a means, so it transforms the species-life of man into a means of physical existence.

Consciousness, which man has from his species, is transformed through alienation so that species-life becomes only a means for him. (3) Thus alienated labour turns the *species-life of man*, and also nature as his mental species-property, into an *alien being* and into a *means* for his *individual existence*. It alienates from man his own body, external nature, his mental life and his *human life*. (4) A direct consequence of the alienation of man from the product of his labour, from his life activity and from his species-life, is that *man is alienated* from other *men*. When man confronts himself he also confronts *other men*. What is true of man's relationship to his work, to the product of his work and to himself, is also true of his relationship to other men, to their labour and to the objects of their labour.

In general, the statement that man is alienated from his species-life means that each man is alienated from others, and that each of the others is likewise alienated from human life.

Human alienation, and above all the relation of man to himself, is first realized and expressed in the relationship between each man and other men. Thus in the relationship of alienated labour every man regards other men according to the standards and relationships in which he finds himself placed as a worker.

We began with an economic fact, the alienation of the worker and his production. We have expressed this fact in conceptual terms as *alienated labour*, and in analysing the concept we have merely analysed an economic fact.

Let us now examine further how this concept of alienated labour must express and reveal itself in reality. If the product of labour is alien to me and confronts me as an alien power, to whom does it belong? If my own activity does not belong to me but is an alien,

forced activity, to whom does it belong? To a being *other* than myself. And who is this being? The *gods*? It is apparent in the earliest stages of advanced production, e.g. temple building, etc. in Egypt, India, Mexico, and in the service rendered to gods, that the product belonged to the gods. But the gods alone were never the lords of labour. And no more was *nature*. What a contradiction it would be if the more man subjugates nature by his labour, and the more the marvels of the gods are rendered superfluous by the marvels of industry, the more he should abstain from his joy in producing and his enjoyment of the product for love of these powers.

The *alien* being to whom labour and the product of labour belong, to whose service labour is devoted, and to whose enjoyment the product of labour goes, can only be *man* himself. If the product of labour does not belong to the worker, but confronts him as an alien power, this can only be because it belongs to a *man other than the worker*. If his activity is a torment to him it must be a source of *enjoyment* and pleasure to another. Not the gods, nor nature, but only man himself can be this alien power over men.

Consider the earlier statement that the relation of man to himself is first realized, *objectified*, through his relation to other men. If he is related to the product of his labour, his objectified labour, as to an *alien*, hostile, powerful and independent object, he is related in such a way that another alien, hostile, powerful and independent man is the lord of this object. If he is related to his own activity as to unfree activity, then he is related to it as activity in the service, and under the domination, coercion and yoke, of another man. . . .

Thus, through alienated labour the worker creates the relation of another man, who does not work and is outside the work process, to this labour. The relation of the worker to work also produces the relation of the capitalist (or whatever one likes to call the lord of labour) to work. *Private property* is, therefore, the product, the necessary result, of *alienated labour*, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.

Private property is thus derived from the analysis of the concept of *alienated labour*; that is, alienated man, alienated labour, alienated life, and estranged man.

We have, of course, derived the concept of *alienated labour* (*alienated life*) from political economy, from an analysis of the *movement of private property*. But the analysis of this concept shows that although private property appears to be the basis and cause of alienated labour, it is rather a consequence of the latter, just as the gods are *fundamentally* not the cause but the product of confusions of human reason. At a later stage, however, there is a reciprocal influence.

Only in the final stage of the development of private property is its secret revealed, namely, that it is on one hand the *product* of alienated labour, and on the other hand the *means* by which labour is alienated, the *realization of this alienation*.

The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts,
pp. 121-131

K A R L M A R X

Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism

The history of all hitherto existing society¹ is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master² and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open

The possessing class and the proletarian class represent one and the same human self-alienation. But the former feels satisfied and affirmed in this self-alienation, experiences the alienation as a sign of *its own power*, and possesses in it the *appearance* of a human existence. The latter, however, feels destroyed in this alienation, seeing in it its own impotence and the reality of an inhuman existence. To use Hegel's expression, this class is, within depravity, an *indignation* against this depravity, an indignation necessarily aroused in this class by the contradiction between its human *nature* and its life-situation, which is a blatant, outright and all-embracing denial of that very nature.

Within the antagonism as a whole, therefore, private property represents the *conservative* side and the proletariat the *destructive* side. From the former comes action aimed at preserving the antagonism; from the latter, action aimed at its destruction.

The Holy Family: A Critique of Critical Criticism,
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fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in

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almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, under which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeoisie.

III / The Structure of Contemporary Stratification

Modern industry has established the world-market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the mediæval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world-market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water

Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism

of egoistical calculation. It has resolved of personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which Reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, *i.e.*, to become bourgeois

themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiosyncrasy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations

of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economical and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois

society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, as the decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work ex-

acted in a given time or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, and he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then

by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves: they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeois, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeois. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeois; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeois.

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Therupon the workers begin to form combinations ('Trades'

Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeois itself. Thus the ten-hours' bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeois finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeois itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times, with the bourgeois of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeois itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeois.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeois, so now a portion of the bourgeois goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeois today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeois, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The "dangerous class," the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution, its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family-relations; modern, industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeois is at first a national struggle. The proletarian of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeois.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeois lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat. Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism

onism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

Notes

1. That is, all *written* history. In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organisation existing

previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

2. Guild-master, that is, a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of a guild. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

3. "Commune" was the name taken, in France, by the nascent towns even before they had conquered from their feudal lords and masters local self-government and political rights as the "Third Estate". Generally speaking, for the economical development of the bourgeoisie, England is here taken as the typical country; for its political development, France. [Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.]

This was the name given their urban communities by the townsmen of Italy and France, after they had purchased or wrested their initial rights of self-government from their feudal lords. [Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.]

The Communist Manifesto, pp. 108-119

The first attempts of workers to *associate* among themselves always take place in the form of combinations.

Large-scale industry concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of wages, this common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance—*combination*. Thus combination always has a double aim, that of stopping competition among the workers, so that they can carry on general competition with the capitalist. If the first aim of resistance was merely the maintenance of wages, combinations, at first isolated, constitute themselves into groups as the capitalists in their turn unite for the purpose of repression, and in face of all ways united capital, the maintenance of the association becomes more necessary to them than that of wages. This is so true that English economists are amazed to see the workers sacrifice a good part of their wages in favour of associations, which, in the eyes of these economists, are established solely in favour of wages. In this struggle—a veritable civil war—all the elements necessary for a

coming battle unite and develop. Once it has reached this point, association takes on a political character.

Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle.

In the bourgeoisie we have two phases to distinguish: that in which it constituted itself as a class under the regime of feudalism and absolute monarchy, and that in which, already constituted as a class, it overthrew feudalism and monarchy to make society into a bourgeois society. The first of these phases was the longer and necessitated the greater efforts. This too began by partial combinations against the feudal lords.

Much research has been carried out to trace the different historical phases that the bourgeoisie has passed through, from the commune up to its constitution as a class.

But when it is a question of making a precise study of strikes, combinations and other forms in which the proletarians carry out before our eyes their organization as a class, some are seized with real fear and others display a *transcendental* disdain.

An oppressed class is the vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes. The emancipation of the oppressed class thus implies necessarily the creation of a new society. For the oppressed class to be able to emancipate itself it is necessary that the productive powers already acquired and the existing social relations should no longer be capable of existing side by side. Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself. The organization of revolutionary elements as a class supposes the existence of all the pro-

ductive forces which could be engendered in the bosom of the old society.

Does this mean that after the fall of the old society there will be a new class domination culminating in a new political power? No.

The condition for the emancipation of the working class is the abolition of every class, just as the condition for the liberation of the third estate, of the bourgeois order, was the abolition of all estates¹ and all orders.

The working class, in the course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so-called, since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society.

Meanwhile the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is a struggle of class against class, a struggle which carried to its highest expression is a total revolution. Indeed, is it at all surprising that a society founded on the opposition of classes should culminate in brutal *contradiction*, the shock of body against body, as its final *dénouement*?

Do not say that social movement excludes political movement. There is never a political movement which is not at the same time social.

It is only in an order of things in which there are no more classes and class antagonisms that *social evolutions* will cease to be *political revolutions*. Till then, on the eve of every general reshuffling of society, the last word of social science will always be:

"*Le combat ou la mort; la lutte sanguinaire ou le néant. C'est ainsi que la question est inévitablement posée.*"²

Notes

1. Estates here in the historical sense of the estates of feudalism, estates with definite and limited privileges. The revolution of the bourgeoisie abolished the estates and their privileges. Bourgeois society knows only *classes*. It was, therefore, absolutely in contradiction with history to describe the proletariat as the "fourth estate." [Note by F. Engels to the German edition, 1885.]

2. "Combat or death; bloody struggle or extinction. It is thus that the question is inexorably put." George Sand, *Jean Ziska*.

The Poverty of Philosophy, pp. 172-175

The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. The isolation is increased by France's bad means of communication and by the poverty of the peasants. Their field of production, the small holding, admits of no division of labour in its cultivation, no application of science and, therefore, no diversity of development, no variety of talent, no wealth of social relationships. Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society. A small holding, a peasant and his family, alongside them another small holding, another peasant and another family. A few score of these make up a village, and a few score of villages make up a Department. In this way, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes. In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organisation among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their

III / The Structure of Contemporary Stratification

representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself.

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, pp. 478-479

The owners merely of labour-power, owners of capital, and landowners, whose respective sources of income are wages, profit and ground-rent, in other words, wage-labourers, capitalists and landowners, constitute then three big classes of modern society based upon the capitalist mode of production.

In England, modern society is indisputably most highly and classically developed in economic structure. Nevertheless, even here the stratification of classes does not appear in its pure form. Middle and intermediate strata even here obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere (although incomparably less in rural districts than in the cities). However, this is immaterial for our analysis. We have seen that the continual tendency and law of development of the capitalist mode of production is more and more to divorce the means of production from labour, and more and more to concentrate the scattered means of production into large groups, thereby transforming labour into wage-labour and the means of production into capital. And to this tendency, on the other hand, corresponds the independent separation of landed property from capital and labour, or the transformation of all landed property into the form of landed property corresponding to the capitalist mode of production.

The first question to be answered is this: What constitutes a class?—and the reply to this follows naturally from the reply to another question, namely: What makes wage-labourers, capitalists and landlords constitute the three great social classes?

Ideology and Class

At first glance—the identity of revenues and sources of revenue. There are three great social groups whose members, the individuals forming them, live on wages, profit and ground-rent respectively, on the realisation of their labour-power, their capital, and their landed property.

However, from this standpoint, physicians and officials, e.g., would also constitute two classes, for they belong to two distinct social groups, the members of each of these groups

K A R L M A R X

Ideology and Class

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent

receiving their revenue from one and the same source. The same would also be true of the infinite fragmentation of interest and rank into which the division of social labour splits labourers as well as capitalists and landlords—the latter, e.g., into owners of vineyards, farm owners, owners of forests, mine owners and owners of fisheries.

[Here the manuscript breaks off.]

Capital, Vol. III, pp. 885-886

and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. For instance, in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy, and bourgeoisie are contending for mastery and where, therefore, mastery is shared, the doctrine of the separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an "eternal law".

The division of labour manifests itself in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labour, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class (its active, conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas

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about themselves. Within this class this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts, which, however, in the case of a practical collision, in which the class itself is endangered, automatically comes to nothing, in which case there also vanishes the semblance that the ruling ideas were not the ideas of the ruling class and had a power distinct from the power of this class. The existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular period presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class.

If now in considering the course of history we detach the ideas of the ruling class from the ruling class itself and attribute to them an independent existence, if we confine ourselves to saying that these or those ideas were dominant at a given time, without bothering ourselves about the conditions of production and the products of these ideas, if we thus ignore the individuals and world conditions which are the source of the ideas, we can say, for instance, that during the time that the aristocracy was dominant, the concepts honour, loyalty, etc. were dominant, during the dominance of the bourgeoisie the concepts freedom, equality, etc. The ruling class itself on the whole imagines this to be so. This conception of history, which is common to all historians, particularly since the eighteenth century, will necessarily come up against the phenomenon that increasingly abstract ideas hold sway, i.e. ideas which increasingly take on the form of universality. For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and to represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. The class making a revolution appears from the very start, if only because it is opposed to a class, not as a class but as the representative of the whole of society; it appears as the whole mass of society

confronting the one ruling class.¹ It can do this because, to start with, its interest really is more connected with the common interest of all other non-ruling classes, because under the pressure of hitherto existing conditions its interest has not yet been able to develop as the particular interest of a particular class. Its victory, therefore, benefits also many individuals of the other classes which are not winning a dominant position, but only insofar as it now puts these individuals in a position to raise themselves into the ruling class. When the French bourgeoisie overthrew the power of the aristocracy, it thereby made it possible for many proletarians to raise themselves above the proletariat, but only insofar as they became bourgeois. Every new class, therefore, achieves its hegemony only on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously, whereas the opposition of the non-ruling class against the new ruling class later develops all the more sharply and profoundly. Both these things determine the fact that the struggle to be waged against this new ruling class, in its turn, aims at a more decided and radical negation of the previous conditions of society than could all previous classes which sought to rule.

This whole semblance, that the rule of a certain class is only the rule of certain ideas, comes to a natural end, of course, as soon as class rule in general ceases to be the form in which society is organised, that is to say, as soon as it is no longer necessary to represent a particular interest as general or the "general interest" as ruling.

Notes

1. Universality corresponds to (1) the class versus the estate, (2) the competition, world-wide intercourse, etc., (3) the great numerical strength of the ruling class, (4) the illusion of the common interest (in the beginning this illusion is true), (5) the delusion of the ideologists and the division of labour. [Marginal note by Marx.]

KARL MARX

Value and Surplus Value

What is the common social substance of all commodities? It is *Labour*. To produce a commodity a certain amount of labour must be bestowed upon it, or worked up in it. And I say not only *Labour*, but *social Labour*. A man who produces an article for his own immediate use, to consume it himself, creates a *product*, but not a *commodity*. As a self-sustaining producer he has nothing to do with society. But to produce a *commodity*, a man must not only produce an article satisfying some social want, but his labour itself must form part and parcel of the total sum of labour expended by society. It must be subordinate to the *Division of Labour within Society*. It is nothing without the other divisions of labour, and on its part is required to integrate them.

If we consider *commodities as values*, we consider them exclusively under the single aspect of *realised, fixed*, or, if you like, *crystallised social labour*. In this respect they can differ only by representing greater or smaller quantities of labour, as, for example, a greater amount of labour may be worked up in a silken handkerchief than in a brick. But how does one measure *quantities of labour*? By the *time the labour lasts*, in measuring the labour by the hour, the day, etc. Of course, to apply this measure, all sorts of labour are reduced to average or simple labour as their unit.

We arrive, therefore, at this conclusion. A commodity has a *value*, because it is a *crystallisation of social labour*. The *greatness* of its value, of its *relative value*, depends upon the greater or less amount of that social substance contained in it; that is to say, on the relative mass of labour necessary for its production. The *relative values of commodities* are, therefore, determined by the *respective quantities or amounts of labour, worked up, realised, fixed in them*. The *correlative quantities of commodities* which can be produced in the *same time of labour* are *equal*. Or the value of one commodity is to the value of another commodity as the quantity of labour fixed in the one is to the quantity of labour fixed in the other....

What, then, is the *Value of Labouring Power*?

Like that of every other commodity, its value is determined by the quantity of labour necessary to produce it. The labouring power of a man exists only in his living individuality. A certain mass of necessities must be consumed by a man to grow up and maintain his life. But the man, like the machine, will wear out, and must be replaced by another man. Beside the mass of necessities required for *his own* maintenance, he wants another amount of necessities to bring up a certain quota of children that are to replace him on the labour market and to perpetuate the race of labourers. Moreover, to develop his labouring power, and acquire a given skill, another amount of values must be spent. For our purpose it suffices to consider only *average* labour, the costs of whose education and development are vanishing magnitudes. Still I

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must seize upon this occasion to state that, as the costs of producing labouring powers of different quality differ, so must differ the values of the labouring powers employed in different trades. The cry for an *equality of wages* rests, therefore, upon a mistake, is an *insane* wish never to be fulfilled. It is an offspring of that false and superficial radicalism that accepts premises and tries to evade conclusions. Upon the basis of the wages system the value of labouring power is settled like that of every other commodity; and as different kinds of labouring power have different values, or require different quantities of labour for their production, they *must* fetch different prices in the labour market. To clamour for *equal or even equitable retribution* on the basis of the wages system is the same as to clamour for *freedom* on the basis of the slavery system. What you think just or equitable is out of the question. The question is: What is necessary and unavoidable with a given system of production?

After what has been said, it will be seen that the *value of labouring power* is determined by the *value of the necessities* required to produce, develop, maintain, and perpetuate the labouring power.

Now suppose that the average amount of the daily necessities of a labouring man require *six hours of average labour* for their production. Suppose, moreover, six hours of average labour to be also realised in a quantity of gold equal to 3s. Then 3s. would be the *Price*, or the monetary expression of the *Daily Value* of that man's *Labouring Power*. If he worked daily six hours he would daily produce a value sufficient to buy the average amount of his daily necessities, or to maintain himself as a labouring man.

But our man is a wages labourer. He must, therefore, sell his labouring power to a capitalist. If he sells it at 3s. daily, or 18s. weekly, he sells it at its value. Suppose him to be a spinner. If he works six hours daily he will add to the cotton a value of 3s. daily. This value, daily added by him, would be an exact equivalent for the wages, or the price of his labouring power, received daily. But in that

case *no surplus value or surplus produce* whatever would go to the capitalist. Here, then, we come to the rub.

In buying the labouring power of the workman, and paying its value, the capitalist, like every other purchaser, has acquired the right to consume or use the commodity bought. You consume or use the labouring power of a man by making him work as you consume or use a machine by making it run. By paying the daily or weekly value of the labouring power of the workman, the capitalist has, therefore, acquired the right to use or make that labouring power work during the *whole day or week*...

For the present I want to turn your attention to one decisive point.

The *value* of the labouring power is determined by the quantity of labour necessary to maintain or reproduce it, but the *use* of that labouring power is only limited by the active energies and physical strength of the labourer. The daily or weekly *value* of the labouring power is quite distinct from the daily or weekly exercise of that power, the same as the food a horse wants and the time it can carry the horseman are quite distinct. The quantity of labour by which the *value* of the workman's labouring power is limited forms by no means a limit to the quantity of labour which his labouring power is apt to perform. Take the example of our spinner. We have seen that, to daily reproduce his labouring power, he must daily reproduce a value of three shillings, which he will do by working six hours daily. But this does not disable him from working ten or twelve or more hours a day. But by paying the daily or weekly *value* of the spinner's labouring power, the capitalist has acquired the right of using that labouring power during the *whole day or week*. He will, therefore, make him work say, daily, *twelve* hours. *Over and above* the six hours required to replace his wages, or the value of his labouring power, he will, therefore, have to work *six other hours*, which I shall call hours of *surplus labour*, which surplus labour will realise itself in a *surplus value* and a *surplus produce*. If our spinner,

for example, by his daily labour of six hours, added three shillings' value to the cotton, a value forming an exact equivalent to his wages, he will, in twelve hours, add six shillings' worth to the cotton, and produce a *proportional surplus of yarn*. As he has sold his labouring power to the capitalist, the whole value or produce created by him belongs to the capitalist, the owner *pro ten*, of his labouring power. By advancing three shillings, the capitalist will, therefore, realise a value of six shillings, because, advancing a value in which six hours of labour are crystallised, he will receive in return a value in which twelve hours of labour are crystallised. By repeating this same process daily, the capitalist will daily advance three shillings and daily pocket six shillings, one-half of which will go to pay wages anew, and the other half

of which will form *surplus value*, for which the capitalist pays no equivalent. It is this sort of *exchange between capital and labour* upon which capitalistic production, or the wages system, is founded, and which must constantly result in reproducing the working man as a working man, and the capitalist as a capitalist.

The *rate of surplus value*, all other circumstances remaining the same, will depend on the proportion between that part of the working day necessary to reproduce the value of the labouring power and the *surplus time* or *surplus labour* performed for the capitalist. It will, therefore, depend on the *ratio in which the working day is prolonged over and above that extent*, by working which the working man would only reproduce the value of his labouring power, or replace his wages.

RALF DAHRENDORF

Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society

One of the main questions which the present investigation is supposed to answer is: Do classes and class conflicts belong to that group of phenomena by which only the capitalist type of industrial society is characterized, or is their existence a consequence of industrial production itself, and are they therefore a lasting feature of industrial societies? This question will accompany us throughout the following analysis of changes in the structure of industrial societies since Marx.

Ownership and Control, or the Decomposition of Capital

Marx was right in seeking the root of social change in capitalist society in the sphere of industrial production, but the direction these changes took turned out to be directly contrary to Marx's expectations. With respect to capital, he had, in his later years, at least a vision of what was going to happen, as his brief and somewhat puzzled analysis of joint-stock companies shows. Joint-stock companies were legally recognized in Germany, England, France, and the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. Laws often indicate the conclusion of social developments, and indeed early forms of joint-stock compa-

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nies can be traced back at least to the commercial companies and trade societies of the seventeenth century. But it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that this type of enterprise first gained wide recognition and expanded into all branches of economic activity. Today, more than two-thirds of all companies in advanced industrial societies are joint-stock companies, and their property exceeds four-fifths of the total property in economic enterprises. The enterprise owned and run by an individual, or even a family, has long ceased to be the dominant pattern of economic organization....

According to the radical view, joint-stock companies involve a complete break with earlier capitalist traditions. By separating what has come to be called ownership and control, they give rise to a new group of managers who are utterly different from their capitalist predecessors. Thus for Marx, the joint-stock company involves a complete alienation of capital "from the real producers, and its position as alien property to all individuals really participating in production, from the manager down to the last day-laborer" (1953, Vol. III, p. 478). In other words, by separating ownership and control, the joint-stock company reduces the distance between manager and worker while at the same time removing the owners altogether from the sphere of production and thereby isolating their function as exploiters of others. It is merely a step from this kind of analysis to the thesis that, as Renner has it, the "capitalists without function" yield to the "functionaries without capital," and that this new ruling group of industry bears little resemblance to the old "full capitalists" (1953, pp. 182, 198). Burnham, Geiger, Sering, and others followed Marx (and Renner) in this radical interpretation of the social effects of joint-stock companies.

The conservative view, on the other hand, holds that the consequences of the apparent separation of ownership and control have been vastly overrated. It is argued that in fact owners and controllers, i.e., stockholders and managers, are a fairly homogeneous group. There are often direct connections between

them, and where this is not the case, their outlook is sufficiently similar to justify insisting on the old assumption of a homogeneous class of capitalists opposed to an equally homogeneous class of laborers. This view is not often heard in the West nowadays, although traces of it are evident in the work of C. Wright Mills (1954, 1956). It may be added that this conservative view is clearly contrary to Marx's own analysis....

There is little reason to follow Marx and describe the condition of separation of ownership and control as a transitional form of historical development. It is no more transitional than any other stage of history, and it has already proven quite a vital pattern of social and economic structure. But I think that we can follow Marx in his radical interpretation of this phenomenon. The separation of ownership and control has replaced one group by two whose positions, roles, and outlooks are far from identical. In taking this view, one does of course agree with Marx against himself. For it follows from this that the homogeneous capitalist class predicted by Marx has in fact not developed. Capital—and thereby in capitalism—has dissolved and given way in the economic sphere, to a plurality of partly agreed, partly competing, and partly simply different groups. The effect of this development on class conflict is threefold: first, the replacement of capitalists by managers involves a change in the composition of the groups participating in conflict; second, and as a consequence of this change in recruitment and composition, there is a change in the nature of the issues that cause conflicts, for the interests of the functionaries without capital differ from those of full-blown capitalists, and so therefore do the interests of labor vis-à-vis their new opponents; and third, the decomposition of capital involves a change in the patterns of conflict. One might question whether this new conflict, in which labor is no longer opposed to a homogeneous capitalist class, can still be described as a class conflict at all. In any case, it is different from the division of the whole society into two great and homogeneous hostile camps with which Marx was

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Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society

concerned. While I would follow the radical view of the separation of ownership and control in industry to this point, there is one thing to be said in favor of the conservative view. Changes in the composition of conflict groups, of the issues, and of patterns of conflict do not imply the abolition of conflict or even of the specific conflict between management and labor in industry. Despite the effects of the decomposition of capital on class structure, we have no reason to believe that antagonisms and clashes of interest have now been named from industrial enterprises.

Skill and Stratification, or the Decomposition of Labor

While Marx had at least a premonition of things to come with respect to capital, he remained unaware of developments affecting the unity and homogeneity of labor. Yet in this respect, too, the sphere of production which loomed so large in Marx's analyses became the starting point of changes that clearly refute his predictions. The working class of today, far from being a homogeneous group of equally unskilled and impoverished people, is in fact a stratum differentiated by numerous subtle and not-so-subtle distinctions. Here, too, history has dissolved one position, or role, and has substituted for it a plurality of roles that are endowed with diverging and often conflicting expectations....

Analysis of industrial conditions suggests quite clearly that within the labor force of advanced industry we have to distinguish at least three skill groups: a growing stratum of highly skilled workmen who increasingly merge with both engineers and white-collar employees, a relatively stable stratum of semiskilled workers with a high degree of diffuse as well as specific industrial experience, and a dwindling stratum of totally unskilled laborers who are characteristically either newcomers to industry (beginners, former agricultural laborers, immigrants) or semi-unemployables. It appears, furthermore, that these three groups differ not only in their level of skill, but also in other at-

tributes and determinants of social status. The semiskilled almost invariably earn a higher wage than the unskilled, whereas the skilled are often salaried and thereby participate in white-collar status. The hierarchy of skill corresponds exactly to the hierarchy of responsibility and delegated authority within the working class. From numerous studies it would seem beyond doubt that it also correlates with the hierarchy of prestige, at the top of which we find the skilled man whose prolonged training, salary, and security convey special status, and at the bottom of which stands the unskilled man who is, according to a recent German investigation into workers' opinions, merely "working" without having an "occupation" proper (see Kluth, 1955, p. 67). Here as elsewhere Marx was evidently mistaken. "Everywhere, the working class differentiates itself more and more, on the one hand into occupational groups, on the other hand into three large categories with different, if not contradictory, interests: the skilled craftsmen, the unskilled laborers, and the semiskilled specialist workers" (Philip, 1955, p. 2).

In trying to assess the consequences of this development, it is well to remember that, for Marx, the increasing uniformity of the working class was an indispensable condition of that intensification of the class struggle which was to lead, eventually, to its climax in a revolution. The underlying argument of what for Marx became a prediction appears quite plausible. For there to be a revolution, the conflicts within a society have to become extremely intense. For conflicts to be intense, one would indeed expect its participants to be highly unified and homogeneous groups. But neither capital nor labor have developed along these lines. Capital has dissolved into at least two, in many ways distinct, elements, and so has labor. The proletarian, the impoverished slave of industry who is indistinguishable from his peers in terms of his work, his skill, his wage, and his prestige, has left the scene. What is more, it appears that by now he has been followed by his less deprived, but equally alienated successor, the worker. In

modern industry, "the worker" has become precisely the kind of abstraction which Marx quite justly resented so much. In his place, we find a plurality of status and skill groups whose interests often diverge. Demands of the skilled for security may injure the semiskilled; wage claims of the semiskilled may raise objections by the skilled; and any interest on the part of the unskilled is bound to set their more highly skilled fellow workmen worrying about differentials.

Again, as in the case of capital, it does not follow from the decomposition of labor that there is no bond left that unites most workers—at least for specific goals; nor does it follow that industrial conflict has lost its edge. But here, too, a change of the issues and, above all, of the patterns of conflict is indicated. As with the capitalist class, it has become doubtful whether speaking of the working class still makes much sense. Probably Marx would have agreed that class "is a force that unites into groups people who differ from one another, by overriding the differences between them" (Marshall, 1950, p. 114), but he certainly did not expect the differences to be so great, and the uniting force so precarious as it has turned out to be in the case both of capital and of labor. . . .

The Institutionalization of Class Conflict

A historian might argue that all the tendencies of change here described as changes in the structure of industrial societies since Marx had in fact begun before and in some cases long before Marx died in 1883. . . . There is, however, one line of social development in industrial societies which has both originated and spread since about the time of Marx's death, and which is directly relevant to our problem. Geiger, who has described this change as the "institutionalization of class conflict," says: "The tension between capital and labor is recognized as a principle of the structure of the labor market and has become a legal institution of society. . . . The methods, weapons, and techniques of the class struggle

are recognized—and are thereby brought under control. The struggle evolves according to certain rules of the game. Thereby the class struggle has lost its worst sting, it is converted into a legitimate tension between power factors which balance each other. Capital and labor struggle with each other, conclude compromises, negotiate solutions, and thereby determine wage levels, hours of work, and other conditions of work" (1949, p. 184).

Marx displayed a certain sociological naïveté when he expressed his belief that capitalist society would be entirely unable to cope with the class conflict generated by its structure. In fact, every society is capable of coping with whatever new phenomena arise in it, if only by the simple yet effective inertia which can be described, a little pretentiously, as the process of institutionalization. In the case of class conflict, institutionalization assumed a number of successive and complementary forms. It began with the painful process of recognition of the contending parties as legitimate interest groups. Within industry, a "secondary system of industrial citizenship" (Marshall, 1950, p. 68) enabled both workers and entrepreneurs to associate and defend their interests collectively. Outside industry, the primary system of political citizenship had the same effect. And while, in the stage of organization, conflict may develop a greater visible intensity, organization has at least two side effects which operate in the opposite direction. Organization presupposes the legitimacy of conflict groups, and it thereby removes the permanent and incalculable threat of guerrilla warfare. At the same time, it makes systematic regulations of conflicts possible. Organization is institutionalization, and whereas its manifest function is usually an increasingly articulate and outspoken defense of interests, it invariably has the latent function also of inaugurating routines of conflict which contribute to reducing the violence of clashes of interest. . . .

Nobody can, of course, ever be sure that a given pattern of conflict regulation will always prove successful. There are still strikes, and for all we know they will continue to occur. But it has proved possible for industrial

society to get along with the clashes of interest arising from its industrial and political structure—and it has proved possible for interest groups to get along with industrial society. Instead of a battlefield, the scene of group conflict has become a kind of market in which relatively autonomous forces contend according to certain rules of the game, by virtue of which nobody is a permanent winner or loser. This course of development must naturally be bitter for the orthodox and the dogmatic, but theirs is the kind of bitterness which makes liberal minds rejoice. . . .

Power and Authority

One of the central theses of this study consists in the assumption that the differential distribution of authority invariably becomes the determining factor of systematic social conflicts of a type that is germane to class conflicts in the traditional (Marxian) sense of this term. The structural origin of such group conflicts must be sought in the arrangement of social roles endowed with expectations of domination or subjection. Wherever there are such roles, group conflicts of the type in question are to be expected. Differentiation of groups engaged in such conflicts follows the lines of differentiation of roles that are relevant from the point of view of the exercise of authority. Identification of variously equipped authority roles is the first task of conflict analysis;¹ conceptually and empirically all further steps of analysis follow from the investigation of distributions of power and authority.

"Unfortunately, the concept of power is not a settled one in the social sciences, either in political science or in sociology" (Parsons, 1957, p. 139). Max Weber (1947), Pareto (1953), Mosca (1950), later Russell (1938), Bendix (1952), Lasswell (1936), and others have explored some of the dimensions of this category; they have not, however, reached such a degree of consensus as would enable us to employ the categories of power and authority without at least brief conceptual preliminaries. So far as the terms "power" and "authority" and their distinction are con-

cerned, I shall follow in this study the useful and well-considered definitions of Max Weber. For Weber, power is the "probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests"; whereas authority (*Herrschaft*) is the "probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (1947, p. 28). The important difference between power and authority consists in the fact that whereas power is essentially tied to the personality of individuals, authority is always associated with social positions or roles. The demagogue has power over the masses to whom he speaks or whose actions he controls; but the control of the officer over his men, the manager over his workers, the civil servant over his clientele is authority, because it exists as an expectation independent of the specific person occupying the position of officer, manager, civil servant. It is only another way of putting this difference if we say—as does Max Weber—that while power is merely a factual relation, authority is a legitimate relation of domination and subjection. In this sense, authority can be described as legitimate power.

In the present study we are concerned exclusively with relations of authority, for these alone are part of social structure and therefore permit the systematic derivation of group conflicts from the organization of total societies and associations within them. The significance of such group conflicts rests with the fact that they are not the product of structurally fortuitous relations of power but come forth wherever authority is exercised—and that means in all societies under all historical conditions. (1) Authority relations are always relations of super- and subordination. (2) Where there are authority relations, the superordinate element is socially expected to control, by orders and commands, warnings and prohibitions, the behavior of the subordinate element. (3) Such expectations attach to relatively permanent social positions rather than to the character of individuals; they are in this sense legitimate. (4) By virtue of this fact, they always involve specification of the

persons subject to control and of the spheres within which control is permissible. Authority, as distinct from power, is never a relation of generalized control over others. (5) Authority being a legitimate relation, noncompliance with authoritative commands can be sanctioned; it is indeed one of the functions of the legal system (and of course of quasi-legal customs and norms) to support the effective exercise of legitimate authority.

Alongside the term "authority," we shall employ in this study the terms "domination" and "subjection." These will be used synonymously with the rather clumsy expressions "endowed with authority" or "participating in the exercise of authority" (domination), and "deprived of authority" or "excluded from the exercise of authority" (subjection).

It seems desirable for purposes of conflict analysis to specify the relevant unit of social organization in analogy to the concept of social system in the analysis of integration. To speak of specification here is perhaps misleading. "Social system" is a very general concept applicable to all types of organization; and we shall want to employ an equally general concept which differs from that of social system by emphasizing a different aspect of the same organizations. It seems to me that Max Weber's category "imperatively coordinated association" (*Herrschaftsverband*) serves this purpose despite its clumsiness....

Empirically it is not always easy to identify the border line between domination and subjection. Authority has not remained unaffected by the modern process of division of labor. But even here, groups or aggregates can be identified which do not participate in the exercise of authority other than by complying with given commands or prohibitions. Contrary to all criteria of social stratification, authority does not permit the construction of a scale. So-called hierarchies of authority (as displayed, for example, in organization charts) are in fact hierarchies of the "plus-side" of authority, i.e., of the differentiation of domination; but there is, in every association, also a "minus-side" consisting of those who are subjected to authority rather than participate in its exercise.

In two respects this analysis has to be specified, if not supplemented. First, for the individual incumbent of roles, domination in one association does not necessarily involve domination in all others to which he belongs, and subjection, conversely, in one association does not mean subjection in all. The dichotomy of positions of authority holds for specific associations only. In a democratic state, there are both mere voters and incumbents of positions of authority such as cabinet ministers, representatives, and higher civil servants. But this does not mean that the "mere voter" cannot be incumbent of a position of authority in a different context, say, in an industrial enterprise; conversely, a cabinet minister may be, in his church, a mere member, i.e., subject to the authority of others. Although empirically a certain correlation of the authority positions of individuals in different associations seems likely, it is by no means general and is in any case a matter of specific empirical conditions. It is at least possible, if not probable, that if individuals in a given society are ranked according to the sum total of their authority positions in all associations, the resulting pattern will not be a dichotomy but rather like scales of stratification according to income or prestige. For this reason it is necessary to emphasize that in the sociological analysis of group conflict the unit of analysis is always a specific association and the dichotomy of positions within it.

As with respect to the set of roles associated with an individual, total societies, also, do not usually present an unambiguously dichotomic authority structure. There are a large number of imperatively coordinated associations in any given society. Within every one of them we can distinguish the aggregates of those who dominate and those who are subjected. But since domination in industry does not necessarily involve domination in the state, or a church, or other associations, total societies can present the picture of a plurality of competing dominant (and, conversely, subjected) aggregates. This, again, is a problem for the analysis of specific historical societies and must not be confounded with the clearer lines of differentiation within any one associ-

ation. Within the latter, the distribution of authority always sums up to zero, i.e., there always is a division involving domination and subjection.

I need hardly emphasize that from the point of view of "settling" the concepts of power and authority, the preceding discussion has raised more problems than it has solved. I believe, however, that for the purposes of this study, and of a sociological theory of conflict, little needs to be added to what has been stated here. In order somewhat to substantiate this perhaps rather bold assertion, it seems useful to recapitulate briefly the heuristic purpose and logical status of the considerations of this section.

I have introduced, as a structural determinant of conflict groups, the category of authority as exercised in imperatively coordinated associations. While agreeing with Marx that source and level of income—even socioeconomic status—cannot usefully be conceived as determinants of conflict groups, I have added to this list of erroneous approaches Marx's own in terms of property in the means of production. Authority is both a more general and a more significant social relation. The former has been shown in our critique of Marx; the latter will have to be demonstrated [elsewhere (see Dahrendorf 1959)]. The concept of authority is used, in this context, in a specific sense. It is differentiated from power by what may roughly be referred to as the element of legitimacy; and it has to be understood throughout in the restricted sense of authority as distributed and exercised in imperatively coordinated associations. While its "disruptive" or conflict-generating consequences are not the only aspect of authority, they are the one relevant in terms of the coercion model of society. Within the frame of reference of this model, (1) the distribution of authority in associations is the ultimate "cause" of the formation of conflict groups, and (2) being dichotomous, it is, in any given association, the cause of the formation of two, and only two, conflict groups.

Notes

1. To facilitate communication, I shall employ in this study a number of abbreviations. These must not however be misunderstood. Thus, "conflict analysis" in this context stands for "analysis of group conflicts of the class type, class being understood in the traditional sense." At no point do I want to imply a claim for a generalized theory of social conflict.

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ERIK OLIN WRIGHT

Varieties of Marxist Conceptions of Class Structure

The general outlines of the theory of contradictory locations within class relations were first presented in an essay in the *New Left Review* in 1976 and later elaborated in a series of other publications.¹ The basic argument revolves around an analysis of three interconnected dimensions of domination and subordination within production. Each of these dimensions involves a social relation of domination and subordination with respect to some particular resource within production: *money capital*, that is, the flow of investments into production and the direction of the overall accumulation process (accumulation of surplus value); *physical capital*, that is, the actual means of production within the production process; and *labor*, that is, the laboring activity of the direct producers within production. These relations can be characterized as relations of domination and subordination because each relation simultaneously defines those positions that have the capacity to control the particular resource and those that are excluded from such control. The first of these dimensions is often referred to as "real economic ownership"; the second and third together are often referred to as "possession."

In no sense should these three dimensions be thought of as three independent types of relations. Within capitalist production they are each necessary conditions for the existence of the others; there is no sense in which they can exist autonomously. Nevertheless, while these three dimensions of social relations are intrinsically interdependent, there is still a clear hierarchy of determination among them. The social relations of control over money capital structure, or set limits upon, the relations of control over physical capital, which in turn limit the direct control over labor within production. A rentier capitalist, therefore, who is not directly involved in control over physical capital or labor, nevertheless falls within the capitalist class because of the social relations of control over money capital ("real economic ownership" of the means of production).

The fundamental class relation between labor and capital can be thought of as a polarized, antagonistic relation along all three of these dimensions: The capitalist class occupies the dominant position with respect to the social relations of control over money capital, physical capital, and labor; the working class occupies the subordinate position within each of these dimensions of social relations.

When the class structure is analyzed at the highest level of abstraction—the level of the "pure" capitalist mode of production—these are the only two classes defined by these three dimensions of relations of production. When we move to a lower level of abstraction—the level of what Marxists call the "social formation"—other classes enter the analysis. This occurs for two basic reasons. First, concrete capitalist social formations are never characterized simply by the capitalist mode of production. Various kinds of precapitalist rela-

tions of production exist side by side with capitalist relations, although typically these are of marginal importance and are socially subordinated in various ways to the capitalist mode of production. Of particular importance in these terms is simple commodity production: the production and sale of goods by self-employed individuals who employ no workers. In terms of the three dimensions of social relations of production discussed above, such "petty bourgeois" class locations involve control over money capital and physical capital but not over labor (since no labor power is employed within production).

The second way in which additional class locations appear when we study class structures within concrete capitalist societies is that the three dimensions of social relations of production need not necessarily coincide perfectly—indeed, there are systemic forces in capitalist development working against their doing so. Such noncorrespondence generates what I have termed "contradictory locations within class relations." Three such contradictory locations are particularly important.

Managers and supervisors occupy a contradictory location between the working class and the capitalist class. Like the working class they are excluded from control over money capital (that is, from basic decisions about allocation of investments and the direction of accumulation), but unlike workers they have a certain degree of control of the physical means of production and over the labor of workers within production. Within the manager-supervisor contradictory location, top managers occupy the position closest to the capitalist class, whereas foremen occupy the location closest to the working class.

Small employers occupy a contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the capitalist class proper. Unlike the petty bourgeoisie, they do employ some labor power and thus are in a relation of exploitation with workers. But unlike the capitalist class, they are themselves directly engaged in production alongside their workers, and they do not employ sufficient quantities of labor power to accumulate large masses of capital.

Semiautonomous employees occupy a contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. Like the working class, they are excluded from any control over money capital and the labor of others, but like the petty bourgeoisie they do have some real control over their immediate physical means of production, over their direct activity within the labor process. These three contradictory locations are schematically represented in the accompanying figure and in a more formal way in table 1.

It should be noted that in table 1 there is more than one position (or "level") within each of the three dimensions of social relations of production. Take, for example, the social relations of control over physical capital, one of the two aspects of "possession" of the means of production. "Full" control in this instance implies that the position is involved in decisions concerning the operation and planning of the entire production process; "partial" control implies participation in decisions concerning specific segments of the production process; "minimal" control implies control over one's immediate means of production within the labor process; "no" control implies complete exclusion from decisions concerning the operation of the means of production. Each of these "levels" of control must be understood in terms of the social relations with other levels; they are not simply points on a scale. Taken together, they make it possible to identify more precisely specific positions within each contradictory location.

It is important to understand the precise sense in which these class locations are "contradictory" locations within class relations. They are not contradictory simply because they cannot be neatly pigeonholed in any of the basic classes. The issue is not one of typological aesthetics. Rather they are contradictory locations because they simultaneously share the relational characteristics of two distinct classes. As a result, they share class interests with two different classes but have interests identical to neither. It is in this sense that they can be viewed as being objectively torn between class locations.

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Notes

1. The initial formulation was in Erik Olin Wright, "Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies," *New Left Review*, no. 98 (1976), pp. 3-41. This essay was then revised as chap. 2 in *Class, Crisis and the State* (London: New Left Books, 1978). Other discussions of contradictory locations include: idem, "Intellectuals and the Working Class," *The Insurgent Sociologist*, Summer 1978; idem, *Class Structure and Income Determination* (New York: Academic Press, 1979); and idem, "Class, Occupation and Organization," *International Yearbook of Organizational Theory*.

vol. 1, ed. David Dunkerley and Graham Saleman (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979). For some critical remarks on the analysis of contradictory locations, see Edward S. Greenberg and Thomas F. Mayer, "Review of *Class, Crisis and the State*," *Kapitalist*, no. 7 (1979), pp. 167-86; and Barbara Ehrenreich and John Ehrenreich, "Rejoinder," in *Between Capital and Labor*, ed. Pat Walker (Boston: South End Press, 1979), esp. pp. 325, 331-32.

2. See *Class, Crisis and the State*, chap. 2; and idem, "Intellectuals and the Working Class," *The Insurgent Sociologist*, Summer 1978.

ERIK OLIN WRIGHT

A General Framework for the Analysis of Class Structure

The Point of Departure: Neo-Marxist Analyses of Class Structure

At the heart of the recent resurgence of Marxist theorizing on the problem of class has been what might be termed the "embarrassment" of the middle class. For all of their disagreements, all Marxists share a basic commitment to a polarized abstract concept of class relations. Yet, at least at first glance, the concrete class structures of contemporary advanced capitalist societies look anything but polarized. This empirical evidence of a large middle class has provided critics of Marxism with one of their principal arguments against Marxist class theory. In response, a variety of solutions to the problem of the middle class have been proposed in the recent Marxist debates.

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Without going into any detail, it is possible to identify four broadly different strategies that Marxists have adopted to deal with the conceptual problem of nonpolarized class positions within a logic of polarized class relations.¹ First, the class structure of advanced capitalist societies really is polarized; the "middle class" is strictly an ideological illusion. This position deals with the problem of the middle class by denying the problem itself. Second, the middle class should be viewed as a segment of some other class, typically a "new petty bourgeoisie" or "new working class."² In this strategy the basic class map of capitalism remains intact, but significant internal differentiations within classes are added to the analysis of class structure. Third, the middle class is really a new class in its own right, completely distinct from either the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, or the petty bourgeoisie. Sometimes this class is given a specific name, such as the Professional Managerial Class,³ sometimes it is simply called "the New Class."⁴ By adding entirely new classes to the class structure, this approach more radically

alters the class map of capitalism than the class-segment strategy. Fourth, the positions aggregated under the popular rubric "middle class" are not really in a class at all. Rather they should be viewed as locations that are simultaneously in more than one class, positions that I have characterized as "contradictory locations within class relations."⁵ Managers, for example, should be viewed as simultaneously in the working class (in so far as they are wage laborers dominated by capitalists) and in the capitalist class (in so far as they control the operation of production and the labor of workers). This strategy departs most from the traditional Marxist vision of class structure since the very meaning of a "location" is altered: there is no longer a one-to-one correspondence between structural locations filled by individuals and classes.

I no longer feel that this fourth solution is satisfactory. Specifically, it suffers from two important problems that it shares with most other neo-Marxist conceptualizations of class structure: it tends to shift the analysis of class relations from exploitation to domination; and it implicitly regards socialism—a society within which the working class is the "ruling class"—as the only possible alternative to capitalism.

Domination Versus Exploitation

Throughout the development of the concept of contradictory class locations I have insisted that this was a reformulation of a distinctively Marxist class concept. As part of the rhetoric of such an enterprise, I affirmed the relationship between class and exploitation. Nevertheless, in practice the concept of contradictory locations within class relations rested almost exclusively on relations of *domination* rather than exploitation. Reference to exploitation functioned more as a background concept to the discussion of classes than as a constitutive element of the analysis of class structures. Managers, for example, were basically defined as a contradictory location because they were simultaneously dominators

and dominated. Domination relations were also decisive in defining the class character of "semiautonomous employees"—locations that, I argued, were simultaneously petty bourgeois and proletarian by virtue of their self-direction within the labor process—since "autonomy" defines a condition with respect to domination. This same tendency of substituting domination for exploitation at the core of the concept of class is found in most other neo-Marxist conceptualizations of class structure.

For some people, of course, marginalizing the concept of exploitation is a virtue, not a sin. My own view, however, is that this is a serious weakness. The marginalization of exploitation both undermines claims that classes have "objective" interests and erodes the centrality Marxists have accorded class in social theory.

The concept of domination does not in and of itself imply any specific interest of actors. Parents dominate small children, but this does not imply that they have intrinsically opposed interests to their children. What would make those interests antagonistic is if the relation of parents to children were exploitative as well. Exploitation, unlike domination, intrinsically implies a set of opposing material interests. If we wish to retain some sense in which the interests of individuals as members of classes are not simply whatever interests those individuals subjectively hold, then the shift to a domination-centered concept renders this more difficult.

Domination-centered concepts of class also tend to slide into what can be termed "the multiple oppressions" approach to understanding society. Societies, in this view, are characterized by a plurality of oppressions each rooted in a different form of domination—sexual, racial, national, economic—none of which has any explanatory priority over any other. Class, then, becomes just one of many oppressions, with no particular centrality for social and historical analysis. How important class is in a given society becomes an historically contingent question.

Again, this displacement of class from the center stage may be viewed as an achievement

rather than a problem. It may be that class should not occupy a privileged place in social theory. But if one believes, as Marxists traditionally have believed, that only by giving class this central place is it possible to develop a scientific theory of the trajectory of historical development, and in particular, a theory of the real historical alternatives to capitalism, then the domination-centered concept of class risks eroding the theoretical justification for Marxian class analysis itself.

Classes in Postcapitalist Societies

Classical Marxism was absolutely unequivocal about the historical prognosis for capitalism: socialism—and ultimately communism—was the future of capitalist societies. The bearer of that necessary future was the working class. The polarized class structure *within* capitalism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat thus paralleled the polarized historical alternatives *between* capitalism and socialism.

The actual historical experience of the twentieth century has called into question, although not unambiguously refuted, this historical vision. As I have argued elsewhere, it is necessary to at least entertain the possibility of postcapitalist class structures.⁶ The difficulty is that with very few exceptions, the conceptual frameworks adopted by Marxists for analyzing capitalist class relations do not contain adequate criteria for understanding postcapitalist classes.⁷ In particular, all of the class categories in my analysis of contradictory locations within class relations were either situated firmly within capitalist relations (bourgeoisie, managers, workers) or in contradictory locations involving basically pre-capitalist relations (semiautonomous employees, the petty bourgeoisie, small employers). There were no elements within this analysis of class relations in capitalist society that could point the direction for the analysis of postcapitalist classes. The result is a tendency for discussions of postcapitalist class structures—the class structures of “actually existing socialism”—to have a very ad hoc character to them.

Given these conceptual problems—the shift from exploitation to domination and the lack of a conceptual basis for analyzing postcapitalist classes—there are really two theoretical alternatives that could be pursued. One possibility is to celebrate the shift to a domination-centered concept and use this new class concept as the basis for analyzing both capitalist and postcapitalist society. This would lead to class analysis firmly in the direction of Dahrendorf's analysis of classes as positions within authority relations.⁸ A second alternative is to attempt to restore exploitation as the center of class analysis in such a way that it can both accommodate the empirical complexities of the middle class within capitalism and the historical reality of postcapitalist class structures. It is this second course of action that I will pursue in the rest of this paper.

The basis for this reconstruction of an exploitation-centered concept of class comes from the recent work of John Roemer.⁹ While Roemer himself has not been particularly concerned with problems of empirical investigation or the elaboration of concrete maps of class structures, nevertheless his work does provide a rich foundation for such endeavors. As I will attempt to show, with suitable modification and extension, his strategy of analysis can provide a rigorous basis for resolving the problems in the concept of contradictory class locations.

Roemer's Account of Class and Exploitation

The Concept of Exploitation

We observe inequalities in the distribution of incomes, the real consumption packages available to individuals, families, groups. The concept of exploitation is a particular way of analyzing such inequalities. To describe an inequality as reflecting exploitation is to make the claim that there exists a particular kind of causal relationship between the incomes of different actors. More concretely, we will say that the rich exploit the poor when two things can be established: that the welfare of the rich

causally depends on the deprivations of the poor—the rich are rich *because* the poor are poor; and that the welfare of the rich depends upon the *effort* of the poor—the rich, through one mechanism or another, appropriate part of the fruits of labor of the poor. The first of these criteria by itself defines *economic oppression*, but not exploitation. Unemployed workers, in these terms, are economically oppressed but not exploited. Exploitation implies both economic oppression and appropriation of at least part of the social surplus by the oppressor.

The traditional Marxist concept of exploitation is clearly a special case of this general concept. In Marxian exploitation one class appropriates the surplus labor performed by another class through various mechanisms. The income of the exploiting class comes from the labor performed by the exploited class. There is thus a straightforward causal linkage between the poverty and effort of the exploited and the affluence of the exploiter. The latter benefits at the expense of the former.

Roemer has attempted to elaborate this view of exploitation using two strategies. The first of these involves studying through a series of formal mathematical models the flows of “surplus labor” from one category of actors to another in the course of various exchange relations; the second involves adopting a kind of game-theory approach to specifying different forms of exploitation. Let us briefly examine each of these in turn.

The Labor-Transfer Approach

The analysis of labor transfers is an extension of the traditional Marxist view of exploitation, although Roemer self-consciously does not rely on the labor theory of value in order to explore such labor transfers. The main target of his analysis is the view, commonly held by Marxists, that a necessary condition for the exploitation of labor in a market economy is the institution of wage labor. Roemer demonstrates two basic propositions. First, Roemer demonstrates that exploitation can occur in an economy in which all producers

own their own means of production and in which there is no market in labor power and no credit market (that is, no borrowing). The only things that are traded are products. In such an economy if different producers own different amounts of productive assets such that different producers have to work different numbers of hours to produce the exchange-equivalent of their own subsistence, then free trade among these producers will lead to exploitation of the asset poor by the asset rich. What Roemer shows in this simple economy is not simply that some producers work less than others for the same subsistence, but that the workers who work less are able to do so *because* the less-endowed producers have to work more. The critical proof in this example is that if the asset-poor person simply stopped producing—died—and the asset-rich person took over the asset-poor's assets, then the asset-rich producer would have to work longer hours than before to maintain the same subsistence. There is thus not merely an inequality among the producers in this economy, but exploitation as well.

Second, Roemer demonstrates that there is complete symmetry in the structure of exploitation in a system in which capital hires wage laborers and in a system in which workers rent capital (that is, systems with credit and labor markets). For this analysis, he compares the class structures and patterns of exploitation on the two imaginary islands, “labor-market island” and “credit-market island.” On both islands some people own no means of production and other people own varying amounts of the means of production. The distribution of these assets is identical on the two islands. And on both islands people have the same motivations: they all seek to minimize the amount of labor-time they must expend to achieve a common level of subsistence. The two islands differ in only one respect: on the labor-market island people are allowed to sell their labor power, whereas on the credit-market island people are prohibited from selling their labor power but are allowed to borrow, at some interest rate, the means of production. Roemer shows that on each

island there is a strict correspondence between class location (derived from ownership of differing amounts of means of production, including no means of production) and exploitation status (having one's surplus labor appropriated by someone else). This is what he terms the "Class-Exploitation Correspondence Principle." He also shows that the two class structures are completely isomorphic: every individual on one island would be in exactly the same exploitation status on the other island.

The upshot of these two propositions (and others that Roemer explores) is the claim that market-based exploitation is strictly a consequence of inequalities in the distribution of the means of production. However, while this may typically play itself out through a labor market, this is only one concrete institutional form for such exploitation: it is not the necessary condition for the exploitation to occur.

The Game-Theory Approach

While the labor-transfer analyses of exploitation were primarily designed to reveal the underlying logic of exploitation in market exchanges, the game-theory approach is used by Roemer to compare different systems of exploitation. The idea is to compare different systems of exploitation by treating the organization of production as a "game" and asking if a coalition of players would be better off if they withdrew from the game under certain specified procedures. Different types of exploitation are defined by the withdrawal rules that would make certain agents better off.

More formally, Roemer argues that a coalition of actors S can be said to be exploited, and another coalition S' (the complement of S) can be said to be exploiting, if "there is no alternative, which we may conceive of as hypothetically feasible, in which S would be better off than in its present situation, [and if] under this alternative, the complement to S . . . would be worse off than at present."¹⁰ The counterfactual in these two conditions is meant to convey the sense in which the welfare of S' is causally dependent upon the deprivation of S .

III / The Structure of Contemporary Stratification

Roemer uses this strategy to define three kinds of exploitation: feudal exploitation, capitalist exploitation, and what he refers to as socialist exploitation. Let's begin with capitalist exploitation. Workers own no physical assets (means of production) and sell their labor power to capitalists for a wage. Are workers exploited under capitalism? The answer to this question, in the game theoretic formulation, requires posing an alternative game to the game of capitalism within which the two conditions specified above hold. What is the alternative? It is a game within which each worker receives his/her *per capita share of society's total productive assets*. What Roemer demonstrates is that if the coalition of all wage-earners were to leave the game of capitalism with their *per capita share of society's assets*, then they would be better off than staying in capitalism, and capitalists would be worse off. The "withdrawal rule" in this case—leaving the game with *per capita shares of physical assets*—then becomes the formal "test" of whether or not a particular social system involves capitalistic exploitation.

In contrast, the withdrawal rule to specify feudal exploitation is leaving the game with one's *personal assets* (rather than one's *per capita share of total social assets*). This is equivalent to the feudal serf being freed from all obligations based on personal bondage. Peasants would be better off under such circumstances; feudal lords would be worse off.¹¹

The concept of the socialist exploitation is the least systematically worked out in Roemer's analysis. The withdrawal rule in this case is leaving the game with one's *per capita share of alienable assets* (skills). A coalition will be said to be socially exploited if it would improve its position by leaving with its *per capita skills* while its complement would be worse off under such circumstances. This implies that people with high levels of skills in the game receive high income not simply because they have high skills, but because of the differentials in skill levels across actors. The highly skilled would become worse off if the unskilled obtained skills; they thus have

A General Framework for the Analysis of Class Structure

an interest in maintaining skill differentials, and this is what underpins the claim that their income reflects exploitation.¹² If a skilled person's income reflected no more than the amount of time and resources it takes to obtain the skill, then there would be no skill-based exploitation. The higher incomes would simply be reimbursement for real costs incurred. The argument behind skill exploitation is that people with scarce skills receive incomes above the costs of producing those skills, a "rent" component to their income; it is this element that constitutes exploitation.

Class and Exploitation

The central message of both of Roemer's strategies for analyzing exploitation is that the material basis of exploitation is inequalities in distributions of productive assets, or what is usually referred to as property relations. On the one hand, inequalities of assets are sufficient to account for transfers of labor surplus; on the other hand, different forms of asset inequality specify different systems of exploitation. Classes are then defined as positions within the social relations of production derived from these relations of exploitation.¹³

These conclusions have led Roemer to challenge directly the tendency of Marxists (like myself) to define class relations primarily in terms of domination relations within production. Of course, exploiting classes dominate exploited classes in the sense of preventing the exploited classes from taking the exploiting class's productive assets. But domination

within production, Roemer insists, is not a central part of defining class relations as such. In previous work I have criticized Roemer's position on this issue.¹⁴ I argued that class relations intrinsically involved domination *at the point of production*, not simply in the repressive protection of the property relations as such. I now think that Roemer is correct on this point. That capitalists boss workers around within production is unquestionably an important feature of most historic forms of capitalist production and may play an impor-

tant role in explaining the forms of class organization and class conflict within production. However, the basis of the capital-labor relation should be identified with relations of effective control (that is, real economic ownership) over productive assets as such.

One of the reasons why I resisted Roemer's conceptualization of classes in terms of property relations is that it seemed to blur the difference between Marxist definitions of class and Weberian definitions. Weberian definitions, as I construed them, were "market based" definitions of class, whereas Marxist definitions were "production based." The reputed advantage of the latter was that production was more "fundamental" than exchange, and therefore production-based class concepts had more explanatory power than market-based concepts.

What now seems clear to me is that definitions of classes in terms of property relations should not be identified with strictly market-based definitions. Property-relations accounts of classes do not define classes by income shares, by the results of market transactions, but by the productive assets that classes control, which lead them to adopt certain strategies within exchange relations and which thereby determine the outcomes of those market transactions.

Toward a General Framework of Class Analysis

Extending Roemer's Analysis

The heart of Roemer's analysis is the linkage between the distribution of productive assets of various sorts and exploitation. Different mechanisms of exploitation are defined by different kinds of assets, and different class systems are defined by which of these assets is most important for shaping the patterns of exploitation in the society.

In Roemer's own explicit formulation, only two kinds of assets are formally considered: physical assets (alienable assets in his terminology) and skill assets (inalienable assets).

The distinction between exploitation in feudalism and exploitation in capitalism revolves around the nature of the withdrawal rules with respect to physical assets (withdrawing with one's personal assets to define feudal exploitation versus withdrawing with one's per capita share of assets to define capitalist exploitation). The feudal case, however, can be characterized in a somewhat different way.

Labor power is a productive asset.¹⁵ In capitalist societies everyone owns one unit of this asset, namely themselves. In feudalism, on the other hand, ownership rights over labor power are unequally distributed: feudal lords have more than one unit, serfs have less than one unit. To be sure, it is not typical of feudalism for serfs to own no labor power—they are generally not slaves divested of all ownership rights in their own labor power—but they do not have complete effective control over their own persons as productive actors, and this is what it means to “own” one's own labor power assets. The withdrawal rule that defines feudal exploitation can then be specified as leaving the feudal game with one's per capita share of society's assets in labor power, namely one unit. Feudal exploitation is thus exploitation (transfers of labor) that results from inequalities in the distribution of assets in labor power.

Reformulating feudal exploitation in this manner makes the game-theory specification of different exploitations in Roemer's analysis symmetrical: feudal exploitation is based on inequalities generated by ownership of labor-power assets; capitalist exploitation on inequalities generated by ownership of alienable assets; socialist exploitation on inequalities generated by ownership of inalienable assets. And corresponding to each of these exploitation-generating inequalities of assets, there is a specific class relation: lords and serfs in feudalism, bourgeoisie and proletariat in capitalism, experts and workers in socialism.

But how, it might be asked, should “actually existing socialist societies” be theorized within these categories? The anticapitalist revolution in Russia resulted in the virtual elimination of private property in the means of

production: individuals cannot own means of production, they cannot inherit them or dispose of them on a market, and so on. And yet it seems unsatisfactory to characterize such societies simply in terms of skill-based exploitation. Experts do not appear to be the “ruling class” in those societies, and the dynamic of the societies does not seem to revolve around skill inequalities as such.

Roemer recognized this problem and introduced what he termed “status exploitation,” to deal with it. The exploitation exercised by bureaucrats is the prototypical example. “If these positions,” Roemer writes, “required special skills, then one might be justified in calling the differential remuneration to these positions an aspect of socialist [skill-based] exploitation. . . . [However] there is some extra remuneration to holders of those positions which accrues solely by virtue of the position and not by virtue of the skill necessary to carry out the tasks associated with it. These special payments to positions give rise to *status exploitation*.”¹⁶

Roemer's concept of status exploitation is unsatisfactory for two principal reasons. First, it is outside of the logic of the rest of his analysis of exploitation. In each of the other cases, exploitation is rooted in relations to the forces of production. Each of the other forms of exploitation is “materialist” not only because the concept is meant to explain material distribution, but also because it is based on the relation to the material conditions of production. “Status” exploitation has no necessary relationship to production at all. Second, it is hard to rigorously distinguish status exploitation from feudal exploitation. The “lord” receives remuneration strictly because of an incumbency in a position, not because of skills or ownership of capital. Yet, it hardly seems reasonable to consider the logic of exploitation and class in the contemporary Soviet Union and in fourteenth-century feudal Europe as being essentially the same.

The problems with the concept of status exploitation can be solved by analyzing exploitation based on a fourth element in the inventory of productive assets, an asset that can

be referred to as “organization.” As both Adam Smith and Marx noted, the technical division of labor among producers is itself a source of productivity. The way the production process is organized is a productive resource independent of the expenditure of labor power, the use of means of production, or the skills of the producer. Of course there is an interrelationship between organization and these other assets, just as there is an interdependence between means of production and skills. But organization—the conditions of coordinated cooperation among producers in a complex division of labor—is a productive resource in its own right.

How is this asset distributed in different kinds of societies? In contemporary capitalism, organization assets are generally controlled by managers and capitalists: managers control the organization assets within specific firms under constraints imposed by the ownership of the capital assets by capitalists. Entrepreneurial capitalists directly control both kinds of assets (and probably skill assets as well); pure rentier capitalists (“coupon clippers”) only own capital assets. Because of the anarchy of the capitalist market, no set of actors controls the technical division of labor across firms.

In state bureaucratic socialism, organization assets assume a much greater importance. Controlling the technical division of labor—the coordination of productive activities within and across labor processes—becomes a societal task organized at the center. The control over organization assets is no longer simply the task of firm-level managers but extends into the central organs of planning within the state. Exploitation in such societies is thus based on bureaucratic power: the control over organization assets defines the material basis for class relations and exploitation.

This notion of organization assets bears a close relation to the problem of authority and hierarchy. The asset is organization. The activity of using that asset is coordinated decision making over a complex technical division of labor. When that asset is distributed unequally, so some positions have effective con-

trol over much more of the asset than others, then the social relation with respect to that asset takes the form of hierarchical authority. Authority, however, is not the asset as such; organization is the asset and is controlled through a hierarchy of authority.

The claim that effective control over organization assets is a basis of exploitation is equivalent to saying that nonmanagers would be better off and managers/bureaucrats worse off if nonmanagers were to withdraw with their per capita share of organization assets (or equivalently, if organizational control were democratized); and that by virtue of effectively controlling organization assets managers/bureaucrats control part or all of the socially produced surplus.¹⁷

A Typology of Class Structures, Assets, and Exploitation

If we add organization assets to the list in Roemer's analysis, we generate the more complex typology presented in Table 1. Let us briefly look at each row of this table and examine its logic. Feudalism is a class system based on unequal distribution of ownership rights in labor power. What “personal bondage” means is that feudal lords have partial effective economic control over vassals. The empirical manifestation of this unequal distribution of ownership rights over labor power in classical feudalism is the coercive extraction of labor dues from serfs. When corvée labor is committed to rents in kind and eventually money rents, the feudal character of the exploitation relation is reflected in legal prohibitions on the movement of peasants off the land. The “flight” of a peasant to the city is, in effect, a form of theft: the peasant is stealing part of the labor power owned by the lord. Feudal lords may also have more means of production than serfs, more organizational assets, and more productive skills (although this is unlikely), and thus they may be exploiters with respect to these assets as well. What defines the society as “feudal”, however, is the primacy of the distinctively feudal

TABLE 1
Assets, Exploitation, and Classes

Type of class structure	Principal asset that is unequally distributed	Mechanism of exploitation	Classes	Central task of revolutionary transformation
Feudalism	Labor power	Coercive extraction of surplus labor	Lords and serfs	Individual liberty
Capitalism	Means of production	Market exchanges of labor power and commodities	Capitalists and workers	Socializing means of production
State bureaucratic socialism	Organization	Planned appropriation and distribution of surplus based on hierarchy	Managers/bureaucrats and nonmanagement	Democratization of organizational control
Socialism	Skills	Negotiated redistribution of surplus from workers to experts	Experts and workers	Substantive equality

mechanisms of exploitation. Accordingly, feudal class relations will be the primary structural basis of class struggle.

The bourgeois revolutions radically redistributed productive assets in people: everyone, at least in principle, owns one unit. This is what is meant by "bourgeois freedoms," and in this sense capitalism can be regarded as an historically progressive force. But capitalism raises the second type of exploitation, exploitation based on property relations in means of production, to an unprecedented level.

The typical institutional form of capitalist class relations is capitalists having full ownership rights in the means of production and workers none. Other possibilities, however, have existed historically. Cottage industries in early capitalism involved workers owning some of their means of production, but not having sufficient assets to actually produce commodities without the assistance of merchant capitalists. Such workers were still being capitalistically exploited even though there was no formal labor market with wages. In all capitalist exploitation, the mediating mechanism is market exchanges. Unlike in feudalism, surplus is not directly appropriated from workers in the form of coerced labor. Rather, it is appropriated through market exchanges: workers are paid a wage that covers the costs of production of their labor power; capitalists

receive an income from the sale of the commodities produced by workers. The difference in these quantities constitutes the exploitative surplus appropriated by capitalists.

Anticapitalist revolutions attempt to eliminate the distinctively capitalist form of exploitation, exploitation based on private ownership of the means of production. The nationalization of the principal means of production is, in effect, a radical equalization of ownership of capital: everyone owns one citizen-share. Such revolutions, however, do not eliminate, and indeed may considerably strengthen and deepen, inequalities of effective control over organization assets. Whereas in capitalism the control over organization assets does not extend beyond the firm, in state bureaucratic socialism the coordinated integration of the division of labor extends to the whole society through institutions of central state planning. The mechanism by which this generates exploitative transfers of surplus involves the centrally planned bureaucratic appropriation and distribution of the surplus along hierarchical principles. The corresponding class relation is therefore between managers/bureaucrats—people who control organization assets—and nonmanagers.

The historical task of revolutionary transformation of state bureaucratic socialism revolves around the equalization of effective

economic control over organization assets, or, equivalently, the democratization of bureaucratic apparatuses of production. This does not imply total direct democracy, where all decisions of any consequence are directly made in democratic assemblies. There will still inevitably be delegated responsibilities, and there certainly can be representative forms of democratic control. But it does mean that the basic parameters of planning and coordinating social production are made through democratic mechanisms and that incumbency within delegated positions of responsibility does not give incumbents any personal claims on the social surplus. Such equalization, however, would not necessarily affect exploitation based on skills/credentials. Such exploitation would remain a central feature of socialism.

"Skill" in this context is not a trivial concept. The mere possession of enhanced laboring capabilities acquired through training is not sufficient to generate relations of exploitation, since the income of such trained labor may simply reflect the costs of acquiring the training. In such cases there is neither a transfer of surplus, nor would the untrained be better off under the game-theory specification of exploitation. For a skill to be the basis of exploitation, therefore, it has to be in some sense scarce relative to its demand, and there must be a mechanism through which individual owners of scarce skills are able to translate that scarcity into higher incomes.

There are basically three ways that skills can become scarce: first, they may require special *talents* that are naturally scarce in a population; second, access to the training needed to develop the skill may be restricted through various mechanisms, creating an artificial scarcity of trained people; third, a certification system may be established that prohibits uncertified people from being employed to use the skill even if they have it. In all of these cases, the exploitation comes from the skilled/certified individual receiving an income that is above the costs of production of the skills by virtue of the scarcity of the availability of the skill.

In this conceptualization of socialism, a socialist society is essentially a kind of democratic technocracy. Experts control their own skills and knowledge within production, and by virtue of such control are able to appropriate some of the surplus out of production. However, because of the democratization of organization assets, actual planning decisions will not be made under the direct control of experts but will be made through some kind of democratic procedure (this is in effect what democratization of organization assets means: equalizing control over the planning and coordinating of social production). This means that the actual class power of a socialist technocratic exploiting class will be much weaker than the class power of exploiting classes in other class systems. Their ownership rights extend to only a limited part of the social surplus.

This much more limited basis of *domination* implied by skill-based exploitation is consistent with the spirit, if not the letter, of Marx's claim that socialism is the "lower stage" of "communism," since classes are already in a partial state of dissolution in a society with only skill-based exploitation. Communism itself, then, would be understood as a society within which skill-based exploitation itself had "withered away," that is, in which ownership rights in skills had been equalized. This does not mean, it must be stressed, that all individuals would actually *possess* the same skills in communism, any more than eliminating property rights in means of production implies that all individuals would actively use the same amount of physical capital. What is equalized is effective control over skills as a productive resource and claims to differential incomes resulting from differential use of skills.¹⁸ . . .

The Middle Classes and Contradictory Locations

The framework in Table 1 enables us to pose the problem of middle classes in a new way. Two different kinds of nonpolarized class lo-

TABLE 2
Basic Typology of Exploitation and Class
Assets in the means of production

Owners (%)		Nonowners (wage laborers) (%)			
1 Bourgeoisie		4 Expert manager		7 Semicredentialed manager	10 Uncredentialed manager
US 1.8		US 3.9		US 6.2	US 2.3
Sweden 0.7		Sweden 4.4		Sweden 4.0	Sweden 2.5
2 Small employer		5 Expert supervisor		8 Semicredentialed supervisor	11 Uncredentialed supervisor
US 6.0		US 3.7		US 6.8	US 6.9
Sweden 4.8		Sweden 3.8		Sweden 3.2	Sweden 3.1
3 Petty bourgeoisie		6 Expert nonmanager		9 Semicredentialed worker	12 Proletarian
US 6.9		US 3.4		US 12.2	US 39.9
Sweden 5.4		Sweden 6.8		Sweden 17.8	Sweden 43.5

+ > 0 Skill assets

+ > 0 Organization assets

United States: N = 1487

Sweden: N = 1179

Note: Distributions are of people working in the labor force, thus excluding unemployed, housewives, pensioners, etc.

Source: Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness.

cations can be defined in the logic of this framework:

1. There are class locations that are neither exploiters nor exploited, that is, people who have precisely the per capita level of the relevant asset. A petty bourgeois, self-employed producer with average capital stock, for example, would be neither exploiter nor exploited within capitalist relations. These kinds of positions are what can be called the "traditional" or "old" middle class of a particular kind of class system.

2. Since concrete societies are rarely, if ever, characterized by a single mode of production, the actual class structures of given societies will be characterized by complex patterns of intersecting exploitation relations. There will therefore tend to be some positions that are exploiting along one dimension of exploitation relations and are exploited along another. Highly skilled wage-earners (for example, professionals) in

capitalism are a good example: they are capitalistically exploited because they lack assets in capital, and yet they are skill exploiters. Such positions are what are typically referred to as the "new middle class" of a given system.

Table 2 presents a schematic typology of such complex class locations for capitalism. The typology is divided into two segments: one for owners of the means of production and one for nonowners. Within the wage-earner section of the typology, locations are distinguished by the two subordinate relations of exploitation characteristic of capitalist society—organization assets and skill/credentialed assets. It is thus possible within this framework to distinguish a whole terrain of class locations in capitalist society that are distinct from the polarized classes of the capitalist mode of production: expert managers, nonmanagerial experts, nonexpert managers, and so on.¹⁹

What is the relationship between this heterogeneous exploitation definition of the middle class and my previous conceptualization

TABLE 3
Basic Classes and Contradictory Locations
in Successive Modes of Production

Mode of production	Basic classes	Principal contradictory location
Feudalism	Lords and serfs	Bourgeoisie
Capitalism	Bourgeoisie and proletariat	Managers/bureaucrats
State bureaucratic socialism	Bureaucrats and workers	Intelligentsia/experts

of such positions as contradictory locations within class relations? There is still a sense in which such positions could be characterized as "contradictory locations," for they will typically hold contradictory interests with respect to the primary forms of class struggle in capitalist society, the struggle between labor and capital. On the one hand, they are like workers, in being excluded from ownership of the means of production. On the other hand, they have interests opposed to workers because of their effective control of organization and skill assets. Within the struggles of capitalism, therefore, these new middle classes do constitute contradictory locations, or more precisely, contradictory locations within exploitation relations.

This conceptualization of the middle classes also suggests that historically the principal forms of contradictory locations will vary depending upon the particular combinations of exploitation relations in a given society. These principal contradictory locations are presented in Table 3. In feudalism, the critical contradictory location is constituted by the bourgeoisie, the rising class of the successor mode of production. Within capitalism, the central contradictory location within exploitation relations is constituted by managers and state bureaucrats. They embody a principle of class organization that is quite distinct from capitalism and that potentially poses an alternative to capitalist relations. This is particularly true for state managers who, unlike corporate managers, are less likely to have their careers tightly integrated with the interests of the capitalist class. Finally, in state bureaucratic socialism, the "intelligentsia" broadly defined constitutes the pivotal contradictory location.

One of the upshots of this reconceptualization of the middle class is that it is no longer axiomatic that the proletariat is the unique, or perhaps even the central, rival to the capitalist class for class power in capitalist society. That classical Marxist assumption depended upon the thesis that there were no other classes within capitalism that could be viewed as the "bearers" of an historical alternative to capi-

talism. Socialism (as the transition to communism) was the only possible future for capitalism. What Table 3 suggests is that there are other class forces within capitalism that potentially pose an alternative to capitalism. This does not imply that there is any inevitability to the sequence feudalism-capitalism-state bureaucratic socialism-socialism-communism; state bureaucrats are not inevitably destined to be the future ruling class of present-day capitalism. But it does suggest that the process of class formation and class struggle is considerably more complex and indeterminate than the traditional Marxist story has allowed.

Notes

1. For a more detailed review of these alternatives, see E.O. Wright, "Varieties of Marxist Concepts of Class Structure," *Politics and Society*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1980).
2. The leading proponent of the concept of the "new petty bourgeoisie" is N. Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1975). For the new-working-class concept, see S. Mallet, *La Nouvelle Classe Ouvrière* (Paris: Seuil, 1963).
3. B. Ehrenreich and J. Ehrenreich, "The Professional and Managerial Class," *Radical America*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1977).
4. A. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979); and G. Konrad and I. Szelenyi, *Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979).
5. E.O. Wright, "Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies," *New Left Review*, no. 98 (1976); and *Class, Crisis and the State* (London:

New Left Books, 1978). See also G. Carchedi, *The Economic Identification of Social Classes* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).

6. E.O. Wright, "Capitalism's Futures," *Socialist Review*, no. 68 (1983).

7. A partial exception to this can be found in arguments for the existence of a "new class" of intellectuals and/or bureaucrats in capitalist and post-capitalist society. See: A. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals*; and L. Szelenyi and W. Martin, *New Class Theory and Beyond* (unpublished book manuscript, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, 1985).

8. R. Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1959).

9. Roemer is a Marxist economist engaged in a long-term project of elaborating what he calls the "microfoundations" of Marxist theory. His most important work is entitled *A General Theory of Exploitation and Class* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

10. Roemer, *A General Theory*, pp. 194-95.

11. But note: workers in capitalism are not feudally exploited; they would be worse off, not better off, if they withdrew from the game of capitalism with only their personal assets. As Roemer argues, the claim by neoclassical theorists that wage earners in capitalism are not exploited is generally equivalent to the claim that they are not feudally exploited; that is, that they are not subjected to surplus extraction based on relations of personal bondage. See Roemer, *A General Theory*, p. 206.

12. The asset-exploitation nexus thus depends upon the capacity of asset-holders to deprive others of that asset. The social basis of exploitation, understood in this way, is quite similar to Frank Parkin's characterization of Weber's concept of social closure as "the process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles." F. Parkin, *Marrism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). While Parkin's central concern is with the kinds of attributes that serve as the basis for closure—race, religion, language—Roemer's is with the nature of the resources (productive assets) over which closure is organized.

13. Roemer's conceptualization of the relationship between class and exploitation is similar in certain aspects to Alvin Gouldner's, although Roemer is unaware of Gouldner's work. Gouldner defines the "New Class" as a *cultural bourgeoisie* defined by its control over "cultural capital," where

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"capital" is defined as "any produced object used to make saleable utilities, thus providing its possessor with incomes, or claims to incomes defined as legitimate because of their imputed contribution to economic productivity." (*Future of Intellectuals*, p. 21). While Gouldner does not characterize this income allocation process in terms of exploitation, Roemer's exploitation concept would fit comfortably within Gouldner's general approach.

14. E.O. Wright, "The Status of the Political in the Concept of Class Structure," *Politics and Society*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1982).

15. See G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 40-41, for a discussion of why labor power should be considered part of the forces of production (that is, a productive asset).

16. Roemer, *A General Theory*, p. 243.

17. This "control of the surplus," it must be noted, is not the equivalent of the *actual* personal consumption income of managers and bureaucrats, any more than capitalist profits or feudal rents are the equivalent of the personally consumed income of capitalists and feudal lords. It is historically variable both within and between types of societies exploiting classes is used for personal consumption and what portion is used for other purposes (feudal military expenditures, capitalist accumulation, organization growth). The claim that managers-bureaucrats would be "worse off" under conditions of a redistribution of organization assets refers to the amount of income they effectively control, which is therefore potentially available for personal appropriation, not simply the amount they personally consume.

18. It may be utopian to imagine a society without skill-based exploitation, or even a society without organization-asset exploitation, particularly if we reject the claim that a future society will ever exist in a state of absolute abundance. In the absence of absolute abundance, all societies will face dilemmas and trade-offs around the problem of distribution of consumption, and such dilemmas may pose intractable incentive problems in the absence of exploitation. For a careful exposition of the problem of utopian fantasies in Marxist theory, see A. Nove, *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (Hemel Hempstead: George Allen and Unwin, 1983).

19. The labor-force data in this table come from the comparative project on class structure and class consciousness, University of Wisconsin. Details of the coding of categories and the operationalization of variables can be found in E.O. Wright, *Classes* (London: Verso, 1985), appendix 2.

I M M A N U E L W A L L E R S T E I N

Class Conflict in the Capitalist World Economy

What is capitalism as a mode of production?

This is not an easy question, and for that reason is not in fact a widely discussed one. It seems to me that there are several elements that combine to constitute the 'model'. Capitalism is the *only* mode of production in which the *maximization* of surplus creation is rewarded *per se*. In every historical system, there has been *some* production for *use*, and *some* production for *exchange*, but only in capitalism are all producers rewarded primarily in terms of the exchange value they produce and penalized to the extent they neglect it. The 'rewards' and 'penalties' are mediated through a structure called the 'market'. It is a structure but not an institution. It is a structure molded by *many* institutions (political, economic, social, even cultural), and it is the principal arena of economic struggle.

Not only is surplus maximized for its own sake, but those who use the surplus to accumulate more capital to produce still more surplus are further rewarded. Thus the pressure is for constant expansion, although the individualistic premise of the system simultaneously renders *constant* expansion impossible.

How does the search for profit operate? It operates by creating legal protections for individual firms (which can range in size from individuals to quite large organizations, including parastatal agencies) to appropriate the

surplus value created by the labor of the primary producers. Were all or most of this surplus value however consumed by the few who owned or controlled the 'firms', we would not have capitalism. This is in fact approximately what had happened in various pre-capitalist systems.

Capitalism involves in addition structures and institutions which reward primarily that subsegment of the owners and controllers who use the surplus value *only in part* for their own consumption, and in another (usually larger) part for further investment. The structure of the market ensures that those who do not accumulate capital (but merely consume surplus value) lose out economically over time to those who do accumulate capital.

We may thereupon designate as the bourgeoisie those who receive a part of the surplus value they do not themselves create and use some of it to accumulate capital. What defines the bourgeoisie is not a particular profession and not even the legal status of proprietor (although this was historically important) but the fact that the bourgeois obtains, either as an individual or a member of some collectivity, a part of the surplus that he did not create and is in the position to invest (again either individually or as part of a collectivity) some of this surplus in capital goods.

There is a very large gamut of organizational arrangements which can permit this, of which the classic model of the 'free entrepreneur' is only one. Which organizational arrangements prevail at particular moments of time in particular states (for these arrangements are dependent on the legal framework)

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is a function of the state of development of the world-economy as a whole (and the role of a particular state in that world-economy) on the one hand, and the consequent forms of class struggle in the world-economy (and within the particular state) on the other. Hence, like all other social constructs, the 'bourgeoisie' is not a static phenomenon. It is the designation of a class in the process of perpetual re-creation and hence of constant change of form and composition. . . .

The fundamental role of the state as an institution in the capitalist world-economy is to augment the advantage of some against others in the market—that is, to *reduce* the 'freedom' of the market. Everyone is in favor of this, as long as one is the beneficiary of the 'distortion', and everyone opposed to the extent that one loses. It is all a matter of whose ox is being gored.

The modes of augmenting advantage are many. The state can transfer income by taking it from some and giving it to others. The state can restrict access to the market (of commodities or of labor) which favor those who thereby share in the oligopoly or oligopsony. The state can restrain persons from organizing to change the actions of the state. And, of course, the state can act not only within its jurisdiction but beyond it. This may be licit (the rules concerning transit over boundaries) or illicit (interference in the internal affairs of another state). Warfare is of course one of the mechanisms used.

What is crucial to perceive is that the state is a special kind of organization. Its 'sovereignty', a notion of the modern world, is the claim to the monopolization (regulation) of the legitimate use of force within its boundaries, and it is in a relatively strong position to interfere effectively with the flow of factors of production. Obviously also it is possible for particular social groups to alter advantage by altering state boundaries; hence both movements for secession (or autonomy) and movements for annexation (or federation).

It is this realistic ability of states to interfere with the flow of factors of production that provides the political underpinnings of the

structural division of labor in the capitalist world-economy as a whole. Normal market considerations may account for recurring initial thrusts to specialization (natural or socio-historical advantages in the production of one or another commodity), but it is the state system which enforces, enforces, and exaggerates the patterns, and it has regularly required the use of state machinery to revise the pattern of the world-wide division of labor.

Furthermore, the ability of states to interfere with flows becomes differentiated. That is, core states become *stronger* than peripheral states, and use this differential power to maintain a differential degree of interstate freedom of flow. Specifically, core states have historically arranged that world-wide and over time, money and goods have flowed more 'freely' than labor. The reason for doing this is that core states have thereby received the advantages of 'unequal exchange'.

In effect, unequal exchange is simply a part of the world-wide process of the appropriation of surplus. We analyze falsely if we try to take literally the model of *one* proletarian relating to *one* bourgeois. In fact, the surplus value that the producer creates passes through a series of persons and firms. It is therefore the case that *many* bourgeois *share* the surplus value of *one* proletarian. The exact share of different groups in the chain (property owner, merchants, intermediate consumers) is subject to much historical change and is itself a principal analytical variable in the functioning of the capitalist world-economy.

This chain of the transfer of surplus value frequently (often? almost always?) traverses national boundaries and, when it does, state operations intervene to tilt the sharing among bourgeois towards those bourgeois located in core states. This is unequal exchange, a mechanism in the overall process of the appropriation of surplus value.

One of the socio-geographic consequences of this system is the uneven distribution of the bourgeoisie and proletariat in different states, core states containing a higher percentage nationally of bourgeois than peripheral states. In addition, there are systematic differences in

kinds of bourgeois and proletarians located in the two zones. For example, the percentage of wage-earning proletarians is systematically higher in core states.

Since states are the primary arena of political conflict in a capitalist world-economy, and since the functioning of the world-economy is such that national class composition varies widely, it is easy to perceive why the politics of states differentially located in relation to the world-economy should be so dissimilar. It is also then easy to perceive that using the political machinery of a given state to change the social composition and world-economic function of national production does not *per se* change the capitalist world-system as such.

Obviously, however, these various national thrusts to a change in structural position (which we misleadingly often call 'development') do in fact affect, indeed over the long

run do in fact transform, the world-system. But they do so via the intervening variable of their impact on world-wide class consciousness of the proletariat.

Core and periphery then are simply phrases to locate one crucial part of the system of surplus appropriation by the bourgeoisie. To oversimplify, capitalism is a system in which the surplus value of the proletarian is appropriated by the bourgeois. When this proletarian is located in a different country from this bourgeois, one of the mechanisms that has affected the process of appropriation is the manipulation of controlling flows over state boundaries. This results in patterns of 'uneven development' which are summarized in the concepts of core, semiperiphery, and periphery. This is an intellectual tool to help analyze the multiple forms of class conflict in the capitalist world-economy.

MAX WEBER

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Economically Determined Power and the Social Order

Law exists when there is a probability that an order will be upheld by a specific staff of men who will use physical or psychological compulsion with the intention of obtaining conformity with the order, or of inflicting sanctions for infringement of it.¹ The structure of every legal order directly influences the distribution of power, economic or otherwise, within its respective community. This is true of all legal orders and not only that of the state. In general, we understand by 'power' the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.

'Economically conditioned' power is not, of course, identical with 'power' as such. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds. Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich himself economically. Power, including economic power, may be valued 'for its own sake.' Very frequently the striving for power is also conditioned by the social honor² it entails. Not all power, however, entails social honor: The typical American Boss, as well as the typical big speculator,

deliberately relinquishes social honor. Quite generally, 'mere economic' power, and especially 'naked' money power, is by no means a recognized basis of social honor. Nor is power the only basis of social honor. Indeed, social honor, or prestige, may even be the basis of political or economic power, and very frequently has been. Power, as well as honor, may be guaranteed by the legal order, but, at least normally, it is not their primary source. The legal order is rather an additional factor that enhances the chance to hold power or honor; but it cannot always secure them.

The way in which social honor is distributed in a community between typical groups participating in this distribution we may call the 'social order.' The social order and the economic order are, of course, similarly related to the 'legal order.' However, the social and the economic order are not identical. The economic order is for us merely the way in which economic goods and services are distributed and used. The social order is of course conditioned by the economic order to a high degree, and in its turn reacts upon it. Now: 'classes,' 'status groups,' and 'parties' are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.

Determination of Class-Situation by Market-Situation

In our terminology, 'classes' are not communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action. We may

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speak of a 'class' when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets. [These points refer to 'class situation,' which we may express more briefly as the typical chance for a supply of goods, external living conditions, and personal life experiences, in so far as this chance is determined by the amount and kind of power, or lack of such, to dispose of goods or skills for the sake of income in a given economic order. The term 'class' refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation.]

It is the most elemental economic fact that the way in which the disposition over material property is distributed among a plurality of people, meeting competitively in the market for the purpose of exchange, in itself creates specific life chances. According to the law of marginal utility this mode of distribution excludes the non-owners from competing for highly valued goods; it favors the owners and, in fact, gives to them a monopoly to acquire such goods. Other things being equal, this mode of distribution monopolizes the opportunities for profitable deals for all those who, provided with goods, do not necessarily have to exchange them. It increases, at least generally, their power in price wars with those who, being propertyless, have nothing to offer but their services in native form or goods in a form constituted through their own labor, and who above all are compelled to get rid of these products in order barely to subsist. This mode of distribution gives to the propertied a monopoly on the possibility of transferring property from the sphere of use as a 'fortune,' to the sphere of 'capital goods'; that is, it gives them the entrepreneurial function and all chances to share directly or indirectly in returns on capital. All this holds true within the area in which pure market conditions prevail. 'Property' and 'lack of property' are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations. It does not matter whether these two

categories become effective in price wars or in competitive struggles.

Within these categories, however, class situations are further differentiated: on the one hand, according to the kind of property that is usable for returns; and, on the other hand, according to the kind of services that can be offered in the market. Ownership of domestic buildings; productive establishments; warehouses; stores; agriculturally usable land, large and small holdings—quantitative differences with possibly qualitative consequences—; ownership of mines; cattle; men (slaves); disposition over mobile instruments of production, or capital goods of all sorts, especially money or objects that can be exchanged for money easily and at any time; disposition over products of one's own labor or of others' labor differing according to their various distances from consumability; disposition over transferable monopolies of any kind—all these distinctions differentiate the class situations of the propertied just as does the 'meaning' which they can and do give to the utilization of property, especially to property which has money equivalence. Accordingly, the propertied, for instance, may belong to the class of renters or to the class of entrepreneurs.

Those who have no property but who offer services are differentiated just as much according to their kinds of services as according to the way in which they make use of these services, in a continuous or discontinuous relation to a recipient. But always this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the *market* is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate. 'Class situation' is, in this sense, ultimately 'market situation.' The effect of naked possession *per se*, which among cattle breeders gives the nonowning slave or serf into the power of the cattle owner, is only a forerunner of real 'class' formation. However, in the cattle loan and in the naked severity of the law of debts in such communities, for the first time mere 'possession' as such emerges as decisive for the fate of the individual. This is very much in contrast to the agricultural communities

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based on labor. The creditor-debtor relation becomes the basis of 'class situations' only in those cities where a 'credit market,' however primitive, with rates of interest increasing according to the extent of dearth and a factual monopolization of credits, is developed by a plutocracy. Therewith 'class struggles' begin.

Those men whose fate is not determined by the chance of using goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g., slaves, are not, however, 'class' in the technical sense of the term. They are, rather, a 'status group.'

Communal Action Flowing from Class Interest

According to our terminology, the factor that creates 'class' is unambiguously economic interest, and indeed, only those interests involved in the existence of the 'market.' Nevertheless, the concept of 'class-interest' is an ambiguous one: even as an empirical concept it is ambiguous as soon as one understands by it something other than the factual direction of interests following with a certain probability from the class situation for a certain 'average' of those people subjected to the class situation. The class situation and other circumstances remaining the same, the direction in which the individual worker, for instance, is likely to pursue his interests may vary widely, according to whether he is constitutionally qualified for the task at hand to a high, to an average, or to a low degree. In the same way, the direction of interests may vary according to whether or not a communal action of a larger or smaller portion of those commonly affected by the 'class situation,' or even an association among them, e.g., a 'trade union,' has grown out of the class situation from which the individual may or may not expect promising results. [Communal action refers to that action which is oriented to the feeling of the actors that they belong together. Societal action, on the other hand, is oriented to a rationally motivated adjustment of interests.] The rise of societal or even of communal action from a common

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class situation is by no means a universal phenomenon.

The class situation may be restricted in its effects to the generation of essentially *similar* reactions, that is to say, within our terminology, of 'mass actions.' However, it may not have even this result. Furthermore, often merely an amorphous communal action emerges. For example, the 'murmuring' of the workers known in ancient oriental ethics: the moral disapproval of the work-master's conduct, which in its practical significance was probably equivalent to an increasingly typical phenomenon of precisely the latest industrial development, namely, the 'slow down' (the deliberate limiting of work effort) of laborers by virtue of tacit agreement. The degree in which 'communal action' and possibly 'societal action,' emerges from the 'mass actions' of the members of a class is linked to general cultural conditions, especially to those of an intellectual sort. It is also linked to the extent of the contrasts that have already evolved, and is especially linked to the *transparency* of the connections between the causes and the consequences of the 'class situation.' For however different life chances may be, this fact in itself, according to all experience, by no means gives birth to 'class action' (communal action by the members of a class). The fact of being conditioned and the results of the class situation must be distinctly recognizable. For only then the contrast of life chances can be felt not as an absolutely given fact to be accepted, but as a resultant from either (1) the given distribution of property, or (2) the structure of the concrete economic order. It is only then that people may react against the class structure not only through acts of intermittent and irrational protest, but in the form of rational association. There have been 'class situations' of the first category (1), of a specifically naked and transparent sort, in the urban centers of Antiquity and during the Middle Ages; especially then, when great fortunes were accumulated by factually monopolized trading in industrial products of these localities or in foodstuffs. Furthermore, under certain circumstances, in the rural economy of

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the most diverse periods, when agriculture was increasingly exploited in a profit-making manner. The most important historical example of the second category (2) is the class situation of the modern 'proletariat.'

Types of 'Class Struggle'

Thus every class may be the carrier of any one of the possibly innumerable forms of 'class action,' but this is not necessarily so: In any case, a class does not in itself constitute a community. To treat 'class' conceptually as having the same value as 'community' leads to distortion. That men in the same class situation regularly react in mass actions to such tangible situations as economic ones in the direction of those interests that are most adequate to their average number is an important and after all simple fact for the understanding of historical events. Above all, this fact must not lead to that kind of pseudo-scientific operation with the concepts of 'class' and 'class interests' so frequently found these days, and which has found its most classic expression in the statement of a talented author, that the individual may be in error concerning his interests but that the 'class' is 'infallible' about its interests. Yet, if classes as such are not communities, nevertheless class situations emerge only on the basis of communalization. The communal action that brings forth class situations, however, is not basically action between members of the identical class; it is an action between members of different classes. Communal actions that directly determine the class situation of the worker and the entrepreneur are: the labor market, the commodities market, and the capitalistic enterprise. But, in its turn, the existence of a capitalistic enterprise presupposes that a very specific communal action exists and that it is specifically structured to protect the possession of goods *per se*, and especially the power of individuals to dispose, in principle freely, over the means of production. The existence of a capitalistic enterprise is preconditioned

by a specific kind of 'legal order.' Each kind of class situation, and above all when it rests upon the power of property *per se*, will become most clearly efficacious when all other determinants of reciprocal relations are, as far as possible, eliminated in their significance. It is in this way that the utilization of the power of property in the market obtains its most sovereign importance.

Now 'status groups' hinder the strict carrying through of the sheer market principle. In the present context they are of interest to us only from this one point of view. Before we briefly consider them, note that not much of a general nature can be said about the more specific kinds of antagonism between 'classes' (in our meaning of the term). The great shift, which has been going on continuously in the past, and up to our times, may be summarized, although at the cost of some precision: the struggle in which class situations are effective has progressively shifted from consumption credit toward, first, competitive struggles in the commodity market and, then, toward price wars on the labor market. The 'class struggles' of antiquity—to the extent that they were genuine class struggles and not struggles between status groups—were initially carried on by indebted peasants, and perhaps also by artisans threatened by debt bondage and struggling against urban creditors. For debt bondage is the normal result of the differentiation of wealth in commercial cities, especially in seaport cities. A similar situation has existed among cattle breeders. Debt relationships as such produced class action up to the time of Carthage. Along with this, and with an increase in provision of grain for the city by transporting it from the outside, the struggle over the means of sustenance emerged. It centered in the first place around the provision of bread and the determination of the price of bread. It lasted throughout antiquity and the entire Middle Ages. The propertyless as such flocked together against those who actually and supposedly were interested in the dearth of bread. This fight spread until it involved all those commodities essential to the way of life

and to handicraft production. There were only incipient discussions of wage disputes in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. But they have been slowly increasing up into modern times. In the earlier periods they were completely secondary to slave rebellions as well as to fights in the commodity market.

The propertyless of antiquity and of the Middle Ages protested against monopolies, pre-emption, forestalling, and the withholding of goods from the market in order to raise prices. Today the central issue is the determination of the price of labor.

This transition is represented by the fight for access to the market and for the determination of the price of products. Such fights went on between merchants and workers in the putting-out system of domestic handicraft during the transition to modern times. Since it is quite a general phenomenon we must mention here that the class antagonisms that are conditioned through the market situation are usually most bitter between those who actually and directly participate as opponents in price wars. It is not the rentier, the shareholder, and the banker who suffer the ill will of the worker, but almost exclusively the manufacturer and the business executives who are the direct opponents of workers in price wars. This is so in spite of the fact that it is precisely the cash boxes of the rentier, the shareholder, and the banker into which the more or less 'unearned' gains flow, rather than into the pockets of the manufacturers or of the business executives. This simple state of affairs has very frequently been decisive for the role the class situation has played in the formation of political parties. For example, it has made possible the varieties of patriarchal socialism and the frequent attempts—for merely, at least—of threatened status groups to form alliances with the proletariat against the 'bourgeoisie.'

Status Honor

In contrast to classes, *status groups* are normally communities. They are, however, often

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of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined 'class situation' we wish to designate as 'status situation' every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*. This honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and, of course, it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity. In the subsistence economy of the organized neighborhood, very often the richest man is simply the chieftain. However, this often means only an honorific preference. For example, in the so-called pure modern 'democracy,' that is, one devoid of any expressly ordered status privileges for individuals, it may be that only the families coming under approximately the same tax class dance with one another. This example is reported of certain smaller Swiss cities. But status honor need not necessarily be linked with a 'class situation.' On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.

Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently they do with very tangible consequences. This 'equality' of social esteem may, however, in the long run become quite precarious. The 'equality' of status among the American 'gentlemen,' for instance, is expressed by the fact that outside the subordination determined by the different functions of 'business,' it would be considered strictly repugnant—wherever the old tradition still prevails—if even the richest 'chief,' while playing billiards or cards in his club in the evening, would not treat his 'clerk' as in every sense fully his equal in birthright. It would be repugnant if the American 'chief' would bestow upon his 'clerk' the condescending 'benevolence' marking a distinction of 'position,' which the German chief can never disavow from his attitude. This is one of the most important reasons why in America the German

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'clubby-ness' has never been able to attain the attraction that the American clubs have.

Guarantees of Status Stratification

In content, status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific *style of life* can be expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle. Linked with this expectation are restrictions on 'social' intercourse (that is, intercourse which is not subservient to economic or any other of business's 'functional' purposes). These restrictions may confine normal marriages to within the status circle and may lead to complete endogamous closure. As soon as there is not a mere individual and socially irrelevant imitation of another style of life, but an agreed-upon communal action of this closing character, the 'status' development is under way.

In its characteristic form, stratification by 'status groups' on the basis of conventional styles of life evolves at the present time in the United States out of the traditional democracy. For example, only the resident of a certain street ('the street') is considered as belonging to 'society,' is qualified for social intercourse, and is visited and invited. Above all, this differentiation evolves in such a way as to make for strict submission to the fashion that is dominant at a given time in society. This submission to fashion also exists among men in America to a degree unknown in Germany. Such submission is considered to be an indication of the fact that a given man *pretends* to qualify as a gentleman. This submission decides, at least *prima facie*, that he will be treated as such. And this recognition becomes just as important for his employment chances in 'swank' establishments, and above all, for social intercourse and marriage with 'esteemed' families, as the qualification for dueling among Germans in the Kaiser's day. As for the rest: certain families resident for a long time, and, of course, correspondingly wealthy, e.g., 'F. V., i.e. First Families of Virginia,' or the actual or alleged descendants of the 'Indian Princess' Pocahontas, of the Pil-

grim fathers, or of the Knickerbockers, the members of almost inaccessible sects and all sorts of circles setting themselves apart by means of any other characteristics and badges . . . all these elements usurp 'status' honor. The development of status is essentially a question of stratification resting upon usurpation. Such usurpation is the normal origin of almost all status honor. But the road from this purely conventional situation to legal privilege, positive or negative, is easily traveled as soon as a certain stratification of the social order has in fact been 'lived in' and has achieved stability by virtue of a stable distribution of economic power.

'Ethnic' Segregation and 'Caste'

Where the consequences have been realized to their full extent, the status group evolves into a closed 'caste.' Status distinctions are then guaranteed not merely by conventions and laws, but also by *rituals*. This occurs in such a way that every physical contact with a member of any caste that is considered to be 'lower' by the members of a 'higher' caste is considered as making for a ritualistic impurity and to be a stigma which must be expiated by a religious act. Individual castes develop quite distinct cults and gods.

In general, however, the status structure reaches such extreme consequences only where there are underlying differences which are held to be 'ethnic.' The 'caste' is, indeed, the normal form in which ethnic communities usually live side by side in a 'societalized' manner. These ethnic communities believe in blood relationship and exclude exogamous marriage and social intercourse. Such a caste situation is part of the phenomenon of 'pariah' peoples and is found all over the world. These people form communities, acquire specific occupational traditions of handicrafts or of other arts, and cultivate a belief in their ethnic community. They live in a 'diaspora' strictly segregated from all personal intercourse, except that of an unavoidable sort, and their situation is legally precarious.

Yet, by virtue of their economic indispensability, they are tolerated, indeed, frequently privileged, and they live in interspersed political communities. The Jews are the most impressive historical example.

A 'status' segregation grown into a 'caste' differs in its structure from a mere 'ethnic' segregation: the caste structure transforms the horizontal and unconnected coexistences of ethnically segregated groups into a vertical social system of super- and subordination. Correctly formulated: a comprehensive socialization integrates the ethnically divided communities into specific political and communal action. In their consequences they differ precisely in this way: ethnic coexistences condition a mutual repulsion and disdain but allow each ethnic community to consider its own honor as the highest one; the caste structure brings about a social subordination and an acknowledgment of 'more honor' in favor of the privileged caste and status group. This is due to the fact that in the caste structure ethnic distinctions as such have become 'functional' distinctions within the political socialization (warriors, priests, artisans that are politically important for war and for building, and so on). But even pariah people who are most despised are usually apt to continue cultivating in some manner that which is equally peculiar to ethnic and to status communities: the belief in their own specific 'honor.' This is the case with the Jews.

Only with the negatively privileged status groups does the 'sense of dignity' take a specific deviation. A sense of dignity is the precipitation in individuals of social honor and of conventional demands which a positively privileged status group raises for the deportment of its members. The sense of dignity that characterizes positively privileged status groups is naturally related to their 'being' which does not transcend itself, that is, it is to their 'beauty and excellence.' Their kingdom is 'of this world.' They live for the present and by exploiting their great past. The sense of dignity of the negatively privileged strata naturally refers to a future lying beyond the present, whether it is of this life or of another. In

other words, it must be nurtured by the belief in a providential 'mission' and by a belief in a specific honor before God. The 'chosen people's' dignity is nurtured by a belief either that in the beyond 'the last will be the first,' or that in this life a Messiah will appear to bring forth into the light of the world which has cast them out the hidden honor of the pariah people. This simple state of affairs, and not the 'resentment' which is so strongly emphasized in Nietzsche's much admired construction in the *Genealogy of Morals*, is the source of the religiosity cultivated by pariah status groups. In passing, we may note that resentment may be accurately applied only to a limited extent; for one of Nietzsche's main examples, Buddhism, it is not at all applicable.

Incidentally, the development of status groups from ethnic segregations is by no means the normal phenomenon. On the contrary, since objective 'racial differences' are by no means basic to every subjective sentiment of an ethnic community, the ultimately racial foundation of status structure is rightly and absolutely a question of the concrete individual case. Very frequently a status group is instrumental in the production of a thoroughbred anthropological type. Certainly a status group is to a high degree effective in producing extreme types, for they select personally qualified individuals (e.g. the Knighthood selects those who are fit for warfare, physically and psychically). But selection is far from being the only, or the predominant, way in which status groups are formed: Political membership or class situation has at all times been at least as frequently decisive. And today the class situation is by far the predominant factor, for of course the possibility of a style of life expected for members of a status group is usually conditioned economically.

Status Privileges

For all practical purposes, stratification by status goes hand in hand with a monopolization of ideal and material goods or opportunities, in a manner we have come to know as

typical. Besides the specific status honor, which always rests upon distance and exclusiveness, we find all sorts of material monopolies. Such honorific preferences may consist of the privilege of wearing special costumes, of eating special dishes taboo to others, of carrying arms—which is most obvious in its consequences—the right to pursue certain non-professional dilettante artistic practices, e.g. to play certain musical instruments. Of course, material monopolies provide the most effective motives for the exclusiveness of a status group; although, in themselves, they are rarely sufficient, almost always they come into play to some extent. Within a status circle there is the question of intermarriage: the interest of the families in the monopolization of potential bridegrooms is at least of equal importance and is parallel to the interest in the monopolization of daughters. The daughters of the circle must be provided for. With an increased inclosure of the status group, the conventional preferential opportunities for special employment grow into a legal monopoly of special offices for the members. Certain goods become objects for monopolization by status groups. In the typical fashion these include 'entailed estates' and frequently also the possessions of serfs or bondsmen and, finally, special trades. This monopolization occurs positively when the status group is exclusively entitled to own and to manage them; and negatively when, in order to maintain its specific way of life, the status group must not own and manage them.

The decisive role of a 'style of life' in status 'honor' means that status groups are the specific bearers of all 'conventions.' In whatever way it may be manifest, all 'stylization' of life either originates in status groups or is at least conserved by them. Even if the principles of status conventions differ greatly, they reveal certain typical traits, especially among those strata which are most privileged. Quite generally, among privileged status groups there is a status disqualification that operates against the performance of common physical labor. This disqualification is now 'setting in' in America against the old tradition of esteem

for labor. Very frequently every rational economic pursuit, and especially 'entrepreneurial activity,' is looked upon as a disqualification of status. Artistic and literary activity is also considered as degrading work as soon as it is exploited for income, or at least when it is connected with hard physical exertion. An example is the sculptor working like a mason in his dusty smock as over against the painter in his salon-like 'studio' and those forms of musical practice that are acceptable to the status group.

Economic Conditions and Effects of Status Stratification

The frequent disqualification of the gainfully employed as such is a direct result of the principle of status stratification peculiar to the social order, and of course, of this principle's opposition to a distribution of power which is regulated exclusively through the market. These two factors operate along with various individual ones, which will be touched upon below.

We have seen above that the market and its processes 'knows no personal distinctions': 'functional' interests dominate it. It knows nothing of 'honor.' The status order means precisely the reverse, viz.: stratification in terms of 'honor' and of styles of life peculiar to status groups as such. If mere economic acquisition and naked economic power still bearing the stigma of its extra-status origin could bestow upon anyone who has won it the same honor as those who are interested in status by virtue of style of life claim for themselves, the status order would be threatened at its very root. This is the more so as, given equality of status honor, property *per se* represents an addition even if it is not overtly acknowledged to be such. Yet if such economic acquisition and power gave the agent any honor at all, his wealth would result in his attaining more honor than those who successfully claim honor by virtue of style of life. Therefore all groups having interests in the status order react with special sharpness pre-

cisely against the pretensions of purely economic acquisition. In most cases they react the more vigorously the more they feel themselves threatened. Calderon's respectful treatment of the peasant, for instance, as opposed to Shakespeare's simultaneous and ostensible disdain of the *canaille* illustrates the different way in which a firmly structured status order reacts as compared with a status order that has become economically precarious. This is an example of a state of affairs that recurs everywhere. Precisely because of the rigorous reactions against the claims of property *per se*, the 'parvenu' is never accepted, personally and without reservation, by the privileged status groups, no matter how completely his style of life has been adjusted to theirs. They will only accept his descendants who have been educated in the conventions of their status group and who have never besmirched its honor by their own economic labor.

As to the general effect of the status order, only one consequence can be stated, but it is a very important one: the hindrance of the free development of the market occurs first for those goods which status groups directly withheld from free exchange by monopolization. This monopolization may be effected either legally or conventionally. For example, in many Hellenic cities during the epoch of status groups, and also originally in Rome, the inherited estate (as is shown by the old formula for indication against spendthrifts) was monopolized just as were the estates of knights, peasants, priests, and especially the clientele of the craft and merchant guilds. The market is restricted, and the power of naked property *per se*, which gives its stamp to 'class formation,' is pushed into the background. The results of this process can be most varied. Of course, they do not necessarily weaken the contrasts in the economic situation. Frequently they strengthen these contrasts, and in any case, where stratification by status permeates a community as strongly as was the case in all political communities of antiquity and of the Middle Ages, one can never speak of a genuinely free market competition as we un-

derstand it today. There are wider effects than this direct exclusion of special goods from the market. From the contrary between the status order and the purely economic order mentioned above, it follows that in most instances the notion of honor peculiar to status absolutely abhors that which is essential to the market: higgling. Honor abhors higgling among peers and occasionally it taboos higgling for the members of a status group in general. Therefore, everywhere some status groups, and usually the most influential, consider almost any kind of overt participation in economic acquisition as absolutely stigmatizing.

With some oversimplification, one might thus say that 'classes' are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas 'status groups' are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special 'styles of life.'

An 'occupational group' is also a status group. For normally, it successfully claims social honor only by virtue of the special style of life which may be determined by it. The differences between classes and status groups frequently overlap. It is precisely those status communities most strictly segregated in terms of honor (viz. the Indian castes) who today show, although within very rigid limits, a relatively high degree of indifference to pecuniary income. However, the Brahmins seek such income in many different ways.

As to the general economic conditions making for the predominance of stratification by 'status,' only very little can be said. When the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable, stratification by status is favored. Every technological reproduction and economic transformation threatens stratification by status and pushes the class situation into the foreground. Epochs and countries in which the naked class situation is of predominant significance are regularly the periods of technical and economic transformations. And every slowing down of the shifting of economic stratifications leads, in due course, to the growth of status struc-

Class, Status, Party
tures and makes for a resuscitation of the important role of social honor.

Parties

Whereas the genuine place of 'classes' is within the economic order, the place of 'status groups' is within the social order, that is, within the sphere of the distribution of 'honor.' From within these spheres, classes and status groups influence one another and they influence the legal order and are in turn influenced by it. But 'parties' live in a house of 'power.'

Their action is oriented toward the acquisition of social 'power,' that is to say, toward influencing a communal action no matter what its content may be. In principle, parties may exist in a social 'club' as well as in a 'state.' As over against the actions of classes and status groups, for which this is not necessarily the case, the communal actions of 'parties' always mean a socialization. For party actions are always directed toward a goal which is striven for in planned manner. This goal may be a 'cause' (the party may aim at realizing a program for ideal or material purposes), or the goal may be 'personal' (sinécures, power, and from these, honor for the leader and the followers of the party). Usually the party action aims at all these simultaneously. Parties are, therefore, only possible within communities that are socialized, that is, which have some rational order and a staff of persons available who are ready to enforce it. For parties aim precisely at influencing this staff, and if possible, to recruit it from party followers.

In any individual case, parties may represent interests determined through 'class situation' or 'status situation,' and they may recruit their following respectively from one or the other. But they need be neither purely 'class' nor purely 'status' parties. In most cases they are partly class parties and partly status parties, but sometimes they are neither. They may represent ephemeral or enduring

structures. Their means of attaining power may be quite varied, ranging from naked violence of any sort to canvassing for votes with coarse or subtle means: money, social influence, the force of speech, suggestion, clumsy hoax, and so on to the rougher or more artful tactics of obstruction in parliamentary bodies.

The sociological structure of parties differs in a basic way according to the kind of communal action which they struggle to influence. Parties also differ according to whether or not the community is stratified by status or by classes. Above all else, they vary according to the structure of domination within the community. For their leaders normally deal with the conquest of a community. They are, in the general concept which is maintained here, not only products of specially modern forms of domination. We shall also designate as parties the ancient and medieval 'parties,' despite the fact that their structure differs basically from the structure of modern parties. By virtue of these structural differences of domination it is impossible to say anything about the structure of parties without discussing the structural forms of social domination *per se*. Parties, which are always structures struggling for domination, are very frequently organized in a very strict 'authoritarian' fashion....

Concerning 'classes,' 'status groups,' and 'parties,' it must be said in general that they necessarily presuppose a comprehensive socialization, and especially a political framework of communal action, within which they operate. This does not mean that parties would be confined by the frontiers of any individual political community. On the contrary, at all times it has been the order of the day that the socialization (even when it aims at the use of military force in common) reaches beyond the frontiers of politics. This has been the case in the solidarity of interests among the Oligarchs and among the democrats in Hellas, among the Guelts and among Ghibellines in the Middle Ages, and within the Calvinist party during the period of religious struggles. It has been the case up to the solidarity of the landlords (interna-

tional congress of agrarian landlords), and has continued among princes (holy alliance, Karlsbad decrees), socialist workers, conservatives (the longing of Prussian conservatives for Russian intervention in 1850). But their aim is not necessarily the establishment of new international political, i.e. *territorial*, domination. In the main they aim to influence the existing dominion.²

MAX WEBER

Status Groups and Classes

The Concepts of Class and Class Situation

The term 'class situation'¹ will be applied to the typical probability that a given state of (a) provision with goods, (b) external conditions of life, and (c) subjective satisfaction or frustration will be possessed by an individual or a group. These probabilities define class situation in so far as they are dependent on the kind and extent of control or lack of it which the individual has over goods or services and existing possibilities of their exploitation for the attainment of income or receipts within a given economic order.

A 'class' is any group of persons occupying the same class situation. The following types of classes may be distinguished: (a) A class is a 'property class' when class situation for its members is primarily determined by the dif-

Notes

1. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, part III, chap. 4, pp. 631-40. The first sentence in paragraph one and the several definitions in this chapter which are in brackets do not appear in the original text. They have been taken from other contexts of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*.

2. The posthumously published text breaks off here. We omit an incomplete sketch of types of 'warrior estates.'

ferentiation of property holdings; (b) a class is an 'acquisition class' when the class situation of its members is primarily determined by their opportunity for the exploitation of services on the market; (c) the 'social class' structure is composed of the plurality of class situations between which an interchange of individuals on a personal basis or in the course of generations is readily possible and typically observable. On the basis of any of the three types of class situation, associative relationships between those sharing the same

class interests, namely, corporate class organizations may develop. This need not, however, necessarily happen. The concepts of class and class situation, as such designate only the fact of identity or similarity in the typical situation in which a given individual and many others find their interests defined. In principle control over different combinations of consumer goods, means of production, investments, capital funds or marketable abilities constitute class situations which are different with each variation and combination. Only persons who are completely unskilled, without property and dependent on employment without regular occupation, are in a strictly identical class situation. Transitions from one class

situation to another vary greatly in fluidity and in the ease with which an individual can enter the class. Hence the unity of 'social' classes is highly relative and variable.

The Significance of Property Classes

The primary significance of a positively privileged property class lies in the following facts: (i) Its members may be able to monopolize the purchase of high-priced consumer goods. (ii) They may control the opportunities of pursuing a systematic monopoly policy in the sale of economic goods. (iii) They may monopolize opportunities for the accumulation of property through unconsumed surpluses. (iv) They may monopolize opportunities to accumulate capital by saving, hence, the possibility of investing property in loans and the related possibility of control over executive positions in business. (v) They may monopolize the privileges of socially advantageous kinds of education so far as these involve expenditures.

Positively privileged property classes typically live from property income. This may be derived from property rights in human beings, as with slaveowners, in land, in mining property, in fixed equipment such as plant and apparatus, in ships, and as creditors in loan relationships. Loans may consist of domestic animals, grain, or money. Finally they may live on income from securities.

Class interests which are negatively privileged with respect to property belong typically to one of the following types: (a) They are themselves objects of ownership, that is they are unfree. (b) They are 'outcasts,' that is 'proletarians' in the sense meant in Antiquity. (c) They are debtor classes and, (d) the 'poor.'

In between stand the 'middle' classes. This term includes groups who have all sorts of property, or of marketable abilities through training, who are in a position to draw their support from these sources. Some of them may be 'acquisition' classes. Entrepreneurs are in this category by virtue of essentially positive privileges; proletarians, by virtue of

negative privileges. But many types such as peasants, craftsmen, and officials do not fall in this category.

The differentiation of classes on the basis of property alone is not 'dynamic,' that is, it does not necessarily result in class struggles or class revolutions. It is not uncommon for very strongly privileged property classes, such as slaveowners, to exist side by side with such far less privileged groups as peasants or even outcasts without any class struggle. There may even be ties of solidarity between privileged property classes and unfree elements. However, such conflicts as that between landowners and outcast elements or between creditors and debtors, the latter often being a question of urban patricians as opposed to either rural peasants or urban craftsmen, may lead to revolutionary conflict. Even this, however, need not necessarily aim at radical changes in economic organization. It may, on the contrary, be concerned in the first instance only with a redistribution of wealth. These may be called 'property revolutions.'

A classic example of the lack of class antagonism has been the relation of the 'poor white trash,' originally those not owning slaves, to the planters in the Southern States of the United States. The 'poor whites' have often been much more hostile to the Negro than the planters who have frequently had a large element of patriarchal sentiment. The conflict of outcast against the property classes, of creditors and debtors, and of landowners and outcasts are best illustrated in the history of Antiquity.

The Significance of Acquisition and Social Classes

The primary significance of a positively privileged acquisition class is to be found in two directions. On the one hand it is generally possible to go far toward attaining a monopoly of the management of productive enterprises in favour of the members of the class and their business interests. On the other hand, such a class tends to insure the security of its economic position by exercising influ-

ence on the economic policy of political bodies and other groups.

The members of positively privileged acquisition classes are typically entrepreneurs. The following are the most important types: merchants, shipowners, industrial and agricultural entrepreneurs, bankers and financiers. Under certain circumstances two other types are also members of such classes, namely, members of the 'liberal' professions with a privileged position by virtue of their abilities or training, and workers with special skills commanding a monopolistic position, regardless of how far they are hereditary or the result of training.

Acquisition classes in a negatively privileged situation are workers of the various principal types. They may be roughly classified as skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled.

In this connexion as well as the above, independent peasants and craftsmen are to be treated as belonging to the 'middle classes.' This category often includes in addition officials, whether they are in public or private employment, the liberal professions, and workers with exceptional monopolistic assets or positions.

Examples of 'social classes' are: (a) The 'working' class as a whole. It approaches this type the more completely mechanized the productive process becomes. (b) The petty bourgeoisie.² (c) The 'intelligentsia' without independent property and the persons whose social position is primarily dependent on technical training such as engineers, commercial and other officials, and civil servants. These groups may differ greatly among themselves, in particular according to costs of training. (d) The classes occupying a privileged position through property and education.

The unfinished concluding section of Karl Marx's *Kapital* was evidently intended to deal with the problem of the class unity of the proletariat, which he held existed in spite of the high degree of qualitative differentiation. A decisive factor is the increase in the importance of semi-skilled workers who have been trained in a relatively short time directly on the machines themselves, at the expense of the older type of 'skilled' labour and also of un-

skilled. However, even this type of skill may often have a monopolistic aspect. Weavers are said to attain the highest level of productivity only after five years' experience.

At an earlier period every worker could be said to have been primarily interested in becoming an independent small bourgeois, but the possibility of realizing this goal is becoming progressively smaller. From one generation to another the most readily available path to advancement both for skilled and semi-skilled workers is into the class of technically trained individuals. In the most highly privileged classes, at least over the period of more than one generation, it is coming more and more to be true that money is overwhelmingly decisive. Through the banks and corporate enterprises members of the lower middle class and the salaried groups have certain opportunities to rise into the privileged class.

Organized activity of class groups is favoured by the following circumstances: (a) The possibility of concentrating on opponents where the immediate conflict of interests is vital. Thus workers organize against management and not against security holders who are the ones who really draw income without working. Similarly peasants are not apt to organize against landlords. (b) The existence of a class situation which is typically similar for large masses of people. (c) The technical possibility of being easily brought together. This is particularly true where large numbers work together in a small area, as in the modern factory. (d) Leadership directed to readily understandable goals. Such goals are very generally imposed or at least are interpreted by persons, such as intelligentsia, who do not belong to the class in question.

Status and Status Group

The term of 'status'³ will be applied to a typically effective claim to positive or negative privilege with respect to social prestige so far as it rests on one or more of the following bases: (a) mode of living, (b) a formal process of education which may consist in empirical or rational training and the acquisition of the

corresponding modes of life, or (c) on the prestige of birth, or of an occupation.

The primary practical manifestations of status with respect to social stratification are conubium, commensality, and often monopolistic appropriation of privileged economic opportunities and also prohibition of certain modes of acquisition. Finally, there are conventions or traditions of other types attached to a status.

Status may be based on class situation directly or related to it in complex ways. It is not, however, determined by this alone. Property and managerial positions are not as such sufficient to lend their holder a certain status, though they may well lead to its acquisition. Similarly, poverty is not as such a disqualification for high status though again it may influence it.

Conversely, status may partly or even wholly determine class situation, without, however, being identical with it. The class situation of an officer, a civil servant, and a student as determined by their income may be widely different while their status remains the same, because they adhere to the same mode of life in all relevant respects as a result of their common education.

A 'status group' is a plurality of individuals who, within a larger group, enjoy a particular kind and level of prestige by virtue of their position and possibly also claim certain special monopolies.

The following are the most important sources of the development of distinct status groups: (a) The most important is by the development of a peculiar style of life including, particularly, the type of occupation pursued. (b) The second basis is hereditary charisma arising from the successful claim to a position of prestige by virtue of birth. (c) The third is the appropriation of political or hierocratic authority as a monopoly by socially distinct groups.

The development of hereditary status groups is usually a form of the hereditary appropriation of privileges by an organized group or by individual qualified persons. Every well-established case of appropriation

of opportunities and abilities, especially of exercising imperative powers, has a tendency to lead to the development of distinct status groups. Conversely, the development of status groups has a tendency in turn to lead to the monopolistic appropriation of governing powers and of the corresponding economic advantages.

Acquisition classes are favoured by an economic system oriented to market situations, whereas status groups develop and subsist most readily where economic organization is of a monopolistic and liturgical character and where the economic needs of corporate groups are met on a feudal or patrimonial basis. The type of class which is most closely related to a status group is the 'social' class, while the 'acquisition' class is the farthest removed. Property classes often constitute the nucleus of a status group.

Every society where status groups play a prominent part is controlled to a large extent by conventional rules of conduct. It thus creates economically irrational conditions of consumption and hinders the development of free markets by monopolistic appropriation and by restricting free disposal of the individual's own economic ability. This will have to be discussed further elsewhere.

Notes

1. Although Parsons chooses to translate *Klasse* as 'class status' in this context, to do so is potentially confusing because Weber so carefully distinguishes between the concepts of class and status. I have therefore followed the lead of Roth and Wirth (*Economy and Society*, 1968) and opted for the term 'class situation' throughout this essay.—Ed.

2. I have again followed Roth and Wirth (*Economy and Society*, 1968) in translating the German term *Kleinbürgertum* as 'petty bourgeoisie', whereas Parsons opted for the more ambiguous term 'lower middle' class.—Ed.

3. For the purposes of consistency with the other selections, I have translated the term *ständische Lage* as 'status' (see Roth and Wirth, *Economy and Society*, 1968), whereas Parsons opted for the terms 'social status', 'stratificatory status', and the like.—Ed.

MAX WEBER

Open and Closed Relationships

Social Relationships

A social relationship, regardless of whether it is communal or associative in character, will be spoken of as "open" to outsiders if and insofar as its system of order does not deny participation to anyone who wishes to join and is actually in a position to do so. A relationship will, on the other hand, be called "closed" against outsiders so far as, according to its subjective meaning and its binding rules, participation of certain persons is excluded, limited, or subjected to conditions. Whether a relationship is open or closed may be determined traditionally, affectually, or rationally in terms of values or of expediency. It is especially likely to be closed, for rational reasons, in the following type of situation: a social relationship may provide the parties to it with opportunities for the satisfaction of spiritual or material interests, whether absolutely or instrumentally, or whether it is achieved through co-operative action or by a compromise of interests. If the participants expect that the admission of others will lead to an improvement of their situation, an improvement in degree, in kind, in the security or the value of the satisfaction, their interest will be in keeping the relationship open. If, on the other hand, their expectations are of improving their position by monopolistic tactics, their interest is in a closed relationship.

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Open and Closed Relationships

groups in question; and, insofar as they are alienable, "free" property.

The apparently gratuitous tediousness involved in the elaborate definition of the above concepts is an example of the fact that we often neglect to think out clearly what seems to be obvious, because it is intuitively familiar.

1. a. Examples of communal relationships, which tend to be closed on a traditional basis, are those in which membership is determined by family relationship.

b. Personal emotional relationships are usually affectually closed. Examples are erotic relationships and, very commonly, relations of personal loyalty.

c. Closure on the basis of value-rational commitment to values is usual in groups sharing a common system of explicit religious belief.

d. Typical cases of rational closure on grounds of expediency are economic associations of a monopolistic or a plutocratic character.

A few examples may be taken at random. Whether a group of people engaged in conversation is open or closed depends on its content. General conversation is apt to be open, as contrasted with intimate conversation or the imparting of official information. Market relationships are in most, or at least in many, cases essentially open. In the case of many relationships, both communal and associative, there is a tendency to shift from a phase of expansion to one of exclusiveness. Examples are the guilds and the democratic city-states of Antiquity and the Middle Ages. At times these groups sought to increase their membership in the interest of improving the security of their position of power by adequate numbers. At other times they restricted their membership to protect the value of their monopolistic position. The same phenomenon is not uncommon in monastic orders and religious sects which have passed from a stage of religious proselytizing to one of restriction in the interest of the maintenance of an ethical standard or for the protection of material interests. There is a similar

close relationship between the extension of market relationships in the interest of increased turnover on the one hand, their monopolistic restriction on the other. The promotion of linguistic uniformity is today a natural result of the interests of publishers and writers, as opposed to the earlier, not uncommon, tendency for status groups to maintain linguistic peculiarities or even for secret languages to emerge.

2. Both the extent and the methods of regulation and exclusion in relation to outsiders may vary widely, so that the transition from a state of openness to one of regulation and closure is gradual. Various conditions of participation may be laid down; qualifying tests, a period of probation, requirement of possession of a share which can be purchased under certain conditions, election of new members by ballot, membership or eligibility by birth or by virtue of achievements open to anyone. Finally, in case of closure and the appropriation of rights within the group, participation may be dependent on the acquisition of an appropriated right. There is a wide variety of different degrees of closure and of conditions of participation. Thus regulation and closure are relative concepts. There are all manner of gradual shadings as between an exclusive club, a theatrical audience the members of which have purchased tickets, and a party rally to which the largest possible number has been urged to come; similarly, from a church service open to the general public through the rituals of a limited sect to the mysteries of a secret cult.

3. Similarly, closure within the group may also assume the most varied forms. Thus a caste, a guild, or a group of stock exchange brokers, which is closed to outsiders, may allow to its members a perfectly free competition for all the advantages which the group as a whole monopolizes for itself. Or it may assign every member strictly to the enjoyment of certain advantages, such as claims over customers or particular business opportunities, for life or even on a hereditary basis. This is particularly characteristic of India. Similarly, a closed group of settlers (*Markghenossen-*

schaf(t) may allow its members free use of the resources of its area or may restrict them rigidly to a plot assigned to each individual household. A closed group of colonists may allow free use of the land or sanction and guarantee permanent appropriation of separate holdings. In such cases all conceivable transitional and intermediate forms can be found. Historically, the closure of eligibility to fiefs, benefices, and offices within the group, and the appropriation on the part of those enjoying them, have occurred in the most varied forms. Similarly, the establishment of rights to and possession of particular jobs on the part of workers may develop all the way from the "closed shop" to a right to a particular job. The first step in this development may be to prohibit the dismissal of a worker without the consent of the workers' representatives. The development of the "works councils" [in Germany after 1918] might be a first step in this direction, though it need not be....

4. The principal motives for closure of a relationship are: (a) The maintenance of quality, which is often combined with the interest in prestige and the consequent opportunities to enjoy honor, and even profit; examples are communities of ascetics, monastic orders, especially, for instance, the Indian mendicant orders, religious sects like the Puritans, organized groups of warriors, of *ministerials* and other functionaries, organized citizen bodies as in the Greek states, craft guilds; (b) the contraction of advantages in relation to consumption needs (*Nahrungsspielraum*); examples are monopolies of consumption, the most developed form of which is a self-subsistent village community; (c) the growing scarcity of opportunities for acquisition (*Erwerbsspielraum*). This is found in trade monopolies such as guilds, the ancient monopolies of fishing rights, and so on. Usually motive (a) is combined with (b) or (c)....

Economic Relationships

One frequent economic determinant [of closure] is the competition for a livelihood—

offices, clients and other remunerative opportunities. When the number of competitors increases in relation to the profit span, the participants become interested in curbing competition. Usually one group of competitors takes some externally identifiable characteristic of another group of (actual or potential) competitors—race, language, religion, local or social origin, descent, residence, etc.—as a pretext for attempting their exclusion. It does not matter which characteristic is chosen in the individual case; whatever suggests itself most easily is seized upon. Such group action may provoke a corresponding reaction on the part of those against whom it is directed.

In spite of their continued competition against one another, the jointly acting competitors now form an "interest group" toward outsiders; there is a growing tendency to set up some kind of association with rational regulations; if the monopolistic interests persist, the time comes when the competitors, or another group whom they can influence (for example, a political community), establish a legal order that limits competition through formal monopolies; from then on, certain persons are available as "organs" to protect the monopolistic practices, if need be, with force. In such a case, the interest group has developed into a "legally privileged group" (*Rechtsgemeinschaft*) and the participants have become "privileged members" (*Rechts-genossen*). Such closure, as we want to call it, is an ever-recurring process; it is the source of property in land as well as of all guild and other group monopolies.

The tendency toward the monopolization of specific, usually economic opportunities is always the driving force in such cases as: "co-operative organization," which always means closed monopolistic groups, for example, of fishermen taking their name from a certain fishing area; the establishment of an association of engineering graduates, which seeks to secure a legal, or at least factual, monopoly over certain positions; the exclusion of outsiders from sharing in the fields and commons of a village; "patriotic" associations of shop

clerks; the *ministerials*, knights, university graduates and craftsmen of a given region or locality; ex-soldiers entitled to civil service positions—all these groups first engage in some joint action (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*) and later perhaps an explicit association. This monopolization is directed against competitors who share some positive or negative characteristics; its purpose is always the closure of social and economic opportunities to outsiders. Its extent may vary widely, especially so far as the group member shares in the apportionment of monopolistic advantages....

This monopolistic tendency takes on specific forms when groups are formed by persons with shared qualities *acquired* through upbringing, apprenticeship and training. These characteristics may be economic qualifications of some kind, the holding of the same or of similar offices, a knightly or ascetic way of life, etc. If in such a case an association results from social action, it tends toward the *guild*. Full members make a vocation out of monopolizing the disposition of spiritual, intellectual, social and economic goods, duties and positions. Only those are admitted to the unrestricted practice of the vocation who (1) have completed a novitiate in order to acquire the proper training, (2) have proven their qualification, and (3) sometimes have passed through further wait-

ing periods and met additional requirements. This development follows a typical pattern in groups ranging from the juvenile student fraternities, through knightly associations and craft-guilds, to the qualifications required of the modern officials and employees. It is true that the interest in guaranteeing an efficient performance may everywhere have some importance; the participants may desire it for idealistic or materialistic reasons in spite of their possibly continuing competition with one another: local craftsmen may desire it for the sake of their business reputation, *ministerials* and knights of a given association for the sake of their professional reputation and also their own military security, and ascetic groups for fear that the gods and demons may turn their wrath against all members because of faulty manipulations. (For example, in almost all primitive tribes, persons who sang falsely during a ritual dance were originally slain in expiation of such an offense.) But normally this concern for efficient performance recedes behind the interest in limiting the supply of candidates for the benefices and honors of a given occupation. The novitiates, waiting periods, masterpieces and other demands, particularly the expensive entertainment of group members, are more often economic than professional tests of qualification.

MAX WEBER

The Rationalization of Education and Training

We cannot here analyze the far-reaching and general cultural effects that the advance of the rational bureaucratic structure of domination, as such, develops quite independently of the areas in which it takes hold. Naturally, bureaucracy promotes a 'rationalist' way of life, but the concept of rationalism allows for widely differing contents. Quite generally, one can only say that the bureaucratization of all domination very strongly furthers the development of 'rational matter-of-factness' and the personality type of the professional expert. This has far-reaching ramifications, but only one important element of the process can be briefly indicated here: its effect upon the nature of training and education.

Educational institutions on the European continent, especially the institutions of higher learning—the universities, as well as technical academies, business colleges, gymnasiums, and other middle schools—are dominated and influenced by the need for the kind of 'education' that produces a system of special examinations and the trained expertness that is increasingly indispensable for modern bureaucracy.

The 'special examination,' in the present sense, was and is found also outside of bureaucratic structures proper; thus, today it is found in the 'free' professions of medicine and law and in the guild-organized trades. Expert examinations are neither indispensable

to nor concomitant phenomena of bureaucratization. The French, English, and American bureaucracies have for a long time foregone such examinations entirely or to a large extent, for training and service in party organizations have made up for them.

'Democracy' also takes an ambivalent stand in the face of specialized examinations, as it does in the face of all the phenomena of bureaucracy—although democracy itself promotes these developments. Special examinations, on the one hand, mean or appear to mean a 'selection' of those who qualify from all social strata rather than a rule by notables. On the other hand, democracy fears that a merit system and educational certificates will result in a privileged 'caste.' Hence, democracy fights against the special-examination system.

The special examination is found even in pre-bureaucratic or semi-bureaucratic epochs. Indeed, the regular and earliest locus of special examinations is among prebendally organized dominions. Expectancies of prebends, first of church prebends—as in the Islamic Orient and in the Occidental Middle Ages—then, as was especially the case in China, secular prebends, are the typical prizes for which people study and are examined. These examinations, however, have in truth only a partially specialized and expert character.

The modern development of full bureaucratization brings the system of rational, specialized, and expert examinations irresistibly to the fore. The civil-service reform gradually imports expert training and specialized examinations into the United States. In all other countries this system also advances, stemming

from its main breeding place, Germany. The increasing bureaucratization of administration enhances the importance of the specialized examination in England. In China, the attempt to replace the semi-patrimonial and ancient bureaucracy by a modern bureaucracy brought the expert examination; it took the place of a former and quite differently structured system of examinations. The bureaucratization of capitalism, with its demand for expertly trained technicians, clerks, etc., carries such examinations all over the world. Above all, the development is greatly furthered by the social prestige of the educational certificates acquired through such specialized examinations. This is all the more the case as the educational patent is turned to economic advantage. Today, the certificate of education becomes what the test for ancestors has been in the past, at least where the nobility has remained powerful: a prerequisite for equality of birth, a qualification for a canonship, and for state office.

The development of the diploma from universities, and business and engineering colleges, and the universal clamor for the creation of educational certificates in all fields make for the formation of a privileged stratum in bureaus and in offices. Such certificates support their holders' claims for intermarriages with notable families (in business offices people naturally hope for preferment with regard to the chief's daughter), claims to be admitted into the circles that adhere to 'codes of honor,' claims for a 'respectable' remuneration rather than remuneration for work done, claims for assured advancement and old-age insurance, and, above all, claims to monopolize socially and economically advantageous positions. When we hear from all sides the demand for an introduction of regular curricula and special examinations, the reason behind it is, of course, not a suddenly awakened 'thirst for education' but the desire for restricting the supply for these positions and their monopolization by the owners of educational certificates. Today, the 'examination' is the universal means of this monopolization, and therefore examinations irre-

sistibly advance. As the education prerequisite to the acquisition of the educational certificate requires considerable expense and a period of waiting for full remuneration, this striving means a setback for talent (charisma) in favor of property. For the 'intellectual' costs of educational certificates are always low, and with the increasing volume of such certificates, their intellectual costs do not increase, but rather decrease....

Social prestige based upon the advantage of special education and training as such is by no means specific to bureaucracy. On the contrary! But educational prestige in other structures of domination rests upon substantially different foundations.

Expressed in slogan-like fashion, the 'cultivated man,' rather than the 'specialist,' has been the end sought by education and has formed the basis of social esteem in such various systems as the feudal, theocratic, and patrimonial structures of dominion: in the English notable administration, in the old Chinese patrimonial bureaucracy, as well as under the rule of demagogues in the so-called Hellenic democracy.

The term 'cultivated man' is used here in a completely value-neutral sense; it is understood to mean solely that the goal of education consists in the quality of a man's bearing in life which was *considered* 'cultivated,' rather than in a specialized training for expertness. The 'cultivated' personality formed the educational ideal, which was stamped by the structure of domination and by the social condition for membership in the ruling stratum. Such education aimed at a chivalrous or an ascetic type; or, at a literary type, as in China; a gymnastic-humanist type, as in Hellas; or it aimed at a conventional type, as in the case of the Anglo-Saxon gentleman. The qualification of the ruling stratum as such rested upon the possession of 'more' cultural quality (in the absolutely changeable, value-neutral sense in which we use the term here), rather than upon 'more' expert knowledge. Special military, theological, and juridical ability was of course intensely practiced; but the point of gravity in Hellenic, in medieval, as well as in Chinese ed-

ucation, has rested upon educational elements that were entirely different from what was 'useful' in one's specialty.

Behind all the present discussions of the foundations of the educational system, the struggle of the 'specialist type of man' against the older type of 'cultivated man' is

hidden at some decisive point. This fight is determined by the irresistibly expanding bureaucratization of all public and private relations of authority and by the ever-increasing importance of expert and specialized knowledge. This fight intrudes into all intimate cultural questions.

ANTHONY GIDDENS

The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies

The Weberian Critique

For the most significant developments in the theory of classes since Marx, we have to look to those forms of social thought whose authors, while being directly influenced by Marx's ideas, have attempted at the same time to criticise or to reformulate them. This tendency has been strongest, for a combination of historical and intellectual reasons, in German sociology, where a series of attempts have been made to provide a fruitful critique of Marx—beginning with Max Weber, and continuing through such authors as Geiger, Renner and Dahrendorf.¹ Weber's critique of Marx here has been of particular importance. But, especially in the English-speaking world, the real import of Weber's analysis has frequently been misrepresented. The customary procedure has been to contrast Weber's discussion of 'Class, status and party', a fragment of *Economy and Society*, with the con-

ception of class supposedly taken by Marx, to the detriment of the latter. Marx, so it is argued, treated 'class' as a purely economic phenomenon and, moreover, regarded class conflicts as in some way the 'inevitable' outcome of clashes of material interest. He failed to realise, according to this argument, that the divisions of economic interest which create classes do not necessarily correspond to sentiments of communal identity which constitute differential 'status'. Thus, status, which depends upon subjective evaluation, is a separate 'dimension of stratification' from class, and the two may vary independently. There is yet a third dimension, so the argument continues, which Weber recognised as an independently variable factor in 'stratification', but which Marx treated as directly contingent upon class interests. This is the factor of 'power'.²

Evaluation of the validity of this interpretation is difficult because there is no doubt that Weber himself accepted it—or certain elements of it. What is often portrayed in the secondary literature as a critique of 'Marx's conception of class' actually takes a stilted and impoverished form of crude Marxism as its main target of attack. But this sort of determinist Marxism was already current in Germany in

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Weber's lifetime, and since Weber himself set out to question this determinism, the true lines of similarity and difference between his and Marx's analysis of classes are difficult to disentangle.³

In the two versions of 'Class, status and party' which have been embodied in *Economy and Society*,⁴ Weber provides what is missing in Marx: an explicit discussion of the concept of class. There are two principal respects in which this analysis differs from Marx's 'abstract model' of classes. One is that which is familiar from most secondary accounts—the differentiation of 'class' from 'status' and 'party'. The second, however, as will be argued below, is equally important: this is that, although Weber employs for some purposes a dichotomous model which in certain general respects resembles that of Marx, his viewpoint strongly emphasises a *pluralistic conception of classes*. Thus Weber's distinction between 'ownership classes' (*Besitzklassen*) and 'acquisition classes' (*Erbwerbsklassen*) is based upon a fusion of two criteria: 'on the one hand . . . the kind of property that is usable for returns; and, on the other hand . . . the kind of services that can be offered on the market, thus producing a complex typology. The sorts of property which may be used to obtain market returns, although dividing generally into two types—creating ownership (*rentier*) and acquisition (entrepreneurial) classes—are highly variable, and may produce many differential interests within dominant classes:

Ownership of dwellings; workshops; warehouses; stores; agriculturally usable land in large or small holdings—a quantitative difference with possibly qualitative consequences; ownership of mines; cattle; men (slaves); disposition over mobile instruments of production, or capital goods of all sorts, especially money or objects that can easily be exchanged for money; disposition over products of one's own labour or of others' labour differing according to their various distances from consumability; disposition over transferable monopolies of any kind—all these distinctions differentiate the class situations of the propertied . . .⁵

But the class situations of the propertyless are also differentiated, in relation both to the types and the degree of 'monopolisation' of 'marketable skills' which they possess. Consequently, there are various types of 'middle class' which stand between the 'positively privileged' classes (the propertied) and the 'negatively privileged' classes (those who possess neither property nor marketable skills). While these groupings are all nominally propertyless, those who possess skills which have a definite 'market value' are certainly in a different class situation from those who have nothing to offer but their (unskilled) labour. In acquisition classes—i.e., those associated particularly with the rise of modern capitalism—educational qualifications take on a particular significance in this respect; but the monopolisation of trade skills by manual workers is also important.

Weber insists that a clear-cut distinction must be made between class 'in itself' and class 'for itself': 'class', in his terminology, always refers to market interests, which exist independently of whether men are aware of them. Class is thus an 'objective' characteristic influencing the life-chances of men. But only under certain conditions do those sharing a common class situation become conscious of, and act upon, their mutual economic interests. In making this emphasis, Weber undoubtedly intends to separate his position from that adopted by many Marxists, involving what he calls a 'pseudo-scientific operation' whereby the link between class and class consciousness is treated as direct and immediate.⁶ Such a consideration evidently also underlies the emphasis which Weber places upon 'status groups' (*Stände*) as contrasted to classes. The contrast between class and status group, however, is not, as often seems to be assumed, merely, nor perhaps even primarily, a distinction between subjective and objective aspects of differentiation. While class is founded upon differentials of economic interest in market relationships, Weber nowhere denies that, under certain given circumstances, a class may be a subjectively aware 'community'. The importance of status groups—

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which are normally 'communities' in this sense—derives from the fact that they are built upon criteria of grouping other than those stemming from market situation. The contrast between classes and status groups is sometimes portrayed by Weber as one between the objective and the subjective; but it is also one between production and consumption. Whereas class expresses relationships involved in production, status groups express those involved in consumption, in the form of specific 'styles of life'.

Status affiliations may cut across the relationships generated in the market, since membership of a status group usually carries with it various sorts of monopolistic privileges. Nonetheless, classes and status groups tend in many cases to be closely linked, through property; possession of property is both a major determinant of class situation and also provides the basis for following a definite 'style of life'. The point of Weber's analysis is not that class and status constitute two 'dimensions of stratification', but that classes and status communities represent two possible, and competing, modes of group formation in relation to the distribution of power in society. Power is *not*, for Weber, a 'third dimension' in some sense comparable to the first two. He is quite explicit about saying that classes, status groups and parties are all 'phenomena of the distribution of power'.⁷ The theorem informing Weber's position here is his insistence that power is not to be assimilated to economic domination—again, of course, a standpoint taken in deliberate contrast to that of Marx. The party, oriented towards the acquisition or maintenance of political leadership, represents, like the class and the status group, a major focus of social organisation relevant to the distribution of power in a society. It is, however, only characteristic of the modern rational state....

In his conceptual discussion of class, besides distinguishing the purely economic *Beitzklassen* and *Erwerbsklassen*, Weber also refers to what he calls 'social classes'. A social class, in Weber's sense, is formed of a cluster of class situations which are linked together

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by virtue of the fact that they involve common mobility chances, either within the career of individuals or across the generations. Thus while a worker may fairly readily move from an unskilled to a semi-skilled manual occupation, and the son of an unskilled worker may become a semi-skilled or perhaps a skilled worker, the chances of either intra- or inter-generational mobility into non-manual occupations are much less. While the conception of the 'social class' remains relatively undeveloped in Weber's writings, it is of particular interest in relation to his model of capitalist development. As Weber himself points out, the notion of 'social class' comes much closer to that of 'status group' than does the conception of purely economic class (although, as with economic class situation, individuals who are in the same social class are not necessarily conscious of the fact). The notion of social class is important because it introduces a unifying theme into the diversity of cross-cutting class relationships which may stem from Weber's identification of 'class situation' with 'market position'. If the latter is applied strictly, it is possible to distinguish an almost endless multiplicity of class situations. But a 'social class' exists only when these class situations cluster together in such a way as to create a common nexus of social interchange between individuals. In capitalism, Weber distinguishes four main social class groupings: the manual working class, the petty bourgeoisie, propertyless white-collar workers, 'technicians, various kinds of white-collar employees, civil servants—possibly with considerable social differences depending on the cost of their training; and those 'privileged through property and education'.⁸ Of these social class groupings, the most significant are the working class, the propertyless 'middle class' and the propertied 'upper class'. Weber agrees with Marx that the category of small property-owners (*Kleinbürger-tum*) tends to become progressively more restricted with the increasing maturity of capitalism. The result of this process, however, is not normally that they 'sink into the proletariat', but that they become absorbed

into the expanding category of skilled manual or non-manual salaried workers.

To emphasise, therefore, that Weber's 'abstract model' of classes is a pluralistic one is not to hold that he failed to recognise unifying ties between the numerous combinations of class interests made possible by his conception of 'class situation'. But there is no doubt that his viewpoint drastically amends important elements of Marx's picture of the typical trend of development of the capitalist class structure. Even Weber's simplified ('social class') model of capitalism diverges significantly from the Marxian conception, in treating the propertyless 'middle class' as the category which tends to expand most with the advance of capitalism. Moreover, the social classes do not necessarily constitute 'communities', and they may be fragmented by interest divisions deriving from differentials in market position; and finally, as Weber shows in his historical writings, the relationship between class structure and the political sphere is a contingent one....

Rethinking the Theory of Class

The deficiency in Weber's reinterpretation of Marx's view is that it is not sufficiently radical. While Weber recognises the unsatisfactory character of the Marxian standpoint, particularly as regards the undifferentiated category of the 'propertyless', he does not pursue the implications of his own conception far enough. Dahrendorf has suggested that we may stand the Marxian concept of property on its head in terms of its relation to authority;⁹ the implications of the Weberian analysis, however, are that the conception of property may be 'inverted' or generalised in a different way, which does not sacrifice the economic foundation of the concept of class. 'Property' refers, not to any characteristics of physical objects as such, but to rights which are associated with them, which in turn confer certain capacities upon the 'owner'.... In the market, of course, the significance of capital as private property is that it confers certain

very definite capacities upon its possessor as compared to those who are 'propertyless'—those who do not own their means of production. But we can readily perceive that, even in the Marxian view, the notion of 'propertylessness' is something of a misnomer. For if 'property' is conceived of as a set of capacities of action with reference to the operations of the market, it is evident that the wage-labourer does possess such capacities. The 'property' of the wage-labourer is the labour-power which he brings for sale in entering into the contractual relation. While this fundamentally disadvantages him in the competitive bargaining situation in relation to the owner of capital, this is not simply a one-way power relationship: the 'property' which the wage-labourer possesses is needed by the employer, and he must pay at least some minimal attention to the demands of the worker—providing a basis for the collective withdrawal of labour as a possible sanction. It would be departing too much from usual terminology to refer to capital and to the labour-power of the worker both as 'property'; and, anyway, the point is rather that 'property' (capital) is a particular case of capacity to determine the bargaining outcome, rather than vice versa. So I shall continue to speak below of 'property' (in the means of production) in a conventional sense, and shall use the term 'market capacity' in an inclusive manner to refer to all forms of relevant attributes which individuals may bring to the bargaining encounter.

It is an elementary fact that where ownership of property is concentrated in the hands of a minority and in a society in which the mass of the population is employed in industrial production, the vast majority consequently offer their labour for sale on the market. Because of his general emphasis upon 'productive labour', and because of his expectation that it is in the nature of modern technology to reduce productive operations to a homogeneous skill-level, Marx failed to recognise the potential significance of differentiations of market capacity which do not derive directly from the factor of property ownership. Such differentiations, it seems

clear, are contingent upon the scarcity value of what the individual 'owns' and is able to offer on the market. As Weber indicates, possession of recognised 'skills'—including educational qualifications—is the major factor influencing market capacity. Differentiations in market capacity may be used, as various recent authors have indicated, to secure economic returns other than income as such. These include, principally, security of employment, prospects of career advancement, and a range of 'fringe benefits', such as pension rights, etc.¹⁰ In the same way as the capacities which individuals bring to the bargaining process may be regarded as a form of 'property' which they exchange on the market, so these material returns may be regarded as forms of 'good' which are obtained through the sale of labour-power.

In the market structure of competitive capitalism, all those who participate in the exchange process are in a certain sense in (interest) conflict with one another for access to scarce returns. Conflict of interest may be created by the existence of many sorts of differential market capacities. Moreover, the possible relationships between property and 'propertyless' forms of market capacity are various. Speculative investment in property may, for example, be one of the specific market advantages used by those in certain occupations (thus directors are often able to use 'inside knowledge' to profit from property deals). Marx himself, of course, recognised the existence of persistent conflicts of interest within property-owning groupings: notably, between financial and industrial sectors of the large bourgeoisie, and between large and petty bourgeoisie.

The difficulty of identifying 'class' with common market capacity has already been alluded to with reference to Weber. While Weber's concept of 'market situation' successfully moves away from some of the rigidities of the Marxian scheme, it tends to imply the recognition of a cumbersome plurality of classes. There would appear to be as many 'classes', and as many 'class conflicts', as there

are differing market positions. The problem here, however, is not the recognition of the diversity of the relationships and conflicts created by the capitalist market as such, but that of making the *theoretical transition from such relationships and conflicts to the identification of classes as structured forms*. The unsatisfactory and ill-defined character of the connections between 'class position', the typology of *Bestritzen* and *Erwerbsklassen*, and 'social classes' in Weber's work has already been mentioned. But the problem is by no means confined to Weber's theoretical scheme. Marx was certainly conscious of the problematic character of the links between class as a latent set of characteristics generated by the capitalist system and class as an historical, dynamic entity, an 'historical actor'. But his contrast between class 'in itself' and class 'for itself' is primarily one distinguishing between class relationships as a cluster of economic connections on the one hand and class consciousness on the other. This emphasis was very much dictated by the nature of Marx's interests, lying as they did above all in understanding and promoting the rise of a revolutionary class consciousness within capitalism. While it would by no means be true to hold that Marx ignored this completely, it can be said that he gave only little attention to the modes in which classes, founded in a set of economic relationships, take on or 'express' themselves in definite social forms.

Nor has the matter been adequately dealt with in the writings of later authors. In fact, one of the leading dilemmas in the theory of class—which figures prominently, for example, in Aron's discussion—is that of identifying the 'reality' of class.¹¹ Not only has there been some considerable controversy over whether class is a 'real' or 'nominal' category, but many have argued that, since it is difficult or impossible to draw the 'boundaries' between classes with any degree of clarity, we should abandon the notion of class as a useful sociological concept altogether.¹² Only Dahrendorf seems to have attempted to give attention to the problem within the frame-

work of an overall theory of class, and since his identification of class with authority divisions is unacceptable [for reasons outlined elsewhere],¹³ his analysis does not help greatly.

The major problems in the theory of class, I shall suggest, do not so much concern the nature and application of the class concept itself, as what, for want of a better word, I shall call the *structuration* of class relationships.¹⁴ Most attempts to revise class theory since Marx have sought to accomplish such a revision primarily by refining, modifying, or substituting an altogether different notion for the Marxian concept of class. While it is useful to follow and develop certain of Weber's insights in this respect, the most important blank spots in the theory of class concern the processes whereby 'economic classes' become 'social classes', and whereby in turn the latter are related to other social forms. As Marx was anxious to stress in criticising the premises of political economy, all economic relationships, and any sort of 'economy', presuppose a set of social ties between producers. In arguing for the necessity of conceptualising the structuration of class relationships, I do not in any way wish to question the legitimacy of this insight, but rather to focus upon *the modes in which* 'economic' relationships become translated into 'non-economic' social structures.

One source of terminological ambiguity and conceptual confusion in the usage of the term 'class' is that it has often been employed to refer both to an economic *category* and to a specifiable cluster of social groupings. Thus Weber uses the term in both of these ways, although he seeks terminologically to indicate the difference between 'class' (as a series of 'class positions') and 'social class'. But in order to insist that the study of class and class conflict must concern itself with the interdependence of economy and society, it is not necessary to identify the term 'class' with the divisions and interests generated by the market as such. Consequently, in the remainder of this [essay], I shall use the term in the sense of Weber's 'social class'—appropriately expli-

ated. While there may be an indefinite multiplicity of cross-cutting interests created by differential market capacities, there are only, in any given society, a limited number of classes.

It will be useful at this juncture to state what class is *not*. First, a class is not a specific 'entity'—that is to say, a bounded social form in the way in which a business firm or a university is—and a class has no publicly sanctioned identity. It is extremely important to stress this, since established linguistic usage often encourages us to apply active verbs to the term 'class', but the sense in which a class 'acts' in a certain way, or 'perceives' elements in its environment on a par with an individual actor, is highly elliptical, and this sort of verbal usage is to be avoided wherever possible. Similarly, it is perhaps misleading to speak of 'membership' of a class, since this might be held to imply participation in a definite 'group'. This form of expression, however, is difficult to avoid altogether, and I shall not attempt to do so in what follows. Secondly, class has to be distinguished from 'stratum', and class theory from the study of 'stratification' as such. The latter, comprising what Ossowski terms a gradation scheme, involves a criterion or set of criteria in terms of which individuals may be ranked descriptively along a scale.¹⁵ The distinction between class and stratum is again a matter of some significance, and bears directly upon the problem of class 'boundaries'. For the divisions between strata, for analytical purposes, may be drawn very precisely, since they may be set upon a measurement scale—as, for example, with 'income strata'. The divisions between classes are *never* of this sort; nor, moreover, do they lend themselves to easy visualisation, in terms of any ordinal scale of 'higher' and 'lower', as strata do—although this sort of imagery cannot be escaped altogether. Finally we must distinguish clearly between class and elite. Elite theory, as formulated by Pareto and Mosca, developed in part as a conscious and deliberate repudiation of class analysis.¹⁶ In place of the concept of class relationships, the elite theorists substituted the opposition of

'elite' and 'mass'; and in place of the Marxian juxtaposition of class society and classlessness they substituted the idea of the cyclical replacement of elites in *perpetuo*....

The Structuration of Class Relationships

It is useful, initially, to distinguish the *mediate* from the *proximate* structuration of class relationships. By the former term, I refer to the factors which intervene between the existence of certain given market capacities and the formation of classes as identifiable social groupings, that is to say which operate as 'overall' connecting links between the market on the one hand and structured systems of class relationships on the other. In using the latter phrase, I refer to 'localised' factors which condition or shape class formation. The mediate structuration of class relationships is governed above all by the distribution of mobility chances which pertain within a given society. Mobility has sometimes been treated as if it were in large part separable from the determination of class structure. According to Schumpeter's famous example, classes may be conceived of as like conveyances, which may be constantly carrying different 'passengers' without in any way changing their shape. But, compelling though the analogy is at first sight, it does not stand up to closer examination, especially within the framework I am suggesting here.¹⁷ In general, the greater the degree of 'closure' of mobility chances—both intergenerationally and within the career of the individual—the more this facilitates the formation of identifiable classes. For the effect of closure in terms of intergenerational movement is to provide for the *reproduction* of common life experience over the generations; and this homogenisation of experience is reinforced to the degree to which the individual's movement within the labour market is confined to occupations which generate a similar range of material outcomes. In general we may state that the structuration of classes is facilitated to the degree to which mobility closure exists

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in relation to any specified form of market capacity. There are three sorts of market capacity which can be said to be normally of importance in this respect: ownership of property in the means of production; possession of educational or technical qualifications; and possession of manual labour-power. In so far as it is the case that these tend to be tied to closed patterns of inter- and intragenerational mobility, this yields the foundation of a *basic three-class system* in capitalist society: an 'upper', 'middle', and 'lower' or 'working' class. But as has been indicated previously, it is an intrinsic characteristic of the development of the capitalist market that there exist no legally sanctioned or formally prescribed limitations upon mobility, and hence it must be emphasised that there is certainly never anything even approaching complete closure. In order to account for the emergence of structured classes, we must look in addition at the proximate sources of structuration.

There are three, related, sources of proximate structuration of class relationships: the division of labour within the productive enterprise; the authority relationships within the enterprise; and the influence of what I shall call 'distributive groupings'. I have already suggested that Marx tended to use the notion of 'division of labour' very broadly, to refer both to market relationships and to the allocation of occupational tasks within the productive organisation. Here I shall use the term only in this second, more specific, sense. In capitalism, the division of labour in the enterprise is in principle governed by the promotion of productive efficiency in relation to the maximisation of profit, but while responding to the same exigencies as the capitalist market in general, the influence of the division of labour must be analytically separated as a distinctive source of structuration (and, as will be discussed later, as a significant influence upon class consciousness). The division of labour, it is clear, may be a basis of the fragmentation as well as the consolidation of class relationships. It furthers the formation of classes to the degree to which it creates homogeneous groupings which cluster along the

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same lines as those which are fostered by mediate structuration. Within the modern industrial order, the most significant influence upon proximate structuration in the division of labour is undoubtedly that of technique. The effect of industrial technique (more recently, however, modified by the introduction of cybernetic systems of control) is to create a decisive separation between the conditions of labour of manual and non-manual workers. 'Machine-minding', in one form or another, regardless of whether it involves a high level of manual skill, tends to create a working environment quite distinct from that of the administrative employee, and one which normally enforces a high degree of physical separation between the two groupings.¹⁸

This effect of the division of labour thus overlaps closely with the influence of the mediate structuration of class relationships through the differential apportionment of mobility chances; but it is, in turn, potentially heavily reinforced by the typical authority system in the enterprise. In so far as administrative workers participate in the framing, or merely in the enforcement, of authoritative commands, they tend to be separated from manual workers, who are subject to those commands. But the influence of differential authority is also basic as a reinforcing agent of the structuration of class relationships at the 'upper' levels. Ownership of property, in other words, confers certain fundamental capacities of command, maximised within the 'entrepreneurial' enterprise in its classical form. To the extent to which this serves to underwrite a division at the top, in the control of the organisation (something which is manifestly influenced, but not at all destroyed, if certain of the suppositions advanced by the advocates of the theory of the separation of 'ownership and control' are correct) it supports the differentiation of the 'upper' from the 'middle' class.

The third source of the proximate structuration of class relationships is that originating in the sphere of consumption rather than production. Now according to the traditional interpretations of class structure, including

those of Marx and Weber, 'class' is a phenomenon of production: relationships established in consumption are therefore quite distinct from, and secondary to, those formed in the context of productive activity. There is no reason to deviate from this general emphasis. But without dropping the conception that classes are founded ultimately in the economic structure of the capitalist market, it is still possible to regard consumption patterns as a major influence upon class structuration. Weber's notions of 'status' and 'status group', as I previously pointed out, confuse two separable elements: the formation of groupings in consumption, on the one hand, and the formation of types of social differentiation based upon some sort of non-economic value providing a scale of 'honour' or 'prestige' on the other. While the two may often coincide, they do not necessarily do so, and it seems worthwhile to distinguish them terminologically. Thus I shall call '*distributive groupings*' those relationships involving common patterns of the consumption of economic goods, regardless of whether the individuals involved make any type of conscious evaluation of their honour or prestige relative to others; 'status' refers to the existence of such evaluations, and a 'status group' is, then, any set of social relationships which derives its coherence from their application.¹⁹

In terms of class structuration, distributive groupings are important in so far as they interrelate with the other sets of factors distinguished above in such a way as to reinforce the typical separations between forms of market capacity. The most significant distributive groupings in this respect are those formed through the tendency towards community or neighbourhood segregation. Such a tendency is not normally based only upon differentials in income, but also upon such factors as access to housing mortgages, etc. The creation of distinctive 'working-class neighbourhoods' and 'middle-class neighbourhoods', for example, is naturally promoted if those in manual labour are by and large denied mortgages for house buying, while those in non-manual occupations experience little difficulty in obtain-

ing such loans. Where industry is located outside of the major urban areas, homogeneous 'working-class communities' frequently develop through the dependence of workers upon housing provided by the company.

In summary, to the extent to which the various bases of mediate and proximate class structuration overlap, classes will exist as distinguishable formations. I wish to say that the combination of the sources of mediate and proximate structuration distinguished here, creating a threefold class structure, is generic to capitalist society. But the mode in which these elements are merged to form a specific class system, in any given society, differs significantly according to variations in economic and political development. It should be evident that structuration is never an all-or-nothing matter. The problem of the existence of distinct class 'boundaries', therefore, is not one which can be settled in *abstracto*: one of the specific aims of class analysis in relation to empirical societies must necessarily be that of determining how strongly, in any given case, the 'class principle' has become established as a mode of structuration. Moreover, the operation of the 'class principle' may also involve the creation of forms of structuration within the major class divisions. One case in point is that which Marx called the 'petty bourgeoisie'. In terms of the preceding analysis, it is quite easy to see why ownership of small property in the means of production might come to be differentiated both from the upper class and from the ('new') middle class. If it is the case that the chances of mobility, either inter- or intragenerationally, from small to large property ownership are slight, this is likely to isolate the small property-owner from membership of the upper class as such. But the fact that he enjoys directive control of an enterprise, however minute, acts to distinguish him from those who are part of a hierarchy of authority in a larger organisation. On the other hand, the income and other economic returns of the petty bourgeois are likely to be similar to the white-collar worker, and hence they may belong to similar distributive groupings. A second potentially important influence

upon class formation is to be traced to the factor of skill differential within the general category of manual labour. The manual worker who has undergone apprenticeship, or a comparable period of training, possesses a market capacity which sets him apart from the unskilled or semi-skilled worker. This case will be discussed in more detail [elsewhere];²⁰ it is enough merely to indicate at this point that there are certain factors promoting structuration on the basis of this differentiation in market capacity (e.g., that the chances of intergenerational mobility from skilled manual to white-collar occupations are considerably higher than they are from unskilled and semi-skilled manual occupations).

So far I have spoken of structuration in a purely formal way, as though class could be defined in terms of relationships which have no 'content'. But this obviously will not do: if classes become social realities, this must be manifest in the formation of common patterns of behaviour and attitude. Since Weber's discussion of classes and status groups, the notion of 'style of life' has normally come to be identified as solely pertaining to the mode whereby a status group expresses its claim to distinctiveness. However, in so far as there is marked convergence of the sources of structuration mentioned above, classes will also tend to manifest common styles of life.

An initial distinction can be drawn here between 'class awareness' and 'class consciousness'.²¹ We may say that, in so far as class is a structured phenomenon, there will tend to exist a common awareness and acceptance of similar attitudes and beliefs, linked to a common style of life, among the members of the class. 'Class awareness', as I use the term here, does *not* involve a recognition that these attitudes and beliefs signify a particular class affiliation, or the recognition that there exist other classes, characterised by different attitudes, beliefs, and styles of life; 'class consciousness', by contrast, as I shall use the notion, does imply both of these. The difference between class awareness and class consciousness is a fundamental one, because class awareness may take the form of a *denial* of

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the existence or reality of classes.²² Thus the class awareness of the middle class, in so far as it involves beliefs which place a premium upon individual responsibility and achievement, is of this order.

Within ethnically and culturally homogeneous societies, the degree of class structuration will be determined by the interrelationship between the sources of structuration identified previously. But many, if not the majority, of capitalist societies are not homogeneous in these respects. Traditionally, in class theory, racial or religious divisions have been regarded as just so many 'obstacles' to the formation of classes as coherent unities. This may often be so, where these foster types of structuration which deviate from that established by the 'class principle' (as typically was the case in the battles fought by the rearguard of feudalism against the forces promoting the emergence of capitalism). The idea that ethnic or cultural divisions serve to dilute or hinder the formation of classes is also very explicitly built into Weber's separation of (economic) 'class' and 'status group'. But this, in part at least, gains its cogency from the contrast between estate, as a legally constituted category, and class, as an economic category. While it may be agreed, however, that the bases of the formation of classes and status groups (in the sense in which I have employed these concepts) are different, nonetheless the tendency to class structuration may receive a considerable impetus where class coincides with the criteria of status group membership—in other words, where structuration deriving from economic organisation 'overlaps' with, or, in Dahrendorf's terms, is 'superimposed' upon, that deriving from evaluative categorisations based upon ethnic or cultural differences.²³ Where this is so, status group membership itself becomes a form of market capacity. Such a situation frequently offers the strongest possible source of class structuration, whereby there develop clear-cut differences in attitudes, beliefs and style of life between the classes. Where ethnic differences serve as a 'disqualifying' market capacity, such that those in the category in question are heavily

concentrated among the lowest-paid occupations, or are chronically unemployed or semi-employed, we may speak of the existence of an *underclass*.²⁴

Notes

1. Theodor Geiger, *Die Klassengesellschaft im Schmelztiegel* (Cologne 1949); Karl Renner, *Wandlungen der modernen Gesellschaft* (Vienna 1933); Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford 1959).
2. For a cogent representation of this view, see W. G. Runciman, 'Class, status and power', in J. A. Jackson, *Social Stratification* (Cambridge 1968).
3. See my *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge 1971), pp. 185ff. and *passim*.
4. *Economy and Society*, vol. 2 (New York 1968), pp. 926–40, and vol. 1, pp. 302–7.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 928.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 930.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 927.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
9. Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict*.
10. See, for example, David Lockwood, *The Blackcoated Worker* (London 1958), pp. 202–4; Frank Parkin, *Class Inequality and Political Order* (London 1971).
11. Raymond Aron, *La lutte des classes* (Paris 1964).
12. See Robert A. Nisbet, 'The decline and fall of social class', *Pacific Sociological Review* 2, 1959.
13. Anthony Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (New York 1973), ch. 4.
14. What I call class structuration, Gurwitsch calls negatively 'résistance à la pénétration par la société globale'. Georges Gurwitsch, *Le concept de classes sociales de Marx à nos jours* (Paris 1954), p. 116 and *passim*.
15. Stanisław Ossowski, *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness* (London 1963).
16. Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society* (New York 1935); Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (New York 1939).
17. We may, however, agree with Schumpeter that 'The family, not the physical person, is the true unit of class and class theory' (Joseph Schumpeter, *Imperialism, Social Classes*, Cleveland 1961). This is actually completely consistent with the idea that mobility is fundamental to class formation.
18. Lockwood, *The Blackcoated Worker*, op. cit.
19. It might be pointed out that it would easily be possible to break down the notion of status group further; according, for example, to whether the status evaluations in question are made primar-

ity by others outside the group, and rejected by those inside it, etc.

20. Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*.

21. This is not, of course, the same as Lukács' 'class-conditioned unconsciousness'; but I believe that Lukács is correct in distinguishing qualitatively different 'levels' of class consciousness. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (London 1971), pp. 52ff.

22. cf. Nicos Poulantzas, *Pouvoir politique et classes sociales de l'état capitaliste* (Paris 1970). It is misleading, however, to speak of *classes sans conscience*, as Crozier does. See Michel Crozier, 'Classes sans conscience ou préfiguration de la société sans classes', *Archives européennes de sociologie*.

FRANK PARKIN

Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique

The 'Boundary Problem' in Sociology

The persistent attractions of Marxist class theory have almost certainly been boosted by the less than inspiring alternative offered by academic sociology. In so far as there is any sort of tacitly agreed upon model of class among western social theorists it takes the form of the familiar distinction between manual and non-manual labour. No other criterion for identifying the class boundary seems to enjoy such widespread acceptance among those who conduct investigations into family structure, political attitudes, social imagery, life-styles, educational attainment, and similar enquiries that

give 1, 1960; also 'L'ambiguïté de la conscience de classe chez les employés et les petits fonctionnaires', *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* 28, 1955.

23. Or, to use another terminology, where there is 'overdetermination' (Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, London 1969, pp. 89-128).

24. Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*, according to this usage, is only an underclass when the individuals in question tend to derive from distinctive ethnic backgrounds. Leggett has referred to the underclass as the 'marginal working class', defining this as 'a sub-community of workers who belong to a subordinate ethnic or racial group which is usually proletarianised and highly segregated' (John C. Leggett, *Class, Race, and Labor*, New York 1968, p. 14).

keep the wheels of empirical sociology endlessly turning. Paradoxically, however, although the manual/non-manual model is felt to be highly serviceable for research purposes, it is not commonly represented as a model of class cleavage and conflict. That is to say, the two main social categories distinguished by sociology for purposes of class analysis are not invested with antagonistic properties comparable to those accorded to proletariat and bourgeoisie in Marxist theory. This would be less cause for comment if proponents of the manual/non-manual model normally construed the social order as a harmonious and integrated whole; but to construe it instead in terms of conflict, dichotomy, and cleavage, as most of these writers now appear to do, seems to reveal an awkward contrast between the empirical model of class and the general conception of capitalist society.

The strongest case that could be made out for identifying the line between manual and non-manual labour as the focal point of class conflict would be one that treated capitalist society as the industrial firm writ large. If it is only within the framework of 'factory despotism' that the blue-collar/white-collar divide closely corresponds to the line of social confrontation over the distribution of spoils and the prerogatives of command. And this is particularly the case in those industrial settings where even the lowest grades of white-collar staff are cast in the role of managerial subalterns, physically and emotionally removed from the shop-floor workers. Within the microcosm of capitalism represented by the typical industrial firm, the sociological model of class has something to recommend it as an alternative to one constructed around the rights of property.

The drawback is, however, that social relations within the capitalist firm are a less accurate guide to class relations within capitalist society than they might once have been. The reason for this is that the post-war expansion of the public sector has given rise to an ever-increasing assortment of non-manual groups in local government and welfare services that cannot in any real sense be thought of as the tail-end of a broad managerial stratum aligned against a manual workforce. Frequently, in fact there is no manual workforce to confront in the occupational settings within which these white-collar groups are employed.¹ And even where teachers, social workers, nurses, local government clerks, lower civil servants, and the like do form part of an organization that includes janitors, orderlies, cleaners, and other workers by hand, they do not usually stand in the same quasi-managerial relationship to them as does the staff employee to the industrial worker in the capitalist firm.

The usual rationale for treating intermediate and lower white-collar groups as a constituent element of a dominant class is that these groups traditionally have identified themselves with the interests of capital and

management rather than with the interests of organized labour. But for various reasons this identification is easier to accomplish in the sphere of private industry and commerce than in the public sector. In the latter, as already pointed out, not only is there usually no subordinate manual group physically present to inspire a sense of white-collar status elevation, but also the charms of management are likely to seem less alluring when the chain of command stretches ever upwards and out of sight into the amorphous and unlovely body of the state. Moreover, public sector employees do not have the same opportunities as those in the commercial sector for transferring their special skills and services to different and competing employers, all improvements in pay and conditions must be negotiated with a monopoly employer, and one who is under close budgetary scrutiny. All this makes for a relationship of some tension between white-collar employees and the state *qua* employer, a condition more akin to that found between manual labour and management than between white-collar employees and management in the private sector. Thus, the validity of the manual/non-manual model as a representation of class conflict relies more heavily upon a view of the commercial employee as the prototypical case of the white-collar worker than really is justified, given the enormous growth of public-sector employment.

What this suggests is that manual and non-manual groups can usefully be thought of as entities socially differentiated from each other in terms of life-chances and opportunities, but not as groups standing in a relationship of exploitation and exploited, of dominance and subordination, in the manner presumably required of a genuine conflict model. Expressed differently, the current sociological model does not fulfil even the minimal Weberian claim that the relations between classes are to be understood as 'aspects of the distribution of power'. Instead of a theoretical framework organized around the central ideas of mutual antagonism and the incompatibility of interests

we find one organized around the recorded facts of mere social differentiation....

The 'Boundary Problem' in Marxism

The variety of [Marxist] interpretations on offer make it more than usually difficult to speak of 'the' Marxist theory of class. In some respects the range of differences within this camp has tended to blur the simple contrast between Marxist and bourgeois theories; and this is particularly so given the tendency for Marxists to adopt familiar sociological categories under substitute names. The most striking example of this is the tacit acknowledgment of the role of *authority* in the determination of bourgeois status. This arises from the need to find some theoretical principle by which the managerial stratum, in particular, can be assigned to the same class as the owners of capital. Although allusions may occasionally be made to the fact that managers are sometimes shareholders in the companies that employ them, it is clear that this is a contingent feature of managerial status and could not be regarded as theoretically decisive. Managers with and without private company shares do not appear to be different political and ideological animals.

The exercise of discipline over the workforce, on the other hand, is a necessary feature of the managerial role, not a contingent one; and as such it recommends itself as a major criterion of bourgeois class membership. Indeed, for some Marxists managerial authority has in certain respects superseded property ownership as *the* defining attribute of a capitalist class. According to Garchedi, 'the manager, rather than the capitalist rentier, is the central figure, he, rather than the capitalist rentier, is the non-labourer, the non-producer, the exploiter. He, rather than the capitalist rentier, is capital personified'.²

Interestingly, by proclaiming that the supervision and control of subordinates is the new hallmark of bourgeois status, Marxist theorists have come surprisingly close to endorsing Dahrendorf's view of the determinate role

of authority in establishing the class boundary.³ Their strict avoidance of this term in favour of some synonym or circumlocution ('mental labour', 'global function of capital', 'labour of superintendence') is perhaps a tacit admission of this embarrassing affinity with Dahrendorf's position. Although none of these writers would accept Dahrendorf's proposition that authority is a general phenomenon that encompasses property, it is nevertheless the case that their treatment of authority relations, however phrased, takes up far more of their analysis than the discussion of property relations.

To make property the centrepiece of class analysis would bring with it the duty of explaining precisely why the apparatus of managerial authority and control was thought to grow out of the institution of private ownership. Presumably it has come to the attention of western Marxists that societies that have done away with property in its private forms nevertheless have their own interesting little ways of seeing to the 'superintendence of labour'. The view that class and authority relations under capitalism are a unique product of private ownership must rest on a belief that these things are ordered in a very different way under the socialist mode of production. The fact that this mode of production figures not at all in any of the class analyses referred to suggests that Marxists are none too happy about drawing the very comparisons that are so essential to their case. After all, supposing it was discovered that factory despotism, the coercive uses of knowledge, and the privileges of mental labour were present not only in societies where the manager was 'capital personified', but also in societies where he was the party personified? Marxists would then be faced with the unwelcome choice of either having to expand the definition of capitalism to embrace socialist society, or of disowning the cherished concepts of private property and surplus extraction upon which their class theory is grounded. The obvious reluctance to engage in the comparative analysis of class under the two ostensibly different modes of production is therefore understandable

enough. As for the credibility of Marxist class theory, it would seem that the advent of socialist society is about the worst thing that could have happened to it.

A further difficulty encountered by this theory is the attempt to arrive at some general principles by which to demarcate the established professions from routine white-collar employees, a distinction required by the evident self-identification of the former with the general interests of the bourgeoisie. In place of any general principles, however, resort is had to an eclectic assortment of descriptive indices demonstrating that 'higher' white-collar groups are in various ways simply better off than 'lower' white-collar groups. Braverman, for example, lists advantages such as higher pay, security of employment, and the privileged market position of the professions.⁴ In similar vein, Westergaard and Resler suggest drawing a line of class demarcation beneath professional and managerial groups on the grounds that 'they are not dependent on the markets in which they sell their labour in anything like the way that other earners are'.⁵ Their incomes 'are determined by market rules and mechanisms over which, in effect, they themselves have considerable influence in their own corners of the market'.⁶

The one notable thing about this kind of analysis is that despite its avowedly Marxist provenance it is indistinguishable from the approach of modern bourgeois social theory. It is, after all, Weber rather than Marx who provides the intellectual framework for understanding class in terms of market opportunities, life-chances, and symbolic rewards. The focus upon income differences and other market factors is difficult to reconcile with the standard Marxist objection to bourgeois sociology that it mistakenly operates on the level of distribution instead of on the level of productive relations. It might also be said that it is from Weber rather than Marx that the postulated link between class position and bureaucratic authority most clearly derives. The fact that these normally alien concepts of authority relations, life-chances, and market rewards have now been comfortably absorbed

by contemporary Marxist theory is a handsome, if unacknowledged, tribute to the virtues of bourgeois sociology. Inside every neo-Marxist there seems to be a Weberian struggling to get out....

Social Closure

By social closure Weber means the process by which social collectivities seek to maximize rewards by restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles. This entails the singling out of certain social or physical attributes as the justificatory basis of exclusion. Weber suggests that virtually any group attribute—race, language, social origin, religion—may be seized upon provided it can be used for 'the monopolization of specific, usually economic opportunities'.⁷ This monopolization is directed against competitors who share some positive or negative characteristic; its purpose is always the 'closure of social and economic opportunities to outsiders'.⁸ The nature of these exclusionary practices, and the completeness of social closure, determine the general character of the distributive system.

Surprisingly, Weber's elaboration of the closure theme is not linked in any immediate way with his other main contributions to stratification theory, despite the fact that processes of exclusion can properly be conceived of as an aspect of the distribution of power, which for Weber is practically synonymous with stratification. As a result, the usefulness of the concept for the study of class and similar forms of structured inequality becomes conditional on the acceptance of certain refinements and enlargements upon the original usage.

An initial step in this direction is to extend the notion of closure to encompass other forms of collective social action designed to maximize claims to rewards and opportunities. Closure strategies would thus include not only those of an exclusionary kind, but also those adopted by the excluded themselves as a direct response to their status as outsiders. It

is in any case hardly possible to consider the effectiveness of exclusion practices without due reference to the countervailing actions of socially defined ineligibles. As Weber acknowledges: 'Such group action may provoke a corresponding reaction on the part of those against whom it is directed'.⁹ In other words, collective efforts to resist a pattern of dominance governed by exclusion principles can properly be regarded as the other half of the social closure equation. This usage is in fact employed by Weber in his discussion of 'community closure' which, as Neuwirth has shown, bears directly upon those forms of collective action mounted by the excluded—that is, 'negatively privileged status groups'.¹⁰

The distinguishing feature of exclusionary closure is the attempt by one group to secure for itself a privileged position at the expense of some other group through a process of subordination. That is to say, it is a form of collective social action which, intentionally or otherwise, gives rise to a social category of ineligibles or outsiders. Expressed metaphorically, exclusionary closure represents the use of power in a 'downward' direction because it necessarily entails the creation of a group, class, or stratum of legally defined inferiors. Countervailing action by the 'negatively privileged', on the other hand, represents the use of power in an upward direction in the sense that collective attempts by the excluded to win a greater share of resources always threaten to bite into the privileges of legally defined superiors. It is in other words a form of action having usurpation as its goal. *Exclusion* and *usurpation* may therefore be regarded as the two main generic types of social closure, the latter always being a consequence of, and collective response to, the former.¹¹

Strategies of exclusion are the predominant mode of closure in all stratified systems. Where the excluded in their turn also succeed in closing off access to remaining rewards and opportunities, so multiplying the number of substrata, the stratification order approaches the furthest point of contrast to the Marxist model of class polarization. The traditional

caste system and the stratification of ethnic communities in the United States provide the clearest illustrations of this closure pattern, though similar processes are easily detectable in societies in which class formation is paramount. Strategies of usurpation vary in scale from those designed to bring about marginal redistribution to those aimed at total expropriation. But whatever their intended scale they nearly always contain a potential challenge to the prevailing system of allocation and to the authorized version of distributive justice.

All this indicates the ease with which the language of closure can be translated into the language of power. Modes of closure can be thought of as different means of mobilizing power for the purpose of engaging in distributive struggle. To conceive of power as a built-in attribute of closure is at the very least to dispense with those fruitless searches for its 'location' inspired by Weber's more familiar but completely unhelpful definition in terms of the ubiquitous struggle between contending wills. Moreover, to speak of power in the light of closure principles is quite consistent with the analysis of class relations. Thus, to anticipate the discussion, the familiar distinction between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in its classic as well as in its modern guise, may be conceived of as an expression of conflict between classes defined not specifically in relation to their place in the productive process but in relation to their prevalent modes of closure, exclusion and usurpation, respectively. . . .

In modern capitalist society the two main exclusionary devices by which the bourgeoisie constructs and maintains itself as a class are, first, those surrounding the institutions of property; and second, academic or professional qualifications and credentials. Each represents a set of legal arrangements for restricting access to rewards and privileges: property ownership is a form of closure designed to prevent general access to the means of production and its fruits; credentialism is a form of closure designed to control and moni-

tor entry to key positions in the division of labour. The two sets of beneficiaries of these state-enforced exclusionary practices may thus be thought of as the core components of the dominant class under modern capitalism. Before taking up the discussion of common class interests fostered by private property and credentials it may be useful to consider each of the two principal closure strategies separately.

It has already been remarked upon how the concept of property has been devalued in the modern sociology of class as a result of the heavy weighting accorded to the division of labour. This has not always been true of bourgeois sociology. Weber was in full accord with Marx in asserting that "Property" and "lack of property" are . . . the basic characteristics of all class situations.¹² The post-Weberian tendency to analyse social relations as if the propertyless condition had painlessly arrived is perhaps a natural extension of the use of 'western' or 'industrial' to denote societies formerly referred to as capitalist. The post-war impact of functionalist theory certainly contributed to this tendency, since the proclamation of belief in the ultimate victory of achievement values and the merit system of reward naturally cast doubt on the importance of property as an institution. The inheritance of wealth after all requires notably little expenditure of those talents and efforts that are said to be the only keys to the gates of fortune.

The extent to which property has come to be regarded as something of an embarrassing theoretical anomaly is hinted at in the fact that it receives only the most cursory acknowledgment in Davis and Moore's functionalist manifesto, and even then in the shape of an assertion that 'strictly legal and functional ownership . . . is open to attack' as capitalism develops.¹³ To propose that the imposition of death duties and estate taxes constitutes evidence for an assault upon property rights is somewhat like suggesting that the introduction of divorce laws is evidence of state support for the dissolution of the family.

Property in this scheme of things can only be understood as a case of cultural lag—one of those quaint institutional remnants from an earlier epoch which survives by the grace of social inertia.

Several generations earlier Durkheim had reasoned along similar lines in declaring that property inheritance was 'bound up with archaic concepts and practices that have no part in our present day ethics'.¹⁴ And although he felt it was not bound to disappear on this account he was willing to predict that inherited wealth would 'lose its importance more and more', and if it survived at all it would only be 'in a weakened form'.¹⁵ Durkheim was not of course opposed to private property as such, only its transmission through the family. It is obvious that inheritance, by creating inequalities amongst men from birth, that are unrelated to merit or services, invalidates the whole contractual system at its very roots.¹⁶ Durkheim wanted society made safe for property by removing those legal practices that could not be squared with conceptions of liberal individualism and which therefore threatened to cause as much moral and social disturbance as the 'forced' division of labour.

There was not much likelihood of property itself declining as an institution because it was part of the order of things invested with a sacred character, understood in that special Durkheimian sense of an awesome relationship rooted deeply in the *conscience collective*. Although the sacred character of property arose originally from its communal status, the source of all things holy, the marked evolutionary trend towards the individualization of property would not be accompanied by any decline in its divinity. Personal rights to property were therefore seen by Durkheim as part of that general line of social development by which the individual emerges as a distinct and separate entity from the shadow of the group. The individual affirms himself as such by claiming exclusive rights to things over and above the rights of the collectivity. There is more than an echo here of Hegel's dictum that 'In this property a

person exists for the first time as reason'.¹⁷ As Plamenatz comments:

'It makes sense to argue, as Hegel does, that it is partly in the process of coming to own things, and to be recognised as their owners, that human beings learn to behave rationally and responsibly, to lead an ordered life. It is partly in the process of learning to distinguish mine from thine that a child comes to recognise itself as a person, as a bearer of rights and duties, as a member of a community with a place of its own inside it'.¹⁸

As Plamenatz goes on to say, however plausible as a defence of personal property this may be, as a defence of capitalist property relations it is 'lamentably inadequate'.¹⁹

The reason for this is that Hegel, like Durkheim, and many contemporary sociologists, never clearly distinguishes between property as rights to personal possessions and property as capital. Parsons is only one of many who reduces all forms of property to the status of a possession; this is understood as 'a right or a bundle of rights. In other words it is a set of expectations relative to social behaviour and attitudes'.²⁰ If property is simply a specific form of possession, or a certain bundle of rights, then everyone in society is a proprietor to some degree. On this reckoning there can be no clear social division between owners and non-owners, only a gradual, descending scale from those with very much to those with very little. This is well in line with Parsons' usual theoretical strategy of asserting the benign quality of any resource by reference to its widespread distribution. The possession of a toothbrush or an oilfield confers similar rights and obligations upon their owners, so that property laws cannot be interpreted as class laws. As Rose and his colleagues have suggested:

'the ideological significance of such a universalistic and disinterested legal interpretation of property in modern capitalist society is two-fold. First, as the law protects and recognises *all* private property, and as virtually all members of the society can claim title to *some* such property, it may be claimed

that all members of society have some vested interest in the *status quo*. From such a perspective, therefore, it can be argued that, far from representing an irreconcilable conflict of interests, the distribution of property in modern capitalist society gives rise to a commensurability of interests, any differences being variations of degree rather than kind. The office developer, the shareholder, the factory-owner, the householder and even the second-hand car owner may thus be represented as sharing fundamentally common interests, if not identities'.²¹

What the sociological definition of property as possessions interestingly fails to ask is why only certain limited forms of possession are legally admissible. It is patently not the case, for example, that workers are permitted to claim legal possession of their jobs; nor can tenants claim rights of possession to their homes, nor welfare claimants enforceable rights to benefits. Possession in all these cases is pre-empted by the conflicting claims of employers, landlords, and the state respectively, which are accorded legal priority. Although the law may treat the rights of ownership in true universalistic fashion it is silent on the manner by which only some 'expectations' are successfully converted to the status of property rights and others not. . . .

The case for restoring the notion of property into the centre of class analysis is that it is the most important single form of social closure common to industrial societies. That is to say, rights of ownership can be understood not as a special case of authority so much as a specific form of exclusion. As Durkheim expresses it, 'the right of property is the right of a given individual to exclude other individual and collective entities from the usage of a given thing'.²² Property is defined negatively by 'the exclusion it involves rather than the prerogatives it confers'.²³ Durkheim's reference to *individual* rights of exclusion clearly indicates that once again he has possessions in mind, and that, characteristically, he sees no important distinction between objects of personal ownership, and the control of resources resulting in the exercise of power.

It is clearly necessary to distinguish property as possessions from property as capital, since only the latter is germane to the analysis of class systems. Property as capital is, to paraphrase Macpherson, that which 'confers the right to deny men access to the means of life and labour'.²⁴ This exclusionary right can obviously be vested in a variety of institutional forms, including the capitalist firm, a nationalized industry, or a Soviet enterprise. All these are examples of property that confers legal powers upon a limited few to grant or deny general access to the means of production and the distribution of its fruits. Although personal possessions and capital both entail rights of exclusion, it is only the exclusionary rights embedded in the latter that have important consequences for the life-chances and social condition of the excluded. To speak of property in the context of class analysis is, then, to speak of capital only, and not possessions.

Once property is conceptualized as a form of exclusionary social closure there is no need to become entangled in semantic debates over whether or not workers in socialist states are 'really' exploited. The relevant question is not whether surplus extraction occurs, but whether the state confers rights upon a limited circle of eligibles to deny access to the means of life and labour to the rest of the community. If such exclusionary powers are legally guaranteed and enforced, an exploitative relationship prevails as a matter of definition. It is not of overriding importance to know whether these exclusionary powers are exercised by the formal owners of property or by their appointed agents, since the social consequences of exclusion are not demonstrably different in the two cases. Carchedi and other neo-Marxists may therefore be quite correct in suggesting that 'the manager is capitalist personified'; but all that needs to be added is first, that this dictum holds good not only for monopoly capitalism, but for *all*, including socialism, systems in which access to property and its benefits is in the legal gift of a select few; and, second, that it squares far more comfortably with the assumptions of

bourgeois, or at least Weberian, sociology than with classical Marxist theory.

Of equal importance to the exclusionary rights of property is that set of closure practices sometimes referred to as 'credentialism'—that is, the inflated use of educational certificates as a means of monitoring entry to key positions in the division of labour. Well before the onset of mass higher education, Weber had pointed to the growing use of credentials as a means of effecting exclusionary closure.

'The development of the diploma from universities, and business and engineering colleges, and the universal clamour for the creation of educational certificates in all fields make for the formation of a privileged stratum in bureaus and offices. Such certificates support their holders' claims for internarratives with notable families. . . . claims to be admitted into the circles that adhere to "codes of honour", claims for a "respectable" remuneration rather than remuneration for work well done, claims for assured advancement and old-age insurance, and, above all, claims to monopolize social and economically advantageous positions. When we hear from all sides the demand for an introduction of regular curricula and special examinations, the reason behind it is, of course, not a suddenly awakened "thirst for education" but the desire for restricting the supply of these positions and their monopolization by the owners of educational certificates. Today the "examination" is the universal means of this monopolization, and therefore examinations irresistibly advance'.²⁵

The use of credentials for closure purposes, in the manner elaborated by Weber, has accompanied the attempt by an ever-increasing number of white collar occupations to attain the status of professions. Professionalization itself may be understood as a strategy designed, amongst other things, to limit and control the supply of entrants to an occupation in order to safeguard or enhance its market value. Much of the literature on the professions has tended to stress their differences from workaday occupations, usually accepting the professions' own evaluation of their

singularity in creating rigorous codes of technical competence and ethical standards. It is perfectly possible to accept that the monopolization of skills and services does enable the professions to exercise close control over the moral and technical standards of their members, whilst also endorsing Weber's judgment that 'normally this concern for efficient performance recedes behind the interest in limiting the supply of candidates for the benefices and honours of a given occupation'.²⁶

It would seem to be the professions' anxiety to control the supply side of labour that accounts, in part at least, for the qualifications epidemic referred to by Dore as the 'diploma disease'.²⁷ This is the universal tendency among professions to raise the minimum standards of entry as increasing numbers of potential candidates attain the formerly scarce qualifications. The growing reliance upon credentials as a precondition of professional candidature is commonly justified by reference to the greater complexity of the tasks to be performed and the consequent need for more stringent tests of individual capacity. Yet Berg's careful analysis of these claims was able to turn up no evidence to show that variations in the level of formal education were matched by variations in the quality of work performance.²⁸ Nor was there anything to suggest that professional tasks were in fact becoming more complex such as to justify a more rigorous intellectual screening of potential entrants. Berg's conclusion, in line with Weber's, is that credentials are accorded their present importance largely because they simplify and legitimate the exclusionary process. It is on these grounds, among others, that Jencks suggests that 'the use of credentials or tests scores to exclude "have not" groups from desirable jobs can be viewed in the same light as any other arbitrary form of discrimination'.²⁹

Formal qualifications and certificates would appear to be a handy device for ensuring that those who possess 'cultural capital' are given the best opportunity to transmit the benefits of professional status to their own children. Credentials are usually supplied on

the basis of tests designed to measure certain class-related qualities and attributes rather than those practical skills and aptitudes that may not so easily be passed on through the family line. It is illuminating in this respect to contrast the white-collar professions with the sporting and entertaining professions. What is especially remarkable about the latter is how relatively few of the children of successful footballers, boxers, baseball and tennis stars, or the celebrities of stage and screen have succeeded in reproducing their parents' elevated status. One reason for this would seem to be that the skills called for in these pursuits are of a kind that must be acquired and cultivated by the individual in the actual course of performance, and which are thus not easily transferred from parent to child. That is, there seems to be no equivalent to cultural capital that can be socially transmitted to the children of those gifted in the performing arts that could give them a head start in the fiercely competitive world of professional sport and show business. Presumably, if the rewards of professional sport could be more or less guaranteed along conventional career or bureaucratic lines serious proposals would eventually be put forward to limit entry to those candidates able to pass qualifying examinations in the theory of sporting science. This would have the desired effect of giving a competitive edge to those endowed with examination abilities over those merely excelling in the activity itself.³⁰

The reason why professional sports, and the entertainment professions in general, are likely to be resistant to the 'diploma disease' offers a further instructive comment upon the nature of the white-collar professions. The supreme advantage of occupational closure based upon credentials is that all those in possession of a given qualification are deemed competent to provide the relevant skills and services for the rest of their professional lives. There is no question of retesting abilities at a later stage in the professional career. The professional bodies' careful insistence that members of the lay public are not competent to sit in judgement on professional standards effec-

tively means that a final certificate is a meal ticket for life. In the sporting and entertainment professions, by contrast, the skills and abilities of the performers are kept under continuous open review by the public; those who consume the services are themselves the ultimate arbiters of an individual's competence and hence his market value, as expressed via their aggregate purchasing power. There can be no resort to the umbrella protection of a professional licence when sporting prowess and the ability to entertain are felt to be in decline in the eyes of those who pass collective judgement.

Against this exacting yardstick, then, credentialism stands out as a doubly effective device for protecting the learned professions from the hazards of the marketplace. Not merely does it serve the convenient purpose of monitoring and restricting the supply of labour, but also effectively masks all but the most extreme variations in the level of ability of professional members, thereby shielding the least competent from ruinous economic punishment. The small irony is that credentialist strategies aimed at neutralizing the competitive effects of the market confer most benefit upon that class that is most prone to trumpet the virtues of a free market economy and the sins of collectivism.

The use of systematic restrictions upon occupational entry has not of course been wholly confined to the white-collar professions. Certain skilled manual trades have adopted similar techniques designed to regulate supply, as in the case of the apprenticeship system or certain forms of the closed shop. Some unskilled occupations such as dock work and market-portering have also sought to restrict entry to the kinsmen of those already employed, though this does not normally guarantee control over the actual volume of labour supply. The crucial difference between these attempts at occupational exclusion by manual trades and those adopted by the professions is that the latter generally seek to establish a *legal monopoly* over the provision of services through licensure by the state. Whereas the learned profes-

sions have been remarkably successful in winning for themselves the status of what Weber calls 'legally privileged groups', it has been far less common for the manual trades to secure the blessing of the state for their exclusionary tactics. Indeed, the resort to 'restrictive practices' on the part of organized labour is commonly condemned as a breach of industrial morality that should be curbed rather than sanctified by law. Presumably the fact that governments have usually been reluctant to legislate formally against such practices is not unrelated to the awkwardness that might arise in drawing legal distinctions between these practices and the exclusionary devices of the professions, including the profession of law itself.

A further point of difference between professional closure and restrictive practices by trade unions is that the main purpose behind the latter activity has been the attempt to redress in some small part the disadvantages accruing to labour in its uneven contest with capital. Closure by skilled workers has been a strategy embarked upon in the course of struggle against a superior and highly organized opponent, and not primarily with the conscious intent of reducing the material opportunities of other members of the labour force. Credentialism, on the other hand, cannot be seen as a response to exploitation by powerful employers; the learned or free professions were never directly subordinate to an employing class during the period when they were effecting social closure. Their conflict, concealed beneath the rhetoric of professional ethics was, if anything, with the lay public. It was the struggle to establish a monopoly of certain forms of knowledge and practice and to win legal protection from lay interference. The aim was to ensure that the professional-client relationship was one in which the organized few confronted the disorganized many. Under modern conditions, where many professions are indirectly in the service of the state and occasionally in conflict with the government of the day over pay and conditions, a somewhat better case could perhaps be made for likening the position of profes-

sions to that of craft unions, in so far as both could be said to employ closure for purposes of bargaining with a more powerful agency. But however acrimonious relations may become between professional bodies and the state, it is worth noting that the state rarely if ever threatens to take sanctions against professions in the way that would most seriously damage their interests—namely, by rescinding their legal monopoly.

On all these grounds it is necessary to regard credentialism as a form of exclusionary social closure comparable in its importance for class formation to the institution of property. Both entail the use of exclusionary rules that confer benefits and privileges on the few through denying access to the many, rules that are enshrined in law and upheld by the coercive authority of the state. It follows from this that the dominant class under modern capitalism can be thought of as comprising those who possess or control productive capital and those who possess a legal monopoly of professional services. These groups represent the core body of the dominant or exploiting class by virtue of their exclusionary powers which necessarily have the effect of creating a reciprocal class of social inferiors and subordinates....

Class Reproduction

There is a definite tension between the commitment to closure by way of property and credentials on the part of one generation and the desire to pass on benefits to subsequent generations of kith and kin. It is not in the least necessary to deny that most members of the exclusionary class will strive to put their own advantages to the service of their children, while asserting at the same time that bourgeois forms of closure are not exactly tailor-made for self-recruiting purposes. In fact exclusionary institutions formed under capitalism do not seem to be designed first and foremost to solve the problem of class reproduction through the family line. The kin-

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ship link can only be preserved as a result of *adaptation* by the bourgeois family to the demands of institutions designed to serve a different purpose; it does not come about as a natural consequence of the closure rules themselves. In systems based on aristocratic, caste, or racial exclusion, families of the dominant group can expect to pass on their privileged status to their own descendants as a direct result of the closure rules in operation, however socially lethargic those families might be. The bourgeois family, by contrast, cannot rest comfortably on the assumption of automatic class succession; it must make definite social exertions of its own or face the very real prospect of generational decline. In other words, although the typical bourgeois family will certainly be better equipped than most to cope with the closure system on its children's behalf, it must still approach the task more in the manner of a challenge with serious risks attached than as a foregone conclusion. Even when it is successful it must face the prospect of sharing bourgeois status with uncomfortably large numbers of parvenus. What kind of system is this to provoke such anxieties in the breasts of those supposedly in command?

The answer must be that it is a system designed to promote a class formation biased more in the direction of sponsorship and careful selection of successors than of hereditary transmission. Although *both* aims might be held desirable, the first takes ideological precedence over the second, so that succession along kinship lines must be accomplished in conformity with the application of criteria that are ostensibly indifferent to the claims of blood. There is nothing especially bizarre about an arrangement whereby a dominant class relinquishes its children's patrimony in order to ensure that the calibre of its replacements is of the highest possible order. It would only appear strange to those unable to conceive that the attachment to doctrine could ever take precedence over the claims of kinship. As Orwell noted in his discussion of communist party oligarchies:

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'The essence of oligarchical rule is not father-to-son inheritance, but the persistence of a certain world-view and a certain way of life, imposed by the dead upon the living. A ruling group is a ruling group so long as it can nominate its successors. The Party is not concerned with perpetuating its blood but with perpetuating itself.³¹

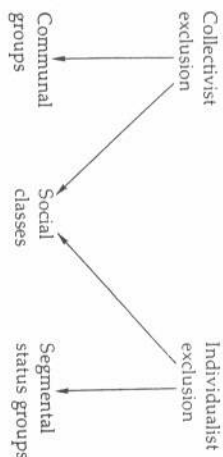
There are also powerful forces in capitalist society that are more dedicated to the perpetuation of bourgeois values than bourgeois blood. Ideological commitment to the rights of property and the value of credentials may be just as fierce as any faith in Leninist party principles. Each represents a set of ideals that can be held quite irrespective of the consequences upon the family fortunes of their advocates. The party militant's belief in a system of political selection and exclusion that could tell against his own ideologically wayward children has its counterpart in the liberal's belief in the validity of meritocratic criteria that would find against his not too clever offspring. It was perhaps examples of this kind that Weber had in mind when referring to patterns of closure distinguished by a 'rational commitment to values'. The same idea is also more than hinted at in Marx's well-known assertion that the bourgeoisie always puts the interests of the whole class above the interests of any of its individual members. These priorities are not, presumably, reversed whenever the individual members in question happen to be someone's children.

To suggest that predominant forms of closure under modern capitalism are in some tension with the common desire to transmit privileges to one's own is to point up politically significant differences of interpretation of bourgeois ideology. The classical liberal doctrine of individualism contains a powerful rejection of those principles and practices that evaluate men on the basis of group or collectivist criteria. The political driving force of individualist doctrines arose in part from the opposition of the emergent middle classes to aristocratic pretensions and exclusiveness

centred around the notion of descent. The emphasis upon lineage was an obvious hindrance to those who had raised themselves into the ranks of property by way of industry and commerce, but who lacked the pedigree necessary to enter the charmed circles inhabited by those of political power and social honour. Although non-landed wealth could occasionally be cleansed through marriage into the nobility, the new rising class sought to make property respectable in its own right by divorcing it from its associations with particular status groups. Property in all its forms was to become the hallmark of moral worth without reference back, as it were, to the quality of proprietorial blood. In the individualist credo, property thus assumed the same characteristic as money in the marketplace, where the ability to pay overrides all questions as to the actual source of the buyer's cash....

One reason for pressing the distinction between collectivist and individualist criteria underlying all forms of exclusion is to suggest that subordinate classes or strata are likely to differ in their political character according to which of the two sets of criteria is predominant. Looked at in ideal-typical terms, purely collectivist types of exclusion, such as those based on race, religion, ethnicity, and so on, would produce a subordinate group of a communal character—that is, one defined in terms of a total all-encompassing negative status. Blacks under *apartheid* or minority groups herded into religious and racial ghettos are the familiar modern examples. The polar archetypal case would be that of exclusion based solely on individualist criteria, giving rise to a subordinate group marked by intense social fragmentation and incoherence. The example here is furnished by the model of a pure meritocracy in which class is virtually replaced by a condition of discrete segmental statuses never quite reaching the point of coalescence. In non-fictional societies, of course, individualist and collectivist criteria are usually applied in some combination or other, so producing stratified systems located at vari-

ous points between these two extremes. This can be depicted in simplified form as follows:



Thus, of the three major types of subordination, classes are presented as a combination of both types of exclusionary criteria. Schematically, a subordinate class could be located towards either of the opposite poles according to the relative weighting of the two sets of criteria. The proletariat of early and mid-nineteenth century Europe, for example, would approximate to the communal pole by virtue of its wholesale exclusion from civil society arising from the treatment of its members as *de facto* collectivity. The badge of proletarian status carried with it the kinds of stigmata commonly associated with subordinate racial and ethnic groups. It was a total condition which permitted little leeway for the cultivation of those small part-time identities that bring temporary release from the humiliations of servile status. Correspondingly, of course, the proletarian condition under communal exclusion offered fertile ground for movements and ideologies which raised large questions about the nature of the political order and its legitimacy, and not merely about the fact of unequal shares.

It is the very hallmark of the communal condition that subordination is experienced through a myriad of direct personal degradations and affronts to human dignity, encouraged by the submergence of the individual into the stereotype of his 'membership' group. It is largely as a result of this that the politics of communal exclusion so frequently stresses the need for subordinate groups to create an alternative moral identity to that fashioned for them by their oppressors. Although the

condition of the early proletariat was never completely of a communal kind, it was not so different from that of a despised ethnic group, if only because the visible signs and trappings of status were as unmistakably clear as racial features. Certainly the mixture of horror, fear, and revulsion felt by the upper classes for the great unwashed was not a far remove from the sentiments usually held by dominant racial or ethnic groups towards those whom they simultaneously exploit and despise.

To speak of a gradual shift in the nature of exclusionary rules, from collectivism to individualism, is thus to point to those tendencies making for the progressive erosion of the communal components of proletarian status, otherwise referred to as working-class incorporation into civil society. Although under advanced capitalism labour remains an exploited commodity, the status of the worker does not derive to anything like the same extent from his immersion in a total collective identity and its accompanying rituals of personal degradation. Mills' portrayal of the term of 'status cycles' by which the modern urban worker is able to find escape in class anonymity during leisure periods and vacations may be somewhat overdrawn;³² but there is a real sense in which the absence of clearly visible and unambiguous marks of inferior status has made the enforcement of an all-pervasive deference system almost impossible to sustain outside the immediate work situation. It would now take an unusually sharp eye to detect the social class of Saturday morning shoppers in the High Street, whereas to any earlier generation it would have been the most elementary task. More to the point, even assuming that a lynx-eyed bourgeois could accurately spot a worker in muti, what real hope could he now entertain of having any claim to deference actually honoured? A system of deference can only operate effectively when the status of strangers can accurately be judged, and the information required for this is difficult to come by without the aid of a collectivist stereotype. In this respect the personal dignity of the modern

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worker has been enhanced by the evolution towards individualist exclusion, even though his subordination to capital remains a central fact of life.

As class subordination becomes increasingly less communal in character, the political ideals and programmes that flourish among its members tend to become less inspired by visions of a new moral order and the promise of emancipation, and rather more preoccupied with the issues of distributive justice. Those who deplore the apparent flickering of those energies and passions that produced nineteenth-century socialism might care to reflect on the possibility that this has less to do with the iniquities of working-class leadership than with the engines of political resentment in which the engines of political resentment are not so lavishly fuelled by the personal degradations arising from wholesale collectivist exclusion. . . .

Conclusion

By way of concluding this part of the discussion, it might be appropriate to offer some general remarks on the explanatory status of the closure model. This model, like any other, recommends the use of a particular sociological vocabulary and an attendant battery of concepts that contain barely disguised moral assumptions about the nature of class society. It is not strictly speaking a 'theory' of class but a way of conceptualizing it that differs from that proposed by other variants of bourgeois sociology or by Marxism. Most of what we conventionally call theories of class are in fact conceptual methods of this kind. They are, for the most part, take-it-or-leave-it moral classifications, not sets of propositions that stand or fall under the impact of evidence. What conceivable social facts could destroy either the Marxist conception of class as an exploitative relationship, or the liberal conception of class as an exchange relationship? Since conceptual models are ways of presenting social reality, it follows that the preference for one presentation over another

entails a personal judgement of some kind about the moral standing of class society.

On this score, the closure model is almost bound to appear defective by liberal and Marxist theorists alike. Liberal theory endorses a contractual view of class, in which the notion of mutual interest and harmony is the essential ingredient. Marxism, on the other hand, assumes not merely the absence of harmony and common class interests, but, more importantly, the presence of irresolvable antagonisms that drive the system to ultimate breakdown. The neo-Weberian position advanced here is that the relation between classes is neither one of harmony and mutual benefit, nor of irresolvable and fatal contradiction. Rather, the relationship is understood as one of mutual antagonism and permanent tension; that is, a condition of unrelieved distributive struggle that is not necessarily impossible to contain. Class conflict may be without cease, but it is not inevitably fought to a conclusion. The competing notions of harmony, contradiction, and tension could thus be thought of as the three broad possible ways of conceptualizing the relation between classes, and on which all class models are grounded.

Since class models are not subject to direct empirical assault, the case for advancing the cause of one in preference to another rests partly on the claim that it draws attention to a set of problems and issues that are otherwise obscured. Thus, one of the attractions of the closure model is that it highlights the fact of communal cleavage and its relationship to class, and seeks to analyse both within the same conceptual framework. More generally, it proposes that intra-class relations be treated as conflict phenomena of the same general order as inter-class relations, and not as mere disturbances or complications within a 'pure' class model. Hence the extension of the concept of exploitation to cover both sets of phenomena. There is, in addition, a recommendation that social classes be defined by reference to their mode of collective action rather than to their place in the productive process or the division of labour. The reason for this is that

incumbency of position in a formally defined structure does not normally correspond to class alignment where it really counts—at the level of organized political sentiment and conduct. This serious lack of fit between all positional or systemic definitions of class and the actual behaviour of classes in the course of distributive struggle, is not due to any lack of categories employed. It arises from the initial theoretical decision to discount the significance and effect of variations in the cultural and social make-up of the groups assigned to the categories in question. Models constructed upon such formal, systemic definitions require of their advocates much ingenuity in accounting for the continuous and wholesale discrepancies between class position and class behaviour. A good deal of the intellectual energy of western Marxism has been dissipated in wrestling with this very problem which is of its own conceptual making.

Notes

1. The hospital setting provides, perhaps, the most important exception. Industrial conflicts between medical staff and the manual workers' unions over issues such as 'pay beds' are unusual in having clear-cut ideological, rather than bread-and-butter, causes.
2. Carchedi 1975:48. For Braverman, too, managers and executives are 'part of the class that personifies capital...' (1974:405).
3. Dahrendorf 1959.
4. Braverman 1974: Chapter 18.
5. Westergaard and Resler 1975:92.
6. Westergaard and Resler 1975:346.
7. Weber (eds Roth and Wirtich) 1968:342.
8. Weber (eds Roth and Wirtich) 1968:342.
9. Weber (eds Roth and Wirtich) 1968:342.
10. Neuwirth 1969.
11. These arguments were first tentatively sketched out in my 'Strategies of Social Closure in Class Formation' (Parkin 1974). In that publication the two types of closure were referred to as *exclusion* and *solidarism*. This latter term does not, however, satisfactorily describe a mode of collective action standing in direct opposition to exclusion, since solidaristic behaviour can itself be used for blatantly exclusionary ends. That is to say, solidarism does not properly refer to the purposes for which power is employed. The term *usurpation*

more adequately captures the notion of collective action designed to improve the lot of a subordinate group at the expense of a dominant group. Solidarism is simply one means among others to this end.

12. Weber (eds Gerth and Mills) 1948:182.
13. Daws and Moore 1945:247.
14. Durkheim 1957:174.
15. Durkheim 1957:175 and 217.
16. Durkheim 1957:213.
17. Plamenatz 1975:120.
18. Plamenatz 1975:121.
19. Plamenatz 1975:121.
20. Parsons 1951:119. The entry in the index under 'Property' invites the reader to 'see Possessions'.
21. Rose *et al.* 1976:703.
22. Durkheim 1957:142.
23. Durkheim 1957:142.
24. Macpherson 1973.
25. Weber (eds Gerth and Mills) 1948:241-42.
26. Weber (eds Roth and Wirtich) 1968:344.
27. Dore 1976.
28. Berg 1973.
29. Jencks 1972:192.
30. It transpires that the idea is not so far-fetched after all. The Council for National Academic Awards has recently approved the syllabus for a BA Degree in Sports Studies. Undergraduates will be instructed in 'the variables influencing performance in sport; a science and its sports application; scientific methods, statistics and computing; and wide practical experience in a number of sports.' *Daily Telegraph*, Monday, 28 August 1978, p.3.
31. Orwell 1949:215.
32. Mills 1956:257-58.

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EMILE DURKHEIM

The Division of Labor in Society

In *The Division of Labor in Society*, we emphasise the state of legal and moral anomie in which economic life exists at the present time. In fact, in this particular sphere of activity, professional ethics only exist in a very rudimentary state. There are professional ethics for the lawyer and magistrate, the soldier and professor, the doctor and priest, etc. Yet if we attempted to express in somewhat more precise terms contemporary ideas of what should be the relationship between employer and white-collar worker, between the industrial worker and the factory boss, between industrialists in competition with one another or between industrialists and the public, how imprecise would be the statements that we could formulate! Some vague generalities about the loyalty and commitment that employees of every kind owe to those who employ them, or about the moderation that employers should manifest in exercising their economic superiority, a certain condemnation of any competition that is too blatantly unfair, or of any too glaring exploitation of the consumer: this is almost the sum total of what the ethical consciousness of these professions comprises. Moreover, most of these precepts lack any juridical character. They are backed only by

public opinion and not by the law—and it is well known how indulgent that opinion shows itself to be about the way in which such vague obligations are fulfilled. Those actions most blameworthy are so often excused by success that the boundary between the permissible and the prohibited, between what is just and what is unjust, is no longer fixed in any way, but seems capable of being shifted by individuals in an almost arbitrary fashion. So vague a morality, one so inconsistent, cannot constitute any kind of discipline. The upshot is that this entire sphere of collective life is for the most part removed from the moderating action of any rules.

It is to this state of anomie that must be attributed the continually recurring conflicts and disorders of every kind of which the economic world affords so sorry a spectacle. For, since nothing restrains the forces present from reacting together, or prescribes limits for them that they are obliged to respect, they tend to grow beyond all bounds, each clashing with the other, each warding off and weakening the other. . . .

Political society as a whole, or the state, clearly cannot draw up the system of rules that is now lacking. Economic life, because it is very special and is daily becoming increasingly specialised, lies outside their authority and sphere of action. Activity within a profession can only be effectively regulated through a group close enough to that profession to be thoroughly cognisant of how it functions, capable of perceiving all its needs and following every fluctuation in them. The sole group that meets these conditions is that constituted by

all those working in the same industry, assembled together and organised in a single body. This is what is termed a corporation, or professional group.

Yet in the economic field the professional group no more exists than does a professional ethic. Since the last century when, *not without reason*, the ancient corporations were dissolved, hardly more than fragmentary and incomplete attempts have been made to reconstitute them on a different basis. Doubtless, individuals who are busy in the same trade are in contact with one another by the very fact that their activities are similar. Competition with one another engenders mutual relationships. But these are in no way regular, depending upon chance meetings, they are very often entirely of an individual nature. One industrialist finds himself in contact with another, but the body of industrialists in some particular speciality do not meet to act in concert. Exceptionally, we do see all members of the same profession come together at a conference to deal with some problem of common interest. But such conferences last only a short while: they do not survive the particular circumstances that gave rise to them. Consequently the collective life for which they provided an opportunity dies more or less entirely with them. . . .

Can we legitimately believe that corporate organisation is called upon to play in contemporary societies a more considerable part? If we deem it indispensable it is not because of the services it might render the economy, but on account of the moral influence it could exercise. What we particularly see in the professional grouping is a moral force capable of curbing individual egoism, nurturing among workers a more enervated feeling of their common solidarity, and preventing the law of the strongest from being applied too brutally in industrial and commercial relationships. Yet such a grouping is deemed unfit for such a role. Because it springs from temporal interests, it can seemingly only serve utilitarian ends, and the memories that survive of the corporations during the *ancien régime* only confirm this impression. We incline to viza-

lise them in the future as they were towards the end of their former existence, intent above all on maintaining or increasing their privileges and monopolies. We fail to see how such narrow vocational concerns might have any beneficial effect upon the morality of the corporation or its members.

However, we should refrain from extending to the entire corporate system what may have been true of certain corporations during a very short period in their development. Far from the system having been, because of its very constitution, infected by a kind of moral sickness, during the greater part of its existence it played above all a moral role. This is especially evident with the Roman corporation. 'Among the Romans,' declares Walzing, 'the corporations of artisans were far from having so pronounced a professional character as in the Middle Ages. We come across no regulations concerning methods, no obligatory apprenticeship, and no monopoly. Nor was their purpose to accumulate the capital necessary to exploit an industry.¹ Doubtless their associating together gave them more power to safeguard the common interest, when the need arose. But this was only one of the useful by-products that the institution engendered. It was not the justification for its existence, nor its main function. Above all else, the corporation was a collegiate religious body. Each one possessed its own particular god, who, when the means were available, was worshipped in a special temple. Just as every family had its *Lar familiares* and every city its *Genius publicus*, so every collegiate body had its protecting divinity, the *Genius collegii*. Naturally this professional form of worship was not without its festivities, and sacrifices and banquets were celebrated in common together. Moreover, all kinds of circumstances would serve as the occasion for festive gatherings: distribution of food and money was often made at the expense of the community. . . .

The facts cited adequately demonstrate that a professional grouping is not at all incapable of exerting a moral effect. The very important place that religion held in its life highlights

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very particularly the true nature of its functions, for in such times every religious community constituted a moral environment, just as every kind of moral discipline necessarily tended to take on a religious form. Moreover, this characteristic of corporative organisation is due to the effect of very general causes which we can see at work in different circumstances. Within a political society, as soon as a certain number of individuals find they hold in common ideas, interests, sentiments and occupations which the rest of the population does not share in, it is inevitable that, under the influence of these similarities, they should be attracted to one another. They will seek one another out, enter into relationships and associate together. Thus a restricted group is gradually formed within society as a whole, with its own special features. Once such a group is formed, a moral life evolves within it which naturally bears the distinguishing mark of the special conditions in which it has developed. It is impossible for men to live together and be in regular contact with one another without their acquiring some feeling for the group which they constitute through having united together, without their becoming attached to it, concerning themselves with its interests and taking it into account in their behaviour. And this attachment to something that transcends the individual, this subordination of the particular to the general interest, is the very well-spring of all moral activity. Let this sentiment only crystallise and grow more determinate, let it be translated into well-defined formulas by being applied to the most common circumstances of life, and we see gradually being constituted a corpus of moral rules.

Domestic morality did not arise any differently. Because of the prestige that the family retains in our eyes, if it appears to us to have been and continue to be a school of altruism and abnegation, the highest seat of morality, it is through the very special characteristics it is privileged to possess, ones that could not be found at any level elsewhere. We like to believe that in blood kinship there exists an extraordinarily powerful reason for moral iden-

tification with others. But, as we have often had occasion to show,² blood kinship has in no way the extraordinary effectiveness attributed to it. The proof of this is that in a large number of societies relations not linked by the blood tie are very numerous in a family. Thus so-called artificial kinship is entered into very readily and has all the effects of natural kinship. Conversely, very frequently those closely knit by ties of blood are morally and legally strangers to one another. For example, this is true of blood kin in the Roman family. Thus the family does not derive its whole strength from unity of descent. Quite simply, it is a group of individuals who have drawn close to one another within the body politic through a very specially close community of ideas, feelings and interests. Blood kinship was able to make such a concentration of individuals easier, for it naturally tends to have the effect of bringing different consciousnesses together. Yet many other factors have also intervened: physical proximity, solidarity of interest, the need to unite to fight a common danger, or simply to unite, have been causes of a different kind which have made people come together.

Such causes are not peculiar to the family but are to be found, although in different forms, within the corporation. Thus if the former group has played so important a role in the moral history of humanity, why should not also the latter be capable of so doing? Undoubtedly one difference will always exist between them, inasmuch as family members share in common their entire existence, whereas the members of a corporation share only their professional concerns. The family is a kind of complete society whose influence extends to economic activity as well as to that of religion, politics, and science, etc. Everything of any importance that we do, even outside the home, has repercussions upon it and sparks off an appropriate reaction. In one sense the corporation's sphere of influence is more limited. Yet we must not forget the ever more important place that our profession assumes in our lives as work becomes increasingly segmented. . . .

What past experience demonstrates above all is that the organisational framework of the professional group should always be related to that of economic life. It is because this condition was not fulfilled that the system of corporations disappeared. Thus, since the market, from being municipal as it once was, has become national and international, the corporation should assume the same dimensions. Instead of being restricted exclusively to the artisans of one town, it must grow so as to include all the members of one profession scattered over the whole country,³ for in whatever region they may be, whether they live in town or countryside, they are all linked to one another and share a common life. Since this common life is in certain respects independent of any territorial boundaries, a suitable organism must be created to give expression to this life and to regulate its functions. Because of the dimensions that it assumes, such an organism should necessarily be closely in contact and directly linked with the central organism of the life of the collectivity. Events

important enough to affect a whole category of industrial enterprises within a country necessarily have wide repercussions of which the state cannot fail to be aware. This implies it to intervene. Thus for good reason the royal power tended instinctively not to leave large-scale industry outside its ambit as soon as it appeared. It could not fail to take an interest in a form of activity which by its very nature is always liable to affect society as a whole. Yet such regulatory action, although necessary, should not degenerate into utter subordination, as happened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The two organisms, although in contact with each other, should remain distinct and autonomous; each has functions that it alone can perform. If it falls to political assemblies to lay down the general principles for industrial legislation, they are not capable of diversifying them according to the various types of industry. It is this diversification that is the corporation's proper task.⁴

A unitary organisation over a whole country also in no way precludes the formation of secondary organisations which include similar workers in the same region or locality. Their role could be to spell out even more specifically, in accordance with local or regional needs, the regulations for a profession. Thus economic activity could be regulated and demarcated without losing any of its diversity.

Moreover, we must reject the belief that the corporation's sole role should consist in laying down and applying rules. It is undoubtedly true that wherever a group is formed, a moral discipline is also formed. But the institution of that discipline is only one of the numerous ways in which any collective activity manifests itself. A group is not only a moral authority regulating the life of its members, but also a source of life *sui generis*. From it there arises a warmth that quickens or gives fresh life to each individual, which makes him disposed to empathise, causing selfishness to melt away. Thus in the past the family has been responsible for legislating a code of law and morality whose severity has often been carried to an extreme of harshness. But it has also been the environment where, for the first time, men have learnt to appreciate the outpouring of feeling. We have likewise seen how the corporation, both in Rome and during the Middle Ages, created these same needs and sought to satisfy them. The corporations of the future will be assigned even greater and more complex functions, because of their increased scope. Around their purely professional functions will be grouped others which at present are exercised by the communes and private associations. Among these are functions of mutual assistance which, in order to be entirely fulfilled, assume between helpers and helped feelings of solidarity as well as a certain homogeneity of intellect and morals, such as that readily engendered by the exercise of the same profession. Many educational activities (technical education, adult education, etc.) should also, it seems, find in the corporation their natural habitat. The same is also true for a certain type of artistic activity. It would seem in accordance with the nature of things that such a noble form of diversion and recreation should develop alongside the more serious aspects of life, acting as a bal-

ancing and restorative influence. In fact we now already see trade unions acting at the same time as friendly societies, and others are setting up communal centres where courses are organised, and concerts and dramatic performances held. Hence the activity of a corporation can take on the most varied forms.

We may even reasonably suppose that the corporation will be called upon to become the foundation, or one of the essential foundations, of our political organisation. We have seen that, although it first began outside the social system, it tended to become more and more closely involved in it as economic life developed. We have therefore every reason to anticipate that, if progress continues on the same lines, the corporation is destined to assume an ever more central and preponderant place in society. It was once the elementary division of communal organisation. Now that the commune, from being the autonomous unit that it once was, has been absorbed into the state just as the municipal market was absorbed into the national market, may we not legitimately think that the corporation should also undergo a corresponding transformation and become the elementary division of the state, the basic political unit? Society, instead of remaining what it is today—a conglomerate of land masses juxtaposed together—would become a vast system of national corporations. The demand is raised in various quarters for electoral colleges to be constituted by professions and not by territorial constituencies. Certainly in this way political assemblies would more accurately reflect the diversity of social interests and their interconnections. They would more exactly epitomise social life as a whole. Yet if we state that the country, in order to become conscious of itself, should be grouped by professions, is not this to acknowledge that the organised profession or the corporation should become the essential organ of public life?

In this way a serious gap in the structure of European societies, and in our own in particular, would be filled. We shall see how, as history unfolds, an organisation based on territorial groupings (village, town, district or

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province, etc.) becomes progressively weaker. There is no doubt that we each belong to a commune or a *département*, but the ties binding us to them become daily more loose and tenuous. These geographical divisions are in the main artificial, and no longer arouse deep emotions within us. The provincial spirit has vanished beyond recall. 'Parish pump' patriotism has become an anachronism that cannot be restored at will. Strictly local or *département* matters hardly affect or enthrall us either any longer, save in so far as they go hand in hand with matters relating to our profession. Our activity extends much beyond these groups, which are too narrow for it; moreover, much of what happens within them leaves us indifferent. Thus what might be described as the spontaneous collapse of the old social structure has occurred. But this internal organisation cannot disappear without something taking its place. A society made up of an extremely large mass of unorganised individuals, which an overgrown state attempts to limit and restrain, constitutes a veritable sociological monstrosity. For collective activity is always too complex to be capable of finding expression in the one single organ of the state. Moreover, the state is too remote from individuals, its connections with them too superficial and irregular, to be able to penetrate the depths of their consciousness and socialise them from within. This is why, when the state constitutes the sole environment in which men can fit themselves for the business of living in common, they inevitably 'contract out', detaching themselves from one another, and thus society disintegrates to a corresponding extent. A nation cannot be maintained unless, between the state and individuals, a whole range of secondary groups are interposed. These must be close enough to the individual to attract him strongly to their activities and, in so doing, to absorb him into the mainstream of social life. We have just demonstrated how professional groupings are fitted to perform this role, and how indeed everything marks them out for it. Hence we can comprehend how important it is, particularly in the economic sphere, that they should

emerge from that inchoate and disorganised state in which they have lain for a century, since professions of this kind today absorb the greater part of the energies of society.⁵

Notes

1. Walzing, *Etude historique sur les corporations profession chez les Romains*, vol. I, p. 194.

2. Cf. especially *Année sociologique*, vol. I, pp. 313 ff.

3. We need not discuss the international organisation which, because of the international character of the market, would necessarily develop at a level above that of the national organisation. For at present the latter alone can constitute a legal entity; in the present state of European law the former can only result from arrangements freely concluded between national corporations.

4. This specialisation could not occur without the help of elected assemblies charged with representing the corporation. In the present state of industry, these assemblies, as well as those tribunals entrusted with the task of applying the regulations of an occupation, should clearly include representatives of employees and employers, as is already the case with the industrial arbitration tribunals. The proportion of each should correspond to the

respective importance attributed by public opinion to these two factors of production. But if it is necessary for both sides to meet on the governing councils of the corporation it is no less indispensable for them to constitute distinct and independent groups at the lower level of corporative organisation, because too often their interests vie with one another and are opposing. To feel that they exist freely, they must be aware of their separate existence. The two bodies so constituted can then appoint their representatives to the common assemblies.

5. Moreover, we do not mean that territorial constituencies are destined to disappear completely, but only that they will fade into the background. Old institutions never vanish in the face of new ones to such an extent that they leave no trace of themselves. They persist not only by the mere fact of survival, but also because there persists some trace of the needs to which they correspond. Material proximity will always constitute a link between men. Consequently the political and social organisation based on territory will certainly subsist. But it will no longer enjoy its present pre-dominance, precisely because that link is losing some of its force. What is more, we have shown above that, even at the base of the corporation will still be found geographical divisions. Moreover, between the various corporations from a same locality or region there will necessarily be special relationships of solidarity which will, from time to time, demand an appropriate organisation.

DAVID B. GRUSKY AND JESPER B. SØRENSEN

Are There Big Social Classes?

The study of social class has a volatile history in which waves of creative class analytic scholarship are interspersed with periods of cynicism about the class analytic enterprise. In the present cynical phase, criticisms of both Marxian and non-Marxian class analysis continue to escalate, with many commentators now feeling bold enough to argue that the

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concept of class is "ceasing to do any useful work for sociology" (Pahl 1989, p. 710; also, Pakulski and Waters 1996; Clark and Lipset 1991). By way of response, the most ardent defenders of class models have simply reaffirmed the class analytic status quo, albeit sometimes with the concession that class-based formulations now apply in rather weakened form (e.g., Wright 1996; Hout, Brooks, and Manza 1993; Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992). The debate between these two camps has proceeded along stylized lines. Indeed, although the literature is well stocked

with all manner of defense and critique of conventional class analysis, there have been few, if any, truly constructive efforts to refresh class analysis.

Against this intellectual backdrop, we have recently suggested that critics of class analysis have too quickly dismissed the power of class analytic language, whereas defenders of class analysis have not appreciated that such language, for all its power, yields little insight when applied to conventional, highly aggregate social classes (see Grusky and Sørensen 1998; Grusky 1999; Grusky and Weedon forthcoming). This formulation leads to the prescription that class analysis should be ratcheted down to an analytic level where real social groupings (i.e., "occupations") form around functional niches in the division of labor. The great virtue of disaggregating is that the nominal categories of conventional class analysis can be replaced by *Gemeinschaftlich* groupings that are embedded in the very fabric of society and are thereby meaningful not merely to sociologists but to the lay public as well.

The foregoing line of argument is not entirely without precedent. Indeed, whenever sociologists have turned their attention to the professions (e.g., Abbott 1988), the longstanding tendency has been to emphasize the great heterogeneity and sectional divisiveness within this (putative) new class. The recent commentary of Freidson (1986) is illustrative here: "The range of education, income, and prestige of the professional occupations in question ... [makes] it hard to imagine them sharing a common culture of any significance, a common set of material interests, or a common inclination to act politically in the same fashion and direction" (p. 57). Although this critique is surely of interest, it falls short of our own position insofar as it pertains only to the professional sector and fails to engage more broadly with contemporary anticlass critiques. In similar fashion, stratification scholars are currently quite interested in "unpacking" conventional class categories (Marshall et al. 1988), yet the ultimate objective

has invariably been to argue for some new and preferred form of *reaggregation*.

We would be hard-pressed, then, to locate a direct line of intellectual heritage. If forced to identify a partial and approximate one, the principal inspiration would have to be scholars such as Durkheim ([1893] 1933), Bourdieu (1984), and their intellectual descendants (e.g., Lamont 1992; also, Freidson 1994; Van Maanen and Barley 1984). Under the Durkheimian developmental model, occupational associations come to serve as important intermediaries between the modern state and individual, yet they play a largely integrative role and eschew the more partisan behavior of "maintaining or increasing privileges and monopolies" (Durkheim [1893] 1933, p. 10). Likewise, Bourdieu (1984) has argued that sociologists should "rethink Weber's opposition between class and *Stand*" (p. xii), but his recent empirical work emphasizes the cultural rather than economic implications of occupational closure. This work is nonetheless distinguished by its relatively detailed analyses; that is, Bourdieu resorts to disaggregate data in characterizing the *habitus* and the lifestyles it generates, because the conditions of existence of conventional aggregate classes are assumed to be unacceptably heterogeneous. In our own analysis, we shall similarly insist on extreme disaggregation, yet we regard the resulting occupations as economic and cultural groupings that constitute precisely that unification of "class and *Stand*" that Bourdieu (1984) so ambitiously sought.

The Case for Disaggregation

The following discussion summarizes the main virtues of disaggregation in understanding patterns of class identification, social closure, collective action, and lifestyles and attitudes. For each of these topics, our summary of the conceptual rationale for disaggregation will be brief, as more comprehensive analyses can be found elsewhere (see Grusky and

Sørensen 1998; Grusky 1999; Grusky and Weedon forthcoming).

Class Identification

We can usefully begin by considering the subjective domain of stratification as revealed in patterns of class identification and awareness. Although some sociologists remain convinced that contemporary identities are strongly shaped by aggregate affiliations (e.g., Marshall et al. 1988), the prevailing post-Marxist position is that conventional classes now have only a weak hold over workers. For example, Emmison and Western (1990) report that only 7 percent of all Australians regard their social class as a "very important" identity, whereas other commentators (e.g., Saunders 1989) have stressed that open-ended queries about class identification tend to yield confused responses, refusals to answer, and even explicit denials that classes exist. This evidence has led many sociologists to conclude that class is now a "passive identity" (Bradley 1996, p. 72) and that the realm of production is no longer the principal locus of identity formation.

We regard such accounts as overreactive to concerns that, although legitimate, surely do not require abandoning class analysis altogether. The Emmison-Western results are again revealing on this point, because they indicate that detailed occupations continue to be one of the main social identities for contemporary workers (see Emmison and Western 1990, pp. 247-48). This result should come as no surprise; after all, occupational categories are deeply embedded in the institutions of advanced industrialism, whereas aggregate classes are highly abstract constructs that are evidently more appealing to academics than to workers, employers, or the state. As Treiman (1977) notes, workers invariably represent their career aspirations in occupational terms, while professional and vocational schools train workers for occupationally defined skills, and employers construct and advertise jobs in terms of corre-

sponding occupational designations. The class analytic fallacy thus amounts to insisting on aggregate categories even when disaggregate ones are more deeply institutionalized and hence subjectively more salient.

Social Closure

If subjectivist models of class were once dominant in sociology (e.g., Warner, Meeker, and Fells 1949), they have now been superseded by analytic approaches that focus on the social processes by which class membership is restricted to qualified eligibles (Freidson 1994, pp. 80-84; Murphy 1988; Collins 1979; Parkin 1979; Weber [1922] 1968). These models emphasize not only the institutionalized means by which closure is secured (e.g., private property, credentials, licenses) but also the efforts of excluded parties to challenge these institutions and the inequality that they maintain. Although closure theory provides, then, a new sociological language for understanding interclass relations, the actual class mappings posited by closure theorists have proven to be standard aggregate fare. The two-class solution proposed, for example, by Parkin (1979, p. 58) features an exclusionary class comprising those who control productive capital and professional services and a subordinate class comprising all those who are excluded from these positions of control.

We might usefully ask whether an aggregate formulation is fundamental to closure theory or merely superfluous adjunct. The latter interpretation strikes us as more plausible; that is, if closure theory could somehow be reinvented without the coloration of class analytic convention, its authors would likely emphasize that the real working institutions of closure (i.e., professional associations, craft unions) are largely local associations "representing the credential-holders themselves" (Murphy 1988, p. 174). These associations establish and enforce local jurisdictional settlements that prevent other occupations from providing competing services. In most cases,

the associated closure devices (e.g., licensing, credentialing, apprenticeships) do not govern entry to aggregate classes, but instead serve only to control entry (and exit) at the more detailed occupational level. By contrast, there are no analogous organizations that represent aggregate classes, nor are there jurisdictional settlements or closure devices that are truly aggregate in scope. This conclusion implies that conventional aggregate mappings of "exploitation classes" (e.g., Wright 1985) conceal the highly disaggregate level at which rent is extracted and interests are formed (see Sørensen 1996; 1994). Indeed, given that unions and associations establish local rather than classwide restrictions on labor supply, the "rent" that is thereby generated should create interests principally at the disaggregate level.

Collective Action

For most neo-Marxists, social closure is of interest not because it provides a vehicle for pursuing purely local concerns (i.e., "trade union consciousness"), but rather because it allegedly facilitates the development of class-wide interests and grander forms of interclass conflict. The aggregate classes identified by contemporary sociologists have so far shown a decided reluctance to act in accord with such theorizing. This quiescence at the aggregate level has led to considerable neo-Marxian handwringing as well as more radical claims that postmodern interests are increasingly defined and established outside the realm of production (e.g., Laraña, Johnston, and Gusfield 1994). The latter form of postmodernism, popular as it is, overlooks the simple fact that much collective action flows unproblematically out of structurally defined groupings, albeit only when those groupings are defined in less aggregate terms than is conventionally the case. The three principal types of collective action at the level of unit occupations are (a) downwardly directed closure strategies designed to restrict access to occupational positions, (b) lateral competitive struggles between occupational associations

over functional niches in the division of labor, and (c) upwardly directed collective action oriented toward securing occupation-specific benefits (e.g., monopoly protection) from the state and from employers. We thus concur with Krause (1971, p. 87) that "there has historically been more occupation-specific consciousness and action than cross-occupational combination" (also, see Freidson 1994, pp. 75-91).

This is not to suggest that local conflict at the unit occupational level drives the course of human history. To the contrary, local associations typically pursue sectional objectives, and the wider systemic effects of such micro-level conflict are neither obvious nor necessarily profound (cf. Durkheim [1893] 1933). We might conclude, then, that our disaggregate class analysis is an intellectually modest project, but it bears noting that aggregate class analysts have likewise scaled back their ambitions and effectively discarded comprehensive class-based theories of history (e.g., Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992, p. 385).

Class Outcomes

In this sense, the class analytic project is becoming gradually more limited in its objectives, with many contemporary scholars now satisfied to merely document that class membership conditions individual-level outcomes of all kinds (e.g., attitudes, voting behavior, lifestyles). The resulting analyses typically examine either the categorical effects of aggregate classes or the gradational effects of variables that represent the many dimensions (e.g., socioeconomic status, substantive complexity) underlying disaggregate occupations. Although these approaches have yielded new and important results, it is nonetheless troubling that they typically conceal or ignore the *Gemeinschaftlich* character of (some) disaggregate occupations. If modern closure is indeed secured principally at the detailed occupational level, then the resulting restriction of social interaction will generate and maintain occupational subcultures that are correspondingly disaggregate. These local

cultures are initially forged through intensive secondary socialization of the kind provided in apprenticeships, police and military academies, and graduate and professional schools. As Caplow (1954) noted long ago, many occupations require prolonged training that serves to inculcate explicit codes of behavior, whereas aggregate classes have no comparable influence or authority over secondary patterns of socialization. The occupational habitus is further strengthened insofar as workers choose occupations receptive to their values and employers choose workers with values that are (putatively) compatible with occupational demands. The great failing of conventional analyses of lifestyles, dispositions, and attitudes is that *Gemeinschaftlich* occupations are regarded as nominal categories and are therefore blithely aggregated or dimensionalized.

The moral to our story, then, is that sociologists have searched for structuration at the wrong level of analysis. Ironically, class analysts have sought realist solutions at the aggregate level when only nominal ones were viable, whereas occupational analysts have settled on nominal solutions (e.g., socioeconomic scales) when in fact realist ones were feasible. Among Marxian and non-Marxian scholars alike, the division of labor is typically represented as purely "technical" in character (see, esp., Wright 1980; Abercrombie and Urry 1983, p. 109), even though nominal task-based groupings are often converted into real social collectivities with a shared culture and set of interests. We think that sociological research stands to benefit from taking such local organization more explicitly into account.

Issues of Trend

Although disaggregate structuration has been largely overlooked by contemporary class analysts, it is nonetheless possible that such structuration, strong though it may be, is growing gradually weaker in ways that are consistent with a standard poststructuralist

vision. The prevailing view, especially among European commentators, is that the site of production is indeed of diminishing relevance in understanding stratification systems. The virtues of poststructuralism may be "taken for granted among contemporary social and cultural analysts" (Casey 1995, p. 8), but the lack of substantiating evidence for this position is quite striking; and it is accordingly premature to foreclose on all further debate about the principal forces of change.

The available literature on such matters can be readily simplified by classifying theories in terms of the institutional domains that they distinguish between (a) the types of technical tasks embodied in the division of labor, (b) the organizational settings in which these tasks are carried out, and (c) the associational forms that characteristically develop at the site of production (e.g., trade unions, professional associations). As shall be evident, the foregoing domains do not evolve in isolation from one another, but it is still analytically useful to distinguish between them.

Sociotechnical Change

The current fashion is to approach longstanding debates about sociotechnical change from a post-Fordist perspective (Piore and Sabel 1984). As Amin (1994) notes, post-Fordists suggest that early industrialism brought about much craft deskilling and homogenization, yet this process is alleged to be reversing itself as "Fordist" factories are gradually supplanted by small-scale production, flexible specialization, and a rejuvenated artisanal sector, all of which serve to reintroduce those distinctions of manual labor that Marx ([1894] 1964) promised would ultimately disappear. This account may therefore be seen as a freshened form of postindustrial theory in which the forces of upgrading and reskilling are presumed to play out not merely in the professional, technical, and service categories but in the craft sector as well. In this context, one might expect postmodernists to view post-Fordism with some antipathy, yet in fact

these two accounts are often conflated in the literature. For example, the "new times" post-Fordism of Hall (1988) and his colleagues (e.g., Hall and Jacques 1989) becomes virtually indistinguishable from conventional postmodernism, as it emphasizes that sociotechnical changes weaken aggregate solidarities and generate a new stratification order based on "lifestyle, taste, and culture rather than categories of social class" (Hall 1988, p. 24). This account rests on the characteristic postmodernist assumption that an "increasingly fragmented" productive realm (Hall 1988, p. 24) necessarily weakens *all* forms of solidarity within the division of labor.

The pathbreaking work of Piore and Sabel (1984) clearly has merit, but we would necessarily take issue with these more elaborated accounts that attempt to smuggle in post-structuralism under a post-Fordist banner. If one accepts the core post-Fordist claim that flexible specialization breathes new life into artisanal production (e.g., Piore and Sabel 1984), the appropriate implication is not that all production-based solidarities shall wither away but rather that such solidarities are increasingly localistic. In any standard post-Fordist account, the new and emerging forms of craft production are assumed to require worker "solidarity and communitarianism" (Piore and Sabel 1984, p. 278), and the rejuvenated artisanal sector therefore brings early-industrial "craft communities into the twenty-first century on the basis of a newly decentralized production process" (Aronowitz and DiFazio 1994, p. 98). The end result, then, is a manifestly poststructuralist account whereby modern craftworkers are increasingly "bound to an often familial community [that] promotes both greater control and a sense of belonging" (Aronowitz and DiFazio 1994, p. 97).

The same conclusion holds with respect to older sociotechnical models of differentiation (e.g., Parsons 1970; Dahrendorf 1959). When such models were initially formulated, there was little interest in elaborating a positive theory of local structuration, because the principal objective was merely to counter

Marxian approaches by calling attention to the class-decomposing effects of differentiation. If a positive theory of local solidarities *were* attempted, it would likely emphasize that (a) the process of differentiation generates local collective action as emergent occupational groupings vie with one another for jurisdiction over new functional niches, and (b) the resulting occupations become meaningful communities not only because of the "mechanical solidarity" spawned by functional similarities (Dukheim [1893] 1933, p. 16) but also because of the affiliative ties forged in the originating jurisdictional struggles (see Abbott 1988).

The above considerations suggest that differentiation creates solidarities that are increasingly localistic. At the same time, one must bear in mind that the newly differentiated occupations are, by virtue of their newness, hampered in developing stereotypical behavioral expectations that can then be enforced by the outside public. The subcultures of these occupations may therefore be less binding; for instance, the occupations of "systems analyst," "day trader," or "Web site designer" may not evoke stereotypical expectations that are as well formed as those characterizing more established occupations, such as professor (absentminded), cook (excitable), or reporter (cynical). In his seminal work, Caplow (1954, pp. 134-35) makes much of this liability of newness, as he regarded the "public stereotype as itself the most important agent for the conditioning of roles." The latter argument fails, however, to appreciate that newness can itself be an asset; indeed, just as religious cults generate solidarity by capitalizing on missionary zeal, so too one suspects that new occupations can impose behavioral expectations on incumbents without these expectations being well known or appreciated by outsiders. Under this formulation, rapid differentiation prevents the public from understanding the increasingly complex mosaic of occupational subcultures and communities, but it may not greatly weaken the hold of these local communities over their members.

Organizational Change

As sociologists so frequently point out, the division of labor is not intrinsic to the structure of tasks, but rather is a social construction that reflects organizational constraints as well as the interests of relevant parties (e.g., Edwards 1979). The rise of industrialism in the eighteenth century can be attributed, for example, to the spread of vertical strategies of coordination that fragmented tasks into increasingly simple jobs and thus rendered them amenable to purely administrative or bureaucratic oversight (Weber [1922] 1968). By contrast, preindustrial craft workers defined and organized the production process themselves, and the division of labor was accordingly controlled by self-regulating occupational experts rather than organizationally empowered administrators (Zabuský and Barley 1996, pp. 188-92). The obvious question that then arises is whether vertical methods of control will continue to encroach on occupationally defined labor as postindustrialism evolves.

This question cannot be as easily answered as some postmodernists seemingly suggest. In fact, one can identify incipient organizational theories on either side of this debate, with the contemporary literature thus encompassing both (a) postoccupational theories describing the gradual withering away of functionally defined positions, and (b) revisionist theories suggesting that a new occupationally oriented logic of production is on the rise. The former literature, which is clearly dominant, rests on the claim that contemporary organizations are relying increasingly on teamwork, cross-training, and multiactivity jobs that breakdown conventional skill-based distinctions (e.g., Casey 1995). These new polyvalent jobs are created either by combining formerly distinct skills or by appending managerial and coordinative functions to production positions. The resulting story thus privileges the forces of integration over those of differentiation; that is, whereas many early industrial craft occupations (e.g., shoemaker) were dissolved through task simplification, the postindustrial organizations described by

Casey (1995) putatively eliminate occupations through task fusion, elaboration, and complication.

The preceding account, popular though it may be, is not without its critics, some of whom have argued that "pressures for an occupational logic of organizing may in fact be rising" (Barley 1995, p. 40). This revisionist argument rests on the twofold claim that (a) the occupationally organized sectors of the labor force (e.g., professionals) are rapidly expanding in size, and (b) the remaining vertically organized sectors of the labor force (e.g., management) are increasingly differentiating into functional areas and therefore becoming "occupationalized" (Freidson 1994). In developing these claims, Barley (1995) suggests that the seeds of the future have been sown in the burgeoning technical sector, where the work process is dominated by experts who have so far rigorously defended their occupational jurisdictions and have accordingly resisted cross-training, job mergers, and all forms of hierarchy. The resulting "technician archetype" (Barley 1995) thus rests on the collaboration of experts who control knowledge through extended training within a community of practice. Under the latter formulation, teams and work groups figure no less prominently than in the postoccupationalist archetype (e.g., Casey 1995), but of course the constituent experts now control mutually exclusive bodies of knowledge. The resulting team solidarity may be seen, then, as organic rather than mechanical.

Although most expert teams are presently formed within the confines of firms, one might anticipate that production will increasingly be contracted out to independent workers who are brought together by managers or brokers. The construction industry serves as the conventional exemplar here both because of its extreme occupationalism and characteristic reliance on outsourcing. In fact, the emerging fashion among organizational theorists is to represent the construction industry not as a historical remnant that "God forgot and the industrial revolution overlooked" (Lawrence and Dyer 1983, p. 599), but rather

as a heroic survivor that will in the end supersede mass production, thereby shaping the future of work more generally. For our purposes, it suffices to stress that these revisionist theories are inconsistent with those of postoccupationalism, and not merely because they rest explicitly on a well-developed (and intensifying) division of labor. We would further emphasize that the concomitant growth of outsourcing and externalization increases pressures to identify and affiliate with occupations rather than organizations.

Associational Change

The final institutions of interest to us are the various intermediary associations (e.g., trade unions, professional associations) that characteristically develop at the site of production. Within the Marxian framework, the longstanding concern has been that "trade union consciousness" is intrinsically sectional, thus requiring intellectuals and party functionaries to carry out supplementary ideological work that presumably cultivates more encompassing class-based interests (esp. Lenin 1927). This Marxian concern appears now to have been well founded. If the history of guilds, unions, and related production-based associations is reevaluated from the long view, it is evident that true classwide organization emerged for only a brief historical moment and that postmodern forms are reverting back to localism and sectionalism. The widely documented difficulties facing contemporary unions should be interpreted accordingly; namely, despite an evident weakening in the "encompassiveness" of union movements" (Visser 1988, p. 167), there is much evidence suggesting that purely local unions and associations have by no means lost their hold over workers (e.g., the American Federation of Teachers). In many countries, centralized bargaining between national unions and employers is indeed on the decline, yet decentralized negotiations have taken their place as "instrumental collectivism, based on sectional self-interest, becomes the order of the day" (Marshall et al. 1988, p. 7). This interpreta-

tion, if borne out, does not speak to destruction per se but rather to increasing disaggregation and differentiation of associational forms.

The professional sector has given rise to organizational forms that are yet more localistic. As Parkin (1979) points out, professionals eschew all types of interoccupational confederation, whereas they typically seek out sectional associations that can defend jurisdictional claims and thereby protect against incursions by neighboring occupations. In assessing the future of professionalization, one must consider not only the ongoing growth of traditional professional occupations (e.g., lawyer) and the consequent increase in the number of workers who find themselves in classlike groupings, but also the emergence of new high-skill sectors that may allow further occupations to undertake professionalization projects. To be sure, oppositional movements may possibly emerge and stall these closure projects, yet there is relatively little in the contemporary political arena that might now be interpreted as incipient antiprofessionalism. This conclusion serves to emphasize our larger point that the future of local solidarities is more ambiguous than standard poststructuralist formulas allow.

Conclusions

In his celebrated preface to *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim (1893) 1933, p. 28 predicted that occupational associations would gradually become "intercalated between the state and the individual," thereby providing an organizational counterbalance to the threat of class formation on one hand and state tyranny on the other. This account is ritually rehearsed by Durkheimian scholars but has never been treated as a credible developmental model. As the Marxian project falls out of favor, scholars have therefore settled into some version of Weberianism or postmodernism, neither of which pays much attention to occupation-level structuration. We have outlined above a quasi-Durkheimian third road that re-

focuses attention on local forms of structuration within the division of labor.

In laying out this case for disaggregation, we have largely ignored cross-national variability in local structuration, but not because we believe such variability to be either trivial or inconsequential. To the contrary, we suspect that convergence theories (e.g., Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992) may be rather less appealing when disaggregate analyses are attempted, because national idiosyncrasies are necessarily concealed through the abstracting and aggregating operations of class analysis. The case of Germany, for example, provides a revealing example of the extent to which local institutional forms can support and sustain disaggregate structuration. As class analysts have long stressed, Germany has a well-developed system of vocational training and apprenticeship, both of which serve to encourage occupation-specific investments and promote professional commitment and craftsmanship (e.g., Blossfeld 1992). In systems of this sort, workers must invest in a single trade early in their careers, and the correspondingly high costs of retraining produce relatively closed occupational groupings.

If the German system reveals, then, the limits of disaggregate structuration, the case of Japan conversely reveals the extent to which such structuration can be institutionally supported. The standard characterization of Japan emphasizes such distinguishing features as (a) an educational curriculum that is generalist in orientation rather than functionally differentiated, (b) a vocational training system that cultivates firm-specific "newko skills" (Dore 1973) through teamwork and continuous job rotation, (c) an organizational commitment to "lifetime employment" that further strengthens firm-specific ties at the expense of more purely occupational ones, and (d) a weakly developed system of enterprise unions that cuts across functional specializations and thereby eliminates any residual craft-based loyalties. This conjunction of forces produces a postoccupational system that some commentators might well regard as prototypically postmodern.

Although further cross-national comparisons of the preceding sort would surely be instructive, we think that comparative analysis becomes especially powerful when local and aggregate forms of structuration are considered in tandem. In the past, structuration has been treated as a unidimensional concept, and scholars accordingly sought to characterize countries on a simple continuum representing the extent to which their stratification systems were well formed (cf. Giddens 1973). The two cases discussed above suggest that such practice may not be altogether misleading; after all, Japan is well known for its attenuated class structure as well as its postoccupationalism (Nakane 1970), while Germany likewise combines strong vocationalism with a deeply class-based labor market and political system. We would nonetheless caution against assuming that such cross-level consistency is the norm. In fact, low-level structuration is often assumed to *undermine* the development of class-based organization, with the United States serving as the typical case in point. The scholarly literature on American exceptionalism is obviously wide ranging, but one of the continuing themes is that class formation was inhibited in the American case not so much by simple individualism as by low-level structuration in the form of craft unions and professionalism (e.g., Dahrendorf 1959). The zero-sum imagery underlying such analyses suggests that aggregate and disaggregate structuration may sometimes work at cross-purposes.

It is also worth considering the obverse case in which class-based organization flourishes in the absence of competing local structuration. This is clearly the stuff of textbook Marxism, yet ironically it comes closest to empirical realization within countries, such as Sweden, that opted for the social democratic road quite early. In standard analyses of Swedish exceptionalism (e.g., Therborn 1988), the well-known solidarism of labor is attributed not merely to the historic weakness of guild organization and craft unionism, but also to party negotiating tactics that privileged classwide collective bargaining over

purely sectional wage demands. At the same time, the "active labor market" programs embodied in the Rehn-Meidner model (Esping-Andersen 1988, pp. 47-53) provide extensive state assistance for worker retraining and relocation, thereby blurring interoccupational boundaries and further undermining local sectionalism and closure. In this context, unit-level occupations are still defined by functional positions in the Swedish division of labor, but the social trappings (e.g., associations, closure) that usually emerge around such technical distinctions have been partly repressed. Although Sweden appears, then, to be properly characterized by the neo-Marxian formula that "technical features do not entail social features" (Abercrombie and Urry 1983, p. 109), it is unclear whether this form of structuralism extends much beyond Sweden and Scandinavia more generally. If it is more widespread than we suspect, then our preferred line of argumentation is admittedly weakened.

The larger conclusion to be drawn is that sociologists in all countries have typically been too quick to fall back on purely nominal categories and the descriptive models that they imply. The longstanding Marxian distinction between *klasse an sich* and *klasse für sich* only reinforces such nominalist tendencies, as it legitimates the claim that conventional aggregate categories, although presently latent or quiescent, may someday become meaningful and activated. This approach is of course peculiarly modern. In characterizing stratification systems of the past, sociologists have typically relied on categories that were embedded in the fabric of society (e.g., estates, castes), thereby rendering them sensible and meaningful to intellectuals and the lay public alike.

The modern analogues to such realist categories are the unit occupational groups that emerge around functional positions in the division of labor. If analyses are ratcheted down to this level, we can construct models that rely on real institutional forces and assume more nearly structural form. The proof of our approach rests, then, on the additional explana-

tory power and understanding that accrues from referencing the real institutional processes that create classes, constrain mobility chances, generate earnings, and define lifestyles. The task of mapping disintegrated stratification is hardly trivial, but the intellectual payoff to so proceeding is likely to be greater than that secured by carrying out yet another study at the aggregate level.

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► THE RULING CLASS AND ELITES

GAETANO MOSCA

The Ruling Class

1. Among the constant facts and tendencies that are to be found in all political organisms, one is so obvious that it is apparent to the most casual eye. In all societies—from societies that are very meagerly developed and have barely attained the dawning of civilization, down to the most advanced and powerful societies—two classes of people appear—a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second, the more numerous class, is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent, and supplies the first, in appearance at least, with material means of subsistence and with the instrumentalities that are essential to the vitality of the political organism.

In practical life we all recognize the existence of this ruling class (or political class, as we have elsewhere chosen to define it).¹ We all know that, in our own country, whichever it may be, the management of public affairs is in the hands of a minority of influential persons, to which management, willingly or unwillingly, the majority defer. We know that the same thing goes on in neighboring countries,

and in fact we should be put to it to conceive of a real world otherwise organized—a world in which all men would be directly subject to a single person without relationships of superiority or subordination, or in which all men would share equally in the direction of political affairs. If we reason otherwise in theory, that is due partly to inveterate habits that we follow in our thinking and partly to the exaggerated importance that we attach to two political facts that loom far larger in appearance than they are in reality.

The first of these facts—and one has only to open one's eyes to see it—is that in every political organism there is one individual who is chief among the leaders of the ruling class as a whole and stands, as we say, at the helm of the state. That person is not always the person who holds supreme power according to law. At times, alongside of the hereditary king or emperor there is a prime minister or a major-domo who wields an actual power that is greater than the sovereign's. At other times, in place of the elected president the influential politician who has procured the president's election will govern. Under special circumstances there may be, instead of a single person, two or three who discharge the functions of supreme control.

The second fact, too, is readily discernible. Whatever the type of political organization, pressures arising from the discontent of the masses who are governed, from the passions by which they are swayed, exert a certain amount of influence on the policies of the ruling, the political, class.

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But the man who is at the head of the state would certainly not be able to govern without the support of a numerous class to enforce respect for his orders and to have them carried out; and granting that he can make one individual, or indeed many individuals, in the ruling class feel the weight of his power, he certainly cannot be at odds with the class as a whole or do away with it. Even if that were possible, he would at once be forced to create another class, without the support of which action on his part would be completely paralyzed. On the other hand, granting that the discontent of the masses might succeed in disposing a ruling class, inevitably, as we shall later show, there would have to be another organized minority within the masses themselves to discharge the functions of a ruling class. Otherwise all organization, and the whole social structure, would be destroyed.

2. From the point of view of scientific research the real superiority of the concept of the ruling, or political, class lies in the fact that the varying structure of ruling classes has a preponderant importance in determining the political type, and also the level of civilization, of the different peoples. According to a manner of classifying forms of government that is still in vogue, Turkey and Russia were both, up to a few years ago, absolute monarchies, England and Italy were constitutional, or limited, monarchies, and France and the United States were classed as republics. The classification was based on the fact that, in the first two countries mentioned, headship in the state was hereditary and the chief was nominally omnipotent; in the second two, his office is hereditary but his powers and prerogatives are limited; in the last two, he is elected. That classification is obviously superficial. Absolutisms though they were, there was little in common between the manners in which Russia and Turkey were managed politically; the levels of civilization in the two countries and the organization of their ruling classes being vastly different. On the same basis, the regime in Italy, a monarchy, is much more similar to the regime in France, a republic, than it is to the regime in England, also a

monarchy; and there are important differences between the political organizations of the United States and France, though both countries are republics.

As we have already suggested, ingrained habits of thinking have long stood, as they still stand, in the way of scientific progress in this matter. The classification mentioned above, which divides governments into absolute monarchies, limited monarchies and republics, was devised by Montesquieu and was intended to replace the classical categories of Aristotle, who divided governments into monarchies, aristocracies and democracies. What Aristotle called a democracy was simply an aristocracy of fairly broad membership. Aristotle himself was in a position to observe that in every Greek state, whether aristocratic or democratic, there was always one person or more who had a preponderant influence. Between the day of Polybius and the day of Montesquieu, many writers perfected Aristotle's classification by introducing into it the concept of "mixed" governments. Later on the modern democratic theory, which had its source in Rousseau, took its stand upon the concept that the majority of the citizens in any state can participate, and in fact *ought* to participate, in its political life, and the doctrine of popular sovereignty still holds sway over many minds in spite of the fact that modern scholarship is making it increasingly clear that democratic, monarchical and aristocratic principles function side by side in every political organism. We shall not stop to refute this democratic theory here, since that is the task of this work as a whole. Besides, it would be hard to destroy in a few pages a whole system of ideas that has become firmly rooted in the human mind. As Las Casas aptly wrote in the life of Christopher Columbus, it is often much harder to unlearn than to learn.

3. We think it may be desirable, nevertheless, to reply at this point to an objection which might very readily be made to our point of view. If it is easy to understand that a single individual cannot command a group without finding within the group a minority to support him, it is rather difficult to grant,

as a constant and natural fact, that minorities rule majorities, rather than majorities minorities. But that is one of the points—so numerous in all the other sciences—where the first impression one has of things is contrary to what they are in reality. In reality the domination of an organized minority, obeying a single impulse, over the unorganized majority is inevitable. The power of any minority is irresistible as against each single individual in the majority, who stands alone before the totality of the organized minority. At the same time, the minority is organized for the very reason that it is a minority. A hundred men acting uniformly in concert, with a common understanding, will triumph over a thousand men who are not in accord and can therefore be dealt with one by one. Meanwhile it will be easier for the former to act in concert and have a mutual understanding simply because they are a hundred and not a thousand. It follows that the larger the political community, the smaller will the proportion of the governing minority to the governed majority be, and the more difficult will it be for the majority to organize for reaction against the minority.

However, in addition to the great advantage accruing to them from the fact of being organized, ruling minorities are usually so constituted that the individuals who make them up are distinguished from the mass of the governed by qualities that give them a certain material, intellectual or even moral superiority; or else they are the heirs of individuals who possessed such qualities. In other words, members of a ruling minority regularly have some attribute, real or apparent, which is highly esteemed and very influential in the society in which they live.

4. In primitive societies that are still in the early stages of organization, military valor is the quality that most readily opens access to the ruling, or political, class. In societies of advanced civilization, war is the exceptional condition. It may be regarded as virtually normal in societies that are in the initial stages of their development; and the individuals who show the greatest ability in war easily gain supremacy over their fellows—the bravest be-

come chiefs. The fact is constant, but the forms it may assume, in one set of circumstances or another, vary considerably.

As a rule the dominance of a warrior class over a peaceful multitude is attributed to a superposition of races, to the conquest of a relatively unwarlike group by an aggressive one. Sometimes that is actually the case—we have examples in India after the Aryan invasions, in the Roman Empire after the Germanic invasions and in Mexico after the Aztec conquest. But more often, under certain social conditions, we note the rise of a warlike ruling class in places where there is absolutely no trace of a foreign conquest. As long as a horde lives exclusively by the chase, all individuals can easily become warriors. There will of course be leaders who will rule over the tribe, but we will not find a warrior class rising to exploit, and at the same time to protect, another class that is devoted to peaceful pursuits. As the tribe emerges from the hunting stage and enters the agricultural and pastoral stage, then, along with an enormous increase in population and a greater stability in the means of exerting social influence, a more or less clean-cut division into two classes will take place, one class being devoted exclusively to agriculture, the other class to war. In this event, it is inevitable that the warrior class should little by little acquire such ascendancy over the other as to be able to oppress it with impunity....

5. Everywhere—in Russia and Poland, in India and medieval Europe—the ruling warrior classes acquire almost exclusive ownership of the land. Land, as we have seen, is the chief source of production and wealth in countries that are not very far advanced in civilization. But as civilization progresses, revenue from land increases proportionately. With the growth of population there is, at least in certain periods, an increase in rent, in the Ricardian sense of the term, largely because great centers of consumption arise—such as at all times have been the great capitals and other large cities, ancient and modern. Eventually, if other circumstances permit, a very important social transformation occurs.

Wealth rather than military valor comes to be the characteristic feature of the dominant class: the people who rule are the rich rather than the brave.

The condition that in the main is required for this transformation is that social organization shall have concentrated and become perfected to such an extent that the protection offered by public authority is considerably more effective than the protection offered by private force. In other words, private property must be so well protected by the practical and real efficacy of the laws as to render the power of the proprietor himself superfluous. This comes about through a series of gradual alterations in the social structure whereby a type of political organization, which we shall call the "feudal state," is transformed into an essentially different type, which we shall term the "bureaucratic state." We are to discuss these types at some length hereafter, but we may say at once that the evolution here referred to is as a rule greatly facilitated by progress in pacific manners and customs and by certain moral habits which societies contract as civilization advances.

Once this transformation has taken place, wealth produces political power just as political power has been producing wealth. In a society already somewhat mature—where, therefore, individual power is curbed by the collective power—if the powerful are as a rule the rich, to be rich is to become powerful. And, in truth, when fighting with the mailed fist is prohibited whereas fighting with pounds and pence is sanctioned, the better posts are inevitably won by those who are better supplied with pounds and pence.

There are, to be sure, states of a very high level of civilization which in theory are organized on the basis of moral principles of such a character that they seem to preclude this overbearing assertiveness on the part of wealth. But this is a case—and there are many such—where theoretical principles can have no more than a limited application in real life. In the United States all powers flow directly or indirectly from popular elections, and suffrage is equal for all men and women in all

the states of the Union. What is more, democracy prevails not only in institutions but to a certain extent also in morals. The rich ordinarily feel a certain aversion to entering public life, and the poor a certain aversion to choosing the rich for elective office. But that does not prevent a rich man from being more influential than a poor man, since he can use pressure upon the politicians who control public administration. It does not prevent elections from being carried on to the music of clinking dollars. It does not prevent whole legislatures and considerable numbers of national congressmen from feeling the influence of powerful corporations and great financiers.²...

6. In societies in which religious beliefs are strong and ministers of the faith form a special class a priestly aristocracy almost always arises and gains possession of a more or less important share of the wealth and the political power. Conspicuous examples of that situation would be ancient Egypt (during certain periods), Brahman India and medieval Europe. Oftentimes the priests not only perform religious functions. They possess legal and scientific knowledge and constitute the class of highest intellectual culture. Consciously or unconsciously, priestly hierarchies often show a tendency to monopolize learning and hamper the dissemination of the methods and procedures that make the acquisition of knowledge possible and easy. To that tendency may have been due, in part at least, the painfully slow diffusion of the demotic alphabet in ancient Egypt, though that alphabet was infinitely more simple than the hieroglyphic script. The Druids in Gaul were acquainted with the Greek alphabet but would not permit their rich store of sacred literature to be written down, requiring their pupils to commit it to memory at the cost of untold effort. To the same outlook may be attributed the snobbish and frequent use of dead languages that we find in ancient Chaldaea, in India, and in medieval Europe. Sometimes, as was the case in India, lower classes have been explicitly forbidden to acquire knowledge of sacred books.

Specialized knowledge and really scientific culture, purged of any sacred or religious aura, become important political forces only in a highly advanced stage of civilization, and only then do they give access to membership in the ruling class to those who possess them. But in this case too, it is not so much learning in itself that has political value as the practical applications that may be made of learning to the profit of the public or the state. Sometimes all that is required is mere possession of the mechanical processes that are indispensable to the acquisition of a higher culture. This may be due to the fact that on such a basis it is easier to ascertain and measure the skill which a candidate has been able to acquire—it is easier to "mark" or grade him. So in certain periods in ancient Egypt the profession of scribe was a road to public office and power, perhaps because to have learned the hieroglyphic script was proof of long and patient study. In modern China, again, learning the numberless characters in Chinese script has formed the basis of the mandarin's education.³ In present-day Europe and America the class that applies the findings of modern science to war, public administration, public works and public sanitation holds a fairly important position, both socially and politically, and in our western world, as in ancient Rome, an altogether privileged position is held by lawyers. They know the complicated legislation that arises in all peoples of long-standing civilization, and they become especially powerful if their knowledge of law is coupled with the type of eloquence that chances to have a strong appeal to the taste of their contemporaries.

There are examples in abundance where we see that longstanding practice in directing the military and civil organization of a community creates and develops in the higher reaches of the ruling class a real art of governing, which is something better than crude empiricism and better than anything that mere individual experience could suggest. In such circumstances aristocracies of functionaries arise, such as the Roman senate, the Venetian nobility and to a certain extent the English

aristocracy. Those bodies all stirred John Stuart Mill to admiration and certainly they all three developed governments that were distinguished for carefully considered policies and for great steadfastness and sagacity in carrying them out. This art of governing is not political science, though it has, at one time or another, anticipated applications of a number of the postulates of political science. However, even if the art of governing has now and again enjoyed prestige with certain classes of persons who have long held possession of political functions, knowledge of it has never served as an ordinary criterion for admitting to public offices persons who were barred from them by social station. The degree of mastery of the art of governing that a person possesses is, moreover, apart from exceptional cases, a very difficult thing to determine if the person has given no practical demonstration that he possesses it.

7. In some countries we find hereditary castes. In such cases the governing class is explicitly restricted to a given number of families, and birth is the one criterion that determines entry into the class or exclusion from it. Examples are exceedingly common. There is practically no country of long-standing civilization that has not had a hereditary aristocracy at one period or another in its history. We find hereditary nobilities during certain periods in China and ancient Egypt, in India, in Greece before the wars with the Medes, in ancient Rome, among the Slavs, among the Latins and Germans of the Middle Ages, in Mexico at the time of the Discovery and in Japan down to a few years ago.

In this connection two preliminary observations are in point. In the first place, all ruling classes tend to become hereditary in fact if not in law. All political forces seem to possess a quality that in physics used to be called the force of inertia. They have a tendency, that is, to remain at the point and in the state in which they find themselves. Wealth and military valor are easily maintained in certain families by moral tradition and by heredity. Qualification for important office—the habit of, and to an extent the capacity for, dealing

with affairs of consequence—is much more readily acquired when one has had a certain familiarity with them from childhood. Even when academic degrees, scientific training, special aptitudes as tested by examinations and competitions, open the way to public office, there is no eliminating that special advantage in favor of certain individuals which the French call the advantage of *positions déjà prises*. In actual fact, though examinations and competitions may theoretically be open to all, the majority never have the resources for meeting the expense of long preparation, and many others are without the connections and kinships that set an individual promptly on the right road, enabling him to avoid the gropings and blunders that are inevitable when one enters an unfamiliar environment without any guidance or support.

The democratic principle of election by broadbased suffrage would seem at first glance to be in conflict with the tendency toward stability which, according to our theory, ruling classes show. But it must be noted that candidates who are successful in democratic elections are almost always the ones who possess the political forces above enumerated, which are very often hereditary. In the English, French and Italian parliaments we frequently see the sons, grandsons, brothers, nephews and sons-in-law of members and deputies, ex-members and ex-deputies.

In the second place, when we see a hereditary caste established in a country and monopolizing political power, we may be sure that such a status de jure was preceded by a similar status de facto. Before proclaiming their exclusive and hereditary right to power the families or castes in question must have held the scepter of command in a firm grasp, completely monopolizing all the political forces of that country at that period. Otherwise such a claim on their part would only have aroused the bitterest protests and provoked the bitterest struggles.

Hereditary aristocracies often come to vaunt supernatural origins, or at least origins different from, and superior to, those of the governed classes. Such claims are explained

by a highly significant social fact, namely that every governing class tends to justify its actual exercise of power by resting it on some universal moral principle. This same sort of claim has come forward in our time in scientific trappings. A number of writers, developing and amplifying Darwin's theories, contend that upper classes represent a higher level in social evolution and are therefore superior to lower classes by organic structure. Gumplovicz goes to the point of maintaining that the divisions of populations into trade groups and professional classes in modern civilized countries are based on ethnological heterogeneity.⁴

Now history very definitely shows the special abilities as well as the special defects—both very marked—which have been displayed by aristocracies that have either remained absolutely closed or have made entry into their circles difficult. The ancient Roman patriciate and the English and German nobilities of modern times give a ready idea of the type we refer to. Yet in dealing with this fact, and with the theories that tend to exaggerate its significance, we can always raise the same objection—that the individuals who belong to the aristocracies in question owe their special qualities not so much to the blood that flows in their veins as to their very particular upbringing, which has brought out certain intellectual and moral tendencies in them in preference to others....

8. Finally, if we were to keep to the idea of those who maintain the exclusive influence of the hereditary principle in the formation of ruling classes, we should be carried to a conclusion somewhat like the one to which we were carried by the evolutionary principle: The political history of mankind ought to be much simpler than it is. If the ruling class really belonged to a different race, or if the qualities that fit it for domination were transmitted primarily by organic heredity, it is difficult to see how, once the class was formed, it could decline and lose its power. The peculiar qualities of a race are exceedingly tenacious. Keeping to the evolutionary theory, acquired capacities in the parents are inborn in their

children and, as generation succeeds generation, are progressively accentuated. The descendants of rulers, therefore, ought to become better and better fitted to rule, and the other classes ought to see their chances of challenging or supplanting them become more and more remote. Now the most commonplace experience suffices to assure one that things do not go in that way at all.

What we see is that as soon as there is a shift in the balance of political forces—when, that is, a need is felt that capacities different from the old should assert themselves in the management of the state, when the old capacities, therefore, lose some of their importance or changes in their distribution occur—then the manner in which the ruling class is constituted changes also. If a new source of wealth develops in a society, if the practical importance of knowledge grows, if an old religion declines or a new one is born, if a new current of ideas spreads, then, simultaneously, far-reaching dislocations occur in the ruling class. One might say, indeed, that the whole history of civilized mankind comes down to a conflict between the tendency of dominant elements to monopolize political power and transmit possession of it by inheritance, and the tendency toward a dislocation of old forces and an insurgence of new forces; and this conflict produces an unending ferment of endosmosis and exosmosis between the upper classes and certain portions of the lower. Ruling classes decline inevitably when they cease to find scope for the capacities through which they rose to power, when they can no longer render the social services which they once rendered, or when their talents and

the services they render lose in importance in the social environment in which they live. So the Roman aristocracy declined when it was no longer the exclusive source of higher officers for the army, of administrators for the commonwealth, of governors for the provinces. So the Venetian aristocracy declined when its nobles ceased to command the galleys and no longer passed the greater part of their lives in sailing the seas and in trading and fighting.

In inorganic nature we have the example of our air, in which a tendency to immobility produced by the force of inertia is continuously in conflict with a tendency to shift about as the result of inequalities in the distribution of heat. The two tendencies, prevailing by turn in various regions on our planet, produce now calm, now wind and storm. In much the same way in human societies there prevails now the tendency that produces closed, stationary, crystallized ruling classes, now the tendency that results in a more or less rapid renovation of ruling classes.

Notes

1. Mosca, *Teoria dei governi e governo parlamentare*, chap. I.
2. Janet, *Le istituzioni politiche e sociali degli Stati Uniti d'America*, part II, chap. X.
3. This was true up to a few years ago, the examination of a mandarin covering only literary and historical studies—as the Chinese understood such studies, of course.
4. *Der Rassenkampf*. This notion transpires from Gumplovicz's whole volume. It is explicitly formulated in book II, chap. XXXIII.

C. WRIGHT MILLS

The Power Elite

The powers of ordinary men are circumscribed by the everyday worlds in which they live, yet even in these rounds of job, family, and neighborhood they often seem driven by forces they can neither understand nor govern. 'Great changes' are beyond their control, but affect their conduct and outlook none the less. The very framework of modern society confines them to projects not their own, but from every side, such changes now press upon the men and women of the mass society, who accordingly feel that they are without purpose in an epoch in which they are without power.

But not all men are in this sense ordinary. As the means of information and of power are centralized, some men come to occupy positions in American society from which they can look down upon, so to speak, and by their decisions mightily affect, the everyday worlds of ordinary men and women. They are not made by their jobs; they set up and break down jobs for thousands of others; they are not confined by simple family responsibilities; they can escape. They may live in many hotels and houses, but they are bound by no one community. They need not merely 'meet the demands of the day and hour'; in some part, they create these demands, and cause others to meet them. Whether or not they profess their power, their technical and political experience of it far transcends that of the underlying population. What Jacob Burckhardt said

of 'great men,' most Americans might well say of their elite: 'They are all that we are not.'¹

The power elite is composed of men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences. Whether they do or do not make such decisions is less important than the fact that they do occupy such pivotal positions: their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, is itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions they do make. For they are in command of the major hierarchies and organizations of modern society. They rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure, in which are now centered the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy.

The power elite are not solitary rulers. Advisers and consultants, spokesmen and opinion-makers are often the captains of their higher thought and decision. Immediately below the elite are the professional politicians of the middle levels of power, in the Congress and in the pressure groups, as well as among the new and old upper classes of town and city and region. Mingling with them in curious ways are those professional celebrities who live by being continually displayed but are never, so long as they remain celebrities, displayed enough. If such celebrities are not at the head of any dominating hierarchy, they do often have the power to distract the attention of the public or afford sensations to the

masses, or, more directly, to gain the ear of those who do occupy positions of direct power. More or less unattached, as critics of morality and technicians of power, as spokesmen of God and creators of mass sensibility, such celebrities and consultants are part of the immediate scene in which the drama of the elite is enacted. But that drama itself is centered in the command posts of the major institutional hierarchies.

1

The truth about the nature and the power of the elite is not some secret which men of affairs know but will not tell. Such men hold quite various theories about their own roles in the sequence of event and decision. Often they are uncertain about their roles, and even more often they allow their fears and their hopes to affect their assessment of their own power. No matter how great their actual power, they tend to be less acutely aware of it than of the resistances of others to its use. Moreover, most American men of affairs have learned well the rhetoric of public relations, in some cases even to the point of using it when they are alone, and thus coming to believe it. The personal awareness of the actors is only one of the several sources one must examine in order to understand the higher circles. Yet many who believe that there is no elite, or at any rate none of any consequence, rest their argument upon what men of affairs believe about themselves, or at least assert in public.

There is, however, another view: those who feel, even if vaguely, that a compact and powerful elite of great importance does now prevail in America often base that feeling upon the historical trend of our time. They have felt, for example, the domination of the military event, and from this they infer that generals and admirals, as well as other men of decision influenced by them, must be enormously powerful. They hear that the Congress has again dedicated to a handful of men decisions clearly related to the issue of war or peace.

They know that the bomb was dropped over Japan in the name of the United States of America, although they were at no time consulted about the matter. They feel that they live in a time of big decisions; they know that they are not making any. Accordingly, as they consider the present as history, they infer that at its center, making decisions or failing to make them, there must be an elite of power.

On the one hand, those who share this feeling about big historical events assume that there is an elite and that its power is great. On the other hand, those who listen carefully to the reports of men apparently involved in the great decisions often do not believe that there is an elite whose powers are of decisive consequence.

Both views must be taken into account, but neither is adequate. The way to understand the power of the American elite lies neither solely in recognizing the historic scale of events nor in accepting the personal awareness reported by men of apparent decision. Behind such men and behind the events of history, linking the two, are the major institutions of modern society. These hierarchies of state and corporation and army constitute the means of power; as such they are now of a consequence not before equaled in human history—and at their summits, there are now those command posts of modern society which offer us the sociological key to an understanding of the role of the higher circles in America.

Within American society, major national power now resides in the economic, the political, and the military domains. Other institutions seem off to the side of modern history, and, on occasion, duly subordinated to these. No family is as directly powerful in national affairs as any major corporation; no church is as directly powerful in the external biographies of young men in America today as the military establishment; no college is as powerful in the shaping of momentous events as the National Security Council. Religious, educational, and family institutions are not autonomous centers of national power; on the contrary, these decentralized areas are in-

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creasingly shaped by the big three, in which developments of decisive and immediate consequence now occur . . .

Within each of the big three, the typical institutional unit has become enlarged, has become administrative, and, in the power of its decisions, has become centralized. Behind these developments there is a fabulous technology, for as institutions, they have incorporated this technology and guide it, even as it shapes and paces their developments.

The economy—once a great scatter of small productive units in autonomous balance—has become dominated by two or three hundred giant corporations, administratively and politically interrelated, which together hold the keys to economic decisions.

The political order, once a decentralized set of several dozen states with a weak spinal cord, has become a centralized, executive establishment which has taken up into itself many powers previously scattered, and now enters into each and every cranny of the social structure.

The military order, once a slim establishment in a context of distrust fed by state militia, has become the largest and most expensive feature of government, and, although well versed in smiling public relations, now has all the grim and clumsy efficiency of a sprawling bureaucratic domain.

In each of these institutional areas, the means of power at the disposal of decision makers have increased enormously; their central executive powers have been enhanced; within each of them modern administrative routines have been elaborated and tightened up.

As each of these domains becomes enlarged and centralized, the consequences of its activities become greater, and its traffic with the others increases. The decisions of a handful of corporations bear upon military and political as well as upon economic developments around the world. The decisions of the military establishment rest upon and grievously affect political life as well as the very level of economic activity. The decisions made within the political domain determine economic ac-

tivities and military programs. There is no longer, on the one hand, an economy, and, on the other hand, a political order containing a military establishment unimportant to politics and to money-making. There is a political economy linked, in a thousand ways, with military institutions and decisions. On each side of the world-split running through central Europe and around the Asiatic rimlands, there is an ever-increasing interlocking of economic, military, and political structures.² If there is government intervention in the corporate economy, so is there corporate intervention in the governmental process. In the structural sense, this triangle of power is the source of the interlocking directorate that is most important for the historical structure of the present.

The fact of the interlocking is clearly revealed at each of the points of crisis of modern capitalist society—slump, war, and boom. In each, men of decision are led to an awareness of the interdependence of the major institutional orders. In the nineteenth century, when the scale of all institutions was smaller, their liberal integration was achieved in the automatic economy, by an autonomous play of market forces, and in the automatic political domain, by the bargain and the vote. It was then assumed that out of the imbalance and friction that followed the limited decisions then possible a new equilibrium would in due course emerge. That can no longer be assumed, and it is not assumed by the men at the top of each of the three dominant hierarchies.

For given the scope of their consequences, decisions—and indecisions—in any one of these ramify into the others, and hence top decisions tend either to become co-ordinated or to lead to a commanding indecision. It has not always been like this. When numerous small entrepreneurs made up the economy, for example, many of them could fail and the consequences still remain local, political and military authorities did not intervene. But now, given political expectations and military commitments, can they afford to allow key units of the private corporate economy to break down in slump? Increasingly, they do

intervene in economic affairs, and as they do so, the controlling decisions in each order are inspected by agents of the other two, and economic, military, and political structures are interlocked.

At the pinnacle of each of the three enlarged and centralized domains, there have arisen those higher circles which make up the economic, the political, and the military elites. At the top of the economy, among the corporate rich, there are the chief executives; at the top of the political order, the members of the political directorate; at the top of the military establishment, the elite of soldier-statesmen clustered in and around the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the upper echelon. As each of these domains has coincided with the others, as decisions tend to become total in their consequence, the leading men in each of the three domains of power—the waldorfs, the corporation chieftains, the political directorate—tend to come together, to form the power elite of America.

2

The higher circles in and around these command posts are often thought of in terms of what their members possess: they have a greater share than other people of the things and experiences that are most highly valued. From this point of view, the elite are simply those who have the most of what there is to have, which is generally held to include money, power, and prestige—as well as all the ways of life to which these lead.³ But the elite are not simply those who have the most, for they could not 'have the most' were it not for their positions in the great institutions. For such institutions are the necessary bases of power, of wealth, and of prestige, and at the same time, the chief means of exercising power, of acquiring and retaining wealth, and of existing in the higher claims for prestige.

By the powerful we mean, of course, those who are able to realize their will, even if others resist it. No one, accordingly, can be truly powerful unless he has access to the com-

mand of major institutions, for it is over these institutional means of power that the truly powerful are, in the first instance, powerful. Higher politicians and key officials of government command such institutional power; so do admirals and generals, and so do the major owners and executives of the larger corporations. Not all power, it is true, is anchored in and exercised by means of such institutions, but only within and through them can power be more or less continuous and important. . . .

If we took the one hundred most powerful men in America, the one hundred wealthiest, and the one hundred most celebrated away from the institutional positions they now occupy, away from their resources of men and women and money, away from the media of mass communication that are now focused upon them—then they would be powerless and poor and uncelebrated. For power is not of a man. Wealth does not center in the person of the wealthy. Celebrity is not inherent in any personality. To be celebrated, to be wealthy, to have power requires access to major institutions, for the institutional positions men occupy determine in large part their chances to have and to hold these valued experiences.

3

The people of the higher circles may also be conceived as members of a top social stratum, as a set of groups whose members know one another, see one another socially and at business, and so, in making decisions, take one another into account. The elite, according to this conception, feel themselves to be, and are felt by others to be, the inner circle of the upper social classes.⁴ They form a more or less compact social and psychological entity; they have become self-conscious members of a social class. People are either accepted into this class or they are not, and there is a qualitative split, rather than merely a numerical scale, separating them from those who are not elite. They are more or less aware of themselves as a social class and they behave toward one another differently from the way they do toward

members of other classes. They accept one another, understand one another, marry one another, tend to work and to think if not together at least alike.

Now, we do not want by our definition to prejudice whether the elite of the command posts are conscious members of such a socially recognized class, or whether considerable proportions of the elite derive from such a clear and distinct class. These are matters to be investigated. Yet in order to be able to recognize what we intend to investigate, we must note something that all biographies and memoirs of the wealthy and the powerful and the eminent make clear: no matter what else they may be, the people of these higher circles are involved in a set of overlapping 'crowds' and intricately connected 'cliques.' There is a kind of mutual attraction among those who 'sit on the same terrace'—although this often becomes clear to them, as well as to others, only at the point at which they feel the need to draw the line; only when, in their common defense, they come to understand what they have in common, and so close their ranks against outsiders.

The idea of such ruling stratum implies that most of its members have similar social origins, that throughout their lives they maintain a network of informal connections, and that to some degree there is an interchangeability of position between the various hierarchies of money and power and celebrity. We must, of course, note at once that if such an elite stratum does exist, its social visibility and its form, for very solid historical reasons, are quite different from those of the noble cousinhoods that once ruled various European nations.

That American society has never passed through a feudal epoch is of decisive importance to the nature of the American elite, as well as to American society as a historic whole. For it means that no nobility or aristocracy, established before the capitalist era, has stood in tense opposition to the higher bourgeoisie. It means that this bourgeoisie has monopolized not only wealth but prestige and power as well. It means that no set of noble

families has commanded the top positions and monopolized the values that are generally held in high esteem; and certainly that no set has done so explicitly by inherited right. It means that no high church dignitaries or court nobilities, no entrenched landlords with honorific accoutrements, no monopolists of high army posts have opposed the enriched bourgeoisie and in the name of birth and prerogative successfully resisted its self-making.

But this does not mean that there are no upper strata in the United States. That they emerged from a 'middle class' that had no recognized aristocratic superiors does not mean they remained middle class when enormous increases in wealth made their own superiority possible. Their origins and their newness may have made the upper strata less visible in America than elsewhere. But in America today there are in fact tiers and ranges of wealth and power of which people in the middle and lower ranks know very little and may not even dream. There are families who, in their well-being, are quite insulated from the economic jolts and lurches felt by the merely prosperous and those farther down the scale. There are also men of power who in quite small groups make decisions of enormous consequence for the underlying population.

The American elite entered modern history as a virtually unopposed bourgeoisie. No national bourgeoisie, before or since, has had such opportunities and advantages. Having no military neighbors, they easily occupied an isolated continent stocked with natural resources and immensely inviting to a willing labor force. A framework of power and an ideology for its justification were already at hand. Against mercantilist restriction, they inherited the principle of *laissez-faire*; against Southern planters, they imposed the principle of industrialism. The Revolutionary War put an end to colonial pretensions to nobility, as loyalists fled the country and many estates were broken up. The Jacksonian upheaval with its status revolution put an end to pretensions to monopoly of descent by the old New England families. The Civil War broke the power, and so in due course the prestige,

of the antebellum South's claimants for the higher esteem. The tempo of the whole capitalist development made it impossible for an inherited nobility to develop and endure in America.

No fixed ruling class, anchored in agrarian life and coming to flower in military glory, could contain in America the historic thrust of commerce and industry, or subordinate to itself the capitalist elite—as capitalists were subordinated, for example, in Germany and Japan. Nor could such a ruling class anywhere in the world contain that of the United States when industrialized violence came to decide history. Witness the fate of Germany and Japan in the two world wars of the twentieth century; and indeed the fate of Britain herself and her model ruling class, as New York became the inevitable economic, and Washington the inevitable political capital of the western capitalist world.

4

The elite who occupy the command posts may be seen as the possessors of power and wealth and celebrity; they may be seen as members of the upper stratum of a capitalistic society. They may also be defined in terms of psychological and moral criteria, as certain kinds of selected individuals. So defined, the elite, quite simply, are people of superior character and energy.

The humanist, for example, may conceive of the 'elite' not as a social level or category, but as a scatter of those individuals who attempt to transcend themselves, and accordingly, are more noble, more efficient, made out of better stuff. It does not matter whether they are poor or rich, whether they hold high position or low, whether they are acclaimed or despised; they are elite because of the kind of individuals they are. The rest of the population is mass, which, according to this conception, sluggishly relaxes into uncomfortable mediocrity.³

This is the sort of socially unlocated conception which some American writers with

conservative yearnings have recently sought to develop. But most moral and psychological conceptions of the elite are much less sophisticated, concerning themselves not with individuals but with the stratum as a whole. Such ideas, in fact, always arise in a society in which some people possess more than do others of what there is to possess. People with advantages are loath to believe that they just happen to be people with advantages. They come readily to define themselves as inherently worthy of what they possess; they come to believe themselves 'naturally' elite; and, in fact, to imagine their possessions and their privileges as natural extensions of their own elite selves. In this sense, the idea of the elite as composed of men and women having a finer moral character is an ideology of the elite as a privileged ruling stratum, and this is true whether the ideology is elite-made or made up for it by others.

In eras of equalitarian rhetoric, the more intelligent or the more articulate among the lower and middle classes, as well as guilty members of the upper, may come to entertain ideas of a counter-elite. In western society, as a matter of fact, there is a long tradition and varied images of the poor, the exploited, and the oppressed as the truly virtuous, the wise, and the blessed. Stemming from Christian tradition, this moral idea of a counter-elite composed of essentially higher types condemned to a lowly station, may be and has been used by the underlying population to justify harsh criticism of ruling elites and to celebrate utopian images of a new elite to come.

The moral conception of the elite, however, is not always merely an ideology of the overprivileged or a counter-ideology of the underprivileged. It is often a fact: having controlled experiences and select privileges, many individuals of the upper stratum do come in due course to approximate the types of character they claim to embody. Even when we give up—as we must—the idea that the elite man or woman is born with an elite character, we need not dismiss the idea that their experiences and trainings develop in them characteristics of a specific type....

These several notions of the elite, when appropriately understood, are intricately bound up with one another, and we shall use them all in this examination of American success. We shall study each of several higher circles as offering candidates for the elite, and we shall do so in terms of the major institutions making up the total society of America; within and between each of these institutions, we shall trace the interrelations of wealth and power and prestige. But our main concern is with the power of those who now occupy the command posts, and with the role which they are enacting in the history of our epoch.

Such an elite may be conceived as omnipotent, and its powers thought of as a great hidden design. Thus, in vulgar Marxism, events and trends are explained by reference to 'the will of the bourgeoisie'; in Nazism, by reference to 'the conspiracy of the Jews'; by the petty right in America today, by reference to 'the hidden force' of Communist spies. According to such notions of the omnipotent elite as historical cause, the elite is never an entirely visible agency. It is, in fact, a secular substitute for the will of God, being realized in a sort of providential design, except that usually non-elite men are thought capable of opposing it and eventually overcoming it.

The opposite view—of the elite as impotent—is now quite popular among liberal-minded observers. Far from being omnipotent, the elites are thought to be so scattered as to lack any coherence as a historical force. Their invisibility is not the invisibility of secrecy but the invisibility of the multitude. Those who occupy the formal places of authority are so check-mated—by other elites exerting pressure, or by the public as an electorate, or by constitutional codes—that, although there may be upper classes, there is no ruling class; although there may be men of power, there is no power elite; although there may be a system of stratification, it has no effective top. In the extreme, this view of the elite, as weakened by compromise and disunited to the point of nullity, is a substitute

for impersonal collective fate; for, in this view, the decisions of the visible men of the higher circles do not count in history.

Internationally, the image of the omnipotent elite tends to prevail. All good events and pleasing happenings are quickly imputed by the opinion-makers to the leaders of their own nation; all bad events and unpleasant experiences are imputed to the enemy abroad. In both cases, the omnipotence of evil rulers or of virtuous leaders is assumed. Within the nation, the use of such rhetoric is rather more complicated: when men speak of the power of their own party or circle, they and their leaders are, of course, impotent; only 'the people' are omnipotent. But, when they speak of the power of their opponent's party or circle, they impute to them omnipotence; 'the people' are now powerlessly taken in.

More generally, American men of power tend, by convention, to deny that they are powerful. No American runs for office in order to rule or even govern, but only to serve; he does not become a bureaucrat or even an official, but a public servant. And nowadays, as I have already pointed out, such postures have become standard features of the public-relations programs of all men of power. So firm a part of the style of power-wielding have they become that conservative writers readily misinterpret them as indicating a trend toward an 'amorphous power situation.'

But the 'power situation' of America today is less amorphous than is the perspective of those who see it as a romantic confusion. It is less a flat, momentary 'situation' than a graded, durable structure. And if those who occupy its top grades are not omnipotent, neither are they impotent. It is the form and the height of the gradation of power that we must examine if we would understand the degree of power held and exercised by the elite.

If the power to decide such national issues as are decided were shared in an absolutely equal way, there would be no power elite; in fact, there would be no *gradation* of power, but only a radical homogeneity. At the opposite extreme as well, if the power to decide issues were absolutely monopolized by one

small group, there would be no gradation of power; there would simply be this small group in command, and below it, the unfettered, dominated masses. American society today represents neither the one nor the other of these extremes, but a conception of them is none the less useful: it makes us realize more clearly the question of the structure of power in the United States and the position of the power elite within it.

Within each of the most powerful institutional orders of modern society there is a gradation of power. The owner of a roadside fruit stand does not have as much power in any area of social or economic or political decision as the head of a multi-million-dollar fruit corporation; no lieutenant on the line is as powerful as the Chief of Staff in the Pentagon; no deputy sheriff carries as much authority as the President of the United States. Accordingly, the problem of defining the power elite concerns the level at which we wish to draw the line. By lowering the line, we could define the elite out of existence; by raising it, we could make the elite a very small circle indeed. In a preliminary and minimum way, we draw the line crudely, in charcoal as it were: By the power elite, we refer to those political, economic, and military circles which as an intricate set of overlapping cliques share decisions having at least national consequences. In so far as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them....

6

It is not my thesis that for all epochs of human history and in all nations, a creative minority, a ruling class, an omnipotent elite, shape all historical events. Such statements, upon careful examination, usually turn out to be mere tautologies,⁶ and even when they are not, they are so entirely general as to be useless in the attempt to understand the history of the present. The minimum definition of the power elite as those who decide whatever is decided of major consequence, does not imply

that the members of this elite are always and necessarily the history-makers; neither does it imply that they never are. We must not confuse the conception of the elite, which we wish to define, with one theory about their role: that they are the history-makers of our time. To define the elite, for example, as those who rule America⁷ is less to define a conception than to state one hypothesis about the role and power of that elite. No matter how we might define the elite, the extent of its members' power is subject to historical variation. If, in a dogmatic way, we try to include that variation in our generic definition, we foolishly limit the use of a needed conception. If we insist that the elite be defined as a strictly coordinated class that continually and absolutely rules, we are closing off from our view much to which the term more modestly defined might open to our observation. In short, our definition of the power elite cannot properly contain dogma concerning the degree and kind of power that ruling groups everywhere have. Much less should it permit us to smuggle into our discussion a theory of history.

During most of human history, historical change has not been visible to the people who were involved in it, or even to those enacting it. Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, for example, endured for some four hundred generations with but slight changes in their basic structure. That is six and a half times as long as the entire Christian era, which has only prevailed some sixty generations; it is about eighty times as long as the five generations of the United States' existence. But now the tempo of change is so rapid, and the means of observation so accessible, that the interplay of event and decision seems often to be quite historically visible, if we will only look carefully and from an adequate vantage point.

When knowledgeable journalists tell us that 'events, not men, shape the big decisions,' they are echoing the theory of history as Fortune, Chance, Fate, or the work of The Unseen Hand. For 'events' is merely a modern word for these older ideas, all of which separate men from history-making, because all of them lead us to believe that history goes on

behind men's backs. History is drift with no mastery; within it there is action but no deed; history is mere happening and the event intended by no one.⁷

The course of events in our time depends more on a series of human decisions than on any inevitable fate. The sociological meaning of 'fate' is simply this: that, when the decisions are innumerable and each one is of small consequence, all of them add up in a way no man intended—to history as fate. But not all epochs are equally fateful. As the circle of those who decide is narrowed, as the means of decision are centralized and the consequences of decisions become enormous, then the course of great events often rests upon the decisions of determinable circles. This does not necessarily mean that the same circle of men follow through from one event to another in such a way that all of history is merely their plot. The power of the elite does not necessarily mean that history is not also shaped by a series of small decisions, none of which are thought out. It does not mean that a hundred small arrangements and compromises and adaptations may not be built into the going policy and the living event. The idea of the power elite implies nothing about the process of decision-making as such: it is an attempt to delimit the social areas within which that process, whatever its character, goes on. It is a conception of who is involved in the process.

The degree of foresight and control of those who are involved in decisions that count may also vary. The idea of the power elite does not mean that the estimations and calculated risks upon which decisions are made are not often wrong and that the consequences are sometimes, indeed often, not those intended. Often those who make decisions are trapped by their own inadequacies and blinded by their own errors.

Yet in our time the pivotal moment does arise, and at that moment, small circles do decide or fail to decide. In either case, they are an elite of power. The dropping of the A-bombs over Japan was such a moment; the decision on Korea was such a moment; the

confusion about Quernoy and Matsui, as well as before Dienbienphu were such moments; the sequence of maneuvers which involved the United States in World War II was such a 'moment.' Is it not true that much of the history of our times is composed of such moments? And is not that what is meant when it is said that we live in a time of big decisions, of decisively centralized power?

Most of us do not try to make sense of our age by believing in a Greek-like, eternal recurrence, nor by a Christian belief in a salvation to come, nor by any steady march of human progress. Even though we do not reflect upon such matters, the chances are we believe with Burckhardt that we live in a mere succession of events; that sheer continuity is the only principle of history. History is merely one thing after another; history is meaningless in that it is not the realization of any determinate plot. It is true, of course, that our sense of continuity, our feeling for the history of our time, is affected by crisis. But we seldom look beyond the immediate crisis or the crisis felt to be just ahead. We believe neither in fate nor providence; and we assume, without talking about it, that 'we'—as a nation—can decisively shape the future but that 'we' as individuals somehow cannot do so.

Any meaning history has, 'we' shall have to give to it by our actions. Yet the fact is that although we are all of us within history we do not all possess equal powers to make history. To pretend that we do is sociological nonsense and political irresponsibility. It is nonsense because any group or any individual is limited, first of all, by the technical and institutional means of power at its command; we do not all have equal access to the means of power that now exist, nor equal influence over their use. To pretend that 'we' are all history-makers is politically irresponsible because it obfuscates any attempt to locate responsibility for the consequential decisions of men who do have access to the means of power.

From even the most superficial examination of the history of the western society we learn that the power of decision-makers is first of

all limited by the level of technique, by the means of power and violence and organization that prevail in a given society. In this connection we also learn that there is a fairly straight line running upward through the history of the West; that the means of oppression and exploitation, of violence and destruction, as well as the means of production and reconstruction, have been progressively enlarged and increasingly centralized.

As the institutional means of power and the means of communications that tie them together have become steadily more efficient, those now in command of them have come into command of instruments of rule quite unsurpassed in the history of mankind. And we are not yet at the climax of their development. We can no longer lean upon or take soft comfort from the historical ups and downs of ruling groups of previous epochs. In that sense, Hegel is correct: we learn from history that we cannot learn from it.

Notes

1. Jacob Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1943), pp. 303 ff.
2. Cf. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953), pp. 457 ff.
3. The statistical idea of choosing some value and calling those who have the most of it an elite derives, in modern times, from the Italian economist Pareto, who puts the central point in this way: 'Let us assume that in every branch of human activity each individual is given an index which stands as a sign of his capacity, very much the way grades are given in the various subjects in examinations in school. The highest type of lawyer, for instance, will be given 10. The man who does not get a client will be given 1—reserving zero for the man who is an out-and-out idiot. To the man who has made his millions—honestly or dishonestly as the case may be—we will give 10. To the man who has earned his thousands we will give 6; to such as just manage to keep out of the poor-

house, 1, keeping zero for those who get in. . . . So let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity, and to that class give the name of *elite*.' Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935), par. 2027 and 2031. Those who follow this approach end up not with one elite, but with a number corresponding to the number of values they select. Like many rather abstract ways of reasoning, this one is useful because it forces us to think in a clear-cut way. For a skilful use of this approach, see the work of Harold D. Lasswell, in particular, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936); and for a more systematic use, H. D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).

4. The conception of the elite as members of a top social stratum, is, of course, in line with the prevailing common-sense view of stratification. Technically, it is closer to 'status group' than to 'class', and has been very well stated by Joseph A. Schumpeter, 'Social Classes in an Ethically Homogeneous Environment,' *Imperialism and Social Classes* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Inc., 1951), pp. 133 ff., especially pp. 137-47. Cf. also his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper, 1950), Part II. For the distinction between class and status groups, see *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (trans. and ed. by Gerth and Mills; New York: Oxford University Press, 1946). For an analysis of Pareto's conception of the elite compared with Marx's conception of classes, as well as data on France, see Raymond Aron, 'Social Structure and Ruling Class,' *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 1, nos. 1 and 2 (1950).

5. The most popular essay in recent years which defines the elite and the mass in terms of a morally evaluated character-type is probably José Ortega y Gasset's, *The Revolt of the Masses*, 1932 (New York: New American Library, Mentor Edition, 1950), esp. pp. 91 ff.

6. As in the case, quite notably, of Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939). For a sharp analysis of Mosca, see Fritz Morstein Marx, 'The Bureaucratic State,' *Review of Politics*, vol. 1, 1939, pp. 457 ff. Cf. also Mills, 'On Intellectual Craftsmanship,' April 1952, mimeographed, Columbia College, February 1955.

7. Cf. Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 125 ff. for concise and penetrating statements of several leading philosophies of history.

ANTHONY GIDDENS

Elites and Power

It is certainly one of the most characteristic emphases of the Marxian perspective that, in capitalism especially (but also, in a general sense, in the prior types of class system), the realm of the 'political' is subordinate to that of the 'economic'. What remains relatively obscure in Marx is the specific form of this dependence, and how it is expressed concretely in the domination of the ruling class.¹ The importance of this is not confined to the analysis of the social structure of capitalism, but bears directly upon the question of the classless character of socialism. It relates, in addition, to issues brought to the forefront by the critique of the Marxian standpoint advanced by the 'elite theorists' of the turn of the century. The substance of this critique, in the writings of such as Pareto and Mosca, may be expressed as an attempt to transmute the Marxian concept of class, as founded in the relations of production, into an essentially *political* differentiation between those 'who rule' and those who 'are ruled'—a transmutation which was, indeed, in part made possible by Marx's failure to specify in a systematic fashion the modes whereby the economic hegemony of the capitalist class becomes 'translated' into the political domination of the *ruling* class. For if it is simply the case that economic control directly yields political power, the way is open for the assertion that, in socialism, as in capitalism (indeed as in any

other conceivable type of complex society), whoever controls the means of production thereby achieves political domination as a ruling class. The movement of history from capitalism to socialism then becomes conceived of as a mere succession of 'ruling classes' ('*elites*'), as in classical 'elite theory', or more specifically as the emergence of the sort of 'managerial' or 'technocratic' ruling class described in Burnham's writings, and more recently in some of the variants of the theory of the 'technocratic society'.²

The points at issue between the Marxian standpoint and 'elite theory' have become further complicated in recent years by the use of concepts drawn from the latter, such as that of 'power elite', as if they were synonymous with that of 'ruling class'. It will be useful to clarify the usage of the terms 'ruling class', 'elite', 'power elite', 'governing class', etc., which involves, in part, looking more closely at the structuration of the upper class.

In the analysis which follows, I shall be interested primarily in developing a set of formulations which illuminate significant conceptual distinctions, rather than adhering to conventional terminological usage—if it can be said, in any case, that there is any conventional practice in a field in which there has been so much confusion.³ I shall suggest that, given the distinctions set out below, there can exist a 'governing class' without it necessarily being a 'ruling class'; that there can exist a 'power elite' without there necessarily being either a 'ruling' or a 'governing class'; that there can be what I shall call a system of 'leadership groups' which constitutes neither a 'ruling class', 'governing class', nor 'power

Integration	Recruitment	
	Open	Closed
High	solidary elite	uniform elite
Low	abstract elite	established elite

elite; and that *all* of these social formations elite; in principle, comparable with the existence of a society which is 'capitalist' in its organisation. To begin with, a few elementary remarks are necessary about the notion of 'elite'. As it is sometimes employed, 'elite' may refer to those who 'lead' in any given category of activity: to actors and sportsmen as well as to political or economic 'leaders'. There is evidently a difference, however, between the first and the second, in that the former 'lead' in terms of some sort of scale of 'fame' or 'achievement', whereas the second usage may be taken to refer to persons who are at the head of a specific social organisation which has an internal authority structure (the state, an economic enterprise, etc.). I shall use the term 'elite group' in this latter sense, to designate those individuals who occupy positions of formal authority at the head of a social organisation or institution; and 'elite' very generally, to refer either to an elite group or cluster of elite groups.

In these terms, it can be said that a major aspect of the structuration of the upper class concerns, first, the process of mobility into or recruitment to, elite positions and, second, the degree of social 'solidarity' within and between elite groups. Mediate structuration thus concerns how 'closed' the process of recruitment to elite positions is, in favour of those drawn from propertied backgrounds. Proximate structuration depends primarily upon the frequency and nature of the social contacts between the members of elite groups. These may take various forms, including the formation of marriage connections or the existence of other kin ties, the prevalence of per-

sonal ties of acquaintance or friendship, etc. If the extent of social 'integration' of elite groups is high, there is also likely to be a high degree of moral solidarity characterising the elite as a whole and, probably, a low incidence of either latent or manifest conflicts between them. There has never been any elite, however solidary, which has been free of conflicts and struggles; but the degree and intensity of overt conflict has varied widely, and thus it is reasonable to speak broadly of differentials in the solidarity of elite groups.

Combining these two aspects of structuration, we can establish a typology of elite formations [see diagram this page].

A 'uniform' elite is one which shares the attributes of having a restricted pattern of recruitment and of forming a relatively tightly knit unity. It hardly needs emphasising that the classifications involved are not of an all-or-nothing character. The point has been made that even among traditional aristocracies there was never a completely 'closed' pattern of recruitment, something which has only been approached by the Indian caste system—all elites open their ranks, in some degree, to individuals from the lower orders, and may enhance their stability thereby. A relatively closed type of recruitment, however, is likely to supply the sort of coherent socialisation process producing a high level of solidarity between (and within) elite groups. But it is quite feasible to envisage the existence of instances which approximate more closely to the case of an 'established' elite, where there is a relatively closed pattern of recruitment, but only a low level of integration between elite groups. A 'solidary' elite, as defined in

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Consolidated power
Diffused power

Issue-strength	
Broad	Restricted
autocratic	oligarchic
hegemonic	democratic

the classification, might also appear to involve an unlikely combination of elements, since it might seem difficult to attain a high degree of integration among elite groups whose members are drawn from diverse class backgrounds. But, while this type of social formation is probably rare in capitalist societies, at least some of the state socialist countries fit quite neatly into this category: the Communist Party is the main channel of access to elite positions, and while it provides an avenue of mobility for individuals drawn in substantial proportions from quite lowly backgrounds, at the same time it ensures a high degree of solidarity among elite groups. An 'abstract' elite, involving both relatively open recruitment and a low level of elite solidarity, whatever its empirical reality, approximates closely to the picture of certain contemporary capitalist societies as these are portrayed in the writings of the theorists of so-called 'pluralist democracy'.

The distinguishing of different types of elite formation does not, in itself, enable us to conceptualise the phenomenon of power. As in the case of class structuration itself, we may distinguish two forms of the mediation of power relationships in society. The first I shall call the *institutional* mediation of power; the other, the mediation of power in terms of *control*. By the institutional mediation of power, I mean the general form of state and economy within which elite groups are recruited and structured. This concerns, among other things, the role of property in the overall organisation of economic life, the nature of the legal framework defining economic and political rights and obligations, and the institutional structure of the state itself. The mediation of control refers to the actual (effective)

power of policy-formation and decision-making held by the members of particular elite groups: how far, for example, economic leaders are able to influence decisions taken by politicians, etc. To express it another way, we can say that power has two aspects: a 'collective' aspect, in the sense that the 'parameters' of any concrete set of power relationships are contingent upon the overall system of organisation of a society; and a 'distributive' aspect, in the sense that certain groups are able to exert their will at the expense of others.⁴ The mediation of control is thus expressed in terms of 'effective' power, manifest in terms of the capacity either to take or to influence the taking of decisions which affect the interests of two or more parties differentially.

We may conceptually separate two variable factors in analysing effective power (that is to say, power as differentiated from 'formal authority') in relation to types of elite formation. The first concerns how far such power is 'consolidated' in the hands of elite groups; the second refers to the 'issue-strength' of the power wielded by those in elite positions. While the former designates limitations upon effective power, deriving from constraints imposed from 'below', the latter concerns how far that power is limited *because it can only be exercised in relation to a range of restricted issues*. Thus it is often held to be characteristic of modern capitalist societies that there are quite narrowly defined limitations upon the issues over which elite groups are able to exercise control.⁵ By combining these two aspects of effective power as exercised by elite groups, we can establish a classification of forms of power-structure [see diagram on this page]. Like the previous typology, this sets out

an abstract combination of possibilities; it goes almost without saying that this is no more than an elementary categorisation of a very complex set of phenomena, and the labels applied here in no way exhaust the variety of characteristics which are frequently subsumed under these terms.

According to these definitions, the consolidation of effective power is greatest where it is not restricted to clearly defined limits in terms of its 'lateral range' (broad 'issue-strength'), and where it is concentrated in the hands of the elite, or an elite group. Power-holding is 'oligarchic' rather than 'autocratic' where the degree of centralisation of power in the hands of elite groups is high, but where the issue-strength of that power is limited. In the case of 'hegemonic' control, those in elite positions wield power which, while it is not clearly defined in scope and limited to a restricted range of issues, is 'shallow'. A 'democratic' order, in these terms, is one in which the effective power of elite groups is limited in both respects.

Finally, bringing together both classifications formulated above, we can set up an overall typology of elite formations and power within the class structure [see diagram on this page]. This makes possible a clarification of the four concepts already mentioned—'ruling class', 'governing class', 'power elite' and 'leadership groups'. It must be emphasised that these partially cross-cut some of the existing usages in the literature on class and elite theory. The Paretian term 'governing class' is here not, as in Pareto's

Elite formation		Power-holding
Ruling class	uniform/established elite	autocratic/oligarchic
Governing class	uniform/established elite	hegemonic/democratic
Power elite	solidary elite	autocratic/oligarchic
Leadership groups	abstract elite	hegemonic/democratic

own writing, a replacement for the Marxian 'ruling class'; in this scheme, a governing class is 'one step down', both in terms of elite formation and power-holding, from a 'ruling class'.

In this scheme, the 'strongest' case of a ruling class is defined as that where a uniform elite wields 'autocratic' power; the weakest is where an established elite holds 'oligarchic' power. Where a relatively closed recruitment pattern is linked with the prevalence of defined restrictions upon the effective power of elite groups, a governing class exists, but not a ruling class. A governing class borders upon being a ruling class where a uniform elite possesses 'hegemonic' power; and comes closest to being a system of leadership groups where an established elite holds 'democratic' power. Where a governing class involves a combination of an established elite and 'hegemonic' power, it stands close to being a power elite. A power elite is distinguished from a ruling class in terms of pattern of recruitment, as is a governing class from a system of leadership groups. The latter exists where elite groups only hold limited power, and where, in addition, elite recruitment is relatively open in character.

In terms of the mediation of control, this classification leaves undefined the relative primacy of the power of any one elite group over others. This can be conceptually expressed as referring to the nature of the *hierarchy* which exists among elite groups. A hierarchy exists among elite groups in so far as one such group holds power of broader issue-strength

than others, and is thereby able to exert a degree of control over decisions taken by those within them. Thus it may be that the economic elite, or certain sectors of the economic elite, are able to significantly condition political decisions through the use of 'influence', 'inducement', or the 'direct' control of political positions—i.e., through the fact that members of the economic elite are also incumbents of political positions. We may refer to all of these modes of obtaining, or striving for, control as the *media of interchange* between elite groups. It is precisely one of the major tasks of the analysis of elite formations to examine the media of interchange which operate between elite groups in any given society in order to determine what kinds of elite hierarchy exist.

EDWARD A. SHILS

The Political Class in the Age of Mass Society: Collectivistic Liberalism and Social Democracy

The very subject of the study of elites is anathema to the anti-elitists. Mosca and Pareto have always been suspect among progressivists, collectivistic liberals and radicals, partly because they were suspected of having been Fascists, partly because some Fascists invoked them as witnesses to their oligarchical ideals and their admiration—and practice—of

III / The Structure of Contemporary Stratification

Notes

1. Most subsequent Marxist authors have either been content with the most generalised assertions about this issue, or have wanted to have their cake and eat it by insisting that capitalism is dominated by a ruling class who do not actually 'rule'; cf. Nicos Poulantzas, *Pouvoir politique et classes sociales de l'état capitaliste* (Paris 1970), pp. 361ff.
2. James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution* (New York 1941).
3. In this section of this chapter I have drawn upon part of my article 'Elites in the British class structure', *Sociological Review* 20, 1972.
4. cf. Talcott Parsons, 'On the concept of political power', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107, 1963. The error in Parsons' analysis, however, is to take insufficient account of the fact that the 'collective' aspect of power is asymmetrical in its consequences for the different groupings in society.
5. As in Keller's 'strategic elites'. See Suzanne Keller, *Beyond the Ruling Class* (New York 1963).

brutality. But, in fact, the study of elites is an evaluatively neutral subject. Insofar as it confines itself to the description of what happens between two or more generations, it is silent at the question as to whether inequality in the distribution of opportunities and rewards is inherent in the nature of societies. Indeed, the descriptive accounts contained in elite studies are quite compatible with the beliefs that inequalities are inevitable and with beliefs that they are necessary and useful or at least have advantages which more than compensate for their disadvantages. They are quite compatible with beliefs that the distributions which they disclose are good or evil.

The Political Class in the Age of Mass Society

Mosca certainly regarded the kinds of inequalities that he discovered in his studies as inevitable. He thought there could be no society without elites and that elites perform functions which are absolutely fundamental for the working of society. He thought moreover that they could not be dispensed with and that some of their vices were an inevitable concomitant of that existence. These did not seem to be controversial issues to Mosca, nor indeed did they take a central position in his thought. He was more concerned with the conditions under which political elites were effective. This seems to me to set the proper problem in the study of elites. The demographic or 'elite-recruitment' studies find their justification when the information that they bring is put to the task of explaining the success or failure of elites in maintaining their domination over their societies and avoiding violent disruptions in their tenure. Mosca did not conceive of the tenure of a particular set of individuals; he thought of tenure as running beyond the lifetime or the political careers of single individuals, conceived simply as individuals. He thought of the success of elites as political lineages or political classes. The ruling or political class was not the aggregate of all individuals participating in political life; it was not the aggregate of all those sections of the population whose members participated in politics. The ruling or political class was narrower than the latter; it was more a collective than the former. The political class was, according to Mosca, marked by a sense of political vocation, which was shared by its individual members who, at the same time, perceived that sense of vocation in the other members of the class. There was, on this basis, a sense of solidarity of individuals with each other, even though the political class as a whole was divided by rivalries.

The concept of a political class referred to a cluster of families or, to a lesser extent, professions and institutions from which the individuals who held important elective and appointive positions in the government came. Membership in these lineages or membership in these professions or the fact of having been

a student at certain schools or colleges or universities offered to their members a sense of identity as parts of a loose collectivity whose "business" was ruling the society. The concept of a political class refers not only to the families, professions, and schools from which politicians and political organizers come; it refers to more than these and to the sense of identity focused on the shared right and obligation to rule. It is also a reference to an accumulating tradition of outlook and skill. The tradition provides each new generational group in the lineages, the professions, or the schools and the protégés of these groups, with the knowledge and skill that it needs to remain in power, to contend for power if it is not in power, and to do its job of exercising power with sufficient effectiveness to enable its collectivity to survive, to leave the peripheries of the ruled, in their significant parts, sufficiently satisfied and, if not satisfied, then sufficiently impotent so as to leave the political class at the center of society.

Mosca—and Schumpeter—seemed to think that these traditions of ruling provided the dispositions and attitudes needed to rule effectively; the self-confidence in confronting the decisions inherent in ruling, the ability to weigh and calculate the chances of success, and the knowledge of human beings with whom one must collaborate and against whom one must act. They thought that political experience is the best teacher of the art of politics and that the accumulated experiences of generations, concentrated into streams of traditions which flow into and through institutions, such as lineages, professions and schools, colleges and universities, are the sources of the knowledge which enables political classes to be successful. The idea of a political class is relevant to the understanding of politics because it implies that certain kinds of attitudes and knowledge are necessary for effective rule and that the sources of recruitment are connected with the qualities that make for effectiveness or ineffectiveness of rule.

Mosca wrote his great book a century ago, and he looked back over all of human history in the way in which an educated man in the

Italy of his time, well read in the classics and in history, could do. He wrote in a period that was on the verge of political and social developments which made the existence of the kind of political class which he had in mind more difficult. Political classes in Mosca's sense are greatly attenuated in the West, to the extent that they exist at all. And the tasks which they would have faced, and which their successors do face in the second half of the 20th century, render the efficacy of rulers more difficult. . . .

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Whatever the complex of conditions that brought forth the present situation of "popular democracy," collectivistic liberalism, and social democracy and whatever the differences among these, the present situation is one that requires a tremendous concentration of power in the government to assemble and dispose of resources and to cope with a very high level of demands in various parts of the population.

Contemporary Western governments have taken the responsibility for full employment and economic growth, as well as for the provision of goods and services beyond those provided by the market, for the fostering of individual happiness and personal development, for the care of health and the conservation of nature, for the progress of scientific knowledge and the promotion of technological innovation, for the well-being of the arts and the quality of culture and for social justice—not just the rule of law—and for the remedying of past wrongs. This is a tremendous distance from the welfare state as it was conceived in Germany in the 19th century and by humanitarian reformers in the United States and Great Britain at the beginning of the 20th century. There is scarcely any sphere of life into which modern governments have not entered as a result of their own conception of their obligations and their sensitivity to the imperfections of man's life on earth and in response to the demands of various parts of the electorate and the prevailing intellectual opinion as to what governments should do and how they can do it.

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No "political class," when political classes were still the reservoirs from which governing political elites came, ever had to cope with such a situation. The situation is a novel one, the tasks placed on and accepted by or actually sought by government are to some extent novel in substance and certainly unprecedented in scope. Moreover, the tasks change rapidly. Tasks are redefined. Failures must be remedied by renewed and more extensive measures. The undertakings of governments are so numerous and so comprehensive are the responsibilities that have been demanded of or proclaimed by governments as their "programs" that tasks of coordination of unexampled complexity arise. Governments have long ceased to regard governing as their first, perhaps even their only task; every government on its accession to office has a program of positive actions intended to carry further its past achievements, to broaden them and to improve on them. (Mistakes of one's own commission are seldom admitted.) On the rare occasions when an ostensibly less expansive government accedes to office, its program of undoing some of the arrangements instituted by its more expansive predecessors is as complicated as the positive program it would cancel. Furthermore, programs of cancellation of the arrangements of previous governments are never as comprehensive as the programs of preceding more positive administrations.

How different this is from the budget of tasks that political classes, when they still existed, accepted and were expected to accept. Even in the "absolute" monarchies of the *ancien régime*, government aspired to nothing comparable in scale and intensity to what contemporary Western governments accept as their objectives.

The great merit of the political class was its inheritance of a tradition of the arts of politics and ruling. The knowledge borne by that tradition was wisdom; it was not technical knowledge. Governments formed by political classes did not use much technical knowledge, and they used practically nothing of what would now be called scientific knowledge and scientific technology. Details of road building,

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the maintenance of waterways, the registration of titles to property, the construction of tax rolls, and the keeping of accounts of revenues and expenditures could be left to officials' decisions at the higher levels of government, insofar as they drew on this kind of knowledge, could be made by delegation of authority or by placing oneself in the hands of "expert advisors." Turgot and Colbert knew as much of the "science of economics" as anyone in France at that time. The fact is that there was little "science" which was thought to have bearing on the affairs of state; the challenge to know it and to incorporate it into decisions was not a burden which the "political class" had to bear. That burden is, however, one which contemporary politicians must bear.

The kinds of problems with which government deal were not beyond the cognitive possessions of the political class. The failures of a political class could not be attributed to its failure to master and use an available stock of scientific knowledge. The problems political classes faced, to the extent that they faced them, did not lie outside the powers gained from the assimilation of the traditional political and governmental wisdom available to members of the political class and their own experience.

To do all the things which are demanded of them and to which they have committed themselves, legislators of the present century have called into being an immense bureaucracy. The bureaucracy, competent or incompetent though it might be in taking these tasks in hand, is certainly able to hold its own with the legislators who are constitutionally the rulers of Western societies, whether they be systems of parliamentary government dominated by a cabinet made up of the leaders of the dominant party or the presidential system which provides for an independent legislature and an independent executive. It was long ago pointed out by Max Weber that the bureaucracy would become the dominant power in government, unless it could be held in check by a system of competitive parties which, through elections and the competition in par-

liament, brought charismatic leaders to the fore. The American Congress, not knowing how to generate charismatic politicians, has sought a make-weight against the bureaucracy through the expansion of congressional staffs. They have now become dependent on a bureaucracy of their own making which is nearly as dominating over its superiors as the bureaucracy of the civil service. The President, to cope in his turn with the civil service on the one hand and with the legislature, which is increasingly wagged by the bureaucratic tail of its own creation, has created a large bureaucracy of his own in the Executive Office of the President. . . .

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The Soviet Union is the only country that can be said to have a political class—a very limited circle of long duration from which the highest political elite is chosen by co-optation and calculation. It is not a political class in Mosca's sense because it lacks the element of recruitment from lineage, but this is a secondary matter. The present Soviet elite comes from a political class, the higher ranks of the Communist party of the Soviet Union; it comes primarily from Russia. Its members were not born into the Soviet political class, but they must enter it very early in their careers and make those careers within it and through the patronage of its then reigning leaders. It is a closed circle; intrusions from the outside are not compatible with its continued existence. Progress within the political class is dependent almost entirely on decisions within the political class which, having the formal organization of the Communist party of the Soviet Union as its frame, maintains—at least thus far—a strict control over succession.

Has the Communist political class been successful? In certain important respects, it has been successful. It has remained in power for about two thirds of a century; it has avoided subversion or replacement from outside itself. It has succeeded in achieving this success by ruthlessness, in brutal suppression of even mild-mannered internal criticism. In

this sense, it goes beyond one of the features of political classes. Whereas political classes could assimilate some of their potential rivals or antagonists and could bring them into the system—this is how constitutional liberalism came to live together with monarchically centered conservatism in the 19th century in Western and Central Europe—the Soviet political elite suppresses potential rivals.

Since remaining in power is one of the tests of success of a political elite or of a political class (which is the variant of concern to us here), the Soviet elite has been successful. But one of the features of modern political elites is that they possess programs which they claim to be able to realize. The Soviet elite has certainly been quite successful in its external policies, in its intrusions into other countries. It has possessed the readiness to use force, corruption, manipulation, and conspiracy in the pursuit of its ends abroad, and it has done so with self-confidence. In this respect it has had all the qualities of relatively successful political classes of early modern times up to almost the end of the 19th century; these were the features of political classes which Mosca, and especially Pareto, admired.

Communism is, however, an ideal arrangement of the internal affairs of a society, and it is through the establishment everywhere of such a system that the Soviet elite justifies its extrusions beyond its own boundaries. There it has not been successful, neither within its own boundaries nor in the regimes which it has established and maintained in power outside those boundaries. There, all the qualities which are sustained by the culture of a political class have not helped it—with the exception of its readiness to suppress by the harshest methods those who appear to endanger it. In those fields of activity, like the economic sphere, in which force is not sufficient, the Soviet political class and those lesser political classes which it supports have not been at all successful. Being a political class is thus not anything like a guarantee of success, although it does have certain advantages.

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When we turn away from Communist regimes and consider the political elites of modern Western countries, we contemplate a scene which is fairly devoid of the qualities of organization and culture characteristic of political classes. Modern liberalism, with its emphasis on individual achievement, modern taxation, and the changes in the technology and organization of agriculture have doomed one of the pillars of the system of political classes, namely the great landowning families which in many large societies supplied cultural centers of interaction and much of the personnel of the political classes.

The church, the religious orders, and lay, para-ecclesiastical organizations once constituted a set of adjuncts of the political class, particularly in Roman Catholic countries in the *anciens régimes* and to a smaller, but still some, extent in Protestant countries. This has changed greatly in Roman Catholic countries as a consequence of anticlericalism and more recently as a consequence of radicalism in the priesthood; priests in some Latin countries have become the enemies of what remains of the political class. In Protestant countries too there has been a clerical withdrawal from the political elite.

The political elites have become less self-enclosed, and their different and rival sectors have become less conciliatory toward each other than when they formed a political class. The fate of the system of *versuiling* which prevailed for more than a century in the Netherlands illustrates this process. As long as the political elites of the various "vertical" sectors of Dutch society maintained their ascendancy in consequence of the compliance of their following, they could collaborate more easily with their rivals or competitors of the other "vertical" sectors. When the rank and file of the various parties became more demanding, more consciously "self-secting," and more insistent on their being headed by their leaders, the political class of the Netherlands lost some of its self-enclosedness, its control over recruitment, and its self-assurance. Similar developments, *mutatis*

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mutatis, have occurred in other Western countries. The churches have become uneasy about their links with the center of their respective societies. They have sought to disavow their participation in the earthly center in order to espouse the causes and to seek the approval of the peripheries of society, while claiming thereby to affirm their link with the transcendent center of all existence.

Language ceased to be as significant in the self-consciousness of individuals and in their influence on the conduct and loyalties of their members. Churches became somewhat dissociated from the center of society—either by the constitutional separation of church and state or through voluntary withdrawal and disavowal by the churches.

Great Britain and France were the only countries in which educational institutions served to form and rally the political class. In the former, the great public schools—above all Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and a few others—and Oxford University (also Cambridge to a lesser degree) provided places for inculturation of the outlook of the political class, a sense of solidarity—the "old school tie"—and places of recruitment into the political class. In France, in different ways, a few of the great *lycées* in Paris, e.g., the Lycée Louis le Grand and the Ecole libre des sciences politiques and, around the time of the First World War, the Ecole normale supérieure, played a similar role.¹ More recently, the Ecole d'administration has been added to the set of formative institutions of the French political elite. (The Ecole polytechnique, important though it has been in the administration of the country, does not seem to have been quite as important in the formation and maintenance of the political elite in contemporary France, although it is conceivable that the technological, scientific training which it offers might lead to its displacement of the more humanistic Ecole normale supérieure. The same applies to the forward movement of the Ecole nationale d'administration.)

Neither the United States nor Germany have had any higher educational institutions

which have performed approximately similar functions. No German university, despite the intellectual achievements and the nationalistic devotion (sometimes excessive) of German professors, ever played a role like that of Oxford in Great Britain. The role of the universities in the United States is somewhat similar. In some of the states, the state university played a part of some importance in the formation of a state-wide political elite. (I think particularly of the University of Wisconsin and, with less certainty, of the University of Minnesota.) Harvard University has never been in a position in national political life in the United States comparable to that of Oxford or the French *grandes écoles*. It has, from time to time, appeared to be on the verge of that situation, for example, during the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and John Kennedy. Many of its members would have liked it to be such, and, recently, the Kennedy School of Public Affairs tries to perform a partial function of an institution which contributes to the formation of a political class through its courses for newly elected members of Congress. Nevertheless, despite aspirations and occasional flickerings, Harvard has not attained that position, and no other American educational institution has come even that near.

The United States is too large and, despite the recent aggrandizement of the national center, it is still too decentralized in its interests, functions, and loyalties for a political class to emerge. Populism would have resisted it. But even without populism and the diversity of American society, local and regional interests and the local and federal structure of the American governmental system would have prevented it. The local and state political machines did create some of the constitutive elements of a political class, but the weakness, between presidential elections, of the national institutions of the two major parties has also stood in the way of the fusion of these constituents into a national political class.

Insofar as the United States has a political class—and it has one only in a most rudimen-

tary and partial form—it does so through its national legislative bodies. Of these, the Senate is by far the most important in many respects. The United States Senate and the British House of Commons have each claimed or had claimed for them, the standing of “the best club in the world.” A club has its atmosphere and its rules; it has its own distinctive culture which new members must acquire and through which they acquire “the art of politics.” It is, however, another matter as to whether the “best club in the world” can generate and sustain the skill, knowledge, solidarity, and self-confidence necessary for keeping on top of the problems which the demands of the electorate and of the particular interests within it, and their own ideas about the rightful sphere of government, have presented to modern politicians for solution.

The strain on the political culture of the main centers of Western societies is aggravated by the unceasingly critical and demanding scrutiny which the contemporary apparatus of knowledge, on the one side, and demanding and increasingly aggrieved assertiveness of the mass of population on the other, directs toward the political elite.

When Mosca discussed a closed or a partially closed political class he had in mind primarily the reservoir of recruitment and the extent to which that reservoir was open to persons who came from outside the main political families, institutions, and circles. Modern political life under conditions of popular democracy is too open for the generation and maintenance of a political class. Mosca's emphasis on the partial closedness of recruitment as a condition of the existence and continuity of a political class might also have been extended, and it should now be extended to include closedness from external scrutiny.

Benham conceived of the “eye of the public” as “the virtue of the statesman,” but he never conceived of that eye as having such a

depth of penetration, such brightness, and such constancy as the present eye of the public represented in the professional staffs of the mass media of communication. Like many of the critics of the closure of the political classes of the 18th and 19th centuries who wanted a pattern of government more open to the public gaze, he did not imagine how imaginative, how powerful, how detailed, and omnipresent that eye would become.

It would be very difficult for a political elite, nurtured by a combination of open and closed recruitment, to withstand that insistent eye, especially under conditions in which the minds and voices behind that eye demand so much and demand it so insistently and continuously. The invention of sample surveys of the political attitudes of Western societies, the frequency of those surveys, and the specificity of the objects on which they seek to discover the distribution of attitudes mean that political elites have to think unceasingly about whether their measures are popular. Popularity of measures becomes a criterion of the success of a measure, long before it has had a chance to become effective. Effectiveness and popularity are not the same thing, and their divergence renders the formation of a political class in Mosca's sense impossible. A political class in Mosca's sense did not have to be continuously on the alert to its popularity, and since it did not try to do as much as contemporary political elites in societies dominated by collectivistic liberal and social democratic beliefs and demands, it was easier for it to be effective. Neither of these conditions is present today.

Note

1. Albert Thibaudet puts this thesis forward explicitly in *La République des professeurs* (Paris: Grasset, 1927).

MICHAEL USEEM

The Inner Circle

Recent studies of the politics of big business could hardly be more divided on the extent to which the corporate community is socially unified, cognizant of its classwide interests, and prepared for concerted action in the political arena. In a number of original investigations, for instance, G. William Domhoff finds “persuasive evidence for the existence of a socially cohesive national upper class.”¹ These “higher circles,” composed chiefly of corporate executives, primary owners, and their descendants, constitute, in his view, “the governing class in America,” for these businesspeople and their families dominate the top positions of government agencies, the political parties, and the governing boards of nonprofit organizations. Drawing on studies of the U.S., Great Britain, and elsewhere, Ralph Miliband reaches a similar conclusion, finding that “‘elite pluralism’ does not . . . prevent the separate elites in capitalist society from constituting a dominant economic class, possessed of a high degree of cohesion and solidarity, with common interests and common purposes which far transcend their specific differences and disagreements.”²

Yet other analysts have arrived at nearly opposite conclusions. In an extensive review of studies of business, Ivar Berg and Mayer Zald argue that “businessmen are decreasingly a coherent and self-sufficient autonomous elite; increasingly business leaders are

differentiated by their heterogeneous interests and find it difficult to weld themselves into a solidified group.”³ Similarly, Daniel Bell contends that the disintegration of family capitalism in America has thwarted the emergence of a national “ruling class,” and, as a result, “there are relatively few political issues on which the managerial elite is united.”⁴ Leonard Silk and David Vogel, drawing on their observations of private discussions among industrial managers, find that the “enormous size and diversity of corporate enterprise today makes it virtually impossible for an individual group to speak to the public or government with authority on behalf of the entire business community.”⁵

Observers of the British corporate community express equally disparate opinion, though the center of gravity is closer to that of discerning cohesion than disorganization. Drawing on their own study of British business leaders during the past century, Philip Stanworth and Anthony Giddens conclude that “we may correctly speak of the emergence, towards the turn of the century, of a consolidated and unitary ‘upper class’ in industrial Britain.”⁶ More recently, according to John Westergaard and Henrietta Ressler, “the core” of the privileged and powerful is “those who own and those who control capital on a large scale: whether top business executives or rentiers makes no difference in this context. Whatever divergences of interests there may be among them on this score and others, latent as well as manifest, they have a common stake in one overriding cause: to keep the working rule of the society capitalist.”⁷ The solidarity is underpinned by a unique lattice-

work of old school ties, exclusive urban haunts, and aristocratic traditions that are without real counterpart in American life. Thus, "a common background and pattern of socialization, reinforced through intermarriage, club memberships, etc. generated a community feeling among the members of the propertied class," writes another analyst, and "this feeling could be articulated into a class awareness by the most active members of the class."⁸

Yet even if the concept of "the establishment" originated in British attempts to characterize the seamless web at the top that seemed so obvious to many, some observers still discern little in British business on which to pin such a label. Scanning the corporate landscape in the early 1960s, for instance, J. P. Nettl finds that the "business community" is in "a state of remarkable weakness and diffuseness—compared, say, to organized labour or the professions," for British businessmen lack "a firm sense of their distinct identity, and belief in their distinct purpose."⁹ The years since have brought little consolidation, according to Wyn Grant: business "is neither homogeneous in its economic composition nor united on the appropriate strategy and tactics to advance its interests." Thus, "businessmen in Britain are not bound by a strong sense of common political purpose."¹⁰

Scholarly disagreement on this question, not surprisingly, is reflected in the textbooks used in university social-science courses. Every year American undergraduate students enter courses whose main textbook declares that business leaders have "a strong sense of identity as a class and a rather sophisticated understanding of their collective interest on which they tend to act in a collective way."¹¹ But students on other campuses find themselves studying textbooks with entirely different conclusions. They will be taught that the capitalist class has ceased to exist altogether or, at the minimum, that the received wisdom is, at best, agnostic on its degree of cohesion. The required reading in some courses asserts that "the question of whether [the] upper class forms a unified, cohesive, dominant group is

still the subject of unresolved debate."¹² The correct view according to the assigned textbook in still other courses is that "until more data are gathered the question of whether national power is in the control of a power elite or veto group remains moot."¹³ Still other students, especially those enrolled in management courses, are informed that fragmentation rather than cohesion now prevails. "A great deal of evidence," asserts a text for business school instruction, "suggests that our society is leaning toward the pluralistic model" rather than the "power-elite" model. "Few, if any, books are written about an 'establishment' anymore, suggesting that if one did exist it either has disappeared or is not influential enough to worry about."¹⁴ The theory of the "power elite" is, according to another widely used textbook on business and society, "a gross distortion of reality and the conclusions derived from it are largely erroneous."¹⁵

Social theory itself divides along this very line. Both traditional pluralist thought and a neo-Marxist strand sometimes labeled "structuralism" have generally argued that the parochial concerns of individual firms receive far greater expression in the political process than do the general collective concerns of business. Competition among firms, sectoral cleavages, and executives' and directors' primary identification with their own enterprise all inhibit even the formation of classwide awareness, let alone an organizational vehicle for promoting their shared concerns. Business disorganization, it is argued, prevails. Arguments based on pluralism and those on structural Marxism radically diverge in the implications they draw from the presumed disunity. To the pluralists, the corporate elite is far too divided to be any more effective than any other interest group in imposing its views on the government, thus enabling the state to avoid having its prerogatives co-opted by business. But for structural Marxists, it is precisely because of this disorganization of big business that the state can and does (for other reasons) assume the role of protecting the common interests of its major corporations.

Counterposed to both of these theoretical perspectives is an equally familiar thesis, advanced by what are now known as "instrumental" neo-Marxists and by many non-Marxists as well: that the government is more responsive to the outlook of big business than to that of any other sector or class, certainly of labor. According to these theories, this responsiveness is the result, in part, of the social unity and political cohesion of the corporate elite. With such cohesion and coordination, business is able to identify and promote successfully those public policies that advance the general priorities shared by most large companies.¹⁶

Resolution of these opposing visions of the internal organization of the business community is essential if we are to understand how, and with what effect, business enters the political process, or, in Anthony Giddens's more abstract framing, how we are to comprehend "the modes in which . . . economic hegemony is translated into political domination."¹⁷ But the resolution offered here is not one of establishing which of these competing views is more "correct," for either answer would be, as we shall see, incorrect, in their own limited and specific fashions, both descriptions are also partly true. . . .

The Inner Circle

I will argue that a politicized leading edge of the leadership of a number of major corporations has come to play a major role in defining and promoting the shared needs of large corporations in two of the industrial democracies, the United States and the United Kingdom. Rooted in intercorporate networks through shared ownership and directorship of large companies in both countries, this politically active group of directors and top managers gives coherence and direction to the politics of business. Most business leaders are not part of what I shall term here the *inner circle*. Their concerns extend little beyond the immediate welfare of their own firms. But those few whose positions make them sensi-

tive to the welfare of a wide range of firms have come to exercise a voice on behalf of the entire business community.

Central members of the inner circle are both top officers of large firms and directors of several other large corporations operating in diverse environments. Though defined by their corporate positions, the members of the inner circle constitute a distinct, semi-autonomous network, one that transcends company, regional, sectoral, and other politically divisive fault lines within the corporate community.

The inner circle is at the forefront of business outreach to government, nonprofit organizations, and the public. Whether it be support for political candidates, consultation with the highest levels of the national administration, public defense of the "free enterprise system," or the governance of foundations and universities, this politically dominant segment of the corporate community assumes a leading role, and corporations whose leadership involves itself in this pan-corporate network assume their own distinct political role as well. Large companies closely allied to the highest circle are more active than other firms in promoting legislation favorable to all big business and in assuming a more visible presence in public affairs, ranging from philanthropy to local community service.

The inner circle has assumed a particularly critical role during the past decade. The 1970s and early 1980s were a period of unprecedented expansion of corporate political activities, whether through direct subvention of candidates, informal lobbying at the highest levels of government, or formal access to governmental decision-making processes through numerous business-dominated panels created to advise government agencies and ministries. This political mobilization of business can be traced to the decline of company profits in both the United States and the United Kingdom and to heightened government regulation in America and labor's challenge of management prerogatives in Britain. As large companies have increasingly sought

to influence the political process, the inner circle has helped direct their activities toward political ends that will yield benefits for all large firms, not just those that are most active. This select group of directors and senior managers has thus added a coherence and effectiveness to the political voice of business, one never before so evident. The rise to power of governments attentive to the voice of business, if not always responsive to its specific proposals, is, in part, a consequence of the mobilization of corporate politics during the past decade and the inner circle's channeling of this new energy into a range of organizational vehicles.

Both the emergence of the inner circle and the degree to which it has come to define the political interests of the entire business community are unforeseen consequences of a far-reaching transformation of the ways in which large corporations and the business communities are organized. In the early years of the rise of the modern corporation, self-made entrepreneurs were at the organizational helm, ownership was shared with, but limited to, kin and descendants, and the owning families merged into a distinct, intermarrying upper class. It was the era of family capitalism, and upper-class concerns critically informed business political activity. In time, however, family capitalism was slowly but inexorably pushed aside by the emergence of a new pattern of corporate organization and control—managerial capitalism. Business political activity increasingly came to address corporate, rather than upper-class, agendas, as the corporation itself became the central organizing force. If family capitalism was at its height at the end of the nineteenth century and managerial capitalism was ascendant during the first half of the twentieth, both are now yielding in this era to institutional capitalism, a development dating to the postwar period and rapidly gaining momentum in recent decades. In the era of institutional capitalism, it is not only family or individual corporate interests that serve to define how business political activity is organized and expressed but rather concerns much more classwide—the shared interests and

needs of all large corporations taken together. Increasingly a consciousness of a generalized corporate outlook shapes the content of corporate political action.

The large business communities in Britain and America have thus evolved, for the most part without conscious design, the means for aggregating and promoting their common interests. While government agencies add further coherence to the policies sought, the inner circle now serves to fashion, albeit in still highly imperfect ways, the main elements of public policies suited to serve the broader requirements of the entire corporate community. This conclusion is not in accord with predominant thinking, nor with those theories about business-government relations more fully described below. Of these, most fall into one of two opposing schools. According to the first, corporate leadership is presumed to be either too-little organized to act politically at all, or, as the second goes, so fully organized that it acts as a single, politically unified bloc. This [essay] rejects both schools of thought and argues for a new perception, a new theory of the nature of the politics of big business in contemporary British and American society.

A new conception of the business firm is also needed. Most corporate business decisions are viewed, correctly, as a product of the internal logic of the firm. Yet when decisions are made on the allocation of company monies to political candidates, the direction of its philanthropic activities, and other forms of political outreach, an external logic is important as well. This is the logic of classwide benefits, involving considerations that lead to company decisions beneficial to all large companies, even when there is no discernible, direct gain for the individual firm. The inner circle is the carrier of this extracorporate logic; the strategic presence of its members in the executive suites of major companies allows it to shape corporate actions to serve the entire corporate community.

The power of the transcorporate network even extends into the selection of company senior managers. In considering an executive

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for promotion to the uppermost positions in a firm, the manager's reputation within the firm remains of paramount importance, but it is not the only reputation that has come to count. The executive's standing within the broader corporate community—as cultivated through successful service on the boards of several other large companies, leadership in major business associations, and the assumption of civic and public responsibilities—is increasingly a factor. Acceptance by the inner circle has thus become almost a prerequisite for accession to the stewardship of many of the nation's largest corporations. Our traditional conception of the firm must accordingly be modified. No longer is the large company an entirely independent actor, striving for its own profitable success without regard for how its actions are affecting the profitability of others. While it retains its independence in many areas of decision-making, its autonomy is compromised. And this is especially true for company actions targeted at improving the political environment. Through the agency of the inner circle, large corporations are now subject to a new form of collective political discipline by their corporate brethren....

Principles of Social Organization

The organization is simultaneously structured by a number of distinct principles, of which three are of overriding importance.¹⁸ Each contains a fundamentally different implication for the ways in which business enters the political arena.

The *upper-class principle* asserts that the first and foremost defining element is a social network of established wealthy families, sharing a distinct culture, occupying a common social status, and unified through intermarriage and common experience in exclusive settings, ranging from boarding schools to private clubs. This principle is the point of departure for virtually all analyses of the British "establishment," or the group that has sometimes been more termed "the great and

the good."¹⁹ Yet the lesser visibility and heterogeneity of an American "establishment" has not discouraged scholars from treating the U.S. circles in terms analogous to those applied to the British upper class. This is evident, for instance, in E. Digby Baltzell's studies of the national and metropolitan "business aristocracies"; in G. William Domhoff's inquiries into America's "upper-social class"; in Randall Collins's treatment of the preeminence of upper-class cultural dominance in America; and in Leonard and Mark Silk's study of what they have simply called "the American establishment."²⁰

Many, if not most members of the upper class also occupy positions in or around large companies. But from the standpoint of this principle, these corporate locations are useful but not defining elements. Individuals are primarily situated instead according to a mixture of such factors as family reputation, kinship connections, academic pedigree, social prominence, and patrician bearing. As the upper class enters politics, this principle supports the conclusions that its main objectives would be to preserve the social boundaries of the upper class, its intergenerational transmission of its position, and the privately held wealth on which its privileged station resides. Control of the large corporation is only one means to this end, though in the U.S. it has emerged as the single most important means. Thus, one "of the functions of upper class solidarity," writes Baltzell, "is the retention, within a primary group of families, of the final decision-making positions within the social structure. As of the first half of the twentieth century in America, the final decisions affecting the goals of the social structure have been made primarily by members of the financial and business community."²¹

A parallel movement into British industry is suggested by other analysts. "Without stigma," writes one observer, "peers, baronets, knights and country squires [accepted] directorships in the City, in banks, large companies and even in the nationalized industries." But the entry into commerce, necessitated by political and financial reality, was not at the

price of assimilation, it is argued, for the upper class moved to rule business with the same self-confident sense of special mission and the empire. Aristocratic identity ran far too deep to permit even capitalist subversion of traditional values: "Hereditarily, family connections, going to the same schools, belonging to the same clubs, the same social circle, going to the same parties, such were the conditions that enabled 'the charmed circle' to survive all change, unscathed, whether economic, political, religious or cultural."²² Business enterprise is simply the newest means for preserving upper-class station, and, as such, is largely subordinated to that project.

The corporate principle of organization suggests by contrast that the primary defining element is the corporation itself. Location is determined not by patrician lineage, but by the individual's responsibilities in the firm and the firm's position in the economy. Coordinates for the latter include such standard dimensions as company size, market power, sector, organizational complexity, source of control, financial performance, and the like. Upper-class allegiances are largely incidental to this definition of location, for the manager is locked into corporate-determined priorities no matter what family loyalties may still be maintained. This is the point of departure, of course, for most journalists covering business, corporate self-imagery, and analysts working within the traditional organizational behavior paradigm.²³ Not only are upper-class commitments viewed as largely incidental, but loyalties to the corporate elite as a whole are taken to be faint by comparison with the manager's single-minded drive to advance the interests of his own firm ahead of those of his competitors. By implication, corporate leaders enter politics primarily to promote conditions favorable to the profitability of their own corporations. Policies designed to preserve upper-class station or the long-term collective interests of all large companies receive weak articulation at best. Capitalist competition and its political spillover might be described as

one of the few remaining illustrations of Hobbes's infamous state of a war of all against all.

The *classwide principle* resides on still different premises about the main elements defining the social organization of the corporate community. In this framework, location is primarily determined by position in a set of interrelated, quasiautonomous networks encompassing virtually all large corporations. Acquaintanceship circles, interlocking directorates, webs of interfirm ownership, and major business associations are among the central strands of these networks. Entry into the transcorporate networks is contingent on successfully reaching the executive suite of some large company, and it is further facilitated by old school ties and kindred signs of a proper breeding. But corporate credentials and upper-class origins are here subordinated to a distinct logic of classwide organization....

Upper-class, corporate, and classwide principles of social organization distinctively shape the basic thrust of business political activity. Thus, their relative importance is of fundamental interest for comprehending contemporary corporate activity—from the orchestration of public opinion on behalf of "reindustrialization" to renewed assaults on organized labor and government regulation. The underlying theme of the present analysis is that the relative balance long ago shifted in the U.S. from upper-class to corporate principles, and that American business is currently undergoing still another transformation, this time from corporate to classwide principles of organization. By the middle of this century, family capitalism had largely given way to managerial capitalism, and in recent decades managerial capitalism itself has been giving way to institutional capitalism, bringing us into an era in which classwide principles are increasingly dominant. In the U.K., the corporate principle never quite so fully eclipsed the upper-class principle, but both logics are now yielding there as well to the rise of classwide organization within the business community. This transformation has profound implica-

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tions for the power and ideology of big business in both countries....

The Power Elite

Business, military, and the government—these were the three pillars of C. Wright Mills's famous American "power elite."²⁴ Since publication of this classic study in 1956, several generations of university students have been required to master its elements, even as, or perhaps because, they were soon themselves to become part of one of the three pillars. As contested as it was, Mills's thesis was assimilated into the shared perception of most educated circles, a touchstone for informed conversation about how our society governs itself, if not proven fact. In opening an article profiling the chief executives of the largest U.S. corporations some two decades after *The Power Elite* first appeared, *Fortune* magazine could still frame a question whose reference most readers were certain to comprehend: "Is [the chief executive], as often supposed outside the business world, an aristocrat of what C. Wright Mills called the Power Elite?"²⁵

Less remembered than the general thesis, but more useful for understanding corporate politics, is Mills's prescient insight regarding why business had become a pillar of the establishment. American capitalism, he observed, has been marked by continuously increasing centralization and concentration. This process, in Mills's view, had led to the emergence of a new breed of corporate executives committed to industry-wide concerns reaching far beyond the interests of their own firms. Moreover, a fraction of these executives took an even broader view of business problems: "They move from the industrial point of interest and outlook to the interests and outlook of the class of all big corporate property as a whole."²⁶

Mills identified two features of business organization as primarily responsible for the change in outlook. First, the personal and family investments of top managers and owners had become dispersed among a number of

firms. As a result, he wrote, "the executives and owners who are in and of and for this propertied class cannot merely push the narrow interests of each property; their interests become engaged by the whole corporate class."²⁷

Second, the emergence of an extensive network of interlocking directorships among the major corporations also meant that a number of managers had assumed responsibility for the prosperity of several corporations, and thus those holding multiple directorships constituted "a more sophisticated executive elite which now possesses a certain autonomy from any specific property interests. Its power is the power . . . of classwide property."²⁸ It is this power that had so well positioned the business elite to serve as a dominant pillar of the American power elite.

Surveying much the same landscape, other analysts have offered kindred hypotheses. Maurice Zeitlin has suggested that centralizing tendencies akin to those discussed by Mills are creating an overarching unity within the business community. Prominent among such tendencies is "the establishment of an effective organizational apparatus of interlocking directorates" cutting across both financial and industrial sectors. Such interlocking directorates may be very important in an effort to maintain the "cohesiveness of the capitalist class and its capacity for common action and unified policies."²⁹ The number of owners and managers holding diversified corporate investments and positions is viewed by both Zeitlin and Mills as a potentially dominant political segment of the business community, one that is increasingly in a position to impose its outlook as it recognizes itself as the national network that it is.

The growing concentration of economic power in this network has been recognized in official circles as well, with equanimity in some, alarm in others. A U.S. congressional study of shared directorships warns, for instance, that "the interlocking management device" could lead to a situation in which "inordinate control over the major part of the U.S. commerce would be concentrated in the

hands of [a] few individuals," creating the possibility that "an 'inner group' would control the destiny of American commerce."³⁰

Central to these analyses is the potentially critical political role played by top managers holding multi-firm connections. Executives with ties to several, often disparate, companies necessarily become concerned with the joint welfare of the several companies. Their indirect ties to other firms through the interlocking directorate further enlarges the scope of their concern. "Even more than other large corporation executives," writes one group of analysts, "those who sit at the center of the web of interlocking directorates must have an outlook and executive policies that, while yet serving particular and more narrow interests, conform to the general interests of the corporate community and of the principal owners of capital within it."³¹ The inner circle, in short, constitutes a distinct, politicized business segment, if a segment is defined as a subset of class members sharing a specific social location with partially distinct interests.³² Though members of the inner circle share with other corporate managers a common commitment to enhancing company profits, their heightened sensitivity to business interests more general than those that look solely to support individual company profits also sets them apart....

The business pillar of the establishment is indeed a pillar, but as powerful as those who occupy the pillar's base may be within their own large corporation, they lack the means and incentives for shaping classwide policy. The top of the pillar does not. It has the power to act through its umbrella of intercorporate connections. It has the unity to act by virtue of its shared social cohesion. Its upper-class connections opens doors when it chooses to act. And at its disposal are the business associations when formal representation is needed.

The inner circle is not all powerful, however. Nor is it seamless. The upper-class credentials are partial, the ability to control the associations imperfect. Yet in all these respects it is more prepared to act than are

other individuals or groups of corporate managers and directors. The pluralist and structuralist claims of elite disorganization capture a relative truth when applied to the bulk of the corporate community. The claim of disunity is far less applicable, however, to the inner circle.

Even then the inner circle does not act as a committee of the whole. Political action is taken not by the inner circle, but by organized entities within it. Resources are actually mobilized through (1) the intercorporate and informal networks linking members of the inner circle, and (2) the formal associations over which the inner circle exercises substantial influence. The real unit of classwide corporate politics, then, is not the business elite as a whole, nor even this select stratum of the elite. As blocs, neither business nor the inner circle act on behalf of anything. But within the inner circle are a set of horizontally organized networks and vertically structured organizations that do act. These are the real motors of business political motion. The inner circle, then, refers not just to the company executive directors who constitute its membership, but also to the networks that constitute its internal structure. It is the power of these internal networks that propel members of the inner circle into leadership roles on behalf of the entire corporate community.

Notes

1. Domhoff 1974, p. 109; 1967; 1970; 1972; 1979.
2. Miliband 1969, p. 47.
3. Berg and Zald 1978, p. 137.
4. Bell 1967, pp. 62-63.
5. Silk and Vogel 1976, p. 181.
6. Stanworth and Giddens 1974, p. 100.
7. Westergaard and Resler 1975, p. 346.
8. Scott 1979, pp. 125-26.
9. Neff 1965, p. 23.
10. Grant 1980, p. 146.
11. Szymanski 1978, p. 39.
12. Rothman 1978, p. 89.
13. Duberman 1976, p. 74.
14. Buchholz 1982, pp. 58-59.
15. Steiner and Steiner 1980, p. 9.

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16. Many elements of the several perspectives are summarized in Alford (1975). The less well-known intra-Marxist debate is described within or exemplified by the works of Miliband (1969), O'Connor (1973), Poulantzas (1973), Gold et al. (1975), Jessop (1977), Domhoff (1979), White (1980, 1982), and Skocpol (1980).

17. Giddens 1974, p. xi.

18. Other principles are described in Useem (1980).

19. See, for instance, Cole (1955), pp. 101-23; Gussman (1963); Perrot (1968); Sampson (1971); Johnson (1973); Giddens (1976).

20. Balzell 1958, 1964, 1966, 1979; Domhoff 1967, 1970, 1974, 1979; Collins 1971, 1979; Silk and Silk 1980.

21. Balzell 1966, p. 273.

22. Bedard 1979, pp. 202-4.

23. Westhues (1976) provides a description of this approach.

24. Mills 1956.

25. Burck 1976, p. 173.

26. Mills 1956, p. 121.

27. Mills 1956, p. 121.

28. Mills 1956, p. 122.

29. Zeitlin 1974, p. 1, 112.

30. U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary, 1965; Antitrust Subcommittee, pp. 225-26.

31. Zeitlin et al. 1974, p. 4.

32. A helpful conceptualization of class segments within the business community can be found in Zeitlin et al. (1976).

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GIL EYAL, IVÁN SZELENYI, AND ELEANOR TOWNSELY

Post-Communist Managerialism

The unique feature of making capitalism from the ruins of state socialism in Central Europe is that it is happening without a propertied bourgeoisie. In all other historical sites where modern capitalism has developed, some form of private property and some class of private proprietors—no matter how embryonic, and no matter how different from modern capitalist entrepreneurs—already existed. In the classical case of transition, feudal landlords gradually converted their property into private ownership and began to be recruited into the new *grande bourgeoisie*. Urban artisans and merchants were busily accumulating capital, and were well positioned to transform themselves from the third estate of a feudal order into one of the fractions of the new dominant class in a capitalist mode of production. Post-communism is the first situation where the transition to private property from a collective form of ownership is being attempted. Moreover, this project is being led by the second *Bildungsbürgertum*—by an uneasy alliance between former communist apparatchiks, technocrats, managers and their former left-wing critics, the dissident intellectuals. In short, capitalism is being made by a coalition of propertyless agents, who only yesterday outbid each other in their anticapitalism.

In 1988 two leading sociologists of the region, Jadwiga Staniszkis and Elemér Hankiss, formulated a provocative hypothesis, which [may be termed] the theory of political capitalism.¹ According to Staniszkis and Hankiss, the former communist *nomenklatura* knew by 1988 that the destruction of the old communist order was inevitable. They therefore designed a scheme to convert political office into private wealth, and attempted to transform themselves into a new *grande bourgeoisie*. Indeed, many commentators on the Central European transformation think that this is what happened after 1989: communist officials used political office to convert public goods into private individual wealth—*de facto*, they stole state property and became a 'kleptocracy'....

The second theory we confront is Erzsébet Szalai's theory of 'technocratic revolution', which in some ways, can be viewed as a refinement of the general political capitalism thesis.² Szalai's argument is that the late state-socialist *nomenklatura* was highly fragmented, and that the dynamics of social change should be understood as an intense struggle between the bureaucratic and technocratic fractions of the old ruling estate. In this view, 1989 was a successful revolution of the late state-socialist technocracy against the bureaucratic fraction of the communist ruling estate.... Rather than the *nomenklatura* as a whole grasping power, one of its fractions—the technocratic-managerial elite—appeared to have established itself as the new propertied class....

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In 1990, we launched a survey in six East and Central European countries—Russia,

Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria—to assess the empirical support for [these] forecasts. In 1993, in each country, we interviewed 1,000 people who were members of the 1988 *nomenklatura*, 1,000 people who belonged to the new economic, political, and cultural elites at the time; we also conducted personal life history interviews of 5,000 adults randomly selected from the population. In this chapter we present data from three Central European countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. We ask: what happened to the old *nomenklatura*? What are the social origins of members of the new elite? Is there any evidence for the existence of a propertied bourgeoisie by 1993? If so, how is this new class of domestic proprietors constituted? How much, and what, do they own?

Whatever Happened to the *Nomenklatura*?

Political capitalism theory expects to find that the old communist elite has turned itself into the new propertied bourgeoisie of post-communist society. Its most general proposition is that people who were in *nomenklatura* positions prior to 1989 were able to retain their power and privilege through the post-communist transition by converting their political capital into private economic wealth. Our data cast doubt on these predictions.

Table 1 describes the 1993 post-communist occupational destinations of those individuals who occupied *nomenklatura* positions in 1988 in Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland.³ While there is some variation across the countries, the main finding in the table is one of massive downward mobility among *nomenklatura* members during the first five years of post-communism. Only half of those who occupied *nomenklatura* positions in 1988 were still in positions of authority in 1993, and this includes rather minor positions in low-level management. Indeed, the proportion of former *nomenklatura* members who occupied any authority position in 1993 was

rather low. And—rather surprisingly—in Hungary, which boasted the most advanced market reform policies of the late communist period, the loss of authority positions among former *nomenklatura* members has been even more marked than it has been in the other countries: only 43.1 percent of the Hungarian *nomenklatura* retained jobs in which they have subordinates....

If we dig deeper into the data, the problems with the political capitalism thesis become even more serious. In its original formulation, this theory stated that political office had been used for the accumulation of private wealth in Central Europe. In order to test the accuracy of this statement, we need to disaggregate the '*nomenklatura*' category further. There were very different kinds of *nomenklatura* positions in the communist system, and good reason to think that they were divided among themselves. For this reason, a fair test of political capitalism theory should investigate whether or not any particular component of the *nomenklatura* has successfully negotiated the post-communist transition and become private proprietors. After all, some of our *nomenklatura* members in 1988 were top managers of large firms—thus they were 'technocrats', or what we term the 'economic elite' of the late communist period. In their case, it is not obvious that becoming a manager of a privately owned firm is a conversion of political capital into private wealth—managers and technocrats may simply have used their human capital and their managerial experience to maintain senior economic positions in the post-communist transition. Other former *nomenklatura* members belonged to the 'cultural elite'—they were rectors of universities, Members of the Academies of Sciences, or editors of daily newspapers—and these jobs in the cultural sector were not positions from which one could easily generate vast amounts of private wealth. Thus, political capitalism theory would not necessarily expect former members of the communist cultural elite to be those most able to convert political office into private wealth. Arguably, however, the political

TABLE 1
Occupational Destinations in 1993 of People Who Were in *Nomenklatura* Positions in 1988 by Country

Occupation in 1993	Czech Republic	Hungary	Poland
All in position of authority	51.7	43.1	51.2
High political office	3.0	6.4	9.0
High manager—public	16.2	11.2	13.4
High manager—private	12.8	2.4	9.1
High cultural office	1.1	4.4	7.1
Low-level managers	12.6	13.0	8.6
Entrepreneurs	6.0	5.7	4.0
Professionals	12.2	19.9	13.9
Workers	12.6	5.5	9.5
Retired early (younger than 65)	15.4	19.1	17.2
Other retired and unemployed	8.1	12.6	8.2
All respondents	100% (468)	100% (803)	100% (849)

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

capitalism thesis should hold for members of the 'political elite'. These were people who held positions in the Communist Party apparatus or in the civil service, and of all the members of the *nomenklatura* they were the best placed to use their 'office' to enrich themselves through the mechanism of 'spontaneous privatization'.⁴ With this disaggregation of the *nomenklatura* into its economic, cultural, and political components, we are now in a position to offer a crucial test of Staniszkis's and Hankiss's version of the political capitalism thesis by asking: to what extent has the 'bureaucratic' fraction of the ruling estate—the 'political elite'—benefited economically from the post-communist transition?

Table 2 documents the 1993 occupational destinations of former *nomenklatura* members for each component of the *nomenklatura*: the economic fraction, the cultural fraction, and the political fraction. It shows, first, that the political fraction of the *nomenklatura* was the least successful in weathering the post-communist transition. Only 39.3 percent of the political *nomenklatura* retained positions of authority between 1988 and 1993, compared to 44.2 percent of the cultural elite and 70.7 percent of the economic elite. Second, early retirement was also much

more common among the political fraction (20.9 percent) of the *nomenklatura* than among the economic and cultural fractions (14.7 and 11.1 percent respectively). This suggests that political capital was much less useful than cultural capital, and particularly cultural capital in the form of managerial expertise, for successfully navigating the pitfalls of post-communism. Third, Table 2 suggests that former Communist Party and state officials who comprised the political fraction of the *nomenklatura* in 1988 had less success in entering new private-sector positions than former communist managers. Among the former members of the economic *nomenklatura*, 24.6 percent (5.4 plus 19.2 percent) either owned or managed a private business in 1993, compared to only 9.8 percent (5.8 plus 4.0 percent) of members of the political fraction. These findings indicate that it was more advantageous to be a manager than a party or state official if one wanted to enter the new economic elite of post-communism. Moreover, these findings directly refute arguments by Staniszkis and Hankiss that it was the political fraction of the former communist elite who were best placed to take advantage of post-communist market reforms; rather, we find that members of the economic *nomen-*

TABLE 2
Occupational Destinations in 1993 of People Who Were in Economic, Political, and Cultural Nomenklatura Positions in 1988 in All Three Countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland)

Occupation in 1993	Economic Elite, 1988	Political Elite, 1988	Cultural Elite, 1988
All in position of authority	70.7	39.3	44.2
High political office	1.5	10.8	1.3
High manager—public	33.4	5.9	7.8
High manager—private	19.2	4.0	1.4
High cultural office	0.4	1.8	19.3
Low-level managers	10.8	11.0	11.8
Entrepreneurs	5.4	5.8	2.5
Professionals	4.7	16.9	27.4
Workers	2.2	13.4	3.3
Retired early (younger than 65)	14.7	20.9	11.1
Other retired and unemployed	7.6	9.4	14.1
All respondents	100% (536)	100% (1,186)	100% (398)

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

klatura were much bigger beneficiaries of the post-communist transition than members of the political *nomenklatura*...

Diffuse Property Relations as the Context for Managerial Control

In one respect, however, our findings diverge from Szalai's predictions. Staniszkis and Hankiss anticipated that former communists would use their power to become the new corporate owners of post-communism, while Szalai argued more specifically that the technocratic-managerial elite was the most likely candidate to achieve this aim. Our data suggest that both these predictions miss the mark. Managerial ownership, or the management buy-out of state-owned firms, is not the major story in post-communism. Indeed, the majority of corporate and industrial managers have acquired no business property at all [for details, see Eyal, Szelenyi and Townsley]. Furthermore, fully half of those who own businesses possess stakes not in the firms

they manage, but in small subcontracting firms. Finally, we find that those who own shares in the businesses they manage are likely to be managers of smaller firms, and typically own only a small fraction of the assets of these firms. In other words, the former communist technocracy do not hold ultimate economic decision-making power as owners, as Szalai predicted; rather, they exercise power as experts and managers.

While data available to us on ownership relations in large firms are sketchy and may not be sufficiently representative, the evidence at our disposal supports hypotheses put forward on the basis of ethnographic observations by David Stark and Larry King.⁶ Stark found that ownership in Central European corporations is 'recombinant', that is, it is neither private nor public. King found firms with 'recombinant' property, too, but he also identified a number of alternative strategies of privatization, most of which have not led to ownership by identifiable individuals. Our data on property also document diffuse patterns of ownership in post-communist

Central Europe, and with the exception of foreign-owned firms (which are really significant only in Hungary), it is not easy to tell who the real owners are. Direct or indirect public ownership, institutional cross-ownership, ownership by banks that are owned by the government or state privatization agencies, and self-ownership (firms owning firms, which own them) are all typical. Together, this creates the material base for the substantial autonomy and power exercised by non-property technocrats and managers.

Finally, while the big winners of the post-communist transition are former communist technocrats, we find that they cannot rule by themselves. They have been forced to create a hegemonic power bloc together with the new politicoocracy and the opinion-making intellectual elite, and these two groups are composed largely of former dissident intellectuals.⁷ Immediately following the fall of communism, the new politicoocracy and opinion-making intellectual elite made an attempt to squeeze the former communist technocracy out of power. They soon learned, however, that neither fraction of the intellectual elite could rule alone. During the second post-communist elections, many former dissidents were dropped from the politicoocracy, and the late communist pragmatists joined the new political elite. These are strange bedfellows indeed, who form the 'unholy alliance' of post-communism....

An Outline of a Theory of Managerial Capitalism

On the basis of the analyses presented above [and elsewhere],⁸ we summarize our theory of managerial capitalism in the following six theses.

Thesis 1. Post-communist economies are characterized by *diffuse property relations*. At the present time it is impossible to identify individuals or groups of individuals with sufficient amounts of property who are able to exercise any-

thing even remotely similar to owners' control of economic decision-making.

Thesis 2. Ironically, it was precisely so-called 'privatization' which created these diffuse property relations. Privatization destroyed redistributive control over state firms, but it has not produced identifiable owners (yet).

Thesis 3. The dispersion of property rights is a *universal* phenomenon, but in market capitalist economies with an established propertied bourgeoisie it faces strict limits which do not exist in post-communism. Post-communist managers do not have to contend with a class of powerful capitalist proprietors; consequently, managerial power and decision-making are visible contributions to the prestige and 'distinction' of the new power bloc.

Thesis 4. Given the dispersion of property rights, the central representative of managerial power in Central Europe is not the manager of the industrial firm, but the finance manager. The most powerful people of the post-communist era are bank managers, managers of investment funds, experts at the Ministry of Finance, advisors at the IMF and the World Bank, and experts working for foreign and international financial agencies. In the absence of a class of big private proprietors, the power of finance managers is not a function of how many shares they own in the banks they manage, or in the firms their banks manage. Rather, their power is a form of 'cultural capital'; it is a function of their capacity to appropriate the sacred knowledge of the workings of the world capitalist system.

Thesis 5. Even though Central European managers are not limited by the power of a propertied bourgeoisie, we would emphasize that they do not exercise power in a vacuum. Rather, they occupy a historically distinctive post-communist class context, formed by ongoing

Gradational Status Groupings

► REPUTATION, DEFERENCE, AND PRESTIGE

W. LLOYD WARNER, WITH MARCHIA MEEKER
AND KENNETH ELLS

Social Class in America

Our great state papers, the orations of great men, and the principles and pronouncements of politicians and statesmen tell us of the equality of all men. Each school boy learns and relearns it; but most of us are dependent upon experience and indirect statement to learn about "the wrong side of the tracks," "the Gold Coast and the slums," and "the top and bottom of the social heap." We are proud of those facts of American life that fit the pattern we are taught, but somehow we are often ashamed of those equally important social facts which demonstrate the presence of social class. Consequently, we tend to deny them or, worse, denounce them and by so doing deny their existence and magically make them disappear from consciousness. We use such expressions as "the Century of the Common Man" to insist on our democratic faith; but we know that, ordinarily, for Common Men to exist as a class, un-Common superior and inferior men must also exist. We know that every town or city in the country has its "Country Club set" and that this group usually lives on its Gold Coast, its Main Line, North Shore, or Nob Hill, and is the top of the community's social heap....

Class Among the New England Yankees

Studies of communities in New England clearly demonstrate the presence of a well-defined social-class system.¹ At the top is an

aristocracy of birth and wealth. This is the so-called "old family" class. The people of Yankee City say the families who belong to it have been in the community for a long time—for at least three generations and preferably many generations more than three. "Old family" means not only old to the community but old to the class. Present members of the class were born into it; the families into which they were born can trace their lineage through many generations participating in a way of life characteristic of the upper class back to a generation marking the lowly beginnings out of which their family came. Although the men of this level are occupied gainfully, usually as large merchants, financiers, or in the higher professions, the wealth of the family, inherited from the husbands or the wife's side, and often from both, has been in the family for a long time. Ideally, it should stem from the sea trade when Yankee City's merchants and sea captains made large fortunes, built great Georgian houses on elm-lined Hill Street, and filled their houses and gardens with the proper symbols of their high position. They

became the 400, the Brahmins, the Hill Strutters to whom others looked up; and they, well-mannered or not, looked down on the rest. They counted themselves, and were so counted, equals of similar levels in Salem, Boston, Providence, and other New England cities. Their sons and daughters married into the old families from these towns and at times, when family fortune was low or love was great, they married wealthy sons and daughters from the newly rich who occupied the class level below them. This was a happy event for the fathers and mothers of such fortunate young people in the lower half of the upper class, an event well publicized and sometimes not too discreetly bragged about by the parents of the lower-upper-class children, an occasion to be explained by the mothers from the old families in terms of the spiritual demands of romantic love and by their friends as "a good deal and a fair exchange all the way around for everyone concerned."

The new families, the lower level of the upper class, came up through the new industries—shoes, textiles, silverware—and finance. Their fathers were some of the men who established New England's trading and financial dominance throughout America. When New York's Wall Street rose to power, many of them transferred their activities to this new center of dominance. Except that they aspire to old-family status, if not for themselves then for their children, these men and their families have a design for living similar to the old-family group. But they are consciously aware that their money is too new and too recently earned to have the sacrosanct quality of wealth inherited from a long line of ancestors. They know, as do those about them, that, while a certain amount of wealth is necessary, birth and old family are what really matter. Each of them can cite critical cases to prove that particular individuals have no money at all, yet belong to the top class because they have the right lineage and right name. While they recognize the worth and importance of birth, they feel that somehow their family's achievements should be

better rewarded than by a mere second place in relation to those who need do little more than be born and stay alive.

The presence of an old-family class in a community forces the newly rich to wait their turn if they aspire to "higher things." Meanwhile, they must learn how to act, fill their lives with good deeds, spend their money on approved philanthropy, and reduce their arrogance to manageable proportions.

The families of the upper and lower strata of the upper classes are organized into social cliques and exclusive clubs. The men gather fortnightly in dining clubs where they discuss matters that concern them. The women belong to small clubs or to the Garden Club and give their interest to subjects which symbolize their high status and evoke those sentiments necessary in each individual if the class is to maintain itself. Both sexes join philanthropic organizations whose good deeds are an asset to the community and an expression of the dominance and importance of the top class to those socially beneath them. They are the members of the Episcopalian and Unitarian and, occasionally, the Congregational and Presbyterian churches.

Below them are the members of the solid, highly respectable upper-middle class, the people who get things done and provide the active front in civic affairs for the classes above them. They aspire to the classes above and hope their good deeds, civic activities, and high moral principles will somehow be recognized far beyond the usual pat on the back and that they will be invited by those above them into the intimacies of upper-class cliques and exclusive clubs. Such recognition might increase their status and would be likely to make them members of the lower-upper group. The fact that this rarely happens seldom stops members of this level, once activated, from continuing to try. The men tend to be owners of stores and belong to the large proprietor and professional levels. Their incomes average less than those of the lower-upper class, this latter group having a larger income than any other group, including the old-family level.

¹Originally published in 1960. Please see complete source information beginning on page 891.

These three strata, the two upper classes and the upper-middle, constitute the levels above the Common Man. There is a considerable distance socially between them and the mass of the people immediately below them. They comprise three of the six classes present in the community. Although in number of levels they constitute half the community, in population they have no more than a sixth, and sometimes less, of the Common Man's population. The three levels combined include approximately 13 per cent of the total population.

The lower-middle class, the top of the Common Man level, is composed of clerks and other white-collar workers, small tradesmen, and a fraction of skilled workers. Their small houses fill "the side streets" down from Hill Street, where the upper classes and some of the upper-middle live, and are noticeably absent from the better suburbs where the upper-middle concentrate. "Side Streets" is a term often used by those above them to imply an inferior way of life and an inconsequential status. They have accumulated little property but are frequently home owners. Some of the more successful members of ethnic groups, such as the Italians, Irish, French-Canadians, have reached this level. Only a few members of these cultural minorities have gone beyond it; none of them has reached the old-family level.

The old-family class (upper-upper) is smaller in size than the new-family class (lower-upper) below them. It has 1.4 per cent, while the lower-upper class has 1.6 per cent, of the total population. Ten per cent of the population belongs to the upper-middle class, and 28 per cent to the lower-middle level. The upper-lower is the most populous class, with 34 per cent, and the lower-lower has 25 per cent of all the people in the town.

The prospects of the upper-middle-class children for higher education are not as good as those of the classes above. One hundred per cent of the children of the two upper classes take courses in the local high school that prepare them for college, and 88 per cent of the upper-middle do; but only 44 per cent

of the lower-middle take these courses, 28 per cent of the upper-lower, and 26 per cent of the lower-lower. These percentages provide a good index of the position of the lower-middle class, ranking it well below the three upper classes, but placing it well above the upper-lower and the lower-lower.²

The upper-lower class, least differentiated from the adjacent levels and hardest to distinguish in the hierarchy, but clearly present, is composed of the "poor but honest workers" who more often than not are only semi-skilled or unskilled. Their relative place in the hierarchy of class is well portrayed by comparing them with the classes superior to them and with the lower-lower class beneath them in the category of how they spend their money.

A glance at the ranking of the proportion of the incomes of each class spent on ten items (including such things as rent and shelter, food, clothing, and education, among others) shows, for example, that this class ranks second for the percentage of the money spent on food, the lower-lower class being first and the rank order of the other classes following lower-middle according to their place in the social hierarchy. The money spent on rent and shelter by upper-lower class is also second to the lower-lower's first, the other classes' rank order and position in the hierarchy being in exact correspondence. To give a bird's-eye view of the way this class spends its money, the rank of the upper-lower, for the percentage of its budget spent on a number of common and important items, has been placed in parentheses after every item in the list which follows: food (2), rent (2), clothing (4), automobiles (5), taxes (5), medical aid (5), education (4), and amusements (4-5). For the majority of items of expenditure the amount of money spent by this class out of its budget corresponds fairly closely with its place in the class hierarchy, second to the first of the lower-lower class for the major necessities of food and shelter, and ordinarily, but not always, fourth or fifth to the classes above for the items that give an opportunity for cutting down the amounts spent on them. Their feelings about doing the right thing, of being re-

spectable and rearing their children to do better than they have, coupled with the limitations of their income, are well reflected in how they select and reject what can be purchased on the American market.³

The lower-lower class, referred to as "Riverbrookers" or the "low-down Yankees who live in the clam flats," have a "bad reputation" among those who are socially above them. This evaluation includes beliefs that they are lazy, shiftless, and won't work, all opposites of the good middle-class virtues belonging to the essence of the Protestant ethic. They are thought to be improvident and unwilling or unable to save their money for a rainy day and, therefore, often dependent on the philanthropy of the private or public agency and on poor relief. They are sometimes said to "live like animals" because it is believed that their sexual mores are not too exacting and that pre-marital intercourse, post-marital infidelity, and high rates of illegitimacy, sometimes too publicly mixed with incest, characterize their personal and family lives. It is certain that they deserve only part of this reputation. Research shows many of them guilty of no more than being poor and lacking in the desire to get ahead, this latter trait being common among those above them. For these reasons and others, this class is ranked in Yankee City below the level of the Common Man (lower-middle and upper-lower). For most of the indexes of status it ranks sixth and last.

Class in the Democratic Middle West and Far West

Cities large and small in the states west of the Alleghenies sometimes have class systems which do not possess an old-family (upper-upper) class. The period of settlement has not always been sufficient for an old-family level, based on the security of birth and inherited wealth, to entrench itself. Ordinarily, it takes several generations for an old-family class to gain and hold the prestige and power necessary to impress the rest of the community suf-

ficiently with the marks of its "breeding" to be able to confer top status on those born into it. The family, its name, and its lineage must have had time to become identified in the public mind as being above ordinary mortals.

While such identification is necessary for the emergence of an old-family (upper-upper) class and for its establishment, it is also necessary for the community to be large enough for the principles of exclusion to operate. For example, those in the old-family group must be sufficiently numerous for all the varieties of social participation to be possible without the use of new-family members; the family names must be old enough to be easily identified; and above all there should always be present young people of marriageable age to become mates of others of their own class and a sufficient number of children to allow mothers to select playmates and companions of their own class for their children.

When a community in the more recently settled regions of the United States is sufficiently large, when it has grown slowly and at an average rate, the chances are higher that it has an old-family class. If it lacks any one of these factors, including size, social and economic complexity, and steady and normal growth, the old-family class is not likely to develop.

One of the best tests of the presence of an old-family level is to determine whether members of the new-family category admit, perhaps grudgingly and enviously and with hostile derogatory remarks, that the old-family level looks down on them and that it is considered a mark of advancement and prestige by those in the new-family group to move into it and be invited to the homes and social affairs of the old families. When a member of the new-family class says, "We've only been here two generations, but we still aren't old-family," and when he or she goes on to say that "they (old family) consider themselves better than people like us and the poor dopes around here let them get away with it," such evidence indicates that an old-family group is present and able to enforce recognition of its superior position upon its most aggressive

and hostile competitors, the members of the lower-upper, or new-family, class.

When the old-family group is present and its position is not recognized as superordinate to the new families, the two tend to be co-ordinate and view each other as equals. The old-family people adroitly let it be known that their riches are not material possessions alone but are old-family lineage; the new families display their wealth, accent their power, and prepare their children for the development of a future lineage by giving them the proper training at home and later sending them to the "right" schools and marrying them into the "right" families.

Such communities usually have a five-class pyramid, including an upper class, two middle, and two lower classes.⁴ . . .

The communities of the mountain states and Pacific Coast are new, and many of them have changed their economic form from mining to other enterprises; consequently, their class orders are similar to those found in the Middle West. The older and larger far western communities which have had a continuing, solid growth of population which has not destroyed the original group are likely to have the old-family level at the top with the other classes present; the newer and smaller communities and those disturbed by the destruction of their original status structure by large population gains are less likely to have an old-family class reigning above all others. San Francisco is a clear example of the old-family type; Los Angeles, of the more amorphous, less well-organized class structure.

Class in the Deep South

Studies in the Deep South demonstrate that, in the older regions where social changes until recently have been less rapid and less disturbing to the status order, most of the towns above a few thousand population have a six-class system in which an old-family elite is socially dominant.

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For example, in a study of a Mississippi community, a market town for a cotton-growing region around it, Davis and the Gardners found a six-class system.⁵ Perhaps the southern status order is best described by Chart I which gives the names used by the people of the community for each class and succinctly tells how the members of each class regard themselves and the rest of the class order.

The people of the two upper classes make a clear distinction between an old aristocracy and an aristocracy which is not old. There is no doubt that the first is above the other; the upper-middle class views the two upper ones much as the upper classes do themselves but groups them in one level with two divisions, the older level above the other; the lower-middle class separates them but considers them co-ordinate; the bottom two classes, at a greater social distance than the others, group all the levels above the Common Man as "society" and one class. An examination of the terms used by the several classes for the other classes shows that similar principles are operating.

The status system of most communities in the South is further complicated by a color-caste system which orders and systematically controls the relations of those categorized as Negroes and whites.

Although color-caste in America is a separate problem and the present [essay] does not deal with this American status system, it is necessary that we describe it briefly to be sure a clear distinction is made between it and social class. Color-caste is a system of values and behavior which places all people who are thought to be white in a superior position and those who are thought of as black in an inferior status. . . .

The members of the two groups are severely punished by the formal and informal rules of our society if they intermarry, and when they break this rule of "caste endogamy," their children suffer the penalties of our caste-like system by being placed in the lower color caste. Furthermore, unlike class, the rules of this system forbid the members of

CHART I
The social perspectives of the social classes*

Upper-Upper Class		Lower-Upper Class	
UU	"Old aristocracy"	UU	"Old aristocracy"
LU	"Aristocracy," but not "old"	LU	"Aristocracy," but not "old"
UM	"Nice, respectable people"	UM	"Nice, respectable people"
LM	"Good people, but 'nobody'"	LM	"Good people, but 'nobody'"
UL	"Po' whites"	UL	"Po' whites"
LL		LL	
Upper-Middle Class		Lower-Middle Class	
UU	"Old families"	UU	"Old aristocracy"
LU	"Society" but not "old families"	LU	"Broken-down aristocracy" (older)
UM	"People who should be upper class"	UM	"People who think they are somebody"
LM	"People who don't have much money"	LM	"We poor folk"
UL	"No 'count lak"	UL	"People poorer than us"
LL		LL	"No 'count lak"
Upper-Lower Class		Lower-Lower Class	
UU	"Society" or the "folks with money"	UU	"Society" or the "folks with money"
LU	"People who are up because they have a little money"	LU	"Way-high-ups," but not "Society"
UM		UM	
LM	"Poor but honest folk"	LM	"Snobs trying to push up"
UL	"Shiftless people"	UL	"People just as good as anybody"
LL		LL	

*Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), p. 65.

the lower caste from climbing out of it. Their status and that of their children are fixed forever. This is true no matter how much money they have, how great the prestige and power they may accumulate, or how well they have acquired correct manners and proper behavior. There can be no social mobility out of the lower caste into the higher one. (There may, of course, be class mobility within the Negro or white caste.) The rigor of caste rules varies from region to region in the United States.⁶

The Mexicans, Spanish Americans, and Orientals occupy a somewhat different status

from that of the Negro, but many of the characteristics of their social place in America are similar.⁷

The social-class and color-caste hypotheses, inductively established as working principles for understanding American society, were developed in the researches which were reported in the "Yankee City" volumes, *Deep South*, and *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*. Gunnar Myrdal borrowed them, particularly color-caste, and made them known to a large, non-professional American audience.⁸

The Generalities of American Class

It is now time to ask what are the basic characteristics of social status common to the communities of all regions in the United States and, once we have answered this question, to inquire what the variations are among the several systems. Economic factors are significant and important in determining the class position of any family or person, influencing the kind of behavior we find in any class, and contributing their share to the present form of our status system. But, while significant and necessary, the economic factors are not sufficient to predict where a particular family or individual will be or to explain completely the phenomena of social class. Something more than a large income is necessary for high social position. Money must be translated into socially approved behavior and possessions, and they in turn must be translated into intimate participation with, and acceptance by, members of a superior class....

The "right" kind of house, the "right" neighborhood, the "right" furniture, the proper behavior—all are symbols that can ultimately be translated into social acceptance by those who have sufficient money to aspire to higher levels than they presently enjoy.

To belong to a particular level in the social-class system of America means that a family or individual has gained acceptance as an equal by those who belong in the class. The behavior in this class and the participation of those in it must be rated by the rest of the community as being at a particular place in the social scale.

Although our democratic heritage makes us disapprove, our class order helps control a number of important functions. It unequally divides the highly and lowly valued things of our society among the several classes according to their rank. Our marriage rules conform to the rules of class, for the majority of marriages are between people of the same class. No class system, however, is so rigid that it completely prohibits marriages above and below one's own class. Furthermore, an open

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class system such as ours permits a person during his lifetime to move up or down from the level into which he was born. Vertical social mobility for individuals or families is characteristic of all class systems. The principal forms of mobility in this country are through the use of money, education, occupation, talent, skill, philanthropy, sex, and marriage. Although economic mobility is still important, it seems likely now that more people move to higher positions by education than by any other route. We have indicated before this that the mere possession of money is insufficient for gaining and keeping a higher social position. This is equally true of all other forms of mobility. In every case there must be social acceptance.

Class varies from community to community. The new city is less likely than an old one to have a well-organized class order; this is also true for cities whose growth has been rapid as compared with those which have not been disturbed by huge increases in population from other regions or countries or by the rapid displacement of old industries by new ones. The mill town's status hierarchy is more likely to follow the occupational hierarchy of the mill than the levels of evaluated participation found in market towns or those with diversified industries. Suburbs of large metropolises tend to respond to selective factors which reduce the number of classes to one or a very few. They do not represent or express all the cultural factors which make up the social pattern of an ordinary city.

Yet systematic studies from coast to coast, in cities large and small and of many economic types, indicate that, despite the variations and diversity, class levels do exist and that they conform to a particular pattern of organization.

Notes

1. See W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, Vol. I, "Yankee City Series" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941); W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt,

Deference

1. *The Status System of a Modern Community*, Vol. II, "Yankee City Series" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942).
2. See *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, pp. 58-72.
3. The evidence for the statements in this paragraph can be found in *The Social Life of a Modern Community*, pp. 287-300.
4. It is conceivable that in smaller communities there may be only three, or even two, classes present.

5. Allison Davis, Burtleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941). Also read: John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937); Mervin Hill, "The All-Negro Society in Oklahoma" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1936); Harry J. Walker, "Changes in Race Accommodation in a Southern Community" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1945).

EDWARD SHILS

Deference

Into every action of one human being towards another there enters an element of appreciation or derogation of the 'partner' towards whom the action is directed. It enters in varying degrees; some actions contain very little of it, some consist almost entirely of appreciation or derogation, in most actions the appreciative or derogatory elements are mingled with others, such as commanding, coercing, cooperating, purchasing, loving, etc.

Appreciation and derogation are responses to properties of the 'partner', of the role which he is performing, of the categories into

6. See St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1945), for studies of two contrasting caste orders; read the "Methodological Note" by Warner in *Black Metropolis* for an analysis of the difference between the two systems.
7. See W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*, Vol. III, "Yankee City Series" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945). Chapter X discusses the similarities and differences and presents a table of predictability on their probable assimilation and gives the principles governing these phenomena.
8. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1944). For an early publication on color-caste, see W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (September, 1936), 234-37, and "Formal Education and the Social Structure," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, IX (May, 1936), 524-31.

which he is classified or the relationships in which he stands to third persons or categories of persons—against the background of the actor's own image of himself with respect to these properties. This element of appreciation or derogation is different from those responses to the past or anticipated actions of the 'partner' which are commands, acts of obedience, the provision of goods or services, the imposition of injuries such as the withholding or withdrawal of goods and services, and acts of love or hatred.

These acts of appreciation or derogation I shall designate as *deference*. The term *deference* shall refer both to positive or high deference and to negative or low deference or derogation. Ordinarily, when I say that one person defers to another, I shall mean that he is acknowledging that person's worth or dig-

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nity but when I speak of a person's 'deference-position', that might refer either to a high or low deference-position. What I call deference here is sometimes called 'status' by other writers. There is nothing wrong with that designation, except that it has become associated with a conception of the phenomenon which I wish to modify. The term 'deference', with its clear intimation of a person who defers, brings out the aspect which has in my view not been made sufficiently explicit in work on this subject in recent years....

The Bases of Deference

The disposition to defer and the performance of acts of deference are evoked by the perception, in the person or classes of persons perceived, of certain characteristics or properties of their roles or actions. These characteristics or properties I shall call deference-entitling properties or entitlements. While they do not by themselves and automatically arouse judgments of deference, they must be seen or believed to exist for deference to be granted. Deference-entitlements include: occupational role and accomplishment, wealth (including type of wealth), income and the mode of its acquisition, style of life, level of educational attainment, political or corporate power, proximity to persons or roles exercising political or corporate power, kinship connections, ethnicity, performance on behalf of the community or society in relation to external communities or societies, and the possession of 'objective acknowledgments' of deference such as titles or ranks.

It is on the basis of the perception of these entitlements that individuals and classes or more or less anonymous individuals who are believed to possess some constellation of these entitlements are granted deference; it is on the basis of the possession of these properties that they grant deference to themselves and claim it from others. It is on the basis of simultaneous assessments of their own and of others' deference-entitlements that they regulate their conduct towards others and antici-

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pate the deferential (or derogatory) responses of others.

Why should these properties be singled out as pertinent to deference? What is it about them which renders them deference-relevant? Why are they and not kindness, amiability, humour, manliness, femininity, and other temperamental qualities which are so much appreciated in life, regarded as deference-relevant?

The cognitive maps which human beings form of their world include a map of their society. This map locates the primary or corporate groups of which they are active members and the larger society which includes these groups, but with which they have little active contact. The map which delineates this society entails a sense of membership in that society and a sense of the vital character of that membership. Even though the individual revolts against that society, he cannot completely free himself from his sense of membership in it. The society is not just an ecological fact or an environment; it is thought to possess a vitality which is inherent in it and membership in it confers a certain vitality on those who belong to it. It is a significant cosmos from which members derive some of their significance to themselves and to others. This significance is a charismatic significance; i.e. it signifies the presence and operation of what is thought to be of ultimate and determinative significance.

If we examine each of the deference-relevant properties with reference to this charismatic content, i.e. with reference to the extent to which it tends to have charisma attributed to it, we will see that each of these properties obtains its significance as an entitlement to deference primarily on these grounds.

Occupational role is ordinarily thought of as one of the most significant entitlements to deference. The most esteemed occupations in societies, for which there are survey or impressionistic data, are those which are in their internal structure and in their functions closest to the *centres*. The centres of society are those positions which exercise earthly power and which mediate man's relationship to the

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order of existence—spiritual forces, cosmic powers, values and norms—which legitimates or withholds legitimacy from the earthly powers or which dominates earthly existence. The highest 'authorities' in society—governors, judges, prime ministers and presidents and fundamental scientists—are those whose roles enable them to control society or to penetrate into the ultimate laws and forces which are thought to control the world and human life. Occupational roles are ranked in a sequence which appears approximately to correspond with the extent to which each role possesses these properties. The charismatic content of a given occupational role will vary with the centrality of the corporate body or sector in which it is carried on. The most authoritative role in a peripheral corporate body will carry less charisma than the same type of role in a more centrally located corporate body. The roles which exercise no authority and which are thought to have a minimum of contact with transcendent powers call forth least deference.

Of course, occupational roles and their incumbents are also deferred to on account of certain highly correlated deference-entitling properties such as the income which the practice of the occupation provides, the educational level of its practitioners, the ethnic qualities of its incumbents, etc. Conversely, occupational roles which are ill-remunerated and the incumbents of which have little education and are of derogatory ethnic stocks receive little deference on the grounds of these traits as well as on the grounds of the nature and functions of the occupational role itself. Nonetheless, occupational role is an independent entitlement to deference....

Deference Behaviour

The term *status*, when it is used to refer to deference-position, ordinarily carries with it overtones of the stability, continuity and pervasiveness which are possessed by sex and age. A person who has a given status tends to be thought of as having that status at every

moment of his existence as long as that particular status is not replaced by another status. One of the reasons why I have chosen to use the term 'deference-position' in place of 'status' is that it makes a little more prominent the fact that status is not a substantial property of the person arising automatically from the possession of certain entitlements but is in fact an element in a relationship between the person deferred to and the deferring person. Deference towards another person is an attitude which is manifested in behaviour.

Acts of deference judgments are evaluative classifications of self and other. As classifications they transcend in their reference the things classified. A person who is evaluatively classified by an act of deference on the basis of his occupation is in that classification even when he is not performing his occupational role. The classificatory deference judgment, because it is a generalization, attains some measure of independence from the intermittence of entitlements. It has an intermittence of its own which is not necessarily synchronized with that of the entitlements.

Overt concentrated acts of deference such as greetings and presentations are usually shortlived, i.e. they are performed for relatively short periods and then 'disappear' until the next appropriate occasion. The appropriate occasions for the performance of concentrated acts of deference might be regular in their recurrence, e.g. annually or weekly or even daily, but except for a few 'deference-occupations' they are not performed with the high frequency and density over extended periods in the way in which occupational roles are performed. But does deference consist exclusively of the performance of concentrated deferential actions? Is there a 'deference vacuum' when concentrated deferential actions are not being performed? Where does deference go when it is not being expressed in a grossly tangible action?

To answer this question, it is desirable to examine somewhat more closely the character of attenuated deference actions. There are concentrated, exclusively deferential actions which are nothing but deferential actions just

as there are exclusively power or style of life or occupational actions but in a way different from these others. Occupational actions are substantial; all effort within a given space and time is devoted to their performance. They can be seen clearly by actor and observer as occupational actions; the exercise of authority has many of these features, especially when it is exercised in an authoritative occupational role. Expenditures of money are of shorter duration but they too are clearly definable. The acts of consumption and conviviality which are comprised in a style of life are of longer duration but they too are also clearly defined. On the other hand, level of educational attainment and kinship connection and ethnicity are not actual actions at all, they are classifications in which 'objectively' the classified person is continuously present although once present in the class he does nothing to manifest or affirm.

But deference actions—deferring to self and other, receiving deference from self and other—are actions. They result in and are performed with reference to classifications but they are actions nonetheless. They are not however always massive actions of much duration. They occur moreover mainly at the margin of other types of action. Deference actions performed alone are usually very short-lived; they open a sequence of interaction and they close it. Between beginning and end, deference actions are performed in fusion with non-deferential actions. Throughout the process of interaction they are attenuated in the substance of the relationship in which the performance of tasks appropriate to roles in corporate bodies, to civil roles, to personal relationships, etc., occurs. Deference actions have always been largely components of other actions; they are parts of the pattern of speaking to a colleague, a superior or an inferior about the business at hand in an authoritatively hierarchical corporate body, of speaking about or to a fellow citizen, of acting towards him over a distance (as in an election). In other words, deference actions seldom appear solely as deference actions and those which do are not regarded, especially in the United States,

as a particularly important part of interaction in most situations. Nonetheless, deference is demanded and it is accepted in an attenuated form.

This then is the answer to the question as to where deference goes when it ceases to be concentrated: it survives in attenuation, in a pervasive, intangible form which enters into all sorts of relationships through tone of speech, demeanour, precedence in speaking, frequency and mode of contradiction, etc. . . .

The Distribution of Deference

It has long been characteristic of the study of deference and of the deference-positions (status) which it helps to produce to ascribe to them a distribution similar in important respects to the distribution of entitlements such as occupational roles and power, income, wealth, styles of life, levels of educational attainment, etc. The entitlements are all relatively 'substantial' things which are not matters of opinion but rather 'objective', more or less quantifiable, conditions or attributes and as such capable of being ranged in a univalent and continuous distribution. Every individual has one occupation or another at any given period in time or for a specifiable duration; every individual has—if it could be measured—such and such an average amount of power over a specifiable time period. Every individual has some style of life, certain components of which at least are enduring and observable—and he either possesses them or does not possess them. There are of course cases of persons having two widely different kinds of occupational roles within the same limited time period ('moonlighting'), of persons having widely divergent incomes within a given period, but these and other anomalies can quite easily be resolved by specifiable procedures for the collection of data and for their statistical treatment and presentation.

Present-day sociological notions of deference (status, esteem, prestige, honour, etc.) grew up in association with the 'objective' conception of social stratification. For reasons

of convenience in research and also because of common usage practised a system of classification into 'middle', 'upper', 'lower',² etc., classes, research workers and theorists attempted to construct a composite index which would amalgamate the positions of each individual in a number of distributions (in particular, the distributions of occupational role and education) into some variant of the three-class distribution. The resultant was called 'social-economic status' (sometimes, 'socio-economic status').

The 'subjective' conception of social stratification appreciated the 'opinion'-like character of deference but for reasons of convenience in research procedure and because of the traditional mode of discourse concerning social stratification, the 'subjective factor' itself tended to be 'substantialized' and it too was regarded as capable of being ranged in a univalent distribution.³ Sometimes as in the Edwards classification in the United States or in the Registrar-General's classification in the United Kingdom, this 'subjective factor' impressionistically assessed by the research worker was amalgamated with the 'objective factors' in arriving at a single indicator of 'status'. Status was taken to mean a total status, which included both deference-position and entitlements, constructed by an external observer (not a participant in the system). But this conception has not found acceptance because it is patently unsatisfactory. Deference-position—or esteem, prestige or status—does belong to a different order of events in comparison with events like occupational distribution, income and wealth distribution, etc. It belongs to the realm of values; it is the outcome of evaluative judgments regarding positions in the distributions of 'objective' characteristics.

The improvement of techniques of field work in community studies and sample surveys has rendered it possible to collect data, relatively systematically, about these evaluations and to assign to each person in a small community or to each occupation on a list a single position in a distribution. Research technique has served to obscure a fundamen-

tal conceptual error. As a result, since each person possessed a status (or deference-position), they could be ranged in a single distribution. Such a distribution could occur, however, only under certain conditions. The conditions include (a) an evaluative consensus throughout the society regarding the criteria in accordance with which deference is allocated; (b) cognitive consensus throughout the society regarding the characteristics of each position in each distribution and regarding the shape of the distributions of entitlements; (c) consensus throughout the society regarding the weights to be assigned to the various categories of deference-entitling properties;⁴ (d) equal attention to and equal differentiation by each member of the society of strata which are adjacent to his own and those which are remote from it;⁵ (e) equal salience of deference judgments throughout the society; (f) univalence of all deference judgments.

Were these conditions to obtain, then the distribution of deference-positions in such a society might well have the form which the distributions of 'objective' entitlements possess. There are, however, numerous reasons why the distribution of deference-positions or status does not have this form. Some of these reasons are as follows: (a) Some consensus concerning the criteria for the assessment of entitlements might well exist but like any consensus it is bound to be incomplete. Furthermore criteria are so ambiguously apprehended that any existent consensus actually covers a wide variety of beliefs about the content of the criteria. (b) Cognitive consensus throughout the society regarding the properties of entitlements and the shape of their distributions is rather unlikely because of the widespread and unequal ignorance about such matters as the occupational roles, incomes, educational attainments of individuals and strata. (c) The weighting of the various criteria is not only ambiguous, it is likely to vary from stratum to stratum depending on the deference position of the various strata and their positions on the various distributions; it is likely that each stratum will give a heavier weight to that distribution on which it

stands more highly or on which it has a greater chance of improving its position or protecting it from 'invaders'. (d) The perceptions of one's own stratum or of adjacent strata are usually much more differentiated and refined and involve more subsidiary criteria than is the case in their perceptions of more strata. Thus even if they are compatible with each other there is no identity of the differentiations made by the various strata. (e) Some persons are more sensitive to deference than are others and this difference in the salience of deference occurs among strata as well. Some persons think frequently in terms of deference position, others think less frequently in those terms. Accordingly assessments of other human beings and the self may differ markedly within a given society, among individuals, strata, regions and generations with respect to their tendency to respond deferentially rather than affectionately or matter-of-factly or instrumentally. The arrangement of the members of a society into a stratified distribution as if each of them had a determinate quantity of a homogeneous thing called deference (or status or prestige) does violence to the nature of deference and deference positions; it further obscures in any case sufficiently opaque reality. The possibility of dissensus in each of the component judgments—cognitive and evaluative—which go to make up a deference-judgment can, of course, be covered by the construction of measures which hide the dispersion of opinions. If all inter-individual disagreements are confined to differences in ranking within a given stratum, the procedure would perhaps be acceptable. But, if 80 per cent of a population place certain persons in stratum I and if 20 per cent place them in stratum II, is it meaningful to say that the persons so judged are in stratum I?

The dissensus which results in inter-individually discordant rankings seriously challenges the validity of procedures which construct univalent deference distributions and then disjoin them into strata. This difficulty would exist even if there were agreement about the location of the boundary lines which allegedly

separate one deference stratum from the other. But there is no certainty that there will be consensus on this matter, and the purpose of realistic understanding is not served by assuming that there is such consensus or by constructing measures which impose the appearance of such a consensus on the data. . . .

Deference Systems

Deference systems tend to become territorially dispersed into local systems which are more differentiated to those who participate in them than is the national system. I do not mean to say that the several systems ranging from local to national are in conflict with each other. Indeed they can be quite consensual and the local usually could not be constituted without reference to persons, roles and symbols of the centre. In the various zones and sectors of the periphery where the centre is more remote, the imagery of the centre still enters markedly into the deference system and local differentiations are often simply refined applications of perceptions and evaluations which have the centre as their point of reference. Thus, for example, local deference judgments will make more subtle internal distinctions about occupational role and authority, income and style of life than would judgments made from a distant point either peripheral or central. Still the distinctions will refer to distances from some standard which enjoys its highest fulfilment at the centre. It seems unlikely that centre-blindness can ever be complete in any society.

Nevertheless, the various systems do to some extent have lives of their own. The local deference system is probably more continuously or more frequently in operation than the national system—although as national societies become more integrated and increasingly incorporate with local and regional societies, the national deference system becomes more frequently and more intensely active.

In all societies, the deference system is at its most intense and most continuous at the centre. The high concentrations of power and

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wealth, the elaborateness of the style of life, all testify to this and call it forth. It is at the centre that deference institutions function and this gives an added focus and stimulus to deference behaviour. The centre adds the vividness of a local deference system to the massive deference-evoking powers of centrality. Within each local or regional deference system, there are some persons who are more sensitive than others to the centre and they infuse into the local system some awareness of and sensitivity to the centre.

At some times and at others, individuals whose preoccupations are mainly with the local deference systems—insofar as they are at all concerned with deference—place themselves on the macrosocial deference map. This self-location and the perception that others are also locating themselves is the precondition of a sense of affinity among those who place themselves macro-socially on approximately the same position in the distribution of deference. The placement of others is made of course on the basis of fragmentary evidence about occupational role, style of life, or elements of these and the sense of affinity is loose, the self-location very vague, very intimated and very approximate. In this way

deference (or status) strata are constituted. They have no clear boundaries and membership cannot be certified or specified. It is largely a matter of sensing one's membership and being regarded by others as a member. Those one 'knows' are usually members, and beyond them the domain spreads out indefinitely and anonymously in accordance with vague cognitive stratification maps and an inchoate image of the 'average man'; within each stratum, an 'average man' possesses the proper combination of positions on the distribution of significant deference-entitlements.

Thus the formation of deference-strata is a process of the mutual assimilation of local deference systems into a national deference system. It is through class consciousness that deference-strata are formed.

In the course of its self-constitution a deference stratum also defines in a much vaguer way the other deference strata of its society. It

draws boundary lines but, except for those it draws about itself, the boundaries are matters of minor significance. Boundary lines are of importance only or mainly to those who are affected by the location of the boundary, i.e. those who live close to it on one side or the other. The location of a line of division in the distribution of deference is regarded as important primarily by those who fear that they themselves are in danger of expulsion or who are refused admission to the company of members of a stratum to whom they regard themselves as equal or to whom they wish to be equal and whose company they regard as more desirable than the one to which they would otherwise be confined. The members of any deference stratum are likely to be ignorant about the location of deference stratum boundaries which are remote from them and if they are not ignorant, they are indifferent.

The various deference strata of local deference systems are in contact with each other through occasional face-to-face contacts. They are present in each others' imaginations and this deferential presence enters into all sorts of non-deferential actions of exchange, conflict and authority.

In national deference systems too the different strata are in contact with each other, not very much through face-to-face contact but through their presence in each other's imagination. This presence carries with it the awareness of one's distance from the centre and it entails some acceptance of the centrality of the centre and some acceptance of the greater dignity of the centre. It is an implicit belief that the centre embodies and enacts standards which are important in the assessment of oneself and one's own stratum.

In some sense, the centre is the standard which is derived from the perception, correct or incorrect, of its conduct and bearing. These remote persons and strata which form the centre might be deterred to, or condemned in speech, and the pattern of their conduct, bearing, outlook, etc., might be emulated or avoided. An 'objective existence' is attributed to the rank ordering from centrality to pe-

ripherality of the other strata and within this rank ordering one's own stratum is located. The ontological, non-empirical reality which is attributed to position in the distribution of deference makes it different from 'mere' evaluation and sometimes even antithetical to it.

On a much more earthly level, contacts between deference strata occur and in many forms—particularly through the division of labour and its coordination through the market and within corporate bodies and in the struggle for political power. This does not mean that the strata encounter each other in corporately organized forms⁶ or that, when there is interstratum contact in the encounter of corporate bodies, these bodies include all or most members of their respective strata. Much of this inter-stratum contact takes place through intermediaries who act as agents and who receive a deference which is a response both to their own deference-entitling properties and those of their principals. Those who act on behalf of these corporate bodies do so in a state of belief that they are 'representing' the deference-stratum to which they belong or feel akin.

A society can then have a deference system of relatively self-distinguishing and self-constituting deference strata, with the strata being in various kinds of relationship with each other. Such a situation is entirely compatible with the absence of the type of objective deference distribution which we rejected in the foregoing section. Each of the deference strata possesses in a vague form an image of a society-wide deference distribution but these images cannot be correct in the sense of corresponding to an objective deference distribution, which might or might not actually exist.

Notes

This paper is a further exploration of the theme of my earlier papers 'Charisma, order and status', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 30 (April 1965), pp. 199–213; 'Centre and periphery', in *The Logic of Personal Knowledge: Essays in Hon-*

our of Michael Polanyi (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1961), pp. 117–30; 'The concentration and dispersion of charisma', *World Politics*, vol. XI, 1, pp. 1–19; and 'Metropolis and province in the intellectual community' in N. V. Sovani and V. M. Dandekar (eds.), *Changing India: Essays in Honour of Professor D. R. Cadgil* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961), pp. 275–94.

1. The 'objective' conception concerned itself with the relatively substantial entitlements, the 'subjective' with the 'opinion'-like elements.

2. The prevalence of the trichotomous classification and variations on it is probably of Aristotelian origin. There is no obvious reason why reflection on experience and observation alone should have resulted in three classes. This might well be a case where nature has copied art.

3. It is quite possible that this pattern of thought which emerged in the nineteenth century was deeply influenced by the conception of social class of the nineteenth-century critics of the *ancien régime* and of the bourgeois social order which succeeded it. In the *ancien régime* the most powerful ranks were designated by legally guaranteed titles which entered into the consciousness of their bearers and those who associated with or considered them. These designations were not 'material' or 'objective'. They did not belong to the 'substructure' of society. They were therefore 'subjective' but they were also unambiguous. They could be treated in the same way as 'objective' characteristics. By extension, the same procedure could be applied to the other strata.

4. Where these three conditions exist, there would also exist a consensus between the judgment which a person makes of his own deference-position and the judgments which others render about his position.

5. It also presupposes equal knowledge by all members of the society about all other members.

6. Corporate organizations, membership in which is determined by a sense of affinity of deference positions and of positions in other distributions, seldom enlist the active membership of all the members of the stratum or even of all the male members of the stratum. Those who are not members of the corporate body are not, however, to be regarded as completely devoid of the sense of affinity with other members of their stratum. 'Class consciousness' in this sense is very widespread but it is a long step from this type of 'class consciousness' to the aggressively alienated class consciousness which Marxist doctrine predicted would spread throughout the class of manual workers in industry and Marxist agitation has sought to cultivate.

III / The Structure of Contemporary Stratification

► OCCUPATIONAL HIERARCHIES

PETER M. BLAU AND OTIS DUDLEY DUNCAN,
WITH THE COLLABORATION OF ANDREA TYREE

Measuring the Status of Occupations

Two approaches have dominated the investigations of occupational hierarchy carried out by students of social stratification. One is the effort to develop a socioeconomic classification scheme for occupations. Perhaps the most influential work here was that of the census statistician Alba M. Edwards.¹ His "social-economic grouping" of occupations has been widely used in studies of occupational stratification and mobility. With certain modifications it led to the "major occupation groups" used by the Bureau of the Census since 1940.... To suggest that his grouping supplied a "scale," Edwards contended himself with showing differences in average or typical levels of education and income of the workers included in the several categories:

"Education is a very large factor in the social status of workers, and wage or salary income is a very large factor in their economic status."²

A more recent development is the derivation of scores for *detailed* census occupation titles representing a composite index of edu-

cation and income levels of workers in each such occupation. Priority for this specific technique probably belongs to social scientists in Canada,³ with a similar approach being taken in this country by both a private researcher⁴ and, lately, in official publications of the U. S. Bureau of the Census.⁵

The second approach to occupational stratification is to secure, from samples more or less representative of the general public, ratings of the "general standing" or "prestige" of selected occupations. Such ratings have been shown to be remarkably close to invariant with respect to (a) the composition and size of the sample of raters; (b) the specific instructions or form of the rating scale; (c) the interpretation given by respondents to the notion of "general standing"; and (d) the passage of time.⁶ The high order of reliability and stability evidenced by prestige ratings would commend their use in problems requiring social distance scaling of the occupations pursued by a general sample of the working force, but for one fact: ratings have hitherto been available only for relatively small numbers of occupation titles. Many research workers have resorted to ingenious schemes for splicing *ad hoc* judgments into the series of rated occupations, but no general solution to the problem has been widely accepted.

Work currently in progress at the National Opinion Research Center promises to over-

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come this difficulty by supplying prestige ratings for a comprehensive list of occupations. In the absence of such ratings at the time of the Occupational Changes in a Generation (OCG) survey we fell back on the idea of a socioeconomic index of occupational status. The particular index we used, however, was one designed to give near-optimal reproduction of a set of prestige ratings. A full account of the construction of this index is given elsewhere,⁷ and only a few general points need to be made before presenting some illustrations of the scale values assigned to occupations.

In the derivation of the socioeconomic index of occupational status, prestige ratings obtained from a sizable sample of the U.S. population in 1947 were taken as the criterion. These were available for 45 occupations whose titles closely matched those in the census detailed list. Data in the 1950 Census of Population were converted to two summary measures: per cent of male workers with four years of high school or a higher level of educational attainment, and per cent with incomes of \$3,500 or more in 1949 (both variables being age-standardized). The multiple regression of per cent "excellent" or "good" prestige ratings on the education and income measures was calculated. The multiple correlation, with the 45 occupations as units of observation, came out as .91, implying that five-sixths of the variation in aggregate prestige ratings was taken into account by the combination of the two socioeconomic variables. Using the regression weights obtained in this calculation, all census occupations were assigned scores on the basis of their education and income distributions. Such scores may be interpreted either as estimates of (unknown) prestige ratings or simply as values on a scale of occupational socioeconomic status ("occupational status" for short). The scale is represented by two-digit numbers ranging from 0 to 96. It closely resembles the scales of Blighen, Bogue, and the U.S. Bureau of the Census mentioned earlier, although there are various differences in detail among the four sets of scores.

One of the most serious issues in using any index of occupational status in the study of mobility has to do with the problem of temporal stability. . . . Fortunately, we now have a detailed study of temporal stability in occupational prestige ratings. The results are astonishing to most sociologists who have given the matter only casual thought. A set of ratings obtained as long ago as 1925 is correlated to the extent of .93 with the latest set available, obtained in 1963. The analysis concludes, "There have been no substantial changes in occupational prestige in the United States since 1925."⁸ Less complete evidence is available for the socioeconomic components of our index, but information available in the Censuses of 1940, 1950, and 1960 points to a comparably high order of temporal stability,⁹ despite major changes in the value of the dollar and the generally rising levels of educational attainment. . . .

Two-digit status scores are available for 446 detailed occupation titles. Of these, 270 are specific occupation categories; the remainder are subgroupings, based on industry or class of worker, of 13 general occupation categories. The reader may consult the source publication for the scores of particular occupations of interest.¹⁰ Here we shall only illustrate the variation of the scores by citing illustrative occupations, not always those of the greatest numerical importance (see Table 1).

Table 1 makes it clear that occupations of very different character may have similar status scores. In particular, there is considerable overlap of scores of occupations in distinct major occupation groups. Indeed, only five points separate the lowest occupation in the "professional, technical, and kindred workers" group from the highest among "laborers, except farm and mine." Nevertheless, the major occupation group classification accounts for three-fourths of the variation in scores among detailed occupations. The status scores offer a useful refinement of the coarser classification but not a radically different pattern of grading.

TABLE 1
Occupations Illustrating Various Scores on the Index of Occupational Status*

Score Interval	Title of Occupation (Frequency per 10,000 Males in 1960 Experienced Civilian Labor Force in Parentheses)
90 to 96	Architects (7); dentists (18); chemical engineers (9); lawyers and judges (45); physicians and surgeons (47)
85 to 89	Aeronautical engineers (11); industrial engineers (21); salaried managers, banking and finance (30); self-employed proprietors, banking and finance (5)
80 to 84	College presidents, professors and instructors (31); editors and reporters (14); electrical engineers (40); pharmacists (19); officials, federal public administration and postal service (13); salaried managers, business services (11)
75 to 79	Accountants and auditors (87); chemists (17); veterinarians (3); salaried managers, manufacturing (133); self-employed proprietors, insurance and real estate (9)
70 to 74	Designers (12); teachers (105); store buyers and department heads (40); credit men (8); salaried managers, wholesale trade (41); self-employed proprietors, motor vehicles and accessories retailing (12); stock and bond salesmen (6)
65 to 69	Artists and art teachers (15); draftsmen (45); salaried managers, motor vehicles and accessories retailing (18); self-employed proprietors, apparel and accessories retail stores (8); agents, n.e.c. (29); advertising agents and salesmen (7); salesmen, manufacturing (33); foremen, transportation equipment manufacturing (18)
60 to 64	Librarians (3); sports instructors and officials (12); postmasters (5); salaried managers, construction (31); self-employed proprietors, manufacturing (35); stenographers, typists, and secretaries (18); ticket, station, and express agents (12); real estate agents and brokers (33); salesmen, wholesale trade (106); foremen, machinery manufacturing (28); photocopyers and lithographers (5)
55 to 59	Funeral directors and embalmers (8); railroad conductors (10); self-employed proprietors, wholesale trade (28); electrolyzers and stereotypers (2); foremen, communications, utilities, and sanitary services (12); locomotive engineers (13)
50 to 54	Clergymen (43); musicians and music teachers (19); officials and administrators, local public administration (15); salaried managers, food and dairy products stores (21); self-employed proprietors, construction (50); bookkeepers (39); mail carriers (43); foremen, metal industries (28); toolmakers, and die-makers and setters (41)
45 to 49	Surveyors (19); salaried managers, automobile repair services and garages (4); office machine operators (18); linemen and servicemen, telephone, telegraph and power (60); locomotive firemen (9); airplane mechanics and repairmen (26); stationary engineers (60)
40 to 44	Self-employed proprietors, transportation (8); self-employed proprietors, personal services (19); cashiers (23); clerical and kindred workers, n.e.c. (269); electricians (77); construction foremen (22); motion picture projectionists (4); photographic process workers (9); railroad switchmen (13); policemen and detectives, government (51)

Table 1 probably does not illustrate adequately the variation by industry subclass of such occupation categories as "operatives, not elsewhere classified" and "laborers, not elsewhere classified." Such variation is fairly substantial. It must be understood, however, that particularly at these levels of the census classification scheme the occupation-industry categories represent groups of jobs with quite

heterogeneous specifications, although the groups are thought to be somewhat homogeneous as to the degree of skill and experience required for their performance. No one has yet faced the question of what a study of occupational mobility would look like if all the 20,000 or more detailed titles in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* were coded with-

TABLE 1
(continued)

Score Interval	Title of Occupation (Frequency per 10,000 Males in 1960 Experienced Civilian Labor Force in Parentheses)
35 to 39	Salaried and self-employed managers and proprietors, eating and drinking places (43); salesmen and sales clerks, retail trade (274); bookbinders (3); radio and television repairmen (22); firemen, fire protection (30); policemen and detectives, private (3)
30 to 34	Building managers and superintendents (7); self-employed proprietors, gasoline service stations (32); boilermakers (6); machinists (111); millwrights (15); plumbers and pipe fitters (72); structural metal workers (14); tinmiths, coopersmiths, and sheet metal workers (31); deliverymen and roulemen (35); operators, printing, publishing and allied industries (13); sheriffs and bailiffs (5)
25 to 29	Messengers and office boys (11); newsboys (41); brickmasons, stone-masons, and tile setters (45); mechanics and repairmen, n.e.c. (266); plasterers (12); operatives, drugs and medicine manufacturing (2); ushers, recreation and amusement (2); laborers, petroleum refining (3)
20 to 24	Telegraph messengers (1); shipping and receiving clerks (58); bakers (21); cabinetmakers (15); excavating, grading, and road machine operators (49); railroad and car shop mechanics and repairmen (9); tailors (7); upholsterers (12); bus drivers (38); fitters, grinders, and polishers, metal (33); welders and flame-cutters (81)
15 to 19	Blacksmiths (5); carpenters (202); automobile mechanics and repairmen (153); painters (118); attendants, auto service and parking (81); laundry and dry cleaning operatives (25); truck and tractor drivers (352); stationary firemen (20); operatives, metal industries (103); operatives, wholesale and retail trade (35); barbers (38); bartenders (35); cooks, except private household (47)
10 to 14	Farmers (owners and tenants) (521); shoemakers and repairers, except factory (8); dyers (4); taxicab drivers and chauffeurs (36); attendants, hospital and other institution (24); elevator operators (11); fishermen and oystermen (9); gardeners, except farm, and groundskeepers (46); longshoremen and stevedores (13); laborers, machinery manufacturing (10)
5 to 9	Hucksters and peddlers (5); sawyers (20); weavers, textile (8); operatives, footwear, except rubber, manufacturing (16); janitors and sextons (118); farm laborers, wage workers (241); laborers, blast furnaces, steel works, and rolling mills (28); construction laborers (163)
0 to 4	Coal mine operatives and laborers (31); operatives, yarn, thread and fabric mills (30); porters (33); laborers, saw mills, planing mills, and millwork (21)

*n.e.c. means "not elsewhere classified"

SOURCES: Reiss, *op. cit.*, Table B-1; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960 Census of Population, Final Report, PCT1-1D, Table 201.

The use of occupational status scores carries a theoretical implication. We are assuming, in effect, that the occupation structure is more or less continuously graded in regard to status rather than being a set of discrete status classes. The justification of such an assumption is not difficult. One needs only to look at any tabulation of social and economic characteristics of persons engaged in each specific occupation (whatever the level of refinement in

the system of occupational nomenclature). We discover that the occupations overlap—to a greater or lesser degree, to be sure—in their distributions of income, educational attainment, consumer expenditures, measured intelligence, political orientations, and residential locations (to mention but a few items). One may sometimes find evidence supporting the interpretation that there are "natural breaks" in such distributions. Interpretations of this

kind were advanced [elsewhere]¹¹ in respect to the dividing line between farm and nonfarm and between white-collar and manual occupations. The evidence did not permit the conclusion that such occupation categories are entirely disjoint. The analysis . . . suggests that boundaries may be discerned between the three broad groups, [but] also shows that these are by no means sharp lines without any overlap. If we choose to think of occupational status as exhibiting continuous variation, the appropriate analytical model is one that treats status as a quantitative variable. This point of view has far-reaching implications for the conceptualization of the process of mobility as well as for the analysis and manipulation of data purporting to describe the process.

Notes

1. Alba M. Edwards, *Comparative Occupation Statistics for the United States, 1870 to 1940*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
3. End Charles, *The Changing Size of the Family in Canada*, Census Monograph No. One,

- Eight Census of Canada, 1941, Ottawa: The Kings Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1948; Bernard R. Blisshen, "The Construction and Use of an Occupational Class Scale," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 24 (1958), 519-531.
4. Donald J. Bogue, *Skid Row in American Cities*, Chicago: Community and Family Study Center, University of Chicago, 1963, Chapter 14 and Appendix B.
5. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Methodology and Scores of Socioeconomic Status*, Working Paper, No. 15 (1963); U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Population: 1960," *Current Population Reports*, Series P-23, No. 12 (July 31, 1964).

6. Albert J. Reiss, Jr., *et al.*, *Occupations and Social Status*, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961; Robert W. Hodge, Paul M. Siegel, and Peter H. Rossi, "Occupational Prestige in the United States, 1925-63," *American Journal of Sociology*, 70 (1964), 286-302.
7. Otis Dudley Duncan, "A Socioeconomic Index for All Occupations," in Reiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-138.
8. Hodge, Siegel, and Rossi, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

9. Reiss, *op. cit.*, p. 152. (Work in progress by Hodge and Treiman further supports this point.)
10. Duncan, *op. cit.*, Table B-1, pp. 263-275.
11. Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, *The American Occupational Structure*, New York: The Free Press, 1967, Chapter 2.

DONALD J. TREIMAN

Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspective

In the three decades since World War II there have been some eighty-five studies of occupational prestige conducted in more than sixty countries throughout the world, ranging from highly industrialized places such as the U.S. to traditional societies such as India, Thailand, Nigeria, and New Guinea. Although these studies vary somewhat in their specific details, they all utilize the same basic procedure: a sample of the population is asked to rate or rank a set of occupational titles with respect to their prestige or social standing. These ratings are then aggregated into mean scores (or other measures of central tendency) and the scores are treated as indicators of the relative prestige of the evaluated occupations.

A remarkable feature of these studies is that they yield the same results regardless of the exact wording of the questionnaire. It does not matter whether respondents are asked about the "prestige" or "social standing" or "respect" accorded certain occupations, or whether they are asked to rate occupations on a scale or to rank them in any other way. The results are the same. A second striking feature is that the educated and uneducated, the rich and poor, the urban and rural, the old and

young, all on the average have the same perceptions of the prestige hierarchy. There is no systematic subgroup variation in the relative ratings of jobs. This is of considerable importance since it allows us to make use of data drawn from rather poor samples of the population—for example, students, members of voluntary organizations, representatives of special subcultures—without fear that if we had a different sample we would get different answers. The third noteworthy feature is that although the distribution of the labor force in various occupations varies substantially from place to place, the same sorts of occupations tend to exist everywhere. Even if there are not many airplane pilots or professors in a given country, there tend to be at least a few of them and the population at large knows what these jobs are. In general, the organization of work into specific jobs is amazingly uniform across societies. Pretty much everywhere there are distinctions between weavers and tailors, and between carpenters, painters, and plumbers. And the uniformity in occupations across societies is reflected in the uniformity of occupational titles appearing in prestige studies. As a result, matching occupational titles across countries is a less onerous task than might be expected.

These three features, uniform results regardless of measurement procedures, minimal subgroup variations, and similarity of occupational titles, make possible a systematic comparison of occupational prestige hierarchies among countries. The basic procedure is to match titles across countries, e.g., "physi-

cian" in the U.S. with "doctor" in Australia, "médecin" in Mauritania, "medico" in Argentina, "laege" in Denmark, and then to compute a product moment correlation between the prestige scores for all matching titles for each pair of countries. The correlation coefficients thus generated can be taken as measures of the similarity of prestige evaluations between each pair of countries. The fundamental conclusion from such computations is that there is substantial uniformity in occupational evaluations throughout the world: the average intercorrelation between pairs of countries is .81.¹ As such numbers go, it is extremely high and fully justifies treatment of the prestige hierarchy in any given country as reflecting, in large part, a single worldwide occupational prestige hierarchy. On the basis of this result, and in view of the need for a standard occupational scaling procedure, it seemed desirable to attempt to construct a standard occupational prestige scale which could be applied to any country.

In order to match occupational titles across countries, it was necessary to devise a comprehensive occupational classification scheme. To do this, I took advantage of an already existing scheme: the *International Standard Classification of Occupations*, Revised Edition (ISCO).² This classification is a "nested" scheme which clusters occupations into nine major groups, eighty-three minor groups, 284 unit groups, and 1,506 specific occupations. It was developed by the International Labour Office as a guide for national census offices to encourage the comparability of occupational statistics. Many foreign census bureaus do, in fact, utilize the ISCO scheme and do publish occupational statistics according to its guidelines.

However, since the 1,506 ISCO occupational categories did not correspond very well to the occupational titles for which I had prestige ratings, I followed the ISCO scheme (with minor variations) down to the unit group level and then, within this level, made distinctions among specific occupations when they appeared warranted by my prestige data. The

resulting classification contains 509 distinct occupational titles.

To derive generic prestige scores for each of these occupations, I converted all the data to a standard metric and then simply averaged scores across all countries in which a given title appeared. Scores for higher levels of aggregation (unit groups, minor groups, and major groups) were derived by various averaging procedures.³

How good is the prestige scale created by this procedure? The answer is—very good. Evidence for contemporary societies is extremely convincing. The average correlation of the new Standard Scale with the reported prestige hierarchies of fifty-five countries is .91 and only seven of the correlations are less than .87. Thus the Standard Scale is, on the average, the best available predictor of the prestige of occupations in any contemporary society.⁴

A Theory of the Determinants of Prestige

Analysis of the universally shared occupational prestige hierarchy suggests that high prestige is allocated to those occupations which require a high degree of skill or which entail authority over other individuals or control over capital. Moreover, the nature of occupational specialization is such that specific occupations are relatively invariant in these characteristics across time and space. As a result, the prestige of specific occupations is relatively invariant as well. In fact, it is so uniform that a single occupational prestige scale will capture the basic features of the occupational hierarchy of any society.

Specialization of functions into distinct occupational roles necessarily results in inequalities among occupations with respect to skill, authority, and control over capital. Some occupations, by their very definitions, require specific skills. For example, literacy is required of clerks because one cannot be a clerk if one is illiterate. Similarly, some occupations

require control over capital or authority over other individuals as inherent definitions of their functions. For instance, a managerial job is one which involves "planning, direction, control, and co-ordination";⁵ otherwise, it is not a managerial job but something else. Examples of these inherent inequalities can be located throughout the prestige hierarchy.

Skill, authority, and economic control are singled out as the basic resources which differentiate occupations because these are the fundamental aspects of power—they provide the crucial means to the achievement of desired goals. But the more powerful an occupation, the more important it is that it be performed well, since the consequences of competent or incompetent performances are more telling for such occupations. For example, if a garbage collector does his job poorly, little is lost; but if a surgeon is incompetent, a life can be lost. Or, similarly, if a chain store manager makes a poor business decision it may cost a firm a few hundred or at the most a few thousand dollars; but a poor decision on the part of a major executive can run into millions. Consequently, the more powerful an occupation, the greater the incentive to attract competent personnel to it. And since the basic mechanism for inducing people to perform tasks is to reward them, it follows that the most powerful positions will also be the most highly rewarded.

Other factors do enter into the determination of rewards, so that the relationship between power and privilege is not perfect. Some functions are in greater demand than others, depending upon the needs of society at any particular time. For example, in a hunting and gathering society, hunting is in greater demand than farming and thus hunting is more highly rewarded. And in a commercial economy, law is of great importance and therefore highly rewarded. But these differences are relatively minor compared to the differences in occupational requisites and perquisites which are inherent in the definitions of jobs and therefore stable across time and space.

Not only is the relative power and privilege of occupations essentially similar across soci-

eties, but so is the prestige accorded them, for prestige is granted in recognition of power and privilege. Prestige is the metric of "moral worth," and the moral worth of positions reflects their control over socially valued resources and rewards, that is, their power and privilege.⁶ Since occupations are differentiated with respect to power, they will in turn be differentiated with respect to privilege and prestige. Thus, if this theory of prestige determinants is correct, these attributes of occupations will be highly correlated across societies.⁷ In particular, skill level, authority, economic power, wealth, income, and prestige will be highly intercorrelated with one another and will be highly correlated across countries.

In my work on occupational prestige in contemporary societies, I amassed data on the education levels of occupations for fifteen nations (as a surrogate measure for "skill") and on income levels of occupations for eleven countries; no comparable measures of authority or control of capital were available. These data indicate a striking uniformity in occupational hierarchies. Like occupational prestige evaluations, occupational variations in education and in income proved to be highly similar from society to society. When measures of the average level of schooling of incumbents of each occupation were computed for the U.S., Argentina, Canada, West Germany, Ghana, Great Britain, India, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Taiwan, the U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, and Zambia and these measures were intercorrelated, the average intercorrelation was .76, which is almost as high as the average prestige intercorrelation reported above (.81). And when measures of the average income of incumbents of each occupation were computed for the U.S., Canada, Ceylon, Costa Rica, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Surinam, Sweden, Taiwan, and Yugoslavia and these measures were intercorrelated, the average intercorrelation was .65, which is still a substantial correlation. Moreover, education, income, and prestige levels of occupations were highly correlated within each country: the average correlations were, re-

spectively, .77 between education and income, .72 between education and prestige, and .69 between income and prestige. The average correlations with the Standard Scale were .79 for education and .70 for income.⁸

In short, the available data indicate that in the contemporary world occupational hierarchies are substantially invariant from place to place, even among countries varying widely in level of industrialization. This finding lends considerable empirical support to the theoretical argument outlined above.

Notes

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1. This average correlation was computed over all pairs of countries with at least 10 occupational titles rated in common.

2. International Labour Office (Geneva, 1969).

3. These are described more fully in Donald J. Treiman, *Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspective* (New York, 1976), ch. 8.

4. I have shown that the Standard Scale does a uniformly better job of predicting occupational prestige hierarchies in individual countries than do occupational status scales developed specifically for use in occupational mobility studies in those countries. See Donald J. Treiman, "Problems of Concept and Measurement in the Comparative Study of Occupational Mobility," *Social Science Research*, IV (1975), 183-230.

5. I.L.O., *International Standard Classification*, 95.

6. Cf. Edward Shils, "Deference," in John A. Jackson (ed.), *Social Stratification* (Cambridge, 1968), 104-132.

7. Some readers will recognize the similarity between this theory and that of Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, X (1945), 242-249. The principal difference between the two lies in the claim by Davis and Moore that prestige is granted by society as an inducement to competent people to fill important jobs. My claim is that occupational income may be seen as such an inducement but that prestige must be viewed as a measure of moral worth, that is, of the extent to which an occupation embodies that which is valued by members of society. Since power and privilege are universally valued and since hierarchies of power and privilege are relatively invariant, prestige will also be relatively invariant.

8. The education data typically derive from the population censuses of each of the countries in question. The income data also typically derive from population censuses, but in some cases they are from enterprise censuses. Ordinarily annual income was utilized but in some instances weekly or monthly wage rates were available rather than annual income. In practice, alternative measures of the relative income of occupational groups tend to be highly correlated, despite differences among occupations in part-time or seasonal employment rates. See Treiman, *Occupational Prestige*, ch. 5, Tables 5.1 and 5.2. Data on both income and education levels were available for only five countries: the U.S., Canada, India, Taiwan, and Yugoslavia.

JOHN H. GOLDTHORPE AND KEITH HOPE

Occupational Grading and Occupational Prestige

Introduction

Over the last forty years or so, there has accumulated in the literature of sociology and social psychology a relatively large number (probably several score) of studies in which respondents have been required to grade a selection of occupations in some hierarchical fashion. It has become customary to refer to such studies as being ones of 'occupational prestige'. Indeed, when the matter of occupational prestige is now considered, it is almost invariably in terms of studies of the kind in question. Furthermore, the data provided by these enquiries have come to play an important part both in theoretical discussion and in the conduct of empirical investigation in the general problem-area of social stratification and mobility. Yet, oddly enough, 'occupational prestige' studies have rarely been subjected to critical examination other than from a technical point of view....

The Meaning of Prestige

An appropriate starting point for a more radical appraisal of 'occupational prestige' studies than seems hitherto to have been made is with the concept of 'prestige' itself. In a sociologi-

cal context, we would suggest, prestige can be most usefully understood as referring to a particular form of social advantage and power, associated with the incumbency of a role or membership of a collectivity: specifically, to advantage and power which are of a *symbolic*, rather than of an economic or political nature. That is to say, such advantage and power imply the ability of an actor to exploit—in the pursuit of his goals—*meanings* and *values*, rather than superior material resources or positions of authority or of *force majeure*.

From this conception it follows that a hierarchy of prestige is constituted by intersubjective communication among actors, and must therefore be characterized in attitudinal and relational terms. It cannot be characterized—other than misleadingly—as a distribution in which units have differing amounts of some particular substance or quality. As a provisional statement, a prestige hierarchy might be one in which actors

- (i) *defer* to their superiors—that is, acknowledge by speech or other action their own social inferiority—and seek, or at least appreciate, association with superiors;
- (ii) *accept* their equals as partners, associates etc. in intimate social interaction—entertainment, friendship, courtship, marriage, etc.;
- (iii) *derogate*¹ their inferiors, if only by accepting their deference and avoiding association with them other than where their own superiority is confirmed.

The attributes of roles or collectivities which differentiate actors in respect of their prestige are various. What they have in common is some symbolic significance—some generally recognised meaning—which, in conjunction with prevailing values, constitutes a claim to social superiority or, conversely, some stigma of inferiority. For example, having the role of doctor and working in a hospital or clinic implies having knowledge of, control over and close involvement with matters which are generally regarded as ones of ultimate concern—matters of life and death. Belonging to an aristocratic family and owning a landed estate signifies descent from illustrious forebears and participation in an historically-rooted, distinctive and exclusive way of life. Working as a clerk in a bank evokes such generally valued characteristics as honesty, trustworthiness, discretion and dependability, and again in relation to 'important'—in this case, financial—matters. In all of these cases, then, 'deference-entitlements' (Shils, 1968) exist, and are likely to be honoured at least by some actors in some contexts. In contrast, being, say, a gypsy scrap-metal dealer or a West Indian refuse-collector is likely to mean relatively frequent exposure to derogation, on account both of the symbolic significance of the ethnic memberships in question and of the implied occupational contact with what is spoiled, discarded and dirty.² In other words, prestige positions do not derive directly from the attributes of a role or collectivity 'objectively' considered, but rather from the way in which certain of these attributes are perceived and evaluated in some culturally determined fashion....

Occupational Prestige

Assuming that a conception of prestige consistent with classical analyses is adopted, then the reference of 'occupational prestige' follows from it directly: it is to the chances of deference, acceptance and derogation associated with the incumbency of occupational roles and membership in occupational collec-

tivities. Such prestige will be related to the 'objective' attributes of occupations—their rewards, requisite qualifications, work-tasks, work environments etc.—but only indirectly: only, that is, in so far as these attributes carry symbolic significance of a kind that is likely to be interpreted as indicative of social superiority or inferiority, with corresponding interactional consequences.

We may, therefore, now go on to ask such questions as: (i) whether such a conception of occupational prestige has been that generally held by the authors of conventional occupational prestige studies; (ii) whether the results of such studies provide valid indicators of prestige in the sense in question; (iii) whether the uses to which results have been put have been appropriate ones....

The Interpretation of Occupational Prestige Ratings

It has been regularly remarked that in occupational prestige ratings, as conventionally carried out, both cognitive and evaluative processes are involved. However, precisely what are supposed to be the objects of these processes has rarely been made clear. For example, if it really were occupational prestige in the sense we would favour which was being assessed, then what would have to be cognized (or, rather, recognized) and evaluated would be the symbolic significance of certain features of an occupation with regard to the chances of those engaged in the occupation meeting with deference, acceptance or derogation in their relations with others. If, for instance, the occupational 'stimulus' given were that of 'coal miner', a possible response might be on the lines of

'dirty, degrading work' →
'tough, uncultivated men' →
'likely to be looked down on by most groups'

or, alternatively perhaps

¹Originally published in 1972. Please see complete source information beginning on page 891.

'difficult, dangerous work' →
'able, courageous men' →
'likely to be respected by many groups'

But is this in fact the kind of thing that usually happens? There is little reason to believe so, at least if we are guided by respondents' own accounts of what chiefly influenced their ratings.³ Rather, we would suggest, the operation that most respondents have tended to perform (perhaps in accordance with the principle of least effort) is a far more obvious and simple one: namely, that of rating the occupations on the basis of what they know, or think they know, about a number of objective characteristics, evaluated in terms of what they contribute to the general 'goodness' of a job. In other words—and consistently with their own accounts—respondents in occupational prestige studies have not typically been acting within a distinctively 'prestige' frame of reference at all. The sensitivity to symbolic indications of social superiority and inferiority which this would imply has not usually been evoked by the task of grading set them. Rather, this task has led them to assess occupations only in some far less specific fashion, according to a composite judgment on an assortment of their attributes which might be thought of as more or less desirable.⁴

Such an interpretation of what 'occupational prestige' ratings are actually about would seem, moreover, to fit far better with what is known of the pattern of variation in such ratings than would the idea that they relate to prestige *stricto sensu*. The basic feature of this pattern is that while some considerable amount of disagreement in rating occurs as between *individuals*, differences between the mean ratings of age, sex, regional, occupational and other collectivities are never very great. If one assumes that in making their judgments, respondents more or less consciously (i) consider a number of different occupational attributes which they take as determining how 'good' a job is; (ii) attach some subjective 'weight' to each of these; (iii) for each occupation presented apply their rating 'formula' to what they know about the occu-

pation, and thus (iv) come to some overall assessment of it—then one might well anticipate some appreciable degree of variation in ratings at the individual level. Individuals are likely to differ in their familiarity with particular jobs and in their priorities as regards what makes a job 'good'. However, one would not expect—other than in somewhat special and limited cases⁵—that such differences would be socially structured in any very striking way. Knowledge about the more general characteristics of other than rather esoteric occupations is relatively 'open'; and, again in general terms, the kinds of thing thought of as 'good' in a job are unlikely to give rise to systematic differences in ratings, especially since there is, in any case, a clear tendency for such advantages to go together. To take a particular example—from the NORC data—it is not surprising, given an interpretation of the kind we have proposed, that individuals should quite often disagree about the ratings of building contractor's *vis-à-vis* 'welfare-worker'—nor that, at the same time, in the case of age, sex, regional, occupational or other categories, the former job should invariably have the higher mean rating. (See Reiss 1961, pp. 55-6, 225-8).⁶

On the other hand, if we were to suppose that 'occupational prestige' scores did give a valid indication of a structure of prestige relations, then the degree of consensus that is shown among different social groups would indeed be remarkable, at least in those societies where other research has indicated some notable diversity in value systems and in particular between members of different social strata. For in this case it would not be a matter of evaluative consensus simply on what attributes make a job 'good', but rather on certain symbolic criteria of generalized superiority and inferiority, with all their attitudinal and behavioural implications. As Shils has observed, the conditions necessary for an entirely, or even a largely, 'integrated' prestige order to exist are in fact demanding ones. It would seem, therefore, the safest assumption to make that, within modern industrial societies, such conditions will prevail only locally,

transiently or imperfectly, and thus that social relations expressive of a prestige order will occur only in an intermittent or discontinuous fashion. On the basis of available empirical data, one might suggest that while derogation is still quite widely manifest—as, for example, in the form of differential association or status-group exclusivity—the claim to superiority thus made by one group is not necessarily, or even usually, acknowledged by those regarded as inferior; that is to say, the latter are often not inclined to display deference.⁷ This refusal may be revealed passively—by disregard for the claim to superiority, in that no particular 'respect' is shown, and little concern to reduce social distance from the 'superior' group; or, perhaps, some direct challenge to the claim may be made where real interests are felt to be threatened by it—as, say, by 'exclusivity' in housing areas, use of amenities, etc.

The Uses of Occupational Prestige Ratings

One notable use of the data in question results from the fact that over the last two decades occupational prestige studies have been carried out in a steadily increasing number of countries at different levels of economic development. The opportunity has therefore arisen of making cross-national comparisons which, it has been supposed, can throw light on the relationship between value systems and social structural characteristics and are thus relevant to the thesis of the 'convergent' development of societies as industrialism advances. For example, Inkeles and Rossi (1956), comparing occupational prestige ratings in studies from six industrial societies, showed that a high degree of similarity prevailed. On this basis, they concluded that common structural features of these societies were of greater influence on the evaluation of occupations than were differences in cultural traditions. Subsequently, however, occupational prestige ratings from several countries as yet little industrialized have also been

shown to be broadly in line with the hierarchy found in economically advanced societies—in so far, that is, as comparisons can be made. This result has then led to the modified argument (Hodge, Treiman and Rossi, 1966) that what is chiefly reflected in prestige ratings is the set of structural features shared by national societies of any degree of complexity—'specialized institutions to carry out political, religious, and economic functions, and to provide for the health, education and welfare of the population . . .'. Occupations at the top of these institutional structures, it is suggested, are highly regarded because of their functional importance and also because they are those which require the most training and ability and those to which the highest rewards accrue. Thus, 'any major prestige inversion would produce a great deal of inconsistency in the stratification system' (p. 310).

In this way, therefore, it is clearly indicated how occupational prestige data may further be employed in support of a general theory of social stratification of a structural-functional type. Such an application has in fact been made quite explicitly in the work of Barber (1957). Following a Parsonian approach, Barber takes the results of the Inkeles-Rossi study as the main empirical foundation for the view that the factual order of stratification in modern societies tends in the main to be consistent with the dominant normative order. Inequality in social rewards and relationships, it is held, is structured in accordance with functional 'needs', and this arrangement is then seen as receiving general moral support: 'functionally important roles are congruent with or partly determine a system of values' (p. 6).

Clearly, for occupational prestige data to be used in the ways in question, it is necessary to assume that such data reflect prevailing values and norms of a particular kind: ones pertaining to the 'goodness'—in the sense of the 'fairness' or 'justice'—of the existing distribution of social power and advantage. However, in view of our previous discussion, it is difficult to regard such an assumption as a valid one or indeed to understand why it ever should

have been made. Even if it were to be supposed that data on publicly recognized occupational hierarchies do indicate a prestige order in something approximating the classical conception, it still then would not follow that they can provide evidence that the objective reality of stratification is morally legitimated. For while prestige relations do depend upon a certain range of shared understandings, consensus on principles of distributive justice is not necessarily involved.⁸ Moreover, as we have argued, by far the most plausible interpretation is that occupational prestige ratings reflect prevailing ideas at a much lower level of abstraction: that is, ideas of what is 'good' in the sense simply of what is generally found desirable in an occupation. And if *this* is the case, then the consensus that exists is obviously of no very great moral or legitimacy significance at all. Apart from quite unsurprising agreement on such matters as, for example, that high pay is preferable to low pay, more security to less, qualifications to lack of qualifications, etc., the consensus that is implied is of a cognitive and perceptual kind, not an evaluative one. The fact that, on average, all groups and strata agree that certain occupations should be rated higher than others tells one nothing at all about whether the occupational hierarchy that is thus represented is regarded as that which *ought* to exist. And in so far as the publicly recognized hierarchy corresponds to that proposed by structural-functional theorists, this would seem to indicate no more than that broadly similar sets of rating criteria are being applied: i.e. occupational rewards and occupational requirements.⁹

Thus, as regards the utilization of occupational prestige data in the advancement of stratification theory, our view must be that this has been fundamentally misguided. What, now, of their application in research? Primarily, of course, occupational prestige ratings have been used in studies of social mobility, in which they have constituted the hierarchy—scalar or categorical—in the context of which mobility has been assessed. Assumptions about what prestige ratings rate are thus

necessarily involved in the interpretation of mobility patterns, and the crucial issues that arise are once more ones of 'validity'.

Concerning the question: What, in mobility studies, may occupational prestige ratings be taken to indicate?—three main positions can be distinguished. These can be usefully considered in turn, together with their implications and problems.

(i) Ratings may be taken—as, for example, by Svalastoga (1959)—as indicative of the position of an occupation within a prestige order; that is, as indicative of the chances of those holding that occupation encountering deference, acceptance or derogation in their social lives. In this case, therefore, mobility between different occupational levels, other than of a marginal kind, may be interpreted as involving the probability of subcultural and relational discontinuity. While such a perspective does not necessarily mean that society is seen as divided up into more or less discrete strata, it does imply that social mobility, as measured, is not just a matter of individuals gaining more qualifications, more income, more interesting work etc., but further of their experiencing changes in their life-styles and patterns of association. The difficulty is, however, as already remarked, that the validity of occupational prestige ratings construed in this way has never been established, and that there are indeed strong grounds for doubting their validity. In other words, we are simply not in a position to infer, with any acceptable degree of precision and certitude, what are the typical consequences of mobility, as measured via occupational prestige ratings, for the actual social experience of those deemed to be mobile.

(ii) Prestige ratings may be taken as indicative of the status of occupations in the generic sense—that is, as being in effect comparable with composite measures of 'socio-economic' status, derived from data on income, education, housing, possessions etc. Justification for this position is twofold: first, to [quote] the observation of Reiss (1961), respondents in prestige-rating studies appear 'to emphasize

the relevance of indicators sociologists use to measure socio-economic status . . .'; secondly, as shown by Duncan (1961), it is possible, at least in the American case, to predict prestige ratings fairly accurately from census data on occupational income and education. If then, 'occupational prestige' is understood in the way in question, some reasonable basis may be claimed for interpreting occupationally-measured mobility in terms of movement between grades of occupation differentiated chiefly by their levels of rewards and requirements. At the same time, though, it must be emphasized that in this case no good grounds exist for any interpretation in terms of prestige *stricto sensu*, and, of course, no basis at all for any consideration of how far mobility may be incongruent from one form of stratification to another. Precisely because of the inevitably 'synthetic' nature (Ossowski, 1963) of socio-economic status, as indicated by prestige scores, the analysis of mobility must be strictly unidimensional. These limitations would lead one to suggest, therefore, that if it is accepted that occupational prestige ratings are not valid indicators of a prestige order but are being used simply to stand proxy for socio-economic status, then it would be preferable, where possible, to seek to measure the latter more directly—and without any concern to combine components so that a good 'fit' with prestige scores may be obtained. To discard the notion of prestige altogether would, in this case, mean losing nothing, but the possibility of terminological confusion; and developing separate indices of occupational income, education etc., as well as some composite measure, would permit the analysis of mobility in a multi-dimensional manner. In short, there seems no good argument for basing mobility research on occupational prestige ratings, interpreted as socio-economic status scores, other than where a lack of data on the socio-economic attributes of occupations makes this procedure an unavoidable *pis aller*.

(iii) Prestige ratings may be taken as indicating popular evaluations of the relative 'goodness' of occupations in terms of the en-

tire range of prevailing criteria. In this case, related mobility data are open to interpretation as showing, basically, the chances of individuals entering more or less desirable grades of occupation, given certain grades of origin. While an interpretation of the data on these lines has rarely, if ever, been pursued consistently throughout a mobility study, it is that which, on grounds of validity, could best be defended. First, as we have already argued, grading occupations according to notions of their general 'goodness' is what respondents in occupational prestige studies appear, in the main, to be doing. Secondly, it is in regard to *this* understanding of prestige scores that it would seem most relevant to claim, following Duncan and Artis (1951) and Reiss (1961), that their validity lies in the degree of consensus which emerges, despite the use of quite various criteria of evaluation. The argument that this consensus points to 'the existence of an underlying and agreed upon structure of occupational prestige' is difficult to sustain once it is recognized just what consensus on a prestige order entails. But the idea of a broadly agreed upon ordering of occupations in terms of 'goodness' does, on the evidence in question, receive some clear—and not very surprising—support. Furthermore, if prestige ratings are taken as indicative of an occupational hierarchy of this kind, then the fact that they represent synthetic judgments and cannot be 'disaggregated' is no longer a problem in the analysis of mobility patterns. For if mobility is being interpreted as being simply between grades of occupation of differing desirability in some overall sense, a unidimensional approach would appear the appropriate one. However, it must be added that what would then be a dubious and potentially dangerous step would be to shift from such an interpretation of specifically occupational mobility to one in which conclusions were drawn regarding the stability of status groups, income classes, or social strata in any sense whatsoever; that is, conclusions regarding social mobility as generally understood. In effect, of course, a shift of this nature has been made in most large-scale mobility stud-

ies carried out in the recent past. But while it might reasonably be held that such a manoeuvre is unlikely to be very misleading so far as the 'gross' patterns of social mobility are concerned, the difficulty is (apart from the limitation of unidimensionality) that we have no way of knowing at just *what* point and in *what* ways it might turn out to be quite deceptive. Yet again, the problem of validity recurs.

The general—and rather pessimistic—conclusion to which one is led is, therefore, the following: that to the extent that the meaning of occupational prestige ratings is correctly construed, the less useful they appear to be as a basis for mobility studies which pursue the 'classical' sociological interests of mobility research.

Notes

1. We use 'derogate' in this context following Shils (1968). Were it not that its usual connotations go beyond its strict meaning, 'disparage'—literally 'to make unequal'—might be a preferable term.
2. On 'stigma symbols' as the obverse of 'prestige symbols', see Goffman (1963).
3. See Reiss (1961).
4. As regards the NORC (National Opinion Research Center) study, it is worth recalling what is usually forgotten: that this enquiry, at least in the view of those who devised it, was in fact specifically aimed at finding out what people thought were the best jobs, in the sense of the most desirable. Where 'prestige' and 'standing' are referred to in the initial report on the study, they are obviously equated with desirability. See NORC (1947).
5. E.g. where respondents are rating occupations within their own status or *situs* areas, c.f. Gerstl and Cohen (1964).
6. Our interpretation of the meaning of 'occupational prestige' ratings is also consistent with the fact that certain variations in the task set to respondents appear to make little difference to the results achieved: e.g. whether respondents are asked to rate occupations according to their social prestige, 'social standing', 'social status', 'general desirability' etc: or whether they are asked for their own opinions or what they believe are generally prevailing opinions. It seems reasonable to suppose that if respondents are required to grade occupa-

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tions according to any one criterion which, while rather imprecise, implies a 'better-worse' dimension, they will produce results of the kind in question; and further, that the level of consensus in this respect is such that the distinction between personal and general opinion is of little consequence—provided that there is no suggestion of a normative judgment being required; that is, one in terms of which jobs *ought* to be the best.

7. Cf. for example, Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechhofer and Platt (1969), chapters 4 and 5.

8. In fact, one might suggest the hypothesis that societies of the kind in which an integrated and stable prestige order is to be found will tend to be ones in which the factual order of stratification is not commonly appraised in terms of distributive justice, or indeed envisaged as capable of being in any way substantially different from what it is.

The distinction between the recognition of prestige and the attribution of justice is foreshadowed—as are several other points in the above paragraph—by Gusfield and Schwartz (1963) in a paper that has been curiously neglected by subsequent American writers on occupational grading.

9. It is a well-known problem of the structural-functional theory of stratification that other usable criteria of the functional importance of occupational roles are hard to find: employing the two criteria in question does, of course, introduce a serious degree of circularity into the argument.

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DAVID L. FEATHERMAN AND ROBERT M. HAUSER

Prestige or Socioeconomic Scales in the Study of Occupational Achievement?

At least in the United States and Australia, the processes of allocation to educational and occupational statuses from social origins (i.e., the process of stratification or of status attainment) seem largely socioeconomic in character (Featherman, Jones, and Hauser, 1975). Put another way, inter- and intragenerational movements of men among categories of their own and their parents' educations and occupations more closely follow the dimensions of social space defined by the "socioeconomic" distances among occupation groups than by the "prestige" distances among occupations. Evidence for this interpretation is drawn from parallel results for the United States and Australia in which estimates for the structural equations of "status attainment" models with occupations scaled in units of Duncan's (1961) socioeconomic index (SEI) yield higher coefficients of multiple determination (R^2)

Ossowski, S. (1963). *Class structure in the social consciousness*. Routledge, London.

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than do estimates based on occupations scaled in units of NORC prestige (Siegel, 1971) or of Treiman's (1977) international prestige index. In addition, the canonical structure of generational and career occupational mobility in both societies more nearly approximates a socioeconomic "space," as the canonical weights for occupation categories correlated higher with mean SEI scores for these occupations than with mean Siegel or Treiman scores.

In interpreting these data we suggest that prestige scores for occupations are less valid indicators of the dimensions of occupations pertinent to occupational mobility in industrial societies and of the status attainment processes operating therein than are socioeconomic scores. We reason from evidence for the United States (Reiss, 1961; Siegel, 1971) and Great Britain (Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974) that occupational prestige scores represent a congeries of salient dimensions or occupational characteristics. For example, the British ratings of the "social standing" of occupations are a linear combination (to the extent of 97% of their variance) of four oblique dimensions: standard of living, power and in-

fluence over other people, level of qualifications, and value to society (Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974: 14). Any two pairs of raters produce rankings which are modestly correlated at best ($r = .4$), consistent with the notion that unique variance in prestige gradings is quite high. Conversely, the mean ranks for the same occupations over socially and demographically defined groups correlate in the range of 0.8 and 0.9. This common variance appears to be socioeconomic; that is, over three-quarters of the linear variance in prestige scores is a reflection of the educational and economic properties of the ranked occupations. Thus, while raters in the United States and Britain used many and idiosyncratic features of occupations in assessing their relative social standing, apparently they all were aware of and utilized the socioeconomic "desirability" of titles, to some extent, in reaching their decisions.

The salience of the socioeconomic properties of occupations across persons, groups, and perhaps societies may follow from the rather similar social organization of occupations in functionally similar economic systems (e.g., industrial capitalism). But more to the point of the relative centrality of "prestige" or socioeconomic dimensions to the process of status attainment, we speculate that commonalities in prestige grades and in the responsiveness of these rankings to socioeconomic attributes of occupations may reflect popular awareness of (what further comparative research may show to be) similar processes of status allocation across societies. In at least the cases of Australia and the United States, the socioeconomic model, patterned after the work of Blau and Duncan (1967), yields estimates of effect parameters which are substantially the same. Moreover, log-linear adjustments of mobility matrices for the effects of differential occupation structures (to wit, as provided in the table margins) uncovers largely similar interactions within the tables (to wit, constant patterns of inflow and outflow both between and within generations for both societies).

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Our provisional conclusion is that prestige scores are "error-prone" estimates of the socioeconomic attributes of occupations. Whatever it is that prestige scores scale—and this does not appear to be prestige in the classical sense of detraction/detraction (see Goldthorpe and Hope, 1972)—it is substantively different from socioeconomic status. Yet one is best advised to use a scale for occupations which most accurately captures the features of occupations having force for the social process one is studying. In instances of occupational mobility and related processes of status allocation, socioeconomic dimensions and socioeconomic scores for occupations are the more central, and therefore are preferable over prestige scores.

Notes

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ROBERT W. HODGE

The Measurement of Occupational Status

Since the appearance of Blau and Duncan's monumental inquiry into "The American Occupational Structure" (1967), we have learned a great deal about processes of inter- and intrageneration occupational mobility.

Indeed, there has been a virtual explosion of research on processes of status attainment. Much of this research rests upon the reduction of information about a person's detailed occupational pursuit to a single continuous variable, a transformation typically accomplished by utilizing Duncan's socioeconomic index for All Occupations (Duncan, 1961a) to assign status scores to the occupations held by fathers and sons at various points in their careers (see, for example, Blau and Duncan, 1967; Hauser and Featherman, 1977). Despite the reliance of most inquiries into processes of status attainment on Duncan's SEI scale, there has been little discussion of the properties and characteristics of this index by its users (see, however, Duncan, 1961b, and Featherman and Hauser, 1976). The purpose of this essay is to discuss the characteristics of Duncan's SEI scale, as

Siegel, P. M. (1971) "Prestige in the American occupational structure." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago.

Treiman, D. J. (1977) *Occupational Prestige in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Academic Press.

well as several difficulties encountered in its use in studies of occupational mobility. . . .

On the Interpretation of Duncan's Index

The conceptual meaning of Duncan's SEI scale is by no means clear; at least three alternative interpretations are available and none of these is entirely satisfactory. All of these interpretations rest upon features of the construction of Duncan's index and/or characteristics of the estimated weights of its components.

The most obvious interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale follows from the technique by which the weights of its components were derived. The reader will recall that they were established by regressing the percentage of excellent plus good ratings received by a few titles in the North-Hatt study which matched census lines on census-derived indicators of the age-standardized educational and income levels of these occupations. Scale values for all occupations were then obtained by substituting the education and income measures, available for all occupations from census data, into the resulting equation. Consequently, Duncan's SEI scale may be interpreted as *the expected percentage of excellent*

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plus good ratings an occupation would receive in a prestige inquiry of the North-Hatt type.

There are two defects with this interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale. First, the prediction equation for the prestige indicator is less than satisfactory. It accounts for a bit more than four-fifths of the variance in prestige ratings. One could, of course, regard the error variance as random, on the view that prestige ratings are just "error-prone" proxies for the education and income levels of occupations. However, such a view cannot be sustained in the light of the substantial consensus which exists between subgroups of raters. The education and income levels of occupations fail to account for the consensus observed between subgroups of raters differing in their own occupations, their sex, race, and so forth. Not only is there consensus between subgroups of raters about overall prestige ratings, there is also consensus about that part of the prestige of an occupation which is not accounted for by the income and educational levels of its incumbents. This fact enables one to discount the view that prestige scores are just "error-prone" indicators of the "socioeconomic" level of an occupation, a point which appears to have escaped Featherman and Hauser who state (1976, p. 405), "Our provisional conclusion is that prestige scores are 'error-prone' estimates of the socioeconomic attributes of occupations." This claim is quite possibly true with respect to the intergenerational transmission of occupational status. However, in view of the consensus over them from one subgroup of raters to the next, the "errors" themselves appear to be social facts in Durkheim's sense, rather than random disturbances which have no life of their own. For this reason, the interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale as a predicted prestige score flies in the face of what is known about occupational prestige.

Since the publication of Duncan's SEI scale, pure prestige scales have become available for all occupations (Siegel, 1971; Treiman, 1977). Comparisons of the performance of these scales with Duncan's index in studies of status

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attainment leave no doubt that the association between the detailed occupations of fathers and their sons is captured more completely by their values on Duncan's index than on either Siegel's or Treiman's prestige scale (see, for example, Duncan *et al.*, 1972; Featherman and Hauser, 1976; Stevens and Featherman, 1981). This is yet another reason why the interpretation of Duncan's scale as expected prestige scores is dubious.

A second interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale pays no attention to the method of its construction and makes reference only to its components. Without specifying the precise meaning of either, sociologists commonly make a distinction between "social status" and "economic status." (These concepts, whatever they are, should not be confused with Weber's concepts of "status honor" and "class," which have quite specific meanings that are analytically, if not statistically, independent of the usual measures of "social status" and "economic status.") Education is frequently utilized as an indicator of "social status," while current income is a common measure of "economic status." Since aggregate measures of the educational and income levels of an occupation's incumbents enter into the computation of Duncan's index, it is natural to refer to the combination of them as a *socioeconomic index of occupational status*.

This interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale is, obviously, the one most frequently made in the literature. Duncan indicated his own preference for it by his decision to name his index as he did. The socioeconomic interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale is clearly embedded in its use in Blau and Duncan's study of occupational mobility (1967), Hauser and Featherman's replication of it (1977), and Featherman and Hauser's important discussion (1976) of the properties of socioeconomic and prestige indicators of occupational standing. Most users of the Duncan index have accepted this interpretation without serious consideration of alternatives. Despite the overwhelming consensus in the published literature about the proper interpretation of Duncan's scale, it is interesting to note that

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Duncan himself, in his original presentation of the scale, is more than slightly ambiguous about its proper interpretation. At one point, he remarks (1961a, p. 115),

Our problem, then, is defined as that of obtaining a socioeconomic index for each of the occupations in the detailed classification of the 1950 Census of the population. This index is to have both face validity, in terms of its constituent variables, and sufficient predictive efficiency with respect to the NORC occupational prestige ratings that it can serve as an acceptable substitute for them [emphasis is added] in any research where it is necessary to grade or rank occupations in the way that the NORC score does but where some of the occupations are not on the NORC list.

This quotation seems to make clear that Duncan wanted to cut the cake both ways: the index was a socioeconomic one, but it was also a substitute for prestige ratings. Subsequently, Duncan made clear that he did not regard his index as the equivalent of a pure prestige scale, noting (1961a, p. 129) that, "It should be made perfectly clear that the socioeconomic index does not [Duncan's italics] purport to be a prediction of the prestige ratings that occupations excluded from the NORC list would receive in a similarly conducted study of prestige ratings." Subsequent research has clearly demonstrated that Duncan was absolutely correct in this judgment: his scale and prestige scales are very definitely not the same thing. But that still leaves open how his scale should be interpreted.

The interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale as a socioeconomic index is seemingly agreeable and consistent with what its constituent indicators are thought to measure at the individual level. Nonetheless, this interpretation of Duncan's and similar scales is not without its problems. In our view, there are two primary difficulties with socioeconomic indicators of an occupation's location in the social structure of work. First, the combination of indicators of social and economic status such as education and income into a composite index of socioeconomic level begs the question of

whether or not the effects of these factors are proportional to their weights in the index—a crucial and necessary assumption whenever the index is subsequently employed in empirical research. There is ample evidence at the individual level that education and income can even have effects of opposite sign on some dependent variables such as fertility; combining them together with a person's occupational level into an overall index of an individual's socioeconomic level presumes unidimensionality where there is none and should be avoided. (For a further discussion of this point and additional examples, see Hodge, 1970.) But if it is sound practice to keep such variables as income and education separated at the individual level, one can at least question the wisdom of combining them at the aggregate level of occupations. It may well be that alternative, aggregate characteristics of occupations are not just alternative indicators of an occupation's location in a single hierarchy, but reflect somewhat different forces at work on an occupation's incumbents and their behavior.

What we regard, however, as an even greater difficulty with the socioeconomic interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale stems from the analytical status of the concept of "socioeconomic" level. As far as we can see, it has none: its relationship to such well-defined, though poorly measured, concepts of stratification theory as "class," "status," and "power" is at best vague and imprecise. The concept of socioeconomic status has no independent analytical status in stratification theory: at the individual level it is no more or no less than whatever is measured by a person's education, occupational pursuit, and income and, at the aggregate level of occupations, it is just some combination of whatever skills it takes to enter the occupation and whatever rewards are obtained from pursuing it at a given point in time within a given market structure. Socioeconomic status is what socioeconomic status scales measure; there is no underlying analytical concept to which we can refer a proposed indicator of socioeconomic status to decide whether it is well or ill

conceived or to assess how it might be improved. For example, referring to "the choice of summary statistics to represent the education and income distributions of the occupations, and the adjustment of these statistics for age differences among occupations," Duncan observed (1961a, p. 119), "Reasonable procedures for accomplishing these two steps, different from the ones followed [in the construction of Duncan's index] are easily proposed." In a world like this, of course, there is no theoretical justification for the choice of one, as opposed to another plausible means of summarizing the constituent indicators and the choice of any one of the competing alternatives rests on the assumption that they all measure the same thing in approximately the same way. As Duncan put it (1961a, p. 119), "... it seems doubtful that the final result would be greatly altered by switching to one of the alternatives." Whether this is literally the case, we cannot say, for while students of status attainment have been especially diligent at exposing the weaknesses of pure prestige scales in the study of occupational mobility, they have devoted but limited energy to examining the properties of alternative socioeconomic scales, to exposing the behavior of the component variables in these scales, and to making these scales temporally relevant to their research, a fault remedied in considerable measure by the work of Stevens and Featherman (1981).

We offer now a third and final interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale. In Duncan's SEI index, the weights of the education and income variables are nearly equal and the intercept is close to zero. We can find the constant k which will center the coefficients of the income and education variables in Duncan's SEI scale around .5 by solving, $.50 - .55k = .59k - .50$ for $K = (1)/(1.14) = .8772$.¹ Multiplying the values of Duncan's SEI scale ($= D$) by this value and adding $6(k) = 6(.8772) = 5.26$ to eliminate the constant term leaves us with

$$D' = k(D) + 6(k) = 8.772(D) + 5.26 \\ = .4825(E) + 5.175(I),$$

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a transformed index ($= D'$) in which the education ($= E$) and income ($= I$) indicators are for all practical purposes simply averaged together. This transformation of Duncan's SEI scale is, of course, made possible only because the summary measures of the education and income distributions of the occupations receive nearly equal weights when prestige is regressed on them. Our ability to effect this transformation suggests another interpretation of the Duncan SEI scale scores, viz., a *linear transformation of the best guess we could make of the age-standardized percentage of an occupation's male incumbents either with at least a high school diploma or with 1949 incomes of \$3,500 or more if neither percentage was known*. In fact, one would not go far awry in interpreting the untransformed values of Duncan's SEI scale in this fashion, since the transformation required to effect this interpretation is roughly equal to the identity operator.

This interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale is, we believe, novel, though Cain (1974, p. 1501) comes close to making it. And while it sounds ridiculous, that is not necessarily a disadvantage. It keeps one's attention focused upon the essential feature of Duncan's SEI scale, to wit, the particular way it glues education and income together to construct "socioeconomic" status. Beyond that, it makes clear the inherent uncertainty which necessarily surrounds any results obtained by the use of Duncan's SEI scale: having used it, there is absolutely no way of knowing whether the observed effects are brought about by the economic rewards attached to occupations or by the skills required to pursue them. Instead, one must resort to casting the results in terms of an occupation's "socioeconomic" status—a concept which seems more nearly contrived for convenience than a social fact in Durkheim's sense. In keeping with the bulk of the literature on status attainment, we will continue throughout this paper to accept the socioeconomic interpretation of Duncan's SEI scale, but it should be obvious that the serious questions which can be raised about this or any other interpretation of Duncan's scale

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also make the interpretation of any findings based upon it problematical.

Occupation as a Contextual Variable

In recent years, a considerable amount of sociological inquiry has been directed toward detecting contextual effects on individual behavior. In this research tradition, individual behavior is seen in part as a function of the characteristics of the other individuals with whom the subject shares group memberships (see, e.g., Blau, 1957, 1960; Davis, Spaeth, and Huson, 1961; Tannenbaum and Bachman, 1964; Farkas, 1974). Research of this kind has not been without its critics, of which Hauser (1970a, 1970b, 1974) is by far the most outspoken.

There are several strategies of research for examining so-called group, contextual, and structural effects upon individual behavior. We need not detail these here, although we should note that the most general of all these models is the one embedded in the analysis of covariance. The particular strategy of interest in the present context is the one where the consequences for an individual's behavior of his membership in a social group or population aggregate are summarized by an indicator which reflects the average or some other measure of the central tendency on a particular trait of the individual members comprising the social groups or population aggregates to which he belongs. An example of this research strategy would be characterizing schoolchildren by the proportion of minority group members in the school they attend. Such a characterization of an individual has nothing to do with the structural features of the school he attends, such as library books per capita. Instead, it rests solely upon the individual characteristics of his fellow classmates.

The fundamental difficulty with this strategy for analyzing contextual or compositional effects is put quite simply: there is no logically conceivable way in which one could run an

experiment to test for any observed effects. This is the fundamental defect with the analysis of all compositional effects; Hauser (1970a) comes close to stating this principle, but does not make it as explicit as he might have. To illustrate this principle, we may pursue the foregoing example. Suppose we wanted to run an experiment to examine the effects of minority composition on school achievement among white students. Now obviously, our first step would be to make random assignments of white students to schools; in this way the white students in each school would be expected to have equivalent means and variances on all characteristics save those we experimentally manipulate; this is the advantage we realize from experimentation. So far, so good. Now we must construct our experimental variable. To do this, we can again make random assignments, this time of minority students, of subjects to schools. However, while we can make random assignments of minority students to schools so that their expected means and variances on all variables are equal from school to school, we must assign them in differential numbers. If we failed to do this, the schools would not differ in their minority composition and there would be no between-school variance in our experimental variable. The situation is now this: by making random assignments we have secured an expected equality from school to school in the means and variances of both white and minority students on all variables. However, the ratio of white to minority students varies from school to school and that, necessary to conduct the experiment at all, proves fatal.

Minority and white students do not differ on their minority status alone. They differ in their socioeconomic backgrounds, in the numbers of their siblings, in the quality of their experiences, and almost surely in their attitudes and values as well. Because the schools vary in their minority composition, they will necessarily vary in every individual level correlate of minority status as well. Consequently, any observed effect of minority composition is confounded by every individ-

ual correlate of minority status and *there is no logically possible way of experimentally separating these confounding factors*. Having found an effect of minority composition, we can generate additional compositional effects by the carload lot. All we need to do is to refer to the individual level correlates of minority status. Furthermore, although it is not essential to the argument advanced herein, any attempt to separate these confounding factors via nonexperimental methods will certainly flounder on the barricade of multicollinearity, since the relevant associations are the typically high, ecological correlations across the units of the experiment—in this case schools.

The foregoing argument requires comment. First, there is nothing about it which denies the existence of contextual or compositional effects. Indeed, they may be large and substantial, but the argument clearly implies that *there is no logically possible way of isolating them*. Second, while *practically* speaking, most social-science findings are not subject to verification via experimentation, one can at least *logically* conceive of an experiment to test them. Contextual effects, however, are in a different ball park from most other social-science findings. There is no conceivable way of contriving an experiment to test them. That should give one pause, for it is far from clear that the limited resources for social-science research should be expended on discovering effects *whose causes can never be experimentally isolated*. Finally, while it is technically possible to detect a generalized contextual effect—indeed, the experiment outlined above could do that—the impossibility of specifying the precise causal force which generates the effect means that contextual analysis is profoundly and fundamentally irrelevant to policy decisions. Any effort to formulate policy on the basis of presumed, *specific* contextual effects is foolhardy, for there is no way of knowing whether the effects are generated by the specific causes one has identified or by one of their confounding correlates.

Occupation is not inherently a contextual variable. Although other considerations enter the picture, one can at least think of detailed

occupational groupings as clusters of jobs whose incumbents are mutually substitutable. Thus, it is the similarity in the work required by the jobs forming an occupational group, rather than the similarity in the personal characteristics of their incumbents, which delineates one occupation from another. However, once occupational information is scored with a socioeconomic index like Duncan's, occupation is *turned into a contextual variable*. All of the reservations that one might have about contextual analysis similarly apply to the analysis of occupational information coded in this particular way. One can, of course, *logically* conceive of an experiment to test for the effects of occupation as such; though practically such an experiment might be unfeasible, at least logically one can imagine randomly assigning subjects to occupational groups. But there is no logical way to conduct an experiment about *occupational status*. Duncan's SEI scale includes the education and income levels of *incumbents* as its factors; if one tried to run an experiment on occupations by randomly assigning subjects to occupations, the expected means and variances in their educational and income levels would be identical from one occupation to the next and the occupations would no longer be differentiated according to their socioeconomic status as it is measured by Duncan's scale. In order to keep the Duncan scale scores of the occupations differentiated, one would have to assign relatively more high school graduates and high-income earners to some occupations than to others. Once one has done this, the entire advantage of experimentation is lost and one's experiment would be confounded by every individual level correlate of educational attainment and income. There is just no logically conceivable way to reproduce experimentally any results derived by scoring occupational data with Duncan's scale scores; this fact alone ought to give one pause before using such a scale, particularly in analyses which purport to be causal, rather than merely descriptive in character.

The educational component of Duncan's index strikes us as the most problematical in

this regard. Although the income component refers to individuals and to total income, rather than earnings from one's main occupation, one can at least think of this component of Duncan's scale as a characteristic of *jobs* rather than of *people*. To the extent this is so, one could go ahead and make random assignments of persons to posts in an experimental situation without destroying the income differentiation of occupations. But education is another matter: it is attached to people not posts. There is no way around this fact and this component of Duncan's SEI scale indubitably means that its use, both conceptually and practically, serves to reduce "occupation" to a contextual variable. There is more than a little intellectual irony in the fact that perhaps the leading critic of contextual analysis (Hauser, 1970a, 1970b, 1974) is also one of the principal proponents of Duncan's SEI scale (Featherman, Jones, and Hauser, 1975; Featherman and Hauser, 1976). . . .

Prestige and Socioeconomic Status as Occupational Indicators

Prestige scores have two distinct advantages and one very definite disadvantage relative to socioeconomic indices in the study of status attainment and related phenomena. The most obvious advantage of prestige scores is that, unlike socioeconomic indices derived from the characteristics of an occupation's incumbents, they do not reduce occupation to a contextual variable. Because prestige scores are *operationally* independent of the characteristics of an occupation's incumbents, one can logically conceive of an experiment in which subjects are randomly allocated to occupations differing in the prestige they are accorded by the general public. Of course, it may well be that the individual characteristics of an occupation's incumbents are a source of its prestige, in which case one consequence of the experiment might be to reduce the between-occupational variance in prestige scores, since occupations would no longer differ in the characteristics of their incumbents.

If, however, the socioeconomic characteristics of an occupation's incumbents are merely *correlates* rather than *causes* of an occupation's prestige rating, then no change would be observed in their prestige ratings, a situation which would be obtained if prestige ratings are derived from, say, the desirability of the work performed in an occupation, the authority built into occupational positions regardless of their incumbents, and features of the typical work setting.

Another advantage of using prestige scores in the study of occupational stratification flows from its status as a well-defined analytical concept in stratification theory. Although Featherman and Hauser (1976, p. 404) conclude "that occupational prestige scores represent a congeries of salient dimensions or occupational characteristics," such a definition of occupational prestige has little to do with the concept as it is typically used in stratification theory. We would venture that the appropriate definition of occupational prestige is analytically parallel to Weber's definition of power. In this view, the relative prestige of two occupations may be defined as the expectation that a member of one will give (or receive) deference from a member of the other. The concept of expectation or probability is crucial to this definition, as it also is to Weber's definition of power, for it admits the possibility that some members of an occupation may receive deference from members of another occupation while others will give deference to members of the same occupation. In keeping with this view of the relative prestige of two occupations, we can think of the overall prestige of an occupation as the expectation that one of its members will receive (or give) deference to a randomly selected member of any other occupation.

The foregoing definition of occupational prestige implies that it has both a formal and informal component—a part that is built into an occupation by virtue of its formal authority relations with other occupations and a part that devolves upon an occupation by virtue of the performance of its members in situations which are not organized by author-

ity relations. Prestige, in this view, is not identical with power, but it does represent a significant resource—viz., command over the respect of others—which can be mobilized in the effort to secure desired outcomes in the face of competing alternatives. Whether or not occupational prestige conceived in this way is, in fact, what prestige scales measure is, of course, another question. One advantage of using occupational prestige scales, however, rests precisely on one's ability to raise this question intelligibly. Because one analytically knows what prestige is, one can query whether one has measured it satisfactorily. A parallel question cannot be posed of socioeconomic scales, since as best we can tell the socioeconomic status of an occupation is whatever is measured by a socioeconomic scale of occupations.

But whatever analytical advantage prestige scales of occupational status may have is in large measure undercut by their performance, relative to socioeconomic scales, in empirical research. As we have already noted, whatever it is that socioeconomic scales of occupational status measure more nearly governs the process of intergenerational occupational mobility and the entire process of status attainment than do the occupational differences reflected in prestige scales. This is one very sound reason for preferring the former to the latter, even if one can be less than analytically clear about what it is that socioeconomic scales measure. It is, of course, possible that prestige scales perform poorly because they are inferior measures of the underlying analytical concept. We think a case to that effect could be sketched out, but space does not permit us to do so here.

Notes

1. This is because Duncan's SEI scale is constructed from the regression equation,

$$\hat{P} = 0.55(E) + 0.59(I) - 6.0,$$

where E is the age-standardized percentage of the male experienced civilian labor force with 4 years of high school or more, and I is the age-standardized percentage of males who had incomes in 1949 of \$3500 or more.—Ed.

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ROBERT M. HAUSER AND JOHN ROBERT WARREN

Socioeconomic Indexes for Occupations: A Review, Update, and Critique

There are several reasons to focus more attention on the collection, scaling, and analysis of occupational data than has recently been the case. First, job-holding is the most important social role held by most adults outside their family or household. When we meet someone new, often our first question is, "What do you do?" and that is a very good question. Job-holding defines how we spend much of our time, and it provides strong clues about the activities and circumstances in which that time is spent. Second, job-holding tells us about the technical and social skills that we bring to the labor market, and for most people job-holding delimits current and future economic prospects. Thus, even for persons who are not attached to the labor market, past jobs or the jobs held by other members of

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the same family or household provide information about economic and social standing. Third, as market labor has become nearly universal among adult women as well as men, it is increasingly possible to characterize individuals in terms of their own current or past jobs. Fourth, once we have a good job description, it is possible to map jobs into many classifications, scales, and measures. Fifth, measurement of jobs and occupations does not entail the same problems of refusal, recall, reliability, and stability as occur in the measurement of income or wealth. Job descriptions—contemporary or retrospective, from job-holders or from their family members—are imperfect, but the reliability and validity of carefully collected occupational data are high enough to support sustained analysis (Hauser, Sewell, and Warren 1994). Thus, even if we are limited to retrospective questions, we can confidently trace occupational trajectories across the adult years. The same cannot be said of earnings trajectories, let alone other components of personal or household income or wealth.

It is important to distinguish between jobs and occupations. A job is a specific and sometimes unique bundle of activities carried out by a person in the expectation of economic remuneration. An occupation is an abstract category used to group and classify similar jobs. Such abstractions are often heterogeneous and idiosyncratic in construction, but they usually involve determinations of similarity in typical activities, in the sites where work is performed, in the form of job tenure, in the skill requirements of the job, or in the product or service that results from the job. There are multiple systems for the classification of jobs and complex interdependencies between occupational and industrial classifications. Most social scientific uses of occupational data are based either on (a) the classification systems of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, which are revised each decade at the time of the census, or (b) the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, which is produced by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Some measures of social class reflect job or personal characteristics, whereas others depend on occupation. For example, consider two widely used conceptions of "social class." Wright's (1985, 88) class typology combines concepts of ownership, authority, and expertise. It requires information about a person's educational attainment as well as ownership, authority, supervision, and occupational classification. On the other hand, Erikson and Goldthorpe's (1992, 38-39) "class schema," is ultimately a grouping of occupational categories based upon Goldthorpe and Hope's (1974) study of occupational prestige in Great Britain (Goldthorpe 1980). Each author sees his scheme as a theoretically refined basis for identifying the membership of real and discrete social classes. In Wright's neo-Marxian classification, the aim is to identify modes of labor exploitation in the relations of production. In Erikson and Goldthorpe's neo-Weber-

ian classification, the class categories are designed to identify distinct combinations of occupational function and employment status.

In our opinion, differences between the two class schemes and between them and our occupational status measures lie more in the proximity of constituent variables to jobs and persons than in other theoretical or conceptual distinctions that have been debated by their authors. Other things being equal, we should expect a classification based partly upon personal and job characteristics to be more direct and powerful in its influence than a classification based on occupational characteristics would be alone. Rather than relying on a predetermined combination of occupation and other social or economic characteristics, we suggest that investigators should use data on individual education and income, and on other job characteristics, as well as on occupational standing (see Jencks, Perman, and Rainwater 1988).

In working with measures of occupational social standing, we emphasize the social and economic grading of the occupational structure, rather than a priori constructions of distinct social classes. People are linked to jobs, not only through job-holding, but also through their relationships with others who hold or have held jobs. Jobs can be mapped into standard occupational classifications, and the categories of those classifications may be linked to occupational characteristics. By working back through this series of linkages, we can describe people in terms of occupational characteristics. Such characteristics will be valid as descriptions of jobs only to the degree that occupations are homogeneous and the intervening maps and linkages are sound. In our view, the remarkable thing about this way of measuring social and economic characteristics is not that it is error prone, which would seem obvious, but that it has such high reliability and validity. That it does so is a social fact, which rests both on skill and care in classification and coding but also on strong uniformities in social structure.

Occupational Prestige and Socioeconomic Indexes of Occupational Status

What are the relevant status characteristics of occupations? Many discussions of occupations in the stratification system begin with the concept of occupational prestige, the general level of social standing enjoyed by the incumbents of an occupation. In the United States there have been three major national surveys of occupational prestige, the most recent of which was carried out in conjunction with the 1989 General Social Survey (GSS) of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC; Nakao and Treas 1994). The main problem with all of these occupational prestige ratings is that they lack criterion validity. Prestige is not as highly correlated with other variables as are other measures of occupational social standing, specifically, measures of the socioeconomic status of occupations, as indicated by the average educational attainment and income of occupational incumbents.

Duncan (1961) created the first socioeconomic index (SEI) of occupational status. For forty-five census occupation lines, he ran the linear regression of the percentage of "good" or "excellent" ratings on measures of both occupational education and occupational income (see Duncan 1961 for details). This regression yielded roughly equal weights for the two regressors, a result that motivated some sociologists to characterize socioeconomic scales as a hybrid of "social status" (as indexed by occupational education) and economic status (see Hodge 1981).

The Duncan SEI has been updated or elaborated in several ways, and researchers should be cautious in using the updates because of their potential lack of comparability. Most recently, as part of their work with prestige scores obtained in the 1989 GSS, Nakao and Treas (1994) created socioeconomic scores for 1980-basis census occupational lines by regressing their prestige ratings on the charac-

teristics of male and female occupational incumbents in the 1980 census. The obvious next step is to create another set of socioeconomic scores, using the 1989 prestige scores as a criterion, but based upon characteristics of the work force in the 1990 census.

In an earlier paper (see Hauser and Warren 1997), we made a special extract of occupational education and earnings from the 1990 census 5 percent public use sample. Throughout our analyses, we used the same definition of occupational education as Nakao and Treas (1994), namely, the percentage of people in an occupation who had completed one or more years of college. After experimenting with alternative treatments of earnings and income, we constructed the new socioeconomic indexes using occupational wage rates, whereas Duncan (1961) used the percentage of occupational incumbents who had reported incomes of \$3500 or more. Our prestige criterion was the percentage of prestige ratings above a fixed threshold. However, for statistical reasons, we used a logistic transformation of the prestige criterion and of the educational level and wage rate of each occupation (see Hauser and Warren 1997, 203-17).

We then constructed socioeconomic indexes for the total work force and, separately, for men and for women. Our purpose in creating gender-specific indexes was to compare the behavior of occupational characteristics between men and women, especially in relation to occupational prestige. We do not recommend routine use of the gender-specific indexes in research. Although the indexes for all workers, men, and women have roughly the same range and are in the same metric, their statistical properties differ. Findings based on the total, male, and female indexes are not strictly comparable (Warren, Sheridan, and Hauser 1998), and, where researchers choose to use a composite socioeconomic index, we recommend the index based on the characteristics of all workers.

Chastened and instructed by the example of Fox's (1991) and Friendly's (1991) reanalyses

of Duncan's data, we also paid a good deal of attention to issues of fit and functional form. In the final set of regression analyses, we used several types of residual plots to identify influential outliers. Based on these findings, we deleted several occupations from the regression analyses used to estimate weights for the socioeconomic scores. Several of the largest and most influential exceptions to typical relationships among occupational education, wage rates, and prestige occur in common and visible jobs: business owners, farmers, clergy, secretaries, teachers, waiters and waitresses, janitors, and truck drivers. This finding reminds us that occupational prestige is by no means the same as occupational socioeconomic status, and we should respect both the theoretical and empirical distinctions between them.

Using estimates from our preferred models, we computed total-based, male-based, and female-based SEI scores for all occupations. The combined three sets of scores were transformed to range between 0 and 100. Our 1990-basis and 1980-basis total (TSEI), male (MSEI), and female (FSEI) scores for all occupation lines, the socioeconomic components of those scores, and the 1989 Nakao-Treas prestige scores and ratings are available elsewhere (Hauser and Warren 1997; <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cdelcdewp/1996papers.htm>).

Structural Models of the Socioeconomic Index

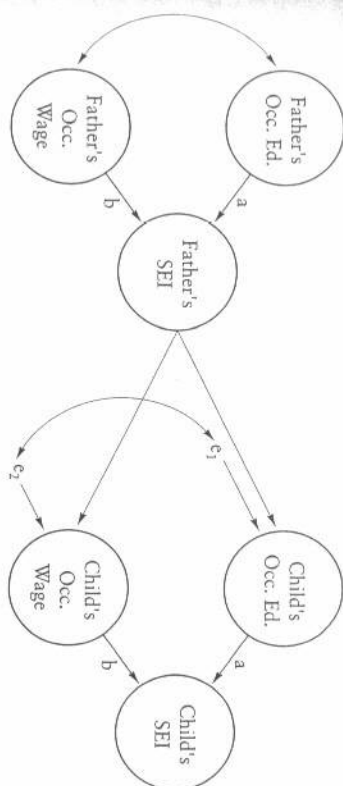
Subsequent analyses—presented in detail in Hauser and Warren (1997)—reveal three potential weaknesses in composite socioeconomic indexes of occupational standing. First, gender differences appear both in the relationships between occupational socioeconomic standing and prestige and in the socioeconomic characteristics of occupational incumbents. Second, occupational wage rates appear to be far less highly correlated, both within and across generations, than occupa-

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tional education. Third, the latter finding led us to wonder whether the use of prestige-validated socioeconomic indexes may overestimate the importance of the economic standing of occupations in the stratification process. Thus, we developed structural equation models in which the construction of socioeconomic indexes was embedded in the stratification process. These models were estimated using data for men and women in the 1994 GSS.

For example, one of our models considered relationships among father's occupational status, the status of a man or woman's first occupation, and the status of his or her current or last occupation. In this rudimentary model, we specified that the status of first occupation depends on that of father's occupation, whereas the status of current or last occupation depends upon father's occupation and first occupation. To be sure, this is scarcely a complete model of the stratification process, but it is sufficient to generate new estimates of the weights of the socioeconomic index components. At each of the three stages of the model—father's occupation, first occupation, and current or last occupation—we assume that an SEI composite is completely determined by measures of occupational education and occupational wages (Hauser and Warren 1997, 236). Figure 1 illustrates part of this model with measures of father's and child's occupational education and occupational wage. The effects of father on child identity the weights of occupational education, a , and occupational wage, b , in the SEI. To our surprise, we found that the weight of the wage rate is negligible, that is, $b = 0$. Thus, in the GSS data the process of occupational stratification is best described by relationships among occupation-based measures of educational attainment, not the combination of occupation-based measures of educational attainment and wage rates. Our findings from the socioeconomic model point to occupational differentiation by education as a central feature of the stratification process.

FIGURE 1
Illustrative Model of Intergenerational Stratification in Occupational Socioeconomic Status



Discussion

We are thus led to question the value of traditional socioeconomic indexes of occupational standing, including those that we constructed. If the 1994 GSS data are a reliable guide, we would do better—in studies of the stratification process—to index occupations by their educational level alone than by any of the usual, weighted combinations of educational level and earnings. However, given the modest sensitivity of occupational status correlations to differences in model specification, we would not suggest any wholesale effort to reevaluate previous findings about levels, trends, and differentials in occupational stratification. It would be sufficient, we think, to suggest that previously estimated levels of correlation are slightly too low. Finally, we would caution that our findings about the relative importance of occupational education and occupational wage rates are specific to models of the stratification process. Just as the relative weights of occupational education and wage rates differ between prestige and socioeconomic outcomes, so they may also differ across other outcomes (e.g., health, well-being, social participation, or political choice). If there is any general conclusion to

be drawn from our analysis, it is that we ought to move toward a more specific and disaggregated appraisal of the effects of occupational characteristics on social, psychological, economic, political, and health outcomes. Although composite measures of occupational status may have heuristic uses, the global concept of occupational status is scientifically obsolete.

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CONCLUDING COMMENTARY TO PART THREE

AAGE B. SØRENSEN

The Basic Concepts of Stratification Research: Class, Status, and Power

Many good things come in three parts—God, Montesquieu's concept of the modern democratic state, and the major dimensions of social structure. All sociology students are told that class, status, and power are the main variables in stratification research. Weber's brief essay, in the English translation entitled "Class, Status, Party" (1946), is probably the closest thing to a universally required text for all sociologists. Most agree that these three variables are what sociologists use when they analyze processes and structures of stratification. Little else is agreed upon. There is wide disagreement about the relative importance of the three variables. There is equally wide disagreement over the concepts behind the variables. This essay attempts to sort out some of these disagreements and, it is hoped, provide some order.

In addition to the disagreements, there is unequal attention to the three variables. Power never has been a frequently used variable in empirical stratification research. It is a slippery concept and a difficult variable to measure. The study of elites is the main research tradition using power in stratification research; other empirical uses of the concept tend to be located in political science or political sociology. The elite studies make assumptions about the distribution of power and then examine only one part of the distribution, the elite. We have no agreed-upon mea-

sures that allow a test of these assumptions about the distribution, and there is surprisingly little attention given in stratification research to characterizing empirically the structure of power in society. Debates about the usefulness of elite studies tend to be debates about untestable assumptions concerning the distribution of power.

To Weber, studies of class and of status are studies of bases of power, in the sense that class or status positions may be seen as resources for affecting the action of others. However, matters are rarely conceived of that way in stratification research. Sociologists study class and status because they are interested in class and status. Marxists especially tend to think of the class structure as the most important thing about social structure from which everything else, including the power structure, derives. The discussions about the validity of this claim occur in debates about the relation between class and the state. These discussions usually take place in political sociology. The main application of the concept of power in stratification research is the frequent use of authority as an element in the concept of class.

I focus in this essay on class and status and survey some of the main distinctions and conceptual properties that dominate the literature and are well represented in the readings. Few concepts in sociology carry as much conceptual baggage as these two. For many sociologists, the choice between concepts of status and class is a fundamental choice between basic assumptions about the nature of society.

This is an original article prepared for this book.

Indeed, for some, it is a choice reflecting basic ideological positions. My main conclusion is that the choices are simpler to make and the conceptual baggage less burdensome than many claim. The essay devotes most attention to the concept of class, which is the most complicated and most ambitious concept in the field of stratification, if not in sociology (see, also, Sørensen 1996, 2000).

Basic Ideas

It is useful to think of distinct levels of status and class concepts. These levels are differentiated by how close the concepts are connected to theories of inequality. Most measures of status seem to capture overall welfare along several dimensions of inequality and have no theory of inequality implied. Not all status concepts are like this. Weber's original idea of status groups captures a one-dimensional concept of prestige or honor with more theoretical implications. In addition to the socioeconomic or welfare concept and the prestige concept of status, I distinguish among three concepts of class. The first one, a "stratum concept" of class, is not unlike socioeconomic status. It is meant to convey the idea of homogeneous groupings along several dimensions of inequality. Like socioeconomic status, the concept provides no theory of how inequality is obtained. The other two, which I call the market or Weberian concept of class and the Marxist concept of class, have theories of inequality attached to them. The Marxist concept also attaches antagonistic interests to class categories, while the Weberian concept is more ambiguous about this.

Theoretical power is related to the empirical requirements of the concept. The Marxist concept makes the most stringent requirements: A Marxist class category may or may not exist depending on whether or not positions in social structure have certain properties; in particular, positions should be associated with interests that are in conflict with the interests associated with other positions. The prestige concept of status also suggests empiri-

cal requirements in the form of strategies of exclusion. The socioeconomic status concept and the stratum concept of class make no such requirements; they are purely nominal classifications of people or positions and therefore especially simple to apply in empirical research. A main task for this essay is a critical review of some of the attempts to meet empirical requirements of such concepts, especially the classic Marxist class concept.

For purposes of this review, it is important to distinguish between positions in social structure and persons occupying these positions. This distinction is the main theoretical contribution of sociological theory about inequality—the distinction is, for example, completely absent from economic theory. A structural theory of inequality is one in which inequality is created by relationships between positions. The structural explanation may be complete, as in the Marxist theory of exploitation; or it may be partial with the theory positing an interaction between characteristics of position and characteristics of person. The most obvious examples of a partial explanation are functionalist theories of the Davis and Moore (1945) variety and organizational theories of inequality that emphasize motivational consequences of organizations, such as internal labor markets (e.g., Stinchcombe 1974; Sørensen 1983; Lazear and Rosen 1981).

In the discussion that follows, I detail the most important status and class concepts. I try to show that the basic choices are not between class and status but between concepts that are useful for different types of research tasks. There is more to say about class than about status. The claims about the theoretical power of the class concepts have been greater.

Social Status: Welfare or Honor?

Sociology students are often told that Weber's discussion of status groups is the original source for the concept of status. This is a bit bizarre. Weber did not use the word *status* or *status group*. He used the words *stand* and

ehre, which most would translate as estate and honor, in describing what these groups were about. We are meant to be brought back to, or reminded of, the world of feudalism and knights. This world was not so far from Wilhelmian Germany as it is from the contemporary United States. In any event, Weber's ideas about this had little to do with the concept of socioeconomic status that produces the standard variable in all of status-attainment research and the standard independent variable in much other sociological research, especially of the survey variety.

Sorokin's discussion of the basic concepts of stratification is a much more accurate point of departure for the concept and variable that dominate modern stratification research under the name "social status." Sorokin (1927) explicitly adopts a spatial metaphor for society with vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical or status dimension has three components: economic status, political status, and occupational status. There are distances and movements (in the form of social mobility) along these dimensions. The vertical dimension is a measuring rod put through society to capture what inequality is about; it tells us what is up and what is down and how far up and down people and positions are.

Sorokin's status concept makes it possible to talk meaningfully about directions and distances. Weber's concept of honor does not. The differentiation of honor depends on who differentiates. Peasants are equally dishonorable to lords but unequally honorable to each other. This imbalance is not useful if one wants to measure distances and movements. Sorokin receives less honor than Weber from modern sociologists, so Weber remains the original source of wisdom about status despite the confusion it creates to compare his comments on the topic with the properties of the concept that is most often used in empirical research. This is the concept of socioeconomic status with the properties described by Sorokin.

It would have made more sense to translate *ehre* as prestige. The concepts of prestige employed by, for example, Goode (1978) and

Shils (1970) are similar to the relational concept of *ehre*. Prestige as *ehre* is an extremely interesting variable and in certain institutions—academia, the arts, and the military—an extremely important variable. It is a concept with more theoretical implications than the concept of socioeconomic status. High prestige causes deference, and low prestige causes contempt. Prestige groups practice exclusion or closure, for example with respect to marriage. If prestige groups are to be equated with Weber's status groups, they must be seen as discrete groupings.

Prestige groups should be identified empirically by demonstrating practices of exclusion or closure. Not all occupational groups or categories of people with similar levels of socioeconomic status necessarily practice such explicit exclusion. Therefore, the identification of prestige groups poses the same type of empirical problems as the empirical identification of the higher-level class concepts, as discussed later. There is some theoretical work on the issue of closure and exclusion (Parkin 1979). Unfortunately, the measurement of prestige and the empirical identification of prestige groups are neglected because of the conceptual confusion created by a misleading translation of Weber and the neglect of Sorokin. The best work on the topic is qualitative (e.g., Goode 1978; Shils 1970).

Empirical research on prestige was derailed also because the concept was contaminated by loose usage in empirical practices. With the arrival of modern survey techniques, it became possible to have national samples rank occupations from one to five according to labels ranging from "excellent" to "poor." This was said to measure the prestige of occupations. However, the occupational ratings do not measure prestige in the sense of honor or deference. There is empirical evidence for this claim. Goldthorpe and Hope (1974) directly asked respondents about what they had in mind when rating occupations. They responded that they thought about things such as income, education, job security, and the like that enter into people's ideas of a good job. Thus, respondents seem to rate occupa-

tions according to the general level of welfare that they provide incumbents. The second piece of evidence is that it does not matter much who does the ratings. This is one of the most well established findings in all of sociology. Occupations are rated about the same by all, at all times, and wherever these occupations are found.¹ What is measured by occupational prestige is not a relational concept.

Duncan (1961) used the occupational prestige ratings to generate an index of socioeconomic status. The procedure is simple: For the subset of occupations for which ratings exist, regress the ratings of occupations on aggregate characteristics of those who occupy these occupations. (Duncan used income and education of incumbents.) Then use the regression equation to derive scores for all occupations. The result is called the Socioeconomic Index (SEI). Since SEI is based on occupational prestige scores, it can be seen as an approximation to such scores, with the degree of approximation reflecting the quality of the prediction. Although the approximation is generally quite good, for some occupations the SEI and occupational prestige scores differ, most notably for farmers. Farmers have low income and low formal education but are rated higher than other occupations with the same level of income and education. This may be the result of Americans' nostalgia for a rural past, or it may simply mean that Americans carry around images of farmers that overstate their true income and schooling. Featherman and Hauser (1976) find that SEI explains more variance in status-attainment models than occupational prestige measures, and they conclude from this that SEI is the better measure. This is really a conclusion about how best to measure the socioeconomic status of farmers; it has nothing to do with the difference between the concept of prestige as *ethre* and the concept of socioeconomic status.

Socioeconomic status and occupational prestige are characteristics of occupations. Older American sociology (Warner et al. 1949; Hollingshead and Redlick 1958) constructed measures of the socioeconomic status of persons using indexes based on education,

occupation, type of residence, source of income, and other individual attributes. These synthetic measures of the socioeconomic status of persons should perform even better than the occupational-level socioeconomic status measure when the issue is to predict individual behavior, such as voting, deviance, school performance of children, and so forth.

Socioeconomic status measured at the level of occupation nevertheless remains the favorite independent variable in research on all kinds of individual behaviors and attitudes, probably because of the ease with which the measure is obtained. Much has been made of the difference between status, measured at the level of occupation, and class. It is claimed that the use of status assumes that the occupational structure is more fundamental than the class structure (Wright 1979). However, the relative merit of seeing occupations as the basic dimension of social structure has nothing to do with the usefulness of socioeconomic status in empirical research. It is research practice, not theory, that conflates socioeconomic status and occupation. One might equally well have a socioeconomic status measure based on the ranking of class categories.

Overseas, Grusky and Sørensen (1998) argue that detailed occupations ought not be reduced to a nominal socioeconomic scale, since the division of labor often breeds organic *gemeinschaftlich* groups with closely defended borders and well-developed cultures. This formulation involves treating detailed occupations as status groups in the true Weberian sense rather than as mere indicators of vertical "social status."

The Grusky-Sørensen proposal thus signals a turn away from conventional socioeconomic scaling. In recent years, socioeconomic scales have indeed declined in popularity, and Hauser and Warren (1997) have even suggested that "the global concept of occupational status is scientifically obsolete" (p. 251). The main rationale for this conclusion is that conventional scales based on a composite of educational attainment and wage rates are out-performed in models of stratification by occupational scales based wholly on

education. If the socioeconomic tradition is now in some disarray, this is no doubt partly because the theoretical rationale for socioeconomic composites is poorly developed, even in the work of Sorokin (1927; also, see Hodge 1981).

Class

Most sociologists recognize that the concept of class is among our most important concepts. It is perhaps the most influential formulation of the central idea of sociology—that is, the idea of a social structure. Some claim the concept has a status as gravity does in physics. The analogy is imperfect: Physics without a concept of gravity is impossible, but some pursue sociology without ever employing the term *class* and claim the concept is not needed. Further, those who employ the term use it to denote quite different concepts. This is an expression of the well-known disagreements about what are the central ideas of sociology.

In much of modern sociology, class has come to mean nothing more than a homogeneous categorical grouping of social positions in contrast to the gradation provided by socioeconomic status. An explicit formulation of this emphasis on social homogeneity can be found in Geiger (1951) and Carlsson (1958). It appears to have been decisive for the formulation of the class scheme proposed by Goldthorpe (see Goldthorpe [1984] for an elaboration of the rationale). The difference, if any, between such a *stratum concept* of class and the welfare or socioeconomic concept of social status is the emphasis on the resources that are responsible for a person's welfare rather than the welfare dimensions themselves. This approach usually results in a class scheme that is not completely ordered as socioeconomic status is. A good example is Goldthorpe's class scheme (1987). Such stratum class schemes may be very useful in empirical research. They are nominal categories that do not imply theories of inequality. I concentrate on Marxist or market concepts of

class that do imply positional theories of inequality, in particular theories of exploitation.

Marxist Concept of Class

The core of the Marxist concept is a theory of exploitation that explains inequality between classes and the resulting antagonistic interests that generate conflict. Unfortunately, this theory has certain defects, and the concept cannot account for an important part of the inequality we observe—the inequality generated in the labor market. In this section, I first elaborate these points and then show that the defects perhaps can be overcome by identifying the circumstances when market mechanisms produce a form of inequality in which the advantages of some are obtained at the disadvantage of others.

In Marx's own analysis, the ability of one party to become better off at the expense of another is conferred by ownership of the means of production. The two components of ownership—authority and legal ownership—are the means to establish the exploitative relationship. It is the exploitative relationship that defines classes. If there are ways other than ownership of property to maintain a relationship of exploitation, classes presumably would be created.

Exploitation takes place in a social relationship without regard to who occupies this relationship. Capitalists exploit workers because the logic of capitalist production forces them to do so, not because they are evil or conservative or white males. Smart capitalists are no better at exploiting than dumb capitalists. Smart capitalists may get higher profits, but the relation between profits and the rate of exploitation is very complicated. Marx demonstrates this at great length in volume three of *Capital*. Class relations that are relations of exploitation create inequality independently of the personal characteristics of those who occupy class positions. Class positions are "empty places" (Simmel 1908). This is of fundamental importance for the relation between the class structure and the structure of inequality. Only by changing the class

structure can the structure of inequality be changed. Therefore, class conflict will produce social change.

This does not mean that Marx did not recognize sources of inequality other than class. He describes but does not analyze inequality in the labor market by education, skills, and ability. These are all inequalities associated with personal characteristics and not with class positions. According to Marx, many inequalities will disappear with the advance of capitalism as the working class becomes more homogeneous. The inequalities caused by effort and ability will continue into socialism. These inequalities are less important for Marx. No tinkering with the structure of society will remove them.

Since exploitation is rooted in positions, class positions become associated with antagonistic interests. Those in positions to exploit wish to preserve their ability to obtain advantage; those being exploited want to destroy the relationship that creates their disadvantage. The model includes a scenario, called the formation of revolutionary class consciousness, describing how the "structural" interests are translated into collective action. The stages are class awareness, class conflict, class struggle, and eventually the destruction of the relationships that define classes.

To Marx, exploitation in capitalist society is created in the employment relationship, but he pays no systematic attention to variation in employment relationships that would form classes within the employed labor force. In fact, I argue later that Marx probably conceived of only one type of employment relationship, at least in advanced capitalism. This is the employment relationship conceived of in classical and neoclassical economics. Regardless of whether the original exploitation theory is valid, it is of little assistance in providing a structural theory of inequality among positions that are jobs. The Marxist concept is useless for analyzing inequality and conflict within the labor market as opposed to the inequality and conflict between capitalists and workers.

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There is an even more important theoretical problem. It was Marx's great discovery that voluntary employment relationships create involuntary exploitation of one party by the other. The exploitation comes about by the appropriation by the capitalist of surplus value created by the worker. This assumes the validity of the labor theory of value. Unfortunately, this theory has been abandoned by everyone.² The labor theory of value generates a set of relationships among unobservables. It has great appeal as a claim of injustice but no appeal as an economic theory.

Abandoning the labor theory of value removes the basis for the whole theory of inequality and social change, unless some other concept of exploitation can be developed to explain inequality associated with class positions. This other concept should also make empirical requirements that can be met in analysis of labor market structures. The next section considers if the market power concept can provide such an alternative.

Class and Market Power

The Weberian concept of class as market power appears to provide a straightforward rationale for why classes create inequality. In light of the difficulties with the Marxist concept, it is understandable why the market power concept is appealing.

In the Weberian conception, classes are people with similar command over economic resources. The market creates inequality, and class is a proxy for variables that cause inequality in the market, such as occupation, skill, and property. Weberian classes group people according to their resources and their access to resources for obtaining welfare and well-being in the market, but class relations are usually not seen as the direct cause of inequality. Market mechanisms are responsible.

It is presumably to be expected that the market concept will identify positions in social structure associated with interests in preserving advantages and removing disadvantages caused by occupancy of these positions.

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However, since advantages and disadvantages are created in the market, the realizations of interests by different groups are not necessarily interdependent. In the market the advantage of some does not necessarily reduce the advantage of others. This will only happen when advantage is based on a mechanism of exploitation in the market. Identifying such a mechanism of exploitation is needed for the market concept to be useful in specifying class categories that are conflict groups rather than simply strata.

Roemer's (1982) reformulation of the Marxist exploitation idea is a useful starting point for such an effort. The basic idea is quite simple: Inequality in productive assets will produce exploitation in a market economy with private property and trade. Those with superior assets will need to work less to obtain the same level of welfare as those with inferior assets. If the superior assets were divided among the disadvantaged, they would be better off. Defining classes by absence and presence of property and by amount of property produces a class scheme correlating perfectly with the amount of exploitation.

Roemer's concept of exploitation creates a class concept in which inequalities among classes are created in the market. They are produced by returns to productive assets traded in the market. This market concept of class makes the theory consistent with modern economics. However, the development of the theory relies mainly on the consequences of returns to alienable productive assets—that is, physical property. Here the problem is to define a type of exploitation based on properties of positions in the labor market. This is not a matter dealt with extensively by Roemer (1982). Indeed, he does not emphasize the distinction between people and positions.

It is possible to derive some insights into the exploitation-creating properties of jobs by conceiving of exploitation as generated by economic rent. This seems consistent with Roemer's formulation. Returns on productive

assets are payments for use of factors of production. It is important to note that there are two types of productive assets: assets in inherently fixed supply and "normal" assets in variable supply. In the case of normal assets, an increase in return or pay for their use will generate a corresponding increase in the supply of such assets. The increase in supply will then reduce returns to the level obtained for other factors of production. In the long run, therefore, such assets do not create the type of inequality in which the welfare of those possessing the asset is obtained at the expense of those not possessing the asset. All assets will tend to provide the same return, and these returns in turn compensate for the consumption forgone when making the investment. The advantage of some caused by the return on their investments will not reduce the advantage of others.

However, some assets, such as fertile land and superior ability, may be in fixed supply. These assets create a "rent"—a payment that is in addition to the one needed to employ the assets. They produce advantages that are not Pareto-optimal. Those individuals not obtaining the rent are worse off than they would have been without the rent payments to those owning the assets in fixed supply. Roemer's idea of exploitation is consistent with inequalities created by rent-generating assets. These assets will satisfy his test for exploitation. The test is that dividing the assets among owners and nonowners will make the nonowners better off.³

To create a positional theory of inequality in the labor market, it is therefore necessary to search for rent-generating assets attached to employment positions. These assets will provide an advantage to the incumbent of the position not available to those not in the position. I show later that many employment positions, including some treated by recent scholars as class categories in the labor market, do not form class positions. In fact, not even all forms of rents generated in employment relationships will create class positions.

Class Formation

While the market power concept of class does identify a source of antagonistic interests in certain labor market structures, exploitation does not unavoidably create the conditions in which latent antagonistic interests result in manifest collective action. Indeed, Roemer (1988) shows that exploitation in the abstract may produce a number of paradoxical consequences. The class formation analyses of Giddens (1973), Parkin (1979), and Goldthorpe (1987) are useful for the identification of the conditions that make exploitation produce class action.

Class formation analysis relies on a simple theory of the formation of collective action. The theory is that persons with the same location in the class structure might realize over time their common interests and form class movements. This is a Durkheimian theory of mechanical solidarity emphasizing similarity and time together. If the boundaries between classes are relatively rigid, class incumbents may come to identify with their class and act in its behalf. Therefore, the study of mobility patterns becomes a major vehicle for the identification of social classes that might become actors in changing social structure. This is an approach already suggested by Weber's remarks on the matter (Weber 1968). Although there are other sources of "class structuration" (Giddens 1973), such as residential segregation, the analysis of mobility processes represents the best-known empirical example of the class formation perspective.

The class formation approach assumes that some theory explains why classes are unequal and why they have antagonistic interests. While silent on the nature of this theory, it adds an important requirement to the definition of positions that create class categories. Incumbency in these positions must have some permanency over time. Thus, to identify class categories within the employed part of the labor force, we need to know the stability of the employment relationships that create the corresponding job categories. This dimension

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sion of employment relationships is the major focus in the remainder of this essay.

In conclusion, exploitation among groups within the labor market has been argued to derive from rent-generating properties of jobs. The mere existence of exploitation is not sufficient for the formation of classes. The class formation perspective suggests identifying properties of jobs generating stable interests and stable membership.

Employment Relationships and Class Properties of Jobs

In this section, I briefly survey the properties of jobs that generate economic rents and stable membership and then ask if some of the proposals for defining class categories in the labor market satisfy these necessary conditions.

Jobs are defined by employment relationships. They form (often implicit) contracts between employer and employee about the execution of certain tasks in return for payment over a period of time. It is useful to characterize employment relations according to who typically has the initiative in terminating the contract. The result is a continuum ranging from employment relationships that are completely *open* (the employer will dismiss the worker whenever a better worker is available for the job) to those that are *closed* (the worker typically has the initiative and therefore high job security). For an elaboration of the distinction and the arguments for when open and closed jobs are likely to emerge, see Sørensen (1983) and Sørensen and Kalleberg (1981).

Open and Closed Relationships

Open employment relationships, of course, assume the employer knows that a different worker can do the job better and that there are no significant costs in dismissing the incumbent. They are assumed in the basic price theory applied to competitive labor markets that constitutes neoclassical economic theory

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of wage rates. In this scenario, wage rates are a function of individual productivity; equally productive persons should, except for short-term disequilibria, obtain the same wage.

Open employment relationships define jobs that do not satisfy the requirement of permanency needed to create class categories within the labor market. They are of considerable interest anyway. First, they establish a baseline for determining positional sources of inequality. This baseline is the market or competitive wage. Second, in the present context, it is of interest to note that Marx saw open employment relations as being typical of advanced capitalism.

Marx saw the essence of capitalist society in the treatment of labor as a commodity, purchased and sold on the market in the manner of other commodities. This is the very scenario assumed in neoclassical economic theory of the labor market. Such a theory was not available to Marx. Marginalism had not yet been invented. Further, the question of how different prices of labor are created in the labor market apparently was of little interest to him. Thus, we find nowhere in Marx an analysis of wage inequalities similar to the analysis presented by John Stuart Mill. There is, however, nothing to suggest that Marx would not have accepted the now-standard theory about this wage structure. In particular, Marx's analysis of the dynamics of capitalist society predicts the development of a labor market satisfying the assumptions made in neoclassical labor economics. As Roemer puts it: "The neoclassical model of the competitive economy is not a bad place for Marxists to start their study of idealized capitalism" (Roemer 1988, 196).

This view of Marx's "theory" of the labor market of course implies that Marxist theory will be the same as neoclassical theory in conceptualizing income differences among the employed. There will be no subclasses created in the labor market, consistent with the basic homogenization thesis of Karl Marx. The dynamics of capitalism will destroy those deviating employment relationships that survive from earlier modes of production, such as ar-

tisans. With this perspective, the emiseration thesis is not a prediction of wage equality. It is a prediction of a uniform labor market with no positional advantages but with inequality due to skill and ability that will remain also into socialism and only disappear with the ultimate compensating differentials introduced by communism.

It should be noted that open employment relationships may generate economic rents. Scarce and unusual abilities may command a rent so that the person with the rare ability has an advantage obtained at the expense of the welfare of others. Others might be better off if the scarce ability was equally distributed. This does not create classes. Abilities are attributes of people and not of positions, and no reorganization of labor market structures will change the distribution of innate and unique talents.

Skills acquired through training and experience create inequality, but they do not necessarily command rents. The main economic theory about the acquisition of skills—human capital theory—argues that training is undertaken at a cost and results in skills that increase the pay for the individual. Training will only be undertaken if the returns equal the costs. If returns exceed costs, more workers will seek training, thereby lowering the returns on skills. Therefore, in equilibrium, differentials caused by skills exactly compensate for training costs. The cumulated lifetime earnings of people with unequal skills will be equal, except for the variation due to compensating differentials, to effort, and to ability and other resources that affect training costs (such as family background). Skills of general usefulness in the labor market will produce cross-sectional inequality. However, when returns on training equal costs of training, skills do not generate rents and therefore cannot be a basis for exploitation.

Skills may generate rents if training opportunities are in fixed, limited supply because of restrictions of admissions to schools and apprenticeships. This will create an advantage that is a rent. It will be a higher return on the skill than would be necessary to bring about

training for the skill. There are numerous examples of situations in which this seems to occur: the training for medical doctors; for most crafts and other skilled occupations; and for artisans and other self-employed occupations typical of the *petit bourgeoisie*. However, in open employment relations, these rents do not create class categories within the labor market. Open jobs do not provide the needed permanency. Furthermore—regardless of whether skills are rent-generating—they are not properties of positions.⁴ The advantages produced outside the labor market seem difficult to maintain unless the advantaged group also can restrict access to the employment of these skills or their substitutes.

Closed employment relationships satisfy the requirement of permanency. Furthermore, closed employment creates the positions that have the potential of providing advantages that may be obtained independently of the productivity of persons. However, only when the resulting job rewards systematically differ from the competitive wage over some period of time will these properties be class properties.

There is a considerable literature on the causes of closed employment relationships. Specific on-the-job training, financed by the employer (Becker 1964), and transaction costs (Williamson 1975) are among the most important causes. These explanations suggest that closed employment may be more efficient than open employment in certain production technologies. If this is so, closed employment does not create rents and therefore does not create the bases for separate classes within the labor market.

If training opportunities are rationed and employment relationships closed, economic rents should emerge. It is indeed in such job structures that collective action to preserve positional advantage has been more successful. The resulting social organizations, such as craft unions, are particularly important when the use of credentials is underwritten by the state in the form of licensing. This is also the case for professions, such as medicine and law, in which the restriction on employment

opportunities is not at the level of a job but at the level of the occupation. It is important to note that a measure of skill level, such as educational attainment, is not in itself informative as to whether skills are rent-generating or not. We need information on the actual rationing of training opportunities.⁵ This makes many proposals to define "new" classes by skills and education of quite dubious validity.

Classes in Internal Labor Markets

The use of authority and the use of incentives are properties of closed employment relationships that are solutions to the main problem for the employer involved: the problem of how to match wage rates and productivity, especially effort, in the absence of open competition. Both solutions have been used to justify the emergence of class categories within the labor market. What follows is a brief evaluation of a recent proposal to use authority and incentive structures to define class categories within the labor market.

Authority relations are an inherent part of the employment relationship. Marx emphasizes the importance of authority for employment contracts: That is, when workers sell their labor power, they also sell control over their own activities.⁶ Indeed, authority is often identified as the basis for the formation of class categories (Dahrendorf 1959; Wright 1979), and among many sociologists of the labor market, authority has become the defining characteristic of "class" (Kalleberg and Berg 1987).

The class schemes using authority relations to define classes often do not provide a rationale in terms of exploitation mechanisms. It is possible, for example, that Dahrendorf's scheme (1959) may be justified by a justice theory of exploitation, but the theory is not presented. It is difficult to provide a rationale in terms of an economic theory of exploitation. Wright (1985) suggests that there is an advantage accruing to authority that derives from having control over the organization of production. The organization itself is seen as a productive asset, and authority becomes a

measure of the asset. This approach is not convincing. The asset of organization is not in fixed supply and therefore does not necessarily generate rents. Further, those in authority in an organization do not "own" the organization of production; they execute it. Finally, authority is not a measure of the value of the asset—of the productive effectiveness of an organizational arrangement. It is difficult, without an incentive argument, to formulate a convincing theory for why those with authority should have higher wages than those who produce. Wright does not try.

Incentive systems provide a way of reducing the costs of exercising authority, in particular, the cost of wages to supervisors. Two such incentive systems have been suggested to create class categories. In "efficiency wage theory" (see, e.g., Akerlof and Yellen 1986), the argument is that paying above-market wages creates an incentive for high performance. Wright (1979) suggests the existence of such a "loyalty" wage for his class category of "semiautonomous employees." However, the efficiency wage increases the productivity of the worker. It therefore need not deviate from the competitive wage, that is, the wage obtained in the open labor market by the worker exercising the same level of effort. The efficiency wage is a solution to the possible inefficiency caused by closed employment relationships. If the solution works, there are no positional advantages caused by efficiency wages.

Promotion systems in internal labor markets are another important solution to the incentive problems created by closed employment relations. It is a common and old idea among sociologists (Weber 1968; Stinchcombe 1974) that promotion schemes can be important for generating effort. In promotion schemes, inequality in the cross section clearly is associated with occupancy of positions. The question is whether the advantages and disadvantages associated with positions constitute rents and therefore represent exploitation.

It is important to consider the career implications of the promotion scheme. The job ladders create an upward-sloping career trajec-

tory. To the extent that the age slope in productivity is lower than the slope in wages, older workers will be paid more than their productivity would justify in a different job structure. If firms maximize profits, they should attempt to equalize total wages paid over the career to the overall productivity of the worker. Younger workers, therefore, will be paid less than their productivity would justify elsewhere.

The implications of this scenario for positional advantages and interests are straightforward but perhaps surprising. For the duration of the employment contract, the overall outcome may well be that there is no advantage in lifetime income of entering an internal labor market. In other words, access to an internal labor market does not necessarily provide a positional advantage that is a rent.⁷ The situation is much the same as the one predicted by human capital theory for the returns to training, where the inequality observed in the cross section also misinforms about the overall advantage.

This leaves the use of rationed skills and credentials in matching persons to closed jobs as the main source of positional advantages that can form class categories within the labor market. There is nothing surprising in the proposition that closed skilled jobs for which training opportunities are rationed will form the main example of such categories. These are the positions that form the traditional basis of craft unions and professional organizations. Nevertheless, in recent work on the labor market, scholars employing class analysis strangely ignore these categories.

Conclusion

The general argument has been that the choice of basic concepts in stratification research is a question of balancing theoretical power and specificity with empirical requirements of concepts. The Marxist class concept is the most powerful, but it is also the most unsatisfactory concept for analyzing inequality and conflict within the large majority of

the population of modern industrialized societies. The stratum concept of class and the concept of socioeconomic status pose the fewest empirical requirements. They are also least informative about the causes and consequences of inequality.

Some analysts see the choice between class and status concepts as a fundamental one. Certain class concepts indeed make stronger theoretical claims than the socioeconomic status concepts (which basically make none). Unless one believes that Marxist theory explains everything, this does not mean class concepts are more useful. It depends on what is being studied. The Marxist class concept and the market concept may be useful for studies of political processes and social movements, since they make claims about the sources of conflict and social change. However, in studies of attainment and in analyses that predict behavior or attitudes from the level of welfare obtained by individuals, the Marxist or market concepts of class are less useful than socioeconomic status. These class categories often are more heterogeneous than socioeconomic status categories. Further, since SEI and related measures form continuous variables, socioeconomic status is very convenient for use in the estimation of individual linear regression models. The stratum concept of class also emphasizes homogeneity, yet the discrete form may make it an awkward variable to use in attainment studies. Nevertheless, this discrete form may make it especially useful when the emphasis is on certain outcomes, as in mobility research, or when it is desired to study the consequences that changes in industrial structure have for the distribution of welfare.

I have tried to show that an economic theory of rent can be used to identify class categories that have the potential to form class actors. The Weberian idea of prestige or status groups also makes the claim that such groups practice exclusion. This suggests that status groups establish strategies to protect an advantage that is threatened because it is obtained at the expense of others. The market concept of class, therefore, may be seen as a

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latent basis for status groups consistent with Weber's discussion. There is one difficulty. It has been argued that market-generated class categories form around rents and property, whereas status groups presumably are about honor or prestige. The transition from rents to honor needs analysis.

The controversies in sociology over the last twenty years have surrounded the choice of basic concepts with a minefield of ideological and epistemological connotations. This confusion has not been useful for research and theoretical development. The main message of this essay is to treat the basic concepts as tools useful for some purposes but not for every purpose.

Notes

I am indebted to Patricia Chang, Liah Greenfield, Annette Sørensen, and Jesper B. Sørensen for valuable comments and suggestions.

1. There are, of course, some variations, but they are relatively minor. A comprehensive treatment is provided by Treiman (1977).
2. The start of the demise of the Marxist labor theory of value is usually attributed to the German economist Eugene von Böhm-Bawerk a hundred years ago. The history of the debate has been reviewed by many: See, for example, Gordon (1990) for a review that includes the attempt by so-called analytical Marxists (e.g., G. A. Cohen, Jon Elster, and John Roemer) to revise the basis for Marxist theory.
3. It is important to note that cross-sectional inequality, in my opinion, does not necessarily provide evidence for exploitation. When some individuals have higher income because of the returns they receive on earlier investments, they are being compensated for consumption forgone when making the investment. Those who do not receive the return, because they did not make the investment, would obviously gladly share in the returns. However, they should then also "pay back" the added gratification they received when choosing consumption over investment. This hypothetical exchange would only be advantageous to those owning assets when these assets are in fixed supply and rents are extracted. The need to consider lifetime incomes when identifying exploitation becomes important for my criticism later of recent formulations of class concepts within the labor market.

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4. Roemer (1982) does not provide a discussion of this implication of human capital theory in his formulation of "skill assets" as a basis for exploitation. In fact, he does not present a precise definition of skills. In one place he seems to refer to any type of endowment that leads to unequal productivity (1982, 111); in another he explicitly states, "let us treat skills as embodied and innate" (1982, 24). Only the latter should generate rents. Wright (1985) uses the former interpretation and therefore confuses returns with rents. Wright does attempt to make skills a property of positions by defining "skill requirements" of jobs.

5. Wright (1985) violates this principle by operationalizing skill assets as levels of educational attainment. He identifies what he calls skill requirements of positions in an attempt to implement Roemer's notion of exploitation based on skill assets. However, the concept of skill requirements does not distinguish between skills that generate true rents and those for which the income payoff is merely compensation for training costs.

6. The importance attached to authority in Marxist theory seems to contradict the argument presented previously that Marx would have accepted the neoclassical scenario for the labor market in which authority has no role. There is no doubt that Marx thought that the authority exercised by capitalists was important for the creation of classes. However, the importance of authority derives from Marx's belief in the labor theory of value. This theory implies that the wage paid to the worker is independent of his productivity—it represents the cost of reproducing the worker. Therefore, the amount of surplus generated will depend on how much work the employer extracts from the labor purchased. However, if the labor theory of value is abandoned, the need for authority disappears. In the open employment relationships assumed in modern marginal productivity theory, workers are paid according to their productivity, including their effort. As a result, effort is of no concern to the firm. Workers who do not work hard are simply paid less than workers who work hard.

7. Internal labor markets also create other problems for class analysis; see Sørensen (1991) for a discussion.

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Part IV

Generating Inequality

Social Mobility

Classical Viewpoints
Modern Analyses of Class Mobility
Modern Analyses of Income Mobility and Poverty Spells

Status and Income Attainment

Basic Models
Social Psychological Models
The "New Structuralism"
Social Capital, Networks, and Attainment
Rational Action Approaches to Mobility and Attainment