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# What's Left of Wright:
# a Theoretical and Methodological Critique of E.O. Wright's Theory of Social Class

by

David S. Hubka

a thesis
submitted to the faculty of graduate studies and research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Department of Sociology, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "What's Left of Wright: a theoretical and methodological critique of E.O. Wright's theory of social class" submitted by David S. Hubka In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Sociology.

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## Abstract

The current version of Marxian class research developed by Erik Olin Wright is assessed. The tradition of structuralist Marxism that Wright most closely represents is described. Wright is situated within his academic setting as a member of a new radical left, motivated by the positivist demands of contemporary sociology. The first version of Wright's project (1976) is presented, wherein he reformulates Poulantzas' theory of class boundaries into a statistical typology of capitalist class structure. The critical responses to this typology are restated. The second version (1986a) is then outlined, and methodological issues pertaining to 1) Wright's divergences from Marx's theory and observations, and 2) the invalidations of Wright's assumptions and causal inferences in which these divergences result, are formulated. The focus then shifts to a statistical application of Wright's class typology. An evaluation of this typology is made with respect to a host of variables indicative of Marxist class boundaries. A simple manual/non-manual labour distinction is shown to be more predictive of Marxist class processes such as class consciousness, operationalized more specifically as class identification and the class polarization of political culture. The results of this analysis suggest that Wright's typology is not only theoretically unsound, but also lacks the explanatory value predicted by Wright. Summary conclusions are then drawn, followed by possible alternate methods and operationalizations which better reflect both Marx's intellectual work and political agenda.

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## I. Introduction

The concept of social stratification presumes that individuals occupy or can be theorized to occupy positions within a ranked, hierarchical structure determined by variables of inequality such as income, power, or gender. Though there is debate as to the existence of discrete strata boundaries or divisions, it is generally accepted that each stratum possesses a certain degree of homogeneity with respect to given criteria. Issues of the identification and measurement of social strata, however, are presently confounded by widely varying and commonly opposed indices of stratification.

Sociological class theory emerges primarily from the traditions of Karl Marx and Max Weber. Though both theorized the determination of class boundaries within the context of 19th century industrial capitalism and attributed central importance to economic factors, their class theories are opposed. The identification of the source of profit in systems of capital is useful focus in understanding this opposition.

For Marx, principal class polarization occurs around the most fundamental relations of production. In this case, the unpropertied working class sells its labour power in exchange for a wage. The bourgeois class, given ownership of the means of production, appropriates the surplus value of this labour in the form of profit. This exploitative relation of the bourgeois and working classes polarizes these classes, and hence creates a potential for transformation of the working class from a "class in itself" to a "class for itself". The working class as such changes from an abstract category to a class with collective consciousness. Change in Marxist class structure thus comes about through contradictions implicit in systems of capital. That classes cannot be identified outside of class struggle is an essential component of Marxist class theory. Class is *defined* by class struggle.

By way of criticizing Marxist class theory, Weber located the source of capital profit within the market. Class boundaries are determined by individual differences of "market capacity". Though identifying capital as a source of market capacity, Weber included the status-oriented sources of skill and education. These criteria result in a number of classes which diverge from those production-oriented classes prescribed by Marx. They are: the

propertied class, the intelligentsia, the administrative and managerial class, the traditional petty bourgeois, and the working class.

While the work of both Marx and Weber provide divergent examples of *relational* conceptions of class, contemporary research also involves *gradational* conceptions. Gradational class is described by its critics, such as Erik Olin Wright, as one which presumes a quantitative, spatial ordering of groups (1975, p.5). In this, sense there are perceived to be classes which exist on a quantitatively higher level than others, for instance, upper, middle, and lower classes. Regardless of the ongoing debate of continuous versus homogeneous classes, the essential concept among gradational models of class is that of hierarchical units of stratification. The typical determinant of class in gradational conceptions is that of income, and as such, argues Wright, this conception renders class virtually indistinguishable from income (1979, p.8).

Relational conceptions of class do not define classes along a continuum determining which class possess more of a given criteria than others, but rather define classes through their qualitative position within a relational structure. For instance, the working class is a seller of labour power, while the capitalist class is a buyer of labour power. While gradational views of class define classes according to a quantitative determinant, relational views define classes according to qualitative determinants of social relations. Wright argues that though gradational views *imply* social relations (eg. that lower classes are only lower in relation to higher classes), they fall short of comprehending the relations which are merely reflected in such variables as income levels (1979, p.7). In this sense, gradational definitions of class do not capture the underlying dynamics of social relations and hence inadequate to determining and predicting such processes as class struggle.[1]

As a means of recapturing these relational dynamics, Wright has reconstructed the theory of class boundaries proposed by Nicos Poulantzas. Wright's purpose of elaborating structuralist class theory is to construct a class typology which can be applied through survey research. The combination of a socialist political agenda with a currently dominant North

[1] It will be argued in following chapters that Wright's typology also fails to capture all of these processes.

American sociological method, is an admirable goal. Wright's specific attempt, however, is foiled by his deviations from Marx's method, or, in other words, survey research design cannot be employed to test the findings of an historical materialist method. Before attempting to identify and illustrate these difficulties, it is useful to overview the relevant proponents of this form of structuralist Marxism, and to locate Wright within his academic tradition.

**A. Structuralist Marxism**

The genesis of structuralist Marxism was during the post-war de-Stalinization of Western Communist party doctrine. Benton (1984) observes that the unusually high intellectual quality of French political culture at this time explains the divergent traditions of (1) existentialists such as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty on the one hand, and (2) Althusserian structuralism on the other. Although these positions are opposed on several important issues, such as the iron-clad law of history, both are attempts to distance Stalinism from Marxism. According to Benton (1984), however, "scientific analysis is precisely what the humanist philosophy does not have to offer" (p.15). Thus, for Althusser, establishing the scientific status of Marxism had both political and intellectual objectives. Althusser's contributions to the Parti Communiste Français were opposed only by a humanistic voluntarism (Sartre) which provided no viable tactics or strategy (p.16).

Althusser rejected this perspective on the basis that it promoted a right-wing opportunism within the PCF. His rejection of humanist principles led unfortunately to the widespread view that Althusser's work was merely "Stalinism... in a new vocabulary" (p.17). Benton (1984) rejects the charge that Althusserianism is a reconstituted form of Stalinism. "To apply the methods of Stalin to kill off his (Althusser's) ghost is to corrode the personal and intellectual conditions for a living, open, and diverse intellectual culture on the left" (p.2). He (1984) argues that Althusser fully endorsed humanist ethics, but rejected its lack of "theoretical tools", which were necessary to oppose Stalinism (p.17). Althusser's de-Stalinism project in turn effected his theoretical development through, for instance, an opposition to Stalin's economism and technical determinism (p.17).

Althusser's structuralism is partially influenced by both the structuralist anthropological "myth" analysis of Levi-Strauss and the structuralist psychoanalytic "re-working" of Lacan. While Althusser is not the sole influence of all structural Marxists, his work can be characterized as the most influential in this area. The structural Marxist account of class analysis of Poulantzas (1973; 1975) [2] has a strong affinity to Althusser's work. The work of Wright (1978), while developing structuralist categories of class as a means to the statistical investigation of class structure, diverges substantially from Poulantzas (1975). Wright's most recent work in this area (1980) is so completly divorced from Poulantzas', that some suggest it is no longer Marxist (Giddens, 1985; Rose and Marshall, 1986).

## Althusserian Structuralism

### Ideology and Science

The Althusserian critique of the social sciences attempts to reach beyond the failure to define a unit of analysis along a subject/object continuum, and addresses the relation of science to ideology. Althusser asserts that although it is hindered by underlying ideologies, Marxism has the potential of forming a new science of historical materialism. He thus calls for a new science of history to redefine historical materialism and make the working class its theoretical object. Althusser's theory names the proletariat the object of Marxism and Marxism the object of Althusserianism (Fraser, 1979, p.440). Paradoxically, Althusser views Marx as both a great scientific discoverer, and yet as one who failed miserably in providing a unified and complete scientific paradigm.

Addressing the interpretation of Marx, Althusser theorizes that "the text of history is not a text in which the a voice (the logos) speaks, but the inaudible and illegible notation of the effects of a structure of structures" (1970a, p.17). "We must abandon the mirror myths of immediate vision and reading and conceive knowledge as a production" (ibid., p.24). Althusser argues that the problematic presented in *Capital* has the potential as a *totality* " and

[2] Poulantzas, according to Benton (1984) has had a noteable influence upon the field of urban sociology through the work of Manuel Castell's *The Urban Question.*

hence the absolute determination of the forms in which all problems must be posed" (p.25). It is necessary, however, in interpreting *Capital* to apply the object of analysis itself, that is, Marxist philosophy. It is through this transformation of latent into manifest that the production of knowledge is made possible (p.24).

Althusser argues that empiricism actually implies two objects: the real object, and the object of knowledge - which is the essence of the real object, but in fact only partially represents it (1970a, p.40). These underlying assumptions represent part of an ideological "contamination" of the logic discourse which Althusser uses as a general critique. Marx, he argues, made a distinction similar to that of empiricism between real knowledge and the object of knowledge, while further distinguishing each as having a "peculiar production process" (p.41). It is thus through this critique of empiricism that Althusser is able to promote a scientificity of Marxism.

In *For Marx*, (1970b, pp.180-200), Althusser claims that Marxists have been misled in believing that the later Marx remained a Hegelian. This belief has furthermore resulted in an overly economistic and historicist interpretation of Marx's concept of contradictions. As *pure phenomenon* (ibid., p.97-100), Althusser argues that "the simplicity of the Hegelian contradiction is made possible *only* by the simplicity of the *internal principle* that constitutes the essence of any historical period" (p. 105), and furthermore that "the capital-labour contradiction is never simple but always specified by the historically concrete forms and circumstances in which it is exercised" (p.106). The circumstances are a function of the *national past* and existing *world context* (ibid).

Althusser is repeatedly critical of what Marx *failed* to say, that is, Marx's "symptomatic silence". For instance, Marx deals with the "initial abstractions on which the work of transformation is performed" but fails to elaborate on these abstractions (1970a, p.88). Marx's silence, argues Althusser, tends to wrongly evoke the "natural discourse of ideology" or, more specifically for instance, empiricism (ibid). These ommissions occur throughout Marx's work and thus prompt reinterpretation, or, more often, misinterpretation.

In describing Marx's failure to develop a concrete theory of time and history, Althusser suggests that the epistemological distinction of synchrony/diachrony is useful (1970a, pp.107-8). Given that historicism and humanism both stem from the same ideological problematic, and that a problematic is essentially a theoretical totality, Marx, argues Althusser, is no more historicist than he is humanist (ibid., p.119). Althusser suggests that the historicist-humanist interpretation of Marxism arose out of a need to motivate *individuals* to participate in the 1917 revolution (p. 140) and is maintained today as a result of another of his "silences": "the themes of spontaneism rushed into Marxism through this open breach - the humanist universalism of the proletariat" (p.141).

Balibar (1978) argues that while Althusser claims to have borrowed the concept of epistemological break from Bachelard, it is in fact an original concept of Althusser's (p.208). Bachelardian epistemology, he points out, rests on the concept of an *epistemological obstacle*. Bachelard fully rejected the notion of the "progressive continuity of knowledge" and as such argues that it is only through unprecedented, structured epistemological acts (ie, synthesis) that knowledge can overcome these obstacles. These acts represent a distinct singular unity of theoretical forms, the concepts of which *cannot* be interchanged. This is contrary to all previous philosophies of science which proposed that theory is of the permanence of reason rather than an unpredictable historicity of knowledge. An adequate philosophy of science is for Bachelard one which reproduces within itself "the revolutionary characteristics of the modern 'new scientific mind' which reaches beyond traditional empiricism" (Balibar, 1978, p.210).

Althusser, in borrowing the Bachelardian epistemological concept of *rupture* or "break", applies it to a new field of historical materialism. Balibar (1978) argues that Althusser is extending Bachelard's concept of idealising objectivity in order to illustrate the unity of Marxist theory with its ideological prehistory. In doing so, however, Althusser is applying a concept which Bachelard saw as only applicable to the mathematical disciplines (p.215). Althusser thus creates within history an objective knowledge by equating the epistemological break of Marx with those of the mathematical sciences. Balibar implies that

while the objectives of these two epistemological formulations are opposed, they are analogously similar and as such are equally valid (p.216-27).

In sum, Balibar proposes that Althusser's use of Bachelard's epistemological rupture is not sympathetic, but rather poses serious problems for Bachelard's epistemology. Althusser did not merely establish an epistemological coupling of truth and error in Marxist scientific terms, but rather "transferred the whole problem of the constitution of sciences into the field of the materialist (historical) theory of ideologies" (Balibar, 1978, p.217).

Benton (1984) describes the paradox that while structural Marxism is the strongest proponent of Marxism as an objective science, its philosophical and theoretical influences are directly opposed to objective knowledge (p.181). This essential tension, he argues, resulted in a rejection of Althusser's critique of empiricism by its original supporters. By example, Benton describes the objections of Hindess and Hirst to Althusserian epistemology. [3] First, epistemology distinguishes between a knowing subject and an object of knowledge (p.182). Empiricism provides that "sense-datum" are a "privileged level of discourse" in that it establishes an evidential basis for theories (p.183). Hindess and Hirst, however, question the basis for justifying this privilege. In a related critique of rationalism, they provide an example of a "dogmatic closure" of discourse (Hindess and Hirst, 1975). "This incoherence", they conclude, " reveals Balibar's general theory of modes of production to be a speculative history - to be a rationalization and reconstruction of what it takes to be a real object" (p.320).

In a similar attack on the concept of ideology Althusser exchanges an epistemological argument for an ontological one (Benton, 1984, p.186). Althusser's argument of structural causality distinguishes this form of causality from both linear causality (ie the effect of one element on another) and expressive causality (which involves a reduction of the constituent parts to an essense of totality). Structure, in this sense, represents a causality *immanent* in its effects and distinctly *not* exterior to them. Implicit in this notion is Althusser's interpretation of Marx as an anti-humanist, as well as his identification of humanism as an ideology (Geras, 1972, p.76). Geras points out that while humanism is taken to be an ideology by structural

[3] For Althusser, "the critique of empiricism is generalized to cover all forms of epistemological discourse" (Benton, 1984, p.182).

Marxists, its status as a science is fully rejected. With this rejection, structural Marxists assert that subjects are not "concrete individuals" but are rather the "definition and distribution of... the relations of production" (p.67).

In criticizing the assigned scientific status of Marxism, Geras focuses on Althusser's silence in regard to distinguishing Marxism as science from the mathematical and physical sciences. Althusser's very assumption that these two forms of science are equal, argues Geras, implies an *ideological* assumption that these forms of science are independent of social formation (p.83). Thus, while Althusser claims to have superceded ideology, he has in fact not done so.

**Reproduction and ISAs**

In his contribution to *Reading Capital* (1970a) Balibar first carefully describes the conceptual prominence of Marx's modes of production (pp.208-53) in order to develop a conception of the succession of modes of production. He asserts, however, that a second concept at the same level of abstraction is necessary (p.257). Balibar argues that a theory of transition relies on the definition of a mode of production "by revealing the singularity of its terms" (pp.257-8). In other words, as an Althusserian, Balibar's interpretation of Marxism is highly structuralist and systematic.

Simple reproduction essentially refers to the repetitions and continuation of the productive process (1970a, pp.259-64). The reproduction of social relations, on the other hand, refers to the various "moments" or "spheres" of production, which, while independent from each other, are all determined by the laws of production. These spheres include circulation, individual consumption, distribution of the modes of production etc. [4] (p.271). According to Marx, each of these spheres is determined by production *regardless of its mode*. Thus, argues Balibar, Marx is able to explain how social relations exist during a transformation of the modes of production (p.271). This supports Balibar's structuralist theoretical underpinnings by illustrating and promoting the consistency of structure.

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[4] Subjectivity does *not* enter into this determination of production.

While explaining the mechanism of transformation, Balibar points out that transition cannot be a "moment of destructuration" (p.273). Furthermore, the persistence of structure implies that transitions are "terms of manifestation" of this structure (ibid). In other words, the transfiguration of the capitalist mode of production is a result of the contradictions immanent *in its very structure*. Given that the structure is in fact the object of transformation, and that the relations of production are dialectical processes, Balibar argues that transition is not a single process, and as such can occur without destructuration (p.274).

In his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971) Althusser initially extends Balibar's discussion of the reproduction of the productive process. In a process of self-criticism, Althusser points out that the reproduction of labour-power remains unexplained by his own problematic. It requires "not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order" (Althusser, 1971, p.128). This submission is ensured through ideological subjection. Althusser extends the Marxist notion of the state by distinguishing not only *state power* and *state apparatus* but also the *ideological state apparatus* (ISA). ISAs exist in various institutional forms such as church, schools, and family all of which embody the ruling state ideology. [5]

Ideology is defined as the "substratum of ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group" (Althusser, 1971, p.149). Althusser asserts that while specific ideologies have histories, ideology in general is eternal and as such has no history. Ideological disortions of the real world present a system of "imaginary relationships of an individual to the relations of production" (ibid., p.155). These imaginary relations are in turn, through the practice of appearances, endowed with a material existence" (p.157). Althusser asserts that individuals carry out material practice on the basis of ideology and in fact "*must* act according to their ideas" (p.157). It is through this structural determination of an individual's ideological influences that the reproduction of social relations is ensured. While ISAs provide the structural means of this determination, Althusser incorporates a model

[5] This is essentially a reformulation of Gramsci's notion of institutions which "exercise cultural hegemony... and are governed by the principles of reproduction" (Gane, p.438) with which Althusser integrated his own conception of the mechanisms of ideology and anti-historical epistemology.

of Lacanian psychoanalysis whereby the "overall reproductive requirements of the social formation are inscribed in the subjective world of individual social actors." (Benton, 1984, p. 101).

Benton (1984) identifies three objections to this essentially functionalist account of ideological subjection, the first two of which were identified by Althusser himself (p. 101). Gramsci's account of state hegemonic domination, from which Althusser borrowed the principles of his ISAs, involved a synthesis of consent and coercion into a single process. Althusser, on the other hand, distinguished ISAs as having internal forms of coercion, while RSAs (Repressive State Apparatus), which enforce a 'wider social authority', do so specifically through ideology (eg. legitimation of armed force leadership) (p. 101). The second objection which Althusser predicted was the fact that his list of ISAs are essentially of private rather than state domain. Althusser attempts to avoid this question by claiming that their *functions* are essentially in favor of the state.

A more serious criticism of ISAs is that they are apparently not homogeneous, and in fact are evidently so radically heterogeneous that their similar reproductive functions are brought into question (p.103). Similarly, Althusser's assertion that the school and the family are the dominant ISAs in capitalist societies (with the rationale that they function as the reproduction of commodified labour power) implies that families and schools are solely economic institutions (p.103).[6] This essentially economistic functionalism was fundamentally opposed to the tenets of Althusserian epistomology and as such reflected a series of conceptual, sytematic problems.

**Poulantzas and State Capitalism**

The work of Poulantzas (1973) represents an attempt to theorize state politics and capitalist class structure from an Althusserian perspective. Poulantzas first asserts that classes cannot be defined outside of class struggle, but also advocates a distinction between class

[6] This brought serious criticisms from feminists who were attempting to develop a gender-specific theory of stratification, the basis of which relied heavily on a non-economistic conception of the family.

struggle and "*class position* in the *conjuncture*" (p.27-8). For Poulantzas, to reduce class determination to class position is to risk the error of voluntarism.

Poulantzas (1973) rejects the direct role of *economic ownership* and *possession* in determining the class position of the bourgeoisie. Economic ownership in this sense is not juridicial ownership (p.29), but rather "the power to assign the means of production to given uses and so to dispose of the products obtained" (p.28). Possession, on the other hand, is defined as "the capacity to put the means of production into operation" (p.28). Thus, the production process and the relations of production (ie, the distribution of agents into social classes) determine the economic sphere (p.28). Poulantzas, however, breaks from Marxist tradition at this point in stating that purely economic criteria are not sufficient to determine and locate social classes "and that it becomes absolutely necessary to refer to positions within the ideological and political relations of the social division of labour", especially when conceptualizing reproduction of class boundaries (p.35).

This combination of economic with political and ideological criteria, according to Benton (1984), creates a problem in defining the class boundaries of contemporary capitalist states. Poulantzas argues that wage labourers must be politically and ideologically homogeneous in order to constitute a class. If this criteria is applied, however, one observes a separate class much larger than the traditional Marxist proletariat. The proletariat is, in effect, dwarved by this large intermediate class (p.145). Poulantzas' solution is to identify this intermediate as a class fraction (ie, *new petty bourgeosie*). This fraction is situated within the same class as the traditional petty bourgeoisie in that they exhibit the same ideological and political interests (p.37-8), even though they have fundamentally diverse economic characteristics.

Benton (1984) claims that this tactic is a result of Poulantzas' own political opposition to certain PCF policies of political affiliation. The PCF at the time was interested in maintaining the political independence of this "intermediate class" in order to maintain the possibility of establishing an alliance based in common economic interests. Benton, however, criticizes Poulantzas' logic here, pointing out that it indicates an overly economistic notion of

"interests" which also implies that only classes exhibit such interests (p.146).

Poulantzas' theory of hegemonic leadership (following Gramsci) has contributed much to strategic debates in this area. Poulantzas (1973) distinguishes the hegemonic class or fraction from the *reigning* class or fraction, which refers to that class or fraction "from which the upper personnel of the state apparatuses are recruited" (p.45). An example is that of turn of the century Britain, in which "the hegemonic class fraction was the financial (banking) bourgeoisie", while the upper administration personnel (ie the reigning class or fraction) were recruited from the aristocracy (ibid.). The consequences of this distinction are: (1) it is difficult to identify the "real hegemony" behind the open political arena, and (2) an over-emphasis tends to be placed on discussing the political relations between the hegemonic and reigning class or fractions (p.45-6).

Poulantzas' logic of the nature of hegemony, moreover, becomes obscured and, according to Jessop (1982) is fundamentally contradictory (p.183). Regardless of Poulantzas' claim to emphasize economic determinacy "in the last instance", Jessop charges Althusser's influence with *overpoliticization* of relative autonomy. Poulantzas' use of relative autonomy, as a means of describing the institutional autonomy of the state, which is necessary for hegemonic organization, becomes problematic when also contextualized in class struggle. Jessop (1982) argues that this political action of class struggle necessitates *two* forms of relative autonomy in Poulantzas' analysis of the state: structuralist and conjunctural (p.182-3). Poulantzas' insistence on the primacy of class struggle over structural causation is reflected, according to Jessop, in his "increasing assertions that class struggles are reproduced within the heart of the state apparatus, and in his growing recognition of the tendency toward disunity in the state apparatus" (p.183). [7]

[7] Benton similarly criticizes Poulantzas' inconsistency here, focusing on his failure to recognize the existence of ideological apparatuses which serve the interests of the *dominated* classes. These apparatuses achieve concessions from the dominant class which are essentially "economic-corporate", and thereby constitute a form of power which does not correspond with the interests of the state hegemony (something which Poulantzas insisted never occurs) (p.149).

Poulantzas' solution to these realizations, however, is equally ineffective. He essentially abandons the structuralist notion of structural effects as "functional imperatives of the self-reproduction of the social whole" explained by "specific, form-determined effects of political institutions on class struggle" (Jessop, p.183). Jessop points out that this solution results in either (1) an ambiguous causal association between an infinite number of state policies which promote contradicatory relations and an obscured final result of these policies, or (2) a fundamentally tautological explanation (p.183).Thus, argues Jessop, those elements of structuralism which remain in Poulantzas' analysis serve only to undermine any resistence to criticism. In the end, Poulantzas' own revolutionary strategy suffers as a result of his insistence on the primacy of political class structure over social structure (p.185). "Accordingly, one must conclude that Poulantzas' class reductionism and structuralist tendencies prevented him from developing the concepts necessary for a more detailed investigation of hegemony" (p.188).

**B. The Work of Wright**

Wright (1985) contends that Marx's original theory is polarized between analysis of *abstract structural maps* and *concrete conjunctural maps* (p.6). The first of these is a structural account of class positions, while the second is concerned with the collective struggles of individual actors. Marx, according to Wright, failed to systematically define and elaborate a concept of "class" (p.6) and thus provided little basis for linking these polarized elements of structure and action. Despite this, recent Marxist theory and research has attempted to bridge this gap between the concrete and the abstract. Wright (1985) describes the first of these neo-Marxist attempts as dealing directly with the problem of the "new middle class" (p.8). The second of these attempts has focused on processes of class formation. These processes have been characterized through institutional mechanisms which are largely autonomous from class structure, for example, political ideology (ibid.). In general, neo-Marxist theory has attempted to reconcile traditional Marxism with contemporary sociological class theory. Wright's work (1978a; 1985) has also focused on this reconciliation,

and has in this way made significant contributions to neo-Marxist debate.

Through theoretical formulations, Wright has attempted to construct a model which is supposedly consistent with the criteria of Marxist theory. His model is presently supported by an extensive, empirical, multi-national research project. Wright's solution of identifying *contradictory class locations* and treating them differently lays the foundation for an empirical model of class structure which is sensitive to Marxist realist theoretical considerations.

At the outset, it is important to place Wright's model within a broader context of sociological debate regarding class. Wright asserts that attempts to define the concept of class are too often narrow in scope and singularly concerned with "nuances of interpretation and specification" of classical texts, and therefore exhibit a lack of concern with understanding society (1980, p.323). He acknowledges the ongoing, pervasive debate between Marxists and those grounded in a positivistic epistemology. As a Marxist, he claims that he is continually challenged to establish "testable hypotheses" within the parameters of Marxist theory (1978, p.9).

According to Wright, Marxists have formulated three distinct responses to the non-Marxist empirical challenge. The first of these views the positivistic methodological principles of the social sciences as a result of bourgeois ideology and, as such, runs counter to Wright's own position. Althusserian Marxism (Althusser, 1971; Poulantzas, 1975) serves as an example of this perspective which has attempted to undermine those dominant Marxist models which tend toward economic determinism. Overall, this perspective denies that positivistic or empirical models can be imposed on class relations. The second response is found in a misdirected, though highly popular vein of empirical research. These studies are strongly criticized for excluding the dialectic nature of Marxist theory despite their general adherence to Marxist categories (Wright, 1978a, p.11). Wright describes the third response as one in which he believes and contributes to. This research is empirical, involved with mainstream sociological debate, and is sensitive to the subtleties of Marxist theory.

Though Wright's work has direct implications for the study of capitalist society in general, his central concern lies in clarifying and contributing to specifically Marxist forms of

inquiry. Three common elements of class definition are identified in Marxist thought: 1) the concept of *social relations* has primacy over the hierarchical ordering of classes, 2) basic economic structures are understood in terms of *social* rather than *technical* relations, and 3) these social relations are further understood through the process of production rather than exchange [8]. On the basis of these three elements, Wright argues that a *general* notion of Marxist "class" can be identified as "common positions within the social relations of production" (1980, p.326). There is, however, little agreement among Marxists as to what constitutes the social relations of production, and thus this definition in itself provides no criteria for distinguishing specific classes of modern capitalist states.

Wright argues that debates in Marxist class theory have centered around an understanding of the new middle class, a relativley recent phenomena in the history of capitalism. Four current strategies are identified by Wright: 1) a *simple polarization* which places all middle class positions not involving the ownership of capital within the working class, 2) the placement of management wage earners into the "new petty bourgeoisie", and 3) the creation of a new class called the "professional" or "managerial" class. Wright suggests the importance of a specific version of the fourth position, wherein, 4) many of the middle class positions have *contradictory locations* in that they cannot be identified unambiguously as belonging to one or another specific class within the production process (1978, p.327).

One version of this theoretical stance maintains that these positions are determined by *contradictory functions* in the workplace. Wright expands this view and argues that they are determined by *contradictory structural relations* of domination and subordination within the workplace. The identification of class boundaries by these contradictory structural relations within a Marxist theoretical framework provides the foundation for Wright's model of class structure in various examples of capitalist production. An in-depth discussion of the formulation and rationale of these boundaries is essential for illuminating the present status of Wright's work, particularly his significant empirical research. [9]

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[8] This distinction separates Marxist from Weberian theory.

[9] Wright's theory of contradictory location was first presented in "Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies" (*New Left review*, 1976). A revised version was later published as chapter two of *Class, Crisis, and The State* (1978).

Wright begins by stating a truism among Marxists: "classes are not merely analytical abstractions in Marxist theory; they are real social forces and they have real consequences" (1978, p.30) and hence should be empirically measurable. Marxists hold that the understanding of class struggle and social change is affected largely by the categorization of social positions, and thus much debate centers around this categorization. Wright's selection of Nicos Poulantzas' work as representative of a purely Marxist attempt to understand class criteria may be little more than a diplomatic move (1978, p.31) [10]. While he disagrees with Poulantzas' conceptualizations, he sees it as a useful foundation for the construction of an accurate theory of capitalist class structure..

Wright's class theory (1978, 1985) motivated the design of the survey used in the machine-readable data file: *Class Structure and Class Consciousness: merged multi-nation file*. This project was intended to provide a data-base for comparative research of *relational* dimensions of inequality with special emphasis on authority, autonomy, and property. Data sources previous to Wright's project have largely emphasized *gradational* dimensions of social inequality and as such provide little basis to coherently and systematically operationalize the relational concepts of class emphasized by both Marxist and Weberian theory. The present thesis will assess the typology of class structure developed by Erik Wright. This assessment will involve both statistical tests of validity, as well as critical review of the theoretical constructs which support this typology.

### C. Contextualizing Wright's Work

It is from these fundamental criticisms of existing variations of class analysis that Wright carries out both the theoretical construction and empirical investigation of his model of modern capitalist class structure. His attempts essentially take the form of revising existing

[10] It is important to note that *Class, Crisis, and the State* consists of three essays originally published in various other sources and at different times. The third essay, for instance, was originally published in 1974 and deals with Weberian and Leninist conceptions of bureaucracy, while the second, originally published in 1975, overviews the changes in theories of capitalist crisis which parallel the accumulation of capital and the subsequent development of capitalism. The first essay, originally published in 1976, is described in the present paper.

forms of Marxist class analysis while maintaining fundamental Marxist distinctions of class structure. In order to understand these influences and motives, it is important to first contextualize Wright's work.

**Theoretical Tradition and Academic Setting**

Attewell advances a paradigmatic schema which effectively typifies the tradition within which one may contextualize Wright's work - the radical/Marxist political economy of the American New Left. He identifies three fundamental goals of this tradition, the first of which is 1) maintainance extension and application of the theoretical paradigm of Marxism. This paradigm maintainance, is that which "protects the continuity of certain analytic categories and concepts, modes of analysis and exposition, and terminolgy" while maintaining the *coherence* of Marxism through "avoiding contradictory positions while assimilating new data into the paradigm" (p.18). The second goal of the New Left is that of 2) asserting a moral/evaluative perspective in analysing social phenomena. This goal is manifested in a moralist, commonly revolutionist world-view of social relations as fundamentally transitory (ibid.).

The third goal of the American New Left is to 3) focus on the analysis of new, emerging social situations. Attewell points out that this goal reveals a unique characteristic of the New Left academia. Theoretical scientists, he points out, place no unique importance on the category of the present as opposed to the past. Those scientists who seek to understand the present with aspirations to initiating change toward a desired future state are to be viewed as *policy scientists*. Attewell thus characterizes the New Left as "policy scientists out of power" (p.19). These three goals are not explicitly evidenced in every work associated with modern radical political economy, but can rather be viewed as typical of the generalized agenda of this corpus of work. The key issue as described by Attewell is that these goals commonly oppose each other in the discourse of the radical political economist. A common tension, for instance, arises when a researcher attempts to carry out simultaneously the goals of paradigm maintainance and analysis of contemporary events (p.20). The tension resulting

from this type of inconsistency is easily anticipated by Attewell's formulation and is useful in analysing the theoretical evolution of specific projects of radical political economy.

The work of Erik Olin Wright can be viewed as a significant portion of a generalized "New Left" tradition of sociology. This tradition, constituted largely during the 1960s and 1970s, stands in contrast to the post World War II Old Left which dominated the 40s annd 50s. Attewell (1984) describes the disillusionment and eventual disintegration of the Old Left as a result of both a potent neo-conservative political climate and the belief by its proponents that the current radical movement was ideologically bankrupt. Aside from obvious reference to American McCarthyism here, one must recognize that endless criticisms directed at the left movement concerning Stalinism, has had serious effects on both the political momentum and the intellectual credibility of the Old Left (Attewell, 1984). Daniel Bell's *End of Ideology* (1964) represents the realization that the Old Left intelligentia had failed to produce a successor which could continue its radical tradition (p.2-3).

Given that the Old Left was willing to abandon their Marxist political tradition, their now conservative tendencies resulted in a sceptical assessment of the New Left tempered in the popular radicalism of the 1960s. "They tended to view the sixties as a cultural phenomenon rather than as a political one and emphasized the 'counter-culture' as a 'psychedelic bazaar' and stressed the New Left's anti-intellectualism" (Attewell, p.3). While rejecting this charge of anti-intellectualism, Attewell stresses a profound discontinuity between the Old and New Leftists. In losing virtually all of its intellectual heritage, the New Left reconstituted itself in a wide range of both academic diciplines and radical political interests (p.4). [11]

Wright is easily characterized by what Attewell describes as a paradigmatic response to attacks of delegitimation from outside the field of radical political economy. Wright's response to this form of attack is predominantly an application of methodological techniques of empirical documentation and sophisticated statistical analysis. Attewell asserts that this response is a result of the dominant university training in survey methodologies received by

[11] Among these new fields are: poverty, sexism, racism, and unemployment (Attewell, 1984, p.26).

modern radical scholars (p.26). [12] This form of analysis is highly effective in deflecting criticisms from a sociology which equates scientific rigour with quantified analysis.

The failure of Marxism as a political practice has further compelled the New Left to reify Marxism as a source of scientific knowledge. The strength of Marxism as an explanation of capitalism has permitted an academic outlet for a political orientation which is exceedingly unpopular among modern scholars. This outlet is characterized by "an elaboration and extension of a moral-evaluative critique of capitalism through scientific study of capitalism" (p.29). [13] Attewell points out that the need to maintain scientific rigour in the shadow of culturally dominant conceptions of science and scholarship is most pronounced in American academia where radical scholars are more dependent on their non-radical collegues for retaining tenure (p.24).

On this point, Wright (1986a) describes a different situation. Acknowledging a dedication to the "core thesis of marxism", Wright describes part of his work as having to "make (these theses) compelling to a sympathetic yet unconcerned audience" (p.2). His difficulty, however, is not in legitimating his radical bent to a conservative academic community, but rather *maintaining* credibility among other *radicals*, who are suspicious of the "seductions of the safe and comfortable life of an affluent academic" (p.3). He is apologetic that such an affluent lifestyle removes him from a "systematic link" to popular socialist struggles, and assures the reader of an active attempt on his part to "maintain (a)... self reflective stance that might minimize the negative effects of these material conditions on (his) work." (p.3).

Some of the radical left has expressed a dogmatic focus on analysis of the relations of production. This is supported by Marx's criticism of the political economy of his time for situating the source of profit in the market system. Another explanation for this obsession is that it supports the thesis of exploitative relations within capitalist systems and as such is

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[12] Marxist economists of the Old Left, according to Attewell (1984) were trained in Keynes, Friedman, and Samuelson, while modern radical sociologists were trained in structural-functionalism, symbolic interactionism, the Chicago school, and survey methodologies (p.26).

[13] This is highly similar to the approach of the Frankfurt School.

inconsistent with the moral/evaluatory goal of the radical scientist. Attewell describes an interest in *systemetizing blame* here as a means of shifting the locus of blame away from the underprivileged in modern capitalism. This is consistent with the moral/evaluatory goal of the left scholar and is characteristic of Wright's project to develop a model of capitalist class structure. It is interesting to note that Wright's ongoing data research project is located at and receives funding from the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty.

**Crisis Perspective and Periodization**

The Marxists of the American radical political economy have tended, according to Attewell, toward analysis of crisis trends in capitalist economies. Attewell points out that neoclassical economics is not suited to explaining crisis in capital and as such is attacked by left theorists who employ crisis theory as a means of legitimating Marxist economics. [14] Wright (1975) carries out such an attack by predicting and accounting for crises as "endogenous features of capitalism" (p.205). Attewell typifies this practice as symptomatic of the "institutional insecurity" of the American New Left in that its scholars must seek to prove Marxism as *more scientific* than the orthodoxy (ibid.).

In conclusion, Attewell suggests that several Marxists adhering to crisis models of capital have failed in their attempts to maintain Marxist paradigms while integrating new data and maintaining a moral-evaluatory stance. He points out that Marxist interpretations of the high profits made by U.S. companies from Arab oil proves that Arab workers are exploited. In contrast, however, the labour theory of value would explain that the working-class consumers in Western nations are in fact the exploited class given that high profits are derived from the exhorbatant prices which must be paid by western nations (p.249-50). It will be shown in following discussions that Wright demonstrates similar theoretical inconsistencies for the sake of maintaining a moral evaluatory stance.

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[14] British political economy in contrast does not engage in this practice, in that it consists of "already committed" socialists who engage in internal debates regarding the "correct methodological and theoretical reading of Marxist texts" (p.20).

Wright's thesis regarding the capitalist state pivots on his contention that power and its association with social inequality is indistinct from control over the means of production and control over the accumulation of capital. This underscores the primacy of economic factors in determining class structure in that those who control material resources ultimately control all social life (1979, p.15). In this context, Wright views the state, that is, government run apparatuses of society - i.e. the welfare state - as highly dependent on the dominant class in the sense that it relies on taxation as opposed to accumulation of its own surplus. State intervention thus seldom has serious negative effects on bourgeois dominance, but is necessary during certain times of crisis. These crises are inevitable and increasingly destructive in modern capitalist economies.

While revising extensively Marx's original thesis, Wright can be characterized as one who does not acknowledge these revisions, but rather "goes to great lengths to prove that (his) new way of looking at things is actually restoring Marx's original method" (Attewell, 1984, p.266). Attewell schema situates Wright's incongruences here as part of a generalized tendency of American Marxism to "borrow bits and pieces of theory (a conceptual ecclecticism) from various sources while maintaining its emotional and political identification with Marxism" (p.32). Wright typifies the common New Left practice of periodization as a means of relieving the tension between paradigm maintainance and analysis of present social events. [15] Periodization refers to the notion that capitalism has evolved or devolved across various manifestations or phases.

In an attempt to characterize capitalism with various forms of economic crisis theory, Wright (1975) identifies two theories: the traditional organic composition/falling rate of profit perspective and the monopoly capital perspective. Though these two positions represent theoretically opposed models of any capital system, Wright applies them as representative of historically distinct systems of capital. [16] This paradigmatic inconsistency presents serious

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[15] Left literature Attewell notes is preoccupied with the practice of *periodization* involving a "notion of a newer or higher phase of capitalism to justify departure from the traditional analysis and introduction of new ideas" (p.31).

[16] It is interesting to note here that while Wright (1975) argues that the falling rate of profit has *given way* to underconsumptionism, Boddy and Crotty (1976)

problems for Wright's argument, and yet is characteristic of the theoretical eclecticism of radical political economy.

**Revisionism and Eclecticism**

Such practices as periodization are far from effective in substantially reducing tension between paradigm maintainance and analysing present social events. The integration of new phenomena into existing paradigms has resulted in a controversy between traditionalists who struggle to integrate new events without reforming original perspectives and revisionists who view new phenomena as important enough to alter existing paradigms (Attewell, p.32). Attewell argues, on the other hand, that some manifestations of the eclecticism of the radical political economy have positive results. The interpenetration of political economic analysis and a moral/evaluative stance, for instance, does not invalidate the conclusions of the left scholar, but rather tends to reinforce the validity of both these conclusions and the methods used to obtain them: "one cannot evade the moral conclusion, since it follows logically" (p.36).

In a revisionist form typical of the American New Left, Wright retains Marx's original two-class schema of modern capitalism and extends it to encorporate contemporary evolutions in capitalist relations of production. While Poulantzas views these modern developments as fractions within the two classes, Wright employs more classical Marxist criteria based on control of and within capitalist means of production to construct a typology of contemporary class structure which includes innovative *contradictory* class positions corresponding to modern developments in capitalism.

**Causal Ordering and Levels of Abstraction**

A distinction outlined by Weber is useful in evaluating Wright's ahistorical, and as such, problematic analysis of class structure. Weber (1922) situates sociological method between that of history and the natural sciences, given that history is oriented to "important

[16](cont'd) argue that falling rate of profit has *replaced* underconsumptionism.

individual events" while sociology is concerned with "generalized uniformities" in recurring empirical processes. Sociology is consequently more inclined toward theoretical accounts of empirical regularities than are other human sciences. Naturalistic methods, however, do not easily render these generalized uniformities, and consequently theoretical explanations or predicted outcomes must be constrained to probabilistic terms, and must typically be extended to incorporate causally pluralistic explanations. That Wright's project is highly subject to these methodological restrictions is further symptomatic of the fettered nature of his broader, structuralist theoretical claims.

The increased scientific rigour of the New Left both in maintaining the standards of modern notions of sciences and in developing a potent counterattack against the orthodoxy, has resulted in major revisions in Marxism on two levels: causality and level of analysis (Attewell, 1984, p.263). While classical Marxism tends toward a crude or simplistic model of unidirectional causation, neo-Marxism relies on complex models of multiple determinations. Though causal relations in classical Marxist methodology are seen to be unidirectional in the sense for instance that technology causes social relations, the new political economy typically alters traditional causal ordering. [17] Marglin (1974), for instance, concludes that "it was not the handmill that gave us feudalism, but that the feudal lord gave us the watermill" (p.57). [18] The terminology of Althusserianism reflects this practice: polity, ideology and economy are seen as "relatively autonomous" spheres. As Attewell notes: "the basic idea comes through clearly: economic determinism is replaced by relative causal autonomy in the realms of politics, economics, and ideology" (p.265).

Attewell draws some guidelines for distinguishing between Marx's original analysis of the modes of production and contemporary analyses which appear to involve levels of abstraction lower than those of Marx. This distinction is useful in identifying specific inconsistencies between the work of Wright and the Marxist theory of capital which he so adamantly claims to follow. Marx's analysis of the modes of production was guided by two

[17] Similarly, while Marxist scholars have generally been opposed to the principles of structural-functionalism, Wright (1978) readily applies these concepts.
[18] This displacement of causality is also seen in the second phase of Wright's project.

models of capital processes: polarization and homogenization. The process of polarization is essential to Marx's notion of contradiction, which is the typical dynamic of social change, and is hence central to theories of capital. These processes tend toward ever increasing polarization and as such provide support for the eventual disruption of capitalist systems. Homogenization processes, on the other hand, involve the dissolution of structural boundaries and the eventual equilibrium of this structure.

The new Left, argues Attewell, views what have traditionally been seen as homogenizing processes, as polarizing. Wright specifically is guilty of this shift in abstraction, as evidenced in his model of the homogenization of productive and unproductive labour. Though seen by classical Marxists as tending toward homogeity, the polarization of these two types of labour now determines, according to Wright, a significant class boundary between the working and managerial classes. Attewell characterizes this form of theoretical shift as having potential benefits *and* dangers. While it makes possible a new mode of analysis for understanding less abstract and more specific contradictions between the various sectors of capitalist economies, it tends toward pluralist explanations, at the cost of losing theoretical clarity and certainty (p.268).

### D. Thesis Outline

The second chapter of the present thesis will describe and present critical assessments the first version of Wright's theory (1978a). The description will begin with a summary of the propositions which support the theory of the determination of class boundaries provided by Nicos Poulantzas. Wright develops the foundation for his own theory of class through a critical reading and theoretical restructuring of Poulantzas' theory (Wright, 1978a). The end product of Wright's engagement with Poulantzas - Wright's model of contradictory class locations - will then be discussed. The various critical responses to the model will be presented in overview.

The third chapter will describe and assess Wright's latest work in which he attempts to carry his Marxist solution further to confront the traditional empiricist criticisms of the

Marxist paradigm (Wright, 1986a). Wright addresses this by identifying and reformulating four problematic areas within his previous solution in order to permit empirical research within its framework. A pivotal consequence of Wright's final model is that it incorporates Weberian notions of class structure. Though some (Rose and Marshall, 1986; Mann, 1986) herald this as a long awaited reconciliation, others (Carter, 1986; Livingstone, 1986) contend that Marxist and Weberian notions of class are irreconcilable, and thus that Wright's model is fundamentally flawed.

Given that Wright (1986a) consequently retracts many of the claims made in the initial development of his theory (1978a), the third chapter will carry out a more thorough assessment of the second version of Wright's theory (1986a). Here, Wright incorporates Romerian game theory and makes essentially Weberian modifications to his originally Marxist class criteria. This newer version of Wright's typology asserts that class boundaries are determined by relations of ownership as well as by relations of production. Wright attempts to maintain his original goal of developing a Marxist model of class amenable to modern statistical methods by arguing production as the *dominant*, as opposed to *exclusive* mode of exploitation. Critical responses to Wright's new model will be reviewed.

Given that Wright's incorporation of Roemer's game theoretic approach to historical materialism has been extensively criticized and receives no support from Roemer himself, the focus will then shift to a more generalized account of Marxist methodology. Emphasis will be on the original method of class analysis outlined by Marx, as a means of critiquing the highly problematic treatment of class analysis prescribed by Wright. That Wright claims to fully advocate, apply and extend Marx's "intended" method, will serve to emphasize the importance and relevance of this critique. Marx's own specific agenda of class analysis will thus be shown to provide an adequate, decisive critique of Wright's self-proclaimed extension of Marx's method. Wright describes the primary impetus of his work: as part of a larger political strategy for socialist reform. His reformulation of Poulantzas' theory of class and state derives largely from his political project, and yet is highly problematic in itself.

The fourth chapter will report a data analysis project applying Wright's typology of class structure. This application will help to illustrate some of the preceding issues as well as the explanatory value of this typology through comparison with other statistical class-oriented determinants. Given Wright's claims that class determines class consciousness, the independent variables in this case will be those associated with class consciousness. Given the contestable nature of Wright's claims, as outlined in chapter three, it is hypothesized that Wright's model is less effective in predicting the class-specific political preferences of Canadians than are other class indices. Furthermore, given that Wright's model fails to distinguish adequately among, for instance, individuals categorized within the working class, alternate variables related to differences in workplace relations will be employed in order to better predict class consciousness in class analysis.

The fifth chapter will provide summary statements regarding the value of Wright's overall project. Key issues of the previous chapter will be presented, and some implications for Marxian class research will be drawn. Examples of structuralist Marxist method will be presented as alternatives to Wright's limited approach. Finally, issues pertaining to the relevance of Wright's work to Marx's method and political goals will be discussed.

## II. Version I: From Poulantzas' Theory of Class Boundaries to Contradictory Class Location

Three essential tenets provide the framework for what Wright considers Poulantzas' "thorough" analysis of social classes. The first is that classes cannot be defined outside of class struggle. The notion of class is not limited to the phenomenon of class consciousness, but rather refers to the antagonistic compromise of the social division of labour which pervades capitalist relations. This antagonistic process encompasses both class contradiction and class struggle and, Poulantzas argues, continues even during the disorganization of classes (Wright, 1978, p.32).

The second premise asserts that: "classes designate objective postions in the social division of labour". This implies that individuals are subordinate and are thus opposed to the positions they occupy, albeit unconsciously. In that these positions are reproduced, Poulantzas is able to identify the "structural determination of class". These first two points provide Poulantzas with criteria for identifying classes within capitalist states.

It is with the third of Poulantzas' tenets that Wright encounters the most difficulty. It states that: "classes are structurally determined not only at the economic level, but at the political and ideological levels as well" (1978, p.33). Poulantzas softens his economic deterministic position and acknowledges that ideological and political relations may have equal status with economic relations in determining class structure. This is a result of the significance that Poulantzas attaches to the role of class struggle. He agrees that objective structural positions within relations of production are determined solely by economic factors, but maintains that political and ideological factors are those which determine class struggle (p.33). [19]

In understanding the structural determination of the working class, Poulantzas maintains that it is crucial to define the boundary between the working class and the new

[19] Wright (1978) has difficulty with Poulantzas' argument at this point. Poulantzas seems to contradict himself by stating that, in determining class, these factors contribute not to class consciousness, nor to the alignment of a class directive, but rather to the determination of class positions He appears to argue that political and ideological factors contribute to both class struggle and class position, but is unclear (p.33).

petty bourgeoisie. He argues that the distinction between productive and non-productive labour represents the basic economic criteria. The distinction between supervisory and non-supervisory positions represents the political criteria, while the distinction between mental and manual labour represents the ideological criteria. Poulantzas asserts that the new petty bourgeoisie should be placed within the same class as the traditional petty bourgeoisie in that they exhibit the same ideological opposition to the proletariat.

Poulantzas rejects wage-labour as the final criteria for determining positions of the working class. While salary reflects social position within capitalist modes of production, it should be seen as a function of the distribution of the social product. In this sense, it follows that the proletariat can be distinguished from the new petty bourgeoisie as proletariat positions are occupied by *productive* wage earners, while new petty bourgeoisie positions are occupied by *unproductive* wage earners. Furthermore, the unproductive nature of the new petty bourgeoisie constitutes a position of exploitation in relation to the working class. Poulantzas qualifies this distinction by asserting that the new petty bourgeoisie are, in turn, exploited by the bourgeoisie, but *not* in the sense of the creation of surplus value. The new petty bourgeoisie is exploited on the level of *commerce*, in that wages which are received in return for the unproductive labour of the new petty bourgeoisie only partly represents the surplus production which is extracted from the working class by the new petty bourgeoisie, at the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Given that the working class is defined by the antagonism between direct producers and owners who appropriate the surplus value of production, the new petty bourgeoisie cannot be considered to be within the working class (1978, pp.35-36).

Poulantzas identifies the positions of management and supervision within capitalist processes of production as those which directly reproduce the "political relations between the capitalist class and the working class" (pp.36-37). Poulantzas sees this *political* relation as a vital criterion for distinguishing class boundaries. This criterion illuminates a certain degree of ambiguity in that management labour is productive in its function of coordinating and integrating material production, but is exploitative in its dominative role within the social division of labour (p.30). In order to reconcile these criteria, Poulantzas relies on the Marxist

proposition that the social division of labour holds primacy over the technical division of labour. Given that management positions are exploitative only in the sense of a *technical* division of labour, and that the domination of the working class is a function of the *social* division of labour, Poulantzas asserts that the new petty bourgeoisie must be excluded from the working class (p.37).

Poulantzas further establishes ideological criteria for distinguishing between the working class and the new petty bourgeoisie. The difference between mental and manual labour implies that experts are needed to organize production, in that they possess a "secret knowledge" of the production process above that of the workers. This knowledge is vital to the reproduction of capitalist social relations and, as such, excludes positions such as engineers and technicians from the subordinate working class. Even though such positions may be subordinate and productive, their placement within the social division of labour is such that they ideologically dominate the woking class, and thus they are considered new petty bourgeoisie (p.37-39).

Poulantzas concedes that the further inclusion of the new petty bourgeoisie with the traditional petty bourgeoisie is somewhat problematic. He notes, however, that these two classes share a common polarization with the proletariat and thus form a "rough idelogical unity" (p.40). He identifies three common ideological elements of the new petty bourgeoisie and the traditional petty bourgeoisie. Both the latter and the former are generally non-revolutionary in their tendency to be anti-capitalist, and thus are 1) *reformist* in ideology. In that the members of the petty bourgeoisie lean away from proletarianization and aspire to bourgeoisie status, they are 2) *individualistic*. They further exhibit a 3) *power fetishism* which is reflected in their veiw of the state as an arbitrer between independent social forces.

In discussing the determinants of the bourgeoisie, Poulantzas rejects the direct role of *economic ownership* and *possession* in determining the class position of the bourgeoisie. Economic ownership in this sense is not the "legal title to productive property", but rather the control of the modes of production. Possession is similarly defined as "the capacity to put the

means of production into operation" (p.41). In this way, Poulantzas is able to assert that managers are in fact part of the bourgeoisie in that they do not own, but rather control the capitalist means of production.

### A. Critique of Poulantzas' Theory

In his critique of Poulantzas' argument, Wright extracts those elements which support his model and provide justification for rejecting those which do not. He attacks Poulantzas' boundary between the working class and the new petty bourgeoisie on three issues: 1) the distinction between productive and non-productive labour, 2) the importance of political and ideological criteria, and 3) the size of the proletariat as determined by Poulantzas' criteria.

#### Productive versus Non-productive Labour

Wright argues that Poulantzas' distinction between productive and non-productive labour is an arbitrary one, if one views a value to the material labour involved in the creation of surplus production as significant. Failure to assign a surplus value to non-material production, even though it is also involved in the creation of surplus production, would appear inconsistent. In turn, Wright asserts the existence of many positions constituting capitalist modes of production which involve *both* productive and non-productive forms of labour. This mixture is prevalent at many levels of capitalist production and commodity circulation. Wright accuses Poulantzas of "sidestepping" this problem by arbitrarily assuming that these ambiguous positions are ultimately one or the other.

Wright identifies the commonality of class interest (which is essential both to structural transformation) as a serious problem in Poulantzas' work. He points out that not all non-productive positions of labour have antagonistic relations within capitalist states. For instance, non-productive positions employed by the state receive wages through taxation which is essentially based on surplus value. The distinction between productive and non-productive labour is therefore tenuous, in that some positions which constitute both productive and non-productive labour have a vested interest in capitalism (pp.46-50).

**Political and Ideological Criteria**

While Poulantzas argues that political and ideological criteria are equally important for determining class position, he asserts that economic criteria are the primary determinants. Wright carries out an analysis on these three criteria, and concludes that while the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are polar opposites on *every* criteria, any position which involves *any* criteria associated with the bourgeoisie must inevitably be classified as bourgeoisie. On this basis, Wright argues that political and ideological criteria are at least equally capable of determining class and thus claims that by including these two criteria, Poulantzas in no way supports the primacy of economic determinants (p.51-52). Furthermore, Wright argues, if Poulantzas were to correct his useage of the term "technical division of labour" he would tend not to see ideological and political criteria as coequal with economic criteria. Poulantzas equates the technical division of labour with productive labour, and the social division of labour with ideological and political factors. According to Wright, productive labour should also be associated with the social division of labour and as such, argues that economic factors pervade both the technical and social division of labour, while ideological and political factors do not. Economic determinants are thus primary, while ideological and political factors are not.

Wright also argues that Poulantzas' tendency to undermine the economic determinants of social class creates several problems, and solves none. He contends that the identification of managerial positions as an indication of political ideology is no more valid than the identification of such positions as merely another differentiation of economic relations. Wright further argues that the distinction between mental and manual labour as *the* distinction of ideological criteria is unjustified. The phenomena of sexism within the social division of labour is, for instance, also ideological and also creates a division within the working class. This, however, does not implicate a class boundary between male workers and female workers, nor does it cause one to identify male workers with any other class (pp.50-53).

**Poulantzas' Proletariat**

The critical treatment of the size of the proletariat according to Poulantzas' criteria supports Wright's model with empirical evidence. He at first acknowledges that the actual size of the working class has inherent implications for the political feasibility of capitalist class structure. In other words, the proletariat base must be large enough in order to support the dominant bourgeoisie. Wright identifies a methodological problem which he is later to rectify: that of the absence of data which has been collected using Marxist categories. Nonetheless, The University of Michigan Survey Research Center provides a data base which Wright argues is roughly suited to Poulantzas' criteria. Wright is able to establish four categories of labour within this source of data: mental, manual, productive, and unproductive.

Wright finds that according to Poulantzas' criteria, non-supervisory, manual wage earners in productive positions constitute only 20% of the U.S. labour force, while the new petty bourgeoisie represents 70% of this labour force. Clearly this distribution precludes the possibility of a socialist movement of the working class. On this basis, he eliminates the productive/non-productive labour distinction and observes that in doing so, the working class population comprimises over 30% of the population. He further illustrates that if the mental/manual labour distinction is removed, the working class increases in size to over 50% of the population (pp.53-58). In summary, Wright finds that his criteria for class boundaries is a more theoretically sound depiction of capitalist class structure, given a belief in the inevitability of socialist revolution.

**New and Traditional Petty Bourgeoisie Class Unity**

Wright rejects the existence of ideological similarities between the new and traditional petty bourgeosie. He also criticizes Poulantzas' view that these supposed similarities are not seen to be more important than the exclusion of the new petty bourgeosie from the working class. The economic conditions of these two groups are fundamentally different, in that the traditional petty bourgeoisie is opposed to monopoly capitalism, while the new petty bourgeoisie is dependent upon its existence. In turn, the traditional petty bourgeoisie is

opposed to state expansion, while the new petty bourgeoisie has a direct interest in it.

These fundamental conflicts of interest, Wright suggests, supercede any other ideological similarities which may be drawn in associating these two groups. Further to this point, he argues that in contemporary capitalist economies, such ideological associations do not exist. Wright denounces Poulantzas' distinction of individualism [20] in this respect and points out that a position of the new petty bourgeoisie is one which is integrated with the bureaucratic structure as a means of self-advancement. Conversely, positions, and or interests, are of the traditional petty bourgeoisie are generally advanced outside of the demands of bureaucratic organization (pp.58-59).

**B. Contradictory Location as a Model of Class Relations**

As previously discussed, Wright denounces Poulantzas' criteria of class boundaries as arbitrary in nature. He is thus able to establish the credibity of his own theory in this area, and describes the manner in which his own criteria transcend some of the difficulties encountered in Poulantzas' theory. Wright's solution of identifying certain positions as *contradictory* and avoiding Poulantzas' practice of arbitrarily placing these positions into one or another class, is thus promoted as a solution which both reconciles the Marxist debate of class categories, and lends itself to empirical analysis.

Wright concurs with the Marxist argument that all positions within capitalist structure are inherently contradictory, in that all capitalist relations are inherently antagonistic. Wright, however, proceeds to further identify locations which are *more* contradictory in relation to others within the capitalist contradictory relational structure. Wholly discarding traditional Marxist notions in relation to the practice of establishing formal class typologies, Wright proposes the notion of objective contradictory locations derived from "real" class relational processes (p.62). The following identifies and justifies the existence of three contradictory class locations: 1) *Managers and Supervisors*, who occupy contradictory locations between the

[20] Poulantzas (197?) claims that both the New Petty Bourgeoisie and the Traditonal Petty Bourgeoisie are individualistic, and thus that this is an ideological factor by which one can associate these two groups.

proletariat and the bourgeoisie, 2) ***Semi-autonomous employees***, who occupy contradictory locations between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and 3) ***Small employees***, who occupy contradictory locations between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie. Wright contends that these contradictory locations must be considered separately from the class relations within which they occur.

After conducting an extensive overview of the historical process of class relations as a means of illucidating the social, as opposed to economic, contingencies of his model, [21] Wright provides an analysis of the contradictory locations between 1) the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and 2) the petty bourgeoisie and other classes.

**Contradictory Locations Between the Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie**

There are two contradictory locations which exist between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in Wright's model. One such location is closer to the proletariat than the bourgeoisie, and is characterized by the positions of foremen and line supervisors. These positions sustain control over other labour positions, but *only* in the sense of transferring orders downward in a hierarchical structure. Historically, these positions have supported the workers during labour disputes, but presently hold much less personal power than in the past. Wright observes that these supervisors have tended either toward non-productive positions of control or, through bureaucratization of their powers, toward a greater involvement with production. In the event that these positions lose their ability to "evoke negative sanctions" they merge with workers and thus no longer occupy contradictory locations.

The "top managers" are directly opposite to these supervisors within the contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, in that they are closer to the bourgeoisie. These positions do not involve *economic ownership*, but do involve participation in the relational structure of *possession*. The *most* contradictory locations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are those of middle managers and technocrats, as it is more difficult to

[21] This discussion includes: 1) Loss of control over the labour process by workers, 2) The differentiation of the functions of capital, and 3) The development of complex hierarchies (pp.64-74).

identify them as being closer to either of the two classes. The technocrats occupy an ambiguous position in that they play *no* specific role in the accumulation process, while middle management positions are ambiguous in that they can be characterized by *both* proletarian and bourgeoisie criteria. These positions are contradictory on the basis of their positions within the productive process, as well as by the difficulty encountered in determining which side they will tend toward during class struggle (pp.75-79).

**Contradictory Locations Between the Petty Bourgeoisie and Other Classes**

Consideration of contradictory locations between the petty bourgeoisie and other classes diverges from that above, given that these locations are involved with different modes of production. The contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat is more complex than the contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie. Given that capitalist production rests on exploitation, an individual must first become an employer (of a proletarian) before being considered a capitalist. Further, the appropriation of surplus labour value from an employee or number of employees must be significantly greater than the surplus value of the petty bourgeois' own labour prior to identifying the petty bourgeois as a capitalist (pp.79-80).

Another contradictory location between the proletariat and the petty bourgeisie represents semi-autonomous wage earners. A technical researcher at a university, occupying the position of a white-collar employee, may serve as a case in point, if the individual has autonomy over what is produced and how the production process is conducted. This lack of control over the modes of production through a displacement of an employee from the authority structure constitutes this contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat (pp.80-93).

**Number of Contradictory Locations**

Using the same data described above, Wright provides rough estimates of the size of contradictory locations. Based on the U.S. Department of Labor "Dictionary of Occupational

Titles", he is able to distinguish the contradictory characteristics of various occupations along Marxist guidelines. Overall, Wright found that 41-54% of the "economically active" population are of the working class, while 25-35% occupy contradictory locations within class relations (pp.83-87).

**Class Interest and Class Struggle**

In defining class interests, Wright distinguishes between the less important *potential* objectives, and those common interests which inevitably emerge during class struggle. This is of particular importance, in that one cannot make "ahistorical, moralist" statements implying that class interests *should* be directed one way or another. In contrast, the location within a class is associated with the notion that such a location has the *potential* of, for instance, furthering a socialist revolution (p.89). It may then be assumed that there exist *immediate* interests within and about the modes of production without questioning these modes, and *fundamental* interests which directly question the modes of production (pp.88-91).

With this definition of class interest, Wright finds it necessary to identify positions which are not "directly determined by production relations" (p.91). These positions can only be defined by either association with other class positions, or by considering, in sum, the various class interests with which they are associated over time. These positions are: 1) Housewives 2) Students 3) Pensioners 4) Unemployed and Welfare Recipients, and 5) Employed in political and ideological apparatuses (pp.92-95).

Wright now completes his Marxist model of class by introducing the notion of class struggle. He defines this as "the processes which dialectically link class interest to class capacity" (p.98). [22] To this end, he presents a model of the relationships between class structure, class formation, and class struggle. The relation of class structure to class struggle is such that class structure defines the "potential actors" and the "range of potential objectives" of the class struggle (p.102). Class formation, on the other hand, only very

[22] Class interests are defined as the "potential objectives of classes within class struggle" while class capacity is the "potential basis for the realization of class interests within the class struggle" (p.98).

broadly determines the limits of class structure. In turn, class struggle can mediate the effect of class capacity by class structure (pp.104-106).

A central theme of the book which may not be apparent in viewing only the first essay is that of the Marxist notion of the capitalist tendency toward socialist revolution. This is most predominant in the conclusion wherein Wright offers advice to European communist and socialist parties in the form of four strategies toward widening the gap between the limits of "*structural possiblity*" and the limits of "*functional compatibility* with the requirements of reproducing capitalism" (1978, p.231). By employing these strategies, the left may be capable of imposing reforms which are acceptable within the structural limits of the state. These reforms may serve to decrease the reproductive capacity of the state which, in turn, will result in a transformation of the capitalist structure. Wright's theory of contradictory locations supports his revolutionary strategy in that those occupying such locations will tend ally themselves with the working class and thus will tend to support a transition to socialism.

Wright's estimation of the actual number of potential revolutionaries is also important here. According to Poulantzas' criteria, Wright argues that the working class is not large enough to support a transformation to socialism. Wright's classification of contradictory locations, on the other hand, are argued to provide more than enough individuals who would be dedicated to the socialist cause when faced with the alternative.

### C. Critical Responses

Poulantzas refutes the notion of contradictory locations on two points. [23] The first centers on the nature of supervision in the productive process. If, claims Poulantzas, supervisory labour is necessary to the continuation of the labour process and to production itself, it must be considered to be productive labour. On the other hand, if supervision is involved in the *accumulation* of surplus value and not in the *production* of surplus value, then the supervisory labour must be considered to be non-productive labour. Poulantzas does not

[23] Harp and Betcherman relate Poulantzas' response to Wright's theory of contradictory locations. Their source, however, is unclear and thus a thorough description of Poulantzas' discussion is not possible here.

agree that the central issue is class struggle, but is rather concerned with contemporary transformations of capitalism. His specific methodological concern is the "objective polarization important fractions of the new petty bourgeoisie toward the working class" (Harp and Betcherman, 1979, p.147).

Eyerman criticizes Wright for wanting to "avoid the 'psychologism' of talking about real people in real structures" in his emphasis on identifying the possibility of a transformation to a socialist society (1979, p.435). Marx, Eyerman argues, saw activity and the limitation of activity within an occupation as the basic determinant of political consciousness. Unswayed by Wright's "static categories", Eyerman suggests that they fail to reflect the importance of a "real" person's activities. Eyerman appears to reject Wright's work as failing to maintain a realist account of Marxist categories. Eyerman himself, however, clearly breaks from Marxist theory by criticising Wright's failure to include the activities of daily modern life outside of the productive activites of the workplace. He denounces Wright's scientific Marxism as as overlooking how the home life of workers would effect their political consciousness and the "type" of socialism which would come from such a consciousness (1979, p.435). In short, Eyerman's criticisms appear to ignore the fact that Marxist realists deal with the agency-structure debate, and above all, emphasize the antagonistic, economic relations of productive and non-productive labour in the workplace, they do not consider other non-econmic factors.

Wilson (1978) expresses his unfamiliarity with Marxist theory in reviewing *Class, Crisis, and the State* (1978) and as such serves as an example of non-Marxist forms of class theory. He cites the essay dealing with class boundaries as a "boring extension of a seemingly endless Marxist debate". Furthermore, the notions of "non-productive" labour and "contradictory locations" make sense only to those interested in elevating political consciousness in order to construct a viable socialist revolution. The most exciting portion of the book, according to Wilson, is the introduction, in that it "proposes a strategy whereby those relatively new to Marxian thinking can do sociological research without violating the logic of Marxian logic" (1978, p.1404). One might ask why one would be interested in

conducting Marxist research if one had no interest in familiarizing oneself with Marxist theory. The terms introduced in the book came too quickly and without adequate explanation for Wilson. As such, Wright fails to provide Wilson with an empirical strategy whereby one could be a sociologist without bothering oneself with theory.

Schmidt (1979) claims that the disagreement between Poulantzas and Wright in the validity of ideological and political criteria in determining class, indicates a flaw in removing agency from consideration of class relations. Poulantzas, Schmidt argues, should be praised for "breaking away" from an overly narrow economic determinism and for including such factors as ideological and political determinants. Wright's removal of these factors as a means of regaining economic primacy, according to Schmidt, limits his theory both to an "economic class-in-itself" and disregards the usefulness of other factors in understanding the economic process (1979, p.993). In short, by removing agency from a consideration of class, Wright removes unambiguous, valuable categories.

Schmidt, however, makes no mention of the justification which Wright provides in excluding these categories. Wright is able to systematically justify the primacy of economic factors in his theory by revealing that economic factors operate on more dimensions of the division of labour than do ideological and political factors. Wright does *not* limit his theory by discounting those factors which are not economically based, but rather questions Poulantzas for undermining the economic determinacy of the Marxist paradigm.

Schmidt proceeds to criticize Wright for reintroducing agency in such a way that it contradicts Marx's original theory. Wright argues that if workers were exposed to a "scientific understanding of the contradictions of capitalism" they would commit themselves to socialist ideologies and reformations (1978a, p.89). This form of agency ignores Marx's belief that collective class interests are brought about by individual agents who interact in mainstream society and serve to educate others. Wright fails to explain his modification of this notion to include a "scientific" understanding of capitalist contradictions. Schmidt's observation that Wright "reintroduces agency", however, is not supported by the original text. Wright qualifies that the motivation of class interest is only understood through the existence and absence of

those impediments which result from state repressiveness. Individual actors are *not*, he emphasizes, considered to be necessarily involved with arousing the subjective motives of collectivities (1978, p.89).

Giddens provides the best-known and most caustic opposition to Wright's work. While acknowledging the importance of Wright's book as one which stimulates "worthwhile controversy", Giddens outlines several limitations in drawing from his own unique criticisms of contemporary historical materialism. With a strong understanding of metatheoretical issues, Giddens denounces sociology for emphasizing epistemological issues such as verification and falsification, while avoiding ontological issues of the nature of being (1984, p.xx). An inadequate synthesis of Marxism and sociology, Giddens argues, resulted in the combination of two mutually opposed elements: functionalism and naturalism. In effect, sociology is plagued with the structuralist tendency to view human behavior as "the result of forces that actors neither control nor comprehend" (p.xx).

Giddens is highly supportive of reformulating sociological inquiry, and as such praises Wright's substantial departure from and synthesis of the work of Althusser and Poulantzas. He argues, however, that Wright fails to eradicate the structural determinism of both of these theories. In substituting the "diverse modes of determination" for Althusser's structural causality, Wright fails to account for factors which effect class consciousness (1978, p.443). Giddens further alludes to an inconsistency with Wright's account of Offe's processes of commodification and decommodification.

Giddens (1978) makes a brief reference to the functionalist position which Wright expresses in his work. His comment that "I think that every type of functionalism, whether Marxist or other, should be wholly disavowed" requires clarification. Giddens (1981) provides three objectives to functionalism. The first is that functionalism relies on a *synchronic* view of social systems which abstracts from time and as such fails to analyze how systems change over time. A *diachronic* view, on the other hand, analyzes change over time, but in doing so can mislead one to equate change with time. Giddens proposes that the synchronic/diachronic division which is prevalent in sociology is both unecessary and problematic. Functionalism, he

argues, is a logical outcome of this division.

Giddens' second criticism is that of the lack of agency in functionalist theory. Actors are generally viewed in Marxist theory as "cultural dopes" rather than as "highly knowledgeable (discursively and tacitly) about the institutions they produce and reproduce in and through their actions" (1981, p.18). The third objection centers around Marxist interpretations of the "needs" of capitalism. Giddens argues that social systems have no "functional exigencies" in the sense that what a system needs simply comes to be. Marxists in this regard fail to understand that all of the institutional features of a society are historically conditioned and as such must be analyzed separately and distinctly. The fact that, for instance, a capitalist system requires a certain level of overall profit is counterfactual and *not* a product of the system (p.19).

Giddens claims that even though Marxists may resist being labeled functionalists, they all retain some degree or brand of functionalism. He further accuses Marxists of assuming that actors within these functional restraints have little or no knowledge of the relations which they themselves reproduce. Even though these criticisms are directed at Wright's work, his socialist strategy of using the capitalist state to destroy the capitalist state is clearly not subject to at least the former of these criticisms. In developing this strategy, Wright criticizes and reformulates what he views as Poulantzas' overly functionalist fusion of the "limits of structural possibility and the limits of functional compatibilty" (p.231). The thesis which Wright proposes as a viable strategy for the socialist struggle holds that "the limits of what is structurally possible need not correspond to the limits of what is functionally compatible with the requirements of reproducing capitalism" (p.231).

Overly functionalist Marxists such as Poulantzas, argues Wright, assume that the capitalist state is a perfect apparatus for the bourgeoisie. This implies that *any* structurally possible intervention is necessarily optimally reproductive for capitalism (p.230). Wright denounces that this form of functional perfection could ever exist. His reasoning is that the capitalist state is the product of class struggle and not merely the result of bourgeois domination. It is not clear whether Wright makes this claim as a non-functionalist, or merely

in support of his own socialist strategy. Wright denies, as does Giddens, that all capitalist institutions prevail as functional exigencies of the state, and further that "the capitalist state is universally functional for reproducing the dominance of the capitalist class" (ibid.). It is not clear, however, if Wright is willing to refute all notions of functional determinacy.

Wright proceeds to support Giddens' anti-functionalist argument by denouncing the Marxist tradition of "instrumentalism" which, in essence, attempts to outline the functional mechanisms of capitalism. Wright argues that translating the supposed omniscience and omnipotence of the bourgeoisie into an argument for the impossibility of non-reproductive intervention, assumes that history is "only understood in terms of class domination as opposed to class struggle" (p.231). Wright is thus able to illustrate that purely functionalist accounts of capitalism are not supported by historical evidence. At no point, however, does Giddens consider this argument, even though it stands as a vital component of what Wright views as the important issue of providing theoretical support for socialist revolutionary strategies.

Viewing only the above argument, it appears that Wright agrees with Giddens' opposition to emphasizing the functional exigencies of social systems. One might assume that Wright's strategy of widening the gap between the limits of the functional and the limits of the possible implies that actors have a working knowledge of the system which they produce and reproduce. Wright, however, is later careful to qualify this by assuring his readers that what may appear voluntaristic in his argument is in fact not. "It is not a question of political will-power, but of the objective contradictions within the state which make possible such transformations" (p.232). These apparent contradictions in Wright's argument are further illustrated by his discussions elsewhere which refer to his belief that a "scientific" understanding of capitalist contradictions by individual actors will facilitate socialist reform. These inconsistencies lead one to sympathize with Giddens' views that functionalism within the Marxist paradigm has fundamental contradictions.

While Wright's initial theoretical premises are derived almost exclusively from Poulantzas (1975), his systematic revisions of this theory have resulted in some polemical

inconsistencies. Consistent with structuralist tenets, Poulantzas conceives of class as a set of structured positions within systems of capital, and remains irrespective of the agents who occupy these positions (Poulantzas, 1973). This distinction is central to Poulantzas' theory given that his position rejects the importance of individual mobility by suggesting it has no effect on the exploitative relations which are inherent in capitalist structures (1975, p.33). The central task for Poulantzas is thus *not* to characterize the ***distribution*** of individual agents into capitalist classes, but rather to delineate the mechanisms by which the structured relations ***between*** classes are produced and reproduced. In describing these mechanisms, Poulantzas proposes that political and ideological factors act as codeterminants with economic forces (ie determinants "in the last instance") in the formation of class structure.

Wright selectively extracts from Poulantzas' theory a rationale for class determination by economic constituents and disregards altogether the function of political and ideological factors. He, in this sense, falls short of Poulantzas' structuralist project to understand the causally pluralistic mechanisms of class structure determination. Wright develops through selective application of Poulantzas' theory a more simplistic typology which merely accounts for the economic distribution of individuals into a contrived Marxist class schema and as such opposes Poulantzas' project to understand the mechanisms of exploitative relations.

Wright's separation of the proletariat and those employed in areas of technical knowledge and supervision is dubious. It is not demonstrable that these forms of labour are irrelevant to the production of surplus value and do not involve exploitative relations with capitalist employers. This exclusion of certain categories of labour from the working class also appears to contradict Wright's inceptive purpose *not* to develop a theory of structured inequality, but rather to determine the prospects for socialist revolution in modern capitalist states (1978, pp.28-29). Wright's revision of Poulantzas' theory was directed at reformulating criteria to encompass a much larger proletariat and was thus intended to make more feasible the prospects of socialist revolution. [24] These intentions, however, appear to be contradicted by an unfounded exclusion of technical and supervisory labour from the working class.

[24] According to Poulantzas' criteria, Wright (1978) concludes that the petty bourgeois are significantly larger in numbers than the working class (pp.53-58).

Wright's purpose is further precluded by Poulantzas' prediction that the petty bourgeois would eventually strengthen its ties with the proletariat and contribute in this way to revolution. [25]

The first phase of Wright's project (1978a) has met with serious criticism by both opponents to and proponents of Marxian class research. Cohen (1982) provides the most succinct discussion opposing the structuralist focus on class boundaries advocated by Poulantzas and Wright (pp.9-13). Given that their supposedly more empirical structuralist methods rely on objectivist interpretations of Marx, "the questions and results of their analyses turn out to be remarkably trivial *and* obscurantist" (p.9). Cohen criticizes Wright for subsuming the dialectic of Marx to the articulation of structure, suggesting a failure to retain the critical, emancipatory explanations put forth by Marx.

Nonetheless, Wright has continued to advance his analysis of the interconnections of Marxian concepts through survey methods. The next phase of Wright's project (1986a) entails a series of theoretical and methodological adjustments which present difficulties in their own right, but do not effect the construction of his class typology. The following chapter will present these adjustments, as well as a more in-depth assessment of Wright's updated theoretical and methodological assumptions.

[25] Poulantzas (1975) argues that the ideological sub-ensemble of the petty bourgeois is conjunctive with that of the proletariat and as such indicates a polarization of the petty bourgeois and the bourgeois. This has relevance to the criticism below that Wright reverses Marx's original view that the process dertermining the boundary between the working class and the petty bourgeois is one of homogenization as opposed to polarization.

## III. Version II: Contributions to Marxian Method and Class Analysis

The second thrust of Wright's theory is his latest work *Classes* (1985), which represents an attempt to adjust his original Marxist theory so as to satisfy the broader sociological study of class while retaining the central themes of Marxism. To his credit, Wright directly addresses his critics in this endeavour while at the same time adjusting his theory in accord with empirical observations which he derives from the ongoing research generated by his original theory.

Wright (1985) identifies and attempts to correct four problems with his original model of contradictory locations which were illuminated through empirical investigation and debates with other Marxist theorists. The first problem is the "contradictoriness of contradictory locations". While it is acceptable to view the interests of managers as internally consistent, and thus contradictory, Wright finds fault in his previous model which also signifies semi-autonomous and small employees as having contradictory class locations. Semi-autonomous employers may have dual or heterogenous interests, but not contradictory interests, in that autonomy in the labor process does *not* define objective interests which are contradictory with the interests of the working class (p.52). Similarly, while small employers may compete with larger capitalists, they do not necessarily have internal contradictions of interest which polarize the interests of larger capitalists and wage earners.

Holmwood and Stewart (1983) have argued that while Wright (1978a) criticizes Poulantzas for failing to identify the "new middle class" as it is integrated with capitalism along ideological criteria, he too fails. Given that capitalism has inherent contradictions, Holmwood and Stewart (1983) contend that "non-contradictory" locations according to Wright are "unproblematically identified as part of the basic contradiction of the system" (Holmwood and Stewart: p.239). A "contradictory" location on the other hand, has a "problematic relationship to the basic contradiction of the system" (ibid). This distinction, Holmwood and Stewart argue, directly implies that contradictory locations cannot be explained by Marxist class relations. Such locations are an ad hoc attempt to explain the empirical observation that the supposed polarization of Marxist classes is incomplete which "...is

precisely the failure of Marxist theory" (ibid).

The second problem deals with "autonomy as a class criterion" (Wright, 1985, p.53-55) in specifically defining the class location of semi-autonomous employees. While Wright agrees with the essential argument (Braverman, 1974) that proletarianization is a process of dispossession of ownership and loss of control over production, he discounts the belief that autonomy is necessarily a character of the petty bourgeoisie. The autonomy of the petty bourgeoisie is drastically limited by markets, banks and their contradictory relationships with large corporations, etc.(p.53). Furthermore, autonomy is commonly defined by widely varying conditions of the workplace and thus is seldom structurally determined (p.54). Wright found through empirical analysis that autonomy is a generally poor criterion for class position.

Wright's third problem has the most serious implications for Marxist theory. In accepting Marxist theory, one is bound to the notion that history inevitably proceeds toward socialism. This is problematic in that Marxist theory does not adequately define class criteria for post-capitalist societies (1985, p.55). Thus, in using Marxist criteria, Wright found that he was unable to distinguish significantly between contemporary capitalist and state-socialist societies. This supports the view that contemporary socialism is falsely touted as non-capitalist. Wright is unwilling to accept this view, however, and thus argues that Marxist criteria are insensitive to the post-capitalist class structures of contemporary socialist and capitalist societies.

The fourth problem centers on Wright's conceptual shift from exploitation to domination and is the most fundamental in that it is directly related to the other problems. Wright admits that his prior affirmation of the relation of exploitation and class was contradictory in that they are both dominated and dominators (1985, p.56), rather than exploited and exploiters. While this shift is praised by non-Marxists and neo-Marxists alike, Wright sees it as creating two serious problems. Firstly, "domination" does not imply that individual actors have objective interests. More importantly, it does not imply that the dominated and the dominator have *opposed* interests. Secondly, Wright disagrees with the

"plurality of oppression" which domination gives to an understanding of society. In this sense, all bases for the relations of individuals, for example, gender, race and nationality, have equal explanatory power. This "decentering" of class as the basis for understanding society opposes traditional Marxism, and thus is unacceptable to Wright (1985, p.57).

Wright proceeds to systematically restructure his theory of class location around a unique exploitation-centered class concept. The most significant source of this restructuring is the work of John Roemer (1982). Roemer develops a theory of exploitation which centers around the notion that *some* inequalities are a result of a causal relation between the incomes of two or more individuals. In other words, people are rich because of their exploitive relationship with poor people. Roemer (1982) proceeds to elaborate his concept of exploitation using 1) Marxist notions of labor surplus value and 2) a specific form of game theory. This game theory serves to illustrate the varying sets of "rules" which exist across different class structures. It easily delineates the alternatives which must exist before an individual can be said to be exploited. This is necessary, given that if no alternative structure exists, one cannot assume that a relation is exploitative.

Roemer outlines a theory of exploitation without a labor theory of value by introducing a *credit market* in place of a *labor market* in his hypothetical model of a subsistence economy (Roemer, 1982, p.263). The class structure of a labor market consists of: pure capitalists, small capitalists, petty bourgeoisie, mixed proletariats, and proletariats. The class structure of Roemer's credit market, on the other hand, consists of: big lenders, mixed lenders, neither borrowers nor lenders, mixed borrowers, and pure borrowers. The economies of each type of market are "isomorphic" in that the top two classes of each are exploiters, while the bottom two are exploited (Roemer, 1982, p.263). Roemer argues that each type of market involves similar degrees of exploitation, and thus that the class structures are functionally equivalent (ibid.). The implication for Marxist theory is that exploitation is "logically prior" to labor exchange, as well as to the notion of class.

Roemer further argues that the Marxist concept of *alienation* does not necessarily accompany *exploitation*. He is able to illustrate that exploitation can exist without labor

exchange, and thus that property relations do not necessarily correspond with the organization of production in the workplace (1982, p.267). Roemer criticizes Marxists for placing more importance on alienation within the organization of labor than on the relations of exploitation, which operate essentially in the relations of property. Classical Marxists, he notes, are "completely wrong" in assuming that labor power is unique in its capacity to generate surplus value (1982, p.273-274). Roemer points out that other commodities, for example corn, generate surplus value through through human exploitation of that commodity. Marxists thus need not emphasize labor value simply because they are interested in studying the history of people rather than other commodities. Roemer claims that one can study people equally well *through their relations* to these commodities. In emphasizing labour value, Roemer accuses Marxists of seeking only to provide their theories with "ideological ammunition" (1982, p.274-275). This seriously limits the study of accumulation, in that it only views the exploitation of a single type of commodity, even though many types are exploited under capitalism.

Inequalities in the distribution of productive assets, Roemer thus argues, depend on the "capacity of asset-holders to deprive others of equal access to that asset whether it is alienable or inalienable" (Wright, 1982, p.72). "Classes are then defined as positions within the social relations of production derived from the property relations which determine the patterns of exploitation" (ibid.). This distinction leads Roemer to challenge the non-Marxist tendency to emphasize the relations of domination within the modes of production. Wright accepts Roemer's argument, and attempts to account for it by distinguishing between *economic oppression* and *exploitation*. Exploitation includes economic oppression, that is, oppression through property rights, and the appropriation of the labor value assets of one class by another (Wright, 1985, p.74). It is thus possible to be economically oppressed, while not being exploited.

An important implication of Wright's distinction between economic oppression and exploitation is that, in the case of exploitation, the material interests of the oppressor would not be harmed in the absence of the oppressed (1985, p.75). This unique dependency of

exploitation generates the antagonism inherent in class struggle. This notion of exploitation enables Wright to provide a more "coherent" theory of the middle classes (Wright, 1985, p.80). Two forms of non-polarized class locations are identified by this criteria of exploitation. There exist class locations which are neither exploitive nor exploited, in that some individuals neither appropriate assets, nor lose assets to exploiting individuals. An example is a self-employed producer with "precisely the per capita level of relevant asset" (Wright, 1985, p.86). On the other hand, some class locations are both exploited as well as exploitive. Professionals, for example, are exploited in that they lack per capita assets, yet are exploitive in that they appropriate assets which are generated by their credentials (1985, p.87).

This concept of exploitation further enables the analysis of an historical pattern of contradictory locations. In feudalism, the bourgeoisie occupied a contradictory location between the basic classes of lords and serfs. This new middle class gave rise to capitalist modes of production in which managers and bureaucrats occupy contradictory locations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In turn, state-socialism is characterized by contradictory locations of the intelligentsia, or experts which exist between the bureaucrats and the workers (Wright, 1985, p.88-89).

By removing labor exchange as the primary mechanism of class formation and replacing it with a multidimensional model of exploitation, Wright concludes that "classes should be seen as rooted in the complex intersection of three forms of exploitation: exploitation based on the ownership of capital assets, the control of organizational assets, and the possession of skill or credential assets" (1985, p.283).

### A. Critical Responses

Mann (1986) is one who praises Wright for encorporating a Weberian sensitivity to empirical complexities in his treatment of class power with Marxist notions of structural and historical determinacy. Mann notes that Wright has enabled an empirical analysis of Marxist class categories which includes Weberian dimensions of class. This involves a three-dimensional model of class which includes ownership, organizational position, and

skills/credentials. His first criticism is directed at Wright's assumption that his findings support the eventuality of a socialist movement. Wright claims that such a movement will come about as a result of the lack of egalitarian distribution of per capita income which is widely evidenced by his findings. Historical evidence, however, according to Mann, does not support this argument. Secondly, Mann argues that while Wright's comparative analysis of the United States and Sweden is facinating, it tends to demote the credibility of purely economistic predictions of class formation. The finding that "Swedes are employed more by the state, require less supervision, and are more leftist, is *not* Wright admits, a result of exploitation. The combination of Marxist objectivism and American operationalism is thus not supported, argues Mann, as the best method for explaining class structure. Mann further discredits Wright's assumption that public and private ownership are functionally equivalent by indicating several studies which argue otherwise.

Rose and Marshall (1986) argue from a non-Marxist perspective that Wright's attempt to accommodate Marxism with contemporary class structure removes the distinctiveness of Marxist theory (p.441). They attack specifically Wright's incorporation of Roemer's theory of exploitation on three counts. The first is Wright's conception of exploitation as the combination of economic oppression and appropriation. This is opposed to Roemer's conception of exploitation as defined by a game theoretical notion of "withdrawal forces" (Rose and Marshall, 1986, p.444). Secondly, Wright rejects Roemer's concept of status exploitation in that it is not necessarily related to production. Thirdly, Wright accepts Roemer's theory that exploitation of *many* commodities occurs in capitalism but emphasizes the exploitation of labor value as the *prime* basis for exploitation. Considering Wright's substantial departures, Rose and Marshall (1986) question his consideration of Roemer's theory at all. They argue that Wright has rejected the novel, valuable elements in order to secure an orthodox version of Marxism (p.446).

Rose and Marshall (1986) also question Wright's incorporation of Weberian notions of class. By systematically arguing that both Weberian market-based class and Marxist production-based class are based in production, Wright has opened his theory to

neo-Weberianism. The implications of this are found later in Wright's argument when he reformulates the Marxist theory of history. Wright contends that socialism can no longer be viewed as the inevitable state of the future in that contemporary socialism involves exploitation. In rejecting an historical trajectory of a non-antagonistic society, Wright argues that history is merely "progressive" (Rose and Marshal, 1986, p.447). This forces Wright, according to Rose and Marshall (1986) to accept the opinions of non-Weberian theorists (ibid). They do not view this as problematic per se, but criticize Wright for inconsistently adhering to Marxist theory. Wright's essentially non-Marxist revisions of his earliert work (1978a), claim Rose and Marshal, make his new model superior.

Livingstone (1986) criticizes the "substantive and methodological" implications of Wright's "dualistic" theory of exploitation. She argues that while Wright promotes the notion that exploitation occurs in numerous capitalist markets, he fails to outline the specific mechanisms of appropriation in these markets. Furthermore, she questions the intuitive practice of "constructing clean analytical concepts" (Livingstone, 1986, p.633). Livingstone opposes Wright's rejection of Marxist rules on the basis of empirical tests, in that the "rootedness of the concept of class in relation is (thusly) lost" (ibid). For Livingstone, the Weberian elements of Wright's theory undermines its Marxist character and explanatory power.

Giddens (1985) disapproves of Wright's (1985) theorizing on many counts. He is sceptical of Wright's ambiguous radicalism, in that other leftists are critical of the empirical methods which Wright employs. "If Wright is a radical, he is a very respectable one, whose style tends to be somewhat dryly pedantic rather than exhoratory" (Giddens, 1985, p.385). Wright's reformist rejection of the appropriation of surplus leaves Giddens, who questions any form of exploitation as the basis for class boundaries, unimpressed. Giddens knows of no examples of pre-capitalist or modern societies which support Wright's arguments that class is involved with the structuring of society, or that class determines the trajectories of history. He further points out that examples of occupational mobility tend to discount the belief that "empty places" make up class structures regardless of the individual actors who occupy these

places (Giddens, 1985, p.386). Lastly, Giddens argues that property, labor power, and the possession of skills or credentials are distinctly Weberian concepts, regardless of Wright's attempts to claim otherwise.

**B. Methodological Issues**

"It is one thing for a critique to take a science to the point at which it admits of a dialectical presentation, and quite another to apply an abstract, ready-made system of logic to vague presentiments of just such a system" (Sayer, 1989, p.92).

The work of Wright (1976, 1986a) represents a long-term project dedicated to developing and implimenting a strategy for linking theory and research within the context of Marxist sociology. His task is two-fold: 1) to reformulate Marxist theory such that it is useful for 2) carrying out "systematic empirical investigation" (1976, p.14). Wright's method begins with a critical restructuring of Poulantzas' theory of class boundaries, as a means of constructing a statistical variable of class (1976, pp.30-110; Wright et al, 1982). This variable is then employed in a series of data analyses, in which various hypotheses are tested regarding the causal relationship of class structure to other "Marxist" concepts, such as class consciousness (Wright et al, 1982; Wright, 1986a).

Given that Wright's version of empirical investigation appears to be limited to the causal inferences of survey design, he selectively avoids evidence that Marx also carried out empirical investigation using the method of historical materialism (for example, Sayer, 1983, pp.136-137). Nonetheless, Wright proposes that "Marxist theory should generate propositions about the real world which can be empirically studied" (1976, p.10). He hence sets out to reconcile Marx's supposedly unsubstantiated claims with the rigorous positivism of modern sociology. It becomes necessary, however, due to the cross-sectional nature of survey data, to employ his variable of class structure as causally prior to independent variables within the same data set (1986a). This entails assumptions which, ironically, are not supported by the very observations from which Wright derives this variable.

Wright claims to remain "faithful to both the theoretical agenda forged in Marx's work, and the political goals that agenda was meant to promote", while maintaining the primacy of productive relations in developing his own theory of history (1986a, p.16). It was, however, through historical analysis that Marx was able to penetrate the illusion of capital, and refute the "natural" mastery of production over man (Sayer, 1989, p.86). While bourgeois political economy "takes for granted what it is supposed to explain" (ibid., p.306), Wright's ahistorical version of social morphology can *only* take for granted, and can *not* suppose to explain. Thus, though Wright claims to promote the critical, emancipatory theme of Marx's work, he fails to do so.

**The History of Empty Places**

Wright (1986a) typifies Marx's analysis of class as elaborating 1) ***Abstract Structural Maps***: The determination of a structure of empty places in class relations which are devoid of people and 2) ***Concrete Conjunctural Maps***: The manner in which the people occupying these empty places organize in class struggle. He argues that Marx emphasized only the second of these analyses: "While he gives us a list of descriptive categories, corresponding to the actual actors in the conflicts, he does not provide a set of precise concepts for decoding rigourously the structural basis of most of those categories" (p.7). Wright's purpose is thus to carry on Marx's work, "filling in" the elaboration of these abstract structural maps, in order to develop an "effective correspondence" between the two levels of analysis. (p.8).

Wright (1983) develops a thesis by which he is able to identify modes of production as they relate to social formations. Social formation is essentially the abstract designation of various "combinations of modes of production within concrete societies" (p.100). He presents a gestalt of four critical issues in differentiating modes of production: 1) "the mechanism of appropriation of surplus value", 2) "the logic of the allocation of resources and disposition of the surplus labour", 3) "the form of the political dimension of the production relations", and 4) "the nature of the classes determined by the relations of productions" (p.83). This typology of differentiation provides Wright with the means of specifying interpenetrated

forms of production, and hence provides a trajectory of future states.

It appears that Wright makes historical claims using concepts derived from historical analysis, without himself carrying out historical analysis. He contrasts Poulantzas and Skocpol, claiming that while Poulantzas argues that the level of abstraction of mode of production is sufficient to characterize the historical association of class and state, Skocpol rejects the validity of this level of abstraction, and argues for a "strictly historical (ie conjunctural)" analysis of the relationship of the state to class structure (1986a, p.12). Both, claims Wright, are theorizing on the same level of abstraction -- that of the level of social formation. In Marxist analysis, according to Wright, social formation *equates* to mode of production. For Wright, mode of production is hence at the core of the Marxist theory of the "developmental stages" of capitalism (1987, p.17). Given that these stages are in fact "a specific kind of general structural property" (ibid.), the level of abstraction of the mode of production is , for Wright, effective in analysing historical stages of development.

As opposed to addressing the specific *causes* (in this case productive forces) of historical transition, however, Wright appears to equate *historical analysis* with *historically specific analysis*. By conceptually combining four historic modes of production, Wright develops a typology of interpenetrated forms of production. He is then able to identify divergent phases of capitalism, and to thereby provide a range of possible immanent phases (Wright, 1983). In his confusion, Wright furthermore discredits Marx for failing to develop this so-called "legitimate" form of historical materialism. In focusing on the historical conditions of the formation of "concrete class organizations, parties, shop floor organization unions," Marx is argued to have 1) neglected the structural conditions of class: "institutional variability in class relations in given jobs" (p.9), and furthermore to have 2) failed to develop a link between theorized conjunctural class formation and undertheorized conjunctural class structure (p.13).

**Unclad laws**

In proposing a "Theory of History" Wright (1986a) provides a "Typology of class structures, exploitation, and historical transitions" (p.115). The sequential types of social formation in this typology are feudalism, capitalism, statism, socialism and communism. Wright also provides the "historical task of revolutionary transformation". These are, respective to his types of social formation, and which in turn represent increasing levels of emancipation: individual liberty, socializing means of production, democratization of organizational control, substantive equality, and self-actualization. These, he claims, represent the means by which successful transition to the next stage may be made. The probability of achieving his tasks depend directly on the level of the development of productive forces on each level (p.116). His trajectory of future societies is thus probabilistic, as it is contingent on a set of preconditions (p.116). The historical transitions outlined by Wright's version of historical materialism are consequently not "iron laws", but rather provides a range of possibilities which depend on the class structure at each given stage.

This is claimed to be an effective modification of traditional historical materialism, which argues: "whenever a transition from one form of class relations to another becomes historically possible, forms of class struggle will develop that guarantee that some transitions will occur" (Wright, 1986a, p.117). In developing a thesis specifically of "Capitalisms' Futures", Wright takes to task rescuing historical materialism from this iron-clad law of history: "one of the central thrusts of historical materialism has always been that historical development occured along a single developmental trajectory... it is for this reason that historical materialism is often considered a teleological philosophy of history with one final state inexorably pulling social change towards it" (Wright, 1983, p.122). Arguing for a new structural mode of production - "statism", Wright claims to effectively show that there is not *one* future to capitalism (socialism), but in fact *two* (socialism and statism). The structural determination of capitalism's futures thus becomes a ***probabilistic*** determination rather than an *inexorable* determination.

Not only does Wright thus rescue historical materialism from its surfeit of determinacy, but also the revolutionary strategist from a mire of uncertainty. The primacy of productive relations remains the key to social change, given that this power structure determines the manner in which essential resources can be used: "the decisive alternatives that are historically possible revolve around the system of production and appropriation" (p.123). Thus, in the event of "revolutionary rupture", an active, conscious effort must be made to prevent a restoration of *both* capitalist power *and* statist power. Invaluable to the revolutionary is this guide to the "actual patterns of social change" not readily provided by an unmodified historical materialism (p.123).

It is not, however, that Marx's method reveals an iron-clad law, nor a probabilistically contingent one. The charges that Marx's interpretation of history promotes iron-clad laws, resulted partially from the fact that his method of presentation differs from his method of inquiry (Sayer, 1979, pp.96-103). Marx notes: "(inquiry) has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connections. Only after this work is done, can the actual movement be adequately described. If this is done successfully... it may appear as if we had before us a mere a priori construction" (Sayer, 1989, p.92). "What is designated with the words 'destiny', 'goal', 'germ', or 'idea' of earlier history is nothing more than an abstraction from later history, from the active influence which earlier history excercises on later history" (ibid., p.74).

There is evidence that Marx was hostile toward interpretations of his work as advocating a generalized model of historical determinacy. In rebutting such an interpretation, Marx charges the author with taking out of context incidental texts and "transforming (his) historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophical theory of the general course fatally imposed on all peoples, whatever the historical circumstances in which they find themselves placed..." (Sayer, 1989, pp.69-70). Gramsci's criticisms of Bukharin are suggestive here. Bukharin's division of Marx into two components: 1) "a theory of evolution appearing as sociology" and 2) "a philosophy which amount to crude materialism", leads to an empty typology of historical forms. "Separated from the

theory of history and politics, philosophy cannot be other than metaphysics, whereas the great conquest in the history of modern thought, represented by the philosophy of praxis, is precisely the concrete historicization of philosophy and its identification with history" (Gramsci, 1971, p.436).

Marx's methods and conclusions are directly opposed to those suggested by Wright. Historical abstraction reveals both continuities and discontinuities. Production is an effective such abstraction, in that it defines an historical *continuity*. This continuity in turn provides a way of specifying historical *discontinuities* (Sayer, 1989, p.74). This generalized abstraction, however, is itself "multiply divided and diverges into different determinations", and as such facilitates the identification of divergent, more concrete features of these abstract continuities. While all historical epochs have different determinations of production, they also have certain common determinations. This is given by the very nature of production as an historical continuity (p.74-75). The labour process is the production of use-value, which is necessary for affecting exchange of matter between man and nature. This *necessity* implies that the production of use-value is common to every phase of human existence. This continuity, however, is not the entire picture and indeed, is not even the most crucial part, in that it fails to provide the *differing* social conditions of the production of use-value (for example slavery, capitalism or hunting and gathering).

Marx's critique of political observes that though capital is an instrument of production "universal and eternal relation given by nature", the articulation of essential historical differences reveals a specific form of estranged labour. In the *General Introduction* Marx states: "the so-called *general conditions* of all production, however, are nothing but these abstract moments, which do not define any of the actal historical stages of production" (Sayer, 1989, p.78). Clearly Marx's method involves somewhat more than identifying a rigid model of production relations and that, in fact, such models could only form a single level of abstraction useful only in defining a common aspect from which essential differences can be further concluded. Marx claims: "success will never come with the master-key of a general historico-philosophical theory, whose supreme virtue consists in being supra-historical (ibid.,

p.73).

**The Primacy of Productive Forces**

Marx's critical method follows from Feuerbach: "only he whose results stands in direct contradiction to his *conscious beginning* is a truly genetic thinker" (Schmidt, p.33) Consequently, *Capital* begins not with a history of capital relations, but rather with the observation that capitalist societies appear at first as concentrations of commodities (ibid.). From the abstraction of commodity, the concrete categories of exchange, money, circulation of commodities and capital are determined. It is only after this that Marx proceeds to discuss the actual capitalist labour process (ibid.). That Marx was able to discover the content of empirical history, was not dependent on an immediately observed chronolgy of events, but rather derived from an abstract theoretical discourse of the logic of capital (p.34). Had he proceeded with a strictly historiographic analysis, he would have concured with previous political economists, who merely investigated the "ready-made world of capital" (ibid.).

Wright attempts not even a crude historiographic analysis, but rather proposes a series of hypotheses to be tested within historically specific data. Though Athusserian method priorizes synchronic over diachronic analysis, Wright relies on the diachronic only to the point that Marx's analysis has already provided him static class categories. Failing to incorporate historical data, Wright's form of statistical method is not *justified* by, but rather *necessitates* the causal precedence of productive relations. Wright's method thus conforms less to the logic of historical materialism than does the widely criticized Althusserian version.

The criteria for developing his model of class structure, claims Wright (1987: p.27-37), is based on six conceptual constraints: 1) class structure imposes limits on class formation, class consciousness and class struggle. This constraint does not imply that class structure *exclusively* determines class formation, class consciousness, and class struggle (p.29), but does necessitate the conception of a causal association of class structure on these other elements of class: "The argument that class structure imposes basic limits on class formation, class consciousness, and class struggle is essentially a claim that it constitutes the basic

mechanism for distributing access to resources in a society, and thus distributing the capacity to act" (p.28). This "mechanism of distribution" is a qualifier placed by Wright on the claim made by "most Marxists" that class structure is identified one way or another as the basic determinants of the other three elements (ibid.). While deeming class structure to be the basic mechanism determining these elements, Wright acknowledges that he is unable to provide a description of the precise manner in which this determination occurs (ibid.). Though offering that the "precise" mechanisms are cognitive, or psychological, Wright proposes to inform as to the more important, "real" *social* mechanisms of determination.

Class struggle, in Wright's scheme, provides the "transformative principle" of class, but is ultimately determined by class structure (p.30). His second concepual constraint is thus: 2) "class structures constitute the essential qualitative lines of social demarcation in the historical trajectories of social change" (ibid.). Not only does class structure determine class formation, class consciousness, and class struggle, but it also "limits the possibility for other aspects of social structure" (p.31). Class structure, in this way "constitutes the central organizing principles of societies" and within the area of classical Marxism "the crucial historical line of social demarcation remains class relations" (p.31). From these premises, Wright is able to claim that "class structure is the central determinant of social power" (p.31). Again, Wright asserts that this view is widely held among Marxists: the "central thrust" of his model "generally conforms to the logic of the Marxist theory of class" (p.31).

Organizational status is hence for Wright, a function of class structure, which in turn imposes limits on an individual's or a collectivities capacity to act. Consciousness is the "realization by the subordinate class that it is necessary to transform the class structure if there is to be any basic changes in there capacities to act, and the realization by the dominant class that the reproduction of their own power depends on the reproduction of the class structure" (1986a, p.28). Though acknowledging that class struggle constitutes the central transformative principle of class structure, Wright argues that this process is itself determined by class structure.

Wright's third constraint is simply 3) the concept of class is a relational concept. This argument simply dissociates Marxist, relational class concepts from gradational, typically income determined class concepts. Wright argues that gradational class concepts could not possibly provide the necessary "demarcations" upon which a theory of history could be developed (p.35). 4) The social relations which define classes are intrinsically antagonistic rather than symmetrical. Stated simply, classes constitute opposing interests. Consequently, 5) the objective basis of these antagonistic interests is exploitation, and hence result in exploitative relations. Finally, 6) the fundamental basis of exploitation is to be found in the social relations of production. Here, Wright argues that Marxist class models are necessarily production-centered.

Sayer (1983 p.86-87) argues that the practice of subsuming the importance of "productive forces" to that of "relations", as seen in Althusser's ***Reading Capital***, is a misinterpretation of Marx's notion that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (ibid.) [1848a p.40]. If one employs a "traditional" notion of "productive forces", it becomes necessary to interpret Marx's explanation of the transition of modes of production as one of technological determinism. This "traditional" understanding limits the concept of productive forces to the "*instruments* of production and the *individuals* who employ these instruments given a certain degree of *skill* and *experience*" (ibid.). Sayer argues, however, that Marx generalized the definition of productive forces to "all new developments of the universal labour of the human spirit and their social application through combined labour" [1865a p.104]; Marx consequently identified some productive relations as productive forces.

The priorization of relations over productive forces invalidates Marx's theory of historical transition, as that in which "the relevant contradiction lies not between technology and social relations simpliciter, but between one set of emergent production relations, which both constitute a productive force in their own right, and are capable of sustaining a superior technology, and *another* within the framework of which they have operated hitherto" (Sayer, 1983 p.86). This also supports the rejection of traditional interpretations of productive forces

on the grounds that it ignores the "*internality*" of the connection between this paradigm of transition and Marx's equation of history with class struggle. Sayer further rejects this priorization on three grounds: 1) it fails to acknowledge that some relations are themselves social forces, 2) it implies the wrongful isolation of technical from social 'dimensions of production', and 3) it fails to view "production itself as irreducibley material and social" (p.87).

In an historical analysis of the rise of big industry and the subsequent development of international commerce, Marx describes the polarization of classes as a function of increased competition (Tucker, p.184). Given that protective custom regulations represented only a "palliative, a measure of defence *within* free trade" (ibid) the productive forces of big business were able to overcome these measures, and "universalized competition...established a world market, subordinated trade to itself, transformed all capital into industrial capital, and thus produced the rapid circulation (development of the financial system) and the centralization of capital" (ibid). The conditions of universal competition thus resulted in the systematic destruction of previous "natural" relations, (especially those of the division of labour) and replaced them with money relations. The resulting bourgeoisie, according to Marx, retained distinct national interests, while the resulting proletariat were stripped of their nationality, and retained *universal* interests directly opposed to those previous to the productive forces of big business (p.186).

Most importantly, these differing forms of the organization of labour (and property), are manifested as a result of the *necessity* of the unification of productive forces in each phase of development. The relations of production (and hence class structure), are thus *explained* by an historical analysis of the transitions of productive forces. Wright, on the other hand, reverses this causal association, and proposes a typology of class structure which he predicts to be statistically determinant of other variables in a cross-sectional sample. This model is consequently developed out of historical context, and is employed as a univeral analytic tool for a generalized capitalist society.

Describing the resultant universal competition and class polarization which emerged with the advent of big industry, Marx suggests that the eventual class movement of the proletariat would more advance the interests of the worker masses outside of big industry (p.186). These workers were effected more seriously by universal competition than were big industry workers. He cautions, however, that the relations of universal competition created by the productive forces of big industry, resulted in the alienation of worker from worker. "Competition separates individuals from one another, not only the bourgeois but still more the workers, in spite of the fact that it brings them together." (p.186). It is thus only after long struggle that the proletariat may unite in common interest. [26]

In the interests of defining revolutionary potential, or the polarization of class interests, it is thus as least as important to explore variability among the working class as it is to explore variability between classes. The utility of Wright's class typology, however, is limited to describing the distribution of individuals across class categories (Wright, 1986a, pp.193-210), and to comparing measures of class consciousness between classes (ibid., pp.259-280). As will be described in the following chapter, Wright's typology is in fact less effective than other, more simple statistical class indices in predicting the variability of class-related statistical concepts. This finding is not surprising, given that historical materialism has not revealed a set of class categories which are necessarily homogeneous with reference to such concepts as class consciousness or political culture. Nor, in fact, has it found a rigid set of class boundaries.

Further to this argument is Marx's disappointingly abrupt discussion of class categories in the last chapter "What Constitutes a Class" of his third volume of capital (Tucker p.441) He identifies the three "big classes" of modern society as: 1) wage labourers 2) capitalists and 3) land owners. Though Marx views the class divisions of his England as "obliterated" by middle and intermediate strata, he views the process of capital as one of increasing polarization or "the (concentration) of scattered means of production into large

[26] Given universal comptition as a force of production constituting the causal mechanism of class structure, class, in this case, would be an invalid independent variable in statistical analysis. This seriously undermines any causal inferences which involve class as a dependent variable.

groups" (p.441). Answering what constitutes a class, Marx responds (at first glance) "the identity of revenues and sources of revenues" (p.442). This, however, is seen as far too simplistic, given that, for example, physicians and officials also constitute separate classes with this criteria. Marx hence proposes that each class further involves an "infinite fragmentation of interest and rank into which the division of labour splits labourors as well as capitalists and landlords" (p.442). This suggests again that Marx's class is not reducible to crude analytic categories.

Gandy (1979) also finds little support for rigid class boundaries (pp.96-98). According to him, Marx and Engels viewed class as rooted in property relations, which changed historically across tribalism, feudalism, and capitalism. Status, on the other hand, is not pertinent to social change. Marx and Engels accordingly found that classes are constantly splitting into fractions and regrouping within the context of class struggles corresponding to historical transitions of property relations (pp.98-99). The bourgeoisie, for instance, began as a class long before the advent of capitalism. As capitalism matured, fractions of the bourgeois merchants, financiers, and industrialists - struggled among themselves within a new competitive spirit. The bourgeois eventually coalesced into a distinct social group, that is, those who exploit wage labour through productive ownership (p.100). The rhythm of history, according to Marx and Engels, are cycles of class concentration and fractionation (p.101). Class is hence primarily an historical process which can be explained through historical materialist method, as a result of the productive forces of capitalism. Historical fluctuations of polarizing and converging class structure attest to the limited explanatory power of class relations in statistical analysis.

**Where's the Emancipation?**

Three traditional Marxist theses are redefined according to Wright's *sympathetic* modifications. The first rejects the traditional view (Marx's own) that "socialism is the immediate imminent future capitalism", given that such a transition would necessitate the

equalization of two "exploitation assets": means of production and organization (1986a, p.117). There is clearly no logical *necessity* for these to simultaneously occur, and hence Wright concludes that *both* statism *and* socialism are possible futures to capitalism. Second, Wright argues that other classes have the potential to carry out revolution, and hence refutes the Marxist opinion that "the proletariat are the only bearers of a revolutionary mission within capitalism" (ibid.). Third, Wright claims to show that socialism, contrary to Marx, has a "distinctive form of exploitation". Marx, he claims, argued that socialism is *not* a mode of production and merely constituted an intermediate step to communism (p.118). These three modifications do not, according to Wright, undermine the important notion of *progression* in Marx's view of historical trajectory, and consequently supposes to retain support for Marx's claims (p.118).

Wright (1986a) provides a typology of exploitation relations which correspond to specific class structures, described as "essentially a typology of modes of production" (p.109). He admits, however, that no society has only one form of exploitation. In order to better characterize the form of exploitation observed in societies, Wright provides three "axes of variabilities", which typify the unique combinations of types of exploitation: 1) *relative weight* of exploitation, 2) the degree of linkage of exploitation to *internal* or *external* relations, and 3) the degree to which various exploitations *overlap* or are *distinct* from each other in a given society.

Given the possible combinations of four modes of production, which necessarily involve four types of exploitation (feudal, capitalist, statist, or socialist), Wright attempts to operationalize the "relative weight" of these exploitations. He first rejects the Marxist notion that one or another form of exploitation must remain the "dominant mode", on the basis that "two or more forms may in fact carry equal weight in a single society (p.109). Possible operationalizations of relative weight are then identified as 1) "the relative, aggregate magnitudes of... appropriations of social surplus based on property rights by owners of different exploitation-generating assets", 2) "a measure of the 'class power' of those who appropriate surplus", 3) the degree to which the dominant mode is functionally associated

with subordinate modes and 4) the "dynamic effects of different exploitations" (p.109-111).

Wright then proceeds to argue for the fourth approach, but claims that due to the "theoretical underdevelopment of our understanding of the dynamics rooted in each of the forms of exploitation *other* than capitalism, let alone the possibility of distinct 'laws of motion' forced by distinct combinations of these forms of production" it is overly difficult to operationalize this notion of exploitation (p.112). Wright provides no means of identifying the degree to which types of exploitation overlap, or are distinct from one another, but does assert that in societies where an overlap occurs, there is a higher degree of class polarization. Implied in this is the notion that multiple forms of exploitations, as reflected in class structure, can have an *additive* effect on class struggle when combined in the same society.

Arguing that the chemical properties of elements and compounds are analogous to the combinations of his types of exploitation, Wright draws upon the example of Asiatic modes of production. Based on the notion of "hydraulic civilization", Asiatic modes involved a peculiar combination of types of exploitation in which "no dynamic social forces capable of producing qualitative transformations could be generated exogenous to the social structure" (p.113). This provides support for Wright's rejection of the necessity of dominant modes of production, given a balance of *both* feudal *and* organizational exploitation. He further attempts to explain the failure of European-type capitalist structures to arise from Asiatic modes on the basis of this balance. Wright further rejects the term "Asiatic *mode of production*, given that the situation was actually a type of social formation, and *not* a mode of production (p.113).

Marx's theory of estranged labour is central to his understanding of the historical modes of production. In understanding the causes of this process, which involves directly the increasing commodification of the worker, he finds it necessary to reject essential premises of political economy. Failing to comprehend presupposed laws of the material process of private property, political economy attempts no analyses of the causes of what it views as a necessary course of development. Explanations are thus teleological: "It takes for granted what it is supposed to explain". (Sayer, 1989, p.306).

The commodification of the worker is itself a result of the relationship between labour and labour's product. The more a worker produces, the less valued the worker becomes: "The *devaluation* of the world of men is in direct proportion to the *increasing value* of the world of things" (p.308). This process of objectifying labour thus results in an ever increasing estrangement of labour from product. Nature (sensuous natural world) provides the worker with the means of life both as an object of labour, and as a means of subsistence. As the worker appropriates nature (through labour), however, he becomes a servant to it: "It is only as a *worker* that he can maintain himself as a physical subject, and that it is only as a *physical subject* that he is a worker" (p.310). Though "productive life *is* the life of the species", life itself appears only as a *means to life*. (p.315). The free, conscious, activity which constitutes mans' species-character is subordinated by the estrangement of labour to the physical existence of the individual. "In taking away from man the object of his productivity, therefore, estranged labour tears from him his *species-life*, his real objectivity as a member of the species" (p.316). These forms of estrangement: man from 1) the product of his labour 2) his life-activity (ie labour), and 3) his species-being, result directly in the estrangement of *man* from *man* (p. 317) while the estranged relationship of man to labour is provided by this very relationship, so too is private property - the product of alienated labour. The cause becomes however reciprocal: "private property...(is) in the one hand the *product* of alienated labour, (it is) on the other the *means* by which labour alienates itself" (p.320).

As both products of estranged labour, *wages* and *private property* can be seen as identical. The emancipation of the worker will result in universal human emancipation because: "The whole of human servitude is mirrored in the relation of the worker to production, and all relations of servitude are but modifications and consequences of this relation" (p. 322). The nature of private property is thus illustrated by "transferring the question of the *origin of private property* into the question of the relation of *alienated* labour to the course of human development." (p.323).

"The *historical* conditions of (capital's) existence are by no means given with the mere circulation of money and commodities. It arises only when the owners of the means of

production and subsistence finds the *free* worker available, on the market, as the seller of his own labour-power, and *this one historical precondition* comprises a world's history. Capital, therefore, announces from the outset a new epoch in the process of social production" (Sayer, 1989, p.125).

Marx's criticism of political economists' treatment of the concept of labour reveals also his opposition to ahistorical models of production relations. Marx argues that while political economy attempts to reconcile concrete phenomena with abstractions, it is crucial to devise abstract determinations in *reproducing* concrete phenomena (p.90). Political economy, he argues, fails to deduce how *value* becomes *exchange-value*, or even to distinguish between them (Sayer, 1989, p.85). That the value-form of the product of labour is the most abstract and *universal* form negelects altogether historical analysis, which would reveal specific *developments* of value-form and hence commodity-form (p.80). In a distinctly *humanist* argument, Marx criticizes traditional political economy for advancing the bourgeois thesis of a "natural" mastery of production over man (p.86).

Wright's model not only opposes so-called humanist Marxism, but also appears to contradict the Althusserian concept of structural causality. This form of causality is neither linear (historic), nor expressive (ie reducing the constituent parts to an essence of totality), but rather represents a causality "imminent" in its effects. Though supposing to contribute to conjunctural, historical analysis through survey method, Wright is limited by the historical specificity of cross-sectional data. His model of class structure derives from Marx's historical analysis of the development of capital, but is reduced to expressing the constituent elements of capital (eg class structure, class struggle, class consciousness) within a recursive, cross-sectional causal model. Wright's causal claims are thus neither linear, nor imminent, but, due to the limitations of survey methods, are plainly expressive.

Schmidt (1981) identifies the dominant disinterest in history as not simply the demise of current western sociology, but also as a function of the progress of bourgeois society (pp.1-2). A generalized loss of historical consciousness, leads to a failing conception of the nexus of past and future. This further undermines a comprehension of the causes of present conditions, and delimits the role of individual agency in effecting future states. Wright's analysis of cross-sectional data permits no explanation of the causes of present class

structure, and in fact limits future states to be determined primarily by present class relations. Marx, on the other hand, emphasizes the emancipatory theme of his historical method:

> In order to inform why a "particular principle" is associated with a particular point in history, it is necessary to determine "the relations between man and man which result from all these respective needs, productive forces, modes of production, conditions of existence... what is this but to draw up the real, profane history of men in every century and to present these men as both the authors and the actors of their own drama?" (Sayer, 1989, p.89).

Marx's humanist approach to history is reflected in his assertion that even *capital* is not a thing, but a "social relation between persons which is mediated between things" (Sayer, 1989, p.62). That these people are reduced to mere "representatives of the world of commodities" attests to the repressive historical conditions of capital, and is not necessarily an empirical norm (ibid.). The emancipatory theme of Marx's work is thus directly bound up in his historical method. Wright's reduction of historical analysis to identifying simultaneous phases of relations of production within present systems, fails at its onset to apprehend the "antagonistic whole" and avoids altogether an understanding of historical development. No wonder, then, that Wright's proclaimation of faithfulness to the "theoretical agenda forged in Marx's work and the political goals that agenda was meant to promote" fails to ever come to light.

## IV. Applying Wright's Typology

### A. Introduction

The concept of social stratification presumes that individuals occupy or can be theorized to occupy positions within a ranked, hiearchical structure determined by variables of inequality such as income, power, or gender. Though there is debate as to the existence of discrete strata boundaries or divisions, it is generally accepted that each stratum possesses a certain degree of homogeniety in respect to given criteria. Issues of the identification and measurement of social strata have been and are presently confounded by widely varying and commonly opposed indices of stratification.

For Marx, principal class polarization occurs around the most fundamental relations of production. In this case, the unpropertied working class sells their labour power in exchange for a wage. The bourgeois class, given ownership of the means of production, appropriates the surplus value of this labour in the form of profit. This exploitative relation of the bourgeois and working classes is polarizing and thus creates a potential for transformation of the working class from a "class in itself" to one "for itself". The working class as such changes from an abstract category to a class with collective consciousness. Change in Marxist class structure thus comes about through contradictions implicit in systems of capital. That classes cannot be identified outside of class struggle is an essential component of Marxist class theory. Class is *defined* by class struggle.

Though the work of Marx provides a *relational* conception of class, most contemporary Canadian research employs *gradational* conceptions. Gradational conceptions of class are those which presume a quantitative, spatial ordering of groups. In this sense, some classes exist on a quantitatively higher level than others, for instance, upper, middle, and lower classes. Regardless of the ongoing debate of continuous vs homogeneous classes, the essential concept among gradational models of class is that of divisional units within stratification. The typical determinant of class in gradational conceptions is income, and as

such, gradational class is virtually indistinguishable from income.

Relational conceptions of class, on the other hand, do not define classes along a continuum determining which class possess more of a given criteria than others, but rather define classes through their qualitative position within a relational structure. For instance, the working class is viewed as a seller of labour power, while the capitalist class is viewed as a buyer of labour power. Though gradational conceptions define classes according to a *quantitative* determinant, relational views define classes according to *qualitative* determinants of social relations. Wright argues that while gradational views *imply* social relations (e.g. that lower classes are only lower in relation to higher classes), they fall short of comprehending the relations which are merely reflected in such variables as income levels (1979, p.7). In this sense, gradational definitions of class do not capture the underlying dynamics of social relations and, as such, are inadequate to determining and predicting such processes as class struggle.

Canadian class research is largely concerned with these methodological issues of typifying and modeling class structure. Studies of the Canadian class vote, for instance, have dealt directly with this issue in debating the determination of Canadian political culture by Canadian class structure. While several researchers report only a negligible relationship between Canadian social class and Canadian electoral politics (Alford, 1967; Lambert and Hunter, 1979; Ogmundson, 1979; Pammett, 1987), recent studies suggest that Marxist class typologies are more useful as measures of class than conventional SES-oriented indicators of stratification (Stevenson, 1977; Grabb and Lambert, 1982; Johnston and Ornstein, 1982, 1985; Baer et al, 1987).

The effectiveness of statistical Marxist typologies of class relies on the assumption that class location in some way mediates the social or political characteristics of individuals. This mediation process, in Marxist terms, is further determined by class consciousness. Mann (1973) identifies two elements of class consciousness: class identity and class opposition. Similarly, Wright (1985) identifies class consciousness as "the realization by the subordinate classes that it is necessary to transform the class structure if there are to be any basic changes

in their capacities to act, and the realization by the dominant classes that the reproduction of their power depends upon the reproduction of class structure" (p. 28).

Given that, for instance, party affiliation is partially a result of the perceived alignment of individual and party class interests, it can be argued that this perception at very least necessitates class identification. In the same sense, choosing one party over another tacitly implies class opposition. Given the voter's belief that a desired electoral outcome will result in the realization of his/her class interests, it follows that the process of class consciousness is indicated by class voting behavior. In other words, the act of supporting a political party which is perceived to support ones own class interests (a left-oriented party in the case of subordinate classes and a right-oriented party in the case of dominant classes) may be seen as an indication of class consciousness.

The present study will apply the Marxist typology of class structure developed by Erik Wright (1976) in order to assess its explanatory validity. Data analysis will be carried out to explore the relationship of Wright's class typology to various dimensions of class consciousness. A brief overview of Canadian class research will first be presented.

## Class conceptions in Canadian research

The following overview serves to sensitize the reader to current topics and themes encompassed within the field of Canadian class research. It is hoped that an overview of current periodical publications will provide a better understanding of relevant topics and as such will facilitate a synthesizing view of both the central debates, as well as the current "conceptual status" of Canadian class structure. Within the context of an overall research strategy, this review is an attempt to 1) narrow the scope of previous work which has dealt mainly with broader, theoretical orientations to class research, and 2) provide a cursory knowledge of Canadian class research necessary to applying a model of Canadian class structure. This model is central to a data analysis project presented in a following section.

**Class Consciousness and Marxist Categories**

Cuneo (1978) found support for Marxist models of class relations. He notes that Canadian class research has traditionally focused on issues of "status" and "power" while neglecting evidence of economic exploitation as defined by Marxist theory. Cuneo rejects the common criticism of Marxist models of class (ie that a separation of ownership and control of the means of production obscures Marxist categories) and suggests that these criticisms avoid the central issue of Marxist class sytems: "the rate of extraction of surplus value by the capitalist class from the wage-labouring class" (p.285). In an empirical investigation, Cuneo presents 11 indexes of class exploitation which 1) provide an alternative to the dominant prestige and status scales, 2) extend over a long period of time, and 3) focus on the relations *between* classes (p.285).

After addressing several "theoretical and technical problems in the rate of surplus value" (pp.286-290), [27] Cuneo describes the procedures used in constructing his 11 indexes of rates of surplus value which he calculated from the Canadian manufacturing industry between 1917 and 1971. The most crude index, for instance, involved value-added minus total wages of production and related workers, divided by these wages. Each successive index then involved including various standardized, market-based controls, such as the historically specific General Wholesale Price Index, cost of living fluctuations as reflected in the Consumer Price Index, and 5 alternative depreciation indexes.

A comparison of each rate of surplus value index illustrates the important methodological implications associated with these essentially Marxist measures of exploitation. [28] Overall, however, Cuneo's findings indicate that "the rate of surplus value or class exploitation in Canada has increased dramatically over time" (p.296). This increase supports Marx's prediction that the development of capitalism (and subsequently the concentration of

[27] These include surplus value vs. economic surplus, the transformation problem, real wages, costs of constant capital, number of productive workers, commercial and monopoly profits, and the role of the state.

[28] Cuneo, for example, provides a correlation matrix of these indexes which identifies a weakness in the first 3 indexes. These indexes essentially fail to account for annual variations in numbers of wage earners. This is, however, accounted for in the 4th and 6th indexes.

capital) will parallel an increase in the rate of surplus value, and thus an increase in the rate of class exploitation. Cuneo follows this observation with a finding that his strongest indicators of exploitation account for up to 56% of the variance in overt class conflict (p.297).

Grabb and Lambert (1982) carried out a survey research project dealing with the popular class imagery of Canadians. 3218 Torontoians were interviewed in 1971-72 in an attempt to measure their opinions regarding social class differences. In their categorization of class, the authors rely on a loose definition, involving such terms as "social standing", "rank", or "socioeconomic status". With the rationale that such a practice is "customary" they use occupation as the "preferred indicator" (p.300). The results using Blishen's SES index and the Pineo-Porter scale of occupational prestige were "so similar" that a trichotomous categorization of manuals, lower non-manuals (clerical and sales) and upper non-manuals (owners, managers, and professionals) was used. Other independent variables were income, education, and 3 indexes of "sophistication": 1) knowledge, 2) sociocultural participation, and 3) involvement in voluntary organizations. The dependent variables involved "the number and content of responses used in distinguishing social classes". Thus the responses to the question "what do you think are the differences between social classes" were categorized in terms of: 1) educational, 2) economic, 3) cultural, and 4) other criteria.

Grabb and Lambert (1982) found that manuals were more likely to admit to having no notions regarding social class at all, while among those who do have notions, the modal response was of economic criteria. Furthermore, it was found that higher occupational strata tend to provide multiple criteria for distinguishing among social classes. Less educated respondents tended to state only economic criteria, while more educated respondents tended also to provide multiple criterion. The authors conclude that because income alone failed to explain the level complexity in distinguishing between classes, it was the education and sophistication of the higher strata respondents which were responsible for their more complex class imagery.

Tanner and Cockerill (1986) provide a comparison of two opposed explanations of working-class ideology. The first explanation suggests that worker social consciousness is shaped by various situational and occupational orderings in the workplace. [29] The second explanation involves the shaping of consciousness by various "life experiences" which take place *outside* the workplace. [30]

110 male factory workers in Edmonton were interviewed with a wide range of questions dealing with job features mostly related to feelings of "fulfillment and deprivation". A second set of items dealt with various aspects of the workers background. In attempting a measure of class consciousness, the authors drew most prominantly from the work of Giddens (1973). The item thus involved a series of escalating dimensions reflecting revolutionary consciousness which culminated in a "full-blown" radical ideology. More importantly, however, the measurement did *not* involve political ideology, but rather revolutionary consciousness within the context of the workplace.

Both the work and non-work variables were entered in a step-wise multiple regression. In short, no variable was found to have a significant effect on worker industrial ideology. While the authors are unable to offer other possible explanatory variables, they make suggestions as to the *nature* of working-class consciousness. They indicate that the worker responses tended to reflect a schism in their belief systems. For instance, a respondent may express a "left" attitude on the redistribution of profit, while expressing a "right" attitude on the control of union power. Various explanations are offered.

**Political Ideology and the Class Vote**

Recent periodical publications dealing with Canadian class have been dominated by research of class-specific *voting* behavior. While most of these deal directly with the class

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[29] Tanner and Cockerill make no theoretical distinctions in terms of the nature of occupational orderings. One can glean, however, that they are refering to essentially Marxist notions, especially in their preference to the productive system and such notions as worker autonomy.

[30] An interesting example is a study by Keddie (1980) which found that militant workers were more likely to be associated with wives who held white-collar occupations and thus were influenced by middle-class values and political orientations.

vote, others are peripherally involved with class-specific political ideology. The following is a survey of the most recent of these studies.

Ogmundson (1975) indicates that previous studies have tended to suggest that, in Canada, "the relationship of social class to electoral politics appears to be almost non-existent" (p.506). He cites several cross-nation comparative studies [31] which suggest that Canada is unique in that voters are not concerned with class issues. Some explanations are that the Canandian identity is underdeveloped, and that Canadian loyalties tend to be effected more by religious and/or regional factors. Ogmundson, however, suggests that these findings are more a reflection of the nature of the Canadian party system rather than of the individual motivations of Canadians.

Ogmundson (1975) used secondary data which included voter ratings of the class images of Canadian political parties. He describes the cross tabulation of the class position of voters with the class position of the parties which they voted for as the standard method of estimating the rate of class-voting. He critisizes this method, however, as failing to account for the class position which is assigned to political parties. These parties, he points out, rarely present a meaningful choice on class-related issues to the general population. Furthermore, researchers themselves tend to classify parties and fail to take into account voter perceptions. The average voter, Ogmunson suggests, may not even perceive a difference among national parties, and in fact may place a class-motivated vote for entirely different reasons, such as recollection of a specific party action.

Ogmundson (1975) thus compared three rates of class-vote. The first used a conventional authority-based method of classifying Canadian parties. The second classified parties in terms of an aggregate perception of the population, while the third used individual perceptions of parties as a means of controlling for voter dissensus. Each consecutive method substantially increased the rate of the class-vote in Canada. Ogmundson suggests this indicates that the "classlessness" of Canadian politics is *not* a result of voter disinterest in class issues, but is rather a result of the minimization of these issues by the two major political parties

[31] Alford's index of class voting is an example of the methods used in these studies.

(p.511). Overall, he points out, it seems that voter *perceptions* play a far greater role in voter behavior than does party policy.

In a study of the relationship between social class, union membership, unemployment, ethnicity, religious affiliation and left-wing radicalism, Stevenson (1977) found that left-wing radicalism is "rooted" in a specifically Marxian notion of social class. His hypothesis is thus that "the lower one's class, the more left-wing one's political views" (p.272). Stevenson indicates that previous studies tend to suggest that Canadian voting behaviour is not related to social class. These findings, he argues, have been effected by a "limited" notion of social class and proposes to overcome this limitation with a Marxian operationalization of social class.

This researcher is sceptical of his operationalization which is based solely on 1) ownership of business 2) occupation 3) % of 1972 income which came from owning corporate stock or own business. If the last item was responded to with "60% or over" the respondent would be classified as "petty bourgeois". Petty bourgeois professionals were classified as new petty bourgeois, and such petty bourgeois as shopkeepers were classified as old petty bourgeois. The proletariat were divided similarly into white-collar working class and blue-collar working class. Old petty bourgeois were ranked highest and blue collar working class were ranked lowest. None-the-less, Stevenson found a significant negative correlation of his Marxist class schema to left-wing radicalism, and a far weaker correlation of other, non-Marxian measures of class to left-wing radicalism. The other dependent variables were not significantly correlated to class.

Lambert and Hunter (1979) extend Ogmundson's (1975) study by 1) applying his method to later voting data, 2) providing a comparison of voter ratings of political parties across varying scales and surveys, and 3) attempting to find a class-based theme in the ratings of these parties. Respondents were asked to rate, with a 6 item, 7 point semantic differential-type scale, each of the Canadian Federal parties, as well as an "ideal" party. [32] Overall, Lambert and Hunter found that when they applied Ogmundson's scales, their respondent's ratings were consistent with those of Ogmundson. They were thus able to

[32] Ogmunson (1975) procedures were employed.

conclude that Canadian party class images remain stable over time (p.293). While Ogmundson's scales reveal low, positive class voting in 1965 and in 1968, the Alford-Dawson scales reveal low *negative* class voting. They were also able to conclude that ratings for each of the five federal political remained fairly consistent for both supporters and non-supporters overall.

Myles (1979) critisizes Alford's (1967) comparison of Canadian and American class-voting behavior. He suggests that the now widely accepted notion that the class-vote in Canada is virtually non-existent in comparison with the United States, is a "pseudo-fact". On theoretical grounds, it is acknowledged that one should find very little difference in the class-voting behavior of Canadians and Americans. Myles suggests that Alford's left-right division of Canadian federal parties, in a way analogous to the left-right division of the American Democratic and Republican parties, is highly problematic.

Myles (1979) indicates that Alford's (1967) use of an odds-ratio based measure is largely insensitive to variations in the marginals. His alternative method is to "remove the effects due to marginal distributions by means of Deming adjustment" which involves the "progressive standardization of rows and columns to a common set of marginals for all tables" (p.1234). In applying this method to Alford's original data, Myles found that Alford's unstandardized indices drastically underestimated the class vote effect in Canada and that the size of the class vote in Canada and the United States is in fact virtually identical.

Johnston and Ornstein (1982) explored what they describe as a largely avoided issue: "identifying the experiential roots of class differences in political ideology" (p.197). They employ Carchedi's definition of class structure in a multiple regression analysis of the effects of class, background, and work situation on political ideology. [33] Attention to this approach, they argue, has been deflected by studies dealing only with the relation between class and ideology. Overall, Johnston and Ornstein found little support for the prior role of social background in determining class and political ideology. They suggest, however, that this

[33] These issues are central to the thesis of "embourgeoisment" posited by Crossland (1956) which argues that working-class consciousness is "blocked" by a middle clas redirection of lifestyle, values, and ideology patterns.

finding indicates a need for analyzing political differences *within* rather than between classes.

Baer et al (1987) employ a longitudinal analysis of the relationship between class location and political ideology using the 1977, 1979, and 1981 Quality of Life Surveys. As several indicators reveal, these years marked a transition of serious economic decline. [34] The authors attempted to explore the effects of this decline on the political attitudes of Canadian classes. They note that several Marxists hypothesize that economic crisis promotes revolutionary consciousness, and that non-Marxists have similar views on the effects of crisis on political ideology and behavior. After carefully outlining the need for research into, as well as the theoretical groundings of these issues, the authors procede to discuss their project.

Respondents were asked to rate their own attitudes toward the redistribution of wealth on two sets of indicators. The authors then constructed a "three-wave panel model", which is a variation of a multiple indicator model (Lisrel). While a simple comparison of individual item means revealed no distinct pattern, an application of the Lisrel model revealed some attitude shifts and class differences which tend to support the hypothesis that increasing economic problems "may be associated with divergent class ideology, specifically around issues of resource distribution and access to social services" (p.15).

Lambert et al (1987) refer to issues raised in Ogmundson's (1975) reassessment of the class vote in Canada. In accepting Ogmundson's conclusions that the non-existence of the class vote in Canada is a result of a discrepancy between expert and voter definitions of the class orientations of political parties, the authors rely on a *subjective* class voting (SCV) procedure. Their approach differs from earlier SCV studies in that they focus on provincial as well as federal voting. They were thus able to compare provincial and federal voting patterns, as well as differences *between* provinces. Utilizing a development thesis, the authors predicted equivalent levels of class vote between such equally developed provinces as Alberta and Saskatchewan.

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[34] Baer et al (1987) researched a large number of indicators such as: consumer price indices, interest rate changes, GNP, strength of dollar, family income growth, unemployment rates, number of bankruptcies, etc.

The authors found that B.C. had the highest relationship between social class and SCV with 16.1% of variance explained. Alberta followed with 14.9%, and Saskatchewan with 13.7%. Quebec had the lowest level with 3.7%, while Ontario had the second lowest with 6.3%. In every comparison, provincial class voting was higher than the federal class vote. Lambert et al suggest that this is a result of class-based issues being more prevalent on the provincial as opposed to the federal level. Another finding was that left-right orientation was the most important predictor of SCV, *especially* in provinces which were high in SCV. They conclude by suggesting that sociologists have wrongfully separated the areas of class and voting behavior.

Parnmett (1987) addresses the issue of low class vote in Canada. His hypotheses are 1) low class consciousness eliminates class politics, 2) class identification is generally with the middle class and as such precludes any working-class alternatives, 3) class consciousness varies over time and inhibits class formation, 4) lack of correspondence between occupation and class identification. These first four hypotheses are "cultural/attitudinal" hypotheses. The final two hypotheses are: 5) structuring institutions have not developed class issues, and 6) lack of class parties which inhibit emergence of class issues, and can be labelled "elite/institutional" hypotheses. [35]

The first hypothesis was supported by findings of low levels of class consciousness and thus supported the cultural/attitudinal hypothesis. The second hypothesis was also supported, in that the working class was found to be relatively satisfied. The third hypothesis was also supported in that only 3% of Canadians maintained a spontaneous working-class identification over a 5-year period. The fourth hypothesis was supported by the finding of very little correspondence between subjective and objective class variables. While the relationship between union affiliation and working-class consciousness varies considerably, support was found for hypothesis 5, in that unions tended not to foster a working-clas consciousness, but rather that union members tended to consider themselves middle rather than working class. Pammett also concluded that Canadian federal parties have no class basis.

[35] Another important hypothesis acknowledged by the author is the pre-emption of class issues by issues of national integration.

At first glance, the above overview reveals that the bulk of Canadian class research has dealt with the Canadian class vote. Motivated by a provocative study by Alford (1967) which put forward the notion that Canadian social class is *not* related to electoral politics, several researchers have attempted to either refute this conclusion, or to draw further implications from it. The majority of studies and the overall weight of the findings, however, do not support Alford's findings. Ogmundson (1975) found strong support for an alternative explanation of Alford's findings. He revealed that in comparing the Canadian and American party systems, Alford failed to take into account fundamental differences in *subjective* voter perceptions of the class affiliations of Canadian federal parties.

Lambert and Hunter (1979) extended Ogmundson's (1975) study and found further support for his hypothesis, while outlining other interesting factors of the Canadian class vote on provincial as well as federal electoral levels. They also found that the Canadian class vote remained stable over time. Myles (1979) further found support for an alternate explanation of Alford's findings. Rather than correct for the subjective perceptions of Canadian voters, however, he revealed that a direct comparison of Canadian and American federal parties is both ill-conceived and highly problematic. Stevenson (1977) also rejected Alford's findings, while again taking a different approach. He chose to redefine what he believed to be a "limited" notion of "social class" into a more amenable Marxist formulation. Lambert et al (1987) further developed Ogmunson's (1975) procedure into a now widely supported concept of *subjective class voting.*

There are, however, exceptions to the support of Ogmundson's argument. These exceptions, however, appear to avoid the issue rather than to deal directly with it. Pammett (1987) for instance, completely avoids the issue of the existence of the low class vote in Canada and *assumes* that it exists. After succintly and commendably summarizing the issues associated with the Canadian class vote, he states "with these considerations in mind" he will procede to expore various reasons for the low Canadian class vote. None of his hypotheses, however, deal with the methodological issue of the *subjective* class vote which, for many researchers, (Ogmundson, 1975; Myles, 1979; Lambert and Hunter, 1979; Lambert et al, 1987)

is at the heart of the ill-conceived low Canadian class vote.

An important issue which can be gleaned from these studies is the notion that Canadian class is somehow qualitatively different from other Western nations, especially the United States, when related to Canadian electoral politics. This difference, it has been suggested, may both be a result of, or have a substantial effect on, Canadian political culture. This unique relationship, while serving to underscore the importance of studying Canadian class, may also provide a great deal of insight into the roots of the Canadian class structure. With this in mind, one considers studies of the relation of Canadian class to facets of Canadian culture *other* than electoral politics.

Tanner and Cockerill (1986) compare the determination of Canadian class by two separate facets of Canadian life, those within and those outside the workplace. They unfortunately found no support for either type of determinant. Baer et al (1987) found a relationship of varying economic climate over time to various attitude shifts and class differences. Pammett (1987) while using questionable procedures, found a relationship between various cultural/attitudinal and elite/institutional factors. Johnston and Ornstein (1982) on the other hand, in an extensive research project, found little support for the prior role of various social background factors in determining class and political ideology.

In broader terms, these studies serve to counterpose various methodological approaches to studying Canadian class. Overall, one finds popularity of specifically *Marxist* models of social class. [36] Stevenson (1977) found strong support for Marxist class categories, as did Johnston and Ornstein (1982), Baer et al (1987) and Pammett (1987). Grabb and Lambert (1982) found a lack of class identification among Canadians, as well as an interesting pattern of class definiton among higher and lower occupational strata. [37] Cuneo (1978), interestingly, redirected Marxist terms, *avoided* class categories altogether, and focused on the Marxist notion of rate of surplus value as the ultimate measure of class exploitation.

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[36] The authors, however, questions some applications of supposedly Marxist origin, for example, Pammett (1987).

[37] Grabb and Lambert (1982) did *not* use Marxist categories of class in grouping their subjects, but did use these categories as a reference for their subjects to identify with.

He found several interesting trends, including support for the notion that the rate of class exploitation in Canada has drastically increased between 1917 and 1971.

Tanner and Cockerill (1986) provide an interesting contrast to other studies in that they utilize a strict *non*-Marxist definition of class. They follow the class definition of Giddens, who is well known for his opposition to historical materialism. It is moreover interesting to note that Tanner and Cockerill (1986) found no support for either work or non-work related variables in determining class.

**B. Data and Method**

The typology developed by Wright (1982) was constructed from 5 criteria which determine, in Marxist terms, the respondent's objective position within the means of production. This position in turn determines the class location of the respondent. The criteria are: 1) position within a formal hierarchy, 2) having sanctioning authority over other workers, 3) contribution to decision-making within the productive process, 4) autonomy over one's own work, and 5) number of employees in one's company. The first three criteria are used to construct a "managerial location" typology, which, when combined with the final two criteria, constitute a general class typology (see table one).

"The American Class Structure" (Wright et al, 1982) is concerned solely with developing an operationalization of Wright's model and providing a descriptive analysis of American class structure based on this model. As such, this source provides a complete description of the procedure which Wright and others have used in empirical application and assessment of his model. Wright et al (1982) distinguish between three types of locations in capitalist class structures: basic class locations, contradictory locations *between* the modes of production, and contradictory locations *within* the modes of production. The latter two of these types constitute contradictory locations within class relations in general. Basic class locations involve those positions which are "completely polarized" toward one or another identifiable class within the capitalist modes of production. The bourgeoisie, for example,

**TABLE ONE**

Criteria Matrix of Wright's (1982) Typology of Class Structure*

Managerial Location Typology

| Class Location | Formal Hierarchy | Sanctioning Authority | Decision-Making | Autonomy | Number of Employees |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manager | manager | YES | YES | | |
| Supervisor | non-owner/manager | YES | NO | | |
| Semi-Autonomous Employee | non-owner/manager | NO | NO | YES | |
| Worker | non-owner/manager | NO | NO | NO | |
| Petty Bourgeois | self-employed | | | | 1 |
| Small Employer | self-employed | | | | 2-10 |
| Employer | self-employed | | | | 10-1000+ |
| Never Worked | never worked | | | | |

*Taken from Wright (1986)

both own and control the modes of production and as such are polarized toward a specific class. Contradictory locations within the modes of production, on the other hand, are *not* completely polarized toward one class or another. An example is that of the managerial class which occupies a position of dominance over the working class and is in turn dominated by the bourgeoisie.

Contradictory locations between the modes of production are the most difficult to incorporate conceptually into a model of Marxist class categories. While existing within a concrete capitalist structure, these locations constitute fundamentally non-capitalist class relations. Wright terms this situation the "interpenetration of the modes of production" and identifies the two most important examples as 1) ***small employers*** who are both self-employed and direct producers, and 2) ***semiautonomous employees*** who also have direct control over their own involvement in the modes of production, but are non-owners. While this account of class locations is limited to a typology of class structure, Wright is careful to explain that class formation and class structure are also vital to Marxist theory. Furthermore, Wright acknowledges that other locations such as housewives and students are relevant to a description of class relations, even though they are not actively involved in the modes of production. Given that these locations do not correlate directly with Census occupational categories, the practice of translating occupational data into class data was deemed by Wright as impossible. He thus proceeded to develop a national survey relevant to his own typology.

Wright et al (1982) reject the typical research strategy of imposing a set of objective properties on respondents' subjective description of their occupation. In order to adequately measure locations of domination and control within the workplace, they devised a "series of concrete activities which could be considered to be plausible indicators of the relational properties in question" (p.711). These activities involve both the participation in decision-making, and the supervision and sanction of subordinate workers. More serious problems arose in measuring the more conceptually ambiguous locations of small employers and semiautonomous employees. Conceptual criteria such as "self-direction" are associated with continuous, rather than dichotomous variables, and as such, identifying locations as

"self-directed" tends to involve arbitrary distinctions. [38] Wright et al deal with this problem by 1) measuring different indicators of the same "theoretical dimension" in order to facilitate comparison and 2) developing a series of class typologies which may be associated with various *ranges* of restrictiveness for different locations (p.712).

Wright et al (1982) proceed to establish 7 criteria which are used to distinguish between class locations of the bourgeoisie, managers, supervisors, workers, semi-autonomous employees, petty bourgeoisie, and small employers. These criteria are: 1) self employment, 2) number of employees, 3) decision-making, 4) authority, 5) formal hierarchical position, 6) managerial location, and 7) autonomy. Wright et al are thus able to collect data along these criteria and provide a rudimentary analysis of American class structure.

The locations of both the bourgeoisie and small employers are identified by only two principal criteria: self-employment and number of employees. The authors acknowledge that distinguishing between the small employer (which constitutes the contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie) and true capitalists is a difficult task. Their solution is to analyze several different cutoff points for number of employees in order to correct for the necessarily arbitrary nature of thier criteria. This problem, however, has little bearing on the final analysis, in that there are relatively few respondents who employ more than 2 or 3 workers.

In order to identify and distinguish between managers and supervisors, Wright et al used the criteria of decision-making, authority, and formal hierarchy. If respondents acknowledged participation in policy-making decisions, they were further assigned one of three values associated with eight forms of decision participation dealing with, for example, budgeting, products, and various aspects of operation. The assigned values were associated with 1) direct participation in Decision-Making, 2) providing advice in Decision-Making, and 3) no participation in Decision-Making. Four levels of Authority were identified: 1) a sanctioning supervisor who has the ability to impose negative or positive sanctions on a

[38] Wright et al (1982) note that while "autonomy is a continuous variable (it does not follow) that the concept of autonomy is graduational" (p.712). In effect, measuring autonomy as a continuous variable does not restrict the authors from distinguishing conceptually between domination and subordination.

worker, 2) a task supervisor who is not able to impose sanctions, but is able give orders, 3) a nominal supervisor who neither imposes sanctions, nor gives orders, and 4) a non-supervisor who has no subordinates. The measure of hierarchical position distinguishes between formal classifications of 1) managerial positions, 2) supervisory positions, and 3) non-managment positions. The authors point out that the use of the above criteria depends on the restrictiveness of the definition which one applies in distinguishing between managerial and supervisory positions. If, for instance, one wanted to identify a managerial position in the strictest sense, one would employ only unambiguously managerial criteria. Wright et al again chose to remain "flexible" and only collapsed these variables according to the desired definitions of manager and supervisor.

The variable of managerial location was assigned 5 values. 1) *Managers* are decision-makers who are supervisors or managers on the hierarchical variable, and are either sanctioning supervisors or task supervisors according to the Authority scale. 2) *Advisor-Managers* only provide advise to decision-makers, but are supervisors or managers who weild authority. 3) *Non-Managerial Decision-Makers* are involved in the decision-making process, but do not occupy a position within the hierarchy and thus have no authority. 4) *Supervisors* make no decisions and yet have sanctioning authority, or have both task authority and occupy supervisory/management locations in the hierarchy. 5) Non-Managers, non-Supervisors have no authority and are not involved in the decision-making process.

Measurement of the variable of semi-autonomous employers derives from the Marxist process of proletarianization. This process involves the "increasing separation of conception and execution within the labour process" (p.715). For instance, the traditional independent artisan is one who *unites* the conception and execution of the productive process. In the case of the radical proletarianization of the assembly line, on the other hand, the two are completely separated. The authors thus equate the notion of autonomy with a measure of self-directed conception in the productive process. They essentially asked respondents if they were required to design aspects of their own work, or if such details were decided by someone else.

Respondents were identified as "pure" petty bourgeoisie if they owned their own means of production and employed no one. According to Wright's theory, if a petty bourgeoisie employs even a single worker, the relations of production altered to the point that the individual must be associated with a contradictory class location. Finally, the working class was made up of those respondents who remained unclassified after the above criteria had been applied. Again, the authors note that the size of the working class depends on how restrictive the other criteria are, and thus depends on the restrictiveness of one's definitions.

The 1984 Canadian National Election Study involved a four-stage stratified sampling procedure applied to the general population of Canada excluding the N.W.T., Yukon, some remote provincial regions, institutionalized individuals, Indian reservations, and armed forces personnel living abroad. Systematic oversampling was carried out of the less populated provinces.

The data set contains variables adequate for constructing the class typology of Wright (1982), with one exception. The class category termed "advisor-manager" requires a measurement of decision-making participation in the form of providing *advice* on decisions regarding the production process. This measurement however, was not included in the 1984 NES. The category "advisor-manager" was thus excluded from the typology employed in the present study. It is believed that this exclusion does not invalidate the application of the typology, given that this category involves only a minor distinction from the category of "manager". Furthermore, Wright et al (1982) allow for varying degrees of restrictiveness in constructing these categories, and maintain that certain managerial categories may be collapsed according to desired definitions.

Some distinctions were problematic when applied to the NES variables. The "formal hierarchy" variable, as measured in the NES, included "owner", "manager", and "executive" within the same value. In order to specify managers and *not* owners in Wright's "manager" category, it was necessary to exclude all "self-employed" respondents who reported owner/manager/executive status within a formal hierarchy. Furthermore, it was not possible to apply the "number of employees" variable in the NES directly to Wright's criteria.

According to his typology, the "petty bourgeois" category includes 0-1 employees. The closest fit of this criteria to the NES variable is 1 employee. Similarly, the small employer category should include 2-9 employees, while the NES variable only categorizes 2-10 employees. Given the small differences, this discrepancy can be considered inconsequential. [39]

A 6-point index of working class identification (WCI) was constructed by combining the "strength of class identification" and "idenitification with either the working class or other classes" contained in the NES data set. A value of "1" corresponded with strong identification with non-working class, "2" corresponded with moderate non-working class identification, and "3" corresponded with weak non-working class identification. A value of "4" corresponded with weak working class identification, 5 corresponded with moderate working class identification, and 6 corresponded with strong working class identification. The ordering of this scale reflects, in part, an increase in working class consciousness, and also reflects the degree to which a respondent may be mobilized toward working class interests.

A 12-point index of opinions regarding the government redistribution of wealth (GRW) was also constructed. Four 4-point indexes relating the respondent's opinion (i.e. strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, and strongly disagree) were chosen on the basis of a factor analysis and summed. These were: 1) government should ensure adequate housing, 2) doctors/hospitals should not be allowed to charge more than government health plans permit, 3) gap between rich and poor is too great, and 4) governme[illegible]ould subsidize older and retired people's income. A log transformation was applied in order to correct for a non-linear distribution.

It is hypothesized that if Wright's typology of class structure can be employed to model the effects of class structure on class consciousness (Wright, 1986a; 1989), significant relationships will be observed between Wright's typology and class consciousness, which is operationalized as voting behaviour, working class identification, and support for government redistribution of wealth. It is hence predicted that voting patterns consistent with class

[39] It is noted in the codebook (Wright, 1986) that the same discrepancy of "number of employees" in the coding logic of Wright's class model exists between the codebook guidelines and Wright's first application of the typology (Wright et al, 1982).

interests will be observed across Wright's typology. Furthermore, WCI will tend to be observed within Wright's Worker category, and opinions in favour of GRW will be highest within the Worker category.

**C. Results**

Compared to other federal parties, it is argued that the NDP vote is the least obscure class vote in Canada. Previous research (Brym, 1986) suggests that the federal NDP is the most clearly left-wing federal party, and that an NDP vote is most indicative of class interests. This concurs with findings (Ogmundson, 1975) that the low class vote in Canada is not a result of voter disinterest in class issues, but is rather a result of an obscuring of class issues by the more dominant PC and Liberal parties. Subsequently, the most consistent voting was observed in the present study when employing only the NDP vote. Voting behaviour was hence limited in the present study to the NDP vote.

Wright's class categories were entered as dummy variables in a series of bivariate, as well as a single multiple regression model. Given that the Worker category was found to have the highest explained variance of the bivariate regressions, it was employed as the reference category in the multiple regression model. The mean working class identification and attitude toward government redistribution of wealth associated with each of Wright's class categories were also compared. In these cases, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was carried out.

No substantial relationships were observed among Wright's class categories in reference to voting behavior. While the analyses tended to yeild acceptable overall significance levels, the highest explained variance of all the regression analyses was only 2.3%. Furthermore, even though some effects were found to be significant, they were found to be theoretically inconsistent when compared with other effects in the regression model. For instance, in using Wright's typology, "small employers" were found to be 14.4% less likely to vote NDP than were "workers". At the same time, however, the NDP vote of "employers" was not found to differ significantly from that of workers. Similarly, controlling for region did not reveal any significant differences in class voting. These findings do not concur with

previous research (Lambert et al, 1987), which found all provincial rates of class voting to be higher than the federal class vote.

An ANOVA employing the 6-point WCI index, on the other hand, revealed statistically significant differences between Wright's class categories ($p<.01$). Though significant, the differences are substantially small, and all of the mean WCIs cluster around a "weak non-working class identification" (value 3 on the WCI index) (see table two). The largest difference is between the Worker (3.38) and Self-employed (2.71) categories. This difference of .67, however, is small relative to the 6-point scale. [40] This tends to support previous findings (Pammet, 1987; Grabb and Lambert, 1982; Ogmundson, 1975), which suggest a weak Canadian class identification.

These differences, though small, are consistent with Wright's theory regarding the relative positions of his class categories within relations of production. The Worker class category has the highest mean WCI (3.38). This mean furthermore differs most (.34) from the next highest mean WCI, expressed by the Semi-autonomous employee category (3.04). The lowest mean WCI is observed within the Self-employed category (2.71), and is relativley lower (.19) than the employer category (2.90).

Though Wright's class categories are intended to provide a relational, as opposed to gradational model of class, his class categories can be ordered, relative to each other, in reference to the present quantitative variables of class consciousness. For instance, the Worker category should have the highest WCI, while the Employer category should have the lowest WCI. Consequently, the Self-employed should be lower than the Employer, and the Petty bourgeoise should be lower than the Self employed. The Supervisor should have a higher WCI than the Manager. Wright (1982) theorizes that the Semi-autonomous employee, given a lack of control, occupies an ambiguous position, and hence should be a "wild card" with reference to WCI. Though one would predict the Employer category (2.90) to have the lowest mean WCI, the overall pattern is generally monotonic with respect to Wright's theory. Interestingly,

[40] Given that the "Farmer" category is considered by Wright et al (1982) to be a separate category outside the traditional relations of production, and the "Not working" category similarly are not considered within the relations of production, they were not considered in the present analysis.

Table 2. Mean Working-Class Identification (WCI) and Attitude toward Government Redistribution of Wealth (GRW) by Wright's Class Categories

| Wright's Class Catgories | number of cases | Dependent Variable | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | WCI | GRW |
| Manager | 67 | 2.93 | 7.51 |
| Supervisor | 470 | 3.02 | 6.61 |
| Semi-autonomous employee | 437 | 3.04 | 6.63 |
| Worker | 851 | 3.38 | 6.09 |
| Petty Bourgeoise | 50 | 2.96 | 7.04 |
| Self-employed | 48 | 2.71 | 8.08 |
| Employer | 21 | 2.90 | 8.38 |
| Farmer | 156 | 3.32 | 6.63 |
| Not Working | 912 | 3.00 | 6.43 |

Note: WCI ranges from 1 to 6, with 6 representing high working class identification; GRW ranges from 4 to 16, with 4 representing strong support for government redistribution of wealth. The class frequencies for the analysis of GRW are somewhat smaller due to missing cases. The class differences are significant at the .01 level for both WCI and GRW.

while these overall Canadian differences of WCI between Wright's classes were significant ($p<.01$), only Ontario was found to yeild significant differences when Canadian regions were controlled for.

An ANOVA of the mean GRW also yeilded significant differences between Wright's class categories ($p<.01$). Again, however, the differences are small, and tend to fall between the scores of 6-9 on a 12-point scale ranging from 4 to 16 (see table two). The Worker category expressed the lowest mean GRW (6.09), while the Employer category expressed the highest mean GRW (8.38). This implies that the Worker class has the strongest support for GRW, while the Employer class has the weakest support for GRW. This largest difference of 2.29, though significant, is small relative to the 12-point scale. The mean GRW, however, also appears nearly monotonic in relation to Wright's categories. That is, the Worker class would be expected to express the strongest support for GRW, while the Employer class would be expected to express the weakest support for GRW.

**D. Discussion**

Though no class-voting patterns were observed when employing the Worker class category as a reference group, a series of cross-tabulation analyses involving only the *separate* input variables of Wright's typology revealed voting patterns. These input variables were: 1) number of subordinates, 2) supervisory labour, 3) sanctioning authority, and 4) job autonomy. Though Wright's typology as a whole has limited predictive value, individual characteristics expressed in the input variables (see table one) provide a partial explanation of voting behavior. Gender also appeared to play a role in these relationships. For instance, among those respondents who held a high level of sanctioning authority, females were observed to vote NDP twice as often as males (15.6% vs 7.7%) while males tended to vote PC more often than females (54.6% vs 44.4%).

A possible explanantion is that the NES data is not suited to applying Wright's typology. Wright, for instance, provides several subtle criteria for distinguishing between various forms of authority and supervision within the workplace. The NES data, however, is

crude in comparison. For instance, the NES survey only measures three levels of sanctioning authority: "no say", "some say", and "a great deal of say". Wright's (1986, p.25) measurement of authority, on the other hand, involves up to 18 input variables. Still, the NES authority variable and Wright's authority variable are compatible. This is because Wright's 18 variable authority measure is eventually collapsed into a 4 value variable, which is further collapsed as an input variable of the managerial location typology. It is possible that these more precise *measurement* procedures provide a more objective and accurate assessment of a respondent's authority within the workplace than does the NES measurement. Nonetheless, Wright et al (1989) provide for substantial flexibility and variation of the class typology input variables.

The relatively large gap between the worker class identification with the working class and the next lowest identification with the working class suggests that the working class has the strongest working class identity (see table 2). The relatively small difference in working class identification among Wright's other categories, on the other hand, suggests that the non-worker class categories fail to distinguish adequately between the class identity of these classes. According to Wright (1978a), for instance, the supervisor class is more closely associated with the worker class than with any other class. The supervisor class, however, only differs by .05 from the petty bourgeois in working class identification. Though approximately monotonic, the relationship between Wright's categories and the mean working class identification appears to be strongest between the Worker class and the other class categories taken together.

That these differences are only significant in Ontario when controlling for Canadian regions, suggests that working class identity is strongest in Ontario. This regional difference is possibly explained by the higher concentration of industry in Ontario. This, when considered with earlier findings (Lambert et al, 1987) that Alberta has the highest class vote, while Ontario has one of the lowest, raises an interesting question. Why would Ontario have the highest working class identification, while having one of the lowest class votes, especially when one would expect class identification to strengthen class voting?

As would be expected, the worker class were most in favour of government redistribution of wealth. Unlike in the case of working class identification, however, the worker class differed only minimally from the supervisor class (.002 on a scale of .06 to .25). Though the employer class were by far least in favour of the redistribution of wealth, and as such provide support for the typology, a small N (21) suggests that the low mean may be due to random chance.

At best, these figures only provide justification for a homogeneity of class-specific economic interests, as expressed in class identification, and attitudes toward government redistribution of wealth. The low polarization of political culture, reflected in the absence of a class-voting pattern, however, suggests that these interests do not extend to Wright's notion of class consciousness, that is, "the realization... that it is necessary to transform the class structure" (Wright, 1985, p.28).

Possibly the most significant implication to be drawn from this analysis is that, though Wright's worker category appears to be valid relative to the other class categories, his typology fails to identify important characteristics within the Worker class. Wright's theory (1978a; 1986a) categorizes all workers as similar in reference to their position within productive relations, and their subsequent manifestations of class consciousness. Wright's typology hence classifies widely different "workers" together. An office clerk and a factory worker in the meat-packing industry, for instance, would be theorized to have similar political interests, class identification, and opinions toward the redistribution of wealth.

Though it is arguable that these two workers may perform the same function in a neo-Marxian model of the accumulation of capital, it is less likely that they have similar class characteristics. The distinction between manual and non-manual labour was hence incorporated to modify Wright's class typology, as a means of further distinguishing among Wright's Worker class. The resulting mean differences suggest that the common Manual/Non-manual distinction is a useful compliment to, if not substitute for, as Wright's class typology in predicting both opinions regarding working class identification and the redistribution of wealth (see tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. Mean Working-Class Identification (WCI) by Worker Status in Wright's Scheme and Manual versus Non-manual Occupation

| Manual Occupation | Wright's Class | |
|---|---|---|
| | Worker | Non-worker |
| Yes<br>(n) | 3.63<br>(1476) | 3.47<br>(301) |
| No<br>(n) | 3.05<br>(427) | 2.89<br>(435) |

Note: WCI ranges from 1 to 6, with 6 representing strong identification with the Working Class.

Table 4. Mean Attitude toward Government Redistribution of Wealth (GRW) by Worker Status in Wright's Scheme and Manual versus Non-manual Occupation

| Manual Occupation | Wright's Class | |
|---|---|---|
| | Worker | Non-worker |
| Yes<br>(n) | 5.84<br>(1476) | 6.17<br>(301) |
| No<br>(n) | 6.45<br>(427) | 6.78<br>(435) |

Note: GRW ranges from 4 to 16, with 4 representing strong support for government redistribution of wealth.

Manual labour respondents identified on average .58 (on a scale of 1 to 6) points more with the Worker category than did Non-manual occupation respondents ($p<.01$)(see table 3). Wright's Worker category only identified .16 points more with the working class than did Non-workers. This supports the argument that Wright's more complex statistical typology is less predictive of class identification than a simple Manual/Non-manual occupation variable. When employed together, however, these variables yeild results which most closely reflect predicted differences. Those among Wright's Worker category who also claim to hold a Manual occupation, reflect the highest mean working class identification (3.63), which corresponds most closely to a "weak working class identification". The next highest mean working class identification was among Wright's Non-worker class, who also claimed to hold Manual occupations (3.47). Workers with Non-manual occupations were next lowest (3.05), and Non-workers with Non-manual occupations were lowest of all (2.89). The largest difference (.74) among these modified categories was between the Worker/Manual (3.63) and the Non-worker/Non-manual (2.89) categories. This difference is moderately larger than between the unmodified Wright categories (.67).

Similarly, Manual labour respondents expressed on average .61 (on a scale of 4 to 16) points less in favour of redistributing wealth than non-manual labour respondents ($alpha<.01$). Wright's workers, on the other hand, expressed only .33 points less than the other categories. category. This suggests that Wright's typology is also less predictive of attitudes toward government redistribution of wealth than a Manual/Non-manual occupation variable. The strongest support for government redistribution of wealth was observed among those in Wright's Worker class who have Manual occupations (on average, 5.84). The next strongest was among Non-worker/Manual respondents (6.17), while the second weakest support for government redistribution of wealth was found within the Non-worker category (6.78). The greatest difference (.94) was, however, substantially smaller than within Wright's categories employed separately (2.29). This is possibly due to the relatively larger spread of mean attitudes toward government redistribution of wealth, when employing only Wright's class categories (see table two).

The best model of class relations, however, appears to be a modification of Wright's class categories, by incorporating the variable of Manual/Non-manual occupation. This adds a necessary dimension to Wright's neo-Marxian distinction of the Working class, as defined by relations of production. By singling out those "Workers" who do not perform manual labour, one is able to better predict both class identification, and attitudes toward government redistribution of wealth. This finding supports other research (Koo and Hong, 1980), which found that Wright's typology better predicts income, when a Manual/Non-manual occupation variable is incorporated.

In short, Wright's typology was not found to be predictive of voting behaviour, though this finding can be explained away by other studies which indicate a low or non-existent class vote in Canada. Two other indices of class consciousness (working class identification, and attitude toward government redistribution of wealth), however, were found to be predicted by Wright's typology. It was also found, however, that a more valid predictor of class consciousness was a simple Manual/Non-manual occupation variable. This suggests that Wright's neo-Marxist theory of class structure only partially explains class consciousness.

## V. Conclusion

Wright (1986a) still claims to defend what he identifies as "The core theses of Marxism" (p.2). He terms his segment of the academic community "analytic Marxism"; "The systematic interpretation and clarification of basic concepts and their reconstruction into a more competent theoretical structure" (ibid.). In reference to Marx's abrupt, unfinished section of *Capital volume 3 "What Constitutes a Class"*, Wright proposes that *Classes* (1986a) represents an extension of Marx's theory of class structure and class formation "faithful both to the theoretical agenda forged in Marx's work, that is, understanding the development of the contradictions of capitalism, and the political goals that agenda was meant to promote" - understanding the conditions for the revolutionary transformation of capitalist society (p.16).

Grabb (1984) describes the two principle weaknesses of Wright's analysis as 1)"omission of any systematic treatment of the concept of power [41] and his subsequent tendency to play down the role of repression and other means of domination other than that of economic control and 2) a failure to even question the assumption that socialism must always be in the fundamental interests of the working class" (p.148). Grabb concludes an overview of the status of academic perspectives of social inequality by observing that "the most promising ground for conceiving of social inequality is... on the disputes involving the Marxist class analysis of Poulantzas and Wright, on the one hand, and the power perspectives of Parkin and Giddens on the other" (p.174). He implies that a combination of Wright's typology of class structure with Giddens' duality of social relations is necessary in order to complete the human context of Wright's structural skeleton of class positions.

Wright attempts to develop a Marxist typology of capitalist class and proceeds to impose this model on various modern capitalist states. The most interesting outcome of this endeavour is not how comparable these nations are to each other, nor how closely they fit his Marxist typology, but rather the ways in which they deviate from his typology - in short, the principles of Marx's observations which Wright's operationalizations fail to measure. Given

[41] Grabb (1984) at this point is unable to anticipate the second generation of Wright's model which goes to great lengths to encorporate a systematic concept of power.

that measures of such deviations are impossible through Wright's methods, the empirical realities of these economic systems are missed.

Rather than develop from high abstract theory an a priori explanation, in this case a model from which to filter the reality of societies, one must analyse through structuralist principles the underlying logic of societies as a means of explanation. As Godelier suggests: "not that history is a category which explains; on the contrary; it is a category that has to be explained" (Bottomore, 1981, p.92). He continues: "Historical materialism is not another 'model' of history, nor another 'philosophy' of history... it is primarily a theory of society, a hypothesis about the articulation of its inner levels and about the specific hierarchical causality of each of these levels" (ibid.). Though history is an empirically accessible category of social relations which requires explanation, Wright imposes an historically specific model of class structure as a template on modern systems of capital as a *mode* of explanation.

While Marx describes the analysis of class as discovering the "hidden basis of the entire social structure and with it... the corresponding specific form of the state (1864, p.790), his reference is to an historical materialism wherein the various forms of exploitation as manifested in certain historical instances are studied. This materialist conception thus generates a higher level of theoretical abstraction whereby specific, less abstract societal forms can be understood. The key to Marx's analysis is thus not the generalized mode of economic exploitation as prescribed by Wright, but rather the specific historical forms or manifestations of this universal fact.

Similarly, Althusser's structuralist method is one of transforming the latent into manifest as a means of producing knowledge. The contradictions of capital only become specified through the historically concrete forms in which these contradictions are excercised (1970b, pp.105-106). It is the overcoming of *epistemological obstacles* that enables a progressive production of knowledge. To reject humanism on the basis that it presents an ideological obstacle to the scientificity of Marxism, however, requires that the object of analysis be structural relations of production rather than concrete individuals.

Sayer (1979) describes the paradox of Althusserian interpretations of Marx. They attempt to overcome Marx's difficulty with ensuring a correspondence of concept and reality. The "mystifactory mechanism" which corresponds ideological and phenomenological forms could not be located as subjective errors of experience, but must rather be seen as subjective falsehoods. In other words, reality is not misinterpreted, but rather misrepresents itself. If consciousness itself was to be doubted, a scientific interpretation of reality would be impossible. Marx could not begin to promote the "falsity of ideology (through a) materialist theory of consciousness" if he were to accept that this falsity is only subjective (p.31).

Emancipation, could not, for Marx, be promoted through such an investigation as is prescribed by Wright (1989, p.16). It is not the subjective illusions of capital, but rather the illusory function of the objective forms of capital which promote human alienation. It is an empirical analysis of the historical development of these objective forms that provides the historical revelation that capital is not given by nature, but is rather imposed on man, by man.

Sayer (1979) argues:

> fetishism involves a two-fold transgression of proper categorical boundaries. On the one hand, properties which distinguish phenomena as individual members of classes and hence ought properly to be the object of historical categories are subsumed under transhistorical categories and explained by theses logically capable of accounting only for the characteristics of the classes to which they belong... and on the other hand, the historical attributes of the phenomena are thereby falsely universalized" (p.46).

Wright's analysis of class categories does not avoid the fetishized nature of class, but in fact contributes to it. For instance, the class distribution of respondents appears to Wright only as a cross-sectional description, not as historically contingent on capitalist forces of production.

> "Fetishism presents a dehistoricized, desocialized world whose makers are reduced to passive spectators in a mystery not of their making. Marx's critique points behind this, *to* a history. This is how Marx promotes the overcoming of human self-alienation (Sayer, 1979, p.47).

Cohen (1982) comments on the demise of Marxian sociology: "despite the variety of theoretical strategies and political positions that make up the spectrum of neo-Marxian class theory, an unreflective relation to the Marxian original is characteristic of them all" (p.2). In contesting the theory of class boundaries advocated by Poulantzas and Wright, she remarks: "The analysis always proceeds from the side of 'structure', juggling and elaborating categories

> ad infinitum in order that they might mesh with the 'realities' of social stratification. Yet it is unclear whether these realities are simply given, or, worse, derived from the structures themselves. Since the old class concepts and prejudices are presupposed from the onset, the key dilemna endemic to any class theory based on *Das Capital* cannot even be posed (p.10).

Wright's attempt to rescue Marxism on the basis that it lacks empirically testable hypotheses, reflects not a shortcoming of Marx, but rather those of his interpreters. It is hence not that Marx requires rescue, but that Marxians require Marx. The solution to dilemnas regarding the interconnectedness of Marx's concepts are not to be found through modern methods of a so-called rigorous positivism, but rather a long-awaited reconciliation of Marxian claims with those advanced by Marx himself.

Wright's empiricism fails to move beyond describing existing structures, and is never conditioned by an awareness of the diachronic. This implies that to understand a structure, one must also understand both its transformations, and the range of its *possible* transformations. Though Wright (1989) admits that his method of class analysis "risks losing the dialectical and dynamic character" of Marxist explanations, he claims that these risks are worth taking (p.16). Admitting further that his empirical operationalizations of Marx's theory of class have generated only modest insights, they have nonetheless served to "clarify a range of dilemnas" (ibid.). Given, however, serious departures from both Marx's methods and observations, Wright possibly reifies a questionable version of Marx's classes, rather than extend his explanations.

Announcing the completion of an 11-nation data set containing the full range of his statistical operationalizations of Marx's concepts, Wright (1989) proposes a series of regression models. These will explore various causal models of the 1) micro-variables, which involve class-pertinent biographies of individual respondents, and 2) macro-structural variables, which are "dummy" nation variables viewed as "general proxies for all of the causally salient historical and macro-structural properties of the countries that cannot be reduced to distributions of individual attributes" (p.18). Wright then predicts to be able to identify which (micro or macro) variables have the greatest effect on attitudes theoretically correlated to class consciousness, under statistically controlled conditions.

It seems ironic, however, that one would derive a set of statistical indices from a set of observations that require methods fundamentally opposed to those which employ cross-sectional statistical indices. Statistical methods require the formulation of clear, testable hypotheses which are consistent with a set of substantive theoretical arguments. Wright, however, has not effectively operationalized Marx's concepts, and furthermore has failed to interpret his operationalizations within the context of their own limitations.

It also seems ironic that Wright, in attempting to promote a more empirically sound Marxism, that is, one that would generate testable hypotheses, violates the empirical principles of both Marx and modern statistical methods. Cicourel (1964) describes the issue: "the scientific status of sociology is unknowable until we agree on what constitutes a theory, and whether these theories are formulated such that they generate numeric properties which correlate to observable social events" (p.5).

Given that Wright's measurement devices are inappropriate by the nature of their construction, they involve not literal measurement, but rather measurement by fiat. Though he proposes to "tap the inner logic of Marxist theory" Wright's causal models (1989) do not correspond to the substantive claims of historical materialism. Cicourel (1964) argues that such prescientific understandings may lead to a measurement biased by a priori explanations. This bias alone can impose a meaning system previously only presumed to exist, and which appears to be revealed by these biased measures, but entails only spurious observations.

Effective statistical method must first ensure that a relevant, explicit theory is axiomized such that it corresponds to the terms of an applied mathematical system. The causal models prescribed by Wright (1989) do not have this isomorphic relation to the theories developed by Marx, and hence the logical connection between the axiomatic system developed by Marx and the mathematical system employed by Wright is not preserved. In short, the logic of Wright's measurements does not correspond to the properties of the social objects and events that Marx observed through a carefully devised theoretical and methodological system.

It was hence only his investigation of capital through his method of historical materialism that enabled Marx to reveal the causes of class disparity. His was the project of explaining class, not merely describing it. To challenge the acceptance of a "natural" domination of man by man, Marx not only provides the *means*, but also the political *rationale* for social movement. As a political agenda, Wright's version of Marxism is limited to a statistical reification of Marx's class categories, and hence fails to provide an empirical food-for-thought for the actor to question the taking-for-granted of class. The embourgeoisement of deviance disables reform at the source of social movement - the individual. Alienated individuals do not merely require to be told of class, but also to be shown the illusion of a ready-made world of capital, and hence the reality of the tyranny of fetishised labour.

To model the effect of class structure on class consciousness, does not explain class, but rather provides a mathematical likelihood of correctly accepting the hypothesis that class structure effects such variables as class consciousness, *if* one is justified in theorising that it *does*. Wright's claim to success at resolving some of the dilemnas of Marxian class research, avoids the importance of theory-driven statistical hypotheses. The probabilistic inferences of cross-sectional data are not given to the diachronic hypotheses of historical materialism. It is not that the hypotheses of historical materialism are to be rejected, but that Wright's hypotheses fail to ask correctly the Marxist questions.

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