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The Contours of Social Stratification

In advanced industrial societies, much rhetoric and social policy have been directed against economic and social inequality, yet despite such efforts the brute facts of poverty and massive inequality are still everywhere with us. The human condition has so far been a fundamentally unequal one; indeed, *all* known societies have been characterized by inequalities of some kind, with the most privileged individuals or families enjoying a disproportionate share of the total wealth, power, or prestige. The task of contemporary stratification research is to describe the contours and distribution of inequality and to explain its persistence despite modern egalitarian or anti-stratification values.

The term "stratification system" refers to the complex of social institutions that generate inequalities of this sort. The key components of such systems are (1) the institutional processes that define certain types of goods as valuable and desirable, (2) the rules of allocation that distribute these goods across various positions or occupations in the division of labor (e.g., doctor, farmer, or "housewife"), and (3) the mobility mechanisms that link individuals to occupations and thereby generate unequal control over valued resources. It follows that inequality is produced by two types of matching processes: The jobs, occupations, and social roles in society are first matched to "reward packages" of unequal value, and individual members of society are then allocated to the positions so defined and rewarded.[1] In all societies, there is a constant flux of occupational incumbents as new individuals enter the system (and replace dying, retiring, or out-migrating individuals), yet the positions themselves and the reward packages attached to them typically remain much the same. As Schumpeter (1953) puts it, the occupational structure can be seen as "a hotel ... which is always occupied, but always by different persons" (p. 171).

The contents of these reward packages may well differ across modern societies, but the range of variability appears not to be great (e.g., Treiman 1976). We have listed in Table 1 the various goods and assets that have been socially valued in past or present societies (for related listings, see Svalastoga 1965, p. 70; Duncan 1968, pp. 686–690; Runciman 1968).[2] In constructing this table, we have followed the usual objective of including all those goods that are valuable in their own right (i.e., consumption goods) but excluding any "second-order goods" (i.e., investments) that are deemed valuable only insofar as they provide access to other intrinsically desirable goods. The resulting list nonetheless includes resources and assets that serve some investment functions. For example, most economists regard schooling as an investment that generates future streams of income (see Becker 1975), and some sociologists likewise regard cultural resources (e.g., Bourdieu 1977) or social networks (e.g., Coleman 1990) as forms of capital that can be parlayed into educational credentials and other goods.[3] Although most of the assets listed in Table 1 are clearly convertible in this fashion, they are not necessarily re-

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TABLE 1
Types of Assets, Resources, and Valued Goods Underlying Stratification Systems

Asset Group	*Selected Examples*	*Relevant Scholars*
1. Economic	Ownership of land, farms, factories, professional practices, businesses, liquid assets, humans (i.e., slaves), labor power (e.g., serfs)	Karl Marx; Erik Wright
2. Political	Household authority (e.g., head of household); workplace authority (e.g., manager); party and societal authority (e.g., legislator); charismatic leader	Max Weber; Ralf Dahrendorf
3. Cultural	High-status consumption practices; "good manners"; privileged life-style	Pierre Bourdieu; Paul DiMaggio
4. Social	Access to high-status social networks, social ties, associations and clubs, union memberships	W. Lloyd Warner; James Coleman
5. Honorific	Prestige; "good reputation"; fame; deference and derogation; ethnic and religious purity	Edward Shils; Donald Treiman
6. Civil	Rights of property, contract, franchise, and membership in elective assemblies; freedom of association and speech	T. H. Marshall; Rogers Brubaker
7. Human	Skills; expertise; on-the-job training; experience; formal education; knowledge	Kaare Svalastoga; Gary Becker

garded as investments by the individuals involved. In fact, many of these assets are secured at birth or through childhood socialization (e.g., the "good manners" of the aristocracy), and they are therefore acquired without the beneficiaries explicitly weighing the costs of acquisition against the benefits of future returns (see DiMaggio 1979).[4]

The implicit claim underlying Table 1 is that these assets exhaust all possible consumption goods and, as such, constitute the raw materials of stratification systems. Given this formulation, one might expect modern stratification scholars to adopt an analytic approach that is multidimensional in orientation, with their objective being to specify the distribution of individuals on each asset in Table 1. Although some scholars have indeed proceeded in multidimensional fashion (e.g., Landecker 1981), most have instead opted to characterize stratification systems in terms of discrete classes or strata whose members are (allegedly) endowed with similar levels or amounts of assets. In the most extreme versions of this approach, the resulting classes are assumed to be real entities that exist prior to the distribution of assets, and many scholars therefore refer to the "effects" of class location on the assets that their incumbents control (see the following section for details).

The goal of stratification research has thus devolved to describing the structure of these social classes and specifying the processes by which they are generated and maintained. The following types of questions are central to the field:

1. What are the major forms of stratification in human history? Is inequality an inevitable feature of human life?
2. How many social classes are there? What are the principal "fault lines" or social cleavages that define the class structure? Are these cleavages strengthening or weakening with the transition to advanced industrialism?
3. How frequently do individuals cross occupational or class boundaries? Are educational degrees, social contacts, and "individual luck" important forces in matching individuals to jobs and class positions? What other types of social or institutional forces underly occupational attainment and allocation?

4. How are the life-styles, attitudes, and personalities of individuals shaped by their class locations? Are there identifiable "class cultures" in past and present societies?
5. What types of social processes and state policies serve to maintain or alter racial, ethnic, and sex discrimination in labor markets? Have these forms of discrimination weakened or strengthened with the transition to advanced industrialism?
6. Will stratification systems take on completely new and distinctive forms in the future? Is a "new class" of professionals and intellectuals emerging? Are the stratification systems of modern societies gradually shedding their distinctive features and converging toward some common (i.e., post-industrial) regime?

The foregoing questions reflect a critical orientation to human stratification systems that is distinctively modern in its underpinnings. For the greater part of human history, the existing stratification order was regarded as an immutable feature of society, and the implicit objective of commentators was to explain or justify this order in terms of religious or quasi-religious doctrines (see Tawney 1931; Bottomore 1965). It was only with the Enlightenment that a critical "rhetoric of equality" emerged in opposition to the civil and legal advantages of the aristocracy and other privileged status groupings. After these advantages were largely eliminated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the same egalitarian ideal was extended and recast to encompass not merely civil assets (e.g., voting rights) but also economic assets in the form of land, property, and the means of production. In its most radical form, this economic egalitarianism led to Marxist interpretations of human history, and it ultimately provided the intellectual underpinnings for socialist stratification systems. Although much of stratification theory has been formulated in reaction to these early forms of Marxist scholarship,[5] the field nonetheless shares with Marxism a distinctively modern (i.e., Enlightenment) orientation based on the premise that individuals are "ultimately morally equal" (see Meyer 1994, p. 733; also see Tawney 1931). This premise implies that issues of inequality are critical in evaluating the justice and efficiency of stratification systems.

The purpose of this book is to acquaint readers with some of these modern theories and analyses. As has frequently been noted (e.g., Grusky and Takata 1992), the field of stratification covers an exceedingly diverse terrain. It is therefore useful to delimit our review by first defining some core stratification concepts and then focusing on the six empirical questions previously identified. The readings presented after this introductory essay are likewise organized around the same set of empirical questions.

Basic Concepts and Simplifying Strategies

The stratification literature has developed its own vocabulary to describe the distribution of assets, goods, and resources listed in Table 1. The key concepts of this literature can be defined as follows:

1. The degree of *inequality* in a given asset (e.g., income) depends, of course, on its dispersion or concentration across the individuals in the population. Although many scholars seek to characterize the overall level of societal inequality with a single parameter, such attempts will obviously be compromised insofar as some types of assets are distributed more equally than others. This complexity clearly arises in the case of modern stratification systems; for instance, the recent emergence of "citizenship rights" suggests that civil goods are now widely dispersed across all citizens, whereas economic and political goods continue to be disproportionately controlled by a relatively small elite (see, e.g., Parsons 1970; Marshall 1981).
2. The *rigidity* of a stratification system refers to the continuity (over time) in the social standing of its members. The stratification

system is said to be highly rigid, for example, if the current wealth, power, or prestige of individuals can be accurately predicted on the basis of their prior statuses or those of their parents. The amount of rigidity (or "social closure") in any given society will typically vary across the different types of resources and assets listed in Table 1.

3. The stratification system rests on *ascriptive* processes to the extent that traits present at birth (e.g., sex, race, ethnicity, parental wealth, nationality) influence the subsequent social standing of individuals. If ascriptive processes of this sort are in operation, it is possible (but by no means guaranteed) that the underlying traits themselves will become bases for group formation and collective action (e.g., race riots and feminist movements). In modern societies, ascription of all kinds is usually seen as undesirable or discriminatory, and much governmental policy is therefore directed toward fashioning a stratification system in which individuals acquire resources solely by virtue of their achievements.[6]
4. The degree of status *crystallization* is indexed by the correlations among the resources in Table 1. If these correlations are strong, then the same individuals (the "upper class") will consistently appear at the top of all status hierarchies, and other individuals (the "lower class") will consistently appear at the bottom of the stratification system. By contrast, various types of status inconsistencies (e.g., a poorly educated millionaire) will emerge in stratification systems with weakly correlated hierarchies, and it is correspondingly difficult in such systems to define a unitary set of classes that have predictive power with respect to all resources.

The foregoing discussion suggests that stratification systems are complex and multidimensional. However, many scholars are quick to argue that this complexity is mere surface appearance and that stratification systems can in fact be adequately understood with a smaller and simpler set of principles. We shall proceed by reviewing the three simplifying assumptions that have proved to be especially popular.

Reductionism

The prevailing approach is to claim that only one of the asset groups in Table 1 is truly fundamental in understanding the structure, sources, or evolution of societal stratification.[7] There are nearly as many claims of this sort as there are dimensions in Table 1. To be sure, Marx is most commonly criticized (with some justification) for placing "almost exclusive emphasis on economic factors as determinants of social class" (Lipset 1968, p. 300), but in fact much of what passes for stratification theorizing amounts to reductionism of one form or another. Among non-Marxist scholars, inequalities in honor or power are frequently regarded as the most fundamental sources of class formation, whereas the distribution of economic assets is seen as purely secondary. For example, Dahrendorf (1959) argues that "differential authority in associations is the ultimate 'cause' of the formation of conflict groups" (p. 172; also see Lenski 1966), and Shils (1968) suggests that "without the intervention of considerations of deference position the ... inequalities in the distribution of any particular facility or reward would not be grouped into a relatively small number of vaguely bounded strata" (p. 130). The contributions in Part III of this volume were selected, in part, to acquaint readers with these various claims and the arguments on which they are based.[8]

Synthesizing Approaches

There is an equally long tradition of research based on synthetic measures that simultaneously tap a wide range of assets and resources. As was noted earlier, many of the rewards in Table 1 (e.g., income) are directly allocated through the jobs that individuals hold, and one can therefore measure the standing of individuals by classifying them in terms of their positions. In this context, Parkin (1971) refers to the occupational structure

as the "backbone of the entire reward system of modern Western society" (p. 18), and Hauser and Featherman (1977) argue that studies "framed in terms of occupational mobility ... yield information simultaneously (albeit, indirectly) on status power, economic power, and political power" (p. 4; also see Parsons 1954, pp. 326–329; Duncan 1968, pp. 689–690). Although occupational measures are currently the preferred form of classification within this tradition, the same synthesizing objective can be achieved by simply asking community members to locate their peers in a hierarchy of social classes (e.g., Warner 1949). Under the latter approach, a synthetic classification is no longer secured by ranking and sorting occupations in terms of the bundles of rewards attached to them but rather by passing the raw data of inequality through the fulcrum of individual judgment.[9]

Classification Exercises

Regardless of whether a reductionist or synthesizing approach is taken, most scholars adopt the final simplifying step of defining a relatively small number of discrete "classes."[10] For example, Parkin (1971) argues for six occupational classes with the principal "cleavage falling between the manual and non-manual categories" (p. 25), whereas Dahrendorf (1959) argues for a two-class solution with a "clear line drawn between those who participate in the exercise [of authority] ... and those who are subject to the authoritative commands of others" (p. 170).[11] These types of classificatory exercises may seem relatively benign, but the question that necessarily arises is whether the categories so constructed are purely nominal entities or are truly meaningful to the individuals involved. If the categories are intended to be meaningful, one would expect class members not only to be aware of their membership ("class awareness") but also to identify with their class ("class identification") and occasionally act in its behalf ("class action").[12] There is no shortage of debates about the conditions under which classes of this (real) sort are generated.

The simplifying devices listed here are discussed in greater detail in our review of contemporary models of class and status groupings (see "The Structure of Modern Stratification"). However, rather than turning directly to the analysis of contemporary systems, we first set the stage by outlining a highly stylized and compressed history of the stratification forms that appear in modern and premodern periods.

Forms of Stratification

The starting point for any comparative analysis of social inequality is the purely descriptive task of classifying the various types of stratification systems. The staple of modern classification efforts has been the tripartite distinction among class, caste, and estate (e.g., Svalastoga 1965; Mayer and Buckley 1970; Tumin 1985), but there is also a long and illustrious tradition of Marxian typological work that introduces the additional categories of primitive communism, slave society, and socialism (see Marx [1939] 1971; Wright 1985). As shown in Table 2, these conventional approaches are largely (but not entirely) complementary, and it is therefore possible to fashion a hybrid classification that incorporates most of the standard distinctions (see Runciman 1974; Rossides 1990; Kerbo 1991 for related work).

The typology presented here relies heavily on some of the simplifying devices discussed earlier. For each of the stratification forms listed in Table 2, we have assumed not only that certain types of assets tend to emerge as the dominant stratifying forces (see column 2) but also that the asset groups so identified constitute the major axis around which social classes or status groupings are organized (see column 3). If the latter assumptions hold, the rigidity of stratification systems can be indexed by the amount of *class* persistence (see column 5), and the degree of crystallization can be indexed by the correlation between *class* membership and each of the assets listed in Table 1 (see column 6).[13] The final column in Table 2 rests on the further assumption that stratification systems have (reasonably) coherent ideologies that legitimate the rules and criteria by which individuals are allocated to positions in the class structure (see column 7). In most cases, ideologies of this kind are largely conservative in their effects, but they can sometimes

TABLE 2
Basic Parameters of Stratification for Eight Ideal-Typical Systems

System (1)	*Principal Assets* (2)	*Major Strata or Classes* (3)	*Inequality* (4)	*Rigidity* (5)	*Crystallization* (6)	*Justifying Ideology* (7)
A. Hunting and gathering society						
1. Tribalism	Human (hunting and magic skills)	Chiefs, shamans, and other tribe members	Low	Low	High	Meritocratic selection
B. Horticultural and agrarian society						
2. Asiatic mode	Political (i.e., incumbency of state office)	Office-holders and peasants	High	Medium	High	Tradition and religious doctrine
3. Feudalism	Economic (land and labor power)	Nobility, clergy, and commoners	High	Medium-High	High	Tradition and Roman Catholic doctrine
4. Slavery	Economic (human property)	Slave owners, slaves, "free men"	High	Medium-High	High	Doctrine of natural and social inferiority (of slaves)
5. Caste society	Honorific and cultural (ethnic purity and "pure" lifestyles)	Castes and subcastes	High	High	High	Tradition and Hindu religious doctrine
C. Industrial society						
6. Class system	Economic (means of production)	Capitalists and workers	Medium-High	Medium	High	Classical liberalism
7. State socialism	Political (party and workplace authority)	Managers and managed	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	High	Marxism and Leninism
8. "Advanced" industrialism	Human (i.e., education, expertise)	Skill-based occupational groupings	Medium	Low-Medium	Medium	Classical liberalism

serve as forces for change as well as stability. For example, if the facts of labor market processes are inconsistent with the prevailing ideology (e.g., racial discrimination in advanced industrial societies), then various sorts of ameliorative action might be anticipated (e.g., affirmative action programs).

The stratification forms represented in Table 2 should thus be seen as ideal types rather than as viable descriptions of existing systems. In constructing these categories, our intention was not to make empirical claims about how existing systems operate in practice but rather to capture (and distill) the accumulated wisdom about how these systems might operate in their purest form. These ideal-typical models can nonetheless assist us in understanding empirical systems. Indeed, insofar as societies evolve through the gradual overlaying of new stratification forms on older (and partly superseded) ones, it becomes possible

to interpret contemporary systems as a complex mixture of several of the ideal types presented in Table 2 (see Schumpeter 1951).

The first panel in this table pertains to the "primitive" tribal systems that dominated human society from the very beginning of human evolution until the Neolithic revolution of 10,000 years ago. As might be expected, our summary assessments in columns 2–7 conceal much variability; it should be kept in mind that "merely in the night of our ignorance [do] all alien shapes take on the same hue" (Anderson 1974, p. 549). The variable features of tribal societies are clearly of interest, yet what is crucial for our purposes is that (1) the total size of the distributable surplus was quite limited in all such societies, and (2) this cap on the surplus placed corresponding limits on the overall level of economic inequality (but not necessarily on other forms of inequality). It should also be noted that customs such as gift exchange, food sharing, and the like were commonly practiced in tribal societies and had obvious redistributive effects. In fact, some observers (e.g., Marx [1939] 1971) treated these societies as examples of "primitive communism" because the means of production (e.g., tools, land) were owned collectively, and other types of property typically were distributed evenly among tribal members. This is not to suggest that a perfect equality prevailed; after all, the more powerful medicine men (shamans) often secured a disproportionate share of resources, and the tribal chief could exert considerable influence on the political decisions of the day. However, these residual forms of power and privilege were never directly inherited, nor were they typically allocated in accord with well-defined ascriptive traits (e.g., racial traits).[14] It was only by demonstrating superior skills in hunting, magic, or leadership that tribal members could secure political office or acquire status and prestige (see Lenski 1966 for further details). Although meritocratic forms of allocation are often seen as prototypically modern, in fact they were present in incipient form at the very earliest stages of human evolution.

With the emergence of agrarian forms of production, the economic surplus became large enough to support more complex systems of stratification. Among contemporary Marxist theorists (e.g., Godelier 1978; Chesneaux 1964), the "Asiatic mode" is often treated as an intermediate formation in the transition to advanced agrarian society (e.g., feudalism); we have therefore led off our typology with the Asiatic case (see line B2).[15] In this regard we should emphasize that the explicit evolutionary theories of Godelier (1978) and others have not been well received, yet many scholars still take the fallback position that Asiaticism is an important "analytical, though not chronological, stage" in the development of class society (Hobsbawm 1965, p. 37; also see Mandel 1971, pp. 116–139; Anderson 1974, p. 486). The main features of this formation are (1) a large peasant class residing in agricultural villages that are "almost autarkic" (O'Leary 1989, p. 17), (2) the absence of strong legal institutions recognizing private property rights (with village life taking on a correspondingly communal character), (3) a state elite that extracts the surplus agricultural production through rents or taxes and expends it on "defense, opulent living, and the construction of public works" (Shaw 1978, p. 127),[16] and (4) a constant flux in elite personnel due to "wars of dynastic succession and wars of conquest by nomadic warrior tribes" (O'Leary 1989, p. 18; for more extensive reviews, also see Brook 1989; Krader 1975).

Beyond this skeletal outline, all else is open to dispute. There are long-standing debates, for example, about how widespread the Asiatic mode was (see Mandel 1971, pp. 124–128) and about the appropriateness of reducing all forms of Asian development to a "uniform residual category" (Anderson 1974, pp. 548–549). These issues are clearly of significance, but more important for our purposes is that the Asiatic mode provides the conventional example of how a "dictatorship of officialdom" can flourish in the absence of private property and a well-developed proprietary class (Gouldner 1980, pp. 327–328). Under this reading of Asiaticism, the parallel with modern socialism looms large (at least in some quarters), so much so that various scholars have suggested that Marx downplayed the Asian case for fear of exposing it as a "parable for socialism" (see Gouldner 1980, pp. 324–352; also see Wittfogel

1981). It is hardly surprising that O'Leary (1989) nominates Asiaticism as the "most controversial mode" (p. 7) within the Marxist typology.

Whereas the institution of private property was underdeveloped in the East, the ruling class under Western feudalism was very much a propertied one.[17] The distinctive feature of feudalism was that the nobility not only owned large estates or manors but also held legal title to the labor power of its serfs (see line B3).[18] If a serf fled to the city, this was considered a form of theft: The serf was stealing that portion of his or her labor power owned by the lord (Wright 1985, p. 78). With this interpretation, the statuses of serf and slave differ only in degree, and slavery thereby constitutes the "limiting case" in which workers lose all control over their labor power (see line B4).[19] At the same time, it would obviously be a mistake to reify this distinction, given that the history of agrarian Europe reveals "almost infinite gradations of subordination" (Bloch 1961, p. 256) that confuse and blur the conventional dividing lines between slavery, serfdom, and freedom (see Finley 1960 on the complex gradations of Greek slavery; also see Patterson 1982, pp. 21–27). The slavery of Roman society provides the best example of complete subordination (see Sio 1965), whereas some of the slaves of the early feudal period were bestowed with rights of real consequence (e.g., the right to sell surplus product), and some of the (nominally) free men were in fact obliged to provide rents or services to the manorial lord (Bloch 1961, pp. 255–274).[20] The social classes that emerged under European agrarianism were thus structured in quite diverse ways. In all cases, we nonetheless find that rights of property ownership were firmly established, and that the life chances of individuals were defined, in large part, by their control over property in its differing forms. Unlike the ideal-typical Asiatic system, the feudal stratification system was not state centered because the means of production (i.e., land, labor) were controlled by a proprietary class that emerged independently of the state.[21]

The historical record makes it clear that agrarian stratification systems were not always based on strictly hereditary forms of social closure (see panel B, column 5). The case of European feudalism is especially instructive in this regard because it suggests that stratification systems often become more rigid as the underlying institutional forms mature and take shape (see Mosca 1939; Kelley 1981). Although it is well known that the era of classical feudalism (i.e., post-twelfth century) was characterized by a "rigid stratification of social classes" (Bloch 1961, p. 325),[22] the feudal structure appears to have been more permeable during the period prior to the institutionalization of the manorial system and the associated transformation of the nobility into a legal class. In this transitional period, access to the nobility was not yet legally restricted to the offspring of nobility, nor was marriage across classes or estates formally prohibited (see Bloch 1961, pp. 320–331, for further details). The case of ancient Greece provides a complementary example of a (relatively) open agrarian society. As Finley (1960) and others have noted, the condition of slavery was indeed heritable under Greek law, yet manumission (the freeing of slaves) was so common that the slave class had to be constantly replenished with new captives secured through war or piracy. The possibility of servitude was thus something which "no man, woman, or child, regardless of status or wealth, could be sure to escape" (Finley 1960, p. 161). At the same time, some slave systems rested more fully on hereditary forms of closure; the familiar case of American slavery provides the conventional example of a closed system. As Sio (1965) notes, slavery in the antebellum South was "hereditary, endogamous, and permanent" (p. 303), with the annual manumission rate apparently falling as low as 0.04 percent by 1850 (see Patterson 1982, p. 273). The slave societies of Jamaica, South Africa, and rural Iraq were likewise based on largely permanent slave populations (Patterson 1982).

The most extreme examples of hereditary closure are of course found in caste societies (see line B5). In some respects, American slavery might be seen as having "caste-like features" (see Berreman 1981), but Hindu India clearly provides the defining case of caste organization.[23] The Indian caste system is based on (1) a hierarchy of status groupings (castes) that are ranked by ethnic purity, wealth, and access to goods or services, (2) a corresponding set of "closure rules" that restrict all forms of intercaste marriage or mobility and

thereby make caste membership both hereditary and permanent, (3) a high degree of physical and occupational segregation enforced by elaborate rules and rituals governing intercaste contact, and (4) a justifying ideology (Hinduism) that successfully induces the population to regard such extreme forms of inequality as legitimate and appropriate (Jalali 1992; Brass 1985, 1983; Berreman 1981; Dumont 1970; Srinivas 1962; Leach 1960). What makes this system so distinctive, then, is not merely its well-developed closure rules but also the fundamentally honorific (and noneconomic) character of the underlying social hierarchy. As indicated in Table 2, the castes of India are ranked on a continuum of ethnic and ritual purity, with the highest positions in the system reserved for castes that prohibit behaviors deemed dishonorable or "polluting." Under some circumstances, castes that acquired political and economic power eventually advanced in the status hierarchy, yet they typically did so only after mimicking the behaviors and life-styles of higher castes (Srinivas 1962).

The defining feature of the industrial era (see panel C) has been the emergence of egalitarian ideologies and the consequent delegitimation of the extreme forms of stratification found in caste, feudal, and slave systems. This can be seen, for example, in the European revolutions (of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) that pitted the egalitarian ideals of the Enlightenment against the privileges of rank and the political power of the nobility. In the end, these struggles eliminated the last residue of feudal privilege, but they also made new types of inequality and stratification possible. Under the class system that ultimately emerged (see line C6), the estates of the feudal era were replaced by purely economic groups ("classes"), and the old closure rules based on heredity were likewise supplanted by (formally) meritocratic processes. The resulting classes were neither legal entities nor closed status groupings, and the associated class-based inequalities could therefore be represented and justified as the natural outcome of competition among individuals with differing abilities, motivation, or moral character ("classical liberalism"). As indicated in line C6 of Table 2, the class structure of early industrialism had a clear "economic base" (Kerbo 1991, p. 23), so much so that Marx ([1894] 1972) defined classes in terms of their relationship to the means of economic production. The precise contours of the industrial class structure are nonetheless a matter of continuing debate; for example, a simplistic Marxian model focuses on the cleavage between capitalists and workers, whereas more refined Marxian and neo-Marxian models identify additional intervening or "contradictory" classes (e.g., Wright 1985), and yet other (non-Marxian) approaches represent the class structure as a continuous gradation of socioeconomic status or "monetary wealth and income" (Mayer and Buckley 1970, p. 15).[24]

Whatever the relative merits of these models might be, the ideology underlying the socialist revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was of course explicitly Marxist. The intellectual heritage of these revolutions and their legitimating ideologies can ultimately be traced to the Enlightenment, but the new rhetoric of equality that emerged was now directed against the economic power of the capitalist class rather than the status and honorific privileges of the nobility. The evidence from Eastern Europe and elsewhere suggests that these egalitarian ideals were only partially realized (e.g., Lenski 1994). In the immediate post-revolutionary period, factories and farms were indeed collectivized or socialized, and various fiscal and economic reforms were instituted for the express purpose of reducing income inequality and wage differentials among manual and nonmanual workers (Parkin 1971, pp. 137–159; Giddens 1973, pp. 226–230). Although these egalitarian policies were subsequently weakened or reversed through the reform efforts of Stalin and others, this is not to say that inequality on the scale of pre-revolutionary society was ever reestablished among rank-and-file workers (cf. Lenski 1994). It has long been argued, however, that the socialization of productive forces did not have the intended effect of empowering workers because the capitalist class was simply replaced by a "new class" of party officials and managers who continued to control the means of production and to allocate the resulting social surplus (see I. Szelényi 1994). This class has been variously identified with intellectuals or intelligentsia (e.g., Gouldner 1979), bureaucrats or managers (e.g.,

Rizzi 1985), and party officials or appointees (e.g., Djilas 1965). Regardless of the formulation adopted, the presumption is that the working class ultimately lost out in contemporary socialist revolutions, just as it did in the so-called bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[25]

Whereas the means of production were socialized in the revolutions of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the capitalist class remained largely intact throughout the process of industrialization in the West. However, the propertied class may ultimately be weakened by ongoing structural changes, with the most important of these being (1) the rise of a service economy and the associated growth of a professional-managerial class (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1979), (2) the transition to an "information society" (Masuda 1980) and the increasing "centrality of theoretical knowledge as the source of innovation" (Bell 1973, p. 14), and (3) the consequent emergence of technical expertise, educational degrees, and training certificates as "new forms of property" (Berg 1973, p. 183). The foregoing developments all suggest that human and cultural capital are replacing economic capital as the principal stratifying forces in advanced industrial society (see line C8). According to Gouldner (1979) and others (e.g., Galbraith 1967), a dominant class of cultural elites is therefore emerging in the West, much as the transition to state socialism (allegedly) generated a new class of intellectuals in the East.[26]

This is not to suggest that all theorists of advanced industrialism posit a grand divide between the cultural elite and a working mass. In fact, some commentators (e.g., Dahrendorf 1959, pp. 48–57) have argued that skill-based cleavages are crystallizing throughout the occupational structure and that a continuous gradation or hierarchy of socioeconomic classes is therefore emerging. In nearly all models of advanced industrial society, it is further assumed that education is the principal mechanism by which individuals are sorted into such classes; the shared premise is that educational institutions serve to "license" human capital and thereby convert it to cultural currency.[27] The rise of mass education is sometimes seen as a rigidifying force (e.g., Bourdieu and Passeron 1977), but the prevailing view seems to be that the transition to advanced industrialism has equalized life chances and produced a more open society (see line C8, column 5).[28]

Sources of Stratification

The preceding sketch makes it clear that a wide range of stratification systems emerged over the course of human history. The question that arises, then, is whether some form of stratification or inequality is an inevitable feature of human society. In discussing this question, one turns naturally to the functionalist theory of Davis and Moore (1945) because it addresses explicitly "the universal necessity which calls forth stratification in any system" (p. 242; also see Davis 1953; Moore 1963a, 1963b). The starting point for any functionalist approach is the premise that all societies must devise some means to motivate the best workers to fill the most important and difficult occupations. This "motivational problem" might be addressed in a variety of ways, but perhaps the simplest solution is to construct a hierarchy of rewards (e.g., prestige, property, power) that privileges the incumbents of functionally significant positions. As noted by Davis and Moore (1945, p. 243), this amounts to setting up a system of institutionalized inequality (a "stratification system"), with the occupational structure then serving as a conduit through which unequal rewards and perquisites are allocated. The stratification system thus may be seen as an "unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons" (Davis and Moore 1945, p. 243). Under the Davis-Moore formulation, the only empirical claim is that *some form* of inequality is needed to allocate labor efficiently; the authors are silent, however, when it comes to specifying *how much* inequality is sufficient for this purpose. It is well to bear in mind that the extreme forms of stratification found in existing societies may exceed the "minimum ... necessary to maintain a complex division of labor" (Wrong 1959, p. 774).

The Davis-Moore hypothesis has come under considerable criticism from several quarters (see

Huaco 1966 for an early review). The prevailing view, at least among postwar commentators, is that the original hypothesis cannot adequately account for inequalities in "stabilized societies where statuses are ascribed" (Wesolowski 1962, p. 31; Tumin 1953). Indeed, whenever the vacancies in the occupational structure are allocated on purely hereditary grounds, one cannot reasonably argue that the reward system is serving its putative function of matching qualified workers to important positions. What must be recognized, however, is that a purely hereditary system is rarely achieved in practice; in fact, even in caste societies of the most rigid sort, one typically finds that talented and qualified individuals have some opportunities for upward mobility. With the Davis-Moore formulation (1945), this slow trickle of mobility is regarded as essential to the functioning of the social system, so much so that elaborate systems of inequality have evidently been devised to ensure that the trickle continues (see Davis 1948, pp. 369–370, for additional and related comments). Although the Davis-Moore hypothesis can therefore be used to explain stratification in societies with *some* mobility, the original hypothesis is of course untenable insofar as there is complete closure.

The functionalist approach has been further criticized for neglecting the "power element" in stratification systems (Wrong 1959, p. 774). It has long been argued that Davis and Moore failed "to observe that incumbents [of functionally important positions] have the power not only to insist on payment of expected rewards but to demand even larger ones" (Wrong 1959, p. 774; also see Dahrendorf 1968). In this regard, the stratification system might be seen as self-reproducing: The incumbents of important positions can use their power to influence the distribution of resources and to preserve or extend their own privileges. It would be difficult, for instance, to account fully for the advantages of feudal lords without referring to their ability to enforce their claims through moral, legal, or economic sanctions. By this line of reasoning, the distribution of rewards reflects not only the "latent needs" of the larger society but also the balance of power among competing groups and their members (see Collins 1975).

Whereas the early debates addressed conceptual issues of this kind, subsequent researchers shifted their emphasis to constructing "critical tests" of the Davis-Moore hypothesis. This research effort continued apace throughout the 1970s, with some commentators reporting evidence consistent with functionalist theorizing (e.g., Cullen and Novick 1979) and others providing less sympathetic assessments (e.g., Broom and Cushing 1977). The following decade was a period of relative quiescence, but Lenski (1994) has now reopened the debate with his suggestion that "many of the internal, systemic problems of Marxist societies were the result of inadequate motivational arrangements" (p. 57). According to Lenski, the socialist commitment to wage leveling made it difficult to recruit and motivate highly skilled workers, and the "visible hand" of the socialist economy could never be calibrated to mimic adequately the natural incentive of capitalist profit-taking. These results led Lenski to conclude that "successful incentive systems involve ... motivating the best qualified people to seek the most important positions" (p. 59). It remains to be seen whether this reading of the socialist "experiments in destratification" (Lenski 1978) will generate a new round of functionalist theorizing and debate.

The Structure of Modern Stratification

The recent history of stratification theory is in large part a history of debates about the contours of class, status, and prestige hierarchies in advanced industrial societies. These debates might appear to be nothing more than academic infighting, but the participants treat them with high seriousness as a "necessary prelude to the conduct of political strategy" (Parkin 1979, p. 16). For instance, considerable energy has been devoted to drawing the correct dividing line between the working class and the bourgeoisie, if only because the task of identifying the oppressed class is seen as a prerequisite to devising a political strategy that might appeal to it. It goes without saying that political and intellectual goals are often conflated in such mapmaking efforts, and the assorted debates in this subfield are thus infused with more

than the usual amount of scholarly contention. These debates are complex and wide-ranging, but it suffices for our purposes to distinguish among four schools of thought (see Wright 1979, pp. 3–18, for a more comprehensive review).

Marxists and Post-Marxists

The debates within the Marxist and neo-Marxist camps have been especially contentious, not only because of the foregoing political motivations but also because the discussion of class within *Capital* (Marx [1894] 1972) is too fragmentary and unsystematic to adjudicate between various competing interpretations. At the end of the third volume of *Capital,* one finds the now-famous fragment on "the classes" (Marx [1894] 1972, pp. 862–863), but this discussion breaks off just when Marx appeared ready to advance a formal definition of the term. It is clear, nonetheless, that his abstract model of capitalism was resolutely dichotomous, with the conflict between capitalists and workers constituting the driving force behind further social development. This simple two-class model should be viewed as an ideal type designed to capture the developmental tendencies of capitalism; indeed, whenever Marx carried out concrete analyses of existing capitalist systems, he acknowledged that the class structure was complicated by the persistence of transitional classes (e.g., landowners), quasi-class groupings (e.g., peasants), and class fragments (e.g., the lumpen proletariat). It was only with the progressive maturation of capitalism that Marx expected these complications to disappear as the "centrifugal forces of class struggle and crisis flung all *dritte Personen* [third persons] to one camp or the other" (Parkin 1979, p. 16).

The recent history of modern capitalism suggests that the class structure has not evolved in such a precise and tidy fashion. As Dahrendorf (1959) points out, the old middle class of artisans and shopkeepers has indeed declined in relative size, yet a new middle class of managers, professionals, and nonmanual workers has expanded to occupy the newly vacated space (cf. Steinmetz and Wright 1989). The last fifty years of neo-Marxist theorizing can be seen as the intellectual fallout from this development. Whereas some commentators have sought to minimize its implications, others have put forward a revised mapping of the class structure that accommodates the new middle class in explicit terms. Within the former camp, the principal tendency is to claim that the lower sectors of the new middle class are in the process of being proletarianized because "capital subjects [nonmanual labor] ... to the forms of rationalization characteristic of the capitalist mode of production" (Braverman 1974, p. 408). This line of reasoning suggests that the working class may gradually expand in relative size and therefore regain its earlier power.

At the other end of the continuum, Poulantzas (1974) has argued that most members of the new intermediate stratum fall outside the working class proper because they are not exploited in the classical Marxian sense (i.e., surplus value is not extracted). The latter approach may have the merit of keeping the working class conceptually pure, but it also reduces the size of this class to "pygmy proportions" (see Parkin 1979, p. 19), thereby dashing the hopes of those who would see workers as a viable political force within advanced industrial society. This result has motivated contemporary scholars to develop class models that fall somewhere between the extremes advocated by Braverman (1974) and Poulantzas (1974). For example, the neo-Marxist model proposed by Wright (1978) generates an American working class that is acceptably large (approximately 46 percent of the labor force), yet the class mappings in this model still pay tribute to the various cleavages and divisions among workers who sell their labor power. That is, professionals are placed in a distinct "semiautonomous class" by virtue of their control over the work process, and upper-level supervisors are located in a "managerial class" by virtue of their authority over workers (Wright 1978; also see Wright 1985). It should be noted that the dividing lines proposed in this model rest on concepts (e.g., autonomy, authority relations) that were once purely the province of Weberian or neo-Weberian sociology. This type of synthetic approach has become quite popular (e.g., see Westergaard and Resler 1975), so much so that Parkin (1979) suggested that "inside every neo-Marxist there seems to be a Weberian struggling to get out" (p. 25).[29]

Weberians and Post-Weberians

The rise of the "new middle class" is less problematic for scholars working within a Weberian framework. The class model advanced by Weber suggests, in fact, a multiplicity of class cleavages because it equates the economic class of workers with their "market situation" in the competition for jobs and valued goods (Weber [1922] 1968, pp. 926–940). Under this formulation, the class of skilled workers is privileged because its incumbents are in high demand on the labor market and because its economic power can be parlayed into high wages and an advantaged position in commodity markets (Weber [1922] 1968, pp. 927–928). At the same time, the stratification system is further complicated by the existence of "status groupings," which Weber saw as forms of social affiliation that can compete, coexist, or overlap with class-based groupings. Although an economic class is merely an aggregate of individuals in a similar market situation, a status grouping is defined as a community of individuals who share a style of life and interact as status equals (e.g., the nobility or an ethnic caste). In some circumstances, the boundaries of a status grouping are determined by purely economic criteria, yet Weber noted that "status honor normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property" (Weber [1922] 1968, p. 932).

The Weberian approach has been elaborated and extended by sociologists seeking to understand the "American form" of stratification. During the postwar decades, American sociologists typically dismissed the Marxist model of class as overly simplistic and one-dimensional, whereas they celebrated the Weberian model as properly distinguishing between the numerous variables that Marx had conflated in his definition of class (see, e.g., Barber 1968). In the most extreme versions of this approach, the dimensions identified by Weber were disaggregated into a multiplicity of stratification variables (e.g., income, education, ethnicity), and the correlations between these variables were then shown to be weak enough to generate various forms of "status inconsistency" (e.g., a poorly educated millionaire). The resulting picture suggested a "pluralistic model" of stratification; that is, the class system was represented as intrinsically multidimensional, with a host of cross-cutting affiliations producing a complex patchwork of internal class cleavages. The multidimensionalists were often accused of providing a "sociological portrait of America as drawn by Norman Rockwell" (Parkin 1979, p. 604), but it should be kept in mind that some of these theorists also emphasized the seamy side of pluralism. In fact, Lenski (1954) and others (e.g., Lipset 1959) have argued that modern stratification systems might be seen as breeding grounds for personal stress and political radicalism, given that individuals with contradictory statuses may feel relatively deprived and thus support "movements designed to alter the political *status quo*" (Lenski 1966, p. 88). This line of research ultimately died out in the early 1970s under the force of negative and inconclusive findings (e.g., Jackson and Curtis 1972). There has been a recent resurgence of theorizing about issues of status disparity and relative deprivation (e.g., Beck 1987; Wegener 1991; Baron 1994), yet much of this work focuses on the generic properties of all postmodern stratification systems rather than the (allegedly) exceptional features of the American case.

It would be a mistake to regard multidimensionalists of this kind as the only intellectual descendants of Weber. In recent years, the standard multidimensionalist interpretation of "Class, Status, and Party" (Weber 1946, pp. 180–195) has fallen into disfavor, and an alternative version of neo-Weberian stratification theory has gradually taken shape. This revised reading of Weber draws on the concept of social closure as defined and discussed in the essay "Open and Closed Relationships" (Weber [1922] 1968, pp. 43–46, 341–348; also see Weber 1947, pp. 424–429). By social closure, Weber was referring to the processes by which groups devise and enforce rules of membership; the purpose of such rules typically is to "improve the position [of the group] by monopolistic tactics" (Weber [1922] 1968, p. 43). Although Weber did not directly link this discussion with his other contributions to stratification theory, subsequent commentators have pointed out that social classes and status groupings are generated by simple exclusionary processes operating at the macrostructural level (e.g., Goldthorpe 1987; Breiger 1981; Parkin 1979; Westergaard and

Resler 1975; Giddens 1973; Sørensen and Kalleberg 1981).[30] Under modern industrialism, there are obviously no formal sanctions preventing labor from crossing class boundaries, yet various institutional forces (e.g., private property, union shops) are nonetheless quite effective in limiting the amount of class mobility over the life course and between generations. These exclusionary mechanisms not only "maximize claims to rewards and opportunities" among the incumbents of closed classes (Parkin 1979, p. 44), but they also provide the demographic continuity needed to generate distinctive class cultures and to "reproduce common life experience over the generations" (Giddens 1973, p. 107). As noted by Giddens (1973, pp. 107–112), barriers of this sort are not the only source of "class structuration," yet they clearly play a contributing role in the formation of identifiable classes under modern industrialism.[31] This revisionist interpretation of Weber has reoriented the discipline toward examining the causes and sources of class formation rather than the (potentially) fragmenting effects of cross-cutting affiliations and cleavages.

The Ruling Class and Elites

The classical elite theorists (Pareto 1935; Mosca 1939; Mills 1956) sought to replace the Marxian (and Weberian) model of economic classes with a purely political analysis resting on the distinction between the rulers and the ruled. Whereas Marx formulated the "short-cut theory that the economic class rules politically" (Mills 1956, p. 277), elite theorists typically contend that the composition of the ruling class reflects the outcome of political struggles that may not necessarily favor the owners of productive resources. As a corollary to this thesis, Pareto and Mosca further claim that the movement of history can be understood as a cyclical succession of elites, with the relative size of the governing minority tending to diminish as the political community grows (Mosca 1939, p. 53). The common end point of all revolutions is, therefore, the "dominion of an organized minority" (Mosca 1939, p. 53); indeed, Mosca points out that all historical class struggles have culminated with a new elite taking power, whereas the lowliest class invariably remains as such (also see Gouldner 1979, p. 93). Although Marx would perhaps have agreed with this oligarchical interpretation of presocialist revolutions, he nonetheless insisted that the socialist revolution would break the pattern and culminate in a dictatorship of the proletariat (and ultimately a classless state).[32] The elite theorists were, by contrast, unconvinced that the "iron law of oligarchy" (Michels 1949) could be so conveniently suspended for this final revolution.

As elite theory evolved, this original interest in the dynamics of class systems was largely abandoned, and the emphasis shifted to describing the structure and composition of the modern ruling class (cf. Lachmann 1990; Szelényi and Szelényi 1993). The research agenda of contemporary elite theorists is dominated by the following types of questions:

- What are the principal lines of cleavage and structuration at the top of the stratification system? Is there an "inner circle" of powerful corporate leaders (Useem 1984), a "governing class" of hereditary political elites (Mosca 1939; also see Shils 1982), or a more encompassing "power elite" that cuts across political, economic, and military domains (Mills 1956)?
- How solidaristic and cohesive are the elite groupings so defined? Do their members form a unified "social class" (Mills 1956, p. 11), or are they divided by conflicting interests and "unable to weld themselves into a solidified group" (Berg and Zald 1978, p. 137)?
- How are the members of elite groupings recruited and retained? Is there a continuous and rapid "circulation of elites" (see Shils 1982; also see Pareto 1935), or have hereditary forms of closure remained largely intact even today (see Baltzell 1958, 1964, 1991)?

There are nearly as many elite theories as there are possible permutations of responses to questions of this sort. If there is any unifying theme to contemporary theorizing, it is merely that the subordinate classes are seen as "effectively dispos-

sessed" (Mills 1956) of any meaningful control over the major economic and political decisions of the day. It was once fashionable to argue that "ordinary citizens can acquire as much power ... as their free time, ability, and inclination permit" (Rose 1967, p. 247), but such extreme versions of pluralism have now fallen into disrepute (see Dahl 1967 for a classic statement of the pluralist perspective).

Gradational Status Groupings

The foregoing theorists have all proceeded by mapping individuals or families into mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories (i.e., classes). As our review indicates, there continues to be much debate about the location of the boundaries separating these categories, yet the shared assumption is that fundamental class boundaries of some kind are present, if only in latent or incipient form. By contrast, the implicit claim underlying gradational approaches is that such dividing lines are largely the construction of overzealous sociologists, and that the underlying structure of modern stratification can, in fact, be more closely approximated with gradational measures of income, status, or prestige (Nisbet 1959; also see Clark and Lipset 1991; cf. Hout, Brooks, and Manza 1993). The standard concepts of class action and consciousness are likewise typically discarded; indeed, whereas most categorical models are based on the (realist) assumption that the constituent categories are "structures of interest that provide the basis for collective action" (Wright 1979, p. 7), gradational models are usually represented as taxonomic or statistical classifications of purely heuristic interest.[33]

There is no shortage of gradational measures that might be used to characterize the social welfare or reputational ranking of individuals. Although there is some sociological precedent for treating income as an indicator of class (e.g., Mayer and Buckley 1970, p. 15), most sociologists seem content with a disciplinary division of labor that leaves matters of income to economists. It does not follow that distinctions of income are sociologically uninteresting; after all, if one is truly intent on assessing the "market situation" of workers (Weber [1922] 1968), there is much to recommend a direct measurement of their income and wealth. The preferred approach has nonetheless been to define classes as "groups of persons who are members of effective kinship units which, as units, are approximately equally valued" (Parsons 1954, p. 77). This formulation was first operationalized in the postwar community studies (e.g., Warner 1949) by constructing broadly defined categories of reputational equals ("upper-upper class," "upper-middle class," and so on).[34] However, when the disciplinary focus shifted to the national stratification system, the measure of choice soon became occupational scales of prestige (e.g., Treiman 1976, 1977), socioeconomic status (e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967), or global "success in the labor market" (Jencks, Perman, and Rainwater 1988). The latter scales now serve as standard measures of class background in sociological research of all kinds (see Grusky and Van Rompaey 1992 for a recent review).

Generating Stratification

The language of stratification theory makes a sharp distinction between the distribution of social rewards (e.g., the income distribution) and the distribution of opportunities for securing these rewards. As sociologists have frequently noted (e.g., Kluegel and Smith 1986), it is the latter distribution that governs popular judgments about the legitimacy of stratification: The typical American, for example, is quite willing to tolerate substantial inequalities in power, wealth, or prestige provided that the opportunities for securing these social goods are distributed equally across all individuals (Hochschild 1981). Whatever the wisdom of this popular logic might be, stratification researchers have long sought to explore its factual underpinnings by monitoring and describing the structure of mobility chances.

In most of these analyses, the liberal ideal of an open and class-neutral system is treated as an explicit benchmark, and the usual objective is to expose any inconsistencies between this ideal and the empirical distribution of life chances (see, especially, Tawney 1931; Glass 1954). This is not to suggest, however, that all mobility scholars neces-

sarily take a positive interest in mobility or regard liberal democracy as "the good society itself in operation" (Lipset 1959, p. 439). In fact, Lipset and Bendix (1959) themselves argue that open stratification systems can lead to high levels of "social and psychic distress" (p. 286), and not merely because the heightened aspirations that such systems engender are so frequently frustrated (Young 1958). The further difficulty that arises is that open stratification systems will typically generate various types of status inconsistency, given that mobility trajectories in plural societies are often "partial and incomplete" (Lipset and Bendix 1959, p. 286) and therefore trap individuals between collectivities that have conflicting expectations. The nouveaux riches, for example, are typically unable to parlay their economic mobility into social esteem and acceptance from their new peers; the alleged result is personal resentment and consequent "combativeness, frustration, and rootlessness" (Lipset and Bendix 1959, p. 285). Although the empirical evidence for such inconsistency effects is at best weak (e.g., Davis 1982), the continuing effort to uncover them makes it clear that mobility researchers are motivated by a wider range of social interests than commentators and critics have often allowed (see Osipov 1969 for a representative critique; also see Goldthorpe 1987, pp. 1–36, for a relevant review).

The study of social mobility continues to be a major sociological industry, with new findings and developments coming "faster and more furiously in this field than in any other" (Hout 1984, p. 1379). It is convenient to distinguish among the following three traditions of mobility research:

1. The conventional starting point has been to analyze bivariate "mobility tables" formed by cross-classifying the occupational origins and destinations of individuals. The tables so constructed can be used to estimate the densities of occupational inheritance, to describe patterns of mobility and exchange between occupations, and to map the social distances between classes and their constituent occupations (see, e.g., Featherman and Hauser 1978; Stier and Grusky 1990). Moreover, when comparable mobility tables are assembled from several countries, it becomes possible to address long-standing debates about the underlying contours of cross-national variation in stratification systems (e.g., Lipset and Bendix 1959; Grusky and Hauser 1984; Hauser and Grusky 1988; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1994).

2. It is by now a sociological truism that Blau and Duncan (1967) and their colleagues (e.g., Sewell, Haller, and Portes 1969) revolutionized the field with their formal "path models" of stratification. These models were intended to represent, if only partially, the process by which background advantages could be converted into socioeconomic status through the mediating variables of schooling, aspirations, and parental encouragement (e.g., Sewell, Haller, and Portes 1969; Hauser and Featherman 1977; Hauser, Tsai, and Sewell 1983; Grusky and DiPrete 1990). Under formulations of this kind, the main sociological objective was to show that socioeconomic outcomes were structured not only by family origins but also by various intervening variables (e.g., schooling) that were themselves only partly determined by origins and other ascriptive forces (see, especially, Blau and Duncan 1967, pp. 199–205). The picture of modern stratification that emerged suggested that market outcomes depended in large part on unmeasured career contingencies (i.e., individual luck) rather than influences of a more structural sort (Blau and Duncan 1967, p. 174; Jencks et al. 1972; cf. Jencks et al. 1979; Hauser, Tsai, and Sewell 1983).

3. The latter tradition has been frequently criticized for failing to attend to the social structural constraints that operate on the stratification process independently of individual-level traits (e.g., Horan 1978; Beck, Horan, and Tolbert 1978; Sørensen and Kalleberg 1981; Granovetter 1981). The structuralist accounts that ultimately emerged from these critiques amounted, in most cases, to refurbished versions of dual economy and market segmentation models that were introduced and popularized several decades ago by institutional economists (e.g., Averitt 1968; Doeringer and Piore 1971; Piore 1975; also see Smith 1990). When these models were redeployed by sociologists in the early 1980s, the usual objective was to demonstrate that women and minorities were disadvantaged not merely by virtue of deficient human capital investments (e.g., inadequate schooling and experience) but also by their

consignment to secondary labor markets that, on average, paid out lower wages and offered fewer opportunities for promotion or advancement.

The history of these research traditions is marked more by statistical and methodological signposts than substantive ones. Although such methodological innovations obviously cannot be reviewed here, it should at least be noted that most scholars regard the development of structural equation, log-linear, and event-history models as watershed events in the history of mobility research (see Featherman 1981; Ganzeboom, Treiman, and Ultee 1991). At the same time, it is typically conceded that "theory formulation in the field [of social mobility] has become excessively narrow" (Ganzeboom, Treiman, and Ultee 1991, p. 278), and that "little, if any, refinement of major theoretical positions has recently occurred" (Featherman 1981, p. 364; also see Blau and Duncan 1967, pp. 2–10; Burton and Grusky 1992, p. 628). In a now-classic critique of contemporary stratification analysis, Coser (1975) further argued that mobility researchers are so entranced by quantitative models and methods that "the methodological tail [may soon be] wagging the substantive dog" (p. 652). The latter argument can no longer be taken exclusively in the (intended) pejorative sense because these new models and methods have often provided revealing insights into mobility processes and thus opened up questions of some substantive importance (Burton and Grusky 1992).

The Consequences of Stratification

We have so far taken it for granted that the sociological study of classes and status groupings is more than a purely academic exercise. For Marxist scholars, there is of course a strong *macrostructural* rationale for class analysis: The defining assumption of Marxism is that human history unfolds through the conflict between classes and the "revolutionary reconstruction of society" (Marx 1948, p. 9) that such conflict ultimately brings about. By contrast, macrostructural claims of this sort have typically been deemphasized by subsequent (non-Marxist) scholars, and there has been a consequent ratcheting down of analytic interest to the *individual* level. The rationale for class analysis that now tends to be offered rests, in most cases, on the simple empirical observation that class background affects a wide range of individual outcomes (e.g., consumption practices, life-styles, religious affiliation, voting behavior, mental health and deviance, fertility and mortality, values and attitudes). As DiMaggio (1994) puts it, measures of social class serve as modern-day "crack troops in the war on unexplained variance" (p. 458); one would be hard-pressed to identify any aspect of human experience that sociologists have not linked to class-based variables in some way. The resulting analyses of the "consequences of class" continue to account for a substantial proportion of contemporary stratification research (see Burton and Grusky 1992).

The relationship between class, status, and lifestyles has been framed and conceptualized in various ways (for reviews, see Gartman 1991; Brubaker 1985; Sobel 1981; Zablocki and Kanter 1976). We shall review in turn three of the most popular approaches to studying the consequences of social stratification.

Models of Status Groupings

There is a long and honorable tradition of market research (e.g., Mitchell 1983; Weiss 1988) that operationalizes the Weberian concept of status by constructing detailed typologies of modern lifestyles and consumption practices. It should be kept in mind that Weber joined two analytically separable elements in his definition of status; that is, members of a given status grouping were not only assumed to be honorific equals in the symbolic (or subjective) sphere but were also seen as sharing a certain style of life and having similar tastes or preferences in the sphere of consumption (see Giddens 1973, pp. 80, 109). The former feature of status groupings can be partly captured by conventional prestige scales, but the latter can only be indexed by classifying the actual consumption practices of individuals as revealed by their "cultural possessions, material possessions, and participation in the group activities of the community" (Chapin 1935, p. 374; also see Sewell 1940). The status groups so defined are usually regarded as analytically distinct from classes; in-

deed, the standard Weberian approach is to define classes within the domain of *production*, whereas status groups are determined by the "*consumption* of goods as represented by special styles of life" (Weber [1922] 1968, p. 937; italics in original).

Reproduction Theory

The recent work of Bourdieu (e.g., 1977; 1984) can be read as an explicit effort to rethink this conventional distinction between class and status groupings. If one assumes, as does Bourdieu, that classes are highly efficient agents of selection and socialization, then their members will necessarily evince the shared dispositions, tastes, and styles of life that demarcate and define status groupings (see Gartman 1991; Brubaker 1985). Although it is hardly controversial to treat classes as socializing forces (see, e.g., Hyman 1966), Bourdieu takes the more extreme stance that class-based conditioning "structures the whole experience of subjects" (1979, p. 2) and thus creates a near-perfect correspondence between the objective conditions of existence and internalized dispositions or tastes. This is not to suggest that the "subjects" themselves always fully appreciate the class-based sources of their tastes and preferences. As argued by Bourdieu (1977), the conditioning process is typically so seamless and unobtrusive that the sources of individual dispositions are concealed from view, and the "superior" tastes and privileged outcomes of socioeconomic elites are therefore misperceived (and legitimated) as the product of individual merit or worthiness.

Structuration Theory

The foregoing approach is increasingly popular, but there is also continuing support for a middle-ground position that neither treats status groupings in isolation from class (e.g., Mitchell 1983) nor simply conflates them with class (e.g., Bourdieu 1984). The starting point for this position is the proposition that status and class are related in historically specific and contingent ways. For instance, Giddens (1973, p. 109) adopts the usual assumption that classes are founded in the sphere of production, yet he further maintains that the "structuration" of such classes depends on the degree to which incumbents are unified by shared patterns of consumption and behavior (also see Weber [1922] 1968, pp. 932–938). The twofold conclusion reached by Giddens is that (1) classes become distinguishable formations only insofar as they *overlap* with status groupings, and (2) the degree of overlap should be regarded as an empirical matter rather than something resolvable by conceptual fiat (cf. Bourdieu 1984). This type of formula appears to inform much of the current research on the consequences of class (e.g., Clark and Lipset 1991; Hout, Brooks, and Manza 1993; also see Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992). If contemporary commentators are so often exercised about the strength of "class effects" (see, e.g., Wright 1985), this is largely because these effects (purportedly) speak to the degree of class structuration and the consequent viability of class analysis in modern society.

The empirical results coming out of these research programs have been interpreted in conflicting ways. Although some researchers have emphasized the strength and pervasiveness of class effects (e.g., Kohn 1980; Fussell 1983; Bourdieu 1984), others have argued that consumption practices are becoming uncoupled from class and that new theories that are "more cultural than structural" (Davis 1982 p. 585) are now required to account for the attitudes and life-styles that individuals adopt. The evidence adduced for the latter view has often been impressionistic in nature: For example, Nisbet (1959) concluded from his analysis of popular literature that early industrial workers could be readily distinguished by class-specific markers (e.g., distinctive dress, speech), whereas their postwar counterparts were increasingly participating in a "mass culture" that offered the same commodities to all classes and produced correspondingly standardized tastes, attitudes, and behaviors (also see Hall 1992; Clark and Lipset 1991, p. 405; Parkin 1979, p. 69; Goldthorpe et al. 1969, pp. 1–29). The critical issue, of course, is not merely whether a mass culture of this sort is in-

deed emerging but also whether the resulting standardization of life-styles constitutes convincing evidence of a decline in class-based forms of social organization. As we have noted earlier, some commentators would regard the rise of mass culture as an important force for class destructuration (e.g., Giddens 1973), yet others have suggested that the "thin veneer of mass culture" (Adorno 1976) only serves to legitimate the class system by obscuring and concealing the more fundamental inequalities upon which classes are based (also see Horkheimer and Adorno 1972).

Ascriptive Processes

The forces of race, ethnicity, and gender have long been relegated to the sociological sidelines by class theorists of both Marxist and non-Marxist persuasion.[35] In most versions of class-analytic theory, status groups are treated as secondary forms of affiliation, whereas class-based ties are seen as more fundamental and decisive determinants of social and political action (see, e.g., Althusser 1969). This is not to suggest that race and gender have been ignored altogether in such treatments; however, when competing forms of communal solidarity are incorporated into conventional class-analytic models, they are typically represented as vestiges of traditional loyalties that will wither away under the rationalizing influence of socialism (e.g., Kautsky 1903), industrialism (e.g., Levy 1966), or modernization (e.g., Parsons 1975).

The first step in the intellectual breakdown of this model was the fashioning of a multidimensional approach to stratification. Whereas many class theorists gave theoretical or conceptual priority to the economic dimension of stratification, the early multidimensionalists emphasized that social behavior could only be understood by taking into account all status group memberships (e.g., racial, gender) and the complex ways in which these interacted with one another and with class outcomes. The class-analytic approach was further undermined by the apparent reemergence of racial, ethnic, and nationalist conflicts in the late postwar period. Far from withering away under the force of industrialism, the bonds of race and ethnicity seemed to be alive and well: The modern world was witnessing a "sudden increase in tendencies by people in many countries and many circumstances to insist on the significance of their group distinctiveness" (Glazer and Moynihan 1975, p. 3). This resurgence of status politics continues apace today. Indeed, not only have ethnic and regional solidarities intensified with the decline of conventional class politics in Eastern Europe and elsewhere (see Jowitt 1992), but gender-based affiliations and loyalties have likewise strengthened as feminist movements diffuse throughout much of the modern world.

The latter turn of events has led some commentators to proclaim that the factors of race, ethnicity, or gender are now the driving force behind the evolution of stratification systems. In one such formulation, Glazer and Moynihan (1975) conclude that "property relations [formerly] obscured ethnic ones" (p. 16), but now it is "property that begins to seem derivative, and ethnicity that becomes a more fundamental source of stratification" (p. 17). The analogue position favored by at least some feminists is that "men's dominance over women is the cornerstone on which all other oppression (class, age, race) rests" (see Hartmann 1981, p. 12; Firestone 1972). It should be noted that formulations of this kind beg the question of timing; after all, if the forces of gender or ethnicity are truly primordial, it is natural to ask why they only began to be expressed with relative vigor in recent decades. In addressing this issue, Bell (1975) suggests that a trade-off exists between class-based and ethnic forms of solidarity, with the latter strengthening whenever the former weaken (see Hannan 1994, p. 506, for a related interpretation; also see Weber 1946, pp. 193–194). As the conflict between labor and capital is institutionalized (via trade unionism), Bell argues that class-based affiliations typically lose their affective content, and that workers must therefore turn to racial or ethnic ties to provide them with a renewed sense of identification and commitment (see Horowitz 1985; Nielsen 1985; Olzak 1983 for alternative interpretations). It

could well be argued that gender politics often fills the same "moral vacuum" that this decline in class politics has allegedly generated (Parkin 1979, p. 34).

It may be misleading, of course, to treat the competition between ascriptive and class-based forces as a sociological horse race in which one, and only one, of these two principles can ultimately win out. In a pluralist society of the American kind, workers can choose an identity appropriate to the situational context; a modern-day worker might behave as "an industrial laborer in the morning, a black in the afternoon, and an American in the evening" (Parkin 1979, p. 34). Although this situational model of status has not been widely adopted in contemporary research, there is nonetheless some evidence of renewed interest in conceptualizing the diverse affiliations of individuals and the "multiple oppressions" (see Wright 1989, pp. 5–6) that these affiliations engender. It is now fashionable, for example, to assume that the major status groupings in contemporary stratification systems are defined by the *intersection* of ethnic, gender, or class affiliations (e.g., black working-class women, white middle-class men). The theoretical framework motivating this approach is not always well-articulated, but the implicit claim seems to be that these subgroupings shape the "life chances and experiences" of individuals (Ransford and Miller 1983, p. 46) and thus define the social settings in which subcultures typically emerge (also see Gordon 1978; Baltzell 1964). The obvious effect of this approach is to invert the traditional post-Weberian perspective on status groupings; that is, whereas orthodox multidimensionalists described the stress experienced by individuals in inconsistent statuses (e.g., poorly educated doctors), these new multidimensionalists emphasize the shared interests and cultures generated within commonly encountered status sets (e.g., black working-class women).

The sociological study of gender, race, and ethnicity has thus burgeoned of late. As noted by Lieberson (1994, p. 649), there has been a certain faddishness in the types of research topics that scholars of gender and race have chosen for study, and the resulting body of literature has a correspondingly haphazard and scattered feel to it. The following research questions have nonetheless emerged as (relatively) central ones in the field:

1. How are class relations affected by ascriptive forms of stratification? Can capitalists exploit ethnic antagonisms and patriarchy to their advantage (e.g., Reich 1977)? Do male majority workers also benefit from stratification by race and gender (Bonacich 1972; also see Hartmann 1981)?
2. What accounts for variability across time and space in ethnic conflict and solidarity? Will ethnic loyalties weaken as modernization diffuses across ethnically diverse populations (e.g., Lipset and Rokkan 1967)? Or does modernization produce a "cultural division of labor" (Hechter 1975) that strengthens communal ties by making ethnicity the principal arbiter of life chances? Is ethnic conflict further intensified when ethnic groups compete for the same niche in the occupational structure (see Bonacich 1972; Hannan 1994)?
3. What are the generative forces underlying ethnic, racial, and gender differentials in income and other socioeconomic outcomes? Do such differentials proceed from supply-side variability in the occupational aspirations or human capital that workers bring to the market (e.g., Marini and Brinton 1984; Polachek and Siebert 1993)? Or are they produced by demand-side forces such as market segmentation, statistical or institutional discrimination, and the (seemingly) irrational tastes and preferences of employers (e.g., Piore 1975; Arrow 1973; Becker 1957)?
4. Is the underlying structure of ascriptive stratification changing with the transition to advanced industrialism? Does the "logic" of industrialism require universalistic personnel practices and consequent declines in overt discrimination? Can this logic be reconciled with the rise of a modern ghetto underclass (Wilson 1987), the persistence of massive segregation by sex and race (e.g., Bielby and Baron 1986), and the emergence of new forms of poverty and hardship among women and recent immigrants (e.g., Benería and Stimpson 1987)?

The preceding questions make it clear that ethnic, racial, and gender inequalities are often

classed together and treated as analytically equivalent forms of ascription. Although Parsons (1951) and others (e.g., Mayhew 1970) have indeed emphasized the shared features of "communal ties," one should bear in mind that such ties can be maintained (or subverted) in very different ways. It has long been argued, for example, that some forms of inequality can be rendered more palatable by the practice of pooling resources (e.g., income) across all family members. As Lieberson (1994) points out, the family operates to bind males and females together in a single unit of consumption, whereas extrafamilial institutions (e.g., schools, labor markets) must be relied upon to provide the same integrative functions for ethnic groups. If these functions are left wholly unfilled, one might expect ethnic separatist and nationalist movements to emerge (e.g., Hechter 1975). The same "nationalist" option is obviously less viable for single-sex groups; indeed, barring any revolutionary changes in family structure or kinship relations, it seems unlikely that separatist solutions will ever garner much support among men or women. The latter considerations may account for the absence of a well-developed literature on *overt* conflict between single-sex groups (cf. Firestone 1972; Hartmann 1981).[36]

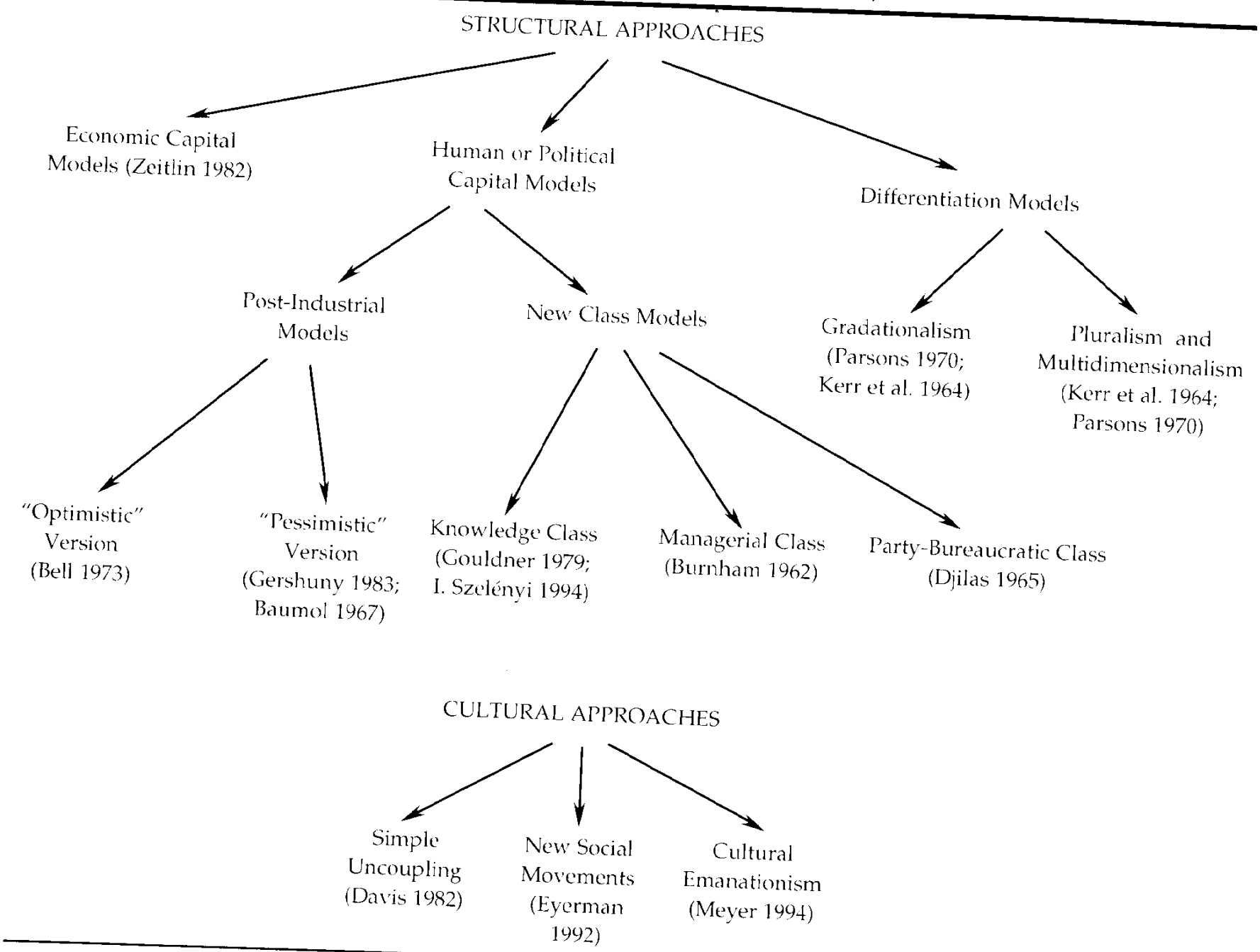
The Evolution of Modern Stratification

We will conclude our introductory commentary by briefly reviewing current approaches to understanding the changing structure of modern stratification. As indicated in Figure 1, some commentators have suggested that future forms of stratification will be defined by structural changes in the productive system (i.e., structural approaches), whereas others have argued that modernity and postmodernity can only be understood by looking beyond the economic system and its putative consequences (i.e., cultural approaches). It will suffice to review these various approaches in cursory fashion because they are based on theories and models that have been covered extensively elsewhere in this introduction.

The natural starting point for our discussion is the now-familiar claim that human and political capital are replacing economic capital as the principal stratifying forces in advanced industrial society. In the most extreme versions of this claim, the old class of moneyed capital is represented as a dying force, and a new class of intellectuals (e.g., Gouldner 1979), managers (e.g., Bunrham 1962), or party bureaucrats (e.g., Djilas 1965) is assumed to be on the road to power. The latter formulations have of course been widely criticized, and not by the academic Left alone. Whereas the (orthodox) Marxist stance is that "news of the demise of the capitalist class is ... somewhat premature" (Zeitlin 1982, p. 216),[37] the contrary position taken by Bell (1973) is that neither the old capitalist class nor the so-called new class will have unfettered power in the postindustrial future. To be sure, there is widespread agreement among postindustrial theorists that human capital is becoming a dominant form of property, yet this need not imply that "the amorphous bloc designated as the knowledge stratum has sufficient community of interest to form a class" (Bell 1987, p. 464). The members of the knowledge stratum have diverse interests because they are drawn from structurally distinct situses (e.g., military, business, university) and because their attitudes are further influenced (and thus rendered heterogeneous) by noneconomic forces of various sorts.[38]

The foregoing variants of structuralism are nonetheless unified by the simple functionalist premise that new classes or strata rise to prominence because they take on increasingly central (i.e., "functionally important") roles in the productive system. The just-so histories that new class theorists tend to advance have a correspondingly zero-sum character to them; that is, the presumption is that all class systems are defined by a single dominant asset and that the history of stratification is therefore the history of old forms of capital (e.g., economic capital) being superseded and supplanted by new forms (e.g., human capital).[39] This framework might be contrasted, then, to stratification theories that treat the emergence of multiple bases of solidarity and affiliation as one of the distinctive features of modernity. For example, Parsons (1970) argues that the oft-cited "separation of ownership from control" (e.g., Berle and Means 1932) is not a unique historical event but instead is merely one example of

FIGURE 1
Possible trajectories of change in advanced stratification systems



the broader tendency for ascriptively fused structures to break down into separate substructures and create a "complex composite of differentiated and articulating ... units of community" (Parsons 1970, p. 25). This process of differentiation is further revealed in (1) the emergence of a finely graded hierarchy of specialized occupations (Parsons 1970; Kerr et al. 1964), (2) the spread of professional and voluntary associations that provide additional and competing bases of affiliation and solidarity (e.g., Parsons 1970; Kerr et al. 1964), and (3) the breakdown of the "kinship complex" as evidenced by the declining salience of family ties for careers, marriages, and other stratification outcomes (e.g., Parsons 1970; also see Treiman 1970; Blau and Duncan 1967, pp. 429–431; Featherman and Hauser 1978, pp. 222–232). The latter tendencies imply that the class standing of modern individuals is becoming "divorced from its historic relation to both kinship and property" (Parsons 1970, p. 24). As Parsons (1970) argues, the family may have once been the underlying unit of stratification, yet increasingly the class standing of individuals is determined by all the collectivities to which they belong, both familial and otherwise. This multidimensionalist approach thus provides the analytic basis for rejecting the conventional family-based model of stratification that Parsons himself earlier espoused (e.g., Parsons 1954).[40]

The driving force behind these accounts is, of course, structural change of the sort conventionally described by such terms as *industrialism* (Kerr et al. 1964), *postindustrialism* (Bell 1973), and *social differentiation* or *integration* (Parsons 1970). By contrast, cultural accounts of change tend to deemphasize these forces or to cast them as epiphenomenal, with the focus thus shifting to the independent role of ideologies, social movements, and cultural practices in generating modern forms of stratification. The culturalist tradition encompasses a host of accounts that have not, as yet, been fashioned into a unitary or cohesive whole. The following positions within this tradition might therefore be distinguished:

1. The weakest form of culturalism rests on the straightforward claim that economic interests are no longer decisive determinants of attitudes or lifestyles (e.g., Davis 1982; see Goldthorpe et al. 1969 on the embourgeoisement hypothesis). This "uncoupling" of class and culture is not necessarily inconsistent with structuralist models of change; for example, Adorno (1976) has long argued that mass culture only serves to obscure the more fundamental class divisions that underlie all historical change, and other neo-Marxians (e.g., Althusser 1969) have suggested that some forms of ideological convergence are merely transitory and will ultimately wither away as economic interests reassert themselves in the "last instance." The uncoupling thesis can therefore be rendered consistent with assorted versions of structuralism, yet it nonetheless lays the groundwork for theories that are fundamentally antistructuralist in tone or character.

2. The "strong form" of the uncoupling thesis suggests that the cultural sphere is not merely increasingly autonomous but also is the locus of permanent and fundamental change in patterns of stratification. This line of argumentation underlies, for example, all forms of postmodernism that seek to represent "new social movements" (e.g., feminism, ethnic and peace movements, environmentalism) as the vanguard force behind future stratificatory change. As argued by Eyerman (1992) and others (e.g., Touraine 1981), the labor movement can be seen as a fading enterprise rooted in the old conflicts of the workplace and industrial capitalism, whereas the new social movements provide a more appealing call for collective action by virtue of their emphasis on issues of lifestyle, personal identity, and normative change. With this formulation, the proletariat is stripped of its privileged status as a universal class, and the new social movements emerge as an alternative force "shaping the future of modern societies" (Haferkamp and Smelser 1992, p. 17).

3. The popularity of modern social movements might be attributed to ongoing structural transformations (e.g., the rise of the new class) rather than to any intrinsic appeal of the egalitarian ideals or values that these movements typically represent. Although structural arguments of this kind continue to be pressed (see, e.g., Eyerman 1992; Brint 1984), the alternative position staked out by Meyer (1994) and others (e.g., Eisenstadt 1992) is that cultural premises such as egalitarianism and functionalism are true generative forces

underlying the rise and spread of modern stratification systems (also see Parsons 1970). As Meyer (1994) points out, egalitarian values not only produce a real reduction in some forms of inequality (e.g., civil inequalities) but also underlie various societal subterfuges (e.g., differentiation) by which inequality is merely concealed from view rather than eliminated. The recent work of Meyer (1994) provides, then, an extreme example of how classical idealist principles can be deployed to account for modern stratificational change.

The final, and more pragmatic, question that might be posed is whether changes of the preceding sort presage a general decline in the field of stratification itself. It could well be argued that Marxian and neo-Marxian models of class will decline in popularity with the rise of postmodern stratification systems and the associated uncoupling of class from lifestyles, consumption patterns, and political behavior (see Clark and Lipset 1991). This line of reasoning is not without merit, but it is worth noting that (1) past predictions of this sort have generated protracted debates that, if anything, have reenergized the field (see, e.g., Nisbet 1959); (2) the massive facts of economic, political, and honorific inequality will still be with us even if narrowly conceived models of class ultimately lose out in such debates; and (3) the continuing diffusion of egalitarian values suggests that all departures from equality, no matter how small, will be the object of considerable interest among sociologists and the lay public alike (see Meyer 1994). In making the latter point, our intent is not merely to note that sociologists may become "ever more ingenious" (Nisbet 1959, p. 12) in teasing out increasingly small departures from perfect equality but also to suggest that entirely new forms and sources of inequality will likely be discovered and marketed by sociologists. This orientation is already very much in evidence; for example, when the now-famous *Scientific American* studies (e.g., Taylor, Sheatsley, and Greeley 1978) revealed that overt forms of racial and ethnic prejudice were withering away, the dominant reaction within the discipline was to ask whether such apparent change concealed the emergence of more subtle and insidious forms of symbolic racism (see, e.g., Sears, Hensler, and Speer 1979). In similar fashion, when Beller (1982) reported a modest decline in occupational sex segregation, other sociologists were quick to ask whether the models and methods being deployed misrepresented the structure of change (e.g., Charles and Grusky 1995) or whether the classification system being used disguised counteracting trends at the intraoccupational level (e.g., Bielby and Baron 1986). The point here is not to suggest that revisionist stories of this kind are either deficient or misleading but only to emphasize that modern sociologists are highly sensitized to inequalities and have a special interest in uncovering those "deep structures" of social differentiation (e.g., Baron 1994, p. 390) that are presumably concealed from ordinary view. This sensitivity to all things unequal bodes well for the future of the field even in the (unlikely) event of a long-term secular movement toward diminishing inequality.

Notes

1. In some stratification systems, individuals receive rewards directly rather than by virtue of the social positions that they occupy, and it therefore becomes possible to describe the regime in terms of a single matching algorithm. The limiting case here would be the tribal economies of Melanesia in which "Big Men" (Oliver 1955) secured prestige and power through personal influence rather than through incumbency of any well-defined roles (also see Granovetter 1981, pp. 12–14).

2. It goes without saying that the assets listed in Table 1 are institutionalized in quite diverse ways. Whereas some types of assets are legally recognized by the state or by professional associations (e.g., civil rights, property ownership, educational credentials), other types are reserved for incumbents of specified work roles (e.g., workplace authority), and yet others have no formal legal or institutional standing and are revealed probabilistically through patterns of behavior and action (e.g., high-status consumption practices, deference, and derogation).

3. It is sometimes claimed that educational credentials are *entirely* investment goods and should therefore be excluded from any listing of the primitive dimensions underlying stratification systems (e.g., Runciman 1968, p. 33). In evaluating this claim, it is worth noting that an investment rhetoric for schooling became fashionable only quite recently (e.g., Becker 1975), whereas

intellectuals and humanists have long viewed education as a simple consumption good.

4. This is not to gainsay the equally important point that parents often encourage their children to acquire such goods because of their putative benefits.

5. The term "stratification" has itself been seen as anti-Marxist by some commentators (e.g., Duncan 1968) because it places emphasis on the vertical ranking of classes rather than the exploitative relations between them. The geological metaphor implied by this term does indeed call attention to issues of hierarchy; nonetheless, whenever it is used in this essay, our intention is to refer generically to inequality of all forms (including those involving exploitation).

6. Although "native ability" is by definition established at birth, it is often seen as a legitimate basis for allocating rewards (because it is presumed to be relevant to judgments of merit). The inherent ambiguity of such judgments is discussed in more detail by Bell (1973).

7. The scholars listed in the right-hand column of Table 1 are not necessarily reductionists of this sort.

8. This section also includes contributions by scholars who recognize two or three "primitive" stratification dimensions (e.g., Wright 1985; also see Bourdieu 1984; Runciman 1968).

9. The viability of a synthesizing approach clearly depends on the extent to which the stratification system is crystallized. If the degree of crystallization is low, then one cannot construct a unidimensional scale that is strongly correlated with its constituent parts.

10. There is, of course, an ongoing tradition of research in which the class structure is represented in gradational terms (see, e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967). However, no attempt has been made to construct an exhaustive rank-ordering of individuals based on their control over the resources listed in Table 1, nor is there any available rank-ordering of the thousands of detailed occupational titles that can be found in modern industrial societies (but see Cain and Treiman 1981; Jencks, Perman, and Rainwater 1988). The approach taken by most gradationalists has been (1) to map individuals into a relatively small number (approximately 500) of broad occupational categories and (2) to subsequently map these categories into an even smaller number of prestige or socioeconomic scores.

11. According to Dahrendorf (1959), the classes so formed are always specific to particular organizational settings (see Dahrendorf 1959, pp. 171–173), and thus the social standing of any given individual will typically differ across the various associations in which he or she participates (e.g., workplace, church, polity). This line of reasoning leads Dahrendorf to conclude that "if individuals in a given society are ranked according to the sum of their authority positions in all associations, the resulting pattern will not be a dichotomy but rather like scales of stratification according to income or prestige" (p. 171).

12. The class structure can also operate in less obtrusive ways; for example, one might imagine a social system in which classes have demonstrable macrolevel consequences (and are therefore "real"), yet their members are not aware of these consequences nor of their membership in any particular class.

13. The assumptions embedded in columns 4–6 of Table 2 are clearly far-reaching. Unless a stratification system is perfectly crystallized, its parameters for inequality and rigidity cannot be represented as scalar quantities, nor can the intercorrelations between the multiple stratification dimensions be easily summarized (in a single "crystallization" parameter). Moreover, even in stratification systems that are perfectly crystallized, there is no reason to believe that persistence over the life course (intragenerational persistence) will always vary in tandem with persistence between generations (intergenerational inheritance). We have nonetheless assumed that each of our ideal-typical stratification systems can be characterized in terms of a single "rigidity parameter" (see column 5).

14. In all hunting and gathering societies, men and women were assigned to different roles or occupations (e.g., see Pfeiffer 1977; Leakey and Lewin 1977), and this led to consequent differences (across genders) in the distribution of rewards. We address this form of ascription in more detail subsequently.

15. It should again be stressed that our typology by no means exhausts the variability of agrarian stratification forms (see Kerbo 1991, pp. 63–79, for an extended review).

16. The state elite was charged with constructing and maintaining the massive irrigation systems that made agriculture possible in regions such as China, India, and the Middle East (cf. Anderson 1974, pp. 490–492).

17. This is not to suggest that feudalism can only be found in the West or that the so-called Asiatic mode is limited to the East. Indeed, the social structure of Japan was essentially feudalistic until the mid-nineteenth century (with the rise of the Meiji state), and the Asiatic mode has been recently discovered in areas as diverse as Africa, pre-Columbian America, and even Mediterranean Europe (see Godelier 1978). The latter "discoveries" were of course predicated on a broad and ahistorical definition of the underlying ideal type. As always, there is a tension between scholars who seek to construct ideal types that are closely tied to historical social systems, and those who seek to construct ones that are more encompassing in their coverage.

18. This economic interpretation of feudalism is clearly not favored by all scholars. For example, Bloch (1961, pp. 288–289) argues that the defining feature of feudalism is the monopolization of *authority* by a small group of nobles, with the implication of this being that the economic concomitants of authority (e.g., land ownership) are reduced to a position of secondary importance. The "authority classes" that emerge under his specification might be seen as feudal analogues to the social classes that Dahrendorf (1959) posits for the capitalist case.

19. We have adopted the conventional definition of a slave as "a man [who] is in the eyes of the law and of public opinion and with respect to all other parties a possession of another man" (Finley 1960, p. 53).

20. In the so-called secondary stage of feudalism (Bloch 1961), the obligations of serfs and free men became somewhat more formalized and standardized, yet regional variations of various sorts often persisted.

21. It was not until the early fourteenth century that states of the modern sort appeared in Europe (see Hechter and Brustein 1980).

22. In describing this period of classical feudalism, Bloch (1961) noted that "access to the circle of knights ... was not absolutely closed, [yet] the door was nevertheless only very slightly ajar" (p. 325).

23. The Indian caste system flourished during the agrarian period, yet it persists in attenuated form within modern industrialized India (see Jalali 1992).

24. This is by no means an exhaustive listing of the various approaches that have been taken (see pp. 13–17 for a more detailed review).

25. There is an emerging consensus that the power of intellectuals and the intelligentsia has been further strengthened with the recent antisocialist revolutions in Eastern Europe (I. Szelényi 1994). The irony in this development is that the intellectual elite may ultimately be sowing the seeds of its own demise by reconstituting the old capitalist class.

26. The long-standing claim of convergence theorists (e.g., Kerr et al. 1964) has been that socialist and capitalist societies are simultaneously moving toward some common structural pattern. This was assumed to be occurring despite the surface differences between socialism and capitalism; however, with the subsequent fall of socialism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, we are now seeing convergence of a more overt sort.

27. Although educational institutions clearly play a certifying role, it does not follow that they emerge merely to fill a "functional need" for highly trained workers (see Collins 1979).

28. This issue is addressed in greater detail in Part IV (see, e.g., "A Refined Model of Occupational Mobility," "Comparative Social Mobility Revisited: Models of Convergence and Divergence in 16 Countries," and "Trends in Class Mobility: The Post-war European Experience").

29. The rise of synthetic approaches makes it increasingly difficult to label scholars in meaningful ways. Although we have avoided standard "litmus test" definitions of what constitutes a true Marxist or Weberian, we have nonetheless found it possible (and useful) to classify scholars in terms of the types of intellectual problems, debates, and literatures that they address.

30. This position contrasts directly with the conventional wisdom that "social mobility as such is irrelevant to the problem of the existence of classes" (Dahrendorf 1959, p. 109; also see Poulantzas 1974, p. 37; Schumpeter 1951).

31. It should be stressed that Giddens departs from the usual neo-Weberian formulations on issues such as "the social and political significance of the new middle class, the importance of bureaucracy as a form of domination, and the character of the state as a focus of political and military power" (Giddens 1980, p. 297). As indicated in the Contents (p. viii), we have nonetheless reluctantly imposed the neo-Weberian label on Giddens, if only because he follows the lead of Weber in treating the foregoing issues as central to understanding modern industrialism and capitalism (see Note 29).

32. However, insofar as "every new class achieves its hegemony on a broader basis than that of the class ruling previously" (Marx and Engels [1947] 1970, p. 66), the presocialist revolutions can be interpreted as partial steps toward a classless society.

33. It is frequently argued that Americans have an elective affinity for gradational models of class. In accounting for this affinity, Ossowski (1963) and others (e.g., Lipset and Bendix 1959) have cited the absence of a feudal or aristocratic past in American history and the consequent reluctance of Americans to recognize differences in status or power with overt forms of deference or derogation.

34. Although some of the research completed by Warner was gradational in character (e.g., Warner 1949, ch. 2), it should be emphasized that his preferred mapping of the American class structure is based on purely discrete categories.

35. The defining feature of ethnic groups is that their members "entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration" (Weber [1922] 1968, p. 389). This definition implies that "races" are particular types of ethnic groups in which putative physical similarities provide the basis for a subjective belief in common de-

scent (see Alba 1992, pp. 575–576, for competing definitions).

36. There is, of course, a large popular literature that represents gender conflict in wholly individualistic terms. This tendency to personalize gender conflicts reflects the simple fact that men and women interact frequently and intimately in family settings.

37. The position that Zeitlin (1982) takes here is directed against the conventional argument that corporate ownership in Western industrialized societies is so diffused across multiple stockholders that effective corporate power has now defaulted to managers. This argument does not, of course, apply directly to the case of socialist societies. Although such societies were once seen as a future bastion of new class rule (e.g., Konrad and Szelényi 1979), it is now possible that a neobourgeoisie will regain power in Russia and Eastern Europe as the postsocialist transition unfolds.

38. We have indicated in Figure 1 that two distinct postindustrial trajectories have been envisaged. The prevailing view has long been that advanced industrialism generates some form of skill upgrading (e.g., Piore and Sabel 1984), yet one continues to find "pessimistic" scenarios that project growing joblessness, underemployment, and deindustrialization (e.g., Gershuny 1983; Baumol 1967).

39. The work by Wright (1985) is similarly zero-sum in character. Although Wright emphasizes that multiple forms of capital tend to coexist in any given historical system, he nonetheless defines the march of history in terms of transitions from one dominant form of capital to another.

40. The importance of distinguishing between the early and mature Parsons on matters of stratification should therefore be stressed. This distinction has not been sufficiently appreciated in recent debates about the appropriateness of treating families as the primitive units of modern stratification analysis (see S. Szelényi 1994).

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