

RETHINKING CLASSES: A FRIENDLY CRITIQUE AND MOVING FORWARD OF ERIK
OLIN WRIGHT'S CLASS THEORY

by

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Jeremiah Coldsmith

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family and friends, without whom I never would have finished.

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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this dissertation is to lay the groundwork for the eventual combination of micro and macro levels of class analysis into a unified theory. The first steps of this process require the creation of a micro level theory of class identity formation, a slight reconceptualization of the class map upon which the macro level theory is based, and an elaboration of the partial macro level theory provided by Wright (1997). At the micro level, I find the factors which contribute to class identity formation depend on which class identities are being distinguished. This result echoes the findings of Centers [1949] 1961, but moves beyond his analysis by quantifying the contribution of each of the factors to the predicted probability of selecting a class identity. At the macro level, I find that including partial ownership in Wright's class map uncovers important hidden variation among Wright's non-owning class locations. Separating partial owners from non-owners illustrates an important source of division in class consciousness not possible using Wright's class map. Finally, I further elaborate Wright's partial theory of class consciousness by demonstrating that McPherson's concept of socio-structural space can be usefully applied to the class structure, which provides a set of hypotheses to explain how class formation affects class consciousness. The solidarity hypothesis is supported, suggesting class based homogeneous friendship relations strengthen class consciousness in the polar class locations. Increasing class based social distance between friends, decreases the strength of an individual's class consciousness. While just the first steps, these advancements in theory and empirical results help further the cause of creating a unified theory of class by strengthening our understanding of both the micro and macro levels of class analysis. With these improvements in place, further work at both levels of analysis can continue the process of integrating the two levels of analysis.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The goal of the dissertation is to begin the process of unifying the micro and macro levels of class analysis and the study of class consciousness and class identity. While these areas of research seem like they should be interrelated, very little work has been done to try to address all issues simultaneously (For examples of class identity and class consciousness together see Mann 1973; Wallace and Jepperson 1986; for an example of micro and macro levels of analysis together see Wright 1997: chapter 13). To this point the study of class consciousness has been dominated by class theorists and focuses on the connection between the macro class structure – usually presented as a class map – and the patterns of class consciousness found within a society. The study of class identity on the other hand is typically found in the area of social psychology – although it is largely unexplored by identity theorists – and is focused on the micro level of analysis. It examines the ways in which individuals understand their class position, such as their criteria for who is and is not a member of their class. A unified theory of class which integrates the insights from those who study the macro class structure with a micro level class structure is the end goal of my research agenda. The current research is a first step towards this final goal.

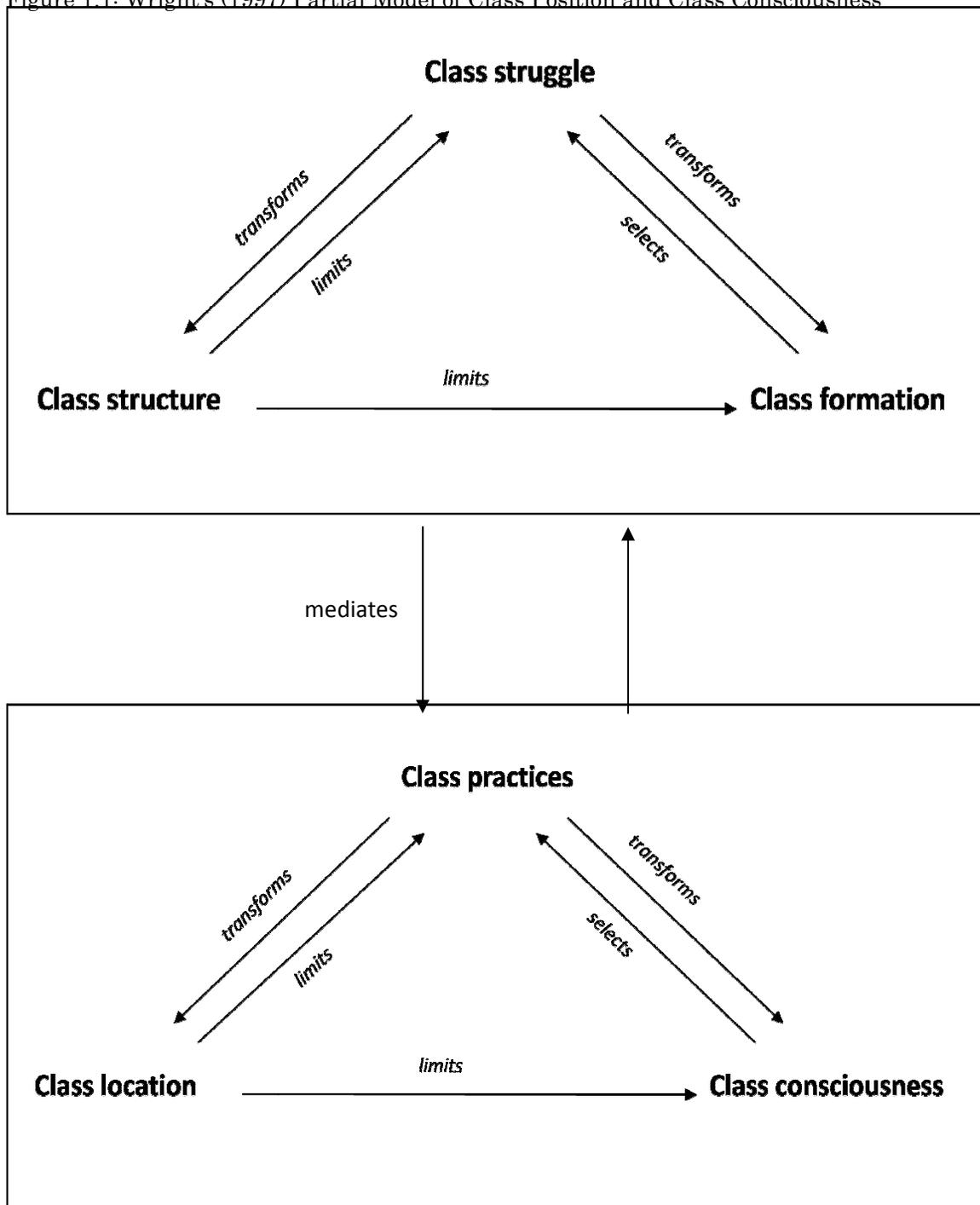
Specifically, I set out to answer three questions. 1) What explains class identity formation? 2) Can Wright's class map be improved through the addition of partial ownership to the ownership dimension? 3) Does thinking of the class structure as a socio-structural space within which individuals interact and associations compete for members improve our understanding of how class consciousness is formed?

Background

While a few others have attempted to study class identity and class consciousness together (Mann 1973; Wallace and Jepperson 1986), in *Class Counts* (1997) Wright makes a

first and only attempt at generating a theory which unifies the micro and macro levels of class analysis into a single model.

Figure 1.1: Wright's (1997) Partial Model of Class Position and Class Consciousness



He begins by explaining that because class locations – which he locates at the micro level of analysis – have different material interests as a result of their relationship to the means of production, they make some world views more plausible than others, thus limiting the class consciousness of the individuals situated within them. Class locations also limit class actions because as Wright says, “class locations significantly shape the feasible set of what individuals in those locations can do to satisfy their material interests” (1997: 390). However, because class locations are not perfectly determinant, class practices can also transform individuals’ class consciousnesses. Finally, class consciousness then feeds back into the system by identifying the best ways the individuals located within a given class location can satisfy their material interests. These class practices can then transform the class locations within the system, particularly as individuals change jobs or change the way they perform their current job (Wright 1997).

Moving to the macro level of analysis, class structure, class formation, and class struggle replicate the micro level system but in terms of macro level structures. Class structure, class formation, and class struggle perform the same functions as class location, class consciousness, and class action respectively.

Wright (1997) then explains how the macro structure emerges out of interactions at the micro level and the macro structure mediates the micro interactions. For example, class struggle can change individuals’ class consciousness by making them more aware of their material interests. This increased awareness of material interests can change the class practices of the individuals in that class location. The resulting shift in class practices may result in a change in strategy by the opposing class engaged in the class struggle, which can start the process all over again.

There are several problems with Wright's conceptualization of the class structure and his partial theory of class consciousness.

The primary problem at the micro level is this level of Wright's model is not really the result of micro level processes. According to Wright's definition of the micro level, class locations are not properly theorized at this level. He defines the micro level in this way; "The micro-level of sociological analysis consists of the study of the relations among individuals. Individuals are the constituent elements within these relations, but it is the relations as such that are the object of study of micro-level sociological analysis" (1997: 375).

According to Wright's description of his model, class locations are defined not as the relations between individuals – the micro level of analysis -- but as the result of the material interests defined by exploitation relations, which are themselves defined by the relative position of the class location within a system of relations to the mode of production. This description more closely matches the description of a macro level phenomenon. Additionally, class consciousness is also incorrectly located at the micro level of analysis. Again, returning to Wright's description of his model, class consciousness is the result of the relations between a class location and the individuals located within the class location. Rather than the micro level, class consciousness exists at the meso level of analysis – the level defined by the relations between individuals and macro structures.

What Wright (1997) misses in the construction of the micro level of his partial theory is even though class consciousness is developed within an individual, class consciousness is generated through macro level processes. Therefore, the micro level of Wright's partial theory must be completely reworked to both identify and account for a micro level outcome of class.

At the macro level, there are more if less severe problems.

First, Wright's conceptualization of the class structure does not match his measurement of this conceptualization. To begin, he often discusses the ability of workers with organizational and credential assets to literally buy into the capitalist class by obtaining corporate stock and bonds and capitalized property. However, he fails to incorporate such a set of categories into his conceptualization of the class structure. Furthermore, the measures he uses for the organizational asset and credential asset dimensions of the class structure only weakly corresponds to his conceptualization of these dimensions, which Wright has acknowledged (Wright, ed. 1989).

Additionally, Wright (1997) recognizes his theory is only a partial theory of class consciousness because vital components – particularly the class formation component – are under-theorized. Wright (1997) says the class structure will shape class formation, which will constrain class consciousness. What is missing he says is a fully theorized mechanism for how class structures shape class formation and how that class formation then limits class consciousness.

Research in social networks can provide theoretical insights which will allow for a more fully theorized understanding of class formation. The idea of socio-structural space elaborated by McPherson and several co-authors (McPherson 1981; McPherson 1983; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987; McPherson and Ranger-Moore 1991; McPherson, Popielarz, and Drobnic 1992; Popielarz and McPherson 1995; McPherson and Rotolo 1995; McPherson and Rotolo 1996; Rotolo and McPherson 2001; McPherson 2004) fills in this missing link. Socio-structural space and the ecological mechanisms operating within it are the structure and the mechanisms through which classes form.

If these significant issues can be overcome, a unified theory of class analysis can be created which combines both the micro and macro levels of class analysis into a coherent

whole. Laying the groundwork for the generation of such a unified theory is the goal of the current project.

My Contribution

The Micro Level

Because the basic construction of Wright's micro level of the theory is mis-specified, I must construct the micro level of the theory anew from what is already known about the micro level of class analysis. To do this I focus particularly on research about class identity formation.

Research on the question of class identity formation is largely found in the area of social psychology and ignored by traditional class theorists. Work in this area tends to focus on understanding how individuals come to possess the class identities they have and is largely modeled after the work of Centers ([1949] 1961). These researchers examine the criteria used by the individuals within a class to identify others in that class as well as the criteria they use to define the other classes (Kornhauser 1938; Cantril 1943; Wallace, Williams, and Cantril 1944; Centers [1949] 1961; Ossowski 1963; Hodge and Treiman 1968; Jackman and Jackman 1983; Vanneman and Cannon 1987).

The major shortcoming of this literature is it has failed to generate a micro level theory which explains the development of class identity. Support for various combinations of factors has been found to explain class identity, including economic class and social status (Centers [1949] 1961; Jackman and Jackman 1983; Vanneman and Cannon 1987), occupation and prestige (Kornhauser 1938; Cantril 1943; Wallace, Williams, and Cantril 1944), and status, class location, and social network connections (Hodge and Treiman 1968).

Given these incongruent findings, no single source of class identity has been demonstrated, despite claims to the contrary (Centers [1949] 1961; Vanneman and Cannon 1987)¹.

One way to overcome this shortfall is to look to identity theories for insight into processes of identity formation, particularly in terms of class identity.

Affect Control Theory (ACT) is a structural identity theory which is promising for its ability to explain identity formation, particularly as it relates to class identities. ACT was developed in the 1970s by David Heise and his students. The central finding of ACT is all identities consist of three affective dimensions of meaning: Evaluation, Potency, and Activity (EPA) (Heise and Smith-Lovin 1981). These three dimensions define the affective expectations individuals have of others and expect others to have of them when engaged in interaction. When these expectations are not met, discomfort results. Through repeated interactions individuals learn which identities they can successfully claim as well as the behavioral expectations for those identities. Additionally, ACT is promising for the study of class identity because the three affective dimensions of identity correspond to three sources of interpersonal stratification: status, power, and agency, such that status is related to Evaluation, power is related to Potency, and agency is related to Activity (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 1992; Heise 1999).

The characteristics of ACT – a structural micro approach, an ability to explain identity formation, and a correspondence to dimensions of stratification – make it a reasonable place to begin to construct a micro level theory of class identity formation.

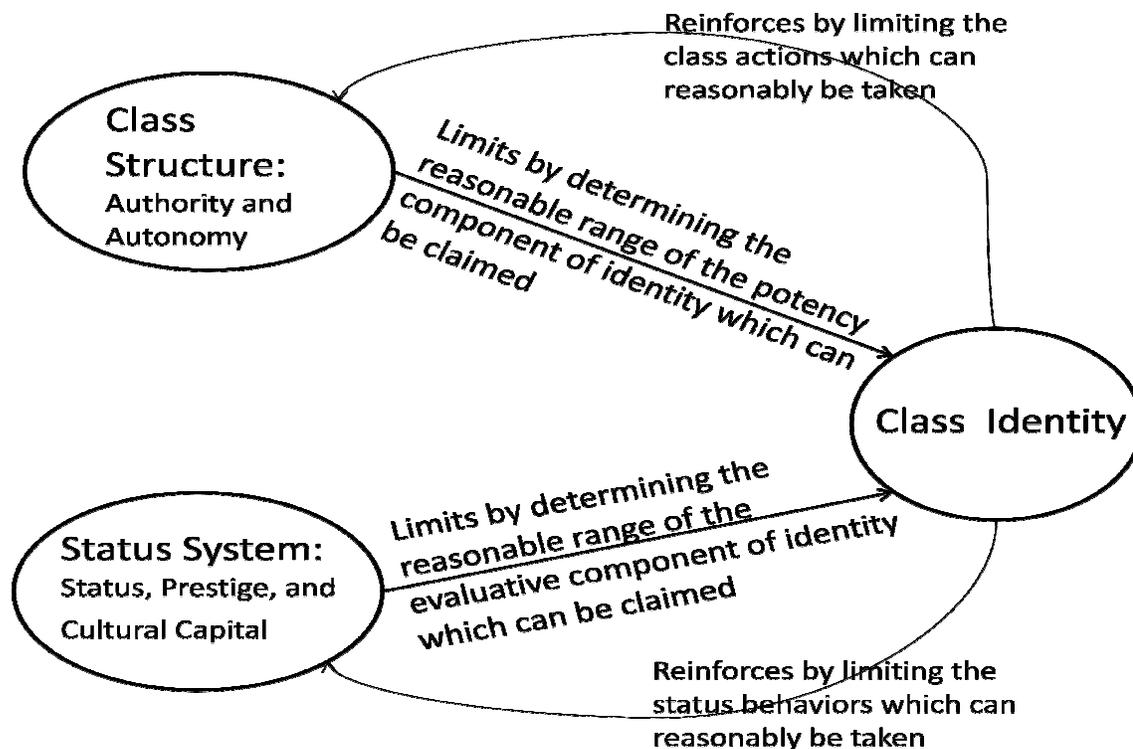
Next in order to create a theory about class identity specifically, the insights from ACT must be integrated into a broader theory of the class structure. To do so I begin with an insight often overlooked in the early work of Wright ([1978] 1979; Wright, Costello, Hachen,

¹ While Centers and Vanneman and Cannon suggest it is completely class which accounts for class identity, their findings actually show mixed support for class and status as the defining characteristics of class identity.

and Sprague 1982), which holds that domination is experienced everyday in the work environment and that domination is a power relationship in the workplace. The experience of power in this sense requires a relational connection between the individual using power – the dominating – and the individual to whom the power is being applied – the dominated. The dominating cannot experience the use of power without someone on which to use the power. Just as the exploiting require the work of the exploited in order to benefit (Wright 1996; Wright 2000). In having control over others and in being controlled by others, both experience power's use.

Given the correspondence between power and Potency and status and Evaluation, it is expected that one's location in both the micro class structure – determined by the distribution of domination within the workforce – and the status system will impact one's ability to hold and maintain a class identity. Because the identities an individual feels comfortable claiming and portraying will be determined by the amount of power the individual has and can avoid as well as the amount of status the person can demonstrate, class identity will be determined by both one's position in the micro class structure and their status. In other words, because the amount of power an individual possesses is central to the identity they claim to possess, the micro class structure – built around power relations in the workplace – will limit the class identities people can claim. Likewise, the status system limits the class identities an individual can claim because evaluation is also central to the way in which people define and experience their identity. By determining the domination and status relations between the structural positions, the micro class structure and the status system define the work based identities available within an economic system.

Figure 1.2: The Micro Level Theory of Class Identity



Behavioral expectations as defined by an individual's position in the class and status systems limits the class action the individual can take as well. An individual without any authority or autonomy is expected to listen to authorities and do what he is told. The same goes for individuals with low levels of status. They are expected to show deference to their social superiors. Similarly, those with authority, autonomy, and status are expected to lead others and to be self directed. These behavioral expectations limit the class actions reasonable available to the individuals in their respective locations.

Class identity works as a feedback mechanism which reinforces the class and status structures by limiting the range of behaviors in which individuals will be able to successfully engage. Similar to roles, identities are associated with a particular range of expected behaviors. Individuals are sanctioned when these behavioral expectations are not met and

are rewarded when the identities are performed correctly. The process of sanctioning and rewarding behaviors limits the range of activities individuals will be able to perform comfortably, thus reinforcing the relationship between actions and identities.

To summarize then, the everyday practice of job responsibilities will reinforce an individual's class identity and their position in the class system. By performing their job duties, individuals both get a sense of their location in the class and status system and the identities available for them to perform. Then, by acting in accordance with the behavioral expectations of those identities, the individuals' class and status location are solidified as their behaviors reinforce the behavioral limitations of their class location.

The Macro Level

My contribution to the macro level begins by improving the measurement of Wright's conceptualization of the class system. While I rely on Wright's data, I change how the ownership, credential assets, and organizational assets dimensions of the macro class structure are measured. Variable construction is an under considered part of sociological practice. Wright himself (1985) points out that differences in variable construction can dramatically change findings even if the underlying theory of two analyses is the same. He insists that variable construction is a central part of any analysis. To this end, Wright provides detailed variable construction appendices in his books and a number of his articles.

While I largely keep Wright's conceptualization of the class structure intact, I alter his variable construction considerably. In places I find his construction of the dimensions of the class structure to be at odds with his conceptualization of these dimensions. In other instances, because I separate authority and autonomy out of the macro level, his construction of the dimensions of class structure are at odds with my conceptualization of the class structure dimensions.

Figure 1.3: Wright's Typology of Class Locations in Capitalist Society

		<i>Assets in the means of production</i>					
		Owners of means of production	Non-owners [wage labourers]				
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Bourgeoisie	4 Expert Managers	7 Semi Credentialed Managers	10 Uncredentialed Managers	+	<i>Organization assets</i>	
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers but must work	2 Small Employers	5 Expert Supervisors	8 Semi Credentialed Supervisors	11 Uncredentialed Supervisors	>0		
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers	3 Petty Bourgeoisie	6 Expert non-managers	9 Semi Credentialed Workers	12 Proletarians	-		
			+	>0	-		
						<i>Skill/credential assets</i>	

Note: Reproduced from Wright *Classes* 1985 p.88

For Wright class locations are structural positions defined by the intersection of exploitative relations resulting from the multiple modes of production operating within a dominant mode of production (1984; 1985; 1996; 1997; 2000; Wright, ed. 1989). But in dichotomizing the ownership dimension of the class structure, Wright misses one of his own key insights. He often says that moving from right to left and from bottom to top on the worker side of his class map (see Figure 1.3) allows those individuals to increasingly buy into the capitalist class, meaning they have partial ownership of the means of production (Wright 1984; 1985; 1997). This mostly occurs through the ownership of corporate stock and bonds and capitalized property.

I correct for this oversight by including ownership of investments in the construction of the ownership dimension, generating four categories of ownership: workers who own no significant portion of the means of production, workers who own some portion of the means of production, the petty bourgeoisie who completely own the means of production but have no employees, and the capitalists who either totally own the means of production and have employees or are workers who own substantial portions of the means of production.

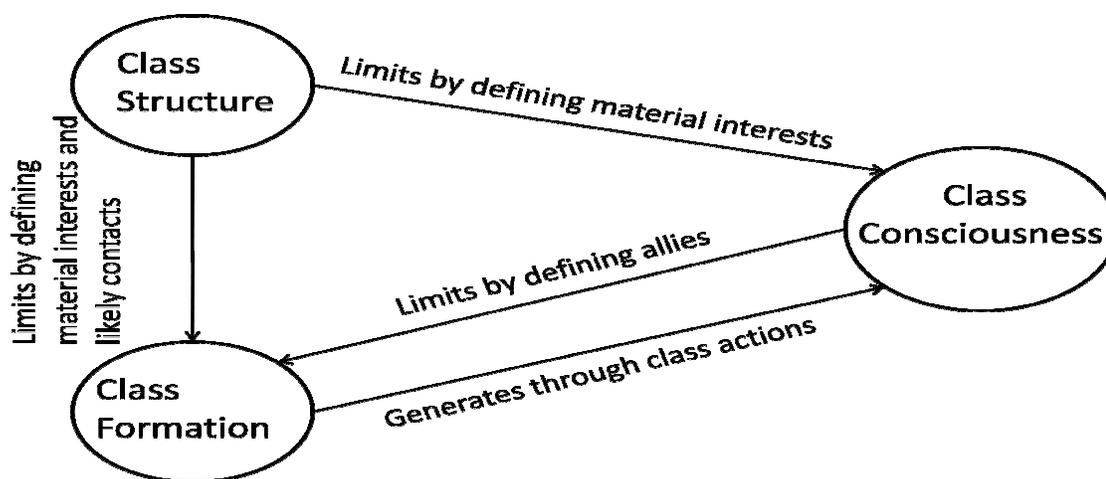
I also alter the measurement of the credential asset and organizational asset dimensions of the class structure. I find highest level of education completed, including technical training, to be a better measure of credential assets than occupational category with ambiguities being settled by education level and level of autonomy. While simply obtaining educational credentials and vocational training does not insure they will ever be used, they are an indication that the individual overcame at least the minimal barriers to entry into the group of people who possess the given skill or credential. To the degree that educational credentials and vocational training represent limitations on accessing a skill set or credential, I find this preferable to Wright's measurement of this dimension. In terms of organizational assets, I simply remove authority measures from Wright's construction of this

dimension. Therefore, I am left with only measures of operational control, which is more in line with Wright's conceptualization of this dimension.

I also correct for Wright's misplacement of class locations at the micro level by adjusting his partial model to take into account its macro nature. Additionally, I attempt to more fully theorize the macro level of the theory by incorporating the insights of social network analysis in the area of class formation. Because of structural homophily – individuals' interaction partners are limited to others with similar characteristics due to structural constraints on contact – individuals may have limited contact with others not of their class. The lack of contact between classes can lead to class formation through solidarity processes. Individuals come to shared understandings of their group interests because everyone in the group has a similar perspective. However, the lack of contact between classes may keep class characteristics from becoming salient for interaction. If this is the case, class formation will occur when individuals have cross-class conflict, bringing class characteristics to the fore during interaction and reinforcing the distinctive interests of the classes. Rather than solidarity processes, positional awareness is driving class formation. Either set of processes is possible.

Transforming Wright's (1997) partial theory of class consciousness from a micro level theory to a macro level theory is straightforward (See Figure 1.4). According to this reformulated theory, the class structure continues to limit class consciousness by defining material interests. The class structure also still limits class action and class formation by limiting the likely advancement of individuals through the class system and the likelihood of interaction between individuals within and between class locations.

Figure 1.4: Basic Macro Level Model of Class Consciousness Formation



In turn, class action and class formation will limit class consciousness because perceived prospects for advancement through the system and the perceived class alliances within the system will determine how material interests will be perceived. Class consciousness will reinforce class formations as the material interests of individuals situated within the class locations will determine which other class locations will be seen as potential allies and which other class locations will be seen as having incompatible interests.

As suggested by the network theory mentioned above, one of three potential outcomes is possible results from class formation within the socio-structural space. For the two polar classes – the capitalist class and the proletariat class – as social distance – measured by the average number of class location boundaries are crossed between the respondent and her three closest friends – increases the class consciousness of individuals in those class locations will either decrease if what I am calling the solidarity hypothesis is correct or increase if what I’m calling the structural perception hypothesis is correct. Both are suggested as possible from the group formation research which has come out of the literature on socio-structural space. A third possibility exists but is not testable with the current data. It is a combination of the solidarity and structural perception hypotheses. It

states that an individual's class consciousness will most closely reflect the material interests of the class location within which the individual is situated when the individual's primary friendships are all located within that same class location – like solidarity – and when the individual has occasional contact with individuals from other class locations – like structural perception. However, this hypothesis requires more network information than is currently available.

Applying the logic of McPherson's socio-structural space to Wright's conceptualization of the class structure, facilitates the integration of theories which better account for class dynamics and the impact of class formation on class consciousness, and therefore improves upon Wright's partial theory of class consciousness by providing a fuller theoretical model.

Data and Methods

The data come from Wright's Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness. Specifically, the data for the US are found in the *Class Structure and Class Consciousness: Merged Multi-national File* housed at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) (1986). They consist of 1,760 individual respondents, 1,498 of whom are employed in the workforce.

From these raw data I construct the variables to be included in the analyses. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the variables and their construction.

Dependent Variables

The micro level dependent variable is class identity. This categorical variable is intended to capture the respondents' class identity. In choosing to which class they belong only one individual claims no class and ten others don't know with which class they identify.

However, all ten individuals who answer “don’t know” are not in the labor force, and are therefore not considered in the analysis. This indicates that most individuals maintain some sense of their place in the class system. A consolidated variable is created consisting of six levels: 1 lower class/poor, 2 working class, 3 lower middle, 4 middle class, 5 upper middle class, and 6 upper class/rich. Using stereotype logistic regression and a series of likelihood tests (Long and Freese 2006), these six class identities are collapsed into three: 1 lower class/poor and working class, 2 lower middle and middle class, and 3 upper middle and upper class.

The macro level dependent variable is a 33 category additive index, ranging from -16 to 16, where negative numbers indicate pro-capitalist views and positive numbers indicate pro-worker views. The variable is created by adding together the responses from eight statements and questions concerning the respondents views on a number of class related issues. It is potentially important to note that all of these questions are asked with the pro-capitalist and pro-worker answer sets always in the same order, such that the pro-worker response is always first and the pro-capitalist response is always last. This may have a subtle impact on individuals’ class consciousness scores. However, most of the questions are spaced out within the survey such that item order and answer order effects are probably minimal, though there is no way I know of to test for them. The alpha of these eight measures is .65, indicating the measures are somewhat reliable.

Micro Level Independent Variables

The micro level class structure is defined by the amount of authority and autonomy the respondent has at work. Authority is measured using an 11 point additive index which is created by adding together the responses from six questions concerning authority at work. All of the authority questions relate to the ability of the respondent to directly control the

daily activities of those below them in the workplace. The alpha of these questions is .9308, which indicates they all measure the same underlying concept. Out of an abundance of caution, a factor analysis was run to check these results. It returned three factors, however all of the questions loaded highly onto the first factor and lowly onto the other two. The factor loadings onto the first factor ranged from .76 to .88. The highest factor loadings onto the other two factors were .28 and .05 respectively. This indicates that while multiple factors may be present in these questions, they predominantly measure the same underlying concept.

Likewise, autonomy is created from several questions resulting in an 8 point index. All of the autonomy questions deal with the degree to which the respondent can be self directed and free from direct control in the workplace. The alpha of these questions is .5998, which is slightly below what is considered acceptable for considering the questions as all measuring the same underlying concept. To determine if multiple concepts were being measured by these questions a factor analysis was conducted on them. It returned a single factor with factor loadings between .51 and .59. Again these loadings are a little on the low side, but the single factor does reinforce the idea that the components of the index are all measuring the same underlying concept.

Table 1.1: Summary of Micro Level Variables

Variable Name	Operationalization	Expected Effect on Class Identity
Authority	The respondent's ability to control others in the workplace.	Increasing authority increases the probability of selecting a higher class identity.
Autonomy	The respondent's ability to be self directed in the workplace and to be free from the authority of others.	Increasing autonomy increases the probability of selecting a higher class identity.
Status System	The respondent's occupation's Duncan Status score as calculated by Wright.	Increasing status increases the probability of selecting a higher class identity.

Age	The respondent's age.	The effects of age have been mixed in past studies, therefore no prediction is being made.
Race	Dummy variable 1=white, 0=non-white	Whites are expected to select higher class identities than non-whites.
Gender	Dummy variable 1=male, 0=female	Males are expected to select higher class identities than females.
Education	Highest degree achieved ranging from 1-less than high school to 8-PhD, MD, JD or equivalent.	Those of higher education are expected to have a higher probability of selecting a higher class identity.
Personal Income	11 category ordinal level variable ranging from 1-\$0-5,000 to 11-\$75,000 and above.	Increasing personal income will increase the probability of selecting higher class identities.
Union Membership	Dummy variable 1= union member, 0=not a union member	Union members are expected to select lower class identities than people who are not union members.
Urban Residency	Dummy variable 1= self report of living in a city or town with 250,000 or more residents, 0= everyone else	Urban residents are expected to select lower class identities than non-urban residents.
Class Identity	5 level ordinal variable ranging from 1-lower class/poor to 5-upper class/rich	

The respondents' location in the status system is measured by a classic Duncan Status Index. This is a pre-calculated index in the dataset, constructed using the occupational status scores of the respondents' occupations according to Hauser and Featherman (1977) (Cited in Wright et al 1986).

Finally control variables age, race, gender, education, personal income, union membership, and urban residency are included because each has been found to have independent effects on class identity in past research.

Macro Level Independent Variables

The macro level class structure is measured two ways. In comparing my favored version of the macro level class structure to Wright's, ownership of the means of production is considered first. There are four levels of ownership in my measure: workers make less than 5% of their yearly income from owning stocks, bonds, or property; worker-owners make between 5% and 75% of their yearly income from owning stocks, bonds, or property; owner-workers – the petty bourgeoisie – own their own business and have no employees; and capitalists who either own their own business and employ others or who make 75% or more of their income a year from owning stocks, bonds, or property.

Next, the workers and worker-owners are divided along organizational asset and credential asset dimensions. Unfortunately the petty bourgeoisie and capitalists are not asked these questions and therefore cannot be differentiated in terms of their organizational or credential assets. Organizational assets are measured through questions dealing with the amount of control the respondent has over production decisions in the workplace. Credential assets are measured by educational degrees and training. Both are condensed into three level categorical variables and crossed to construct a dimension that picks up three levels of asset: no assets, few assets, and numerous assets.

For the other analyses concerning the macro level class structure, I have to revert to Wright's construction of the ownership dimension because no questions are asked of the respondents' perceptions of their friends' sources of income. Therefore, it is impossible to distinguish friends who are workers from friends who are worker owners. In order to tell how many class boundaries are being crossed from respondent to friend, the categories must be similar. It is impossible to tell if friendships cross the partial ownership boundary.

Figure 1.5: Macro Level Class Structure

<i>Assets in the means of production</i>					
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Capitalists				
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers	2 Owner Workers				
Owns some capital but not enough to stop working	Worker Owners	3 Skilled Managers and Supervisors	5 Uncredentialed Managers and Supervisors		>0
		4 Skilled Workers	6 Workers		0
Owns little or no capital primary source of income comes from sale of labor	Workers	7 Expert Managers	10 Semi Credentialed Managers	13 Uncredentialed Managers	+
		8 Expert Supervisors	11 Semi Credentialed Supervisors	14 Uncredentialed Supervisors	>0
		9 Expert Non-managers	12 Semi Credentialed Workers	15 Workers	0
		+	>0	0	
		<i>Skill/credential assets</i>			

Organization assets

Note: Cells 3, 4, and 5 are collapsed due to small sample sizes in these cells.

Table 1.2: Summary of Macro Level Variables

Variable Name	Operationalization	Expected Effect on Class Identity
Wright's Macro Level Class Structure	12 dummy variables generated by first separating those who own the means of production from those who do not and then crossing three levels of organizational assets with three levels of credential assets.	Owners are expected to be more pro-capitalist than workers. Within workers as either type of asset increases the category is expected to be less pro-worker and more pro-capitalist.
Class Formation	The average number of class boundaries crossed from the respondent's class location to his or her friend's class locations.	Solidarity hypothesis: for the two polar classes, as the average number of class boundaries crossed increases, those in the polar class location's class consciousness will weaken. Structural Awareness hypothesis: for the two polar classes, as the average number of class boundaries crossed increases, those in the polar class location's class consciousness will strengthen.
Class Consciousness	33 level additive index ranging from -16-pro-capitalist to 16-pro-worker	

Class formation or class distance is measured as the average number of class location boundaries crossed between the respondent's position in the macro level class structure and his friends' positions in the same structure.

Empirical Agenda

Chapter 2: The Micro Level Analysis

The micro level analysis to be conducted in Chapter 2 is straightforward. The only test is to determine whether or not the micro level class structure and the status system impact class identity. Because class identity is a five category dependent variable ordered logistic regression seems to be the most relevant regression technique to use.

Because the existing empirical work both suggests economic class and social status impact class identity and is mixed in terms of which factor is the dominant component of identity, the current test does not expect one to outperform the other. As both increase, it is expected the likelihood of claiming a higher class identity will also increase.

Chapter 3: Improving Wright's Class Map

The exploration of the macro level in Chapter 3 focuses on improving Wright's class map. The primary test is to determine whether or not my modifications to Wright's measurement of the macro class structure are justified. This is accomplished by comparing the distribution of class consciousness across the class locations as constructed by myself and Wright. Wright (1997) uses this procedure to determine potential ideological alliances – what he calls ideological class formations – across class locations and argues the likely set of class alliances can be seen in the clustering of class locations around three points along a continuum of class consciousness.

I expect that by separating out those with partial ownership from individuals with no ownership of the means of production the patterns of ideological class formation will change. Specifically, the working class ideological class formation should expand to include class locations identified as part of the middle class ideological class formation under Wright's class map. This is because, partial owners or individuals who receive a large amount of their

annual income through ownership of stocks, bonds, and capitalized property should be ideologically aligned with the capitalist class, once these partial owners are removed from the non-owner class locations, the average class consciousness of the remaining individuals should shift towards the working class.

Chapter 4: Understanding Wright's Class Map as a Socio-Structural Space

Chapter 4 applies the logic of socio-structural space to Wright's class map. By understanding the class structure this way, both class dynamics and the way in which class location affects the lives and attitudes of the individuals can be better understood. If the class structure acts as a socio-structural space, outcomes such as friendship should be constrained by the structures. Wright and Cho (1992) have demonstrated this to be the case. Social network theorists already have begun to figure out how attitudes are transmitted through friendship and other types of networks. What is already known about social structures and social networks provides a foundation for understanding how class consciousness is transmitted and strengthened through friendship ties within the social structure that is Wright's class system.

As discussed above, solidarity and structural perception are both plausible hypotheses concerning class formation's effects on class consciousness. Because both hypotheses seem equally plausible, no prediction is being made as to which one is correct. The hypothesis favored by Marxists is the conflict hypothesis, which cannot be tested using the available data. Whichever hypothesis is supported in the current analysis will have to be tested against the conflict hypothesis in the future. But being able to eliminate one of the other two hypotheses will shed some light on the process at hand and will provide further evidence for the supported hypothesis within the networks area.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT LEADS TO DIFFERENTIAL CLASS IDENTIFICATION?

EXPLORING THE FOUNDATIONS OF CLASS IDENTITY

To this point, no one has constructed a theory which explains the development of class identity despite class identity being an important concern from a number of class and status perspectives. The main goal of this chapter is to develop and test such a theory.

The question of class identification is largely studied in the area of social psychology and ignored by traditional class theorists. The earliest studies of class identity were conducted in the 1940's by Centers ([1949] 1961). His work has been updated occasionally and these updated studies tend to focus on understanding how individuals come to possess the class identities they have. These researchers examine what criteria respondents use to classify themselves and others as well as what types of others they consider to have the same class identity as themselves (Kornhauser 1938; Cantril 1943; Wallace, Williams, and Cantril 1944; Centers [1949] 1961; Ossowski 1963; Jackman and Jackman 1983; Hodge and Treiman 1968; Vanneman and Cannon 1987).

There are two major shortcomings in this literature. The first is it has failed to generate a micro level theory which explains the development of class identity. While Centers ([1949] 1961) finds some support for his interest group theory – a simplified version of Marxism, others have found support for combinations of factors including economic class and social status (Jackman and Jackman 1983; Vanneman and Cannon 1987), occupation and prestige (Kornhauser 1938; Cantril 1943; Wallace, Williams, and Cantril 1944), and status, class location, and social network connections (Hodge and Treiman 1968) as the primary influences on one's class identity. These disparate findings suggest multiple sources of class identity – particularly economic class and status group – are combined when

individuals think of and discuss their class identity, although no theory of class identity formation has been constructed from these findings.

The second major shortcoming of the social psychological literature on class identity is it has failed to take seriously the literature on identity – be it social, group, or personal identity. It would seem obvious that some form of identity theory should prove helpful to those wishing to account for the development of class identity within the individual, but so far this has not been the case.

To be fair, theories of identity have also ignored class as an identity to be studied. In her 2000 *Annual Review of Sociology* piece, Howard cites Frable (1997) who says “With few exceptions, class as a meaningful identity is simply absent from the social psychological literature” (cited in Howard 2000: 379). Howard goes on to say “To the extent class identities have been considered in the social psychological literature, the emphasis tends to be on class identities in intersection with other identities . . . and on contextual effects on the salience of class identities (2000: 379). Since the late 1960s then, class identity has largely gone unstudied – the two examples outside this time period were both conducted in the 1980s – and identity theory has failed to incorporate class identity into its research program.

This is perhaps due to the nature of class as an identity. Class poses a problem for many identity theories, which may explain why identity theory has largely ignored class as an identity to be studied. A common way of classifying identity theories is to consider social, collective, and personal identities as separate but related entities. While there is not perfect agreement on any definition of any type of identity Owens (2003) provides an overview of the definitions of these three common types of identity.

Social identities are “derived from the groups, statuses, and categories to which individuals are *socially recognized* as belonging” (Owens 2003: 224, emphasis original). Social identities are not chosen by the identified but are thrust upon them by others.

Individuals can come to embrace these identities, but their defining characteristic is they are used by the broader society to classify individuals. Collective identities on the other hand are group identities chosen by the individual as an indication of attachment to a larger group within society. Typically, collective identities are seen to develop as a group engages in action together particularly when in conflict with other groups (Owens 2003). Finally, personal identities are those assumed by individuals in interactions with others (Owens 2003).

Class is a difficult identity to study because it has elements of all three identity types. Like a social identity, class identity involves individual characteristics used as classification markers by society. However, most class markers are less obvious or are more subtle than are traits associated with typical social identities. At the same time, as Marx suggests, class identity is developed in collective struggle against other classes, making it akin to collective identity. In some instances class identity also acts like a personal identity. During some transitory interactions with strangers class identity may be the identity the interactants utilize. An example from Gorman's (2000) work is "working people" standing in line at the bank with "suits." Lacking any information on the other in line with them, each individual resorts to a generic but still meaningful identity through which to pursue interaction.

A related issue is social and personal identity theories are related but are not yet integrated. Stets and Burke (2000) argue work needs to be done to combine these two sets of theory, however, no theoretical or empirical work could be found which attempted to seriously do so.

Because class possesses the characteristics of several types of identity and because the theories dealing with different types of identities are related but unintegrated, the lack of a theory of class identity is an understandable if lamentable outcome.

The one person who has considered the micro level of class analysis seriously is Wright. However, his version of micro level class theory is in need of revision and fails to address class identity.

Wright's Micro Level Class Theory

Wright's work has attempted to address the micro level by using the macro class structure – his class map – to predict micro level outcomes such as income (1985; Wright and Perrone 1977), friendship (1997; Wright and Cho 1992), class mobility (1997), and marriage homophily (1997). However, Wright never creates an explicitly micro level class structure nor does he address class identity itself. In his earlier work ([1978] 1979; Wright, Costello, Hachen, and Sprague 1982) – based on both relations to the means of production and on domination relations within production – provides insights which will allow for the creation of a micro structural basis for class identity.

Wright's insight is domination experienced in the workplace provides the groundwork for the construction of a micro level theory of class structure. According to Wright, domination is experienced everyday in the work environment (Wright [1978] 1979). Every time a supervisor changes an employee's schedule, every time a foreman hands out work assignments, every time a manager delays a server's lunch break power has been used by one individual and another individual has been subjected to its use. Additionally, the experience of power in this sense requires a relational connection between the individual using power and the individual to whom the power is being applied. The relational element is necessary because without a set of relations the dominated would be able to ignore the orders of the dominator and the dominator would have no reason to expect the compliance of the dominated.

This parallels Wright's definition of exploitation in which the key in defining exploitation is the interconnectedness of exploiter and exploited (Wright 2000). The dominating cannot experience the use of power without someone on which to use the power. Just as the exploiting require the work of the exploited in order to benefit. In having control over others and in being controlled by others, both experience power's use. Domination then, as experienced through authority and autonomy, structures the relations of production just as exploitation structures the relations to the mode of production.

Other Micro Level Theories of Workplace Structure

Durkheimian and Weberian theorists also offer dimensions around which power is structured in the workplace. Goffman (1956) finds honor and proper socialization to be determinants of interactional expectations within and outside of the workplace. Somewhat similarly, Neo-Weberians find status, prestige, and/or cultural capital to be the primary structuring agents in micro level workplace interactions (for a review of this literature see Lamont and Lareau 1988).

Given these findings, individuals' perceptions of their location in the distribution of power and status in the workplace will be structured by the amount of authority and autonomy they possess – their position in a micro level class structure – and the amount of status, prestige, and cultural capital they possess – their location in the status system. What has yet to be explained, however, is how identity theory can inform a theoretical model of how the micro class structure and social status work to generate class identity.

Given previous findings which show it is combinations of economic class, social status, and social network connections which all impact individuals' class identity (Kornhauser 1938; Cantril 1943; Wallace, Williams, and Cantril 1944; Centers [1949] 1961; Ossowski 1963; Jackman and Jackman 1983; Hodge and Treiman 1968; Vanneman and

Cannon 1987), both the Marxists and Weberians are likely correct. According to these findings, in the US at least, people seem to combine economic class with social status when determining their class identity. Therefore, any theory of class identity must be able to take into account both class and status as components of identity.

Identity Theory in Relation to Class and Status

In order to generate a micro level theory of class identity, some form of identity theory must be brought to bear on the question. With its focus on groups and group identification, class most logically fits into the social identity theories. However, these theories tend to focus on determining when groups' identities will be salient (Stets and Burke 2000), which is not part of the current research agenda. The primary concern in this paper is one common to identity theories, which is understanding when individuals will claim an identity (Stets and Burke 2000). Of particular use would be an identity theory which focuses on power and status as components of identity formation.

An identity theory which is concerned with power and status is Affect Control Theory (ACT). Affect Control Theorists have found that all identities consist of three affective dimensions of meaning: Evaluation, Potency, and Activity (EPA). These three dimensions define the affective expectations individuals have of others and expect others to have of them when engaged in interaction. When these expectations are not met, discomfort results. Through repeated interactions individuals learn which identities they can successfully claim as well as the behavioral expectations for those identities.

Additionally, ACT holds that a correspondence exists between the three dimensions of affective meaning and three basic dimensions of stratification: status, power, and agency (Robinson and Smith-Lovin 1992; Heise 1999). Status is seen to correspond to evaluation. Power is seen to correspond to potency. And, agency is seen to correspond with activity.

Given the correspondence between the three dimensions of stratification and the three dimensions of affective meaning, ACT seems like a good place to begin to attempt to construct a theory of class identity.

According to ACT, the ability to use power or to escape its use is a central component of identity (Heise and Smith-Lovin 1981). Anyone who has made the transition from student to instructor has experienced the degree to which power is a component of identity. It takes time to internalize the new identity and to become accustomed to the experience of using power. Interactions with students can be awkward as a person playing at the role of instructor works to take on and to internalize the expectations of the new role. However, once the role has become part of one's identity, they will enforce their power and feel uncomfortable when that power is challenged.

Affect Control Theorists attribute the discomfort felt during the transition period to the differences in potency ratings for students and instructors. The difference in power between the student identity and the instructor identity is large. According to the 1978 North Carolina EPA dictionary (Smith-Lovin and Heise 1978), students have a potency rating of $-.12$, whereas instructors' potency rating is 1.44 . In Affect Control terms, while students are slightly powerless, instructors are fairly powerful. So, when instructors fail to properly assert their power in interactions with students, discomfort is felt on both sides, but doubly so for the new instructor who is used to performing her role as a student. For this person, using power feels odd because it is inconsistent with her old student identity. However, not using power also feels odd because it is expected of the new identity and therefore by both the instructor and her students. Until the new identity is accepted by the instructor, interactions in the classroom involving the use of power will be uncomfortable for all parties involved in the interactions.

Individuals with identities which do not match up with their amount of power actually held will feel out of place and either change their behaviors or change their identities. That power is such a central component of identity points to its use as an important component of identity construction and maintenance. Therefore, location within the power structure or, in other words, position in the micro class structure will strongly limit the class identities individuals will be comfortable claiming.

Unlike the connection between the potency dimension of identity and amount of power an individual has, the connection between status and identity is less obvious. Status is revealed through the evaluative component of identity. As occupational identities' status increases, the evaluation rating of the identities also tends to increase. However, "helping" occupations – such as nurses and teachers – are rated much higher than other occupations regardless of status. This pattern does not correspond to the patterns found with most conceptualizations of status or prestige.

For example, according to the same EPA dictionary cited above (Smith-Lovin and Heise 1978), the evaluation component of the judge identity and the attorney identity is .9 and .82 respectively, while the less prestigious bailiff and stenographer identities are rated .24 and .34 respectively, which would be the expected pattern if status and evaluation are associated.

Yet, turning to a helping field, such as medicine, shows the inconsistency between evaluation ratings and typical status patterns. A practical nurse is rated 1.23, much higher than the high status and high prestige judge identity.

However, within the medical field, physicians are rated higher than nurses at 1.9, which would be the expected pattern if status and evaluation are related.

A potential insight can be gained by looking at coroners. Coroners are rated -.21 (Smith-Lovin and Heise 1978), which means they have a slightly negative evaluation or in

other words are slightly bad. With their advanced degrees and medical training most would expect coroners to have a fair amount of status and therefore would expect them to have at least positive evaluations, probably similar to doctors or physicians. However, coroners are tainted by death. This implies a somewhat Durkheimian or Goffmanian way of thinking about status is included in the evaluation dimension of identity.

What is clear from the patterns described above is Weberian versions of status and prestige alone is not generating the evaluations of identities. The increased evaluations of those who help others and the lowered evaluations of those associated with death suggests some form of honor and stigma (Goffman) or sacredness and profanity (Durkheim) are also contributing to the evaluation component of the affective meaning of these identities.

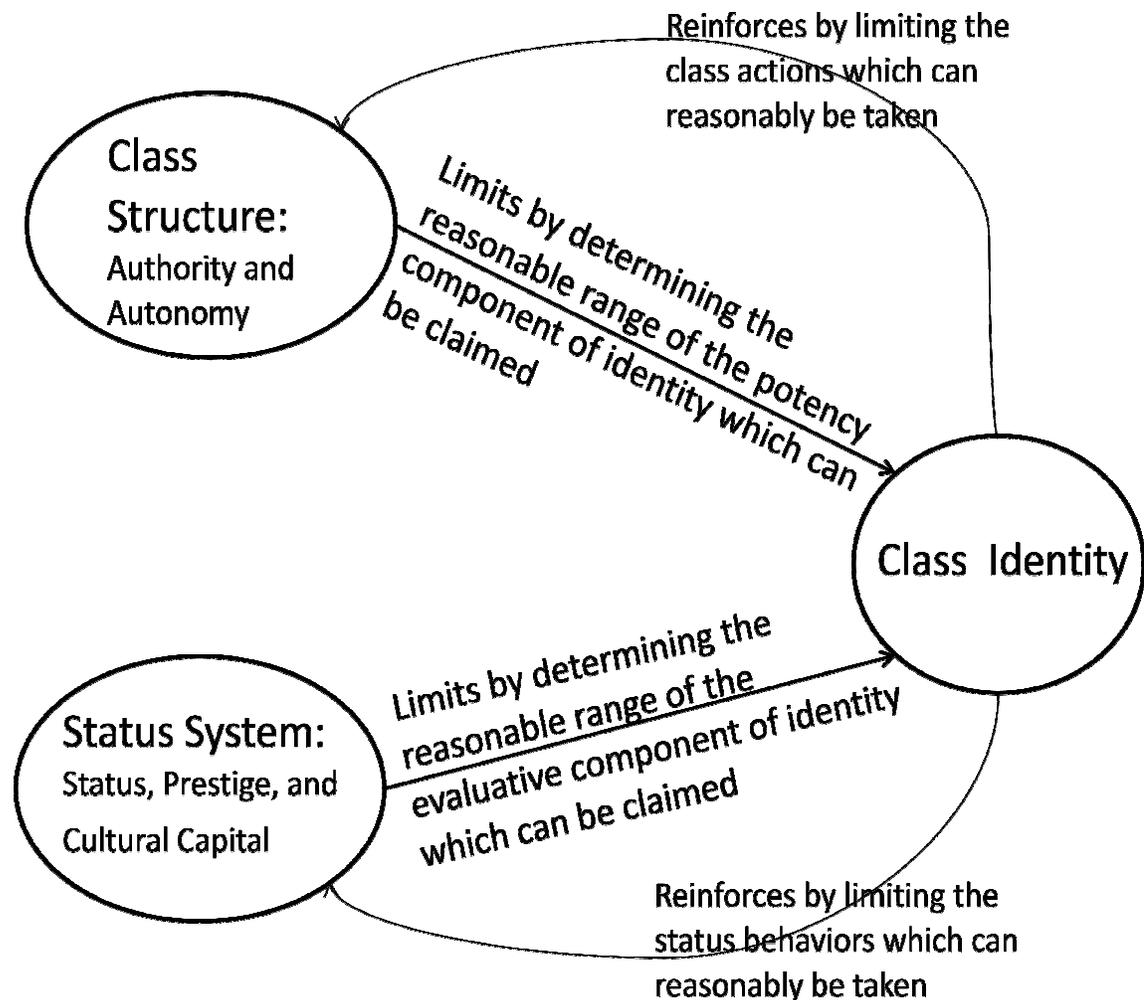
Because identities as conceived of in ACT are compatible with a view of workplace relations controlled by power and status, it is a useful place to begin an attempt to incorporate identity theory into the study of class identity.

Identity Formation

According to ACT, the identities an individual feels comfortable claiming and portraying will be determined by the amount of power the individual has and can avoid as well as the amount of status the person can demonstrate. Therefore, class identity will be determined by both one's position in the micro class structure and their status. In other words, the micro class structure will limit class identity because power is so central to how people experience identities. Similarly, status systems will limit class identity because evaluation is central to how people experience identities as well. The micro class structure and status systems thus define the work based identities available within an economic system by determining the domination and status relations between the structural positions.

The micro class structure and status system will also limit class action in that the behaviors expected from individuals in the workplace will largely depend on their micro class location and their position in the status system. Individuals without authority or autonomy and with low levels of status will be expected to listen to authorities and do what they are told, whereas individuals with authority and autonomy and with high status will be expected to be self directed and to organize and control the work of those below them. The micro class structure and status system thus limit class action by limiting behavioral expectations.

Figure 2.1: The Micro Level Theory of Class Identity



Class identity will reinforce class and status structures by limiting the range of behaviors in which individuals will be able to successfully engage. Much like the more familiar role expectations, we expect certain behaviors from certain identities. When these expectations are not met, individuals are sanctioned. When identities are performed correctly and conform to our expectations individuals are praised, reinforcing the behaviors. This sanctioning and rewarding process will bound what actions individuals with a certain identity will be able to comfortably perform and therefore reinforce the connection between actions and identities.

Class action therefore works as a feedback mechanism in that it reinforces class identity through everyday practice of job responsibilities. In performing job duties individuals will feel their relationship to power and status. This will limit their ability to claim certain class identities. An individual with no power or status will have a hard time claiming and maintaining an upper class identity because holding such an identity requires the use of power and status, which the individual does not have access to in her position. While at the same time once an class identity is claimed and subsequently performed that performance places the individual within the class and status systems by limiting the amount of power or prestige the individual is capable of using in interactions with others.

Data and Methods

To test the model of class identity formation described above, I will use data from the *Class Structure and Class Consciousness: Merged Multi-national File* housed at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) (1986) as part of Wright's Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness. It consists of 1,760

individual respondents, 1,498 of whom are in the workforce. Of the respondents in the workforce 1,019 have complete data, which will be used in the analyses that follow.

The current analysis is limited to those in the workforce because those not in the workforce are outside the relations of production. Therefore, they do not possess the necessary characteristics to develop or successfully maintain a class identity as it is theoretically constructed here.

Respondents are asked questions concerning their class identity, the amount of authority and autonomy they possess in the workplace, as well as questions which describe their positions in the status system. The survey includes measures of status and class necessary for the analysis. The one shortcoming of the data is it is cross-sectional. In order to test the feedback mechanisms predicted by the model, longitudinal data would be necessary. Therefore, the current analysis does not test the veracity of the feedback loops in the theoretical model.

Class identity – the dependent variable and the thing being explained in this chapter – is based on a three part question. First the respondent is asked, “Do you think of yourself as belonging to a particular social class?” Those respondents who answer “yes” are then asked to identify which class to which they feel they belong. Those respondents who answer “no” are then asked, “Many people say they belong to the working class, the middle class, or the upper middle class. If you had to make a choice, which class would you say you belonged to?”

Of those in the labor force 43% think of themselves as belonging to a social class. Of the 57% who say they do not think of themselves as belonging to a social class, only one individual claimed class does not exist and one additional person gave a non-class response. All others chose a social class after being prompted to do so. This implies that even those without a sense of belonging to a social class do identify with a particular class when

prompted to do so. While it may not be a strong sense of identity, it does show a willingness to self identify with a particular group. Additionally, by asking the question as a multi stage question, we can control for potential differences between those with a strong sense of belonging to a class and those who are merely willing to classify themselves when prompted.

When the results of these questions are combined, six class identities result: lower class/poor, working class, lower middle class/upper working class, middle class, upper middle class, and upper class/rich. The vast majority of respondents in the labor force fall into either the middle class – 55%, or the working class – 27%. The other four classes – lower class/poor, lower middle class/upper working class, upper middle class, and upper class/rich – make up .9, 2, 14, and .8 percent of the labor force respectively.

Because the dependent variable is at a maximum ordinal and because several of the categories are small, I begin by determining if any of the categories can be combined. To do so I use a procedure suggested by Long and Freese (2006), which relies on stereotype logistic regression and likelihood tests. According to this procedure, the lower class/poor and working class categories can be combined, the lower middle class/upper working class and the middle class categories can be combined, and the upper middle class and upper class/rich categories can be combined. The resulting three category dependent variable is then regressed on the independent variables using multinomial logistic regression. Multinomial logistic regression is preferable to ordered logistic regression because it can identify differential effects the independent variables may have on the different levels of the dependent variable, thus allowing for non-linear effects between the independent and dependent variables.

Authority and autonomy are addressed by questions concerning workplace activities. Individuals have authority when they directly control the activities or conditions of other workers. Authority deals with three main areas of control: 1) wages, 2) discipline, and 3)

tasks. Multiple questions are asked concerning each of these three areas as well as the amount of control the respondent has over each area. The responses to these questions result in an 11 point additive index of authority in the workplace. The alpha for this index for members of the labor force is .5998, which is on the low side but close to a score suggesting the components of the index all measure the same underlying concept. Additionally, a factor analysis conducted on the components of the index returned a single factor with factor loading scores between .51 and .59. Again, while somewhat weak, the components of the index are seen as measuring the same underlying concept.

Autonomy similarly focuses on three major areas of daily life in the workplace: 1) conceptual autonomy or freedom over ideas or design, 2) schedule autonomy or freedom to decide when to work and for how long, and 3) work autonomy or freedom over pace and manner of work. The responses to these questions result in an 8 point additive index of autonomy in the workplace. The alpha for this index for members of the labor force is .9308, indicating that the components of the index are strongly related and measure the same underlying concept. A factor analysis conducted on the components of the index returned three factors, but all the components loaded highly onto the first factor with factor loading scores between .76 and .88. The highest factor loading score for the second factor is .28 and .05 for the third factor. These results suggest that while the components of the index may measure three distinct concepts, they primarily measure the same underlying concept.

Status is a multifaceted concept in sociological research. Some argue that individual characteristics such as age, education, race, gender, and income are part of the status system. Others argue that these personal characteristics are only related to status and that status is predominantly a result of job characteristics. To ensure I am taking the full range of status systems into account, I include measures of both individual characteristics and a measure of status based on occupation. The measures of the individual characteristics are

straightforward. They are simply a direct measure of the respondent's age, highest degree completed, and personal income. Gender and race are dummy variables where the comparison categories are male and non-Black. The occupation based status measure is a Duncan Socio-Economic Index (DSEI) reconstructed using the respondent's occupation and the corresponding DSEI value as describes in Appendix B of Hauser and Featherman (1977).

Finally, because others have found union membership (Wright 1997) and living in urban areas (Centers [1949] 1961) to be important factors in determining class identity, I also include these as controls.

Results and Findings

The multinomial logistic regression shows the independent variables differentially affect the likelihood of choosing between the three class identities, recalling Centers' ([1949] 1961) original findings. Centers asks his respondents what criteria they believe are required to place someone in the upper, middle, and lower class. He finds different classes of respondents use different criteria to define both their own class and the other classes than do the other classes.

The current findings suggest Centers' respondents' perceptions were correct. Class identities are distinguished by different sets of criteria depending on to which class one belongs and to which class the comparison is being made.

What distinguishes the working class from the middle class is gender, race, status, union membership, and having a sense of belonging to ones class identity, while what distinguishes the middle class from the upper class is simply status and income. Finally, the characteristics which differentiate the working class from the upper class are income, urban residency, union membership, status, autonomy in the workplace, and having a sense of belonging to ones class identity. Generally speaking the results suggest both class and

status differentiate the working class from the other two classes, but status alone differentiates the middle class from the upper class.

Table 2.1: Multinomial Logistic Regression of Class Identity

Variable Name	Coefficient	S.E.	Two-Tailed p	exp(Coefficient)
<i>Middle Class vs. Working Class</i>				
Highest Degree Completed	.128	(.088)	.148	1.136
Age	.007	(.006)	.270	1.007
Gender (comparison group is men)	-.356	(.192)	.064	.700
Black (comparison group is not Black)	-.803	(.257)	.002	.448
Personal Income	.008	(.049)	.870	1.008
Urban Residence	.180	(.269)	.503	1.197
Union Membership	-.536	(.180)	.003	.585
DSEI	.013	(.004)	.004	1.013
Authority	-.035	(.029)	.233	.966
Autonomy	.059	(.043)	.166	1.061
Class Belonging	1.865	(.196)	.000	6.456
Constant	-.632	(.356)	.076	.531
<i>Upper Class vs. Middle Class</i>				
Highest Degree Completed	-.018	(.088)	.836	.982
Age	-.005	(.008)	.502	.995
Gender (comparison group is men)	.343	(.225)	.127	1.409
Black (comparison group is not Black)	.238	(.385)	.538	1.269
Personal Income	.166	(.055)	.003	1.180
Urban Residence	.344	(.244)	.159	1.410
Union Membership	-.248	(.212)	.242	.780
DSEI	.011	(.006)	.041	1.011
Authority	.036	(.030)	.239	1.037
Autonomy	.057	(.053)	.279	1.059
Class Belonging	.006	(.193)	.975	1.006
Constant	-3.022	(.439)	.000	.048
<i>Upper Class vs. Working Class</i>				
Highest Degree Completed	.109	(.112)	.330	1.115
Age	.002	(.009)	.844	1.002
Gender (comparison group is men)	-.013	(.266)	.961	.987
Black (comparison group is not Black)	-.566	(.406)	.164	.568
Personal Income	.174	(.067)	.009	1.190
Urban Residence	.524	(.324)	.106	1.689
Union Membership	-.784	(.251)	.002	.456
DSEI	.024	(.006)	.000	1.024
Authority	.001	(.038)	.974	1.001
Autonomy	.117	(.061)	.057	1.124
Class Belonging	1.871	(.252)	.000	6.495
Constant	-3.655	(.515)	.000	.0259

While these results remind us of Centers' findings, they also improve upon them. Centers is stuck asking his respondents for what they think is important in determining someone's class. The current results use the respondents' characteristics and self reported class identities to predict which criteria are most important in distinguishing between class identities.

It is also important to note these results run counter to Vanneman and Cannon's (1987) findings because their research has been the most recent attempt at understanding class identity, and they use data from around the same time period as I do, meaning the difference in our findings is not a period effect. They found "When they apply 'middle class' and 'working class' labels to themselves, they pay attention to where they fit in the dominance-subordination relations of production. . . On the other hand, Americans do *not* assign class labels according to the prestige level of their occupations. . . What matters is power, not status (Vanneman and Cannon 1987: 283, emphasis original). My findings show it is status and class together which differentiates the working and middle classes. In terms of power alone Vanneman and Cannon's results also differ from mine. Rather than holding power – as Vanneman and Cannon suggest, – being free from control or autonomy comes closest to differentiating the middle and the working classes, although it does not even achieve statistical significance.

Looking more specifically at the results, women, Blacks, and union members are all significantly more likely to identify with the working class than the middle class. Holding all other variables constant, the odds of identifying with the middle class compared to the working class is .7 time smaller for women than for men. Similarly, the odds of Blacks and union members identifying as middle class compared to working class are .45 and .58 times smaller than for non-Blacks and non-union members respectively.

On the other hand, a one unit increase in a worker's DSEI score increases the person's odds of identifying with the middle class by a factor of 1.01. Surprisingly, a sense of belonging to a class increases the odds of identifying with the middle class versus the working class by a factor of 6.46. According to these findings, the middle class and not the working class possesses a stronger sense of class identity.

As with the comparison between the middle class and the working class, both status and class factors differentiate those with an upper class identity from those with a working class identity. In terms of class factors, union membership increases the odds of identifying with the working class compared to the upper class by about a factor of 2.2. As expected, increased autonomy increases the odds of identifying with the upper class when compared to the working class. For every one unit increase in autonomy the odds of identifying with the upper class increases by 1.12. Urban residency on the other hand surprisingly also increases the odds of identifying with the upper class. Marxists expect increased urbanization to increase identification with the working class. As workers are forced to live closer together, their sense of shared grievance and sense of community, which is expected to result in a common identity as working class. This however, does not seem to be the case. Living in an urban area increases the odds of identifying with the upper class by a factor of 1.7. Given that the data are from the middle 1980s and that both race and income are held constant, it is unlikely to be the result of gentrification and the return of wealthy whites to the city.

In differentiating the upper class from the working class personal income and DSEI are the two significant components of status. As expected, as both increase, the odds of identifying with the upper class also increases.

As with the comparison between the middle class and the working class, a sense of belonging to a class is opposite the expected direction. Again the odds of identifying with the working class are lower when one has a sense of belonging to one's class. A sense of class

belonging increases the odds of identifying with the upper class, when compared to the working class, by almost a factor of 6.5. Clearly, the upper class has a better sense of class than does the working class. Perhaps this indicates the upper class does not buy their own “classless society” rhetoric.

While both class and status differentiate the working class from the middle and upper classes, only status factors differentiate the middle and upper classes. As is expected, increasing income and DSEI increase the odds of identifying with the upper class. More significant than what differentiates the middle class from the upper class might be what does not. Surprisingly race and gender play no part in identifying with the upper class rather than the middle class. Also neither authority nor autonomy differentiates these two classes. That the only difference between identifying with the upper class versus the middle class is income and DSEI is somewhat surprising.

Taken together these findings imply that while the bottom class is distinguishable from the other classes for many reasons, the top classes are only distinguishable because of income and occupational status reasons. While they may not be able to overcome the distance in income or occupational status, the middle class may not be wrong in feeling that very little separates them from the upper class, while at the same time they feel very distinct from the working class below them.

Unfortunately for Marxists, class characteristics are only important for distinguishing the working class from the other two classes. Union membership is the only class relevant variable to significantly contribute to class identity differences between workers and the middle class. In differentiating the working class from the upper class, autonomy plays a role in addition to union membership. Living in an urban area, however, has an opposite effect of the one predicted by Marxists. Rather than urbanization increasing

identification with the working class, it increases the likelihood of identifying with the upper class.

Those who favor a status perspective do quite well. DSEI is a significant contributor to class identity differentiation between all three class identities. Although the most consistently significant indicator of class identity, DSEI has the smallest magnitude of effect in every model. Income, race, and gender – all status indicators – also often play a role in differentiating class identities. An interesting pattern holds here as well. When gender and race are important, income is not and vice versa. Gender and race rather than income are important distinguishing features between the working and middle classes, but income and not gender or race is important for distinguishing the upper class from the other two.

At the micro level at least, status group plays a more consistent role than does class in determining ones class identity. Although, when class does matter, it matters more than most of the status variables. Union membership has the largest impact on class identity of any of the variables in the models, although race is a pretty close second.

A potential explanation for status's more consistent contribution to class identity comes from ACT. ACT researchers have found the evaluation dimension of identities has a larger impact on identity construction than do the potency or activity dimensions (Heise and Smith-Lovin 1981). Therefore, it may be unsurprising that status – the component of stratification connected to evaluation – plays a more consistent part in determining class identity than class – the power or potency component of identity – does. But in those instances where class does matter, it has more impact in determining identity choice than does status.

Conclusion and Discussion

The preceding theory and analysis is just a first step in creating a theory of class identity formation. But it is a constructive first step.

First, it recalls the empirical findings of previous research on class identity and provides further support for the idea that a combination of status and class play a role in the construction of class identity. It also extends those findings by providing predictive probabilities for the impact individual characteristics have on class identity.

Secondly, it attempts to bring identity theory into the discussion by explicitly connecting one version of identity theory to the theoretical underpinnings of the analysis. Others may disagree that Affect Control Theory or personal identity theories more generally are the appropriate ones to use. But now there is a basis on which to begin the discussion. Perhaps this is the impetus which will convince identity theorists to begin considering class as an identity and class theorists that identity is an important component of one's sense of class which needs careful analysis.

This paper is not meant to be the definitive statement on class identity. It is meant to jumpstart a line of research which has floundered in recent years. Hopefully, to that end it is successful.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT ABOUT THE INVESTING CLASS? IMPROVING WRIGHT'S CLASS MAP THROUGH THE INCLUSION OF PARTIAL OWNERSHIP

The main goal of this chapter is to improve both conceptually and operationally Wright's class map. Erik Olin Wright has been one of the primary class theorists of the last 30 years. Over that period of time, his scientific or empirical Marxism has been a unique and informative perspective on class structure in modern capitalist economies. His way of thinking about the class structure has been used to understand numerous class related outcomes, such as income (1985; Wright and Perrone 1977), friendship (1997; Wright and Cho 1992), class mobility (1997), and marriage homophily (1997), and has been central in debates surrounding the proper conceptualization of class (Wright 1980; Wright 1984; Wright 1989; Wright ed. 1989; Pakulski and Waters 1996; Wright 1996; Grusky and Sørensen 1998; Grusky, Weeden and Sørensen 2000; Sørensen 2000; Wright 2000; Grusky and Weeden 2001; Adams 2002; Grusky and Weeden 2002; Weeden and Grusky 2005).

Despite its importance, Wright has never been completely satisfied with his own conceptualization of class. He has shifted focus from domination ([1978] 1979; Wright, Costello, Hachen, and Sprague 1982) to exploitation (1984; 1985; 1997; Wright ed. 1989) and from a game theoretic basis for exploitation (1984; 1985) to a partial or quasi rents model (Burawoy and Wright 1990; Wright ed. 1989, especially pages 331-340; Wright 1997; Wright 2000).

For Wright, the conceptualization and operationalization stages of the scientific endeavor are never completed and can be continually be improved. To this end, he often includes detailed methodological appendices in his books and articles and encourages thinking meaningfully about variable construction (Wright 1985).

Given this concern, the simple question is, is there a better way to construct Wright's class map? My answer is yes.

Wright's Class Map: Description and Conceptual Improvement

Before moving beyond Wright's class map, we must understand the map as most recently constructed by Wright. Currently Wright bases his class map on exploitation relations which are generated by a partial rents model. In this model rents are generated by assets which are necessary for increased productivity. Within the capitalist mode of production the primary form of exploitation comes from ownership over the means of production. Ownership allows capitalists to accumulate more of the social surplus than they would be capable of gathering without that ownership. Similarly, credential assets and organizational assets can be used by some workers to extract excess surplus from the capitalists who employ them and use that additional income to literally buy into the capitalist class (Wright ed. 1989, especially pages 331-340; Wright 1997; Wright 2000).

However, Wright (1996; 1997; 2000) explains rents are not entirely an appropriate way to conceive of exploitation. Instead he posits that exploitation occurs when three criteria are met: 1) "The material welfare of exploiters causally depends upon the reductions of material welfare of the exploited," 2) "This inverse interdependence of the welfare of exploiters and the exploited depends upon the exclusion of the exploited from access to productive resources," and 3) "Exclusion generates material advantage to exploiters because it enables them to appropriate the labor effort of the exploited" (Wright 2000:1563). The third requirement means that in order to benefit the exploiters must have the consent or at a minimum the cooperation of the exploited. Without the exploited individuals' cooperation, the exploiters would be unable to extract any surplus because there would be nothing produced. At the same time however, the exploited rely on the exploiters for access to the means of production and thus the materials required for survival. Without being granted access to productive resources, the exploited would simply starve. Therefore, the exploited

and exploiters need each other. A purely rents based model would reject the third requirement because rents do not require the consent or cooperation of the exploited group in order for the rents to be extracted and the exploited group does not need the assistance of the exploiters for survival (Wright 2000; Sørensen 2000).

For Wright the third criterion is the key to the transformative power of social classes. It is the interdependence of exploiter and exploited and the necessary interaction between them that creates class based antagonisms, which provide the impetus for social change. In a pure rents model where the exploiter and exploited need not be tied together, such antagonisms will not be readily apparent and thus would not be a basis for intergroup conflict or could result in one group simply trying to eradicate the other one (Wright 2000).

For example, according to Sørensen's (2000) rents model, minimum wage workers are an exploiting class because they are receiving payments for their services above what is necessary to reproduce and maintain those services. They are therefore receivers of rents. While this rent lowers the employer's profit margin and/or increases the costs of products to consumers, the minimum wage earner is neither reliant on the employer nor the customer for the rent payment. The minimum wage earner is reliant on government regulation for his rent. Similarly, the employer and customer may not like the adverse effects the minimum wage has on their financial circumstances, but their conflict is not with the minimum wage earner, it is with the government. This is because the increased wages of the minimum wage earner are not due to the structural advantages the minimum wage earner has over the employer and customer, the increased wages and thus costs are due to government regulation. Therefore, an attack on the minimum wage may affect the minimum wage earner, but the attack is not directed at him. The attack is directed at the government. In this way the conflicting parties are not the ones involved in the transaction of the rent. The

rent is the result of action by a third party, thus making the relationships involved in rent based exploitation non-dependent.

Because of this shortcoming – that rents neither require the cooperation of the exploited to be collected nor the dependency of the exploiters on the exploited – a pure rents model is rejected by Wright and he partially adopts a rents model but maintains the key relational insight from his earlier model based on Roemer's thinking (Wright 1985).

Within Wright's perspective, structural class locations are defined first by the dichotomy between those who own the means of production and those who do not own the means of production. Because capitalism is the dominant mode of production, the relations to the means of production which result from it are the predominant exploitation relations in society and therefore will structure the rest of the class system.

Within the capitalist class, however, three key distinctions exist. The first is between those who can hire others and those who cannot, which separates the petty bourgeoisie from other capitalists. Then, within the group of capitalists who can hire others, the distinction is between those who can largely control the workplace on their own and those who must rely on an organizational hierarchy for control over production. This second distinction comes from Wright's earlier domination based conceptualization of the class structure but maintains its importance in his exploitation based system (Wright [1978] 1979; Wright et al 1982).

Just as exploitation generated by differential control over assets in the means of production comes from the capitalist economic system, the other two asset categories are also related to modes of production. Rather than a single mode of production, Wright posits that there are three modes of production operating within advanced industrial capitalist economies. While the primary mode of production is capitalism – with its traditional division between owners of the means of production and those who must sell their labor power –, the

other two modes of production are considered to be proto-modes of production, similar in developmental stage to capitalism's emergence at the end of the feudal mode of production.

The first of these developing modes of production is statism, defined by Wright as the distinction between those who control the organizational hierarchy and those who do not. The second of these is socialism, defined by the distinction between those who control skills and credentials and those who do not. In each of these cases those who control the associated resource can leverage their control of the resource into access to part of the surplus produced by the society. This is similar to how early capitalists used their material gains to buy into the feudal class through the purchase of titles and land.

The structural locations defined by these two proto-modes of production and which make up the rest of the class system are wholly situated within the working classes – those who must sell their labor power. These class locations are determined by the intersection of three levels of the other two modes of production: no control, some or minimal control, and extensive control. Figure 3.1 illustrates these structural class locations, as defined by Wright.

Because three simultaneous modes of production – and therefore systems of exploitation – are operating within a single economy, class locations may be exploiters in one dimension but exploited in another. This duality of class positions as simultaneously exploiters and exploited recalls Wright's earlier concept of intermediate or contradictory class locations. Each class location has a unique position in each of the three systems of exploitation, so a class location may be the highest exploiter within one system but may be highly exploited in the other two systems.

In this complex set of exploitation relations, only the proletariat and some members of the bourgeoisie are not in a contradictory position. The proletariat is the only class completely exploited under all three modes of production. This would mean all other classes

are contradictory in at least some regard.² So, the proletariat and the capitalists are the two polar class locations between which a number of middle class or contradictory class locations exist. The other classes are contradictory in the sense that they share interests with both capitalists and the proletariat.

This definition of contradictory class locations is similar to Marx's definition of a transitional class. Marx defines a transitional class as one "in which the interests of two classes are neutralized" (Marx 1996: 62). Marx uses as his primary example of a transitional class, the petty bourgeoisie. Wright's slight modification is to recognize that the interests of the transitional classes are not perfectly balanced between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Their interests are contradictory but not balanced.

Additionally, as one moves across the map of the class structure from right to left and from bottom to top, the class locations increasingly provide those individuals located within them assets which can be leveraged into access to the resources necessary to buy their way into the capitalist classes. In advanced capitalism this is largely done through the acquisition of stock and/or bond assets of large business enterprises or other sources of investment income, such as rents from capitalized property. In short, those with organizational and/or credential assets can leverage those assets into a greater share of the social product than they would receive otherwise (Wright 1985; Wright ed. 1989). They can use this surplus to buy capital assets, thus tying their material interests directly to those of capitalists.

² Some members of the bourgeoisie may be highly credentialed and have high levels of organizational control, but this may not hold for all of them. Therefore, only some members of this class would be exploiters within all three systems of exploitation.

Figure 3.1: Wright's Typology of Class Locations in Capitalist Society

		<i>Assets in the means of production</i>					
		Owners of means of production	Non-owners [wage labourers]				
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Bourgeoisie	4 Expert Managers	7 Semi Credentialed Managers	10 Uncredentialed Managers	+		
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers but must work	2 Small Employers	5 Expert Supervisors	8 Semi Credentialed Supervisors	11 Uncredentialed Supervisors	>0	<i>Organization assets</i>	
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers	3 Petty Bourgeoisie	6 Expert non-managers	9 Semi Credentialed Workers	12 Proletarians	-		
		+	>0	-			
<i>Skill/credential assets</i>							

Note: Reproduced from Wright *Classes* 1985 p.88

So, for Wright class locations are structural positions defined by the intersection of exploitative relations resulting from the multiple modes of production operating within a dominant mode of production. The complex set of exploitation relations also generates two polar classes with a number of contradictory class locations distributed between them.

Again, this line of reasoning recalls Wright's earlier attempts at systematizing the class structure, where intermediate classes exist between polar classes defined by class relations (Wright [1978] 1979, especially pages 74-87). The contradictory nature of the majority of class locations is an important idea which should receive more attention. Because these positions have competing interests not only between capitalists and the proletariat but also between each other, it may explain why under certain circumstances the capitalist-proletariat distinction can get lost in other relational conflicts, such as those between experts and management or between workers and managers. These non-capitalism related conflicts seem like problems to many focusing on "class" relations. The problem is they are only focusing on one set of class relations, which this overlooked idea in Wright's work helps explicate.

Wright is also interested in how alliances may form across these class locations. Wright argues that as a result of the intermediate nature of the majority of class positions, class location and class formation no longer have a one-to-one correspondence. Classes may form across different class location boundaries depending on the context and content of class conflicts.

In order to determine where the potential exists for such partnerships, Wright creates the idea of an "ideological class formation" (Wright 1985; 1997). An ideological class formation is defined as a cluster of individuals with similar attitudes towards class issues, such that formation of associations amongst the individuals for the achievement of class

oriented goals could happen. In other words their attitudes are similar enough to not preclude such strategic alliances from forming (Wright 1985; 1997).

While Wright's conceptualization of the class structure has been useful, there are several places where Wright's operationalization of his class map can be improved.

Improving Wright's Operationalization of the Class Structure

Firstly, in dichotomizing the ownership of the means of production dimension of the class structure, Wright misses one of his own key insights, that moving from right to left and from bottom to top on the worker side of the class map allows those individuals to buy into the capitalist class, meaning they can afford to own some minimal part of the means of production.

I correct for this oversight by including ownership of investments in the construction of the ownership dimension of the class structure. Specifically, those who do not own their own business and self report making less than 5% of their annual income from investments are considered to be non-owners. Those who do not own their own business but who self report making between 5% and 74% of their income from investments are considered to be worker-owners – those who make some income from investments but who must continue to work in order to make a living. The next group is the petty bourgeoisie. Unlike Wright, I restrict this category to only those with no employees. Because the petty bourgeoisie is supposed to be unique in their lack of employees, I prefer to under count them and ensure their uniqueness, rather than over count them and include individuals who do have a single employee. The final category is the capitalist class location. These are individuals who own their own business and have at least one employee or who self report making at least 75% of their income from investments. Both groups of capitalists – those who own their own businesses and those who have significant investment income – may seem to occupy different

locations in the class structure, but both have the same material interests. Both are dependent on the continuation of the capitalist system for their wellbeing and explicitly depend on exploiting workers for their livelihood. However, they may differ in terms of the other two dimensions. Those who can live off of investment income are unlikely to own enough stock in any one company to allow them to have any impact on organizational decisions at that company. In other words while they own part of a company – or more likely parts of several companies – they have no or very limited organizational power in the company. Those who own their own businesses, on the other hand, have substantial organizational power. This difference may indicate two distinct classes are combined into the capitalist class under my construction of the ownership dimension of the class structure. Unfortunately, the survey being used does not ask owners about how much organizational power they possess. Therefore, in terms of what can be measured with the current data, these two classes are indistinguishable.

Secondly, Wright constructs the credential asset dimension by starting with occupations. These are coded as to the degree to which they require scarce and credentialed skills. When the occupational categories were too ambiguous to determine skill level required, education level was used to differentiate skilled from unskilled workers. Still for some occupational categories, the education distinction did not settle the issue. When this was the case job autonomy was used to differentiate job holders further, with the more autonomous employees being higher skilled. The occupational categories were thus divided into high skill, moderate skill, and no skill categories (Wright 1985).

This construction of skill and credential assets is problematic for several reasons. The primary reason is the theoretical underpinning of the skill/credential asset dimension of the class structure relies on the ability of those with the skill or credential to limit the supply of additional individuals with the skill or credential and to leverage the resulting rareness of

the skill or credential into higher payments for its use. In other words the individuals who possess the skill or credential can extract rents for putting their asset to work. Additionally, it is the ability to control the flow of new individuals with the skill or credential which establishes the relational link between those with skills and credentials and those without them. Without the ability to control the supply of the skill or credential, there may be economic oppression of the non-skilled by the skilled but it would not be exploitation. When the skilled can limit access to the skill, their rents depend in part of the inability of the non-skilled to gain access to the skill. The skilled thus explicitly depend on the non-skilled for their rent gains. However, rents can still be gained for skills independent of this limitation, but at that point the rents are not based on the exploitation of the non-skilled by the skilled. They come either from concessions from owners or from higher prices charged to consumers. In either event the rents are not dependent on the exploitation of the non-skilled by the skilled.

Some occupations have this degree of control over their credentialing process, but not all do. Education on the other hand does at least measure one type of credential and includes the limiting mechanism in the measure – the process of obtaining the degree conferred.

On a practical level, a question in the survey specifically asks about additional schooling or other instruction directly related to job training, including technical and vocational training. While educational credentials and vocational training may never be put to use, they are an indication that such skills were acquired. And while many types of credentials are hardly in short supply, the fact that some credentialing process exists limits the supply to some degree. Additionally, autonomy is not part of Wright's conceptualization of the dimensions of the class structure. Autonomy is a non-monetary form of rent extracted by those with skills or credentials. Therefore, it would be problematic to include it in the

construction of the class locations. Therefore, I find highest level of education completed, including technical training, to be a better measure of credential assets than occupational category with ambiguities being settled by education level and level of autonomy.

Conceptually, the construction of the organizational asset category is the least modified. Wright constructs the organizational asset category from the combination of decision making responsibilities, the control of subordinates, and managerial authority. Conceptually this construction is acceptable. Control over both the production process and workers can be used to extract higher portions of the surplus product from the capitalist (Edwards 1978). However, I distinguish between authority – direct control over subordinates – and organizational power – control over organizational decisions, which can include control over subordinates. The basic conceptual difference is that authority affects workers directly and organizational power may affect workers but it does so indirectly through changes in production decisions. This distinction is important for Wright's conceptualization of the class structure. Organizational power is part of the macro structure – control over the productive process allows supervisors and managers to extract rents from capitalists in return for using the productive assets in the capitalists' best interests. Authority, or control over individuals, is potentially a result from this control over production, but it is not a direct measure of organizational power. Also, authority requires interactions between individuals, and is therefore appropriately located at the micro level, while organizational power is a relationship between a class location defined by exploitation relations and the means of production, making it a macro level relation.

These changes – separating worker-owners from the non-owning class locations and adjusting the measurement of the credential and organizational asset dimensions of the class system – improve Wright's class map. Separating worker-owners from non-owners incorporates into his class map a state of ownership Wright often discusses as crucial to

understanding the middle class but has never accounted for in the formal construction of the class map. Adding this set of class locations to the class map corrects this conceptual oversight in Wright's work. The adjustments to the measurement of the credential and organizational asset dimensions of the class system improve the connection of the conceptual descriptions of the dimensions to the measures of those dimensions. Such operational consistency is important for theory testing and building.

Data and Methods

The current data are for the US and come from the *Class Structure and Class Consciousness: Merged Multi-national File* housed at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) (1986) as part of Wright's Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness. They consist of 1,760 individual respondents, 1,498 of whom are in the workforce.

I rely on this data because they are the same data Wright uses in the majority of his analyses, making comparisons between our constructions of the class map more easily interpretable as differences in construction rather than in differences in time or respondents.

The method I use to compare our class maps is through the construction of ideological class formations as developed by Wright first in *Classes* (1985) and later refined in *Class Counts* (1997, especially pages 453-6). In order to find these clusters of likeminded individuals, Wright constructs a continuum of class consciousness – by which he means attitudinal responses to questions concerning class conflicts – along which he plots the 12 class locations, relying on the mean class consciousness score of the individuals located within each class location. He next divides the continuum into three equal parts to make initial distinctions between the capitalist ideological class formation, the middle class ideological class formation, and the working class ideological class formation. Because some

cases are marginal, meaning they are within the third of the continuum which defines one ideological class formation but are closer to the cluster of class locations of a different ideological class formation, he uses the natural clustering of class locations along this continuum to indicate where ideological class formation has occurred.

I compare the ideological class formations found using Wright's operationalization of the class map to the ideological class formations as derived using my operationalization of the class map. Foreshadowing my findings, I show Wright's construction of class locations obscures differences within the non-ownership class locations, which my construction of the class map illuminates.

In my analysis class consciousness is measured as a 33 category additive index, ranging from -16 to 16, where negative numbers indicate pro-capitalist views and positive numbers indicate pro-proletariat views. The index is created by adding together responses from eight statements and questions concerning the respondents' views or attitudes on a number of class related issues associated with conflict along the ownership dimension of the class structure. The survey items and data coding are reported in Table 3.1.

It is potentially important to note all of the questions are asked with the pro-capitalist and pro-proletariat answer sets always in the same order, such that the pro-proletariat response is always first and the pro-capitalist response is always last – this is also true of the items Wright uses to construct his index. This may have a subtle impact on individuals' class consciousness scores. However, most of the questions are spaced out within the survey and item order and answer order effects are probably minimal, though there is no way I know of to test for them. The alpha of these eight measures is .65, indicating the measures are somewhat reliable.

Table 3.1: Class Consciousness Index Survey Items and Coding

Survey Item	Survey Coding	Analysis Recoding
1 Corporations benefit owners at the expense of workers and consumers.		
2 During a strike, management should be prohibited by law from hiring workers to take the place of strikers.	1 Strongly Agree	5= -2 Strongly Pro-Capitalist
3 It is possible for a modern society to run effectively without the profit motive.	2 Somewhat Agree	4= -1 Somewhat Pro-Capitalist
4 Striking workers are generally justified in physically preventing strikebreakers from entering the place of work.	4 Somewhat Disagree	2= 1 Somewhat Pro-Worker
5 Big corporations have far too much power in American society today.	5 Strongly Disagree	1= 2 Strongly Pro-Worker
6 One of the main reasons for poverty is that the economy is based on private ownership and profits.		
		5= -2 Strongly Pro-Capitalist
7 Do you think that the government should be spending a great deal more on education and health, somewhat more, the present amount, somewhat less, or a great deal less?	1 Great Deal More	4= -1 Somewhat Pro-Capitalist
	2 Somewhat More	3= 0 Neutral
	3 Same Amount	2= 1 Somewhat Pro-Worker
	4 Somewhat Less	1= 2 Strongly Pro-Worker
	5 Great Deal Less	
8 Imagine that workers in a major industry are out on strike over working conditions and wages. Which of the following outcomes would you like to see occur?	1 The workers win their most important demands.	4= -2 Strongly Pro-Capitalist
	2 The workers win some of their demands and make some concessions.	3= -1 Somewhat Pro-Capitalist
	3 The workers win	2= 1 Somewhat Pro-Worker
		1= 2 Strongly Pro-Worker

only a few of their
demands and make
major concessions.

4 The workers go back
to work without
winning any of their
demands.

Note: Survey Items and Codes come from the *Class Structure and Class Consciousness: Merged Multi-national File* housed at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) (1986) as part of Wright's Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness.

My measure of class consciousness differs from the one typically used by Wright in his analyses. This is due to two reasons. First, Wright is often constrained by his comparative focus. Not all questions are comparable across cultures, and therefore not all eight survey items are available to him. Therefore Wright tends to use either five or six items from the survey to construct his index of class consciousness, depending on which cross-national comparisons he is making. Second, one of the questions Wright typically includes concerns management-worker relations and is therefore better understood as measuring consciousness generated by exploitation along the organizational asset dimension of the class map rather than the ownership dimension³ – which is the one that distinguishes the proletariat class from the capitalist class and the one for which Wright and I are both primarily interested. This question asks, “If given the chance, the nonmanagement [sic]

³ This does point to the possibility of other factors which could limit potential class formation. It also indicates the proto-modes of production may also generate class consciousness along their dimensions. The class consciousness generated by these two just emerging modes of production are likely to have a limiting effect on class formation because it will eliminate potential allies based on conflicting interests along these two dimensions. Again, this potential insight is untestable using the current data because there is only one question concerning the management dimension and credentials or skills dimension. The question concerning the credentials dimension asks, “In any industrial society it will always be necessary to have a division between those experts who make decisions and people who carry out these decisions” with the same response categories as the first six items in my class consciousness index.

employees at the place where you work could run things effectively without bosses” (Wright ed. 1986: 141) and has the same response categories as the first six items in my index.

Wright’s index is also questionable because its alpha is only .55. This is low enough that the reliability of the measures which make up the index should be questioned. It is important to note Wright’s class consciousness index and my own have a .83 correlation, indicating they measure the same underlying concept.

Results and Findings

The results from my reconceptualization and reconstruction of Wright’s class structure can be found in Figure 3.2. For comparison, Figure 3.3 displays the distribution of the labor force according to Wright’s construction of the macro class structure. His construction of macro class locations yields a large working class in the US. Nearly 40% of all people in the labor force are part of the proletariat. Additionally, a large portion – about 26% – of the labor force is just outside the working class. The other 34% of the labor force is divided among the highly skilled, the organizationally powerful, and the owners of the means of production.

As can be seen in Figure 3.4, when those who make a significant portion of their income from investments – who I am calling worker owners – are separated from those who only work and adjustments are made to the measurement of the credential asset and organizational asset dimensions of Wright’s conceptualization of class structure, the distribution of the labor force across class locations changes in important ways.

Figure 3.2: Typology of Class Locations in Capitalist Society

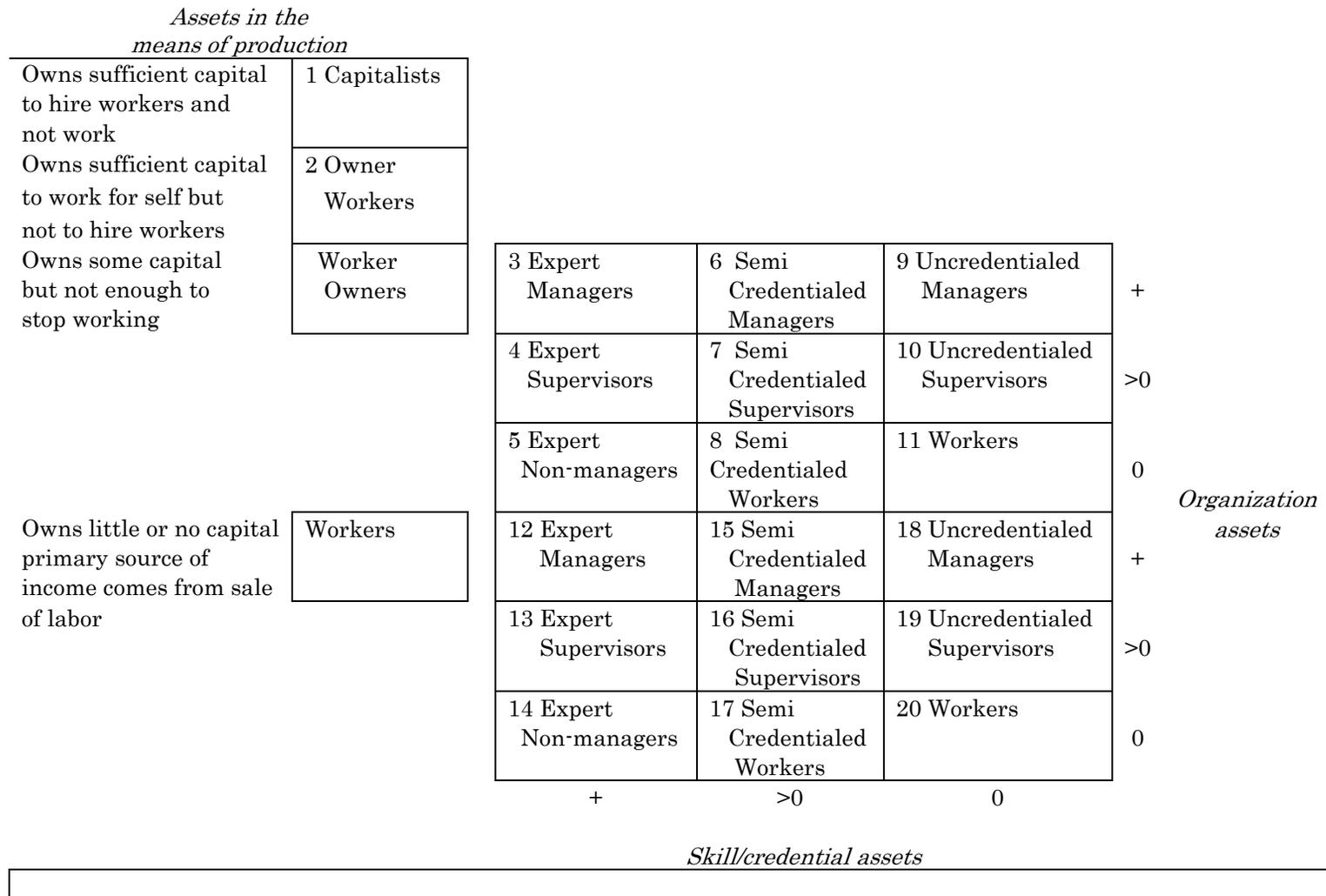


Figure 3.3: Distribution of the Labor Force within Wright's Class Locations in Capitalist Society

Assets in the means of production

	Owners of means of production	Non-owners [wage labourers]			
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Bourgeoisie 1.8%	4 Expert Managers 3.9%	7 Semi Credentialled Managers 6.2%	10 Uncredentialled Managers 2.3%	+
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers but must work	2 Small Employers 6%	5 Expert Supervisors 3.7%	8 Semi Credentialled Supervisors 6.8%	11 Uncredentialled Supervisors 6.9%	>0
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers	3 Petty Bourgeoisie 6.9%	6 Expert non-managers 3.4%	9 Semi Credentialled Workers 12.2%	12 Proletarians 39.9%	-
		+	>0	-	<i>Organization assets</i>

Skill/credential assets

Note: Reproduced from Wright *Classes* 1985 p.195

Figure 3.4: Distribution of the Labor Force within Class Locations in Capitalist Society

<i>Assets in the means of production</i>							
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Capitalists 11.33%						
	2 Owner Workers 4.13%						
	Worker Owners	3 Expert Managers .45%	6 Semi-Credentialed Managers 0%*	9 Uncredentialed Managers .38%	+		
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers		4 Expert Supervisors 1.35%	7 Semi-Credentialed Supervisors .45%	10 Uncredentialed Supervisors 2.32%	>0		
	Owns some capital but not enough to stop working		5 Expert Non-managers .38%	8 Semi-Credentialed Workers .22%	11 Workers 1.42%	0	
		Workers	12 Expert Managers 3.90%	15 Semi-Credentialed Managers 1.65%	18 Uncredentialed Managers 3.52%	+	<i>Organization Assets</i>
13 Expert Supervisors 10.73%			16 Semi-Credentialed Supervisors 4.73%	19 Uncredentialed Supervisors 16.6%	>0		
14 Expert Non-managers 6.08%	17 Semi-Credentialed Workers 6.23%		20 Workers 24.1%	0			
		+	>0	0	<i>Skill/credential assets</i>		

Note: *This cell has an n of 0.

Workers who own some capital only make up approximately 7% of the entire workforce. However, an important pattern can be seen by looking at each class location individually. While only 5% of skilled and expert workers and 6% of non-skilled workers make any portion of their income from investments, 12% of non-skilled supervisors and managers and 10% of the skilled management locations make some portion of their income from investments. This pattern implies organizational assets more than credentials provide for the potential to buy into the capitalist class. Still, even individuals in skilled management positions largely do not use their position to accumulate capital investments, which is itself an important insight made possible by my adjusted conceptualization of the class structure.

Due to the small cell sizes of the worker owner class locations I collapse some of the categories before conducting further analysis. I collapse the semi-skilled and expert workers without organizational assets into a single skilled worker category. Similarly, I collapse the few and many organizational assets categories without skills into a single unskilled manager category. Finally, the other four categories are combined into a single skilled manager category. The percentages of the workforce contained in the collapsed categories can be seen in Figure 3.5.

The next step is to examine the potential class coalitions within the US, using the procedure discussed above. Figures 3.6 and 3.7 illustrate the distribution of class consciousness across the class locations as constructed by Wright (1997).

Figure 3.5: Distribution of the Labor Force within Collapsed Class Locations in Capitalist Society

<i>Assets in the means of production</i>					
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Capitalists 11.33%				
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers	2 Owner Workers 4.13%				
Owns some capital but not enough to stop working	Worker Owners	3 Skilled Managers and Supervisors 2.25%	5 Uncredentialed Managers and Supervisors 2.70%		>0
		4 Skilled Workers .60%	6 Workers 1.42%		0
Owns little or no capital primary source of income comes from sale of labor	Workers	7 Expert Managers 3.90%	10 Semi-Credentialed Managers 1.65%	13 Uncredentialed Managers 3.52%	+ <i>Organization Assets</i>
		8 Expert Supervisors 10.73%	11 Semi-Credentialed Supervisors 4.73%	14 Uncredentialed Supervisors 16.6%	>0
		9 Expert Non-managers 6.08%	12 Semi-Credentialed Workers 6.23%	15 Workers 24.1%	0
		+	>0	0	
		<i>Skill/credential assets</i>			

Figure 3.6: Class Consciousness by Wright's Class Locations

Assets in the means of production

	Owners of means of production	Non-owners [wage labourers]			
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Bourgeoisie -2.17	4 Expert Managers -2.62	7 Semi Credentialled Managers -.68	10 Uncredentialled Managers -1.09	+
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers but must work	2 Small Employers .35	5 Expert Supervisors -.73	8 Semi Credentialled Supervisors 1.30	11 Uncredentialled Supervisors 2.28	>0
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers	3 Petty Bourgeoisie 1.08	6 Expert non-managers .16	9 Semi Credentialled Workers 2.67	12 Proletarians 2.66	-
		+	>0	-	<i>Organization Assets</i>

Skill/credential assets

Note: Reproduced from Wright *Class Counts* 1997 p.418

Figure 3.7: Wright's Patterns of Ideological Class Formation

	Capitalists	Expert Managers	Skilled managers	Nonskilled managers
Bourgeoisie Class Coalition	Small employers	Expert Supervisors	Skilled supervisors	Nonskilled supervisors
Middle Class Coalition	Petty bourgeoisie	Experts	Skilled workers	Nonskilled workers
Working Class Coalition				

Note: Reproduced from Wright *Class Counts* 1997 p.421

The question is, does including the worker-owner set of class locations and using the new construction of the dimensions of class structure change the distribution of class consciousness or the pattern of ideological class formations?

Here it is important to remember there are differences between my analysis and Wright's. As mentioned above, I use a modified version of the class consciousness index as well as modified measures of the dimensions of the class structure.

In order to attempt to account for these differences, I have reconstructed as best I can Wright's (1997) measures of the dimensions of the class structure and Wright's class consciousness measure using his preferred six item index. I then do his procedure for determining ideological class formation first using his class structure and his class consciousness measures, then his class structure and my class consciousness measures, then my class structure and his class consciousness measures, and then finally my class structure and my class consciousness measures. What these analyses primarily show is that even using Wright's detailed methodological appendices, reconstructing his findings is not possible. Therefore, I am going to compare the findings from Wright's published work to the findings from my own analyses. While this potentially masks differences in our results which are due to issues unrelated to our constructions of the class structure and class consciousness index, the alternative would be to compare my constructions of Wright's measures to my own measures, which also masks differences between my constructions and Wright's. I am simply choosing what I see to be the better of two bad choices.

Figure 3.8: Class Consciousness by Class Locations

<i>Assets in the means of production</i>					
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Capitalists				
	-2.13				
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers	2 Owner				
	Workers				
Owns some capital but not enough to stop working	Worker Owners	3 Skilled Managers and Supervisors		5 Uncredentialed Managers and Supervisors	>0
		-2.11		-.26	
Owns little or no capital primary source of income comes from sale of labor	Workers	4 Skilled Workers		6 Workers	0
		-5.0		1.44	
		7 Expert Managers	10 Semi-Credentialed Managers	13 Uncredentialed Managers	+
		-2.59	-.47	-.17	
		8 Expert Supervisors	11 Semi-Credentialed Supervisors	14 Uncredentialed Supervisors	>0
.04	1.85	2.33			
9 Expert Non-managers	12 Semi-Credentialed Workers	15 Workers	0		
1.97	2.65	2.64			
		+	>0	0	
		<i>Skill/credential assets</i>			

Note: This uses both my class categories and my class consciousness measure.

Figure 3.8 shows the distribution of class consciousness across class locations, using both my construction of the three dimensions of the class structure and my index of class consciousness. As with the distribution of the labor force, the distribution of class consciousness substantially changes when the owner-worker category is included and the measures of the credential and organizational asset dimensions are modified. What is most striking is the expert worker categories become much more pro-working class when partial owners are removed from those categories.

At first glance it would seem that the same could be said for the unskilled managers. While they still hold attitudes which favor capitalists over workers, they are much closer to neutral as a class location than under Wright's construction. However, when comparing unskilled managers who have partial ownership and those who do not, it is clear that they are fairly similar in attitude. This means the unskilled manager category largely changes from either the adjusted class consciousness index or more likely from compositional changes in whom is located within the category due to changes in the construction of the credential and organizational asset dimensions of the class structure.

A more dramatic change can be seen when comparing my ideological class formations to Wright's (see Figures 3.9 and 3.10). The most obvious difference is the expansion of the working class and the shift in the ideological location of the middle class. The pattern of the changes suggests that both the change in the construction of the class dimensions and the separation of the worker-owners from the non-owners account for this change.

Figure 3.9: Wright's Class Consciousness Ideological Spectrum

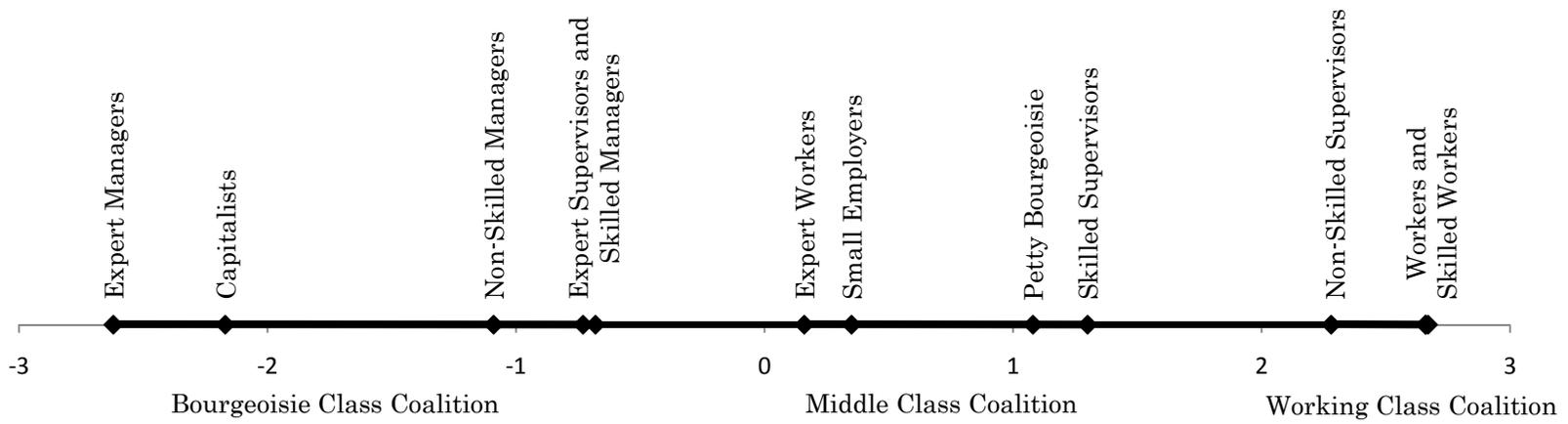


Figure 3.10: Class Consciousness Ideological Spectrum

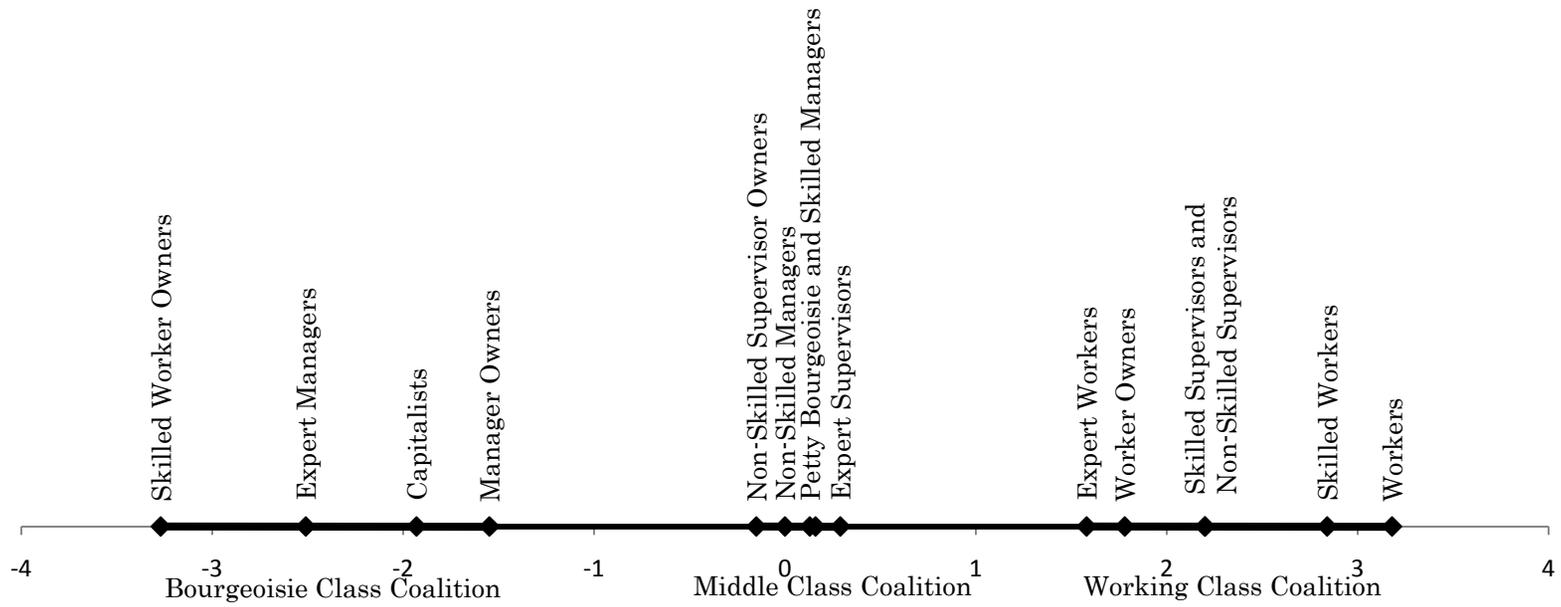
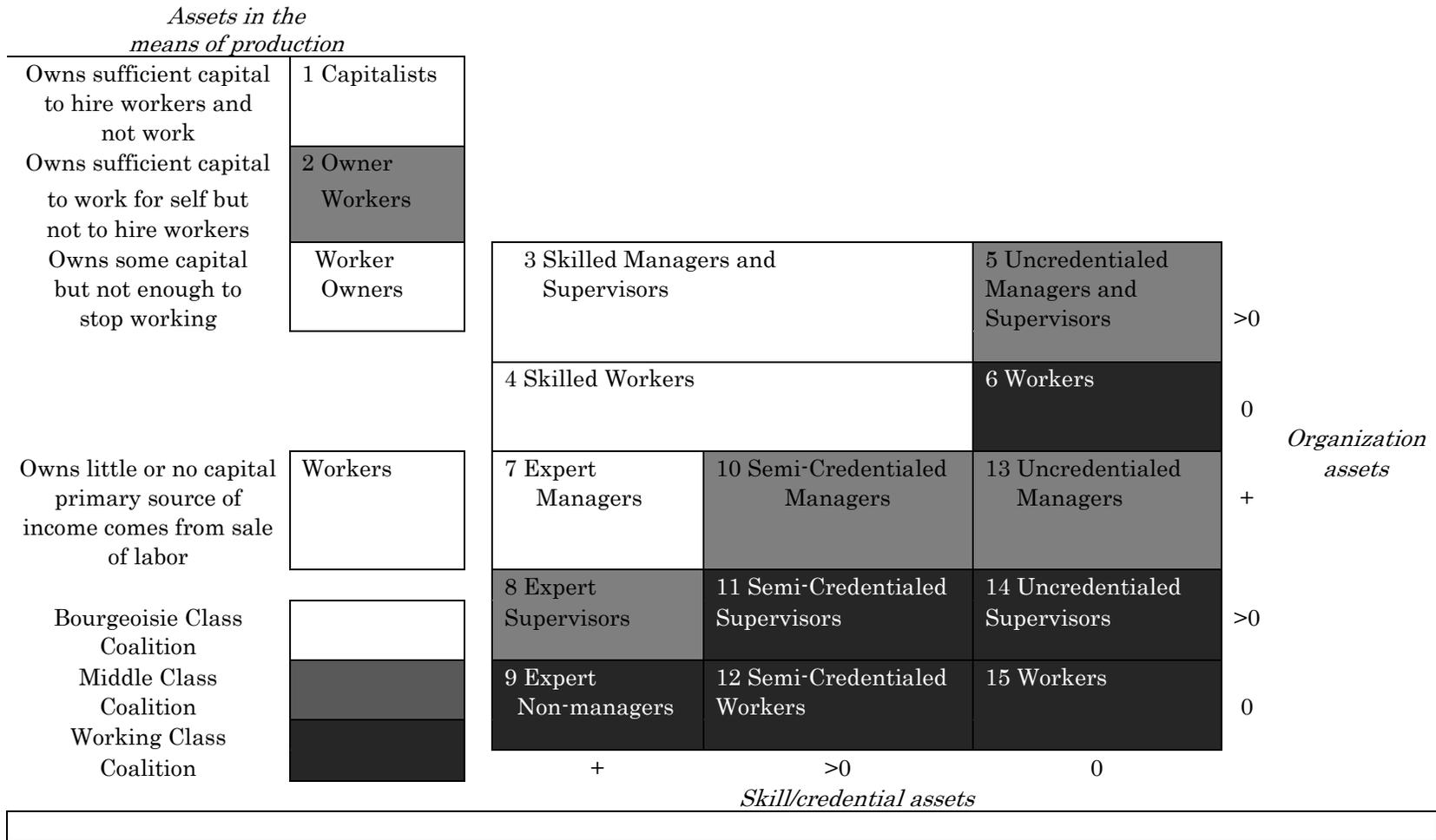


Figure 3.11: Pattern of Potential Ideological Class Coalitions in the US



The extension of the working class ideological class coalition to include the expert worker class location seems largely due to separating out the expert worker-owners. The expert and semi-skilled worker-owners are very pro-capitalist. In fact they are by far the most pro-capitalist class location. The remaining experts – who either have no investments or whose investment income is less than 5% of their total income – are much more pro-proletariat.

The same process is likely occurring in the expert supervisor class location. The owning managers and supervisors with at least some skills are also very pro-capitalist. When the expert supervisor-owners are removed from the expert supervisor class location, the expert supervisors become fairly neutral. That neutrality is enough to place them in the middle class ideological class coalition.

As suggested above, the shift in the uncredentialed manager class location seems more likely to be due to the adjusted construction of the class dimensions than to the removal of partial owners from this location. Comparing the non-owning class location to the owning class location reveals that the class consciousness score is about the same, indicating the change is largely due to a change in who is located in these cells rather than a difference between owners and non-owners.

One complicating factor in this analysis is the combination of supervisors and managers in the owning part of the class structure. Because all the cell sizes in this part of the class structure are small and because both Wright and I find that uncredentialed supervisors and uncredentialed managers have very different class consciousness scores, their combination in the partial ownership portion of the class structure may be balancing towards a neutral position, which is where the non-owning uncredentialed managers end up after the owning uncredentialed managers are removed. Returning to Figure 3.5, we can see that there are

very few owning uncredentialed managers and a much larger number of owning uncredentialed supervisors. If the same pattern holds for owning and non-owning uncredentialed managers and supervisors, then that would mean the owning uncredentialed managers would have to have very pro-capitalist attitudes in order to balance the owning uncredentialed supervisors' slightly pro-working class position to result in a fairly neutral position when they are combined.

An analysis not shown suggests both owning uncredentialed supervisors and owning uncredentialed managers are much more pro-capitalist than their non-owning counterparts. This would imply that the shift in ideological class coalition is largely due to separating out the owners from the non-owners. However, because of the very small number of respondents in the owning uncredentialed manager class location, determining if the difference is real or not is impossible.

It is equally problematic to systematically figure out why the other two class locations that shift their ideological class coalition do so. Again, a combination of small cell sizes and aggregated class locations makes parsing out the causes of the changes all but impossible. Unlike with the uncredentialed managers, an analysis not presented suggests that both of these changes are likely due to adjustments in the construction of the class structure dimensions. But, similar to the uncredentialed managers, saying this for sure is not possible.

What is clear is separating owner workers out of the working class locations alters the patterning of ideological class formations in the US. Including owner workers in the working class locations masks an important distinction within workers. By dividing these partial owners out of the working class locations, we can begin to see how partial ownership affects workers opinions towards worker-capitalist conflicts. Those with some ownership of productive assets either support workers less or support capitalists more than individuals in

a similar position without any assets in the means of production. This is an important addition to Wright's model of the class structure. One he often talks about, but until now had gone unrepresented in his work.

Conclusion and Discussion

The changes in ideological class formation found in the above analyses suggest including the worker-owner contradictory class locations in the class map is an important contribution to Wright's conceptualization of the class structure. Additionally, that adjusting the construction of the credential assets and organizational assets dimensions also change the clustering of class locations in terms of class attitudes suggests that more attention should be paid to variable construction. I believe my construction of the class dimensions more closely indicate the conceptual definitions for the dimensions worked out by Wright. While not perfect measures of the concepts, they eliminate some of the conceptual inconsistencies in Wright's constructions.

CHAPTER 4: CLASS STRUCTURE, FRIENDSHIP, AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IN
THE UNITED STATES: THE IMPACT OF CLASS BASED SOCIAL DISTANCE ON CLASS
CONSCIOUSNESS.

This chapter will extend Wright's (1997) partial theory of class consciousness by more fully theorizing the way in which class contributes to the development of class consciousness. I do this by incorporating the insights of McPherson and his many co-authors. Their key insight is social groups compete for members just like animals compete for resources. Classes then can be seen as competing for members across the class map. While classes present some difficulties not shared by other types of social groups – such as a lack of a formal organization and clear membership signs and signals, – these differences are not so great as to keep the analogy from applying. For example, some social movements face similar issues, but have still had this type of theory successfully applied to their context. The associational population ecology theory elaborated by McPherson's approach suggests how cross-class friendships will impact the development of an individual's class consciousness.

The Study of Class Consciousness

Class consciousness in the Marxist literature has traditionally been treated in two distinct ways. The first way is largely attributed to Lukács ([1922] 1971). This view understands class consciousness to be collective in nature and defined by the material interests of a particular class. The second view of class consciousness is the one supported by Wright (1985), which understands class consciousness to be an attribute of individuals that is created in part by the material interests related to their class location but which is also created through micro level processes. From this perspective class consciousness is the collection of attitudes and opinions an individual holds concerning class related events,

behaviors, and conflicts. It is important to point out the distinction between these two ways of thinking about class consciousness are not always made explicit in Marxist work and are also often combined into a single form of class consciousness that is simultaneously a property of a class location and of the individuals located within it.

However, despite this common practice, class consciousness as a property of class locations and class consciousness as an attribute of individuals have very different consequences for Marxist theory. If class consciousness is a property of class locations, then people within those locations can have a class consciousness at odds with the one for their class location. Marxists call this mismatch between personal and class consciousness false consciousness, implying that the class location's class consciousness is the correct one. Whereas, if class consciousness is an attribute of individuals, that consciousness can be created by a number of factors, only one of which is current class location. A few of the other sources of class consciousness are the class location in which the individual grew up, misattribution of the effects of exploitation to other sources such as gender or race, and aspirational thinking – internalizing the material interests of a class the individual expects to rise to in the future. From this perspective class locations do not have a correct class consciousness. They have a set of material interests associated with their location in the class system that is internalized by the individuals within that class location to a greater or lesser extent. Therefore, the concept of false consciousness no longer applies.

I will be working in the tradition supported by Wright. When I say “class consciousness” I mean the attitudes and opinions an individual is aware they hold concerning class related issues.

An often overlooked aspect of this perspective as developed by Wright is class consciousness multi-dimensional. In Wright's construction of the class system, class consciousness has three distinct dimensions in the modern capitalist system. Wright argues

three distinct modes of production are operating in modern capitalist systems: 1) the capitalist mode of production or the distinction between owners of the means of production and those who do not own the means of production, 2) the statist mode of production or the distinction between those who control production and those who do not, and 3) the socialist mode of production or the distinction between those who control access to skills and credentials and those who do not (Wright 1985). Each of these modes of production corresponds to a type of exploitation within the modern capitalist system, such that some individuals are exploiters in one dimension while being exploited in another dimension. The three distinct forms of exploitation structure the class system and generate distinct class locations within it.

As described in greater detail below, for Wright the internalization of exploitation relations is how class location is translated into class consciousness in individuals. Because each dimension of the class system is based on a different set of exploitation relations, the resulting class consciousness along each dimension will be different as well. Therefore, each of the dimensions of the class structure contributes to an individual's class consciousness. Differences in the saliency of each dimension could contribute to different class alignments across cultures.

Unfortunately because Wright views the capitalist dimension to be the dominant dimension, he focuses almost solely on the capitalist component of class consciousness both in his work (Wright 1985; Wright 1989; Wright 1997) and in his *Class Structure and Class Consciousness* survey (Wright ed. 1986). In future surveys it would be important to measure class consciousness along the other two dimensions as well, as they may help explain patterns in cross-class friendships or in some class locations being more closely aligned than might be expected. In other words, individuals within any two class locations may be more or less willing to see each other as allies or enemies not based on the capitalist dimension of

the class system but on one of the other two dimensions. At this point in time however, the data available limit the focus of study to the capitalist dimension of class consciousness. While a full picture of class consciousness and the cross-class relations facilitated or restricted by the combination of all three dimensions of class consciousness is not possible at this time, it is a very important insight that must be taken into account when planning future studies of class consciousness.

The Formation of Class Consciousness

Wright explains that class consciousness is generated in a dynamic process. In *Class Counts* (1997), he lays out a partial theory to explain how class consciousness is created by the interaction of micro and macro forces. Figure 4.1 illustrates this partial theory.

Wright (1997) begins at the micro level explaining that class locations – created by the varying material interests of individuals that are in turn generated by the co-occurrence of multiple modes of production and their resultant relations to the means of production – limit the class consciousness of those who inhabit these locations by making some world views more plausible than others. At the same time, class locations limit class actions. Wright explains simply, “class locations significantly shape the feasible set of what individuals in those locations can do to satisfy their material interests” (1997: 390). In acting out these class practices individuals’ class consciousnesses can be transformed. The connection between class action and class consciousness is the stuff of classic Marxism. It is through their actions as workers that workers create not only their products but also themselves (Marx and Engels 2002; Marx and Engels 2004). Finally, class consciousness itself selects particular class practices as the best ways of achieving material interests, while class practices may transform the very class locations which define the system. Wright sees this last process happening through class mobility, achieved by moving through the class

structure either by changing jobs or by transforming the nature of one's current job (Wright 1997).

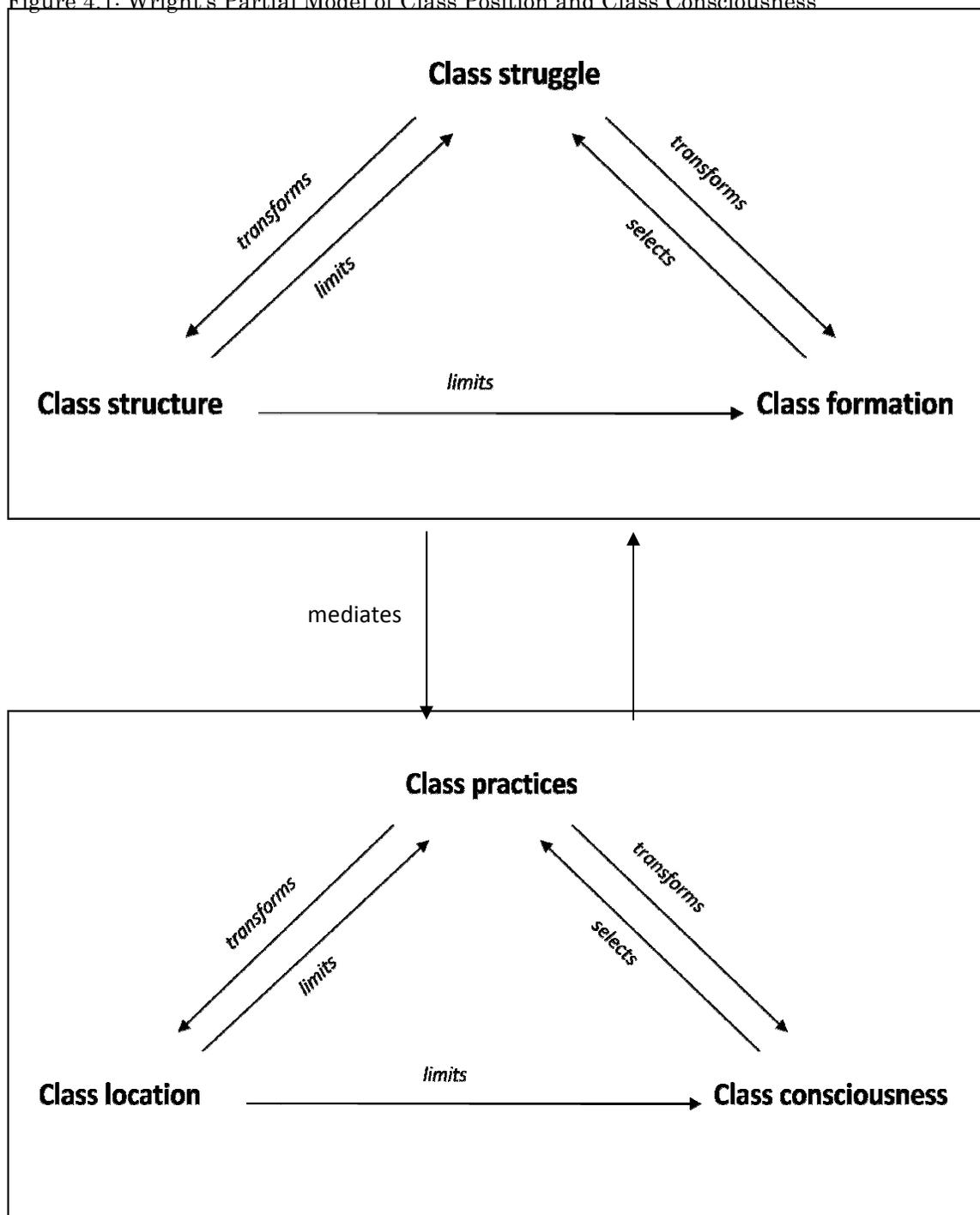
At the macro level class structure, class formation, and class struggle work in the same way as their micro level counterparts. Class structure, class formation, and class struggle map onto class location, class consciousness, and class action respectively but occur at the macro level rather than the micro level.

This macro structure emerges out of interactions at the micro level, while simultaneously the macro structure mediates the micro interactions. For example, class struggle can adjust what individuals think is in their material interests – class consciousness – and thus change the practices in which they are likely to engage in the workplace.

Before Wright's partial theory can be augmented, a major flaw in his reasoning must be corrected. Wright theorizes at the micro level is not really at the micro level of analysis, even according to Wright's own definition of the micro level. He says, "The micro-level of sociological analysis consists of the study of the relations among individuals. Individuals are the constituent elements within these relations, but it is the relations as such that are the object of study of micro-level sociological analysis" (1997: 375).

Looking at Wright's description of the micro level of his theory of class consciousness, it is not the relations between individuals which limits class consciousness and class action, but the location of individuals within a macro structural space which limits both of these things. It is the relations between the class positions and between the class positions and the individuals located within them rather than the relations between the individuals inhabiting the locations which are at the center of the analysis. Rather than the micro level, this theory of class consciousness exists at the meso or macro level of analysis – the level defined by the relations between macro structures and between individuals and macro structures.

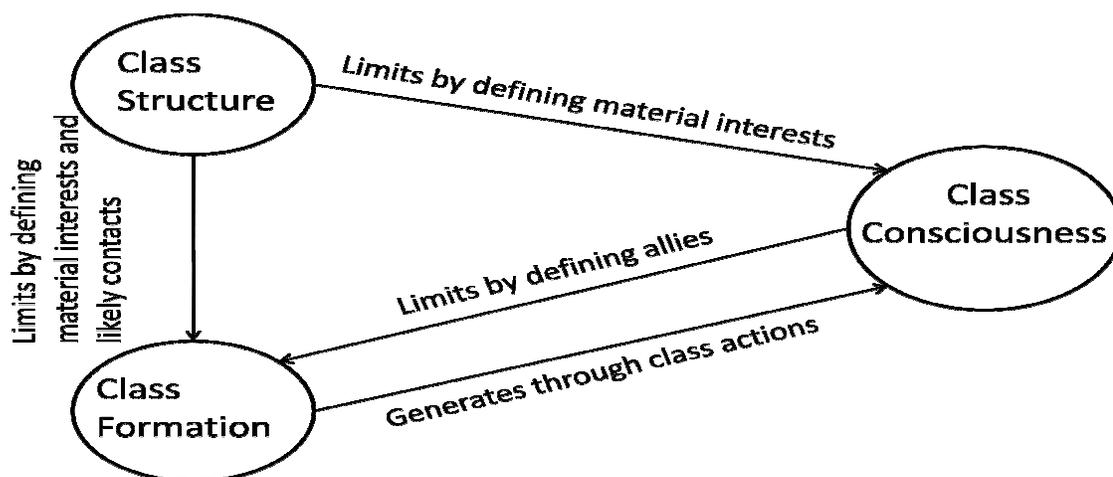
Figure 4.1: Wright's Partial Model of Class Position and Class Consciousness



Note: reproduced from Wright 1997 p. 402.

Wright's theory of class consciousness can be reformulated to take into account the macro level of the processes being addressed (See Figure 4.2). Beginning at the macro level, the class structure will limit class consciousness by defining material interests. The class structure will also limit class action and class formation by limiting to which positions individuals are capable of advancing and the likelihood of interaction between individuals within and between classes.

Figure 4.2: Basic Macro Level Model of Class Consciousness Formation



Class action and class formation will also limit class consciousness in that material interests will be filtered through the perceived prospects for advancement in the system and through the alliances perceived as existing within the system. Class consciousness will in turn limit class formation because material interests will define who is likely to be successfully recruited as an ally and who cannot be. Finally, class action can transform the class structure by bringing the relations of production into alignment with the class locations created by the relations to the mode of production.

Elaboration of Wright's Partial Theory

One of the under theorized areas of Wright's partial theory of class consciousness is class formation. Research in social networks can provide theoretical insights which will allow for a more fully theorized understanding of class formation's impact on class consciousness.

McPherson explains how organizational affiliations exist within socio-structural space – also called Blau space – and how ego networks are likely to form within and between these organizations with which individuals are affiliated (McPherson 1981; McPherson 1983; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987; McPherson and Ranger-Moore 1991; McPherson, Popielarz, and Drobnic 1992; Popielarz and McPherson 1995; McPherson and Rotolo 1995; McPherson and Rotolo 1996; Rotolo and McPherson 2001; McPherson 2004). Socio-structural space is defined as “the k-dimensional system generated by regarding sociodemographic variables as dimensions, rather than as variables” (McPherson 2004: 264).

Within this k-dimensional system individuals are sorted into locations by both social structures and social interactions. The social structures ensure individuals with similar sociodemographic traits interact more often with each other than with dissimilar others. This tendency to interact with like others is called homophily. These interactions in turn reinforce the social structures' ability to configure the social system by generating cohesive groups within the space (McPherson 1981; McPherson 1983; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987; McPherson and Ranger-Moore 1991; McPherson, Popielarz, and Drobnic 1992; Popielarz and McPherson 1995; Rotolo and McPherson 2001; McPherson 2004). McPherson summarizes this process in his statement, “This multi-dimensional Blau space at once organizes the social interactions among individuals, and structures the opportunities for the formation of social entities that are associated with individuals in that space” (McPherson 2004: 267).

This understanding of socio-structural space coincides well with the conceptualization of class being constructed in the current work. Wright's conceptualization of the class system is structural in nature. The locations within the class map are defined by characteristics which exist outside of the individuals in the system, and which therefore constrain the individuals' actions and beliefs. The constraining effects of the structure are what make the class system a type of socio-structural space within which individuals interact and associations compete for members. While McPherson and his coauthors tend to favor what McPherson calls Durkheimian characteristics, any structural characteristics fit into this model. Therefore, the structural approach Wright takes to conceptualizing the class system works with McPherson's conceptualization of socio-structural space.

Understanding the class system in this way also addresses one of the shortcomings identified by Wright in his own conceptualization of class formation. Wright (1997) says the class structure will shape class formation, which will constrain class consciousness. What is missing he says is a fully theorized mechanism for how class structures shape class formation and how that class formation then limits class consciousness.

Because the class system is a socio-structural space within which people's actions are constrained, we should expect homophily to exist within this space along the dimensions of the space. In other words, the social structure of the class system limits the class characteristics of the people an individual is likely to interact with on a regular basis and thus befriend. Wright and Cho (1992) have demonstrated the barriers to friendship created by the class system. While they do not phrase their findings in terms of homophily, they find that all three dimensions of the class system impede cross-class friendship. Although, they do find the capitalist dimension to be the strongest obstacle to friendship formation, they also find the credential and organizational asset dimensions have limiting effects on cross-class friendships.

These findings show that friendship is structured by the class system. To the extent that class characteristics become salient, the existing friendship structure can provide the foundation for class based collective action groups. Class homophily evident in friendship patterns is suggestive of the potential for class formation within the socio-structural space defined by Wright's class system.

Additionally, we know friendship networks transmit political attitudes more than work or task networks do, even in the case of work related political attitudes (Lazer, Rubineau, Katz, Chetkovich, and Neblo forthcoming). Within friendship networks, individuals' attitudes become more similar over time even when accounting for the finding that friendship networks last longer when individuals' attitudes begin at closer positions.

So, while we know that attitudes will become similar within friendship networks and similar others are the most likely to interact and form cohesive groups, an important question remains. It is unclear under what circumstances class characteristics will become salient.

Three opposing theoretical positions exist. The first one suggests that when dense social networks are located within class locations and are weakly connected across them, class characteristics will become salient. This is based on the social psychological concepts of in-group and out-group effects and on solidarity. Individuals with similar characteristics will come to see themselves as a group with similar interests because they share similar experiences and will act to protect or achieve those interests. It is true that group members can misattribute their shared experiences to other shared characteristics, which is one reason why class location is not perfectly determinant of class consciousness. However, primarily interacting with those with similar class characteristics increases the chances that those characteristics will be the ones identified as the reason for the shared experiences. Therefore, class characteristics will become salient and will be used for group formation

when individuals interact predominantly with others from their location in the class structure.

The second theoretical position asserts it is when social networks are dispersed across class boundaries that class characteristics will become salient. This theory relies on a type of social sight or positional awareness for its prediction. When social networks are densely packed within individual class locations with very few connections across them, the individuals within the networks will have very little information about the shape of the rest of the social structure. From the individual's perspective everyone is like them and they are like everyone else. Within such a social structure, class characteristics would be unimportant for distinguishing groups because the groups rarely come into contact. Only in a system with dispersed social contacts can individuals get a sense of their position within the system and what their interests are in relation to other groups' interests. In this type of system, class characteristics would become salient as markers of social position or social status and could thus lead to class formation.

The final theory is a conflict theory (Olzak, Shanahan, and McEaney 1996). It suggests that both solidarity and positional awareness are necessary for class consciousness to develop. Solidarity is necessary for group action to take place but those characteristics will only become salient for action if some positional awareness is present. Such positional awareness is likely to be developed through weak ties, as these ties are the ones most likely to connect to individuals with characteristics dissimilar to the respondent (Granovetter 1973).

Recall from earlier that the class consciousness of an individual comes in part from the material interests defined by the class location within which the individual is located and in part from other sources. Because there are multiple sources of class consciousness – only one of which is the material interests determined by the class location within which the

individual is situated – and because class characteristics are expected to become most salient under one of the three conditions just described, the class consciousness of an individual within a given class location will reflect most closely the material interests of that class location under one of the three conditions because that is when the individual will be most aware of their material interests as part of a specific class.

Two issues must be addressed before proceeding to analysis. Because class consciousness in this study is limited to the capitalist dimension of exploitation, the effects of class formation on the class consciousness of individuals located within intermediate class locations is indeterminate. Only the two polar classes – the capitalist class and the proletariat – have clear class interests along this dimension.

Because of the contradictory or intermediate nature of the other class locations, increasing social distance would have an indeterminate effect on the class consciousness of individuals in those locations. Increasing social distance can happen in any one of a number of ways for the individuals within these class locations. The respondent's friends could be closer to the capitalist class location than the respondent, which would increase the respondent's mean social distance. Similarly, having friends closer to the proletariat class would also increase the respondent's mean social distance. Because the respondent's mean social distance will increase any time a friend is located in a different class location than the respondent is, mean social distance also increases as the respondents move across any one of the three dimensions of the class map. Therefore, increasing social distance from a contradictory class location is somewhat meaningless in terms of its impact on capitalist based class consciousness because the increase in mean social distance says nothing about the direction from where the change came. While the patterning of the effects of social distance on class consciousness of the individuals in the intermediate class locations may be telling, it is not predictable.

Finally, the model being tested is a simplification of the theoretical model proposed above largely due to data limitations. Because the data are cross-sectional, reciprocal causation cannot be tested. Therefore, the model as tested is slightly simplified because the reciprocal relationship between class formation and class consciousness cannot be tested. Two hypotheses can be tested within this simplified model.

H1: Class consciousness will be based on class location because class locations determine material interests and material interests partially determine class consciousness.

H2: Increasing the mean class based social distance on individuals in either of the two polar class locations will either a) decrease their class specific class consciousness – solidarity or b) increase their class specific class consciousness – positional awareness.

Data and Methods

The data being used for this analysis come from the *Class Structure and Class Consciousness: Merged Multi-national File* housed at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) (1986) as part of Wright's Comparative Project on Class Structure and Class Consciousness. I am currently focusing on the US data only. The US data are made up of 1,760 individual respondents of whom 1,498 are employed and in the workforce. Additionally, a number of the respondents failed to respond to the questions concerning their friends, leaving 928 respondents with full data.

I rely on these data because they provide the only information on the class locations of the respondents' friends. Using these data does have some major drawbacks. First, as pointed out in chapter 2, when discussing class consciousness, it is important to differentiate those who make a significant portion of their annual income from capital ownership from other workers. Unfortunately, questions about the respondents' friends' investment income were not asked. Although the reliability of such answers would be questionable at best, the

respondents' impressions of their friends' investment income is likely to be as important if not more so in their understanding of their friends' class positions.

Second, as pointed out above, the survey focuses almost exclusively on attitudes concerning the capitalist dimension of the class structure. Only two questions consider the statist dimension, and no questions consider the socialist dimension of the class structure. These two drawbacks mean only the capitalist dimension of class consciousness can be studied using Wright's twelve class location construction of the class structure.

An additional drawback is the friendship data is limited to three friends. As mentioned in the section on class formation above, weak ties may be key in understanding the development of class consciousness. With information on just three friends, the contribution of weak ties is impossible to discern and therefore an entire hypothesis is incapable of evaluation.

However, despite these drawbacks, it is important to keep in mind that network data with detailed information on friends' class locations and respondents' class consciousness is really only available from this survey. So, despite its limitations, it is a unique data source that offers the opportunity to begin to study the relationships between class location and class consciousness and how that relationship is in turn affected by class formations as measured by the mean class based social distance between the respondent and at least three of his friends.

OLS regression will be used to analyze the data. The dependent variable is the same 33 category class consciousness index used in Chapter 3. While the dependent variable is technically ordinal, the large number of categories makes uneven spacing less of a concern. In this case, OLS regression balances ease of interpretation with the risks of mis-estimation. To ease potential concerns however, an ordered logistic regression was run resulting in a

similar pattern of results. Nothing in terms of statistical significance or substantive interpretation differs between the two analyses.

There are only two independent variables in the current analysis. The first is class location. I construct Wright's twelve class locations using my measures of the dimensions of the class structure as outlined in Chapter 2. In the analysis the class locations are represented by eleven dummy variables, leaving one class location out as the comparison group. I conduct all the analyses twice, once using the large capitalists as the comparison group and once using the proletariat as the comparison group. This procedure lead to an important insight discussed below.

The second independent variable is respondent's mean social distance spanned by the respondent's friendships. The calculation of social distance begins by constructing the class locations of both the respondents and the respondents' friends. Once the respondent and her friends' class locations are constructed, the distance between the respondent and each of her friends is measured by the number of class location boundaries crossed to get from the respondent to her friend. The mean distance between the respondent and her friends is then calculated by dividing the total social distance crossed by the number of friends the respondent has.

Results and Findings

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present the OLS regressions when the proletariat and capitalists classes respectively are the reference group. Figure 4.3 summarizes the finding of the OLS regression models.

An interesting finding compares the significantly different class locations when capitalists are the reference group and when proletarians are the reference group. Two class locations – small employers and expert supervisors – have statistically significantly different

class consciousness from both capitalists and proletarians, whereas all the other class locations are indicated as either indistinguishable from the capitalists or the proletarians regardless of the reference group used, suggesting ideological class formations at odds with Wright's procedure used earlier in Chapter 3. These patterns can clearly be seen in the configuration of significant effects as shown in Figure 4.3 and in the shaded groupings in Figure 4.4.

Table 4.1: OLS Regression of Class Consciousness with the Proletariat Class as the Reference Category

Variable Name	Coefficient	S.E.	Two-Tailed p
<i>Main Effects</i>			
Capitalist Class Location	-11.46	2.57	.000
Small Employer Class Location	-4.80	1.95	.014
Owner Operator Class Location	-2.12	2.69	.432
Expert Manager Class Location	-8.04	1.90	.000
Skilled Manager Class Location	-7.85	3.10	.012
Non-Skilled Manager Class Location	-3.34	2.52	.186
Expert Supervisor Class Location	-3.21	1.51	.034
Skilled Supervisor Class Location	-.55	2.47	.824
Non-Skilled Supervisor Class Location	-2.02	2.12	.339
Expert Worker Class Location	-1.43	1.76	.417
Skilled Worker Class Location	.48	1.79	.788
Mean Social Distance	-.39	.62	.531
Constant	3.68	1.08	.001
<i>Interaction Effects</i>			
Capitalist Class Location x Mean Social Distance	3.42	1.51	.024
Small Employer Class Location x Mean Social Distance	.12	1.35	.932
Owner Operator Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-.70	1.90	.711
Expert Manager Class Location x Mean Social Distance	1.70	1.12	.130
Skilled Manager Class Location x Mean Social Distance	3.42	1.90	.072
Non-Skilled Manager Class Location x Mean Social Distance	.16	.99	.873
Expert Supervisor Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-.38	.99	.697
Skilled Supervisor Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-.54	1.83	.767
Non-Skilled Supervisor Class Location x Mean Social Distance	.69	1.10	.532
Expert Worker Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-.44	1.33	.740
Skilled Worker Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-.84	1.32	.523

Table 4.2: OLS Regression of Class Consciousness with the Capitalist Class as the Reference Category

Variable Name	Coefficient	S.E.	Two-Tailed p
<i>Main Effects</i>			
Small Employer Class Location	6.65	2.84	.019
Owner Operator Class Location	9.34	3.39	.006
Expert Manager Class Location	3.42	2.81	.223
Skilled Manager Class Location	3.61	3.73	.333
Non-Skilled Manager Class Location	8.12	3.26	.013
Expert Supervisor Class Location	8.25	2.56	.001
Skilled Supervisor Class Location	10.91	3.22	.001
Non-Skilled Supervisor Class Location	9.44	2.96	.001
Expert Worker Class Location	10.03	2.71	.000
Skilled Worker Class Location	11.94	2.74	.000
Proletariat Class Location	11.46	2.57	.000
Mean Social Distance	3.04	1.38	.028
Constant	-7.78	2.33	.001
<i>Interaction Effects</i>			
Small Employer Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-3.31	1.83	.071
Owner Operator Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-4.13	2.26	.069
Expert Manager Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-1.72	1.66	.302
Skilled Manager Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-.01	2.26	.998
Non-Skilled Manager Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-3.27	1.58	.038
Expert Supervisor Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-3.81	1.58	.016
Skilled Supervisor Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-3.97	2.21	.072
Non-Skilled Supervisor Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-2.74	1.65	.097
Expert Worker Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-3.86	1.81	.033
Skilled Worker Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-4.27	1.80	.018
Proletariat Class Location x Mean Social Distance	-3.42	1.51	.024

Figure 4.4 presents the potential class formations using this technique. The findings suggest the majority of class positions could be compatible with a working class agenda. However, because of the low predicted mean score on the class consciousness index, it also indicates relatively weak support for such an agenda. For example, even the proletariat class location only has a predicted mean score of 3.68, which while on the pro-working class side of the class consciousness index is far from the maximum score of 16. The much smaller potential capitalist class coalition possesses much stronger pro-capitalist views than any pro-working class category.

Figure 4.3: Class Consciousness by Class Locations when Social Distance Equals Zero

Assets in the means of production

	Owners of means of production	Non-owners [wage laborers]			
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers and not work	1 Capitalists -7.78*	4 Expert Managers -4.36*	7 Skilled Managers -4.17*	10 Nonskilled Managers .34^	+
Owns sufficient capital to hire workers but must work	2 Small Employers -1.13*^	5 Expert Supervisors .47*^	8 Skilled Supervisors 3.13^	11 Nonskilled Supervisors 1.66^	>0
Owns sufficient capital to work for self but not to hire workers	3 Petty Bourgeoisie 1.56^	6 Experts 2.25^	9 Skilled Workers 4.16^	12 Proletarians 3.68^	-
		+	>0	-	

*Organization
assets*

Skill/credential assets

Note: * indicates the value is statistically significantly different from the working class when the working class is the reference category.
 ^ indicates the value is statistically significantly different from the capitalist class when the capitalist class is the reference category.

Figure 4.4: Patterns of Ideological Class Formation when Social Distance Equals Zero

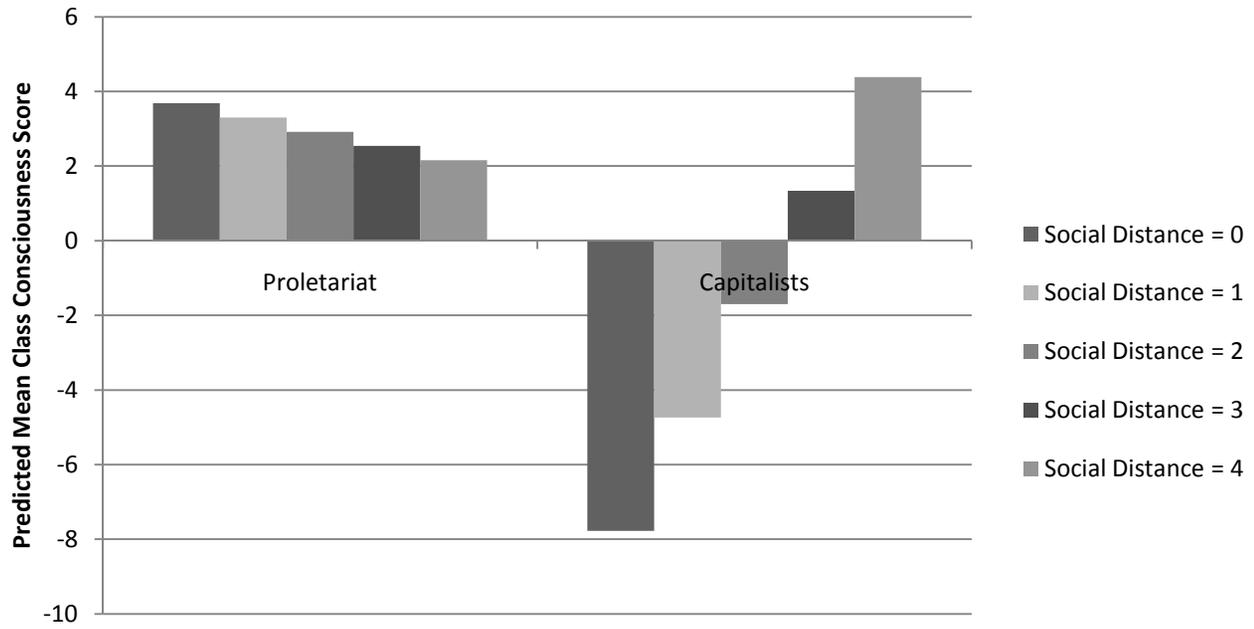
	Capitalists	Expert Managers	Skilled Managers	Nonskilled Managers
Bourgeoisie Class Coalition	Small Employers	Expert Supervisors	Skilled Supervisors	Nonskilled Supervisors
Middle Class Coalition	Petty Bourgeoisie	Experts	Skilled Workers	Proletarians
Working Class Coalition				

Because interaction effects where a categorical variable is mediated by a continuous variable, as is the case here, is difficult to visualize, Figure 4.5 presents a bar chart showing how one unit increases in mean social distance affect the predicted mean class consciousness score for the proletariat and capitalist classes. As can be clearly seen in the figure, as the mean distance between the respondent and his friends increases, the respondents in the proletariat class location become less pro-working class at a constant rate, while respondents in the capitalist class location become increasingly less pro-capitalist class and eventually become pro-working class. This pattern suggests that for the two polar classes, solidarity rules class consciousness formation because as social distance becomes greater, the class consciousness of the individuals within the two class locations becomes less aligned with the material interests of their class location. In other words, as their networks spread out across the class system, their class consciousness reflects the material interests of their class location less and less.

The other class locations typically resemble the pattern of the proletariat. The only two class locations which do not exhibit this pattern are the expert and skilled managers class locations. The skilled managers class location has a pattern similar to the capitalist class. The expert managers class location however has a non-significant interaction effect regardless of the reference category, suggesting that for this class location increasing the social distance between the respondent and the respondent's friends does not change their class consciousness.

One important caveat to these findings is that because the survey only asks about the respondents' three closest friends there is not enough data to test the conflict hypothesis. With information on only the three closest friends, the very links likely to connect to other classes are the ones absent from the data (Granovetter 1973).

Figure 4.5: Predicted Mean Class Consciousness as Social Distance Increases in one unit Increments for the Proletariat and Capitalist Class Locations



Conclusion and Discussion

The main goal of this chapter was to further Wright's partial theory of class consciousness formation by fleshing out the class formation component by incorporating the population ecology theory developed by McPherson and his co-authors. Their conceptualization of a socio-structural space in which individuals interact and organizations and associations compete for members is easily incorporated into Marxist theory. Additionally, this body of literature suggests three ways patterns of friendship within this socio-structural space can impact the class consciousness of those in the two polar classes. The incorporation of both of these insights – that the class system as conceived by Wright is a socio-structural space as defined by McPherson and that theories of group formation within socio-structural space can apply to classes – into the Marxist literature on class consciousness formation is a major accomplishment.

Finally, support for the solidarity hypothesis was found, suggesting class consciousness is greatest in homogeneous groups. This finding has important implications for those concerned with the potential transformative power of the proletariat class location or the power of the capitalist class location. As individuals in the proletariat reach make social connections with individuals in the class locations around it, the pro-working class nature of their class consciousness is diluted, although this occurs gradually. While individuals in the proletariat class location are not radically pro-working class, their support for working class positions decreases slowly. On the other hand, as the individuals in the capitalist class location create friendships across the class based socio-structural landscape, they lose their pro-capitalist attitudes relatively quickly.

An important next step is to see if this pattern holds for other nations. The strength of the capitalist class in the US has been used to explain the lack of a strong labor movement

in the US (Vanneman and Cannon 1987). While these findings alone do not disconfirm this explanation, they do call it into question. The capitalist class in the US is less capable than the proletariat class of resisting the dilution of its class consciousness as it incorporates neighboring class locations into its social networks. One possibility is the capitalist class does a better job of maintaining homophilous relationships than does the working class, and thus overcome their inability to maintain their pro-capitalist attitudes by restricting their contact to capitalists. Additionally, whether or not this phenomenon applies only in the US context has yet to be seen and should be considered in future analyses.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The overarching goal of the current project was to further the process of creating a theory of social class which connects the micro relations of production level of analysis with the macro relations to the means of production level of analysis. Erik Olin Wright has been the primary scholar pushing this line of research, but he seems to have largely moved on to other projects, namely his Real Utopias Project. This shift in Wright's work seems to be motivated by a desire to move on to projects that have to possibility of effecting social change. However, better understanding the ways in which class identity and class consciousness are created and how class alliances are formed will prove helpful in making positive social change by making advocates for that change aware of the most promising ways to approach the problem. The preceding analyses picked up where Wright left off in order to move the literature in this area further along the path Wright began.

Summary

Chapter 2 focused on the micro level by examining the elements which structure interaction in the workplace. The theoretical framework presented incorporates both the relations of production and identity theory into a single analysis. Showing how the relations of production and identity theory fit together was an important step because it began the process of thinking seriously about how class identity is created. It combined the class analysts' interest in the criteria used by individuals to classify themselves and each other by class – exemplified by the work of Centers – with the Affect Control Theorists' interest in understanding the social structures which define the context of interpersonal interactions and which in turn limit the identities available to the interactants. It is hoped the

combinations of these two interests will encourage both sides to begin to take the research of the other side into account to more fully understand class as an identity.

The results of the analyses in Chapter 2 revealed that class identities result more from differences in status than in differences in class. While status differences mattered in differentiating all classes from each other, class differences only mattered in differentiating the working class from the other two – the middle class and the upper class. When class did matter, the class characteristics that mattered most regularly were associational – like union membership – rather than structural elements of the interaction order – like authority or autonomy, although autonomy was important for differentiating the working class from the upper class.

Two pieces of information are important to keep in mind about these findings. First, when class did matter, its impact on class identity was greater than the impact of status. So, while class only differentiated the working class from the middle and upper classes, the magnitude of its effect in those instances was greater than status's contribution to those differentiations.

Second, Affect Control Theory (ACT) may explain why class characteristics were not as consistent in their differentiation of class identities as status. Recall from Chapter 2 that status is associated with the evaluation dimension of affective meaning and class is associated with the potency dimension. Affect Control Theorists have found that evaluation is a more important dimension of affective meaning of identity than is the potency dimension. Therefore, it was unsurprising that status as reflected through evaluation played a more consistent role in differentiating identities than did class reflected through potency. Affect Control Theorists would not expect anything different.

This component of Chapter 2 illustrated the power of combining the class theorists' interest in class identity with the theoretical work already being done on identities by social

psychologists. The mixed results of which effects differentiate the three classes reflect what class theorists – especially Centers – had already found. But it was ACT which began to explain such mixed results. The two areas help inform each other. Class theorists' work on class identity shows that the same social cues are not uniformly important for all interactants or all interactions. Sometimes class characteristics were important for differentiating class identities and sometimes they were not. Then, the work of identity theorists helped to explain the patterns found in the data. To show that this type of synergy between the two areas is not only possible but also fruitful was one of the important contributions of Chapter 2, and hopefully it will spur others to incorporate the findings of both areas into their future work by continuing to examine the link between class structures and status systems and the formation of class identities. Additionally, both theoretical and empirical work must be done to better understand under what circumstances class will act like a personal, social, or collective identity. In doing so, class may be the identity which allows social psychologists to formalize the relationships between these three types of identities.

Chapter 3 turned to the macro level and addressed an important oversight in Wright's conceptualization of the class system at the relations to the mode of production level of analysis. While Wright often talks about the importance of those in intermediate class locations who use the assets they possess to literally buy into the capitalist system by purchasing corporate stocks and bonds and capitalized property, he never accounts for this possibility in his conceptualization or measurement of the class system.

In addition to conceptually improving Wright's class map, by removing those with a significant portion of their income derived from capital ownership – whom I call worker-owners – from those with little or no capital assets, some important insights were gained.

First, the class locations identified as middle class moved further to the left and higher within Wright's class map, meaning the working class ideological class formation expands as the middle class ideological class formation moves into classes formally identified as part of the capitalist class ideological class formation. Specifically, the expert worker and skilled supervisor class locations which were part of the middle class ideological class formation under Wright's class map become part of the working class ideological class formation. Similarly, three of the class locations aligned with the capitalist class – expert supervisors, skilled managers, and non-skilled managers – all became part of the middle class ideological class formation.

While some of the shift may be due to changes in the measurement of the organizational asset and credential asset dimensions of the class map, the majority of the shift seems to have come from the removal of those with a significant portion of their income from capital investments from these class locations. These shifts imply that the ownership dimension of the class map is not dichotomous, as Wright's class map suggests, but is more trichotomous as Wright's descriptions of the non-ownership side of his class map suggests.

Second, the patterns found when separating worker-owners from workers suggested large divisions between these two groups in some class locations. In particular experts without any organizational or capital assets were in the working class ideological class formation, while experts without any organizational assets but with capital assets were in the capitalist class ideological class formation. The large attitudinal division between these two class locations was either a result of very different individuals inhabiting the locations or of the ownership of capital assets. In other words, either experts with no organizational or capital assets simply hold very different attitudes than do experts with no organizational assets but with capital assets or owning capital assets greatly changes the attitudes of individuals. Similar things can be said of the non-skilled supervisor and non-skilled

manager class locations. The attitudinal difference between those who own capital and those who do not was vast, again suggesting either different types of individuals are located within those positions or the ownership of capital assets greatly changes an individual's attitudes towards class relevant events. Without longitudinal data, which possibility was correct is impossible to tell.

Because of the conceptual improvement and the resulting findings, Chapter 3 represented an important correction to those working in Wright's tradition. Combining non-owners with capital assets and non-owners without capital assets into a single set of class locations masked important differences between these two groups. Creating a separate set of class locations for those with capital assets but who do not own their own businesses may change the results of many studies using Wright's class map.

Like Chapter 3, Chapter 4 was directed at the macro level of analysis. The main goal of this chapter was to elaborate the partial theory of class consciousness presented by Wright (1997). Wright admits that the model he presents is under theorized and is therefore only a partial model. He is particularly concerned that the class formation component of the analysis is a black box, without any real theoretical underpinnings.

In Chapter 4 I began the process of more fully theorizing the class formation component of the model by bringing in the associational ecology model envisioned by McPherson and his coauthors. This model provided a theoretical framework within which class formation could be understood as a competition between associations of individuals competing for the time and attention of other individuals. The competition amongst these associations was defined within the structural space defined by the dimensions of the class structure, as theorized by Wright. From this perspective, classes – defined as collections of

interconnected individuals – compete for members within the class structure, which is a novel and appropriate way to study class dynamics.

This way of understanding the class structure also suggested three possible ways in which the material interests specific to the two polar class locations are internalized most completely by the individuals situated in these two class locations. The hypothesis based on solidarity was supported by the analysis, meaning the class location specific attitudes of the polar class locations are strongest when friendship connections do not extend beyond the given class location and that the class location specific attitudes of the two polar class locations decrease in strength as the distance from ego to his alters increases.

This finding is not only important for class theorists – in that it suggests the mechanism through which class attitudes are impacted by class formation – but also for social network analysts in that it further supports the importance of solidarity in creating group supportive attitudes.

Overall, then, the three empirical chapters taken together began the process of moving forward Wright's concern with connecting the micro and macro levels of class analysis by further elaborating the two areas of research. The analytical chapters build a stronger and more complete foundation for both the micro and macro levels while correcting for oversights and inconsistencies in Wright's work. But these analyses are just the beginning. Much future work needs to be done before the micro and macro levels can be combined in a single theory of class.

Looking Ahead

First, the micro level needs to be further elaborated, in order to distinguish when we would expect class to act like a personal, social, or collective identity. Of particular

importance for the study of class identity is understanding how personal and group identities tie together. Because class is both a group and a personal identity, important variation may occur across types of interactions depending on which type of identity is salient at the time. The current analysis assumes that class is a personal identity when the respondents are being questioned about their class identities. However, it is possible that the respondents may be conceiving of it as a group identity instead, which may change the interpretation of the results. What may be even more likely is that some respondents react as if it were a personal identity while others react as if it were a group identity. Which respondents do which may also be a result of which type of identity they understand class to be and/or their class position. Therefore, to really understand class at the micro level, more work must be done to understand the relationship between individual and group identities.

Second, all the analyses would benefit from longitudinal data. In fact, neither the micro nor the macro model can be fully tested without it. Of particular importance for those studying the micro level is to examine individuals who change jobs, especially when those jobs differ in terms of their position in the class structure of status system. It is expected that these individuals will first experience discomfort as they become accustomed to the interactional demands of their new position in the class and status system. Also, over time these individuals' class identities should shift to better suit their new positions as well. At the macro level, an historical perspective is needed in order to determine how class formation and class consciousness reinforce each other. The findings in Chapter 4 suggest that as class homophilus groups become increasingly homophilus around class characteristics, their class consciousnesses should reflect more closely the material interests defined by their class location, this in turn should limit their ability to form alliances across class boundaries, which should make them even more isolated. Future studies which include over time data must be conducted in order to fully test these expectations.

Third, these analyses are limited to the American case. In the past, Wright has found interesting and important differences between the US and other countries. While the general patterns tend to hold cross nationally, slight differences between the countries are typically attributed to differences in culture and history. Because of these differences, it is important to make sure the patterns found in these three analyses also hold true in other countries. Differences may reveal important flaws in the theories being put forth or important differences between the countries. Either way, cross national studies are important and will contribute to our understanding of class.

Finally, connecting the micro and macro levels of analysis together requires the most effort in terms of both theoretical and empirical work. While there is no shortage of literature discussing the relationship between the relations of production and the relations to the means of production and “what Marx really meant or intended to mean” in his different works on these topics, no coherent theory backed up by empirical evidence has yet been produced from all this discussion. While a single theory of class is the eventual goal of my research agenda, much work needs to be done refining both levels of analysis before the process of elaborating their interconnectedness can begin.

To be sure, the analyses in this dissertation are just a first step in the construction of a single theory of class, which is necessary if we want to fully understand any class based outcomes such as economic stratification, social mobility, and political and social movements or the lack thereof within a society. Understanding the micro and macro areas of class separately is like understanding quantum mechanics and general relativity separately. Each works in its own realm of study. But all the big questions are important from both perspectives. Only when we understand how the two work together will we really understand how either works on its own.

One of these big important questions has to do with political or social action by classes. Class theorists still do not understand why or when classes will engage in collective action. Only by understanding both how class becomes a salient collective identity and how class consciousness is formed in such a way as to require action will we understand this outcome.

The analyses themselves raise important questions. At the micro level, while Affect Control Theory provides a rationale for why status is more consistently important than class for differentiating class identities, it is not clear why class matters only for distinguishing the working class from the other two. At this time, I have no good suggestions for why this is, but the answer may have important implications for questions like those surrounding classes and collective action. At the macro level, it is important to see how two major changes in the US may have changed the alignment of the class system. First, the boom and bust cycle from 1982 through 2008, including the increasing income inequality that resulted from it, may have changed the dynamics of cross-class alliances. The recent emergence of the Tea Party movement has elements of a petty bourgeoisie movement. Understanding the emergence of this movement and the class alliances represented within it may shed some light on the way in which class alliances are formed. Second, Bishop's book *The Big Sort* ([2008] 2009) suggests that since the 1970s Americans have been self selecting into politically homogeneous communities. If his research is correct, cross-class contact may be equally less common today, potentially increasing the strength of class location specific class consciousness. Again, this may be an important catalyst in the emergence of recent political activities, both leading up to the election of President Obama and the emergence of the Tea Party movement.

Providing the theoretical foundation to make addressing these kinds of questions possible is the primary goal of this dissertation. The analyses contained within it do not do

this on their own. But, they further the formation of this foundation, which is an important contribution to the literature.

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