33. Erik Olin Wright, Classes (London: Verso, 1985)

6

Class Structure in Contemporary Capitalism

A Comparison of Sweden and The United States

In this chapter we will explore a range of empirical problems concerning the class structure of advanced capitalist societies using the exploitation-centred conceptualization of class relations. Although we will test formal hypotheses in a number of places, most of the chapter will be largely descriptive in character. There have been very few systematic empirical studies of class structure from a Marxist perspective, and none using the exploitation-centred concept of class elaborated in this book. It is therefore of some importance to improve our descriptive maps of the class structure, since the concept figures in so many different kinds of problems Marxists study. This will be our basic goal here.

The data analysis will revolve around systematic comparisons between the United States and Sweden. Within the family of highly developed capitalist countries, Sweden and the United States represent an important contrast. On the one hand they are in many ways rather similar economically: they have roughly the same level of technological development, very similar average standards of living, very little state ownership of industrial production. On the other hand, politically they are in many ways polar opposites. According to one estimate, as a result of state policies Sweden has the lowest level of real income inequality (after taxes and after transfer payments) of any developed capitalist country, while the United States has one of the highest.[1] If we take the ratio of the real income at the ninety-fifth percentile to the real income at the fifth percentile, this figure was only about 3:1 for Sweden in the early 1970s, whereas in the United States it was 13:1.[2] Sweden has a higher proportion of its civilian labour force directly employed by the state than any other advanced capitalist nation, well over forty per cent, while the United States has perhaps the lowest, under twenty per cent. Politically, Sweden has had the highest

level of governance by social democratic parties of any capitalist country; the United States, the lowest. We therefore have two countries with roughly similar economic bases but sharply different political 'superstructures'. From a Marxist point of view, this is fertile terrain on which to explore the problem of class structure and its consequences.

In chapter seven we will focus mainly on the consequences of class structure for class consciousness. In this chapter the focus of attention will be on the class structure itself. The investigation will begin with an examination of the basic distribution of the labour force into classes. Attention will be paid to the relationship between this class distribution and sex, race, industrial sector, size of employing organization and the state. The following section will then attempt to explain the observed differences in class structure by decomposing these differences in various ways. The next section will shift the focus from individuals as units of analysis to families. The basic question will be how families are distributed in the class structure, with particular attention to the problem of class-heterogeneity within families. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an examination of the relationship between class structure and income inequality in Sweden and the United States. Since the concept of class used throughout this analysis is rooted in the concept of exploitation, there should be a direct relationship between our matrix of class locations and income.

Class Distributions

Before looking at the data, a brief word on operationalization is needed. In general, the criteria we will employ in operationalizing concepts of the class structure are identical in the two countries we are studying. The one exception involves the specification of 'credential assets'. Because of the nationally-specific meanings of given academic qualifications and the historical evolution of the relationship between different kinds of credentials and the labour market, it does not make theoretical sense to adopt mechanically the same formal academic degrees in the specification of this exploitation-generating asset. On the other hand, there are considerable risks in undermining the strict comparability of the data if different credentials are adopted as criteria for different countries. Ideally one would like some direct measure of the skill-scarcity of labour power itself, but I do not have a clear idea how

this could be measured, and there is certainly nothing in the data which can plausibly be used to measure this.[3]

In order to balance these various concerns, it seemed advisable to shift the operational criteria for credential assets for Sweden. Instead of using a college degree as the salient criterion for differentiating different levels of credential assets for those occupations for which this is necessary (see table 5.3.III in the previous chapter), a high-school degree is adopted as the criterion. While Sweden may be in the process of becoming more like the United States in this regard, until recently a high-school degree was a much more substantial and important certification in Sweden than in the United States. A much smaller proportion of people went on to the University, and a university degree was not considered necessary for a range of highly skilled positions.[4]

One final prefatory comment on the exposition of the results. Ploughing through masses of detailed statistical tables can often be a tedious and cumbersome affair. The problem is compounded in the present case because the complexity of the class typology being used—twelve categories in all—and the logical structure of the typology—a matrix—can make the tabular presentation of results rather unwieldy. I have therefore adopted the following strategy: complete data tables for the various substantive topics in this chapter appear in appendix III. In the body of the chapter I will collapse and simplify the class typology in various ways, tailoring the tables to the descriptive generalizations I wish to emphasize in the text.

OVERALL CLASS DISTRIBUTIONS

Let us now turn to the data analysis. Table 6.1 presents the distribution of people in the labour force into classes in Sweden and the United States. In broad contours the two class structures are very similar. In spite of their vast differences in levels of social inequality and patterns of class formation, the basic distribution of people in the class structure does not vary dramatically between these two countries. In both countries the working class is by far the largest class numerically, around 40 per cent of the labour force. If we add the contradictory locations with marginal control over organization or skill assets, this increases to about 60 per cent in each country. In both countries the bourgeoisie and petty

TABLE 6.1
Distribution of the labour force in the class matrix using the exploitation-centred concept of class[a]

Assets in the means of production

Owners	Non-owners [wage labourers]			
1 Bourgeoisie U.S. 1.8% Sweden 0.7%	4 Expert managers U.S. 3.9% Sweden 4.4%	7 Semi-credentialed managers U.S. 6.2% Sweden 4.0%	10 Uncredentialled managers U.S. 2.3% Sweden 2.5%	+
2 Small employers U.S. 6.0% Sweden 4.8%	5 Expert supervisors U.S. 3.7% Sweden 3.8%	8 Semi-credentialled supervisors U.S. 6.8% Sweden 3.2%	11 Uncredentialled supervisor U.S. 6.9% Sweden 3.1%	>0
3 Petty bourgeoisie U.S. 6.9% Sweden 5.4%	6 Expert non-managers U.S. 3.4% Sweden 6.8%	9 Semi-credentialled workers U.S. 12.2% Sweden 17.8%	12 Proletarians U.S. 39.9% Sweden 43.5%	−

Organization assets

	+	>0	−

Skill/credential assets

United States:	N = 1487
Sweden:	N = 1179

[a]Distribution are of people working in the labour force, thus excluding unemployed, housewives, pensioners, etc.

[b]For operationalizations of the criteria for assets in this table, see Table 5.3.

bourgeoisie constitute a very small proportion of the labour force: around 5 to 7 per cent are pure petty bourgeois and another 5 to 6 per cent small employers in both countries, and less than 2 per cent fully-fledged capitalists.

While the basic outlines of the class structure are similar in the two societies, there are some differences that deserve attention. First, although approximately the same proportion of the labour force in the two countries—11 to 12 per cent—occupy proper

managerial positions (positions involving organization-policy decision-making), there are significantly more supervisors (non-decision-makers with sanctioning authority) in the United States than in Sweden: 17.4 per cent compared to 10.1 per cent. This contrast is particularly striking for people without substantial credential assets. Non-expert supervisors constitute 13.7 per cent of the US labour force but only 6.3 per cent of the Swedish labour force. I will offer some interpretations of this difference in the level of supervision in the two countries in the next section of this chapter where we try to explain the differences in the two class structures. For the moment the thing to note is that work in the United States appears to be significantly more supervised than in Sweden.

A second point of contrast between the two countries is the working class. While the working class is the largest class in both countries, it is somewhat larger in Sweden. If we combine pure proletarians with semi-credentialled workers (cells 9 and 12 in the typology), the Swedish working class is about nine percentage points larger than the American (61.3 compared to 52.1). Most of this difference, as we shall see later, is attributable to the higher levels of supervision in the United States.

Third, if we look only at people with high levels of credential/skill assets—experts of various sorts—a considerably higher proportion in Sweden are completely outside of the managerial apparatus: 45 per cent of Swedish experts have no organizational assets, compared to only 31 per cent of experts in the United States. The reason for this is not that there are fewer expert managers or expert supervisors in Sweden. To the contrary, in Sweden there are slightly more people in such positions than in the United States. Rather, the reason is that there are more non-managerial experts—about twice the frequency of the United States.

Finally, while in both the United States and Sweden the vast majority of the labour force are wage-labourers, there are slightly more self-employed in the United States: 14.7 per cent compared to 10.9 per cent of the labour force in Sweden.[5] If we add to this those wage-labourers who have at some time in the past been self-employed—13.8 per cent of the labour force in the US and 6.7 per cent in Sweden—the proportion of the labour force with strong petty-bourgeois experiences is considerably larger in the United States than in Sweden: 28.5 per cent compared to 17.6 per cent. While becoming a capitalist remains largely a fantasy for most people in both societies, there are more people who have at least

tried being self-employed in the United States, and this may have important ideological ramifications.

CLASS AND SEX

As one would expect, the class distribution among men and women differs sharply in both Sweden and the United States (see table 6.2). In both countries women in the labour force are disproportionately in the working class, while men are disproportionately in exploiting class positions, particularly the capitalist class and managerial positions. The result is that in both countries women constitute a clear majority of the working class: just over 60 per cent of all workers are women. Even if we add the marginally-credentialled employee category—which includes a fair number of highly skilled craft positions largely filled by men—to the 'pure' working class, it is still the case that a majority of work-

TABLE 6.2

Distribution of classes within sex categories, United States and Sweden[a]

	Distribution of sexes within classes				Distribution of classes within sexes			
	United States		Sweden		United States		Sweden	
Class categories[b]	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1. Employers	69.7	30.3	83.1	16.9	10.1	5.2	8.2	2.1
2. Petty bourgeois	50.3	49.7	75.7	24.3	6.4	7.5	7.3	3.0
3. Managers	67.6	32.4	77.5	22.5	15.5	8.6	15.2	5.5
4. Supervisors	60.9	39.1	63.9	36.1	18.8	14.2	11.5	7.4
Total managers and supervisors	63.7	36.3	71.0	29.0	34.3	22.8	26.7	12.9
5. Expert non-manager	47.7	52.3	56.1	43.9	3.0	3.9	6.8	6.8
6. Skilled workers	73.6	26.4	63.4	36.6	16.6	7.1	20.2	14.8
7. Workers	39.5	60.5	39.8	60.2	29.0	52.8	30.9	59.6
Total workers and skilled workers	47.5	52.5	46.6	53.4	45.6	59.9	51.1	64.4
Overall total	54.3	45.7	56.0	44.0				

[a]For complete data, see Table III.1 in the data appendix (Appendix III).
[b]The categories are collapsed from the full class typology in Table 6.1 in the following manner: employers = 1,2; petty bourgeois = 3; managers = 4,7,10; supervisors = 5, 8, 11; expert non-managers = 6; skilled workers = 9; workers = 12.

ers are women in both countries. The image which is still present in many Marxist accounts that the working class consists primarily of male factory workers simply does not hold true any longer (if one adopts the concept of class proposed here).

Looking at the distributions the other way around—the class distribution within sexes—approximately one third of all men in both Sweden and the United States are clear exploiters (managers, experts and employers), compared to only about one fifth of women. Over half of all women in the labour force are in the working class, compared to only about 30 per cent of men.

The one thing that was not anticipated in the results in table 6.2 is that the degree of sexual difference in class distributions is greater in Sweden than in the United States. In virtually every position of exploitation privilege, women are more under-represented in the Swedish class structure than in the American. In Sweden, the percentage of men who are employers is 3.9 times greater than the percentage of women who are employers, whereas in the United States the figure is only 1.9 times greater; and the percentage of men who are either expert-managers or semi-credentialled managers is 4.8 times greater than the percentage of women in these positions in Sweden, whereas in the United States the over-representation of men is only 2.8 times. Following most of the popular prejudices about 'enlightened' Swedish social democracy, I had expected there to be less sex-bias in the class distribution in Sweden, but this is clearly not the case, at least not according to this data.

While it is beyond the scope of the present analysis to investigate in depth the actual process by which men and women are differentially sorted into classes, we can get a first glimpse at the process by looking at the class distributions for men and women within age groups. As table 6.3 indicates, in the United States the proportion of women who are working class does not vary substantially in different age groups between age twenty-one and sixty-five. Among men, on the other hand, there is a clear age pattern: the proportion in the working class declines until middle age and then rises slightly among older men. The age distributions among managers differ even more sharply between men and women in the United States: an increasing proportion of men are managers as we move from early stages in careers to mid-career, whereas for women there is a monotonic decline in the proportion in managerial positions as we move from the 21 to 25-year-old group to the 56 to 65-year-old group. In Sweden the contrast

between men and women is not quite so clear-cut as in the United States, but a basically similar pattern exists: men appear to have a much sharper age profile for managerial positions than do women, rising from 7.8 per cent in the 21 to 25-year-old group to 19 per cent in the 36 to 45-year-old group, compared to virtually no change for women, about 5 per cent in both groups.

These various age–class profiles within sex categories suggest that men have much greater probabilities of promotional mobility from working-class positions into managerial positions than women do, particularly during the early and middle stages of careers. Of course, the patterns in table 6.3 are a complex result of the intersection of career patterns, transformations in the class

TABLE 6.3
Class distribution within age-sex categories[a]

I. United States

% of men and women who are:

	Workers		Managers	
	Men	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
Under 21	36.7	69.0	8.8	2.7
21–25	35.3	51.5	12.9	12.7
26–35	21.4	48.5	17.4	10.5
36–45	23.9	51.0	20.4	8.5
46–55	30.5	53.6	16.1	6.1
56–65	36.5	59.1	10.0	5.9
Over 65	41.8	47.9	12.3	11.0

II. Sweden

% of men and women who are:

	Workers		Managers	
	Men	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
Under 21	61.1	73.1	2.8	3.8
21–25	40.3	75.0	7.8	5.4
26–35	27.3	45.7	17.0	7.1
36–45	25.2	54.3	19.2	4.7
46–55	27.0	66.4	18.3	4.7
56–65	31.5	68.8	12.0	3.8

[a]For complete data, see Table III.2 in Appendix III.

structure and changes in rates of labour-force participation. For example, how should the curvilinear relationship between age and the proportion of men in managerial positions be interpreted? It is unlikely that this is the result of demotions of managers at the end of their careers. Rather, one would suspect, that this reflects the intersection of two causal processes: first, the career-trajectory process in which promotions into managerial positions occur in the first half of men's careers, so that by the latter part of one's career it becomes relatively rarer to be promoted from non-management to managerial positions; and second, a historical cohort dynamic, in which the probabilities of becoming a manager have increased over time (as the relative number of managerial positions has expanded). The first tendency would mean that the proportion of men in managerial positions would increase with age (although at a decreasing rate beyond mid-career); the second tendency would mean that the proportion of men in managerial positions would decrease with age. The combination of these two tendencies produces the curvilinear relationship in table 6.3. Given this kind of complexity, it is not a simple statistical task to demonstrate conclusively that the differential outcomes for men and women observed in this table are primarily the result of gender discrimination in promotions. Nevertheless, as a provisional conclusion, it is a plausible hypothesis that this is a substantial contributor to the gender differences in class distributions.

CLASS AND RACE

Because of the racial homogeneity of Swedish society, it is not possible with the data at hand to explore the issue of class and race in Sweden. Table 6.4, therefore, only presents the data for the United States. The pattern of racial differences in class distributions is, if anything, more pronounced than the pattern for sexual differences. 59 per cent of blacks are in the working class, compared to only 37 per cent of whites; at the other extreme, about 16 per cent of whites are employers or petty bourgeois compared to less than 3 per cent of blacks. These racial contrasts become even more marked when we break them down by sex: Nearly 70 per cent of black women in the labour force are in the working class, compared to only 27 per cent of white men, with white women and black men falling between the two at about 50 per cent.

TABLE 6.4
Distribution of race and class in the United States[a]

| | Distribution of classes within race and sex categories | | | | | |
| | Whites | | | Blacks | | |
Class categories[b]	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1. Employers	11.1	5.7	8.7	0.0	1.4	0.7
2. Petty bourgeois	6.4	8.9	7.5	3.7	0.0	2.0
3. Managers	17.0	9.5	13.6	8.0	6.3	7.4
4. Supervisors	18.3	15.0	16.8	15.1	11.6	13.4
Total managers and supervisors	35.3	24.5	30.4	23.1	17.9	20.8
5. Expert non-manager	3.0	4.4	3.6	4.0	2.6	3.4
6. Skilled workers	16.7	6.9	12.4	21.4	9.7	15.4
7. Workers	27.4	49.7	37.3	47.8	68.5	59.1
Total workers and skilled workers	44.1	56.6	49.7	69.2	78.2	74.5
Weighted N	648	517	1165	71	78	149

[a]For complete data, see Table III.3 in Appendix III.
[b]The categories are collapsed from the full class typology in Table 6.1 in the following manner: employers = 1,2; petty bourgeois = 3; managers = 4,7,10; supervisors = 5,8,11; expert non-managers = 6; skilled workers = 9; workers = 12.

Taken together with the gender results, we can draw two strong conclusions from these data. First, white males are clearly in a highly priviliged position in class terms. About one white man in six is either a capitalist or an expert manager, that is, in class locations which are either part of the dominant class or closely tied to the dominant class. If we add to this other managers and experts, over a third of all white men in the labour force are in solidly exploiting class positions.

Secondly, the working class in contemporary American capitalism is constituted substantially by women and minorities. As already noted, 60.5 per cent of the working class in the United States are women. If we add black men to this, the figure approaches two-thirds. Any political strategy for the mobilization of the working class has to take this demographic structure into consideration.

CLASS AND ECONOMIC SECTOR[6]

Historically, Marxists have tended to identify the working class with industrial production. As we have seen, this identification has been canonized in certain definitions of the working class, such as Poulantzas's, which effectively restricts the working class to industrial (i.e. productive) labour.

The conceptualization of class structure proposed in this book does not link the working class to industrial production by definition. Yet it remains the case that in both Sweden and the United States, industrial production, or what I term (following the usage adopted by Joachim Singelmann) the transformative sector, remains the core of the working class: in Sweden nearly 42 per cent and in the United States 41 per cent of all workers are employed in the transformative sector (see table 6.5).[7] If skilled workers are added to this to constitute an extended working class, the figure increases to 45 per cent in Sweden (although it remains essentially the same in the US). This, it should be noted, is not a dramatically disproportionate representation of industrial production among workers, since 36 per cent of the US labour force and 40 per cent of the Swedish labour force are in the transformative sector. Still, it remains the case that industrial production constitutes the core of the working class.

The situation is quite different for experts, whether they be managers, supervisors or non-managerial employees. These class locations are highly concentrated in social and political services in both the United States and Sweden. Whereas only 22 per cent of the entire labour forces is in this sector in the United States, and 36 per cent in Sweden, 42 per cent of all experts in the United States and 59 per cent in Sweden work in this sector. As we will see below, the core of this service sector employment is in the state.

CLASS STRUCTURE AND THE STATE[8]

On the face of it, it is a simple matter to study the statistical relationship between state employment and the class structure, since with a few exceptions it is fairly unambiguous whether or not a given person works for the state. On closer examination, however, the problem is more complex, since many firms in the private sector may be closely linked to the state without actually being legally part of the state itself. This is certainly the case, for example, for military contractors. Should a worker employed in a military weapons factory be treated as located within the state sector or the private sector? In certain respects at least, employees in such firms may have interests more like those of direct state employees than other private-sector workers. For example, as in the case of fully-fledged state employees, people in state-dependent firms have direct interests in the expansion of state budgets.

To map out properly the relationship between the state and class structure, therefore, we would ideally like to distinguish among private sector firms on the basis of their financial links to the state. Needless to say, it is not an easy empirical task to get reliable information on such ties. The best we have been able to do is to ask the private sector respondents on the survey to give an estimate for the firm for which they work of the percentage of the firm's business that is done with the state. These estimates are unlikely to be very accurate, but they may give us some very rough idea of these indirect links to the state.

Table 6.6 presents the distribution of 'state-linked employment' within various locations in the class structure. The table indicates an interesting pattern of differences and similarities between Sweden and the United States. Most striking, perhaps, are the dramatically different levels of direct state employment in the two countries: 17.5 per cent (20.6 per cent of wage-earners) in the US sample and 41.6 per cent (46.6 per cent of wage-earners) in the Swedish sample are state employees. This difference occurs throughout the class structure, but it is particularly noticable among experts (63 per cent are state employees in Sweden compared to 29.5 per cent in the United States). On the other hand, it appears that a higher proportion of Americans work in private sector firms with at least minimal ties to the state. Again, the case of experts appears to be the most striking: 39 per cent of experts are in such firms in the US compared to only 17 per cent in Sweden.

The result of these two patterns is that in both countries, experts are the category in the class structure with the closest links, direct or indirect, with the state: only 31 per cent in the US and less than 20 per cent in Sweden report that they are in private sector firms that do no business at all with the state. In contrast, in both Sweden and the United States, workers are the category of wage-earners with the least employment ties to the state: 56 per cent of US workers and 45 per cent of Swedish workers. Also, as would be expected, in both countries the class locations that are most iso-

TABLE 6.5
Distribution of economic sectors within classes, United States and Sweden[a]

Percentages sum horizontally

Classes[b]	Economic sector					
	EXTRACTIVE	TRANSFORMATIVE	DISTRIBUTIVE SERVICES	BUSINESS SERVICES	PERSONAL SERVICES	SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SERVICES
I. United States						
1. Employers	17.1	26.0	21.2	10.1	20.2	5.3
2. Petty bourgeoisie	11.5	22.5	13.0	15.7	26.4	10.9
Total self-employed	14.5	24.4	17.4	12.7	23.1	7.9
3. Manager experts	1.4	27.9	10.6	12.1	2.7	40.9
4. Other experts	1.6	28.4	5.9	11.6	3.5	49.1
Total experts	1.5	28.2	7.6	11.8	3.2	47.7
5. Non-expert managers and supervisors	3.2	35.7	13.5	11.2	9.5	26.8
6. Skilled workers	3.1	43.1	6.9	3.5	6.7	36.7
7. Workers	2.5	40.8	13.0	9.8	11.5	23.4
Total of workers and skilled workers	2.7	41.3	11.6	8.3	10.4	25.7
Labour force total	4.5	36.1	12.4	10.0	11.3	25.7

TABLE 6.5 (*continued*)

Classes[b]	EXTRACTIVE	TRANSFORMATIVE	DISTRIBUTIVE SERVICES	BUSINESS SERVICES	PERSONAL SERVICES	SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SERVICES
II. Sweden						
1. Employers	17.5	39.4	22.4	6.3	6.4	8.0
2. Petty bourgeoisie	36.1	37.3	8.7	5.0	11.4	1.6
Total self-employed	26.7	38.4	15.6	5.6	8.9	4.8
3. Manager experts	0.0	33.0	3.9	11.7	4.1	47.4
4. Other experts	0.8	25.9	2.6	3.4	2.6	64.8
Total experts	0.6	28.0	3.0	5.8	3.0	59.7
5. Non-expert managers and supervisors	6.0	35.9	10.2	3.4	11.6	33.0
6. Skilled workers	0.0	51.3	1.5	2.9	5.3	38.9
7. Workers	3.6	41.9	11.7	1.5	5.6	35.7
Total of workers and skilled workers	2.6	44.6	8.7	1.9	5.6	36.6
Labour force total	5.3	40.3	8.8	3.1	6.3	36.2

[a]For data of class distributions within economic sectors, see Table III.4 in Appendix III.
[b]The categories are collapsed from the full class typology in Table 6.1 in the following manner: employers = 1,2; petty bourgeois = 3; expert managers = 4; other experts = 5,6; non-expert managers and supervisors = 7,8,10,11; skilled workers = 9; workers = 12.

TABLE 6.6
Class structure and the state in Sweden and the United States[a]

	Distribution of state-linked[b] employment within classes							
	UNITED STATES				SWEDEN			
	In private firms, extent of business done with state:			State employee	In private firms, extent of business done with state:			State employee
Class categories[c]	None	Minimal	Some		None	Minimal	Some	
1. Self-employed	88.9	7.8	3.3	0.0	93.7	3.9	2.4	0.0
2. Experts	31.2	30.3	9.1	29.5	19.7	13.2	4.0	63.2
3. Non-expert managers and supervisors	51.6	21.1	7.0	20.0	38.5	16.6	2.7	42.2
4. Skilled workers	37.4	22.2	7.9	32.6	38.0	14.2	1.0	46.9
5. Workers	56.3	20.7	6.8	16.2	45.3	11.8	0.8	42.0
Total	55.0	20.7	6.8	17.5	44.5	12.2	1.7	41.6
Total for wage-earners only	49.1	22.9	7.4	20.6	38.6	13.7	1.6	46.5

[a]For complete data, see Table III.5, Appendix III.
[b]Respondents who were not state employees were asked to give rough estimates of the proportion of the total business of their firm that was done with the state. In this table, minimal = 1–9%, some = over 10%. (Only 2.4% of respondents in the United States and 0.8% in Sweden reported that their firms did more than half of its business with the state).
[c]The categories are collapsed from the full class typology in Table 6.1 in the following manner: self-employed = 1,2,3; experts = 4,5,6; non-expert managers and supervisors = 7,8,10,11; skilled workers = 9, workers = 12.

lated from the state are the petty bourgeoisie and small employers—around 90 per cent of such individuals in both countries do no business at all with the state.

These data on the state and class structure indicate the importance of the state for various categories of 'contradictory class locations'. As I have argued in an earlier study (using my previous conceptualization of class), much of the expansion of what are usually thought of as 'middle-class' positions can be directly attributed to the growth of state employment.[9] Between 1960 and 1970 virtually all of the growth of 'semi-autonomous employee' positions in the United States occurred within the state or in those private sectors (such as hospitals) which are heavily state-dependent. In the rest of the economy there was actually an overall decline of such locations during the period. Managerial locations, while less dependent upon state expansion than semi-autonomous locations, nevertheless also increased considerably due to the expansion of the state.

Politically, the fact that workers and other uncredentialled employees are under-represented in state employment and in state-linked employment is probably one of the reasons that there tends to be a certain amount of anti-statist sentiment in the working class, particularly in the United States. The absence of economic ties to the state also probably contributes to the anti-statism in the petty bourgeoisie. Of course, workers may still receive material benefits from state redistributive and social service policies, but their livelihoods are less likely to be directly bound up with state expansion, and this creates a context for anti-state sentiments to develop.

One other observation about the class-by-state distributions should be mentioned: although in the society at large there are somewhat more capitalists and petty bourgeois in the United States than in Sweden, when the analysis is restricted to the private sector itself, there are, if anything, slightly more self-employed in Sweden than in the United States (18.5 per cent compared to 17.8 per cent). It is as if the market sector at a given level of technical development generates a certain level of self-employment opportunities. Although the total social space for such self-employment is smaller in Sweden because of the very large amount of state employment, this does not seem to dampen the impulse for self-employment in the private sector itself.

CLASS AND SIZE OF EMPLOYER

Marxists have generally characterized the present era as the era of 'monopoly capitalism'. To be sure, there is no doubt that the growth and power of the multinationals is a decisive feature of advanced capitalist societies. It shapes the political possibilities of workers and the economic manoeuverability of states in pervasive ways.

Nevertheless, it is a mistake to conclude from this that most workers are employed directly within such giant capitalist enterprises. Table 6.7 indicates the distributions of class and size of employer.[10] Only 14.8 per cent of the working class and 17.5 per cent of skilled workers in the United States, and about 10 per cent of each of these in Sweden, work in gigantic corporations, corporations employing above ten thousand employees. If we exclude state employment from the calculations, these figures rise to 18 and 25 per cent of private employment in the United States, and 18 and 22 per cent in Sweden, but are still far from a majority of workers.[11] Indeed, a larger proportion of the working class in both countries works for firms with less than fifty employees than firms employing over ten thousand people: 22 per cent of US workers and 17 per cent of Swedish workers work in such small firms (or 26 per cent and 32 per cent respectively of private-sector workers). This may be the era of monopoly capital, but this does not imply that monopoly corporations directly organize most wage-labour in these societies.

The data in table 6.7 point to a second set of interesting findings. In both Sweden and the United States, medium-sized companies—those ranging in size from 500 to 10,000 employees—are the most proletarianized: 52 per cent of the positions in such corporations in both countries are in the working class. The giant corporations in this respect look rather more like the state, with under 40 per cent of their employees in working-class positions in the US and around 45 per cent in Sweden.

In one respect, for which I can offer no interpretation, the US and Swedish data are quite different. In the United States, the large corporation has by far the highest proportion of supervisors in its labour force: 27.6 per cent. When combined with the nearly 13 per cent managers, this brings the total employment in the managerial apparatus in these corporations to over 40 per cent in the US. This is considerably larger than in either the state (just under 33 per cent) or the middle size corporation (36 per cent). In

TABLE 6.7
Class distributions by size of firm[a]

Class categories[b]	Size of employing firm				
	<50	50–500	501–10000	>10,000	State[d]
I. United States					
1. Employers	23.5/96.0[c]	2.1/4.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0
2. Petty bourgeoisie	22.2/100	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0
3. Managers	10.0/25.6	14.5/17.4	13.2/21.0	13.0/14.7	14.8/21.4
4. Supervisors	10.6/19.4	15.9/13.6	22.7/25.8	27.6/22.4	18.1/18.8
5. Expert non-managers	0.5/4.8	4.0/17.3	3.8/21.7	4.2/16.9	7.6/39.4
6. Skilled workers	7.1/18.2	15.5/18.6	7.9/12.6	15.4/17.5	22.7/33.1
7. Workers	26.0/21.8	48.0/18.8	52.3/27.2	39.8/14.8	36.8/17.5
Overall total	32.3	15.1	20.0	14.3	18.3
II. Sweden					
1. Employers	21.2/93.0	3.3/7.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0
2. Petty bourgeoisie	22.4/100	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0	0.0/0.0
3. Managers	5.7/11.5	13.5/13.0	13.2/15.5	17.4/14.7	11.1/43.7
4. Supervisors	4.1/8.9	9.3/9.8	10.4/13.4	6.8/6.2	14.3/61.8
5. Expert non-managers	2.1/6.6	3.4/5.2	6.3/11.6	8.7/11.5	10.3/63.8
6. Skilled workers	9.4/11.8	23.2/13.9	18.3/13.4	21.3/11.2	20.1/49.3
7. Workers	33.3/17.3	47.3/11.8	51.7/15.7	45.8/10.0	44.0/45.0
Overall total	22.4	10.7	13.1	9.4	44.0

[a]For complete data, see Table III.6, Appendix III.
[b]The categories are collapsed from the full class typology in Table 6.1 in the following manner: employers = 1,2; petty bourgeois = 3; managers = 4,7,10; supervisors = 5,8,11; expert non-managers = 6; skilled workers = 9; workers = 12.
[c]The figures to the left of the stroke in each pair are the percentage of people in the firm-size category who are in a given class (i.e. column %); the figures to the right of the stroke are the percentage of people in a given class who are in that firm size (i.e. row %).
[d]The percentages for state employment differ slightly from Table 6.6 because of missing data on the firm-size variable.

Sweden the pattern is quite different: the proportion of supervisors is quite low in the largest corporations, even by Swedish standards—under 7 per cent of their labour forces—and overall the size of bureaucratic apparatuses does not vary very much across organization size (23.7 per cent in medium sized corporations, 24.2 per cent in large corporations and 25.5 per cent in the state).

SUMMARY

We have explored a diverse set of findings in this section. Four general observations are worth keeping in mind. First, in spite of the various differences, a number of important characteristics of the class structures of these two countries are relatively similar: the working class is the largest class; the working class and those contradictory locations that are marginal exploiters constitute a substantial majority of the labour forces of both countries; the petty bourgeoisie and capitalist class are quite small; and credential exploiters in particular, and contradictory locations more generally, are particularly tied to the state in both countries.

Second, women are disproportionately proletarianized in both countries, although slightly more so in Sweden than in the United States. The result is that women constitute a majority of the working class.

Third, in the United States work is more heavily supervised than in Sweden: there are considerably more supervisors in the class structure, particularly in large corporations.

Fourth, Sweden has a higher proportion of non-managerial experts than does the United States. The possession of credentials and the control over organization assets seem to be less intimately linked in Sweden than in the US.

Explaining Differences in Class Structures[12]

In the previous section our focus was on describing the similarities and differences in the Swedish and American class structures. In this section we will pursue a strategy for understanding at least some of the structural causes for these differences. In particular, we will explore two principal hypotheses: first, that the differences in class structures are the result of differences in the mix of economic activities in the two countries (i.e. differences in the labour-force distributions across economic sectors); and second, that they are the result of the differences in the size of the state in the two societies.

The first of these hypotheses corresponds to the view that variations in class structures are largely to be explained by technolocal factors of various sorts. If we assume that within given types of economic activity technologies are quite similar in the United States and Sweden, then the principal way in which technological

factors could explain the differences in class distributions would be via the different mixes of economic acitivities in the two countries. For example, the manufacturing sector is somewhat larger in Sweden than in the United States, and this is precisely the sector in which there is the highest proportion of workers. This could help to explain why there are somewhat fewer workers in the United States than in Sweden.

The second hypothesis corresponds to the claim that the state constitutes the essential basis for a non-capitalist mode of production. If this is a satisfactory formulation, then all other things being equal, the relative size of the state should have a considerable impact on overall class distributions. At the very minimum it should help to account for differences in size of the capitalist class and the traditional petty bourgeoisie.

In order to explore these hypotheses we will have to elaborate a statistical strategy for structurally decomposing differences in class structures. This will be followed by an examination of the extent to which the observed differences in class distributions in the two countries can be attributed to differences in sectoral distributions, the size of the state, or the structural link between authority and credentials.

A STRATEGY FOR DECOMPOSING DIFFERENCES IN CLASS STRUCTURE

The basic statistical strategy we will adopt in this analysis is based on the 'shift-share' technique commonly used in economics and demography.[13] The purpose of this technique is to decompose the *differences* in class distributions between the two countries into a number of different structural components. In the case of the hypothesis about the effects of sectoral distributions, for example, we would be interested in two primary components, one indicating how much of the total difference in class distributions between the two countries is attributable to differences in the class distributions *within* economic sectors, and a second indicating how much is attributable to the differences in the distribution of the labour force *across* economic sectors. (A third component, referred to as an 'interaction term', which indicates how much of the difference between countries cannot be uniquely attributed to either of the other components will also be calculated).

The technique for decomposing the total differences between the two countries into these components involves playing a kind of

counterfactual game. In the case of the hypothesis involving sectoral distributions, we begin by asking the question, what would the overall US class structure look like if the United States had (a) the US distribution of classes *within* economic sectors but (b) the Swedish distribution of employment *across* sectors (or what is technically referred to as the *marginal* distribution of economic sectors, or more succinctly, the sectoral marginal)? This would tell us how much the US class structure would change if its industrial structure changed to match that of Sweden, while its class structure within economic sectors remained constant. This counterfactual estimate provides the basis for calculating the part of the total difference between the two countries attributable to differences in sectoral distributions. We will call this component of the total difference the 'Swedish economic sector distribution effect on the US class structure' (or the Swedish sector effect for short).

Once this counterfactual distribution has been estimated, we ask a second question: what would the overall US class distribution look like if the United States had (a) the Swedish distribution of classes *within* economic sectors, but (b) the US distribution of employment *across* sectors? This tells us how much the US class structure would change if its sectoral distribution remained unchanged, but the class distributions within sectors matched that of Sweden. This counterfactual enables us to calculate what will be referred to as the 'Swedish within-sector class distribution effect on the US class structure' (or more succinctly simply the Swedish class effect).

Finally, after calculating these two components of the total difference between countries, we can compute what is termed an 'interaction' effect. Mathematically, the interaction effect is a residual term: it is the difference between the total difference in the class distributions for the two countries, and the sum of the two components discussed above. It reflects that part of the total difference that cannot be uniquely assigned either to differences in sectoral distributions or to differences in class distributions within sectors. It implies that there is a correlation in the way the two countries differ in both their sectoral distributions and the class structures within sectors.[14]

We have expressed these three components in terms of the counterfactual effects of Swedish distributions on the US class structure. We could, alternatively, have expressed the decomposition as effects of the US distributions on the Swedish class structure. When the interaction term is zero, we would get identical

answers in either decomposition; where the interaction terms are large, however, the decomposition will look different from the vantage point of each country.[15] In the tables which follow we will give both sets of decompositions. As it turns out, the interaction terms are quite small in nearly every case, so the conclusions are largely unaffected by the specific decomposition which is chosen.

Using this basic strategy we will examine three different decompositions: (1) by economic sector, (2) by state employment, and (3) a more complex decomposition involving the linkages between credentials and authority.

One final preliminary methodological point. Because of the complexity of the data analysis in these decompositions, both the exposition and interpretation of the results quickly become unwieldy if the number of categories involved becomes too large. For this reason it is necessary to collapse some of the distinctions made in the full class typology. Table 6.8 indicates how this will be done and the class distributions for Sweden and the United States associated with the collapsed class typology.

TABLE 6.8

Class structure typology and distribution for decomposition of differences

Categories to be used in decomposition	Categories from original class typology (Table 6.1)	United States	Sweden	Difference to be explained
1. Workers	12	39.9	43.5	−3.6
2. Uncredentialled managers and supervisors	10,11	9.2	5.6	+3.6
3. Credentialled employees	6,9	15.6	24.6	−9.0
4. Credentialled supervisors	5,8	10.5	7.0	+3.5
5. Credentialled managers	4,7	10.1	8.4	+1.7
6. Self-employed.	1,2,3	14.7	10.9	+3.8

DECOMPOSITION BY ECONOMIC SECTOR

Although in terms of the range of economic sector distributions across all countries in the world, the United States and Sweden have rather similar economic structures, there are nevertheless striking differences between them. As table 6.5 indicated, the United States has a much larger proportion of total employment in what could be termed the traditional capitalist-market services

(distributive services, business services and personal services)—33.7 per cent compared to 18.2 per cent for Sweden—whereas Sweden has a correspondingly larger proportion of total employment in social and political services—36.2 per cent compared to 25.7 per cent in the US. Thus, while the total 'tertiary sector' in the two countries is of roughly similar size in the two countries—59.5 per cent in the US compared to 54.2 per cent in

TABLE 6.9
Decomposition of differences in class structure by economic sector

A. *Estimates of counterfactual distributions*

Classes[a]	(1) US	(2) Sweden	(3) US sector marginal + Swedish class distribution within sectors	(4) Swedish sector marginal + US class distribution within sectors
	Distributions			
1. Workers	39.9	43.4	42.3	39.3
2. Uncredentialled supervisors and managers	9.0	5.6	6.2	8.4
3. Non-management experts	15.4	24.7	23.5	17.7
4. Credentialled supervisors	10.6	7.0	5.9	11.2
5. Credentialled managers	10.1	8.4	9.5	10.6
6. Self-employed	15.1	10.8	12.6	12.9

B. *US decomposition*[b]

	(5) Total difference (1)–(2)	(6) Class effect (1)–(3)	(7) Sector effect (1)–(4)	(8) Interaction effect (5)–(6)–(7)
1. Workers	−3.5	−2.4	+0.6	−1.7
2. Uncredentialled supervisors and managers	+3.4	+2.8	+0.6	+0.0
3. Non-management experts	−9.3	−8.1	−2.3	+1.1
4. Credentialled supervisors	+3.6	+4.7	−0.6	−0.5
5. Credentialled managers	+1.7	+0.6	−0.4	+1.5
6. Self-employed	+4.3	+2.5	+2.2	−0.4

TABLE 6.9 *(continued)*

C. *Swedish decomposition*[b]

	(9) Total difference (2)–(1)	(10) Class effect (2)–(4)	(11) Sector effect (2)–(3)	(12) Interaction effect (9)–(10)–(11)
1. Workers	+3.5	+4.1	+1.1	−1.7
2. Uncredentialled supervisors and managers	−3.4	−2.8	−0.6	+0.0
3. Non-management experts	+9.3	+7.0	+1.2	+1.1
4. Credentialled supervisors	−3.6	−4.2	+1.1	−0.5
5. Credentialled managers	−1.7	−2.1	−1.1	+1.5
6. Self-employed	−4.3	−2.1	−1.8	−0.4

[a] See Table 6.8 for operationalizations of these class categories.
[b] In the 'US decomposition' all imputed class distributions are subtracted from the actual US class distributions; in the 'Swedish decomposition' they are subtracted from the actual Swedish distributions. If the interaction effect term is zero, then these two decompositions will be the same magnitudes, but with different signs.

Sweden—the detailed activities which contribute to these totals are quite different. It might be expected, therefore, that these differences in sectoral distributions might contribute to the overall differences in class structures.

Table 6.9 indicates that this is not in fact the case. This table should be read as follows: column 3 indicates what the class distribution would be in a society with the United States marginal sectoral distribution but the Swedish distribution of classes within economic sectors; column 4 tells us the complementary counterfactual in which the Swedish sector marginal is combined with the US class distributions within sectors. Columns 5 and 9 are the gross differences between the two class distributions (the signs are opposite because in column 5 the Swedish figures are substracted from the US figures whereas in column 9 the US figures are subtracted from the Swedish ones). All of the other columns are calculated by subtracting in different ways columns 3 and 4 from the original distributions for each country. Columns 6 to 8 give the decomposi-

tions in terms of imputing Swedish distributions on the US class structure; columns 10 to 12 give decompositions in terms of imputing the US distributions on the Swedish class structure.

If much of the differences in class structures in these two countries could be attributed to the differences in economic sector distributions, then the sector effect in columns 7 and 11 in table 6.9 would be large relative to the class effect in columns 6 and 10. This is not the case. Except for the self-employed, where the sector effect is between 40 and 50 per cent of the total difference between the countries (depending upon which decomposition one examines), the sector effect is quite small relative to the class effect. And in some instances it actually works in the opposite direction. For example, in the case of credentialled supervisors, if the United States had the Swedish sector marginals the differences in the proportion of such supervisors in their class structures would actually increase, not decrease. The higher proportion of supervisors in the United States therefore cannot be attributed at all to the differences between its sectoral distribution and that of Sweden.

DECOMPOSITION BY STATE EMPLOYMENT

One of the most striking differences between the United States and Sweden is state employment. Given that the internal organization of state activities is not subjected directly to market pressures as in private-capitalist employment, it might be expected that the internal distribution of exploitation-assets, and the accompanying class relations, would be quite different in the state from the private sector, and that as a result this could account for a good part of the difference between the two countries.

Table 6.10 indicates that the state effect—the part of the total difference attributable to differences in the marginal distributions of state employment in the two countries—is substantial for only two class categories: non-management experts and the self-employed. For non-management experts, about 50 per cent of the total difference in proportions in the US decomposition and 25 per cent in the Swedish decomposition can be attributed to state employment (the reason the Swedish figure is smaller is because of the relatively large and positive interaction term). In contrast the class effect accounts for about 70 per cent of the total in the US and 50 per cent in Sweden. For the self-employed, on the other hand,

the direct effect of the state is overwhelming: in the private sector Sweden actually has a slightly higher proportion of self-employed, and thus the class effect would actually increase the differences in self-employment between the two countries. We cannot tell from this analysis exactly why the state has this tremendous effect on overall self-employment—whether it is primarily because certain activities (eg. medicine) cease to be organized privately and thus the number of economic opportunities for self-employment declines, or whether the tax system that accompanies such a large state makes small businesses more precarious, or whether it is simply that the state provides so many employment opportunities that the incentives for being self-employed decline. Whatever the cause, the state is implicated heavily in explaining the smaller Swedish petty bourgeoisie and employer-class categories.

DECOMPOSITION BY THE AUTHORITY-CREDENTIAL ASSOCIATION

Let us summarize the findings so far. There are two basic conclusions we can draw from these decomposition exercises. First, while there are some exceptions, in general the most important determinants of the overall differences between the US and Swedish class structures are the differences in distributions of classes within economic sectors rather than the differences in the distributions of employment across sectors. Second, where there are exceptions to this, the state is usually involved. Most notably, the size of state employment seems to have a decisive impact on differences in self-employment and at least some impact on non-managerial experts.

To demonstrate that the overall differences in class structures between Sweden and the United States are largely accounted for by the class effects in the structural decompositions is only the first step. What we now need to do is to describe the structural basis of the class effects themselves.

As I have conceptualized the class structure, the empirical distribution of people into particular cells in the class typology depends structurally on two sources of variation: first, the patterns of distribution of specific exploitation-assets; and second, the degree of interdependence among these assets. Take, for example, the category of expert managers. This category consists of those wage-earner positions which are simultaneously organization asset and credential asset exploiters. Its size in the class structure therefore depends upon: the distribution of organization assets, the

distribution of credential assets and the association between these two. Two societies could have the same marginal distributions of each asset taken separately, and yet very different proportions of their labour force in expert-manager locations if they differed in the degree of association between the two assets.

What we want to find out, then, is the extent to which some of the differences between Sweden and the United States can be

TABLE 6.10
Decomposition of differences in class structure by state employment

A. *Estimates of counterfactual distributions*

Classes[a]	(1) US	(2) Sweden distributions[b]	(3) US State employment marginal + Swedish class distribution within sectors	(4) Swedish state marginal + US class distribution within sectors
1. Workers	39.9	43.5	43.3	39.0
2. Uncredentialled supervisors and managers	9.2	5.6	5.9	8.2
3. Non-management experts	15.7	24.6	22.2	20.0
4. Credentialled supervisors	10.5	7.0	5.3	11.3
5. Credentialled managers	10.0	8.4	8.1	11.2
6. Self-employed	14.7	10.9	15.4	10.5

B. *US decomposition[c]*

	(5) Total difference (1)–(2)	(6) Class effect (1)–(3)	(7) State effect (1)–(4)	(8) Interaction effect (5)–(6)–(7)
1. Workers	−3.6	−3.4	+0.9	−1.0
2. Uncredentialled supervisors and managers	+3.6	+3.4	+1.0	−0.8
3. Non-management experts	−8.9	−6.5	−4.3	+1.9
4. Credentialled supervisors	+3.5	+5.2	−0.8	−0.9
5. Credentialled managers	+1.6	+1.9	−1.2	+0.9
6. Self-employed	+3.8	−0.7	+4.3	+0.2

TABLE 6.10 (*continued*)

C. *Swedish decomposition[c]*

	(9) Total difference (2)–(1)	(10) Class effect (2)–(4)	(11) State effect (2)–(3)	(12) Interaction effect (9)–(10)–(11)
1. Workers	+3.6	+4.5	+0.2	−1.0
2. Uncredentialled supervisors and managers	−3.6	−2.6	−0.3	−0.7
3. Non-management experts	+8.9	+4.7	+2.4	+1.8
4. Credentialled supervisors	−3.5	−4.3	+1.7	−0.9
5. Credentialled managers	−1.6	−2.8	+0.3	+0.9
6. Self-employed	−3.8	+0.5	−4.5	−0.2

[a] See Table 6.8 for operationalizations of these class categories.
[b] The slight descrepencies in the figures for the actual distributions in this Table and Table 6.9 are due to differences in missing data.
[c] In the 'US decomposition' all imputed class distributions are subtracted from the actual US class distributions; in the 'Swedish decomposition' they are subtracted from the actual Swedish distributions. If the interaction effect term is zero, then these two decompositions will be the same magnitudes, but with different signs.

attributed to the differences in the marginal distributions of the basic assets or to the association between assets. To accomplish this we will conduct a set of structural decompositions, analogous to those we have already done, on the dimensions of the class typology itself. In order to simplify the analysis, we will collapse the basic class typology even further and restrict the analysis to wage-earners. We will therefore focus on four categories: credentialled management (cells 4, 5, 7, 8 from table 6.1); credentialled non-management (cells 6, 9 in table 6.1); non-credentialled management (cells 10, 11); and workers (cell 12). These four categories can be arranged in a simple two-by-two table, with one dimension being the dichotomy credentialled–non-credentialled and the other management–non-management.

The strategy of the analysis is to decompose this two-by-two table by playing the same kind of counterfactual game we did for the decompositions by sector and state employment. First we will ask: what would the US class structure look like if the US had the

Swedish authority-marginal distribution but the US distribution of credentials within authority categories? Then we ask: what would the US class structure look like if we had the Swedish marginal-credential distribution, but the US distribution of authority within credential categories? The first of these provides the basis for calculating what can be called the Swedish authority margins effect on the US class structure (or the Swedish authority margins effect for short), the second, the Swedish credential margins effect on the US distribution.[16] As in the earlier decompositions, a residual 'interaction' term is defined as that part of the total difference in class distributions for the two countries that cannot be uniquely attributed to either the authority margins or the credential margins. It reflects the differences between the two countries in the ways in which authority and credentials are linked together. These three components can also be calculated by imputing the effects of the US marginal distributions on the Swedish class structure. As in our earlier analyses, both sets of decompositions will be presented.

The results of this relatively complex set of decompositions appear in table 6.11. Several conclusions can be drawn from these results.

TABLE 6.11
Decomposition of class distributions in terms of authority and credential marginals, wage earners only

A. *Estimates of counterfactual distributions*

Classes[a]	Distributions of classes in		United States distributions with Swedish:		Swedish distributions with United States:	
	US (1)	Sweden (2)	Authority marginals (3)	Credential marginals (4)	Authority marginals (5)	Credential marginals (6)
1. Credentialled management	24.1	17.2	16.2	25.4	25.6	16.3
2. Credentialled non-management	18.4	27.6	21.5	19.4	23.5	26.2
3. Non-credentialled management	10.8	6.3	7.3	10.4	9.3	6.7
4. Workers	46.8	48.8	55.0	44.7	41.6	50.9

TABLE 6.11 (*continued*)

B. *United States decomposition*

Classes	(7) Total diff.	(8) Auth. margin	(9) Cred. margin	(10) Inter- action
	(1–2)	(1–3)	(1–4)	(7–8–9)
1. Credentialled management	6.9	7.9	−1.3	0.3
2. Credentialled non-management	−9.2	−3.1	−1.0	−5.1
3. Non-credentialled management	4.5	3.5	0.4	0.6
4. Workers	−2.0	−8.2	2.1	4.1

C. *Swedish decomposition*

Classes	(11) Total diff.	(12) Auth. margin	(13) Cred. margin	(14) Inter- action
	(2–1)	(2–5)	(2–6)	(11–12–13)
1. Credentialled management	−6.9	−8.4	0.9	0.6
2. Credentialled non-management	9.2	4.1	1.4	3.7
3. Non-credentialled management	−4.5	−3.0	−0.4	−1.1
4. Workers	2.0	7.2	−2.1	3.1

[a]These class categories are collapsed from Table 6.1 as follows: credentialled/management = 4,5,7,8; credentialled non-management + 6,9; non-credentialled management = 10,11; workers = 12.

First, the credential margins effect (columns 9 and 13) are relatively small, and if anything in some cases would serve to *increase* the differences between the countries. Very little of the observed difference between the two class structures can be accounted for by differences in the marginal distributions of credential assets in the two countries.[17]

Second, in contrast to the credential marginals, the authority marginals have a substantial effect on the class structures. The

higher proportion of managers and supervisors (either credential-led or uncredentialled) is largely accounted for by the higher proportion of the labour force in positions of authority in the US compared to Sweden.

Third, the effect of differences between the two countries in the association of authority and credentials (the interaction term) is also particularly important in certain cases. For credentialled non-management—experts of all sorts that have no organization assets—much of the difference between the United States and Sweden can be attributed to the differences in the association between credentials and authority. People in the United States with organization assets have a higher probability of also having credential assets than in Sweden, and this difference in the association between assets accounts for between 40 and 55 percent of the total differences in the proportion of credentialled non-management in the two countries.

The interaction term is also important for the working class in the two countries. As columns 10 and 14 in table 6.11 indicate, the difference in the association of credentials and authority between the two countries actually acts as a countervailing force to the effects of the authority marginals on the relative size of the working class.

GENERAL INTERPRETATIONS[18]

In the initial decompositions of the overall differences in class structure by economic sector and state employment, we concluded first, that in general the class effects were greater than the sector effects, and second, when the distribution of employment across sectors did matter, the role of the state was generally implicated. This was followed by a decomposition of the class effects themselves, and here the basic conclusion is that the differences in the authority distributions in the two societies and the linkage between authority and credentials accounts for most of the differences in the distributions of contradictory class locations in the two societies.

The most general interpretation of these results is that the differences between the class structures of Sweden and the United States largely revolve around political determinants. While it is possible that the general employment distribution across sectors and the distribution of credential assets might explain the differ-

ences between countries with a lower level of capitalist development on the one hand, and both Sweden and the United States on the other, the differences between these two advanced capitalist countries are largely accounted for by the effects of the state and the effects of the more political aspects of production relations (authority) on class distributions.

How can these political determinants of class structures themselves be explained? There is an extensive literature on the growth of the welfare state which attempts to explain why it is that countries like Sweden have such a large welfare-state sector. While there is not a consensus in such research, the explanations seem to suggest that the relatively more rapid expansion of state employment in Sweden compared to a country like the United States is to be explained both by specific constraints on accumulation faced by a small country in the world capitalist system and by the forms of political struggle adopted by workers and capitalists within those constraints.[19]

As far as I know, there is no research which addresses the question of why the organization of authority within production differs so drastically between the United States and Sweden. One way of getting a grasp of this problem is to examine the authority distributions within specific occupations. These data are presented in table 6.12. For high status occupations—professionals, technicians, teachers, managers—there is only a modestly higher proportion of people with authority in the United States compared to Sweden. Except in the case of labourers, the difference between the two countries is much greater for those occupations which are usually thought of as part of the 'working class'—clericals, crafts, operatives and service workers. Among these occupations, by far the biggest difference between the United States and Sweden is among craft workers: in the US 39.2 per cent occupy supervisory positions compared to only 8.7 per cent in Sweden.

What these results seem to indicate is that the critical difference between Sweden and the United States is the extent to which the supervisory aspect of managerial functions has been delegated to positions which would otherwise be part of the working class. In particular, highly skilled working class positions—craft occupations—tend to be assigned supervisory authority over other workers in the United States much more frequently than in Sweden.

While it is impossible to provide a rigorous explanation of these differences without looking at historical data on both structural transformations within production and political strategies of work-

TABLE 6.12
Distribution of supervisory authority within occupational categories

	% of employees with supervisory authority		
Occupation	United States	Sweden	Ratio US:Sweden
1. Professionals	54.9	51.2	1.1 :1
2. Teachers	23.2	15.6	1.5 :1
3. Technicians	58.3	40.2	1.45:1
4. Managers	85.1	79.5	1.1 :1
5. Clerks	25.9	13.1	2.0 :1
6. Sales	15.6	21.8	0.7 :1
7. Foremen	93.2	75.5	1.2 :1
8. Crafts	39.2	8.7	4.5 :1
9. Operatives	18.6	8.9	2.1 :1
10. Labourers	15.8	16.7	0.95:1
11. Skilled services	51.9	17.5	3.0 :1
12. Unskilled services	23.3	5.9	3.9 :1

ers and capitalists in both countries, I can offer some general speculations on the mechanisms at work. The labour movement in Sweden is both more powerful and more centralized than in the United States. This has two important consequences. First, the union movement in Sweden has been able to eliminate restrictions on its ability to organize wage-earners much more successfully than in the United States. In particular, managerial employees in the United States are generally excluded by law from the union bargaining unit. This means that it is in the interests of American capitalists to integrate into the lower levels of management at least some jobs which fall within key categories of wage-earners, categories which otherwise would remain working class.[20] The extension of supervisory functions to segments of the working class may be one facet of the general efforts by capital to weaken the union movement in the United States.

Second, the greater centralization of the labour movement in Sweden means that unions themselves may be able to perform certain control functions over workers which otherwise would have to be handled directly by supervisors within production. There may be fewer supervisory employees in Sweden than in the United States at least in part because the differences in the labour movements and the problems of labour discipline in the two coun-

tries make it less necessary for Swedish capitalists to devote so many positions to social-control activities.

Class and Family

So far I have proceeded as if individuals were isolated entities filling slots in the class structure. Individuals, however, live in families, and the process of class formation—the transformation of classes from structures of positions into collective actors—confronts this fact powerfully. In general in capitalist societies, even given the patriarchal character of internal relations within families, the family is the unit of primary consumption. The interests which are determined by class exploitation, therefore, will vary depending upon how they intersect the class compositions of families. In particular, it would be expected that where one spouse was an exploiter and the other exploited—for example, a male expert manager married to a clerical worker—the probability of the worker becoming a participant in the collective struggles of the working class is considerably reduced. If we look at the problem more structurally, it would be expected that class formation will be facilitated to the extent that families are class-homogeneous and retarded to the extent that they are heterogeneous.[21]

Before examining the data for Sweden and the United States on the class composition of households, a word needs to be said about the operationalizations we will use in this part of the analysis. While data necessary for the construction of a class typology were gathered on spouse's jobs, the questions asked were much more limited than for the respondents in our sample. In particular, we did not think it feasible to ask questions concerning the autonomy on the job of the spouse, the specific role in decision-making at the place of work or the kinds of powers he or she might have as a supervisor. We also failed to ask about spouse's education, although clearly we should have. The result is that we cannot replicate precisely the class typology used in the analysis of respondents for their spouses. Instead we will use the somewhat simpler typology laid out in table 6.13. For symmetry in this part of the analysis we will adopt the same criteria for the respondents. This has the effect of increasing the proportion of workers in the sample from 39.9 to 45.0 per cent in the United States and from 43.5 to 54.5 per cent in Sweden. Virtually all of this expansion comes from a reallocation of craftworkers from the semi-

TABLE 6.13
Criteria used for operationalizing spouse's class

Operational criteria	Class typology[a]						
	(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1. Spouse has a paying job or works without pay in a business	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Self employed		Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
3. Has employees		Yes	No	No	No	No	No
4. Occupies a management or supervisor position				Yes	Yes	No	No
5. Occupation is professional technical or managerial				Yes	No	Yes	No

[a] (0) = no spouse or spouse not in labour force
(1) = employer
(2) = petty bourgeois
(3) = expert manager-supervisor
(4) = uncredentialled manager-supervisor
(5) = non-managerial expert
(6) = worker

credentialled employee category (category 11 in Table 6.1) to the working class. Since these craft workers are in many respects so similar to workers anyway, this does not seem a serious problem.

Table 6.14 presents the class composition of households in Sweden and the United States in which at least one adult is in the labour force. Households in which all adult members are retired, unemployed, students or in other ways are not in the labour force are excluded. The table should be read in the following manner: the left-hand column indicates the proportion of all households with a single person in the labour force (i.e. single person households plus married households with only one spouse working in the labour force). The diagonal cells in the rest of the table are the class-homogeneous households. The figures below the diagonal are the various combinations of classes within class heterogeneous families. Table 6.15 then converts the figures in this table into proportions of households that are class homogeneous in specific classes.

In about 10 per cent of all labour-force households in the United States both husband and wife are in the working class. An additional 29 per cent contain one working class single person or mar-

TABLE 6.14
Class composition of households

Entries in cells are % of the total sample that fall into households with particular class compositions.[a]

	0. No spouse or spouse not in the labour force	1. Employer	2. Petty Bourg.	3. Cred. Manager	4. Uncred. Manager	5. Non-mgr Expert	6. Worker
I. United States							
1. Employer	3.9	1.0					
2. Petty bourg.	3.2	1.6	1.4				
3. Cred. manager	9.5	0.8	0.9	1.4			
4. Uncred. manager	9.0	0.6	0.5	1.8	1.1		
5. Non-mgr. Expert	4.7	0.4	0.6	2.3	1.0	1.1	
6. Worker	29.2	1.5	1.7	4.8	4.7	1.6	9.7
II. Sweden							
1. Employer	1.7	0.6					
2. Petty bourg.	1.9	1.3	1.0				
3. Cred. manager	3.4	0.3	0.6	1.6			
4. Uncred. manager	3.6	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.6		
5. Non-mgr. expert	5.1	0.1	0.7	4.6	0.8	2.4	
6. Worker	23.9	1.9	2.1	5.4	7.7	6.0	20.0

[a] See Table 6.13 for operationalization of class categories.

ried person in a family in which the spouse is not in the labour force. This means that approximately 39 per cent of households in the United States are homogeneously working class. Even though the proportionate size of the working class is somewhat larger in Sweden, the corresponding figure for homogenous working-class households is quite close to the American figure: just under 44 per

TABLE 6.15
Class homogeneity and heterogeneity of households

	(1) Households with at least one member in a given class as a % of all households	(2) Households with members only in one class as a % of all households	(3) % households with one member in a class that are class homogeneous (3) = (2) ÷ (1)
I. The United States			
A. All households			
1. Employers	9.9	4.9	53.3
2. Petty bourgeois	9.8	4.6	46.9
All self employed	18.1	11.1	61.3
3. Cred. management	21.6	10.9	50.4
4. Uncred. manag.	18.8	10.1	53.7
5. Cred. non-manag.	11.8	5.8	49.2
All contradictory locations	47.0	32.0	68.1
6. Workers	52.9	38.9	73.5
B. Households with both people in labour force			
1. Employers	15.1	2.7	17.8
2. Petty bourgeois	17.0	3.4	20.0
All self employed	27.8	10.4	37.4
3. Cred. management.	29.9	3.7	12.3
4. Uncred. manag.	24.6	2.7	11.0
5. Cred. non-manag.	16.5	2.7	16.4
All contradictory locations	58.7	21.5	36.6
6. Workers	58.4	23.2	39.7
II. Sweden			
A. All households			
1. Employers	6.5	2.3	35.4
2. Petty bourgeois	8.4	2.9	34.5
All self employed	13.4	6.5	48.5
3. Cred. management	16.8	5.0	29.8
4. Uncred. manag.	15.4	4.7	30.5
5. Cred. non-manag.	19.8	7.5	·37.9
All contradictory locations	45.5	23.7	52.1
6. Workers	67.0	43.9	65.5

TABLE 6.15 (*continued*)

B. Households with both people in labour force			
1. Employers	7.9	1.1	13.9
2. Petty bourgeois	10.4	1.7	16.3
All self employed	16.2	4.9	30.2
3. Cred. management	22.3	2.7	12.1
4. Uncred. manag.	18.7	1.1	5.8
5. Cred. non-manag.	24.5	4.0	16.3
All contradictory locations	54.9	18.5	33.7
6. Workers	72.1	33.4	46.3

cent. Stated in somewhat different terms, 53 per cent of all labour-force households in the United States have at least one spouse or a single adult in the working class. Of these about 74 per cent are class homogeneous. In Sweden, two thirds of all households have at least one worker, and of these 66 per cent are class homogeneous.

Looking at the other end of the class structure, 18 per cent of the households in the United States have at least one self-employed person, and of these households 61 per cent are class homogeneous (if we are willing to consider an employer-petty bourgeois combination as homogeneous). The comparable figure in Sweden is 49 per cent.

What about contradictory locations? Taken separately, the three types of contradictory locations in table 6.12—credentialled managers, uncredentialled managers and non-managerial experts—all live in families that are much less class homogeneous than is the case for either the working class or the bourgeoisie. In the United States approximately 50 per cent of each of these class locations are in homogeneous families, while in Sweden the figure is closer to 30 per cent. If we consider these classes a block—the usual 'middle class' of popular discourse—then the class homogeneity of households rises to 68 per cent in the United States and 52 per cent in Sweden.[22]

What general conclusions can be drawn from these data? First of all, in both countries a substantial majority of workers live in households that contain only workers. The number in mixed class households involving workers is not trivial—about one in four in

the United States and one in three in Sweden—but still most workers live in unambiguously working-class families.

Second, the differences in class homogeneity across classes is greater in Sweden than in the United States. In the United States, when the various contradictory locations are grouped together, their level of internal homogeneity in families is quite close to that of workers—68 compared to 74 per cent; in Sweden the difference is 52 compared to 66 per cent. This contrast is even sharper if we look only at those households which have both spouses in the labour force: in Sweden 46 per cent of the workers who are in households with two earners are in class-homogeneous families compared to 34 per cent of 'middle class' employees in two earner families and 30 per cent of self-employed in such families. In the United States, in contrast, there is virtually no difference across classes in such two earner families: 40 per cent of the workers are in class homogeneous families, 37 per cent of the 'middle' class and 37 per cent of self-employed.

The critical source of this variation between the two countries is in the number of households that contain one 'middle-class' spouse and one working-class spouse: in Sweden, of the households with at least one person in a contradictory class location, 42 per cent also contain a worker; in the United States the figure is only 24 per cent. A similar contrast exists for the self-employed: 30 per cent of households with one self-employed person in Sweden also have a worker in them; in the United States the figure is only 18 per cent.

These contrasts suggest the following general characterization of the differences in the two countries: while the working classes in the two countries do not differ very much in the extent to which their families are firmly part of the working class, the American 'middle class' family is structurally more isolated from the working class than in Sweden.

So far in this discussion of family composition we have not distinguished between husbands and wives. Table 6.16 presents the data for the relationship between the husband's class position and the wife's for families in which both spouses are in the labour force. Perhaps the most striking feature of this table is that a higher proportion of working-class husbands in two-earner families live in homogeneous working-class families than do working class wives: 65 compared to 53 per cent in the United States, and 79 compared to 57 per cent in Sweden. Even if we include single working-class women in the figures, it is still the case that women are more likely to live in class-heterogeneous families than

TABLE 6.16

Family class composition by sex for families with both spouses in the labour force only

Entries in cell are % of the total sample of respondents with working spouses.[a]

	Wife's class[b]						
Husband's class	1. Employer	2. Petty bourg.	3. Cred. manager	4. Uncred. manager	5. Non-mgr. expert	6. Worker	Total
I. United States							
1. Employer	2.5	3.6	1.3	1.3	1.1	2.5	12.3
2. Petty bourg	0.5	3.4	0.7	0.5	0.9	2.2	8.3
3. Cred. manager	0.9	1.6	3.4	2.3	5.1	9.4	22.7
4. Uncred. manager	0.2	0.7	1.1	1.8	1.8	5.6	11.1
5. Non-mgr. expert	0.0	0.9	0.7	1.3	3.1	2.5	8.5
6. Worker	1.1	1.6	2.5	6.1	2.0	24.9	38.3
Totals	5.2	11.9	9.7	13.4	13.9	47.1	
II. Sweden							
1. Employer	1.1	1.6	0.3	0.8	0.2	3.2	7.2
2. Petty bourg.	0.6	1.8	0.5	0.3	1.0	3.1	7.2
3. Cred. manager	0.0	0.3	2.6	0.8	5.8	7.6	17.0
4. Uncred. manager	0.2	0.6	1.0	1.1	1.3	10.5	14.6
5. Non-mgr. expert	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.2	3.5	5.0	10.8
6. Worker	0.2	0.6	1.9	2.6	3.9	33.9	43.1
Totals	2.3	5.1	8.4	5.9	15.6	59.1	

N = 554

[a]The entries in the cells are calculated by adding together the responses of the male respondents for their own class with the responses of the female respondents for their husbands' class, and adding together the responses of the female respondents for their own class with the responses of the male respondents for their wives' class. The estimates therefore are an average of the figures we would have got by looking separately at the tables for male respondents or female respondents.

[b]See Table 6.13 for operationalization of class categories.

men: 76 per cent of all working-class men are in homogeneous families compared to 69 per cent of working class women in the US, and 83 compared to 61 per cent in Sweden. Stated somewhat differently, working-class women have a higher probability than working-class men of living in families in which some of the income comes from exploitation. While I will not explore this issue here, this could help to explain, in some instances at least, the differences in the class actions of working class men and women.

Class Structure and Income

HYPOTHESES

The conceptualization of class elaborated in this book is built around the concept of exploitation. While the relationship between the theoretical concept of exploitation and empirical data on personal income is not a simple one, nevertheless, personal income should be systematically linked to exploitation relations. As a result, if the conceptualization being proposed is to be a compelling one, then there should be a strong relationship between class location and expected income. More precisely, we can frame the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Income should be polarized between the working class and the bourgeoisie.

Hypothesis 2. Average income among wage earners should increase monotonically as you move along each of the dimensions of exploitation from the working class to expert managers.

Hypothesis 3 The pattern for unearned income should also be monotonically increasing along each of the dimensions of the class-structure matrix.

These hypotheses could be made considerably more complex by including the operation of a range of other variables besides class structure. It would be of interest, for example, to investigate the interactions between class structure and industrial sector or size of firm in predicting income, and it would certainly be of considerable importance to examine the relationship between these class determinants of income and such things as sex and race. For present purposes, however, I will restrict the analysis to the direct the relationship between class structure and income, since clarifying

this relationship is a necessary precondition to making more nuanced analyses.

VARIABLES

Personal Annual Income. The question on personal income was asked in the form of a series of categorical questions about income, since this tends to reduce the amount of missing data in respones. As a result, income was initially coded as an eleven-point scale, in which 1 represents an annual income less than $5,000 and 11 represents yearly income over $75,000, and in which the income brackets gradually increase in size as we move from the lower to the higher end of the scale. The values of these intervals in the Swedish data were constructed on the basis of the actual dollar exchange rate at the time the surveys were conducted.

Actual dollar amounts were calculated by assigning the midpoint for each of the closed categories and by extrapolating a value for the open-ended category based on the assumption that the upper tail of the income distribution has a Pareto distribution.[23] The annual-income variable is pre-tax total personal income and thus includes both wage earnings and other sources of income.

Unearned Income. Respondents were asked whether or not they had any income from investments other than bank savings or the sale of personal houses. If they answered 'yes', they were then asked to indicate about what proportion of their total *family* income came from that source. We asked this question in terms of family income since in so many cases it would be difficult to assign such income to any single individual in a family. While such percentage estimates will have a fair amount of error in them, it was our hope that it would give us a reasonable order of magnitude estimate and that there would be less missing data than if we directly asked for an amount.

There are two measurement problems with this variable. First, there were a significant number of respondents, particularly in their late teens and early twenties, who still lived with their parents and who as a result reported such unearned income for the 'family income' of their parents' household. In the US data we had a complete listing of all household members, and thus it was possible to identify such respondents and exclude them from this particular part of the analysis. This was not possible in the Swedish data.[24] Thus, in the analysis of unearned income, we will only use the US

sample. Second, some self-employed respondents excluded income from investments in their own business from the report of 'investment income', others included such investments. The result is that the values on this variable do not have a consistent meaning among self-employed respondents. As a result we will only examine the unearned income variable for wage-earners.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Table 6.17 presents the data for mean personal income by class for the United States and Sweden. Table 6.18 presents the figures for unearned income for the United States. In general, the data in these tables are strongly consistent with the theoretical rationale for the exploitation-based conceptualization of class structure.

In the United States, income is strongly polarized between the proletarian cell in the typology and the bourgeoisie: the former earn, on average, just over $11,000 a year, the latter over $52,000. In Sweden, the results are not quite as striking: the bourgeoisie in the sample has essentially identical income to expert managers. Two things need to be said about this: first, there are only eight respondents in the bourgeoisie category in the Swedish sample, and they are certainly relatively small capitalists. Secondly, because of the very heavy taxation on personal income in Sweden, business people take a substantial part of their income in the form of business expenses and other forms of consumption 'in kind' rather than as salary. It is impossible to measure such non-monetary elements in personal income with the data we have available, but the figure in table 6.17 is certainly an underestimate. Hypothesis 1 is thus strongly supported in the United States, and at least provisionally supported in Sweden.

The results for hypothesis 2 are less equivocal. In both the United States and Sweden incomes increase in a largely monotonic manner in every dimension of the table as we move from the proletarian corner in the class structure matrix to the expert-manager corner. The only exceptions are that categories 10 and 11 (uncredentialled managers and uncredentialled supervisors) are essentially identical and categories 6 and 9 (credentialled and marginally-credentialled non-managerial employees) are essentially identical in both the United States and Sweden. Given the conceptual status of the 'intermediate' categories of 'uncredentialled supervisors' (category 11) and 'marginally-credentialled

TABLE 6.17
Mean annual individual incomes by class location in Sweden and the United States

Assets in the means of production

Owners	Non-owners [wage labourers]		
1 Bourgeoisie US: $52,621 SW: $28,333	4 Expert manager US: $28,665 SW: $29,952	7 Semi-cred. manager US: $20,701 SW: $20,820	10 Uncred. manager US: $12,276 SW: $15,475
2 Small employers US: $24,828 SW: $17,237	5 Expert supervisors US: $23,057 SW: $18,859	8 Semi-cred. supervisors US: $18,023 SW: $19,711	11 Uncred. supervisors US: $13,045 SW: $15,411
3 Petty bourgeoisie US: $14,496 SW: $13,503	6 Expert non-manager US: $15,251 SW: $14,890	9 Semi-cred. workers US: $16,034 SW: $14,879	12 Proletarian US: $11,161 SW: $11,876

+   >0   −

Organization assets

+   >0   −

Skill assets

United States: N = 1282
Sweden: N = 1049

[a]Entries in cells are the means for gross annual individual income from all sources before taxes. The Swedish incomes were converted to dollars at the 1980 exchange rate.

workers' (category 9), these results are not inconsistent with the theoretical model.

What is particularly striking in the pattern in table 6.17 is the interaction between the two dimensions of exploitation relations among wage-earners. The increase in average income is relatively modest as you move along either organization assets or credential assets taken separately (i.e. as you move along the bottom of the table and the right hand column). Where the sharp increase in incomes occurs is when you combine these two exploitation mechanisms (i.e. moving along the top of the table and the left hand column among wage earers). Hypothesis 2 is thus strongly supported.

TABLE 6.18
Unearned income by class location among wage earners in the United States

4 Expert manager $1646[a]	7 Semi-cred. manager $856	10 Uncred. manager $763	+
5 Expert supervisors $942	8 Semi-cred. supervisors $272	11 Uncred. supervisors $368	>0 *Organ- ization assets*
6 Expert non-manager $686	9 Semi-cred. workers $206	12 Proletarian $393	−
+	>0	−	

Skill assets

[a]Entries in cells are the means for family income (not individual income) from investments other than bank savings (stocks, bonds, etc.) and from rent or sale of property (excluding sale of personal houses).

[b]Notes:
1. Respondents living with parents have been excluded from this table, since the concept of 'family income' has a different meaning for such individuals.
2. Comparable data is not available for Sweden.
3. Figures for self-employed categories have been excluded from the table since some self-employed respondents in the survey included income from their own businesses as 'income from investments whereas other respondents restricted their estimates of investment income to outside investments, thus excluding earnings from their own business.

Hypothesis 3 concerns the relationship between unearned income and class location. Income from investments among wage earners depends upon savings, which in turn are closely tied to the amount of 'discretionary' income available to an individual, i.e. income above the necessary expenses for daily 'reproduction'. Such discretionary income should be closely linked to exploitation, and thus it would be expected that income from investments

should follow the predicted monotonic pattern across the dimensions of the class matrix.

The results in table 6.18 support this hypothesis. Although proletarians and uncredentialled supervisors (cells 12 and 11) have more unearned income than marginally-credentialled workers and supervisors (cells 9 and 8), the overall pattern in this table still basically conforms to the expectations. Expert managers have over four times the unearned income of workers, and twice the unearned income of non-managerial experts and uncredentialled managers.

Overall, then, each of the three hypotheses concerning the relationship between class structure and income is broadly supported by the data we have examined: income inequality is polarized between the bourgeoisie and the working class, incomes vary monotonically along the dimensions of exploitation taken separately and together, and unearned income varies in much the same pattern as wage income. These results add considerably to the credibility of the exploitation-centred concept of class.

In this chapter we have been mainly concerned with empirically mapping out the structural contours of the exploitation-centred concept of class. The Marxist concept of class, however, in whatever incarnation, is not meant to be used simply in the description and analysis of the structural properties of society. It is also, fundamentally, meant to provide a way of understanding class formation and class struggle. In the next chapter we will explore one aspect of this broader agenda in the investigation of the relationship between class structure and class consciousness.

Notes

1. See Peter Wiles, *The Distribution of Income East and West*, Amsterdam 1974.
2. This statistic in effect measures the inequality between the tails of the distribution and is thus quite sensitive to extremes of poverty and wealth in societies in which the majority of people are relatively well off.
3. Once again, as I have remarked several times, this difficulty in rigorously specifying the criteria for credential/skill assets reflects the theoretical underdevelopment of the concept itself.
4. In order to see if these operational decisions had substantial empirical consequences, I constructed parallel class variables in which the educational credential criterion was dropped entirely from the specification of credential assets, and we

relied strictly on the occupation and autonomy criteria as indicated in table 5.3. While this did affect modestly the distributions of individuals into classes within countries, it did not in any way affect the pattern of differences between countries (i.e. there was no national bias in the changes in distributions).

5. This figure of 14.7 per cent for the United States is considerably larger than the figure reported in the 1980 US decennial census, where less than 10 per cent are classified as self-employed. There are several possible reasons for this. First of all, the census is a self-administered questionnaire. In the section of the survey where employment status is introduced, self-employment is the last option in a list that begins 'do you work for a wage or salary?'. Many self-employed individuals who are paid on an hourly basis for their services probably tick this first option. The survey used in this book was administered by interviewers with specific instructions about the meaning of self-employment, and all response options were read and explained before the respondent answered. Second, for tax reasons it may be the case that more people hesitate to identify themselves as self-employed to an official government agency than to an academic research institute. This is confirmed by the fact that academic research institute estimates of self-employment are usually above government estimates. At any rate, there is little reason in this instance to believe that the official government figures are more accurate than the ones we are employing.

6. The definitions of the sectors discussed in this section can be found in Appendix II.

7. See Joachim Singelmann, *From Agriculture to Services*, Beverly Hills 1977.

8. I will, for the purposes of this analysis, treat control over the relevant kind of asset as the critical determinant of class location, regardless of the specific institutional site for that control: an owner of capital remains a capitalist even if he or she is engaged in long-term defence contracts with the state and is clearly part of the 'state-sector' of production; an owner of credentials remains an 'expert' even if he or she moves back and forth between the state agencies and private corporations; and, perhaps most problematically, a controller of organization assets is a manager, whether those assets be embedded in public bureaucracies or private enterprises. I will therefore not treat the distinction between state and private workers, state and private experts and state and private managers, as a distinction between classes rooted in different modes of production.

9. See Erik Olin Wright and Joachim Singelmann, 'Proletarianization in the American Class Structure', in *Marxist Inquiries*, edited by Michael Burawoy and Theda Skocpol, Supplement to the *American Journal of Sociology*, vol 88, 1982.

10. These figures are based on self-reports by respondents of the number of employees in the total organization for which they work. Respondents were first asked if their employer had multiple branches, plants, companies, etc. If they said yes, they were then asked to think of the entire firm and then give a rough estimate of employment size. If they said no they were probed further, and then asked for the number of employees in the firm. There are, undoubtedly, considerable errors in these reports. In some cases employees may even be unaware that their business is owned by some conglomerate multinational, and they certainly will not have a very precise idea of the world-wide employment of such conglomerates. My assumption, however, is that as rough estimates, the numbers will not be innacurate by orders-of-magnitude. Few people who work for firms employing more than ten thousand employees will give figures of several hundred, for example. The firm size data for the self-employed is simply the number of people they employ.

11. It is noteworthy that once the state is excluded from the analysis, very similar proportions of workers work for very large corporations in Sweden and the

United States even though the population of Sweden is so much smaller than the US.

12. The analysis presented here is a revision of an earlier paper, using the previous conceptualization of contradictory class location, written by myself and Göran Ahrne, 'Classes in the United States and Sweden: a Comparison', *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 26, no. 3–4, 1983, pp. 211–235.

13. The approach used here is modified from the one adopted by H. Browning and J. Singelmann, *The Emergence of a Service Society*, Springfield 1975, and used in Erik Olin Wright and Joachim Singelmann, 'Proletarianization . . .'. Those studies drew on the techniques developed by G. Palmer and A. Miller, *Industrial and Occupational Trends in Employment*, Philadelphia 1949, and E. Kitagawa, 'Components of a difference between two rates', *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, vol. 50, pp. 1168–1174, 1955. The strategy is described in detail in Wright and Singelmann, op. cit., pp. 202–205.

14. For example, let us suppose that the US and Sweden had the same proportion of workers in every sector except social services, in which Sweden had more workers than the United States, and let us suppose that there were also proportionately many more people altogether in social services in Sweden than in the United States. The fact that these two differences—the within and between sector differences—co-varied would produce a large interaction effect.

15. Technically, the reason for this is as follows: when we compute counterfactual step 1 above, we *subtract* the results from the US class structure figures to see how much difference the differences in sectoral distributions make for the overall difference in the class structure of the two countries. To calculate the sectoral distribution effect on the Swedish class structure, on the other hand, we subtract counterfactual step 2 (not step 1) from the Swedish class structure figures. These numbers will be the same, but with opposite signs, when the interaction terms are zero.

16. The Authority margins effect is calculated as follows: Construct a four-fold authority-by-credential table for the US data in which the cells of the table are the percentage of people in a given authority category who have and do not have credentials. If you multiply the figure in each cell of this table by the corresponding figure from the Swedish marginal authority distribution, you will have the counterfactual estimate of the class distribution for the US if the US had the Swedish authority marginals. The decomposition is accomplished by subtracting the proportions in this counterfactual table from the actual US data (subtracting column 3 from column 1 in table 6.11). The credential margins effect is calculated in a parallel manner.

17. This conclusion, it must be remembered, is potentially vulnerable to the measurement problems involved with credential assets discussed earlier.

18. These interpretations were jointly formulated with Göran Ahrne in the original research on these issues published in 1983.

19. The relevant literature includes, among other things, Gosta Esping-Anderson, *Politics Against Markets: The Social-Democratic Road to Power*, Princeton 1985; J. Cameron, 'The Expansion of the Public Economy', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 72, 1978; John Stephens, *The Transition to Socialism*, London 1979; Ian Gough, *The Political Economy of the Welfare State*, London 1979; Michael Shalev, 'The Social Democratic Model and Beyond: two generations of comparative research on the welfare state', *Comparative Social Research*, vol. 6, 1984.

20. See, Institute for Labor Education and Research, *What's Wrong with the US Economy?*, Boston 1982, p. 315.

21. This may not be a universal principle. Under certain circumstances, having family connections outside of the working class—such as to subsistence farmers for example—may provide workers with increased capacities for struggle, since their survival may depend less on their wage-labour jobs. In general, therefore, we might expect the following: class heterogeneity of families may reduce the interests workers might have in militant struggle but increase their capacities for struggle.

22. How homogeneous a family is obviously depends upon how narrowly or broadly one defines the lines of demarcation. If the categories are defined in extremely broad terms—all wage-earners for example—then the vast majority of families would be homogeneous; if the distinctions were drawn very finely, very few would be.

23. For details of how this extrapolation is done, see Erik Olin Wright, *Class Structure and Income Inequality*, PhD Dissertation, Berkeley 1976, pp. 162–164.

24. The household composition information was gathered in the US survey since in the US sampling procedure this was necessary in order to pick at random a respondent from the household. In Sweden this was unnecessary since the sample was drawn from a list of individuals rather than a list of telephone numbers.

7

Class Structure and Class Consciousness in Contemporary Capitalist Society

The problem of 'class consciousness' has frequently been at the heart of Marxist theoretical and political debates. Indeed, in the recent renaissance of Marxist scholarship, one of the central lines of cleavage has been precisely over whether consciousness is a legitimate concept at all. 'Structuralist' writers in the tradition of Louis Althusser have argued that consciousness is an epistemologically suspect category and of dubious explanatory relevance, whereas Marxists identified with the 'humanist marxist' tradition have placed consciousness at the centre of their analysis.

One of the hallmarks of these Marxist debates over consciousness is their tendency to be preoccupied with philosophical and methodological issues. The idiom of the discussion revolves around questions of whether or not human beings are the 'authors' of their own acts, whether intentions have explanatory power, whether the distinction between 'subjects' and 'objects' is an admissable one, and so on. The result is that, with relatively rare exceptions, the systematic discussion of class consciousness in the Marxist tradition has not focused on empirical problems of its explanation and consequences.

The central purpose of this chapter is to examine the empirical relation between class structure and an attitudinal measure of class consciousness. In the following section I will briefly discuss the concept of class consciousness as I will use it. This will be followed by a discussion of the causal logic of the relationship between class structure and class consciousness that will form the basis for the hypotheses we will explore empirically. In particular, I will explain why I think the micro-relationship between class structure and class consciousness can only be understood properly when it is investigated in a macro-comparative framework. The next section of the chapter will discuss briefly the problems of operationalizing