Table 2.6 Detailed Criteria for the Bourgeoisie and for Differentiation of Bourgeoisie and Petty Bourgeoisie

	ECONOMIC CRITERIA			POLITICAL CRITERIA			IDEOLOGICAL CRITERIA	
	Legal Ownership	*Economic Ownership*	*Possession*	*Direct Producer*	*Domination*	*Subordination*	*Domination*	*Subordination*
Traditional Entrepreneurial Capitalists	+	+	+	−	+	−	+	−
Top Corporate Executives	−	+	+	−	+	−	+	−
Managers	−	−	+	−	+	−	+	−
Heads of State Apparatuses	−	−	−	−	+	−	+	−
Traditional Petty Bourgeoisie	+	+	+	+	−	+	+	+

remain unitary parts of capital as such. Thus, occupying any such position is sufficient to define the manager as bourgeois. This is an arbitrary solution. It is equally plausible to argue that exclusion from economic ownership defines non-capitalists in capitalist society, and thus managers who are "mere" possessors of the means of production should be excluded from the bourgeoisie. A third possibility—which will be developed more fully below—is to argue that there are positions in the social division of labour which are *objectively contradictory*. Managers who are excluded from any economic ownership would constitute such a category, even if they retain partial possession of the means of production.

A second problem with Poulantzas's analysis of the bourgeoisie is that he tends to regard economic ownership and possession as all-or-nothing categories. A position either does or does not have real economic control of the means of production (economic ownership), or does or does not have the capacity to put those means of production into operation (possession). In fact, many managerial positions must be characterized as having limited forms of both ownership and possession. Some managers may have substantial control over one small segment of the total production process; others may have fairly limited

control over a broader range of the production process. While it is clear that an agent whose control is so attenuated that he/she merely executes decisions made from above should be excluded from the bourgeoisie, there is considerable ambiguity how middle-level managers of various sorts should be treated. Poulantzas's apparent solution is to argue that "In all cases, therefore, the managers are an integral section of the bourgeois class".[47] Again, an alternative solution is to treat contradictory cases as contradictory cases rather than to collapse them artificially into one class category or another.

An Alternative Conceptualization of Class Boundaries

Perhaps the most serious general criticism of Poulantzas's perspective centres on his treatment of ambiguous positions within the class structure. In his analysis of the working class, *any* deviation at all from the pure working-class criteria in Chart 1 is sufficient for exclusion from the proletariat; in his analysis of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, it is necessary to deviate on *all* criteria in order to be excluded from the capitalist class. In neither case is the possibility allowed that positions within the social division of labour can be objectively contradictory.[48]

Contradictory Locations within Class Relations

An alternative way of dealing with such ambiguities in the class structure is to regard some positions as occupying *objectively contradictory locations within class relations*. Rather than eradicating these contradictions by artificially classifying

47. Ibid., p. 180.

48. Poulantzas at one point does suggest the possibilities of ambiguous cases when he writes: "The mental/manual labour division is reproduced as a tendency, in the sense that it does not provide a typological classification into rigid compartments for this or that particular agent, and that what matters for us here is its social functioning in the existence and reproduction of social classes." (Ibid., p. 256.) This theme, however, is never developed or given any theoretical specificity in its own right. At most, Poulantzas suggests that there may be some ambiguity in the application of a particular criterion for class position, but not that there may be ambiguities created by contradictions among criteria.

every position within the social division of labour unambiguously into one class or another, contradictory locations need to be studied in their own right. This will be the primary objective of the rest of this chapter.[49] (In a sense, of course, all class positions are "contradictory locations", in that class relations are intrinsically antagonistic, contradictory social relations. The point is that certain positions in the class structure constitute doubly contradictory locations: they represent positions which are torn between the basic contradictory class relations of capitalist society. Rather than refer to these positions with a cumbersome expression such as "contradictory locations within the basic contradictory class relations", I will for convenience simply refer to them as "contradictory class locations".)

So far, our discussion of class structure has centred around the elaboration of various criteria for class. This has perhaps been somewhat misleading. When the word "criteria" is used, there is usually an implication that the purpose of the analysis is the construction of formal, abstract typologies. Ambiguities in the class structure then appear as classification problems in the typology, as failures of analytical imagination rather than as objective characteristics of the society itself. The concept of contradictory locations within class relations, however, does not refer to problems of pigeon-holing people within an abstract typology; rather it refers to objective contradictions among the real processes of class relations. To fully grasp the nature of the class structure of capitalist societies, therefore, we need first to understand the various processes which constitute class relations, analyse their historical transformation in the course of capitalist development, and then examine the ways in which the differentiation of these various processes has generated a number of contradictory locations within the class structures of advanced capitalist societies.

To anticipate the conclusion of the analysis, three clusters of

49. Carchedi's analysis (op. cit. and "Reproduction of Social Classes at the Level of Production Relations", *Economy and Society*, Vol. IV, No. 4, pp. 362–417) of the new middle classes bears a certain resemblance to the present discussion of contradictory locations within class relations. Carchedi defines the new middle classes as positions which perform both the "global function of capital" and the "function of the collective worker" and thus "are only identifiable in terms of contradiction". For a discussion and critique of Carchedi's analysis, see Wright, "Class Structure . . .", op. cit. appendix to chapter 2.

positions within the social division of labour can be characterized as occupying contradictory locations within class relations (see Fig. 2.1): 1. *managers and supervisors* occupy a contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; 2. certain categories of *semi-autonomous employees* who retain relatively high levels of control over their immediate labour process occupy a contradictory location between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie; 3. *small employers* occupy a contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. Our first task is to analyse how these contradictory locations emerge out of the dynamics of class relations in advanced capitalist society.

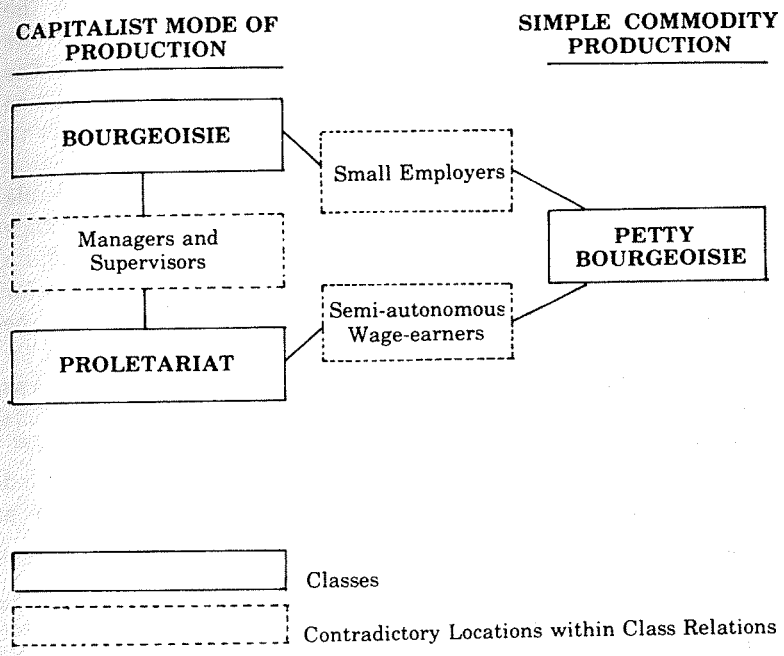

Figure 2.1 The Relationship of Contradictory Class Positions to Class Forces in Capitalist Society

The Processes of Class Relations

Three interconnected structural changes in the course of capitalist development can help us to unravel the social processes underlying class relations in advanced capitalism:[50] the progressive loss of control over the labour process on the part of the direct producers; the elaboration of complex authority hierarchies within capitalist enterprises and bureaucracies; and the differentiation of various functions originally embodied in the entrepreneurial capitalist.[51] Since each of these developments has been thoroughly studied elsewhere, I will only briefly review them here in order to give more substance to the social processes used in the rest of the analysis.

1. *Loss of control over the labour process by workers.* The saga of the progressive dispossession of the direct producers in the course of capitalist development has been told many times. The point that needs stressing here is that the loss of control over the labour process is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon, but has occurred gradually over a long period of time and exists in varying degrees even today. In the earliest capitalist production process, the direct producers generally maintained considerable control over the labour process. Often, especially in cottage industries, they even owned all or part of their immediate means of production. Such a situation made it much easier for the direct producers to control the pace of their labour and the length of their working day, thus making it more difficult for capitalists to raise the rate of exploitation. The net result was that workers' control over their own labour acted as a serious constraint on the accumulation process in early capitalism.[52]

Much of the history of class struggle between capitalists and workers, especially in the 19th century, can be seen as a

50. See ibid., chapter 2 for a considerably more elaborate discussion of these processes of class relations.

51. The point of studying these three historical transformations is less to understand their historical origins as such, than to use structural re-orderings of the capitalist system as a way of gaining insights into the social processes underlying class relations in contemporary capitalism. The epistemological assumption is that a number of distinct social processes are congealed in the class relation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and that an analysis of the historical transformations of that class relation is a way of gaining knowledge about the underlying processes themselves.

52. See Chapter 3, p. 170.

struggle over the terms of the control of the labour process.[53] As Stephen Marglin has argued, one of the major impulses for the creation of factories was the desire to undermine worker control.[54] At a minimum factory owners had much greater control over the length of the working day, and generally over other aspects of the labour process as well.

Once workers were gathered within factories, the assault on their remaining control of the labour process continued in the form of technical innovations which fragmented the production process and progressively "deskilled" the labour force.[55] Capitalists could force workers to work in the factory for ten hours by the clock, but as long as the worker maintained real autonomy in the labour process it was difficult for the capitalist to be sure of getting anywhere near ten hours of actual labour from the worker. The close supervision of the labour process is much easier when tasks are simple and routinized and their pace is determined by machinery rather than the worker. Thus, capitalists look for innovations which tend to reduce skill levels and reduce the autonomy of workers on the job. The culmination of this process was the mass production assembly line regulated by principles of Taylorism, in which the worker lost all autonomy and became virtually a human component of machinery itself.

The reverse tendency also exists within capitalism. As technology changes, new skills are needed and new categories of jobs are created in which the worker may have greater immediate control over the labour process. Furthermore, in recent decades the crude scientific management advocated by Taylor has been replaced at least partially in some corporations by "human relations" approaches to the problem of worker productivity. One part of such new approaches is, in principle, the "enrichment" of jobs and the enlargement of the sphere of decision-making under the control of the worker.

Both of these counter-tendencies to the general process of deskilling and the erosion of worker autonomy in the labour

53. See especially Katherine Stone, "The Origins of Job Structures in the Steel Industry", *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1974.

54. "What Do Bosses Do?", *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1974.

55. See Harry Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capitalism*, New York 1974.

process, however, still reflect the salience of control over the labour process as a dimension of class relations. While new skills are continually being created, it is also true that there is constant pressure to reduce the skill levels needed to perform a given task. Thus, for example, when computers were first being developed, the actual operators of computer hardware tended to be engineers. Gradually over the past twenty years this job has been "deskilled" until, at present, computer operators are technicians with only one or two years of post-high school training.

As for the various experiments with worker participation, such enlarged autonomy is almost always confined within very narrow limits and is always seen as a way of getting workers to work more productively. That is, control is relinquished—and generally peripheral control at that—only when it is more than compensated for by increasing production. Thus, in a report to the Conference Board[56] entitled "Job Design for Motivation", Harold Rush writes: "The current emphasis [in job design] is on gaining internal motivation from the employee so that he performs his tasks with more dedication and commitment, as contrasted with coercion, robot-style control, and machine-like pacing.... The design and redesign of jobs may be said to have a single purpose, though it is a purpose with a double edge: to increase both employee motivation and productivity."[57]

Greater worker control of the labour process, or what is often called "worker participation", is one important form of this redesigning of jobs to increase productivity. In a second Conference Board report entitled "Worker Participation: New Voices in Management", John Roach writes: "A Conference Board survey of top level executives in 50 countries indicates that participation concepts are winning increased acceptance as approaches to improving productivity, motivating job satisfaction, and resolving labour-management problems both

56. The Conference Board is a nonprofit business research organization which is, in its own words, "an institution for scientific research in the fields of business economics and business management. Its sole purpose is to promote prosperity and security by assisting in the effective operation and sound development of voluntary productive enterprise." Members of the Conference Board are drawn from the top executives of the largest corporations in the United States and generally the views of the Conference Board can be interpreted as reflecting the "vanguard" position of the American capitalist class.

57. Harold Rush, "Job Design for Motivation: Experiments in Job Enlargement and Job Enrichment", *Conference Board Report* No. 515, New York 1971.

within and outside traditional collective bargaining processes. Indeed, responses from the international panel suggest that a widening emphasis on participation is adding a broad new dimension to the operation of free enterprise in the Western World. That is not to say that management has decided it should share any of its board-room prerogatives with unions, works councils, or other worker representatives. On the contrary, the general mood of the 143 executives cooperating in the Board's survey is that management must resist attempts to usurp its ultimate authority to make the big decisions."[58]

Far from contradicting the importance of control of the labour process as a dimension of class relations, the sporadic trends towards increased worker participation reveal the underlying logic of this dimension. Capital tries to extract as much actual labour out of the worker during the work day as possible (this would hardly be denied by any capitalist). Control over the labour process is a basic means of accomplishing this. Under certain historical conditions, for example when a large proportion of the industrial work force are newly proletarianized petty bourgeois (artisans, peasants, etc.) with little experience of factory discipline and without proper work habits, strict and despotic control of the labour process may be the most effective structure of control from the capitalist point of view. Under contemporary conditions, a partial relaxation of direct control may accomplish the same end.[59] In any event, social relations of control over the labour process remain a basic dimension of class relations.

2. *The differentiation of the functions of capital*. No development in capitalist social relations has been used more often as "proof"

58. John Roach, "Worker Participation: New Voices in Management" *Conference Board Report* No. 564, New York 1973.

59. This is not to suggest that the capitalist simply decides what structure of control of the labour process is most advantageous for increasing the rate of exploitation, and then proceeds to adopt that form of control. In the 19th century there was often considerable resistance on the part of craft labour to efforts at deepening capitalist control over the labour process, and at the present many of the experiments in enlarged worker participation, especially in Europe, have been the result of pressures from workers rather than initiatives from capitalists. Control of the labour process is a constant object of class struggle (or perhaps more precisely: it is a dimension of class struggle), and the actual patterns of control which emerge should be seen as the outcome of such struggle and not simply manipulative devices used by capitalists.

that Marx's image of class structure is outmoded than the so-called "separation of ownership and control" in the modern corporation. Of course, no one can deny the considerable growth of managerial hierarchies in the modern corporation and the general decline of the traditional family-owned firm in favour of the joint-stock company (although, as Zeitlin forcefully argues, there are considerable data to indicate that the proponents of the "managerial revolution" thesis have grossly exaggerated these changes).[60] The issue is not whether professional managers play a bigger role in running corporations today than 100 years ago, but how such positions should be structurally interpreted in terms of a theory of class relations.

The apparent separation of ownership and control in the large corporation hides a complex process involving a whole series of structural transformations and differentiations. Two such transformations are of particular importance for our discussion: the functional differentiation between economic ownership and possession, and the partial dissociation between legal ownership and economic ownership. In the 19th century, all three of these dimensions of ownership were embodied in the entrepreneurial capitalist. As part of the process of the concentration and centralization of capital, these three dimensions of ownership have tended to become at least partially differentiated.

The partial separation of economic ownership (control over the flow of investments into production, or more concretely, control over *what* is produced) from possession (control over the production process, or control over *how* things are produced) is a consequence of the concentration and centralization of capital within the accumulation process. Increasing concentration and centralization has encouraged the differentiation of economic ownership and possession for two reasons: first, and most obviously, as the scale of both ownership and production increases, it becomes less and less practical for the same individuals to be equally involved in both functions. Competitive pressures will tend to push capitalists to hire professional managers to deal with specific aspects of production and eventually to help coordinate the production process as a whole. Secondly, as

60. Maurice Zeitlin, "Corporate Ownership and Control: the Large Corporation and the Capitalist Class", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 79, 1974.

Poulantzas has emphasized, there is a tendency in monopoly capitalism for the concentration and centralization of economic ownership to develop more rapidly than the concentration and centralization of possession, i.e. for a diverse collection of production processes to be formally united under a single economic ownership. In such circumstances it becomes impossible for the two functions of capital—ownership and possession—to be completely united in a single position.

Capitalist development has also been characterized by a gradual dissociation between formal legal ownership and real economic ownership. This is the famous phenomenon of the dispersion of stock ownership in the large corporation. The fact of such dispersion has been the core datum used by supporters of the managerial revolution thesis to argue that the control of the corporation has moved from property owners to professional managers. Marxists have generally drawn quite different conclusions. Building on the arguments of Hilferding, De Vroey writes: "Concerning the second aspect of the separation of ownership and control, i.e., the dissociation between legal ownership and ownership as a relation of production, the Marxist interpretation is as follows: the dispersion of stock among a large number of small owners is accepted as a matter of fact, and explained as a means to mobilize the ever increasing amount of capital needed for accumulation. But rather than seeing the dispersion of stock as an obstacle to concentrated control, Marxism interprets it in exactly the opposite way: as a means for reinforcing the actual control of big stockholders, who thus succeed in commanding an amount of funds out of proportion to their actual ownership. Paradoxically, dispersion of stock thus favors the centralization of capital."[61] For the managerial revolution proponents to prove their case, therefore, it is not enough to show that stock is widely dispersed. They must show that real economic ownership is in the hands of managers, i.e., that they actually control the accumulation process as a whole. The emphasis on economic ownership as opposed to formal legal ownership should not be taken to imply that legal title to stocks and other forms of property is irrelevant to understanding class relations. On the contrary: as long as capitalist relations of

61. Michael DeVroey, "The Separation of Ownership and Control in Large Corporations", *The Review of Radical Political Economics*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1975.

production remain embedded in the legal superstructure of private property, formal legal ownership is in general a *necessary* condition for economic ownership. The point of the distinction between economic and legal ownership is that formal title is not a *sufficient* condition for actual participation in the control of the investment and accumulation process.[62]

3. *The development of complex hierarchies.* The same process of concentration and centralization of capital that generates the basic differentiation of economic ownership and possession, also generates various forms of internal differentiation within each of these dimensions of ownership. First let us look at relations of possession. Relations of possession concern the direction and control of the capitalist production process. Such direction involves two analytically separable aspects: first, control of the physical means of production; second, control of labour. Even in the earliest capitalist enterprise, there was some structural differentiation between these two aspects. Foremen were typically excluded from any real control of the physical means of production, yet played an important role in the supervision of workers. As the capitalist enterprise expanded, additional layers of supervision were added, leading eventually to the complex hierarchy of social control within the monopoly corporation. Capitalist development has also produced an elaborate hierarchy within the other aspect of possession, control over the physical means of production. At the highest levels of the hierarchy, top managers control the entire apparatus of production.[63] Below them, various middle levels of management

62. The debate on the relationship between legal ownership and real economic ownership becomes especially important in the analysis of class relations in societies where all property is legally owned by the State (such as the USSR or China). The most vigorous defenders of the thesis that legal ownership is of entirely secondary significance tend to be those who wish to demonstrate that such countries are essentially capitalist. I will not address the questions of class in such state-owned economies. In the West, legal ownership cannot be relegated to a purely epiphenomenal status. Legal title to property remains the essential vehicle for controlling resources in capitalist societies and thus shaping the entire accumulation process. Not all individuals who own stock are part of the bourgeoisie, but all occupants of bourgeois class locations own substantial quantities of stock (or other forms of property in the means of production).

63. "Level" refers principally to the scope of control attached to a particular position, rather than the formal location within an organizational hierarchy (although the two would generally tend to coincide). The word "control" in this context should not be taken to imply that the *individual* who occupies a particular social position controls the means of production as an individual. Rather the word designates a social relationship between the position and the means of production. To say that top managers "control the entire apparatus of production" does not mean that any one individual by him/herself controls the entire apparatus, but rather that the individual occupies a position which participates in the control of the entire apparatus of production.

participate in the control of segments of the production process. At the bottom, certain categories of workers maintain some real control over their immediate production process (i.e. over *how* they do their jobs).

A similar line of reasoning can be developed for economic ownership. In the earliest capitalist enterprise, economic ownership was not organized hierarchically. A single figure was essentially responsible for the entire accumulation process. In the modern corporation, however, different levels of economic ownership can be distinguished. Full economic ownership refers to participation in the control of the overall investment and accumulation process. Typically, the highest executives in the corporation and certain members of the board of directors would occupy this position. Under most circumstances, full economic ownership implies a substantial level of formal legal ownership as well. Below this level there are executives and managers who participate in decisions concerning investments in either sub-units of the total production process (e.g. branches) or partial aspects of the entire investment process (e.g. marketing). Finally, minimal economic ownership involves control over *what* one produces in one's immediate labour process, even though one has no control over what is produced in the production process as a whole.[64] These various hierarchical levels within the relations of economic ownership and relations of possession are summarized in Table 2.7.

On the basis of this brief sketch of historical developments

64. Such residual economic ownership constitutes genuine ownership to the extent that genuine control over the disposition of resources—what is produced—exists. Of course, in most corporate settings such minimal ownership is highly constrained by higher level ownership relations, both in the sense that the range of possible uses of resources is limited by higher up decisions and in the sense that the magnitude of resources available for use may be strictly determined from above. When such control over what is produced becomes so marginal as to be irrelevant to the overall accumulation process, then it ceases to make sense to talk about even residual forms of economic ownership.

Table 2.7 Hierarchical Levels within Ownership Relations

	Relations of Economic Ownership (control over *what* is produced)	*Relations of Possession* (control over *how* things are produced) Control of means of production	Control over labour power	*Legal Ownership*
Full control	Control over the overall investment and accumulation process	Control over the entire apparatus of production	Control over the entire supervisory hierarchy	Sufficient stock to ensure influence on investments and accumulation
Partial control	Participation in decisions concerning either sub-units of the total production process or partial aspects of the entire investment process	Control over one segment of the total production process	Control over one segment of the supervisory hierarchy	Sufficient stock to ensure financial stake in profits of corporation (stock is a significant part of income)
Minimal control	Control over *what* one produces in one's immediate labour process	Control over one's immediate instruments of production; over *how* one does one's own job	Control over the direct producers, over immediate subordinates but not part of the hierarchy as such	Marginal stock ownership (stock is an insignificant part of income)
No control	Complete exclusion from participation in decisions about what to produce	Negligible control over any aspect of the means of production	No ability to invoke sanctions on other workers	No stock ownership

within capitalist relations of production, it is possible to isolate three central processes underlying the basic capital-labour relationship: control over the physical means of production; control over labour power; control over investments and resource allocation. The first two of these comprise what Poulantzas has called possession; the third is essentially the same as economic ownership. Again, it must be stressed that these three processes are the real stuff of class relations in capitalist society; they are not merely analytic dimensions derived from *a priori* reasoning.[65]

The fundamental class antagonism between workers and capitalists can be viewed as a polarization on each of these three underlying processes or dimensions: capitalists control the accumulation process, decide how the physical means of production are to be used, and control the authority structure within the labour process. Workers, in contrast, are excluded from the control over authority relations, the physical means of production, and the investment process. These two combinations of the three processes of class relations constitute the two basic antagonistic class locations within the capitalist mode of production.

When the capitalist system is analysed at the highest level of abstraction—the level of the pure capitalist mode of production—these are the only class positions defined by capitalist relations of production.[66] When we move to the next lower level

65. The non-arbitrariness of the choice of these three dimensions of class relations is reflected in their correspondence to the three elements in the formal value equations of Marxist political economy (total value = C + V + S). The control over the physical means of production represents relations of control over constant capital; control over labour implies relations of control over variable capital; and control over investments and accumulation implies relations of control over surplus value. (This correspondence was suggested by Michael Soref).

66. There is a strong tradition within Marxism which limits the definition of classes to this most abstract level. Such simple polarization views of class insist that except for the residues of classes from pre-capitalist modes of production, all positions within capitalist society fall either within the capitalist class or the working class. Typically, in such analyses all wage-earners are considered workers. The basic weakness of simple polarization views of the class structure is that they assume that the simplicity of class relations at the level of abstraction of the mode of production can be directly translated into a corresponding simplicity at the level of concrete societies. The added complexities of concrete social structures are taken to be of purely secondary importance. They may contribute to divisions within classes, but they in principle can have

of abstraction—what is generally called the level of the "social formation"—other class positions appear.

They appear, first of all, because real capitalist societies always contain subordinate modes of production other than the capitalist mode of production itself. In particular, simple commodity production (i.e., production organized for the market by independent self-employed producers who employ no workers) has always existed within capitalist societies. Within simple commodity production, the petty bourgeoisie is defined as having economic ownership and possession of the means of production, but having no control over labour power (since no labour power is employed). The relationship of the petty bourgeoisie to the polarized class positions of the capitalist mode of production is illustrated in Table 2.8.

A second way in which additional class positions appear when we leave the abstraction of the pure capitalist mode of production is that the three processes which constitute capitalist social relations of production do not always perfectly coincide. This non-coincidence of the dimensions of class relations defines the contradictory locations within class relations.

The Analysis of Contradictory Locations within Class Relations

We will explore two different kinds of contradictory locations: 1. contradictory locations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, i.e. locations defined by contradictory combinations of the three processes underlying class relations within the capitalist mode of production; 2. contradictory locations between the petty bourgeoisie and both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, i.e. locations situated between the capitalist mode of production and simple commodity production.[67] Table 2.9

no effects on the criteria for class boundaries. This is a fundamentally incorrect way of understanding the relationship between abstract and concrete levels of analysis. Abstract relations do not obliterate the importance of concrete complexities, but rather render them theoretically intelligible. As we will see below, contradictory class locations can be understood only with reference to the basic polarized class relations of the capitalist mode of production, and yet they cannot be reduced to those polarized class positions.

67. We will not discuss contradictory locations that occur because an individual simultaneously occupies two class positions within social relations of production. For example, a craftsman who works in a factory on weekdays may operate as a self-employed petty-bourgeois artisan on weekends and evenings. While such dual class membership may be important in certain historical circumstances, it does not pose the same kind of analytical problem as positions which are themselves located in a contradictory way within class relations.

Table 2.8 Unambiguous Locations within Class Relations

	PROCESSES UNDERLYING CLASS RELATIONS		
	Economic Ownership	*Possession*	
	Control over investments and the accumulation process	Control over physical means of production	Control over the labour power of others
Bourgeoisie	+	+	+
Proletariat	−	−	−
Petty bourgeoisie	+	+	−

+ Full Control − No Control (See Table 2.7 for precise definitions)

presents the basic relationship between the unambiguous locations illustrated in Table 2.8 and the contradictory locations. In addition to the three social processes discussed above, this chart also contains three juridical categories: legal ownership of property, legal status as the employer of labour power, and legal status as a seller of labour power. These three juridical processes have been included because they so often are treated as the determinants of class position. It must be kept in mind in referring to them that the juridical criteria are of strictly secondary importance; the fundamental issue remains the patterns of contradictory locations defined by the three substantive processes of class relations.

Contradictory Locations Between the Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie

One thing is immediately obvious from Table 2.9. The contradictory quality of a particular location within class relations is a variable rather than all-or-nothing characteristic. Certain

Table 2.9 Contradictory Locations Within Class Relations

	Substantive social processes comprising class relations			Juridical categories of class relations		
	Economic Ownership	*Possession*		*Legal Ownership*		*Wage Labour*
	Control over investments, resources	Control over the physical means of production	Control over the labour power of others	Legal ownership of property (capital, stocks, real estate etc.)	Legal status of being the employer of labour power	Sale of one's own labour power
Bourgeoisie						
Traditional capitalist	+	+	+	+	+	–
Top corporate executive	+	+	+	Partial	–	Minimal
Contradictory location between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie						
Top managers	Partial	+	+	Minimal	–	Partial
Middle managers	Minimal	Partial	Partial	–	–	+
Technocrats	Minimal/–	Minimal	Minimal	–	–	+
Foremen/line supervisors	–	–	Minimal	–	–	+
Proletariat	–	–	–	–	–	+
Contradictory location between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie						
Semi-autonomous employees	Minimal	Minimal	–	–	–	+
Petty bourgeoisie	+	+	–	+	–	–
Contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie						
Small employers	+	+	Minimal	+	Minimal	–

Full control Partial: Attenuated control Minimal: Residual control – No control
(See Table 2.7 for precise definitions)

positions can be thought of as occupying a contradictory location around the boundary of the proletariat; others as occupying a contradictory location around the boundary of the bourgeoisie.

The contradictory location closest to the working class is that of foremen and line supervisors. Foremen typically have little real control over the physical means of production, and while they do exercise control over labour power, this frequently does not extend much beyond being the formal transmission belt for orders from above. It is difficult to say whether during the course of capitalist development over the past century, the class location of foremen has moved closer to or further from the working class. On the one hand, the early foreman often participated directly in the production process alongside workers and even defended workers against arbitrary treatment by the boss. On the other hand, the foreman in the nineteenth-century factory often had much greater personal discretion and personal power than today. In the nineteenth century, authority within the capitalist factory was typically organized in much the same way as an army. There was a simple chain of command and the authority at each level was absolute with respect to the level below. Such a system Marx aptly termed "factory despotism", and foremen in such a factory had at least the potential of being petty despots. As the capitalist enterprise grew in scale and complexity, the authority structure gradually became more bureaucratized. As Weber would put it, foremen increasingly became the administrators of impersonal rules rather than the dispensers of personal fiats.

Richard Edwards, in a study of work norms in bureaucratically structured capitalist organizations, describes this shift in authority relations as follows: "What distinguishes modern enterprises from their earlier and cruder prototypes—and in particular, what distinguishes bureaucratic organization from simple hierarchy—is that in bureaucratically organized enterprises, the exercise of power becomes *institutionalized*. External, arbitrary, personal commands from the boss are replaced by established rules and procedures: 'rule of law' replaces 'rule of personal command'. Work activities become directed by rules. Supervisors at all levels, no longer directing the worker's activities by personal instruction, merely

enforce the rules and evaluate (reward or penalize) their subordinates according to pre-established criteria for adequate work performance. More and more, the work structure is designed so that administrative control can replace executive control."[68] The development of the capitalist enterprise has thus pushed foremen in two opposing directions: they have moved further from workers by becoming less involved in direct production, and they have moved closer to workers by gradually having their personal power bureaucratized. Superficially at least, it would seem that the first of these tendencies probably dominated during the first part of this century, while the second tendency probably dominates today. In any event, when the control of supervisors over labour power becomes so attenuated that the supervisor lacks even the capacity to invoke negative sanctions, then the position really merges with the working class proper and should no longer be thought of as a contradictory location. This would be the case, for example, of the chief of a work team who has certain special responsibilities for coordinating activities of others in the team, but lacks any real power over them.

At the other end of the contradictory location between workers and capitalists, top managers occupy a contradictory location at the boundary of the bourgeoisie. While top managers are generally characterized by limited participation in economic ownership, they differ little from the bourgeoisie in terms of relations of possession. Again, at the very top of the managerial hierarchy, corporate executives essentially merge with the capitalist class itself.

The most contradictory locations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are occupied by middle managers and what can loosely be termed "technocrats". Technocrat in this context refers to technicians and professionals of various sorts within the corporate hierarchy who tend to have a limited degree of autonomy over their own work (*minimal* control over what they produce and how they produce it) and a limited control over subordinates, but who are not in command of pieces of the productive apparatus. Middle managers, on the other hand, control various pieces of the labour process; they have control

68. *Alienation and Inequality: Capitalist Relations of Production in Business Enterprises*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Economics, Harvard, p. 102.

not only over immediate subordinates but over part of the authority hierarchy itself. Both middle managers and technocrats have, in Harry Braverman's words, one foot in the bourgeoisie and one foot in the proletariat. In discussing new technical occupations and middle management, Braverman writes: "If we are to call this a 'new middle class', however, as many have done, we must do so with certain reservations. The old middle class occupied that position by virtue of its place outside the polar class structure; it possessed the attributes of neither capitalist nor worker; it played no direct role in the capital accumulation process, whether on one side or the other. This 'new middle class', by contrast, occupies its intermediate position not because it is outside the process of increasing capital, but because, as part of this process, it takes its characteristics from *both sides*. Not only does it receive its petty share of the prerogatives and rewards of capital, but it also bears the mark of the proletarian condition."[69] Unlike line supervisors and foremen on the one hand, and top managers on the other, middle managers and technocrats do not have a clear class pole to which they are attached. The contradictory quality of their class location is much more intense than in the other cases we have discussed, and as a result it is much more difficult to assess the general stance they will take within class struggle.

Contradictory Locations between the Petty Bourgeoisie and Other Classes

The analysis of the contradictory locations between the petty bourgeoisie and other classes poses a somewhat different problem from the contradictory locations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, since it involves locations between different modes of production rather than within a single mode of production.

The contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie is conceptually simpler than between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The distinctive feature of capitalist production is the appropriation of surplus-value through the exploitation of workers in the labour process. In simple commodity production, on the other hand, there is no exploitation; whatever surplus is produced is generated by the

69. Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, p. 467.

petty-bourgeois producer and his/her family. In general, of course, the surplus is likely to be very small and thus little if any accumulation is likely to occur. When a petty-bourgeois producer employs a single helper, there is an immediate change in the social relations of production, for the labour of a worker can now be exploited. Still, the surplus-value appropriated from a single employee is likely to be very small; most importantly, it is likely to be less than the surplus product generated by the petty-bourgeois producer him/herself. This is especially likely since frequently in petty-bourgeois production a considerable amount of labour is contributed by unpaid family members. As additional employees are added, the proportion of the total surplus product that is generated by the petty-bourgeois family declines. At some point it becomes less than half of the total surplus product, and eventually becomes a small fraction of the total surplus. At that point, the petty-bourgeois producer becomes firmly a small capitalist. There is no *a priori* basis for deciding how many employees are necessary to become a small capitalist. This number would vary considerably for different technologies employed in production and for different historical periods. In any event, between such a small capitalist and the pure petty-bourgeois producer lies the contradictory location between the capitalist class and the petty-bourgeoisie.

The contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat can perhaps best be understood by returning to the historic process of proletarianization of the petty bourgeoisie. The central dynamic underlying this transformation was the need of capital to increase its control over the labour process. Each step of the transformation involved a deeper penetration of capitalist domination into the labouring activity of direct producers, until in the classic form of scientific management, the direct producer has no control whatsoever over his/her work. This process is constantly being re-enacted within capitalism; it is not a process which was somehow completed at the beginning of this century.

Today there are still categories of employees who have a certain degree of control over their own immediate conditions of work, over their immediate labour process. In such instances, the labour process has not been completely proletarianized. Thus, even though such employees work for the self-expansion

of capital and even though they have lost the legal status of being self-employed, they can still be viewed as occupying residual islands of petty-bourgeois relations of production within the capitalist mode of production itself. In their immediate work environment, they maintain the work process of the independent artisan while still being employed by capital as wage labourers. They control *how* they do their work, and have at least some control over *what* they produce. A good example of this is a researcher in a laboratory or a professor in an elite university. Such positions may not really involve control over other people's labour power, yet have considerable immediate control over conditions of work (i.e. research). More generally, many white-collar technical employees and certain highly skilled craftsmen have at least a limited form of this autonomy in their immediate labour process. Such minimal control over the physical means of production by employees outside of the authority hierarchy constitutes the basic contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

While there is some debate on the question, it seem likely that in the course of capitalist development over the past fifty years, this particular kind of contradictory location has been somewhat reduced. It is certainly true that white-collar employees have increased as a proportion of the labour force, but as Braverman has forcefully shown, this expansion of white-collar employment has been combined with a constant proletarianization of the working conditions of white-collar labour. It remains to be shown whether the net effect of these two tendencies—the expansion of white-collar employment and the proletarianization of white-collar work—has increased or decreased the contradictory locations between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie. At any rate, it seems almost certain that the large majority of white-collar employees, especially clerical and secretarial employees, have—at most—trivial autonomy on the job and thus should be placed within the working class itself.

How much autonomy is really necessary to define a position as occupying the contradictory location between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie? Surely the criterion of absolutely any autonomy whatsoever is too broad. While the historical data on the labour process are rather meagre, it is

unlikely that more than a small fraction of the working class was ever characterized by the classic image of the fully proletarianized worker, totally under the control of the capitalist through a minutely subdivided labour process governed by principles of scientific management. Most workers, most of the time, have been able to maintain at least some residual control over their immediate labour process. Similarly, it would be inappropriate to restrict the concept of "semi-autonomy" to positions which, like university professors, have extremely high levels of control over the pace of work, the scheduling of work, the content of work, etc. Clearly, then, a certain amount of arbitrariness will inevitably enter into any attempt rigorously to define the semi-autonomous employee class location.[70]

Provisionally, the minimum criterion for semi-autonomy which I will adopt is that such positions must involve at least some control both over what is produced (minimal economic ownership) as well as how it is produced (minimal possession). This means that positions such as laboratory technicians would not be included in the semi-autonomous category since such positions would generally not involve any control over what kind of experiments were done in the lab, even though a technician might have very considerable control over other conditions of work (pace, breaks, techniques used, etc.). A research scientist, on the other hand, would often not simply have autonomy over how he/she performed an experiment, but over what experiments were performed. Research scientists, therefore, would be firmly within the semi-autonomous employee category.[71]

70. A similar problem exists with the other contradictory locations. How many employees are necessary to transform a small employer (the contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie) into a proper capitalist? How residual must the authority of a foreman be before he/she should be considered a worker? How much participation in investment decisions is necessary before a top manager should be thought of as part of the bourgeoisie itself? In every case, therefore, there will be ambiguous locations right at the boundaries of polarized classes, and a certain arbitrariness will occur whenever formal criteria are applied to such positions. The semi-autonomous employee category, however, poses additional problems because of the ambiguities in the very concept of "autonomy".

71. There is an important relationship between Poulantzas's discussion of mental labour and this discussion of semi-autonomous employees. Poulantzas defines mental labour as labour which involves "secret knowledge" of the production process, in the sense of having knowledge about the organization and coordination of the production process as a whole. Poulantzas also emphasizes that to be mental labour (in his sense of the term) it is not enough to simply have such knowledge; it is necessary to actually use it within the production process (see footnote 17 above). Semi-autonomous employees are, in these terms, employees with such knowledge of the production process as a whole, who have the capacity to use such knowledge on their jobs. This is what it means to have minimal control over what is produced and how it is produced.

Several other contradictory locations could be discussed. For example, the owners of fast food and gas station franchises could be seen as occupying a contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie or small employers and managers. While they maintain some of the characteristics of self-employed independent producers, they also become much more like functionaries for large capitalist corporations. Professors with large research grants which enable them directly to hire research assistants, secretaries, etc., could be thought of as occupying a contradictory location between the semi-autonomous employees and small employers. Other special cases could be given, but the most important contradictory locations are the ones discussed above.

The Size of Contradictory Locations

On the basis of the same data we used to analyse the size of the working class using Poulantzas's criteria, we can make some rough estimates of the size of the various contradictory locations within class relations. The results are presented in Figure 2.2. The criteria used to operationalize the high and low estimates for each category are given in Table 2.10.

Unfortunately, the survey that was available did not contain any precise information on the autonomy of workers in the sense we are using that concept. The survey did, however, contain a number of questions on subjective evaluations of job characteristics. Respondents in the survey were asked to indicate whether a series of job descriptions characterized their own job "a lot", "somewhat", "a little" or "not at all". Two of these descriptions bear on the question of job autonomy:

"A job that allows you a lot of freedom as to how you do your work."

"A job that allows you to make a lot of decisions on your own."

These questions are obviously subjective, since it was left up

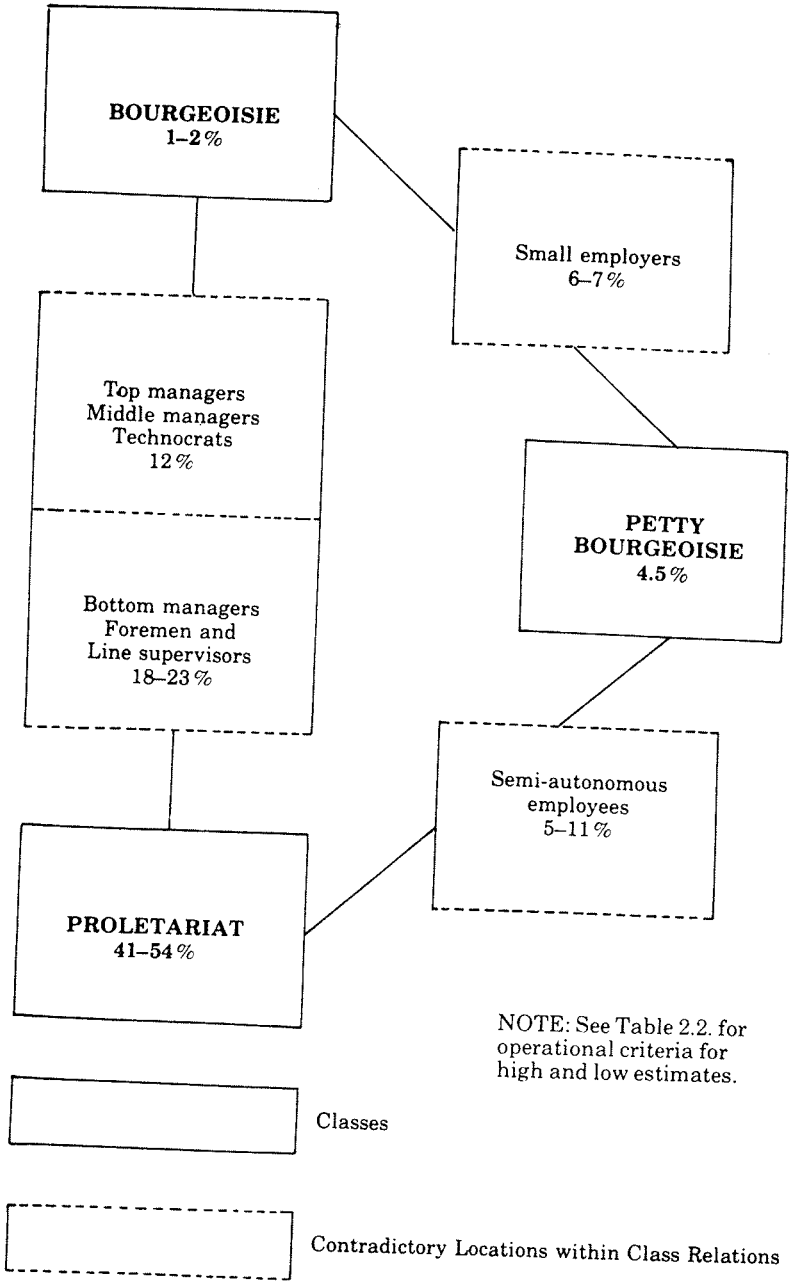

Figure 2.2 Distribution of the Economically Active Population into Contradictory Class Locations (1969)

to each respondent to define what "a lot" means, what "freedom" means, what "decisions" means, and so on. The fact that 46 per cent of the respondents say that having a lot of freedom characterizes their job "a lot", and 49 per cent say that making a lot of decisions describes their job "a lot" reflects the subjective quality of the questions. For the purposes of the present analysis, I will assume that individuals within positions which are genuinely semi-autonomous will answer "a lot" to *both* of these subjective job descriptions. The high estimate of the contradictory location between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie (11 per cent of the economically active population) includes all non-supervisory employees who score high on both of these descriptions. The low estimate adds information about the respondent's occupation to this subjective criterion of job autonomy. The U.S. Department of Labour has constructed a "Dictionary of Occupational Titles" (D.O.T.) which codes all occupations in terms of the typical relationship to data, things and people which characterizes that occupation. The low estimate of the semi-autonomous employee category (5 per cent of the economically active population) includes all non-supervisory employees who scored high on the subjective autonomy questions and whose occupation is classified as having a complex relation to data and things in the D.O.T. (see Table 2.10 for more detailed explanation). Because of the extreme vagueness of the subjective autonomy question, this low estimate is probably closer to the correct proportion.

The figures for the contradictory location between the working class and the bourgeoisie are also only rough estimates. Since all we know is whether or not the respondent supervises people, we have certainly included some positions which involve virtually no real control over labour power and thus should belong to the working class proper. We have also included some top executives in the contradictory location who should really have been placed in the bourgeoisie. In any event, this latter problem involves a very small proportion of the total population, perhaps 1–2 per cent of all managers. No questions were asked in the survey which enable us accurately to distinguish between top managers, middle managers and technocrats, and line supervisors and foremen. We can use occupational titles to make some crude estimates. We will assume that all super-

Table 2.10 Criteria Used in High and Low Estimates for Sizes of Classes

	High estimate	*Low estimate*
Semi-autonomous Employees	All non-supervisory employees who score high on both questions concerning subjective autonomy.[a]	Those non-supervisory employees who score high on the subjective autonomy questions and whose occupation is classified as having a complex relation to data and things by DOT classification[b]
Small Employers	Less than 50 workers	Less than 10 workers
Managers/Supervisors Top/middle managers	Professionals, technicians and managers (by occupational title) who say they supervise people on their job	
Bottom managers/ supervisors	All supervisors not classified as top/middle managers	Excludes operatives and labourers
Workers	All non-supervisory employees plus semi-autonomous employees whose occupations are classified as non-complex by the DOT, plus supervisors whose occupations are operatives or labourers	Non-supervisory employees who score low on either subjective autonomy question

[a] Jobs which the respondent claims are characterized "a lot" by *both* of the following descriptions:
1) "a job that allows a lot of freedom as to how you do your work"
2) "a job that allows you to make a lot of decisions on your own"

[b] The Dictionary of Occupational Titles codes occupations in terms of their relationship to data and to things in the following way:
relationship to things: 0. setting up; 1. precision working; 2. operating-controlling; 3. driving-operating; 4. manipulating; 5. tending; 6. feeding-offbearing; 7. handling; 8. no significant relationship to things.
relationship to data: 0. synthesizing; 1. coordinating; 2. analysing; 3. compiling; 4. computing; 5. copying; 6. comparing; 7–8. no significant relationship to data.
An individual whose occupation scored 0–2 on data and 0–2 or 8 on things, or who scored 0–2 on things and 7–8 on data, was classified as having a "complex" job.

visors who say that they are professionals, managers or technicians are probably technocrats, middle managers or top managers. All the rest we will assume are line supervisors or foremen. The high estimate for this bottom category includes all supervisors who are not classified in the top-middle management position; the low estimate excludes operatives and labourers, most of whom are probably heads of work teams rather than actual foremen. On the basis of these estimates, approximately 12 per cent of the economically active population falls into the middle manager/top manager contradictory location between the working class and the bourgeoisie, while somewhere between 18 per cent and 23 per cent occupy the contradictory location at the boundary of the working class. If we take ten employees as the cut-off point for small capitalists, then the contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie consists of about 6 per cent of the population. If we take fifty employees as the cut-off, then this increases to 7 per cent.

Overall, on the basis of these statistics, the working class (i.e. non-supervisory, non-autonomous employees) in the United States consists of between 41 and 54 per cent of the economically active population. At the boundaries of the working class are another 25–35 per cent of the population, depending upon which estimates are used. The total potential class basis for a socialist movement, consisting of the working class and those contradictory locations closest to the working class, is thus probably somewhere between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the population.

Class Interests and the Definition of Class Positions

To briefly recapitulate the argument so far, we have analysed the class relations of capitalist society in terms of three processes underlying social relations of production: control of labour power, control of the physical means of production and control of investments and resources. The central class forces of capitalist society—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—can be understood as representing polar class positions within each of these three processes. The petty bourgeoisie, on the other hand, is defined by the second and the third of these processes within simple commodity production. We then defined contradictory

locations within class relations as situations in which these three processes did not perfectly correspond to the basic class forces within the capitalist mode of production or to the petty bourgeoisie in simple commodity production. This led to the analysis of three contradictory locations: managers and supervisors occupy a contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; small employers occupy such a position between the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie; and semi-autonomous employees occupy a contradictory location between the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Thus far, no mention has been made of positions in the social structure which are not directly defined by the social relations of production and would thus not be explicitly encompassed by the criteria so far elaborated. Such positions would include housewives, students, pensioners, people permanently on welfare. If one wanted to adopt a fairly narrow conception of relations of *production*, the class location of people employed in the administrative, repressive and ideological apparatuses of the state would also not be directly defined by the criteria discussed above. What then is the relationship of such positions to the structural categories defined directly by the social relations of production? In order to answer this question it is necessary to introduce another distinction into the discussion: the distinction between *fundamental* and *immediate* class interests.

Immediate and Fundamental Class Interests

It is important to be quite clear about how we will use the term "interests" before we discuss the distinction between immediate and fundamental levels of class interests. To make a claim about objective class interests is to make a claim about *potential* objectives of class actors.[72] It makes no sense at all to talk about "interests" which can *never* become actual objectives of real struggles. Not all potential objectives of class actors, however, can be considered class interests. We therefore need to be able to

72. To talk about the objectives of the class struggle is very similar to talking about the *subjective motives* or the class *consciousness* of class actors. In general, I prefer to use the expression "objectives" since it does not have the psychologistic overtones of either subjective motives or consciousness. Nevertheless, to talk about real objectives of struggle is to talk about a certain constellation of subjective motives/consciousness in the actors.

distinguish between objective *class* interests and other kinds of interests (potential objectives). Class interests in capitalist society are those potential objectives which become actual objectives of struggle in the absence of the mystifications and distortions of capitalist relations. Class interests, therefore, are in a sense hypotheses: they are hypotheses about the objectives of struggles which would occur if the actors in the struggle had a scientifically correct understanding of their situations. To make the claim that socialism is in the "interests" of the working class is not simply to make an ahistorical, moralistic claim that workers ought to be in favour of socialism, nor to make a normative claim that they would be "better off" in a socialist society, but rather to claim that if workers had a scientific understanding of the contradictions of capitalism, they would in fact engage in struggles for socialism.[73] In these terms, the very definition of class is systematically linked to the concept of class struggle: to define a position as located within the working class is to say that such a position can potentially sustain socialist objectives in class struggles.

Within this general conception of class interests it is possible to distinguish between what can be termed immediate and fundamental interests. Immediate class interests constitute interests within a given structure of social relations; fundamental interests centre on interests which call into question the structure of social relations itself.[74] That is, immediate

73. This is a somewhat oversimplified account of interests. Mystification is not the only factor which obstructs the translation of objective interests into subjective motives within the class struggle. The repressiveness of the state may equally block the organization of struggle around various class interests. The critical point is that to posit class interests is to posit actual subjective orientations towards struggle which would emerge in the absence of such impediments. It should also be noted that while this concept of interests does involve an implicit notion of the rationality of class actors (under specified objective conditions), it has little to do with the utilitarian notions of people as rational, utility-maximizing *individuals*. There is no claim that subjective motives will emerge because individuals *qua* individuals personally have a scientific understanding of their class situation. *Class* interests can only be defined in terms of the potential subjective motives of collectivities, not simply individuals.

74. The distinction between immediate and fundamental interests is not necessarily equivalent to a temporal distinction between short-run and long-run interests. While it is often the case that struggles over the very structure of society are "long-run" struggles, the critical issue is what the objective of struggle is, not the time horizon for that struggle.

interests are interests defined within a given mode of production (i.e. interests which take the mode of production as a given), while fundamental interests are defined between modes of production (i.e., they call into question the mode of production itself). The immediate economic interests of the working class, for example, are defined largely by market relations. Struggles for wages, better living conditions, better education opportunities and so forth all constitute struggles for objectives defined within the basic structure of capitalism. Struggles for socialism, on the other hand, challenge the premises of capitalist relations and reflect the fundamental interests of the working class.[75]

Immediate interests are not "false" interests; they are "incomplete" interests. The struggle over wages reflects a correct understanding by workers of their immediate conditions of existence within capitalism; the *restriction* of struggles to questions of wages, however, reflects an incomplete understanding of the nature of capitalist society as a whole, for it fails to grasp the possibility of transcending the entire system of capitalist exploitation through socialism.

Immediate and fundamental interests do not exist apart from each other; they are dialectically linked. On the one hand, because immediate interests are real, because they impinge directly on the day-to-day existence of workers in capitalist society, it is utopian to conceive of class struggle organized around fundamental interests which does not as well deal with immediate interests. On the other hand, the working class is much more divided at the level of immediate interests than at the level of fundamental interests. Skilled workers are generally in much more favourable market conditions than

75. Because of the manifest conflicts generated by market relations, many sociologists have taken the market to be the central basis for class differentiation. This is especially true for Max Weber who defines classes primarily in terms of market position: "But always this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate. 'Class situation' is, in this sense, ultimately 'market situation'." (*Economy and Society*, ed. by Guenther Roth, New York: 1968, p. 928.) This general stance has been extended by Anthony Giddens (*Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*, London 1973), who explicitly defines "middle" classes in terms of a market capacity rooted in the possession of educational skills. In all such treatments, classes are defined primarily in terms of immediate interests at the economic level.

unskilled workers and thus often have different immediate interests from other workers. Because of labour market segmentation, male workers may have different immediate interests from female workers, black workers from white workers. Because immediate interests divide the working class, and because they do not directly call into question the structure of capitalist relations, the durability of capitalism depends, in part, on the extent to which struggles over fundamental interests are displaced into struggles over immediate interests.

This contradiction between the immediate and fundamental interests of the working class pervades debates on the left: socialist struggles must take seriously immediate interests, and yet struggles over immediate interests tend to undermine socialist struggles. This contradiction cannot be wished away; it is inherent in the class relations of capitalist society itself. Only in a revolutionary situation do the struggles over immediate and fundamental interests begin fully to coincide (indeed, this might be part of the definition of a revolutionary situation: a situation in which the struggle for objectives within the dominant mode of production directly reinforces struggles over the mode of production).[76]

The Class Location of Positions not Directly Determined by Production Relations

With this understanding of the distinction between immediate and fundamental interests, we can now approach the problem of the class location of various positions in the social structure which are not directly determined by production relations. As a general proposition, the class location of such positions is determined by their relationship to the fundamental interests of classes defined within the social relations of production. Let us see what this means for a number of specific categories of positions defined outside of production relations.

76. One way of interpreting André Gorz's notion of "non-reformist reforms" is to view them as reforms at the level of immediate interests which, even in non-revolutionary situations, tend to reinforce struggles over fundamental interests. This does not mean that there is no tension between such reforms and fundamental interests; but it does imply that within the range of possible reforms compatible with capitalist social relations, some are much more coincident with fundamental interests of the working class than others.

1. *Housewives.* A variety of strategies have been adopted to deal with the class location of housewives. In some accounts, domestic production is treated as a subsidiary mode of production in its own right, in which the male occupies the position of exploiter and the female, the position of exploited. In other accounts, household production is treated as the final state of capitalist production itself, and the housewife as an unpaid worker who is indirectly subordinated to capital.[77]

A much more straightforward way of dealing with this question is to examine the fundamental interests of housewife positions. In particular, in what sense do the fundamental *class* interests of the housewife of a worker differ from those of the worker himself? One might want to claim that she has different interests as a woman, but do her class interests differ in any meaningful way? Does she have any less of a fundamental interest in socialism? Unless one is willing to argue that working class housewives have different interests with respect to socialism, then it is clear that they fall within the working class. This does not in any way imply that the sexual division of labour is unimportant, that women are not oppressed within that division of labour, but simply that the sexual division of labour does not create a division of fundamental *class* interests between husbands and their housewives.[78]

2. *Students.* Like housewives, students are not directly engaged in production relations. The class locations of students, therefore, must be defined by the class location into which they will move upon the completion of their studies. Student positions, in

77. For a review of alternative strategies of a class analysis of housewives, see Terry Fee, *Review of Radical Political Economics*, Summer 1976.

78. This treatment of the class location of housewives is sometimes viewed as sexist, since it assigns the class position of the housewife on the basis of the class location of the husband. If we treat the family as the essential unit of analysis, and ask: how is the family articulated with production relations, then it is clear that the class location of the housewife is not defined via her husband but via the family unit of which they both are a part. It is, indeed, a reflection of the sexism of capitalist society that the division of labour within such a family unit often sends the man out to work and leaves the woman in the home. But it is not sexist to identify the class location of the woman in terms of the way in which the family is inserted into capitalist relations of production. The only way of identifying how the family is so inserted is then to examine the class location of the husband.

this sense, should be thought of as pre-class positions, as positions which are linked with greater or lesser certainty to specific class destinies. Daniel Bertaux has suggested that the appropriate way of dealing with such positions is as parts of class-*trajectories*: a life-time structure of positions through which an individual passes in the course of a work career.[79] Student slots constitute the first stage of such trajectories, and their class location must be defined by the class content of the trajectory as a whole. It is the fundamental class interests of such trajectories, rather than the class *origins* of the student which defines their class location.

3. *Pensioners.* Pensioners pose the opposite problem from students. They occupy post-class locations rather than pre-class locations. But like students, their class can only be understood in terms of the trajectories of class positions to which they are linked.

4. *The unemployed; welfare recipients.* Temporarily unemployed people—the reserve army of the unemployed—pose no special problem for a class analysis. Like students and pensioners, they are tied to trajectories of class positions, and this defines their basic class location. The category of permanently unemployed, on the other hand, is more problematic. In classical Marxism, such positions were generally identified as "lumpenproletariat", the underclass of society. This is not an entirely satisfactory way of classifying such positions, for it suggests that they have fundamentally opposed interests to the working class, and thus would play at best an ambivalent role in socialist struggles.

79. Daniel Bertaux, *Destins Personnels et Structures de Classe*, Paris 1977. In a personal correspondence, Bertaux has suggested that all class positions should be understood as trajectories rather than "empty places". This implies that there is a certain indeterminacy in a given individual's class location at any moment in time, since with few exceptions, a given slot may be linked to multiple potential trajectories. One of the critical aspects of a class structure, in these terms, is the degree of such indeterminacy, how it is spread out over the life-cycle, how it is distributed in the population. It must be noted that this is not a simple recasting of the old problem of social mobility (although there is a certain relationship to the problem of mobility). Rather, the argument is that many job changes which look like mobility are not mobility at all, but merely different phases of a single trajectory. The only genuine mobility would be situations in which individuals move from one trajectory to another.

At the level of immediate interests, to be sure, there is certainly a tremendous gulf between the working class and the permanently unemployed, at least in the United States, since welfare payments come directly out of taxes and workers see those taxes as coming out of their own labour. At the level of fundamental interests, the question becomes much more ambiguous. If we adopted a purely normative stance towards interests, then it would be easy to say that the permanently unemployed would undoubtedly "benefit" from socialism. But the same could be said of feudal peasants, slaves, and even many small shopkeepers; yet such positions would not thereby fall into the working class.[80] The question is not whether on the basis of ahistorical, utilitarian criteria an individual who is permanently unemployed would benefit from socialism, but whether socialism is a potential objective of struggle for such positions. That is, are those positions linked to capitalist relations of production in such a way that they potentially produce socialist working class consciousness? I cannot adequately answer this question. While it is certainly the case that the conditions of the permanently unemployed can engender an anti-capitalist consciousness, it is less clear whether they would systematically generate or sustain a socialist consciousness. As a purely provisional solution to this problem, the permanently unemployed can be considered a marginalized segment of the working class.

5. *Employees in political and ideological apparatuses*. The final category of positions not directly defined by production relations are positions located entirely within what has traditionally been called the "superstructure": policemen, preachers, professors, etc. How can we understand the fundamental class interests of such positions? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to expand our discussion of class interests from purely economic class interests (socialist vs. capitalist organization of

80. The vaguer concept of "the people" or sometimes "the masses" is sometimes used to include all oppressed classes which, at least in a utilitarian-economic sense, would benefit from a socialist transformation. The working class, however, is clearly a narrower concept, defined by a specific structural location within capitalist society. That structural location does not merely give workers a material benefit from socialism, but provides the structural suppport for a socialist consciousness (i.e., for the historical emergence of the subjective interest in a socialist transformation).

production) to political and ideological class interests (socialist vs. capitalist organization of the state and ideology). Once this is done, we can analyse the relationship between different locations within the political and ideological apparatuses to these interests.

The fundamental interest of the capitalist class at the political and ideological level is to prevent the working class from acquiring state power and ideological hegemony. In different periods of capitalist development this implies different concrete class objectives, but throughout the history of capitalism it has implied the maintenance of hierarchical and bureaucratic structures within the political and ideological apparatuses.[81] Such bureaucratic structures are essential in protecting the capitalist state from potential working class domination.

The fundamental interests of the working class at the political and ideological level are, in a dialectical manner, to obtain state power and establish ideological hegemony. This implies a qualitative restructuring of the capitalist state—what is polemically referred to as "smashing" the state—in ways which allow the working class as a class to exercise state power. While the precise contours of such a reorganization are impossible to specify in advance, the minimum requirement is that they be radically democratic and antibureaucratic.

Different positions within the bureaucratic structures of the political and ideological apparatuses of capitalist society clearly have different relationships to these fundamental bourgeois and proletarian class interests. Schematically, positions within the political and ideological apparatuses can be grouped into three functional categories in terms of these antagonistic class interests:

a. *bourgeois positions* involving control over the creation of state policies in the political apparatuses and the production of ideology in the ideological apparatuses. Examples would include the top bureaucratic positions in the state, churches, universities, and other such institutions.

b. *contradictory locations* involving the execution of state policies and the dissemination of ideology. Examples would include a beat policeman and a high school teacher.

81. See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of the centrality of bureaucratic structures for bourgeois political domination.

c. *proletarian positions* involving complete exclusion from either the creation or execution of state policies and ideology. Examples would include a clerk or janitor in a police station and a typist in a school.[82]

In the analysis of positions within the ideological apparatuses, the central issue is the social relations of control over the apparatuses of ideological production *per se*, not simply the participation in the production of ideology. A news reporter, for example, is to a greater or lesser extent involved in producing ideology, but is generally completely excluded from the control over the news apparatus as a whole, and would thus not occupy the bourgeois position within the news media. In these terms, it would be possible further to elaborate this schema of class locations within the ideological apparatuses by introducing the notion of petty bourgeois positions (self-employed, independent intellectuals who control their process of ideological production) and "semi-autonomous" positions (positions which have some control over their immediate production of ideology, but do not control the apparatus of ideological production at all). A novelist might fall into the former category, an assistant professor into the latter. For present purposes, however, I will use the simpler schema of bourgeois, contradictory locations and proletarian positions within the ideological apparatuses.[83]

Extended Definitions of Classes

On the basis of this discussion of fundamental class interests, we can now give a more elaborate definition of classes within capitalist society. The working class can be defined as those positions which:

82. In practice, these three levels within the political and ideological apparatuses can be operationalized in much the same way that the social relations of production at the economic level were operationalized. That is, the working class position in both cases involves exclusion from control over resources, physical means of production/administration, and labour power. The contradictory location involves exclusion from any basic control over resources, but generally does involve some amount of control over physical means of production/administration and labour of others. Finally the bourgeois position in both the political/ideological apparatuses and the economy involves substantial amounts of control over resources, physical means of production/administration and labour.

83. While it is fairly easy to define a petty-bourgeois position at the ideological level (independent intellectuals), it is much less clear how to define a petty bourgeois location at the political level. This suggests, possibly, a critical difference between political and ideological levels of social structures: the political level is much more tightly organized within the framework of capitalist relations than is the ideological.

(a) occupy the working class position within the social relations of production, i.e., wage labour which is excluded from control over money capital, physical capital and labour power; or,
(b) are linked directly to the working class through immediate family or class trajectories; or,
(c) occupy working class positions within political and ideological apparatuses, i.e., positions which are excluded from either the creation or execution of state policy and ideology.

In a complementary manner, the bourgeois class can be defined as those positions which:
(a) occupy the bourgeois position within the social relations of production, i.e., positions of control over money capital, physical capital and labour power; or,
(b) are linked directly to the bourgeoisie through families or class trajectories; or,
(c) occupy bourgeois positions within the political and ideological apparatuses, i.e., positions which involve the control over the creation of state policy and the production of ideology.

Finally, contradictory class locations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat can be defined as those positions which:
(a) occupy a contradictory location within the social relations of production, i.e., positions which involve a non-coincidence of relations of control over money capital, physical capital and labour power; or,
(b) are linked directly to contradictory locations through families or class trajectories; or,
(c) occupy a contradictory location within the political and ideological apparatuses, i.e., execute but do not create state policy, or disseminate but do not control the production of bourgeois ideology.

Class Structure and Class Struggle

It is all very well and good to clarify the structure of positions defined by social relations of production and to link these to