

## Social Movements and Class Analysis

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### Abstract

This paper puts forward a three-dimensional class model that is based on Bourdieu's notions of economic, political, and cultural capital. I argue that knowledge-based capitalism is a complex society that requires a complex class model and that class continues to be an important factor of social analysis and social movement research. With the help of an analysis that covers empirical findings about protest activities in 15 selected countries from the years 1981, 1990, and 1995/1997 the complex class model is connected to social movements research. The results show that cultural and economic capital are important factors in mobilizing or demobilizing protest, that the new knowledge and service class is the most active group in protest, and that there continues to be a significant political left-right distinction concerning protest activities.

**Keywords:** social movements, protest, class, Pierre Bourdieu

### 1. Beyond One-Dimensional Class Analysis

The focus of this paper is the relationship of protest movements and class analysis. Although some research has been devoted to considering the theoretical relationship of class and New Social Movements (NSMs), there is a lack of empirical analysis. In this paper I try to go beyond simplistic class models and introduce a three-dimensional class model based on the class concept of Pierre Bourdieu (section 1). I argue that the complex nature of the knowledge society requires a multidimensional model of class. Based on this class model I report some empirical findings about the class base of protest movements in selected countries.

The concept of class is inherently related to the idea of asymmetrical accumulation that stratifies society and to the possibility of changing society in collective practices. Modern society is still characterized by the asymmetrical distribution of material and non-material resources and by struggles relating to these cleavages and stratifications. Hence I argue that the concept of class is not outdated, but should be incorporated into a contemporary theory of society and social movements.

In the traditional Marxist concept of class the position of the subjects in the production process as possessors of the means of production or as propertyless wage-earners defines their class status. The exploited subjects would form a class that feels alienated, dissatisfied, and deprived, hence class consciousness and protest would emerge. In late capitalism this situation has fundamentally changed:

- **Technology and knowledge:** Capitalist development demands a rise in productivity and hence the increase of the technical and organic composition of capital, i.e. in order to accumulate and to increase profits technological progress is necessary, constant capital (technologies) continuously substitutes variable capital (human labour power) in processes of rationalization and automation. Capitalist development hence results in the permanent dynamic overthrow and recomposition of labour, there is a continuous decrease of exhaustive manual and industrial labour and an increase of intellectual, mental,

communicative, social, and service labour. Knowledge-based capitalism and the rise of a knowledge labour class is the result of capitalist development and the evolution of capitalist technology. Labour has become less exhaustive and hence is no longer considered as exploitative and estranging by the broad masses. Class position does no longer automatically result in class consciousness and protest.

- **Wealth and wages:** Capitalist development and the rise of Fordist capitalism that was based on the welfare state, mass production, and mass consumption have resulted in the growth of general wealth and increasing wages in Western societies. This is a factor that influences the decline of protests of the labour class. In Postfordist neoliberal capitalism there is a tendency for increasing poverty, unemployment, and wage stagnations, but this tendency doesn't automatically result in massive protest waves.
- **Ideology:** Herbert Marcuse (1964) has stressed that in late capitalism ideologies that produce one-dimensional consciousness, instrumental reason and a lack of critical thinking play an important role in forestalling protest. Consumerism, racism, populism, and mass media manipulation are ideologies that function as demobilizing factors of protest.

In informational capitalism conflicts are not only struggles for material property such as technologies, machines, capital, and natural resources, but also conflicts over symbolic and informational goods such as knowledge, values, genetic information, human rights, nature as a preservable and valuable good, democracy, and peace. Deprivation and powerlessness no longer automatically result in protest as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Society has become more complex, and hence the patterns of class and protest have increased in complexity too. In a capitalistic social formation that is more and more based on knowledge and culture, the traditional economic class concept doesn't any longer make sense, however one shouldn't abolish the class concept because society is still based on inequality, power differences, exploitation, status differences, and unequal distribution. A reconceptualization of the class concept is needed.

Ronald Inglehart (1977) has suggested that the new protests are caused by changing values, i.e. a shift from material to postmaterial values. Such an explanation is idealistic and ignores the class structure of modern society. Late capitalism still is a class society characterized by exploitation, unequal distribution, and stratification. Changes in values have material causes, i.e. they are related to aspects of property, power, production, and education. The shift towards postmaterial values is an aspect of the shift from industrial capitalism to informational capitalism.

For Alain Touraine classes are “groups that are opposed to each other in a central conflict for the appropriation of the historicity toward which they are oriented and which constitutes the stakes of their conflict. [...] The ruling class is the one that holds the power to direct the creation of cultural models and of social norms; the dominated class is the one that has access to historicity only in a subordinated way by submitting to the role granted to it by the ruling class, or, on the contrary, by seeking to destroy this ruling class's appropriation of historicity” (Touraine 1988: 41, 110). This is a purely culturally exclusive definition of classes that lacks economic and political aspects.

Klaus Eder (1993) suggests that nature is a new field of class struggle, that classes don't create social movements, but social movements class relationships, that class is not a fact, but a social construction. New Social Movements would be struggles for the control of the means of producing identities and the means of cultural expression, they would protest against the exclusion from identity-construction and fight for the control of identity as a symbolic and

invisible good as well as for alternative values (good life, community). Such a concept of class is subjectivistic and implies that a one-dimensional society where protest is fully forestalled is a classless society. A society that is stratified, but where struggles are forestalled, is still a class society, hence an objective definition of class is needed.

More suited for a complex theory of class and social protest than Touraine's and Eder's class definitions seems to be the one of Pierre Bourdieu (1986) who defines capitalism as a society that is based on the accumulation of economic (money capital, commodities), political (social connections), and cultural capital (education, status, ranks, titles)<sup>1</sup>. He does not as in classical Marxism define class as depending on the position in the economic relationships of production, but as depending on the volume and composition of total capital. The social position and power of an actor depends on the volume and composition of capital (i.e. the relative relationship of the three forms of capital) that he owns and that he can mobilize as well as the temporal changing of these two factors (Bourdieu 1986: 114). The main classes of society are for Bourdieu a result of the distribution of the *whole* (i.e. economic, political, and cultural) capital. This results in a social hierarchy with those at the top who are best provided with capital, and those at the bottom who are most deprived. Within the classes that get a high, medium or low share of the total volume of capital, there are again different distributions of capitals and this results in a hierarchy of class fractions. E.g., within the fraction of those who have much capital, the fractions whose reproduction depends on economic capital (industrial and commercial employers at the higher level, craftsmen and shopkeepers at the intermediate level) are opposed to the fractions which are least endowed with economic capital and whose reproduction mainly depends on cultural capital (higher-education and secondary teachers at the higher level, primary teachers at the intermediate level) (ibid.: 115).

Erik Olin Wright (1997) defines class relationships by three principles: 1. The welfare of the dominators is at the expense of the dominated (inverse interdependent welfare principle), 2. The dominated are asymmetrically excluded from access to and control over certain resources (exclusion principle), 3. The dominators appropriate a surplus product produced by the dominated (appropriation principle, exploitation). For Wright class is exclusively an economic relationship of exploitation. He makes a difference between oppression (conditions 1+2) and exploitation (conditions 1+2+3), relations of oppression would be no class relationships. In a Bourdieuan analysis of class, class is seen as a social relationship constituted by the exclusion of the dominated from resources and the asymmetrical distribution of these resources, accumulation processes benefit the dominators in terms of control of strategic resources at the expense of the dominated. Hence in the Bourdieuan class concept exclusion and interdependent welfare are sufficient conditions for class relationships. This allows to define class not in a narrow economic sense, but to interpret economic accumulation processes in a broad way and to see class as an interrelated economic, political, and cultural phenomenon.

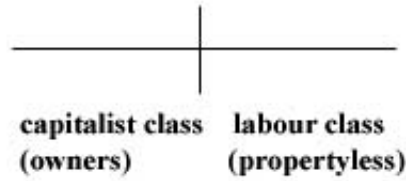
For Marx there were two classes: the capitalist class that owns the mean of production and the labour class that is propertyless and is forced to produce surplus value that is appropriated by the capitalists in order to survive. This is a one-dimensional class model that described the reality of 19<sup>th</sup> century capitalism quite well (cf. fig. 1), but doesn't suffice to analyze the social reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Wright adds the variables authority, skills and expertise, and employee structure to the Marxian model that is based on the relation to the means of production. He has worked out a two-dimensional model of class that is composed of 16

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the role of Bourdieu's concepts of class, capital, and habitus for a dynamic social theory see Fuchs (2003).

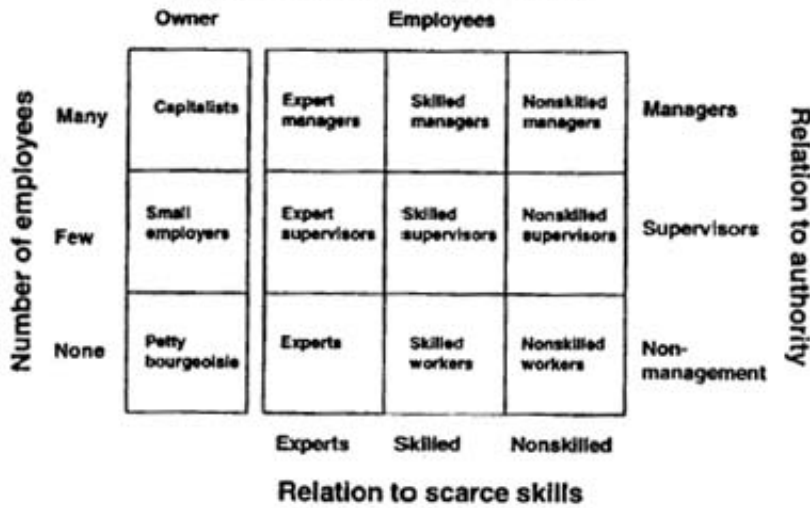
different class locations (cf. fig. 1). This model is complex, but it still leaves out political and cultural aspects of accumulation. Polity and culture are relatively autonomous systems of modern society, but they are structurally coupled with the economy and function just like the economy according to the economic principles of accumulation, competition, exclusive control, and asymmetrical appropriation. Power and knowledge are political and cultural forms of capital that are in capitalist society just like economic property accumulated and unequally distributed. Based on these assumptions one arrives at a three-dimensional class model that sees class defined by the composition and total volume (low, medium, high share) of economic, political, and cultural capital. A class is defined by the control of a certain share of each of the three types of capital. Such a three-dimensional model takes into account the historically increasing complexity of capitalism. The “class cube” is my interpretation of the Bourdieuan class model, it is composed of 27 class-fractions (cf. fig. 1). Social struggle is an engine of social change, this Marxian insight can be applied to the New Social Movements and shows their importance in society. The Marxian method conceives society as historical and as dialectically moving. Class analysis as a way of comprehending social change and social struggles follows laws of dialectical movement just like society does. Hence the social change towards informational capitalism makes it necessary to adapt class analysis to the new social conditions, Marxist concepts have to be dialectically sublated in order to explain the increasing complexity of society.

Relation to means of production

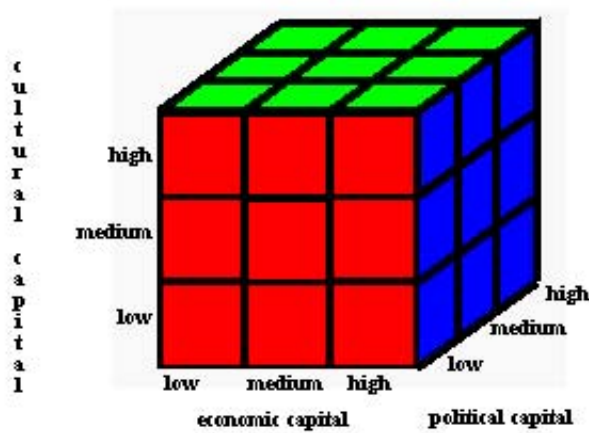


MARX

Relation to means of production



WRIGHT



BOURDIEU  
(The Class Cube)

Fig. 1.: Three class models

## 2. An Empirical Analysis of the Class Base of Protest

It has frequently been argued that the new middle class that is well-educated and active in the service sector and in symbolic and social production is the main carrier and social base of the New Social Movements. E.g. Claus Offe (1985) suggests that the social base of the NSMs is formed by the new middle class (high educational status, relative economic security, especially those who work in the human service professions or the public sector), elements of the old middle class, and people outside the labour market (the unemployed, students, housewives, retired persons, etc.).

Peter Gundelach (1998) has shown in an empirical study of people from twelve European countries who have performed two or more grass-roots activities per year (signing a petition, demonstrating, joining boycotts, occupying buildings or factories) that (in the 1980ies) “men are more active than women, the better educated more active than the less educated, students and white collar workers generally more active than other groups” (Gundelach 1998: 426, cf. table 1). Whereas during the 1970ies and 1980ies grass-roots activity was associated with young people, the study shows that while in 1981 the youngest age group (0-29) was the more active, in 1990 the more active in many countries were people aged 30-49 years. The cause might be that today the young are socialized less in a social climate of rebellion and more in a social climate of individualization.

A recent British empirical study conducted from July 2000 to December 2002 argues that factors that increase the possibility that a person will engage in protest are feelings of unfair political or social arrangements, a negative evaluation of personal economic circumstances, political knowledge and interest, past protest experiences, political contacts, expected group benefits, and positive risk orientation (Sanders/Clark/Stewart 2005). Nicholas S. J. Watts (1987) has shown in an empirical study that in Europe in the 1980ies supporters and activists of New Social Movements (nature conservation associations, ecology movement, anti-nuclear movement, peace movement) have been likely to stem from the “new knowledge class” (Watts 1987), the “communicative intelligence” (Brand 1987) that is young, has high education, holds postmaterial values, and stems from the political left.

In order to empirically research the relationship of protest movements and my complex class model I have analyzed data from the World Values Survey<sup>2</sup> for 15 selected “First World” countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States). I take as an empirical foundation the results of three waves of analysis (1981, 1990, 1995-1997), hence the study covers the developments of more than 15 years. Relevant variables that describe protest activities in the empirical analyses have been derived by asking people if they signed a petition, joined a demonstration, attended a demonstration, joined a strike, or occupied a building, if they might do so, or if they would never do so. I have selected the variable “attending a demonstration” because it seems for me to be the most valuable indicator for assessing if someone is willing to protest or not. In table 1 I report the findings of the studies concerning relative shares (in percent) of people belonging to certain social groups who have attended demonstrations in the respective years of analysis. In order to connect protest activity to class analysis I have selected indicators for the cultural, political, and economic class background of the respondents: education, occupation, employment status, left-right self-placement, and income.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://nds.umdl.umich.edu/cgi/s/sda/hsda?harcWEVS+wevs>

Education ranges in a scale that runs from 1 to 9:

- 1 No formal education
- 2 Incomplete primary school
- 3 Complete primary school
- 4 Incomplete secondary school: technical/vocational type
- 5 Complete secondary school: technical/vocational type
- 6 Incomplete secondary: university-preparatory type
- 7 Complete secondary: university-preparatory type
- 8 Some university-level education, without degree
- 9 University-level education, with degree

I have recoded this scale into a new scale that identifies low (1-3), medium (4-6), and high (7-9) education.

Concerning occupation the empirical studies consider 13 different categories:

- 1 Employer/manager of establishment with 10 or more employees
- 2 Employer/manager of establishment with less than 10 employees
- 3 Professional worker lawyer, accountant, teacher, etc
- 4 Supervisory - office worker: supervises others.
- 5 non-manual - office worker: non-supervisory
- 6 Foreman and supervisor
- 7 Skilled manual worker
- 8 Semi-skilled manual worker
- 9 Unskilled manual worker
- 10 Farmer: has own farm
- 11 Agricultural worker
- 12 Member of armed forces, security personnel
- 13 Never had a job

I have recoded this scale and have arrived at a new one that distinguishes between employer/management (1, 2), white collar labour (3, 4, 5, 6), blue collar labour (7, 8, 9), agricultural labour (10, 11), armed forces/security (12).

Concerning employment I have merged the categories full time and part time employment into a new category that covers all employees and I have adopted the categories self-employed, retired, housewife, student, and unemployed without further transformations.

The variable left-right self placement ranges from 1 (left) to 10 (right). I have recoded this scale into a new one that distinguishes between left-wing (1-2), center-left (3-4), center (5-6), center-right (7-8), and right-wing (9-10).

The income variable ranges from 1 (low income) to 10 (high income), I have recoded it into a new scale that includes low (1-3), medium, (4-7), and high (8-10) incomes.

Country	F 81	F 90	UK 81	UK 90	UK 81	UK 90	G 81	G 90	G 95-97	I 81	I 90	I 90	NL 81	NL 90	NL 90	DK 81	DK 90	DK 90	B 81	B 90	B 90	E 81	E 90	E 90	E 95-97	IRL 81	IRL 90
<b>Education</b>																											
Low																											
Medium																											
High																											
<b>Occupation</b>																											
Employer, management	42,2	22,1	8,2	14,8	9,1	13,3	27,3	16,8	33,8	8,7	21,7	9,8	16,9	12,5	16,5	19,7	16,7	20,2	13,5	15,7							
White collar	35,3	39,9	14,4	18,6	14,4	23,2	32,7	45,6	43,7	17	34,8	21,3	30,6	20,2	32,5	33,8	40,5	35,2	18,9	19							
Blue collar	21,4	27,2	7,2	10,6	11,3	16,1	20	31,2	35,1	9,5	18,2	18,7	27,3	13,3	20,2	29,3	25,7	18,4	12,8	15,5							
Peasants	14,3	23,3	4,3	16	14	15,4	0	13,6	21,3	10	0	3,8	24,1	11,8	22,7	15,9	8	9	7,9	17,9							
Armed Forces, Security	9,5	0	0	0	0	23,1	40	33,3	30	0	0	0	10	16,7	7,7	7,7	14,3	9,1	0	11,1							
<b>Employment Status</b>																											
Employee	34,1	41,5	13,2	15,9	15,8	24	28,6	38,9	43,9	17,1	34,9	21,7	34,7	17,4	27,3	32,4	32,8	30,9	15,1	21							
Self-employed	32	23,1	11,1	15,6	14,3	28,6	55	17	34	11,5	25	10,2	17,6	13	21,8	18,4	23,2	21,4	10,7	19,8							
Retired	18,7	24,1	3,2	10,2	6,5	9,7	9,3	16,3	25,6	10,6	13,7	6,2	12,3	13,2	18,2	12,6	10,3	8,4	13,6	13,6							
Housewife	9,8	18	2,9	8	5,5	10,4	17,4	5,7	12,8	3,7	11	1,7	12	4,1	11,8	10,8	11,5	5,9	5,7	5,5							
Student	31,9	41	19,1	31,8	40,4	57,1	38,2	46,4	51,3	23,7	30,9	44,3	30,8	15,6	28,7	42,3	38	44,1	29,3	21,7							
Unemployed	32,1	17,1	8	21,7	9,7	28,1	27,5	36,9	40,2	6,1	30,8	22,2	23,4	20,5	28,4	48,8	31,3	27	16,5	23,5							
<b>Left-Right</b>																											
Left-wing	57	69,4	25,5	27,5	51,8	58,3	51,9	49,7	60	45	60,6	64,3	75	29	52,1	61,6	48,2	30,1	36,8	26,1							
Center left	45,9	49,6	18,6	28,6	31,2	39,8	43,2	39,7	52,4	23,7	47,8	47,9	53,8	29,7	46,8	42,1	36,1	38	40,4	29,1							
Center	18,6	23,8	9,7	10,1	8,9	15,9	17,6	20,2	29,4	7,8	18,6	14	23,2	14,5	22,2	15,1	18,9	16,5	10,6	15,9							
Center right	15,5	25,8	8,1	11,5	7,5	11,2	14	18,9	29,6	5	13,4	11,3	16,7	16,2	20,3	19,8	20,2	16,2	12,6	20,5							
Right-wing	15,2	40,7	3,8	7,1	13,8	5,5	25	4,5	23,9	8	11,1	2,9	9,2	8,3	12,7	18,5	13,4	7,1	9,9	9,4							
<b>Income</b>																											
Low	24,4	23	4,8	9	11,6	18,5	31,4	12	33,7	21,7	29,5	26,4	22,3	10	21	20	15	11,5	18,6	9,9							
Medium	21,6	34,6	6,1	16,2	11,5	23,4	20,9	25,4	41,8	8,3	20,4	22,1	29	15,9	26,9	25,2	27,9	28,2	11,9	14,4							
High	29,8	51,6	14,6	16,2	12,9	25,5	32,2	32	35,3	10	34,4	22,8	36,6	25,2	36,5	25,7	39,7	45	8,8	23,9							



Country	USA 81	USA 90	USA 95-97	USA 81	J 90	J 95-97	J 81	N 90	N 95-97	N 81	S 90	S 95-97	S 81	FIN 90	FIN 95-97	FIN 90	A 90
<b>Education</b>																	
Low		52			13,2	14,8					16,7	25,5		13,1	10,9	8,8	
Medium		99			14,3	18,8					27,4	25,9		12,6	16,5	43,1	
High		22,6			34,4	37,1						42,5		22,9			
<b>Occupation</b>																	
Employer, management	15,4	21,3	17,2	20,5	14,9	5,7	20,4	21,4			14,1	24,3		3,6	9,4		
White collar	22	19,4	12,1	16,9	12	23,9	26,1	32,2			25,4	32,7		17,6	12,7		
Blue collar	10,7	11,2	10,3	9,3	10,2	21,7	15,5	23,6			18,1	25,7		13,3	6,3		
Peasants	15,2	0	5,8	7,2	3,9	4,9	12,3	14,3			23,5	42,3		14,8	4,3		
Armed Forces, Security	0	17,4	0	0	0	0	0	14,3				37,5					
<b>Employment Status</b>																	
Employee	15,6	18,8	19,6	12,4	16,9	12,1	23,2	22,3	28,6	16	25	32,3	11,1	14,8	14,5	12,6	
Self-employed	18,2	22,4	12,7	7,5	8	4,1	10,8	11	25,5		14,1	34	3,3	10	10,1		
Retired	7,7	9,3	12,2	20	20	22,6	7,7	6,2	11,7	15		20,5	12,2	12,7	13,6	4,9	
Housewife	5,4	8,9	6,6	2,4	4,5	6,3	6,1	28,9	19,6	4,8		0	6,7		10,9		
Student	20,6	24	28,1	3,3	3,7	0	42,1	15,6	36,8	29	21,3	33	18,6	19,4	10,3	26,1	
Unemployed	11,3	17,2	6,9	2,5	0	20	16		30,4	7,1	16	27,9	6,9	11,9	13,6		
<b>Left-Right</b>																	
Left-wing	18,3	46,9	39,3	50	38,5	23,8	35,4	36,7	56,7	30	39,6	57,3	55,9	38,9	30,3	11,3	
Center left	26	34,5	32,2	28,2	41,2	23,1	39,4	33,1	48,5	30	39,4	38,6	28,9	27,4	26,9	30,2	
Center	12,1	12,3	12,9	7,7	16	12,7	19,6	16,5	22,1	9,9	19,6	24,3	9,9	10,8	10,9	10,1	
Center right	10	16,3	12,5	10,5	10	6	14,3	14,3	16,1	7,9	15,3	19,8	9,3	13,8	7,1	8,9	
Right-wing	10	14,3	17,9	2,3	6,5	12,5	5,8	10,5	8,3	1,2	15,3	21,5	7,7	4,4	5,1	12	
<b>Income</b>																	
Low	4,6	11,1	9,4	4,3	7,4	9,3	20,7	17,3	23,4	16	22,9	30,7		12,2	11,6	7	
Medium	9,6	17,8	12,3	12,9	17,1	13,6	17,4	21,2	25,5	18	11,6	28		19,8	16,3	10,9	
High	13,5	7,9	24,1	10,9	16,6	11,5	22,3	24,4	30,4	11	22,2	34,1		13	13,3	13,5	

Tab. 1: Levels of protest (in percent) of various classes and class-fractions in 15 selected countries (France, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, United States, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Austria); Source: World Values Survey 1981, 1990, 1995/1997

The results are reported in table 1. There has been a general increase in protest activity during the 1980ies and 1990ies in the analyzed countries. Concerning cultural capital (education) there is a lack of data, but the data available show that increasing cultural capital means an increasing possibility that someone is willing to join protest activities.

Concerning economic capital (income, occupation, employment status) the results show that in almost all countries increasing income means an increasing possibility of protest. There are certain exceptions to this rule in certain analyzed years in Italy, Denmark, the USA, Japan, Sweden, and Finland. However, the general trend is that with income protest activity increases. Another general trend is that students and employees are in most countries the most active groups in protest, retired workers and reproductive workers the least active ones. Employees and the unemployed have medium levels of protest in most countries. Concerning employees white collar workers tend to protest more than blue collar workers, hence students and white collar workers can be considered as the two main groups of protestors. Concerning the difference between employed or self-employed persons, almost in all countries and periods white collar workers are the group most active in protest. Exceptions concern e.g. employers as the strongest protest group in France in 1981, the USA in 1995-1998, and Japan in all three periods, and peasants as the strongest Swedish protest group in 1995/1997. The results concerning armed forces/security in Germany 1995/1997 (40% protest rate) and Sweden 1995/1997 (37,5% protest rate) don't fall within statistical significance because there was only a sample of 2 respectively 3 peasant respondents. Concerning employment status students are the most active protestors in most countries, but there is a limited number of exceptions: e.g. in France the employees have been the strongest protestors in 1981 and 1990, in Germany the self-employed have been the strongest protestors in 1995/1997, in the Netherlands and Denmark the employees have been the most active group in 1990, in Japan the retired have been the most active group in all three periods, in Spain and Ireland the unemployed have been the strongest protest group in 1990.

In knowledge-based capitalism culture, knowledge and mental labour have become strategic resources of society. Whereas in 19<sup>th</sup> century capitalism the deprivation of economic resources was the main cause of social protest, in late capitalism education and knowledge (cultural capital) seem to be quite important mobilizing resources. The occupational groups most active in protest are students as well as mental, knowledge, and service workers. This reflects the shift from industrial capitalism to knowledge-based capitalism. Late capitalism is a media-, information-, and communication-based society where symbols, mass media, and ideologies play important roles. One can argue that those equipped well with cultural capital are more capable of questioning manipulation and one-dimensional ideologies and developing complex thinking and critical consciousness. The emergence of informational capitalism means a shift from hand to brain, from manual labour to mental labour. More and more intellect, knowledge, and communication and less manual labour are needed in order to satisfy the needs of society and to accumulate capital. This shift towards information both puts forward more efficient forms of manipulation and mind control as well as possibilities of critical and thorough intellectual reflection, i.e. demobilizing and mobilizing factors of protest. Hence the knowledge-based society poses both new risks and opportunities for the emergence and development of protest.

The groups with the lowest levels of grass-roots activity are housewives and pensioners. Concerning economic capital an important result is that individuals endowed with more economic capital are more likely to protest than individuals stemming from the low-income class. This result negates the assumption of orthodox Marxism that economic deprivation results in class consciousness and protest. It might reflect the shift from industrial capitalism toward knowledge capitalism: important topics of protest are increasingly "postmaterial" concerns like peace, gender equality, ecological sustainability, sexuality, race, right-wing extremism, etc. Protest do no longer mainly concentrate on economic issues such as labour rights, wages, labour time, etc. The decreasing manual labour class is more integrated than groups that are relatively well-endowed with economic or cultural capital that are more likely

to hold “postmaterial” values than those who are employed in the field of industrial labour. The statistical results seem to affirm the argument of critical thinkers like Herbert Marcuse that the traditional labour class is relatively well integrated and lacks rebellious consciousness in late capitalism and that this is due to the structural transformations of capitalism toward a society that is knowledge-based and where ideology and manipulation are important factors that to a certain degree produce one-dimensional consciousness.

It is true that the new knowledge class is more active in protest than the traditional industrial labour class (blue-collar labour), but the statistics show that there has been increasing blue-collar protest in the 1980ies in many countries. The groups least endowed with economic and cultural capital (the manual labour class and the unemployed) hence don't seem to be fully integrated and passive, although they are less active in protest than other classes and class fractions. E.g. the unemployed have been the strongest protest group (concerning employment status) in Spain in 1981 (48,8% of activity) and in Ireland in 1990 (23,5%), the manual labour class has been the second strongest group of protestors (concerning occupational status) in France in 1990, in Italy in 1990, in Denmark in 1981 and 1990, in Spain in 1981 and 1990, in Norway in 1981 and 1995/97, and in Finland in 1995/97. However, there is also a large number of cases where employers and managers are more active in protest than blue collar workers (such as in France in 1981, in the United Kingdom in 1981 and 1990, in Germany in 1995/1997, in the Netherlands in 1990, in Spain in 1995/1997, in Ireland in 1981 and 1990, in the USA in 1990 and 1995/97, in Japan in all three periods, in Norway in 1990, and in Austria in 1990). The medium degree of protest of the manual labour class and the unemployed might be due to the effects of neoliberal policies that have overall dramatically increased income inequality. Hence the industrial labour class continues to be a source of protest although it is steadily declining in size.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century economic deprivation was the main cause of protest, today it is no longer a major source of protest, cultural capital is a factor that influences grass-roots activism positively, cultural mobility is positively influencing protest. Possessing high cultural capital increases the possibility of being involved in protests. Class and social movements no longer coincide, movements are made up by people stemming from different social classes, people from classes endowed with high cultural capital are more likely to engage in protest than others. One should note that these remarks concerning the relationship of social class and protest don't account for the content of protest, i.e. if these are progressive or regressive forms of protest. Concerning economic capital one finds e.g. the tendency that economic deprivation is a factor that influences racist and neo-fascist mobilization. The same might be true for cultural and social deprivation.

Concerning political capital the results of the analysis show that in all countries individuals who are left-wing oriented are much more active in protest than right-wingers. This might be mainly due to the fact that there is a culture and tradition of protest on the left and left-wing individuals and groups generally oppose discrimination, exclusion, exploitation, and domination which form a main focus of protests more than those who stem from the political right.

The concept of social class relates to economic, political, and cultural aspects of society. But how does it relate to unemployment, gender, race, ecology, and sexual discrimination? The unemployed stem from all groups of employees, not only blue-collar workers are threatened by unemployment, the same also holds true for many who have gained academic degrees. The unemployed form a class that is defined by a sharp lack of economic capital, they form a class that is economically situated below the proletariat that is characterized by a low degree of

economic, political, and cultural capital. Gender continues to be a source of social stratification, women have generally lower incomes, less promotion aspects than men, they are facing more educational and political barriers and continue to take care of the majority of reproductive labour. Housewives are like the unemployed part of the under class of society, they perform social necessary labour for free. Frequently housewives are not unemployed, but perform reproductive labour besides an occupation. Such occupations are spread among all social classes, gender doesn't constitute a separate class relationship, but is a source of stratification within all classes. Only if one considers reproductive labour as a whole one can argue that this type of labour constitutes an economically defined class. According to Bourdieu class is constituted by the stratified distribution of resources such as property, power, and education. Concerning racial and sexual discrimination there are no resources that are unequally distributed, these are relationships where discrimination is due to categories like sexual identity, origin, culture, and bodily criteria. Hence these forms of discrimination are not class relationships, but forms of exclusion that traverse class relationships. Race and sexual identity are social constructions of discrimination that frequently decrease the possibility of upclassing and increase the possibility of downclassing. Those affected by ecological devastation and those engaging in ecological protests don't form a separate class relationship because nature as a public resource can't be unequally distributed. If it is unequally distributed as in the case of genetic information as property or the privatization of water and parks then one is confronted with economic property and hence economic class relationships. Ecological degradation is a negative side-effect of modernization, i.e. ruthless forms of accumulation and the extension of economic production. Nature hence is related to class issues, but does not form a class relationship.

### **3. Conclusion**

I have argued that knowledge-based capitalism is a complex society and that such a social formation requires a complex model of class that takes into account economic, political, and cultural capital. The empirical analysis presented is based on investigating the levels of protest of different classes and class fractions in 15 selected countries. There have been generally rising protest rates during the 1980ies and 1990ies. Concerning political capital left-wing oriented individuals are much more active in protest than right-wing oriented ones. The main groups engaging in protest are students and white collar workers, i.e. the new knowledge class that is rich in cultural capital. This seems to reflect the structural transformations of late capitalism. Increasing economic capital in terms of income means an increase in the possibility of engaging in protest. Economic deprivation no longer seems to be the main source of protest, the traditional industrial labour class is decreasing in size and is less active in protest than some other groups. However, manual workers and the unemployed as groups who are deprived of economic and/or cultural capital are not purely passive, there have been increasing rates of protest of these groups in the 1980ies and 1990ies, and in a certain limited number of countries these groups have higher degrees of protest than the group of employers and managers. Overall the analysis shows that the structural transformations of late capitalism that have resulted in a transformation of class composition, the emergence of "postmaterial" values, and the emergence of an "immaterial labour class" (Hardt/Negri 200, 2005) that produces knowledge, symbols, communication, affects, and social relationships have changed the patterns of protest and the role of cultural and economic capital as sources of mobilization and demobilization in protest activity.

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