

Session 4 – Stratification and inequality

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53882 (Monday, 3.30 – 5.30 p.m.)

53883 (Monday, 5.40 – 7.40 p.m.)

21/01/2023 – 24/04/2023

Overview of the session

- 1) Presentation of a classical excerpt in sociology (20 min)
- 2) Discussion by the designated discussants (10-15 min)
- 3) Opening of the discussion to the whole class (15 min)
- 4) Short break (10 min)
- 4) Overview of the second mandatory excerpt (30min)
- 5) Presentation of methods in sociology (20 min)



Allocation of presentations and discussions

Date	Session	Text excerpt
24/01	Sociological approaches	
31/01	The individual in social context	Douglas (Mary). Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo. 2003.
07/02	Norms and deviance	Becker (Howard). Outsiders. 1963.
14/02	Stratification and inequality	Marx (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.
21/02	Identity and identification	Brubaker (Rogers). Trans. Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities. 2016.
07/03	Urban sociology	Venkatesh (Sudhir) and Levitt (Steven). History and disjuncture in the urban American street gang. 2000.

Allocation of presentations and discussions

Date	Session	Text excerpt
14/03	The family	Edin (Kathryn) and Kefalas (Maria). Promises I Can Keep: Why poor women put motherhood before marriage. 2005.
21/03	Religion	Snow (David) and Machalek (Richard). "The convert as a social type". 1976.
28/03	Education	Khan (Shamus). Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St Paul's School. 2001.
04/04	Economic sociology	Esping-Andersen (Gøsta). 'Hybrid or Unique?: The Japanese welfare state between Europe and America'. 1997
11/04	Society and the state	Dubois (Vincent). The bureaucrat and the poor. Encounters in French Welfare Offices. 1999.
18/04	Movements and revolutions	McAdam (Douglas). The Biographical Consequences of Activism. 1989.

Presentation of a classical excerpt in sociology

Today's presentation is on:

Bourdieu, P. 1979. *Distinction. A Social Critique of Judgement*. Harvard University Press, p. 114-131







Marx (Karl).

Born in 1818. Died in 1883 writing the fourth volume of *Capital*. Karl Marx was German philosopher, economist, historian, sociologist, political theorist, journalist, critic of political economy, and socialist revolutionary, with an enormous influence on subsequent intellectual, economic, and political history.

His best-known works are:

- *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)
- *The Class Struggles in France* (1850)
- *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon* (1852)
- *Capital* (1867—1883)

Elements of vocabulary

***Marxist** is a term typically used in a political context, which refers to Marx's ideas but also to the various elaborations and reimagining of Marx's theories and arguments.*

***Marxian** is term used more often in an academic setting to discuss Marx's writings or writing that were derived directly or closely from them.*

Why should we read Karl Marx in 2023?

A lot of concepts in Karl Marx's work might seem outdated, as the labour conditions and structure of society have largely changed since then.

However, reading Karl Marx's work is important for:

- The conceptual and empirical work it showcases
- Gaining key understandings with regards to its posterity
- Having deep and fruitful insights on today's society

Elements of context

In 1818, the railway existed practically nowhere. In 1831, it is estimated that there were 300 kms of railways in the world, most of which concentrated in Great Britain. This figure rose to 9,000 kms in 1841, 38,000 kms in 1851, and 235,000 kms in 1871.

In Karl Marx's youth, the misery of modern industrial workers was only beginning to be documented. Alongside certain doctors and, in Great Britain, “factory inspectors” whom he quoted extensively in *Capital* (1867), one of the first to document this misery was his friend and collaborator, Friedrich Engels (1820—1895).

Elements of context

Friedrich Engels was sent to Manchester by his father, a German industrialist who owned factories there. Using this experience, Friedrich Engels published *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845).

Like that of Louis René Villermé in France, who published the *Table of the physical and moral state of the workers employed in the cotton, wool and silk factories* (1840), the damning conclusions of Friedrich Engels was one the elements which led to a law prohibiting the work of children under the age of eight in industrial factories.

Elements of context

Friedrich Engels showed in particular that in Manchester and Liverpool, infant and child mortality due to diseases (pox, chickenpox, scarlet fever, whooping cough, etc.) was four times that of the surrounding countryside.

In addition, the overall mortality rate was much higher (about 1 in 30, compared to 1 in 45 in the surrounding areas). Friedrich Engels also compared mortality in the same quarters before and after the establishment of the factories, highlighting the detrimental effect of the factories on the workers' health as well as on their families.

Elements of context

At the time, German philosophy was dominated by the figure of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), now best known for *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807).

In Berlin, Karl Marx gravitated around a circle of philosophers known as the *Young Hegelians* or *Left Hegelians*, who retained the essence of Hegel's ideas (in particular dialectics, conceived both as a philosophical method and as a driving principle of history) but who also stripped them of whatever justification they had for the established order (the Prussian absolutist state, modern Christianity), and therefore of their conservative tendencies in politics and religion.

Elements of context

Dialectics is a concept which, in ancient philosophy, designates the art of the confrontation of arguments.

For Friedrich Hegel, history has a dialectical form exactly like thought. It is literally a process of incarnation/effectuation of the *absolute spirit* (a notion which corresponds to that of the Christian God in Hegel's system) i.e., “the process by which the spirit discovers itself”. In Hegelian philosophy, history has a meaning, a direction. However, it does not go “straight” in this direction: it never unfolds except through the generation of contradictions and their overcoming/abolition/“sublation”, exactly like a reasoning.

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

The Communist Manifesto (1848) is a command placed with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels by the League of Communists in 1847.

The manifesto is written with four hands, and partly inspired by a text that Friedrich Engels had already written alone on the principles of communism, in the form of questions and answers (e.g., “What is communism?”, “Can private property be abolished by peaceful means?”, etc.). In the book, Karl Marx is responsible for most of the formulations, and is often designated as the main author. However, as for the leading ideas, it is very difficult to determine what comes from one or the other.

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

The Communist Manifesto (1848) takes its name for the political framework of the time.

“In 1847, under this name of socialist were understood two sorts of people. First, the adherents of the various utopian systems, notably the Owenists in England and the Fourierists in France, both of which were already mere dying sects. On the other hand, the social charlatans of all kinds who wanted, with the help of a lot of panaceas and with all sorts of patches, to eliminate social miseries, without doing the slightest harm to Capital and to profit. In both cases, they were people who lived outside the labor movement and sought support from the 'educated' classes instead. [...]

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

On the contrary, that part of the workers who, convinced of the insufficiency of simple political upheavals, demanded a fundamental transformation of society, then called themselves communists. [...] In 1847, socialism meant a bourgeois movement, communism, a labor movement. [...] And since, from that moment, we were very clearly of the opinion that ‘the emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves’, we could not hesitate for a moment on the name to choose.”

Engels (Friedrich), Correspondence (1888)

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

“Although the Manifesto is our common work, I nevertheless consider it my duty to note that the main thesis, which constitutes its core, belongs to Marx.

This thesis is that in each historical epoch, the predominant mode of economic production and exchange, and the social structure [...], the whole history of humanity (since the decomposition of the primitive community with its common possession of the soil) has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploiting and exploited and oppressed classes. [...]

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

That the history of this class struggle has now reached, in its development, a stage where the exploited and oppressed class - the proletariat - can no longer free itself from the yoke of the class which exploits and oppresses - the bourgeoisie - without at the same time freeing, once and for all, the whole of society from all exploitation, oppression, division into classes and class struggle.”

Engels (Friedrich), Correspondence (1888)

What was the “eminently revolutionary role” of the bourgeoisie in history?

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

The bourgeoisie is doubly revolutionary for Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels:

- In its accession to power, which explodes the contradictions of feudalism
- In the permanent transformation by which it perpetuates its own domination

This idea of perpetually transforming one's domination was highlighted again in Joseph Schumpeter's works, where he coined the term of *creative destruction*.

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

In short, the bourgeoisie according to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels:

- Does not recognize anything other than money as sacred, such that when it dominates, everything can be bought and therefore exploitation is no longer masked by religious and political illusions: it appears for what it really is
- Needs to “constantly revolutionize the instruments of production, which means the relations of production, that is to say all of the social relations”
- Is constantly looking for new outlets and therefore tends to extend its domination

But then why does the era of bourgeois domination not mark the end of history according to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels?

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

At the end of this first chapter of the manifesto, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels introduce what are called "contradictions" (on the model of the Hegelian dialectics).

They specify that the major contradiction which interests them is that which opposes the productive forces (the technical aspect of production, the capacity to transform matter) to the relations of production (that is to say the relations between people i.e., between social classes in production, with the question of property in the foreground). Just as the feudal system of property ended up developing productive forces which brought it down, so do Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels feel that in their time a contradiction appeared in capitalism, which had made itself capable of producing more wealth than it can bear.

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

The presence of the proletariat is central in this contradiction. The proletariat is the class of those who have nothing, no assets or privileges, and who are therefore, in order to survive, forced to work for others.

The proletariat is also the crux of the contradictions of bourgeois society: both its product (each expansion and each crisis swells the ranks of the proletariat, into which are incorporated former "small industrialists, merchants and rentiers, craftsmen and peasants, the entire lower echelon of the middle classes of yore"). Moreover, as capitalism develops, living conditions of the proletariat are increasingly miserable.

Mark (Karl) and Engels (Friedrich). The Communist Manifesto. 1848.

But at the same time, the proletariat has more and more the means to become aware of this deterioration, to become aware of itself as a class (in the Hegelian vocabulary of Karl Marx: to become a class for itself and no longer only a class in itself) and, thus, to put themselves in a position to defend their interests.

Social classes in Karl Marx's works

For Marx, a social class is defined:

- in relation to the material conditions of existence
- in relation to other classes (to the relations of production)

Similar living conditions...

Social classes in Karl Marx's works

“The small-holding peasants form an enormous mass whose members live in similar conditions.”

“Insofar as millions of families live under conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class.”

Marx (Karl). The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon (1850)

... but different states of consciousness of shared interests

Social classes in Karl Marx's works

“Thus the great mass of the French nation is formed by the simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes.”

“Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests forms no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not constitute a class.”

Marx (Karl). The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon (1850)

Social classes in Karl Marx's works

Hence Karl Marx distinguishes two types of class:

- class in itself: a class defined by common positions in the production process, independently of any consciousness of the members of such a class
- class for itself: a class whose members are aware of their common interests and build a collective mobilisation to defend them

<i>The Communist Manifesto</i> (1848)	<i>Class Struggles in France</i> (1850) <i>The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon</i> (1852)	<i>Capital</i> (1867, 1885, 1894)
2 classes	7 classes	3 classes
	Landlords	Landlords
	Financial Bourgeoisie	
Bourgeoisie	Industrial Bourgeoisie	Capitalists
	Petty Bourgeoisie	
	Peasants and Farmers	
Proletariat	Proletariat	Proletariat
	Lumpenproletariat	

Other works of Karl Marx

Karl Marx did not live in England until 1849. Before that date, Karl Marx was more interested in the French Revolution and French regimes.

This interest later led to the publication of two major works on France:

- *The Class Struggles in France* (1850)
- *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon* (1852)

Elements of context – Historical landmarks

Some historical landmarks of the French political history of the time are:

- 1791: Establishment of the first Constitution
- 1792-1804: First Republic (Directory then Consulate)
- 1799: Coup d'État of the Eighteenth Brumaire by Napoléon Bonaparte
- 1804-1815: First Empire
- 1814-1815: First Restoration (Louis XVIII - constitutional monarchy)
- 1815: Hundred Days (Napoleon regains power for 100 days, then abdicates)
- 1815-1830: Second Restoration

Elements of context – Historical landmarks

- 1830: Revolution (July Revolution)
- 1830-1848: July Monarchy
- 1848: Revolution
- 1848-1852: Second Republic (Louis Napoléon Bonaparte elected president in 1848)
- 1851: Coup d'État of Louis Napoléon Bonaparte
- 1852-1870: Second Empire (established one year after the coup)

Marx (Karl). *Class Struggles in France*. 1850.

In *Class Struggles in France* (1850), Karl Marx analyses the class issues and the economic relations which drove forward the social and political upheavals, which took place in France in 1848 onwards.

He focuses extensively on the argument that the conflict was not between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, but between different factions within the bourgeoisie.

Specifically, he identifies conflicts between the industrial bourgeoisie, whose wealth and income are dependent upon the production and sale of goods; and the financial bourgeoisie, whom he identifies as bankers and stock market speculators.

Marx (Karl). *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon*. 1852.

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon (1852) was written right after the revolution of 1848. At that time, most of Europe was experiencing a revolutionary wave.

In France, the monarchical Restoration was overthrown and replaced by the Second Republic, which would grant universal male suffrage.

In 1848, the first presidential election with universal male suffrage was held and won by Louis Napoléon Bonaparte, the nephew of the emperor.

Marx (Karl). *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon*. 1852.

What strikes Karl Marx and some of his contemporaries in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon* (1852) is that Louis Napoléon Bonaparte did not belong to the political establishment.

Contrary to this, he made his name by publishing a book on pauperism that was renowned at the time, named *The Extinguishment of Pauperism* (1844).

Pauperism is the question of the working-class misery; at the time, it is one the central social issues in France, at the centre of public debate.

Marx (Karl). The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon. 1852.

As a solution to pauperism, Louis Napoléon Bonaparte proposed in 1844 the colonisation of Algeria, i.e., finding new land so that everyone could become a small owner and work as a peasant.

This was in the 19th century, at the beginning of the second colonisation, at a time when the peoples of Northern Africa were considered as inferior peoples by European colons and were therefore given no rights over their own land using force and violence.

Marx (Karl). *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon*. 1852.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon* (1852), Karl Marx wonders how Bonaparte, who was not a member of the political staff, could have come to power through universal suffrage.

As a result, one can think of Karl Marx's work in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoléon* (1852) as the first case-study in electoral sociology.

Methodology – Observation

Ask yourself the following questions watching these documentaries excerpts:

- What are the social interactions in the scene?
- By what social constructs are these interactions driven?
- What is allowed and what is forbidden by the actors in the scene?
- What do you notice about the movements of individuals?
- Through what aspects can you perceive domination relationships?
- Can you characterise these domination relationships?

Loznitsa (Sergeï). The Factory. 2004.



What elements did you observe?

Wiseman (Frederick). Boxing-Gym. 2010.



What elements did you observe?

For next time...

- Read Kimberlé Crenshaw. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Violence Against Women of Color."
- Read Brubaker, R. 2016. Trans. Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 and 2.
- When reading, remember to note the important elements of the text: question asked by the author(s), (hypo)theses of the author(s), methods used, references, writing style, argumentative construction, etc.
- Prepare the presentation and discussion (if concerned)