The American Experience
in Comparative Perspective

ANTOINE JOSEPH

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Skilled Workers' Solidarity

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Skilled Workers' Solidarity

Introduction

SKILLED WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

Skilled Workers' Solidarity argues that national labor movements are shaped by the interaction of specific structural factors during the industrializing era. Accordingly, labor's solidarism varies along a continuum defined by particularism at one end and universalism at the other. The relative degree of particularism or universalism of national labor movements depends on the extent to which economic, political, and social conditions induce cohesion or fragmentation.

Particularistic development is based on the use of restrictive organizing practices that separate and divide workers, protecting stronger constituencies at the expense of weaker ones. Racial, ethnic, and sometimes even religious divisions facilitate the use of such restrictive techniques, enabling the formation of narrow and fragmented working-class movements. One manifestation of particularism is the formation of a labor aristocracy. Labor aristocracies express the solidarity of skilled workers, who rely on particularistic strategies (the use of closure mechanisms to defend privileged niches) advantageous to narrowly defined constituencies. Alternatively, a more universalistic form of solidarism is based on the emergence of an inclusive, broadly encompassing movement.

The following structural factors are used to explain why and how national labor movements develop in either a particularistic or a universalistic direction:

1. Internal cleavages based on race, ethnicity, and religion simulate the atmosphere of small groups, enhancing particularism in labor movements.
2. The timing and tempo of industrialization—a preponderance of craft trades in early industrialization fosters diversity through the coexistence of traditional and modern techniques of production resulting in a heterogeneity that fragments and narrows the scope of organized interests. By contrast, later industrialization leads to homogenization due to the prevalence of uniform production techniques that are favorable to broader, universalistic movements.
3. The extent of economic openness—labor federations in larger national economies frequently support protectionism, a condition favoring the development of strong producer coalitions composed of narrow sectional constituencies. In contrast, the economic openness of smaller nations discourages protectionism, as the fear of retaliation enhances the desire for a liberal international economy with lower tariff and nontariff barriers. Economic openness thus favors the formation of broad universalistic labor movements.
4. The timing of democratization relative to industrialization—where the broadening of the franchise precedes the existence of an organized working class, mass politicization typically precedes the development of a working class identity, diminishing the likelihood of a unified movement (Dawley, 1976). Alternatively, if an industrial working class takes shape before franchise extension, a more cohesive and universalistic form of solidarism will occur. Early industrialization and democratization prior to or concurrent with industrialization are the conditions expected to reinforce particularistic tendencies, whereas the combination of late industrialization and franchise extension after industrialization should encourage universalistic tendencies.

An illustration of the hypothetical contrast in forms of solidarism is shown in Figure I.1. According to the analysis, combinations in the top left corner should be most particularistic, and those in the lower right corner, most universalistic. In the case of the United States, the combination of such characteristics as an early and relatively sheltered industrialization, large domestic markets, democratization in advance of modern mass production, and high levels of immigration should produce a strongly particularistic form of solidarism.

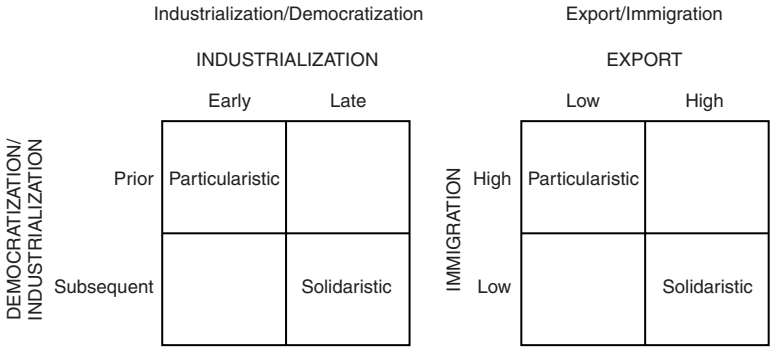

Figure I.1.

These are neither constant nor entirely independent conditions. Internal fragmentation, for example, depends in part on the constrained choices made by political actors to emphasize certain issues and ignore others in the process of mobilizing political support from the less than fully articulated sentiments of ordinary people. Parties make choices among cleavages. Neither "passive agents nor free actors, parties attempt to politicize more favorable cleavages and neutralize less favorable ones" (Daalder, 1985:19). The outcome is

> a process of forming images of society, of molding collective identities, of mobilizing commitments to particular projects of the future. Class, religion, ethnicity, race, or nation do not happen spontaneously as reflections of objective conditions in the psyches of individuals. Collective identity, group solidarity, and political will are continually forged—shaped, destroyed and created anew—as a result of conflicts in the course of which political parties, schools, churches, newspapers, armies and corporations strive to impose a particular form of organization upon political life. (Przeworski and Sprague, 1986:8)

According to the analysis, the patterns (or modes) of solidarism established during industrializing eras have been decisive in several respects:

1. The organizations that survived were able to do so by adapting to the distinctive conditions of their environments.
2. Their existence changed the environment for collective responses to the emergence of new crises.

3. Over the long term, the collective behavior of older and newer groups fit broadly within the profiles of particularism or universalism because of the rewards and benefits provided to powerful interest groups.
4. The form of solidarism is an important albeit not the sole determinant of the type of welfare state that emerges. For example, the strong particularism of American labor solidarism is a core determinant in the American welfare state's emaciation—its comparably minor role in the improvement of the conditions of America's have-nots.

THE UNITED STATES IN COMPARATIVE FOCUS

The issues of American exceptionalism are relevant albeit tangential in the examination of the relationship between structural factors and the absence of social democracy. I argue that the formation of particularistic labor movements is due to the existence of long-term structural conditions. Such an emphasis inevitably dissents from the conventional wisdom expressed by the substantial literature on American exceptionalism, which holds that the American political tradition is unique and thus in many respects not comparable to any other societies (Laslett and Lipset, 1974; Sombart, 1976; Lipset, 1996). However, explanations of American uniqueness are susceptible to the general problem inherent in American exceptionalism which is that the mere existence of unusual or unique features is insufficient to demonstrate that the United States must be treated as singularly different from other liberal or capitalist democracies, or that plausible arguments cannot be made for other cases of exceptionalism (Zollberg, 1986).

Exceptionalist explanations are also susceptible to the problem of an "overdetermination of observed differences," which affects comparisons within a restricted sample. This occurs when the number of cases is too small to establish which of a number of differences among the cases is the cause of the observed variance (Castles, 1982). The conclusions reached are impossible to verify, just as when one has an insufficient degree of freedom to test a statistical hypothesis or to solve an equation with too many unknowns. Any analysis comparing similar entities faces this problem, but the dichotomy of exceptionalism that collapses Europe into a single case—"America has X, Europe does not"—is especially susceptible to it.

In what follows, I will maintain that American exceptionalism has

been in many respects a paradigm in search of a problem. The American case is not exceptional, at least no more so than any number of others. Rather, its labor movement can be understood in terms similar to those of others. Hartz's seminal contribution to the exceptionalist literature is a compelling example. According to Therborn (1983), Hartz argues for the primacy of common values in the explanation of social behavior:

> Like Hartz, pluralist interpretations often subscribe to the truism that feudalism begets socialism, a notion which is manifestly shown to be false in Scandinavia. The point here is not the conventional thesis that "feudalism begets socialism." Indeed, the falseness of that idea is particularly clear in Scandinavia, where Norway, which never had any feudalism proper and has had a broad franchise since 1814 and a parliamentary government since 1884 . . . produced the most radical labour movement in Northern Europe. (Therborn, 1983:50)

American exceptionalism, moreover, shares the deficiencies of the entire species of explanations based on national character. As Maier (1984:40) has pointed out, ". . . any useful historical account must go beyond such national character argumentation, not because it is not 'true' at some level, but because it forecloses so many other lines of analysis that should first be tested." (Maier, 1984:40)

The absence of feudalism explanation treats the preexistence of a culture compatible with socialism as a onetime event, rather than as something that must be perpetually re-created for each generation of workers. The celebratory view that liberalism is the precursor of the good society is often associated with the notion that the growth of the middle class somehow prefigures the development of civil rights and civil liberties. This study employs a less value-laden and provincial comparative perspective, however, unlike a paradigm dominated by a single case.

Another strand of American exceptionalism argues that classes either do not exist in the United States or have been relatively inconsequential social actors. This belief misses the essential if varying extent of class conflict in American social and political life. One reason for this oversight is the presumption that class action requires holistic actors. By explicitly incorporating internal cleavages stemming from racial and ethnic backgrounds, it is easier to discern the significance of class collective actors in American history. The analysis here, based on common causal factors, argues that the American pattern of class formation is not

particularly exceptional; rather, the collective capacities of the labor movement in the United States are determined by the same factors as elsewhere. Ultimately, if the United States can be shown to be influenced by the same factors as other advanced industrial nation-states, the plausibility of American exceptionalism is undermined. The theoretical and comparative portions of the analysis are meant to demonstrate this.

In particular, the limitations of the American labor movement are an integral component of the limitations of the American welfare state. To turn around a common argument, it is sometimes maintained that neo-Marxist analyses of the American welfare state are invalid because of labor's limited role in the formation of the American welfare state. But the significance of labor's limitations in the formation of the weak American welfare state is no less crucial than if its influence had been great. Moreover, it was not only in America that the initial provision of welfare came from sources outside the labor movement. Certainly in Germany, as well as in Britain, the impetus for welfare provisions came from elsewhere. Bismarck's welfare state is closer to Speenhamland than to the New Deal, part of the traditional paternalism of an Old Regime (Wolfe, 1977).

BOOK ORGANIZATION

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a theoretical and comparative framework, developing a causal explanation of labor solidarism based on specific variables. The major premise of these initial chapters is that specific historical structural variables are responsible for molding social, political, and economic environments in ways critical to the development of labor movements within capitalist democracies. Chapter 1 explores the determinants of labor solidarism, arguing that there are distinctive modes of class formation. Chapter 2 argues that there are alternative pathways in the development of capitalist democracies. The next three chapters apply this model to the specific case of the United States, during the Gilded Age and its aftermath. Following an introduction that supplies some historical background, Chapter 3 assesses the empirical evidence for the development of class fractions. Chapters 4 and 5 elaborate the social, political, and economic environment that led to the emergence of a strongly particularistic labor movement. Chapter 6 applies the model and analysis to certain formative features governing the emergence of the American welfare state. Chapter 7 summarizes and offers conclusions, developing the analysis of labor particularism, while suggesting the need to modify our understanding of class and labor.[1]

NOTES

[1]Given the limited number of cases in this comparison, it is impossible to avoid the dilemma between increasing the size of the pool to lessen the probability of spurious explanations and reducing the pool to avoid the idiosyncracies of particular cases (Castles, 1982). A comparison of this size means that the significance of the variables employed depends on the specific cases examined. However, even if it were expanded to include the approximately twenty instances of durable capitalist democracies, the size of the population means that these problems would remain.

CHAPTER 1

Modes of Class Formation

When those using inductive approaches to class formation (usually historians and sociologists) and those using deductive interpretations (typically political scientists but also economists and some sociologists) analyze class and class formation, they at times seem to be discussing different subjects. We would expect that analyses of the ways individuals engage in class action would be a fruitful area for cross-disciplinary fertilization and interaction. Yet scholars with differing approaches rarely seem to be referring to the same dynamic.

Marx is partly responsible for this contemporary Tower of Babel, having left relatively unexamined the interrelations between class position and class action. He treated what we have come to regard as an extraordinarily complex problem simply and even inconsistently. At times he argued as though similarity of interests was sufficient to motivate collective action. The view that class action would inevitably and inexorably follow the growth of proletarians was an essential aspect of the worldview of classical Marxism (Colletti, 1972).

But Marx expressed an alternative view as well. His analysis of the capitalist's antagonism to reductions in the working day anticipated rational choice theory, in that organization was seen as a prerequisite to working-class collective action.

> The first attempts of workers to associate among themselves always take place in the form of combinations. Large-scale industry concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of wages, this

> common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance—combination. Thus combination always has a double aim, that of stopping competition among the workers, so they can carry on general competition with the capitalist. (Marx, 1963:172)

However, this account of the transformation of a class in itself into a class for itself left out a microfoundation for class formation. Historians usually avoid this missing step by emphasizing the most visible forms of collective action in which, because of their apparent spontaneity, it is most difficult to perceive a rational component. They, consequently, often presume that spontaneous uprisings capture the essence of working-class collective action.[1]

E. P. Thompson's influence has led many historians to emphasize the voluntaristic aspects of class consciousness, arguing that classes are the effects of struggles. Clearly, class action includes structure and agency. But the respective roles of each is often ambiguous. Often implicit is an assumption that the role of structural determinants is settled once the context of capitalist social relations is specified. Capitalist societies share (by definition) production relations, but this fact does not exhaust the relevant structural determinants of class formation (defining *structural* as those things beyond the immediate reach of actors individual or collective); it only introduces it. Differences in national structures include economic, political, and social factors and their historical antecedents.

The analysis of this chapter aims to reconcile two contrasting approaches to class formation synthesizing the useful insights of the social history perspective within a framework that can explain the central tendencies in the historical development of labor movements in capitalist democracies. Based on nineteenth- and twentieth-century aggregate cross-sectional and cross-national data, I will argue that alternative modes of class formation can be deduced from the historical development of labor movements. Modes of class formation are the product of distinctive social structural environments. Labor militancy is the key variable distinguishing more particularistic and more universalistic labor movements. The distinction between particularistic and universalistic labor movements also reflects their use of contrasting strategies. Labor movement particularism, represented by higher strike rates in recent years, is strongest where the lag of democratization after industrialization is slight and industrialization commenced relatively early, while a

substantial lag in democratization after industrialization and late industrialization are characteristics associated with low militancy and the development of solidaristic labor movements.[2]

STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE IN CLASS FORMATION

Marx's account of the transformation of a class in itself into a class has long been considered underspecified. Recently, analysts have sought to partially fill in the gaps with a microfoundation, thereby integrating class analysis into theories of strategic interactions. However, the notion that working-class organization hinges on rational action contradicts a common theme of the class formation literature which assumes that the motives for organizing are extrarational (Roemer, 1978; Booth, 1978; Offe and Wiesenthal, 1980). The argument is thereby made that any logic of collective action based upon the premises of utilitarian individualism cannot apply to workers because their very existence as workers imposes a collectively oriented understanding of interests. In a now classic analysis, Offe and Wiesenthal (1980) argued that there were two logics of collective action and the use of one (an essentially nonutilitarian logic) was a prerequisite to solidarity.[3] Hence, workers behave according to a sense of group identity rather than individual rationality.

Yet a theoretical gap often separates formally derived conclusions regarding processes of class formation and substantive analyses set in a particular setting. The present analysis will attempt to fill in this void, by integrating structural forces into a model showing that national labor movements are formed as the product of strategies and structures. An invaluable framework for macro-level theories of strategic interaction is found in Mancur Olson's work, most notably *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (1982). He argues that organized interest groups diverge between broad and inclusive organizing strategies versus narrow and exclusive ones. Olson argues that broad, encompassing interest groups are difficult to create but superior in general welfare to narrower interest groups. The latter are more easily created, but are more likely to pursue limited gains at high cost to the general welfare.

Extrapolating from Olson's model, this principle can be applied to the formation of the labor movements of the long-term capitalist democracies of North America and Western Europe. The argument is that labor movements gravitate between narrow and exclusive representations of interests versus broad and encompassing interest representations. Organizations at the narrow and exclusive end of the spectrum commonly use

strategies of collective organization based on mechanisms of closure to create privileged niches. In many cases they consist of rent-seeking distributional coalitions in search of the minimal size necessary for winning (Riker, 1967). Such strategies exploit fissures in solidarism to defend the interests of the few against those of the many.

Perhaps the purest expression of particularism is to be found in restrictive craft unions of skilled workers. The limitations of this strategy lie in the possibility that homogenizing influences will erode differences between labor segments and that the power of small groups will be insufficient to attain desired ends. Labor movements in this type of environment show strongly particularistic tendencies, and consist of fragmented constituencies.

At the other end of the spectrum are labor movements employing collective action strategies based upon universalistic solidarism, protecting the interests of the many, albeit possibly at some cost to particular groups. Their similarities make the closure strategem unfeasible. Here successful collective action is based on the exploitation of a broadly encompassing solidarity. The chief limitation of solidarism lies in its vulnerability, that similarities will be undermined by heterogeneity, and since heterogeneity can never be entirely eliminated, solidarism is threatened by the prospect that the well off will prefer protection of their distinctive agendas, at the expense of their weaker brethren.[4] Organizationally, internally heterogeneous unions that either cannot or will not redirect some of the bargaining power of stronger members to weaker ones end up allowing market forces to widen disparities between differentially privileged member groups. Such differentiation (if unchecked) will eventually lead to a disintegration of their power as collective actors (Streeck, 1984:292).[5]

Variations among cases reflect variations in the set of institutional structures: economic, political, and sociological. The differences between these alternative patterns of class formation are based on conditions existing during those periods in which the working class emerges as a collective actor. Consequently, distinct modes of class formation are the product of variations in social structural environments and their historical antecedents, as encountered by labor movements during industrializing eras.

THE STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS ON SOLIDARISM

Environments facilitate different types of solidarism by fragmenting or solidifying constituencies. This section considers those factors that ar-

guably have had considerable impact on the characteristics of solidarism. While the factors considered here do not exhaust the range of possibile influences, they are most relevant to the present analysis: (1) the extent to which immigration promotes the internal fragmentation of labor; (2) the timing and tempo of industrialization; (3) the general pattern of trade relations; and (4) the relative proximity of democratization to industrialization. The variables used in this analysis will be discussed here. But the techniques used in their operationalization are to be found in Appendix A.

1. *The extent of internal fragmentation:* While societies always have some internal cleavages, given the multiplicity of dimensions along which differences can crystallize, such divisions are more salient in some cases than in others. The social consequences of such divisions are not innate (that is, they are not simply the product of the existence of heterogeneity) but result from the instrumental and situational uses to which such divisions have been put (Przeworski and Sprague, 1982). Race, religion, language, and region can be either significant or insignificant impediments to solidarity depending on the context in which they take place. National working classes are often products of a patchwork of heterogeneous groups fused into blocs by historical development.

> What tends to set one national or religious or racial group of workers against another, is not so much occupational specialization in itself, as the tendency for one group to occupy, to seek to monopolize the more highly skilled, better paid and more desirable jobs. Such divisions and stratification occur even in nationally homogeneous working classes, but it is certain that they are enormously exacerbated when they coincide with divisions of language, color, religion or nationality. (Hobsbawm, 1984:54)

Immigration rates are used to assess the viability of split labor market strategems (Bonacich, 1972). While other studies have used the ethnic composition of populations, this factor does not necessarily translate into labor movement fragmentation (Stephens, 1986). Changes in immigration rates may more accurately detect the entry of new groups whose presence stratifies labor segments. High rates of immigration should exacerbate internal cleavages. Immigration also hampers collective action because of the lack of commitment most new immigrants have for long-term goals (Korpi and Shalev, 1979: 169; 1980:306).

Immigration is a response to, among other things, an excess of labor

in a sending society and a shortage of labor in a receiving one. Such shortages are perhaps most (or at least perceived to be most) acute when relative labor productivity is high. In the absence of barriers to the migration of labor and capital, people will emigrate from areas in which labor productivity is lower and migrate to areas where labor productivity is higher, at least over the long run. Large-scale migrations allow migrants to sustain separate identities from indigenous workers, creating tensions between indigenous and migrant workers, fostering fragmentation.[6] Immigration reduces solidarism in receiving societies, while aiding solidarism in the sending ones. High rates of immigration undermine solidarism, not least due to the efforts of indigenous labor to exploit anti-immigrant prejudices (Bonacich, 1972). Immigration may also hamper collective action due to the lack of commitment many new immigrants have for long-term goals, maintaining a sojourner's perspective (Korpi and Shalev,1979:169; 1980:306).

High immigration rates also indicate (at least relative) labor shortages in the receiving society. At times, however, immigration occurs in spite of high unemployment, because immigrants will take jobs or work for wages deemed undesirable by and/or unsuitable for indigenous workers. Generally, then, labor's cohesion is typically weakened by immigration and strengthened by emigration.

International migration is not the only type of immigration that fragments labor. Regional or intranational migration may have the same consequences. However, problems of comparability and limitations in historical data make this impediment to unity difficult to assess. Moreover, one possible method of defining a nation-state is the area over which labor can freely move, or at minimum, where its movement is not significantly restricted by state action.[7] Migration is rarely cost-free; migrants consume both material and nonmaterial resources, while critical information about the location of opportunities is often difficult to acquire (Wright, 1986). While the costs of migration are often undervalued, such impediments are rarely decisive over long periods of time in spite of the considerable short-term obstacles they create.

2. *The timing and tempo of industrialization:* Early industrialization undermines broad-ranging solidarism (Luebbert, 1987; Lorwin, 1958). In early industrialization the uniformity characteristic of later industrialization is usually absent, strengthening the position of craft trades. It is true that craft trades often practice forms of industrial solidarity during early periods of industrialization, especially within industrial districts (or

impacted labor markets), but such broad-ranging patterns of industrial solidarity are often replaced by craft sectoral solidarity—solidarity within craft trades rather than between them (Ansell, 1993).[8]

Whereas gradual industrialization helps craft unions sustain protected niches against deskilling, later industrialization favors homogenization, most commonly through the establishment of uniform production techniques.[9] Similarly, rapid industrialization promotes industrial unionism because traditional production techniques more quickly become obsolescent. There is, however, no inherent correspondence between early and gradual industrialization or late and rapid industrialization.[10]

One characteristic problem of industrializing economies is a shortage of capital, encouraging the development of techniques of production that are both labor and capital saving (Elster, 1983a). Where labor is scarce, capital intensive production techniques may be rapidly employed, stimulating rapid industrialization. However, labor shortages may also reflect the success of political coalitions in protecting traditional ways of life, operating to retard the flow of labor out of agriculture and into industry, or from low labor productivity industries to high productivity ones. In either case the result is to slow the process of industrialization.

Labor may also be trapped in relatively unproductive activities because prevailing ideologies do not countenance hiring women for men's work, black for white's work, and so on. The existence of family economies in low-wage sectors may also retard the flow of labor into better paying occupations. For example, in the United States between 1880 and 1930, the employment of women and children in the textile industry often supplemented the income of men in farming, effectively keeping each within a low-wage economy isolated from the higher wages available by migrating.

3. *The degree of economic openness:* The influence of solidarism on trade is multifaceted. However, for present purposes, what is most important is the issue of how trading policies oriented in favor or opposed to trade protectionism affect the cohesion of labor.

According to one perspective, a key variable in trade policies is the size of domestic markets. In small countries where (by definition) the demand for exports is exogenously determined, import protection can reduce the marginal propensity to import without harm to the level of exports. This principle suggests that smaller countries can free ride on

free trade (under some circumstances at least). In larger countries able to influence world prices, exports are not exogenously determined but are related to the level of imports and government export policies. Protection in such countries reduces both exports and imports. According to the theory of optimal tariffs, large countries must weigh potential contractions in the open economy multiplier against the benefits gained by adopting a tariff that lowers both the intranational demand for the imported product as well as the world price of the good (Lake, 1990). Since trade protection stimulates divisions vertically (based on industry, rather than horizontally by class), labor solidarism should be higher where protectionism is weaker and lower where protectionism is stronger.

That international openness discourages protectionism is a staple of corporatist theory as the fear of retaliation enhances the desire for a liberal international economy (Panitch, 1977; Schmitter, 1974; Katzenstein, 1982, 1985). Countries with small domestic markets cannot attain necessary economies of scale over the range of goods used in modern industry, leading to a heavy dependence on imports. Small domestic markets encourage a reliance on increasing exports. Smaller national economies are also less diversified. The result is a greater dependence on the global economy, as the economic openness of the smaller states discourages a resort to protectionism. Of course, such states do not necessarily apply their free trade principles consistently throughout the entire economy. Fear of retaliation, however, enhances their desire for a liberal international economy, with lower tariff and nontariff barriers.

Hence, economic vulnerability fosters centralization in labor movements in small states (Wallerstein, 1984). The existence of dependence on foreign markets in combination with a national commitment to free trade rules out protectionist policies of all sorts, not merely trade restrictions. Given largely external demand, the government is able to do little to increase it other than offer export subsidies that invite retaliation.[11]

The centralization of power within union federations means that centralized labor federations represent the interests of workers or wage earners as a class and not just a particular segment. Centralized unions embody the collective norms of inclusion and responsibility, stimulating solidarism based on the principle that regardless of particular industrial locations and job, workers are part of a unified entity sharing similar identities and similar interests (Lange, 1984:109). Alternatively decentralized union federations represent a narrower segment of labor and are less committed to full employment policies that benefit both organized and unorganized workers.

Arguably, labor federations in relatively open economies favor centralization. Their inability to shift the costs of protectionism to consumers encourages the formation of centralized broad, encompassing movements as a means of defending their interests (Wallerstein, 1984; Katzenstein, 1982, 1985). The decentralized labor federations found in more sheltered economies, by comparison, favor protectionism, at times leading to the formation of strong producer coalitions.

A different, somewhat more complex approach focuses upon the relative scarcity of factors of production as the central determinant of coalition formation among constituencies of land, labor, and capital (Rogowski, 1989). Trade protection hurts those owning and producing factors that a given society holds abundantly. For example, in a society well endowed in labor but poor in capital, protection aids capital and harms labor. Trade liberalization in the same society favors labor and harms capital. Alternatively, in a society well endowed in capital but poor in labor, trade protection aids labor and harms capital, while trade liberalization favors capital and harms labor.

Rogowski's approach can be integrated with the present analysis by observing that in the first situation labor productivity is likely to be low, while in the second, labor productivity is far more likely to be high. Solidarism can be effectively narrow when labor productivity is high but not when labor productivity is low. High labor productivity strengthens coalitions of the skilled, facilitating narrow solidarism. For example, high labor productivity in the nineteenth-century United States was a product of the high standard of human capital, a consequence of early mass public education in industrializing areas and the migration of skilled immigrants (prior to the 1880s).

Alternatively, low labor productivity often (but not always) corresponds to a dearth of skilled labor and an oversupply of unskilled labor. The lack of investment in labor may reflect an absence of capital or an excess of unskilled labor. If low labor productivity occurs due to an oversupply of labor, biasing investment choices away from labor-saving innovations, the excess of labor will often discourage immigration but favor emigration, also aiding broader solidarism. Low labor productivity may also reflect uncertainty regarding the ability to retain labor, once trained. However, placing impediments to the free mobility of labor is a complementary alternative to underinvestment in the labor force. In general, unskilled homogeneous laborers rarely have any viable alternative to coalitions based on broad solidarism. Finally, national trade policies can be inimical to the cohesion of labor by creating misguided incentives,

fostering narrow coalitions when labor is plentiful or broad coalitions when labor is scarce.

4. *The influence of democratization struggles:* The links between democratization and industrialization are so varied as to be difficult to specify. Almost certainly the relation between democratization and industrialization defies straightforward linear hypotheses. While to fully contemplate such linkages would extend far beyond the scope of this analysis, the following hypothesis is most relevant. The timing of industrialization relative to democratization should have the following effects: When mass democratization (often a consequence of an expanding franchise) precedes modern industrialization (represented by the formation of an industrialized working class), mass politicization will be more likely to reflect preindustrial rather than industrial cleavages (Rokkan, 1966). This reduces the prospect that working-class movements will be unified and cohesive. Alternatively, if mass democratization follows modern industrialization, mass politicization will be based in the cleavages of industrial societies, and a solidaristic and cohesive labor movement is more likely.[12] For example, since struggles for democracy aid universalism, movements involved in such struggles should be more universalistic than those that are not. Industrialization also intensifies the pressure for democratization, although not assuring it, by increasing the size of the pro-democracy forces (e.g., the industrial proletariat) while simultaneously reducing the size of those groups antagonistic to democracy (Reuschemayer, Stephens, and Stephens, 1992), such as nobles and possibly peasants as well.

Combining these distinct factors into a model of the structural determinants of solidarism, I argue that the formation of national labor movement occurs along a spectrum running from narrowly based or low solidaristic labor movements to broadly based or high solidaristic labor. Hence, collective labor actors pursue strategies of bounded rationality based on constraints reflecting both long-term and proximate divergences in the historical development of their respective institutional structures.

Figures 1.1a and 1.1b illustrate this analysis cross-nationally for the historical period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Figure 1.1a plots immigration rates against export rates. The intersecting horizontal and vertical lines are drawn at the median positions equally dividing nations between low and high export and immigration rates in the early years of the twentieth century. The upper left quadrant contains

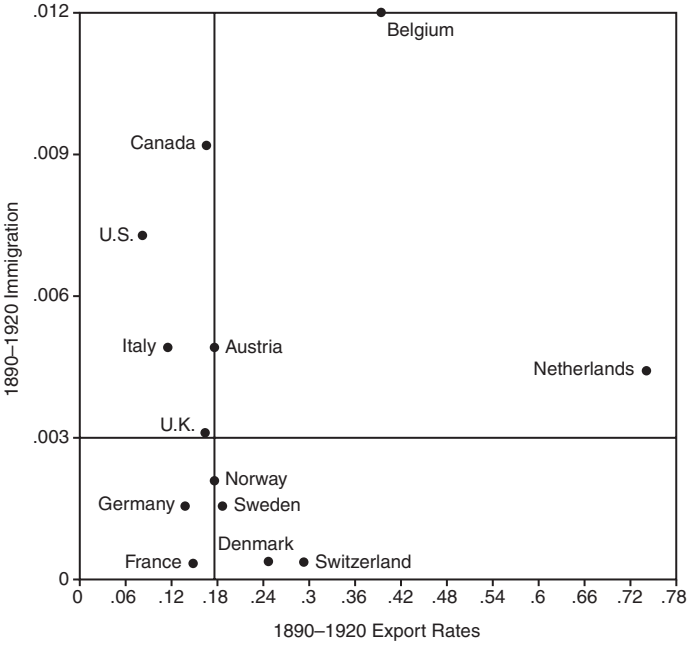

Figure 1.1a. Plot of Immigration Rates with Export Rates

those nations whose combination of relatively low export and high immigration rates should impart a strongly particularistic influence to the development of their labor movements. This group includes Canada, the United States, Italy, Austria, and the United Kingdom. The lower right quadrant represents the contrast of high export and low immigration rates, where universalistic tendencies should be strongest. This group includes Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland.

Figure 1.1b plots the lag of democratization after industrialization (DI) against the timing of industrialization (I). Negative numbers are possible for the democratization-industrialization index because democratization preceded industrialization in the cases of the United States and Finland. The intersecting horizontal and vertical lines are once again drawn at the median points dividing DI and I equally between lower and higher. The upper left quadrant contains those nations whose DI and I combinations should produce strong particularism, democratization preceding or proximate to industrialization and early industrialization. This group includes the United States, France, and Germany. The lower right

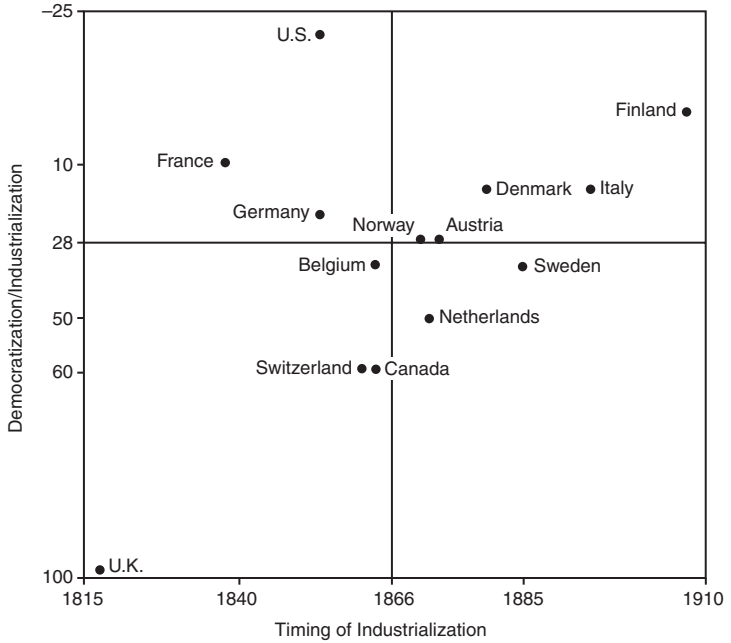

Figure 1.1b. Plot of Democratizaton/Industrialization with Industrialization

quadrant contains the contrasting cases, a relatively long lag between democratization and industrialization and later industrialization, in which universalistic tendencies should be strongest. This group includes Sweden, the Netherlands, Austria, and Norway.

A more precise assessment is provided by the regression analysis on 1960s industrial disputes available in Table B.1 in Appendix B, which shows the democratization to industrializaton DI index to have had the strongest influence, overall. The combination of the formative historical measures DI and I were stronger predictors than combinations that included the conjunctural variables—export and immigration rates.

LABOR MILITANCY AND UNIONIZATION

Union density and strike rates provide empirical referents for the degree of solidarism in national labor movements. The critical intervening factor in the development of alternative modes of class formation is to be found in the pattern of postwar strike rates, specifically in the contrast

among national strike rates. It is, for example, well established that more cohesive working classes strike less, thereby underutilizing their market power. On the other hand, less well organized working classes make more militant wage demands (Schott, 1984).[13]

Figures 1.2a plots unionization against strike rates, indicating three relatively distinct clusters for the era spanning 1946 to 1964:

1. The most cohesive labor movements are to be found in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Austria, based on their low strike rates and higher unionization rates.
2. The least cohesive labor movements are found in the United States, France, Canada, Finland, and Italy, based on their high strike rates and on average lower levels of unionization.
3. Moderately cohesive/moderately fragmented cases include the United Kingdom, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Moreover, this distribution is broadly consistent with the expectations generated by the primary hypotheses, considering that with the exception of Finland (for which the data on export and immigration rates early in the century is unavailable) no country that is not in the diagonal quadrants identified with particularism or universalism (upper left and lower right) in either Figure 1.1a or 1.1b is in either the upper left or lower right areas of Figure 1.2a. The correlation between 1960s unionization and 1960s industrial disputes is ($r = –0.55$, $p = 0.05$). Moreover, the plot in Figure 1.2b for the pre–World War I period does not allow a similar categorization. If there is a pattern in the earlier period, it is of high strike rate nations and low strike rate nations with no visible relation to unionization.[14]

The relationship portrayed in Figures 1.2a and 1.2b is supported by the significant correlation between 1960s unionization and 1960s industrial disputes and the absence of a similarly significant correlation for the prewar period (see Appendix B). The contrast between a noticeable pattern in recent years and its absence in earlier ones reinforces the view that the movement toward strike rate suppression is developmental, rather than a reflection of a cultural or secular preference for consensus. The observed variations in strike rates suggests a strategic choice, as suppression succeeds the establishment of an environment conducive to interclass bargaining rather than preceding it. Yet substantial suppression occurs only in countries of high unionization—an essential characteristic

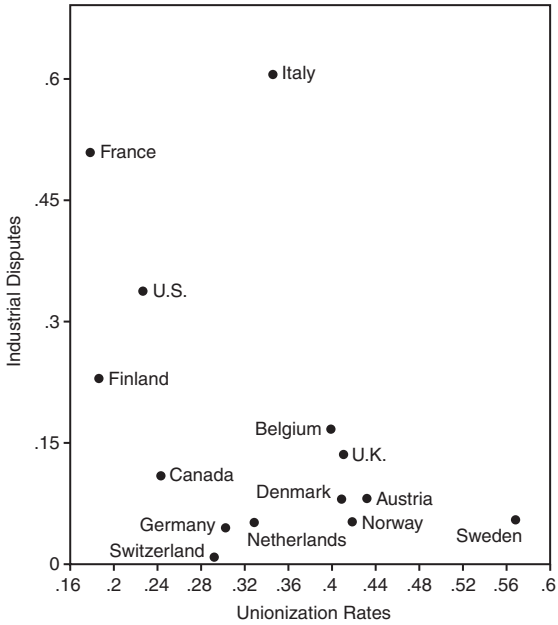

Figure 1.2a. Plot of Postwar (1946–1964) Industrial Displutes and Unionization

of broadly encompassing labor movements—making implausible an attribution to an overarching secular trend toward quiescence.[15]

Hence, labor movement particularism, as represented by higher strike rates in recent years, is most evident where the lag of democratization following industrialization is nonexistent or slight and industrialization began relatively early. By contrast, a substantial lag in democratization following industrialization and late industrialization strengthens labor movements solidaristic tendencies.

The existence of highly unionized labor movements with low strike rates among contemporary nations is not easily reconciled with the expectations of social historians that class consciousness can be equated with strong militancy. But this phenomenon does support the notion of a strategic element in labor quiescence, a finding coinciding with other research (Cameron, 1984; Przeworski and Wallerstein, 1982; Crouch, 1985). The lack of reduction in the strike rates of some low unionization countries, moreover, casts doubt on the existence of any secular trend toward diminished militancy in "mature" or "postindustrial" labor move-

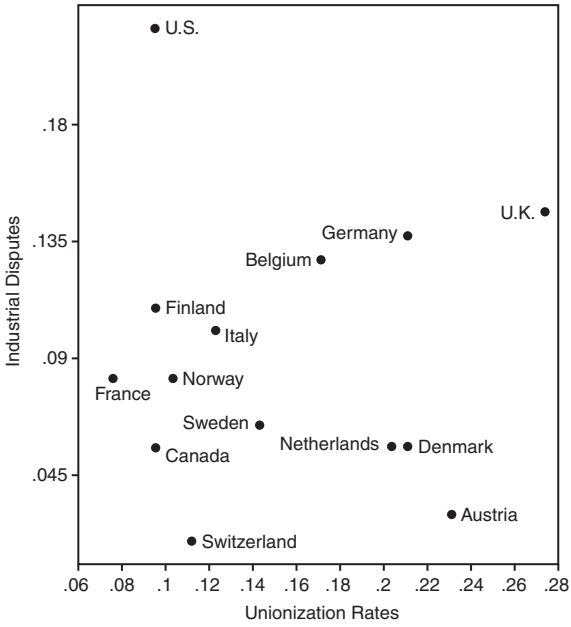

Figure 1.2b. Plot of Prewar (1900–1920) Industrial Displutes and Unionization

ments, and makes implausible as well the attribution to innate national character.

In the formative stages of the labor movement, militancy and class cohesiveness routinely coincided. According to Cronin (1987), in nineteenth-century Britain, strikes increased unionization rates. Similarly, Hanagan (1980) argues that artisanal militancy in France promoted working-class coalitions. In late nineteenth-century France, strikes were the major means of expression of the workers movement. In 1879–1880, for example, strikes may have transcended unionism inasmuch as the number of strikers was in excess of union members (Perrot, 1987).

The experience of maturing labor movements, however, suggests that the relationship between cohesion and strike rates undergoes an inversion whereby class cohesion is associated with countries with lower strike rates. This conclusion is consistent with Hibbs's (1987b:103) comparative findings for the experience of Italy, Great Britain, France, and the United States in the 1950s and 1960s: The greater the reliance on strikes in wage determination, the smaller is the extent of union power.[16]

The emergence of contrasting patterns of strike rates in national labor movements over time, suggests the possibility of responses which are strategic and learned.

A different inference is drawn from by those who argue that diminished strike rates are primarily a product of the existence of socialist and/or left-wing participation in government (Stephens, 1986; Cameron, 1984; Hibbs, 1976; Korpi and Shalev, 1979). However, (1) not all observers agree that left political participation adequately explains diminished strike rates (Schmidt, 1982b). Crouch (1985), for example, argues that social democracy may be more consequence than cause. Disentangling historically contiguous events may not even be possible. (2) Diminished strike rates are not limited to those countries with left governments in the postwar era. (3) And finally, even if the premise is true, there can be distant as well as proximate causes, and the causal status of an antecedent (in this case such historical structural variables as the timing between democratization and industrialization and the timing of industrialization) cannot logically be eliminated in favor of a successor. Of course I do not mean to argue that socialist or social democratic political participation is irrelevant, which would be contrary to findings established by substantial research, but rather that the role of longer-term historical social structural factors is essential as well.

In conclusion, several observations bear repetition: (1) Industrial disputes decline in some countries and not in others. The historical pattern of industrial disputes is of modest differences in early years, convergence in the 1930s, followed by a substantial postwar divergence. Unionization and industrial disputes are substantially correlated only in the postwar (World War II) era. (2) Strongly particularistic labor movements simulate the environment of small groups. (3) Each pattern reflects the capacity of working-class collective actors to discover and exploit the possibilities of their respective societies. But choices exist only within contexts; national potentials are by no means equal. The most successful fragmented labor movements will be less solidaristic than even inefficiently cohesive ones. (4) Thus, particularistic fragmentation and solidaristic universalism are strategic outcomes based on contrasting structural historical contexts. In each case distinctive constellations of structural forces have led to pronounced homogeneous or heterogeneous tendencies in their labor movements.

NOTES

[1]Often neglected is the sometimes interim phase in which a group exists for others, before it does for itself. The potential reactions of the unorganized may enter into the calculations of decision makers, for example, riots in preindustrial society, and efforts undertaken by elites to prevent them. This may even be an essential step in the process of becoming a class for itself (Elster, 1984).

[2]This explanation of cross-national patterns in the historical development of class formation and national labor movements necessarily emphasizes different variables than those explanations whose level of analysis is intrasocietal, communal, or intracommunal. Hanagan (1988:313), for example, has argued that "Community studies must take for granted the characteristics of national political systems, the pace of industrialization, and the varying compositions of ruling groups." This analysis aims, rather, to explicitly endogenize the first two of these causal influences, for which there are no microlevel analogues. Obviously, limitations in comparable international data constrain the possibilities of theory construction.

[3]An argument strongly contested by Elster (1989), who argues that Offe and Wiesenthal's argument is only novel because of the way it is stated rather than because of any real asymmetries between the collective action dilemmas faced by labor and capital.

[4]Among the common sources of discord are the often higher taxes on wage earners in sheltered and exposed industries alike, to finance assistance for those damaged by the vulnerability of open economies to trade and financial fluctuations. Freeman (1989) has argued that a prime source of intraclass discord in open economies is due to rivalry between workers in exposed and sheltered economic sectors. Openness typically entails greater capital mobility, and reductions in government's ability to finance benefits through taxes on firms. Similarly, the development of "private national champions" breeds conflict between those employed by privileged companies and those whose taxes subsidize them.

[5]The achievement of solidarity depends considerably on the capacity of workers in inferior positions (due to the weaknesses of their regions, firms, or industries) to maintain the access to rights and benefits equivalent to workers in stronger positions.

[6]I say "perceived labor shortages" because internal populations may be excluded from particular labor markets and thus not regarded as potential workers: for example, women, children, minorities, aborigines, and so on. The construction of labor markets is in part a matter of social definitions of who are and are not eligible to work at particular occupations. This argument would apply, for example, to blacks residing in the South employed in plantation agriculture before

the twentieth century. Of course, while industrialization may eventually draw on the entire available labor supply, labor market rigidities of indeterminate length can exclude many potential workers from particular labor markets (Bonacich, 1972).

[7]This caveat preserves the notion of the late nineteenth-century United States as a unified nation, in spite of the considerable limitations on the mobility of black Americans, because such limitations were not due primarily to restrictions of the federal government, but combined a mixture of formal and informal barriers (Wright, 1986; Mandle, 1992).

[8]Whether industrial districts offer an alternative to industrialization within mass production (Piore and Sabel, 1984) or simply represent a phase in the development of industrialization (Harrison, 1994) is currently a topic of spirited debate.

[9]Nations that industrialize later can adopt current techniques that foster rapid growth (Bendix, 1967). Similarly, late industrialization allows elite groups to learn from the mistakes made by their counterparts elsewhere how best to dampen working-class mobilization (Shalev and Korpi, 1980). Ruling elites can accept the formal structure of democratic politics minus the necessity of being responsive to it. The broadening of the franchise can be countermanded by weighted voting, slated distribution of seats, or the absence of secret balloting (Daalder, 1966:54). Electoral arrangements in most European nations before World War I disproportionately favored rural areas (Mayer, 1981). In the United States, the bias favoring rural areas was not corrected by reapportionment insuring "one person one vote" until after World War II.

[10]France is a prototypical case of early and gradual industrialization, suggesting the emergence of a low solidaristic national labor movement (Cole and Deane, 1965:11). Britain underwent by far the earliest industrialization, and a slower rate of growth from the mid-nineteenth century (Landes, 1965). Sweden typifies the other extreme—rapid and late industrialization. Examples of cross influences include the United States, where industrialization was early and rapid, and Italy, where it was late and slow, although the rapidity of industrial development in northern Italy is somewhat disguised by the slowness of its southern regions.

[11]Welfare policies are the political option open to unions in such environments to increase the income and security of their members. That the political struggles to gain welfare policies are public goods for individual unions provides them with an incentive to relegate power to a national federation to overcome the free rider problem (Wallerstein, 1984:50). For example, full employment is a demand generally espoused by centralized labor federations (Panitch, 1977:74).

[12]Since franchise extensions often result from social conflicts among elite groupings, the immediate consequence of an apparent breakthrough may be a strengthened aristocracy (Rokkan, 1966:262).

[13]Cameron's (1984) measures of cohesion, based in part on the number of trade union federations in a nation, cannot be used here because of the lack of relevant data for the early years of the century.

[14]The contrast of pre- and postwar strike rates is consistent with Hibbs's (1987b) analysis, which holds aggregate levels to be better summarized in this way. Strike rates are particularly susceptible to problems of incomparability, in that they differ between industries, and as the distribution of industries among countries is unequal, national strike rates will differ because of the differences in the composition of their industrial structures. As national strike rates are influenced by the proportion of industrial workers in the labor force, differences in national strike rates can be a product of the relative size of the industrial sector. To control for this, industrial disputes were divided by the number of male manufacturing workers to reduce the bias introduced by the composition of the labor force. The problems caused by correlated denominators in ratio variables is somewhat diminished by the absence of shared denominators among any of the above variables (Bollen and Ward, 1979).

There are really three semi-independent dimensions of strike frequency, size, and duration. While Hibbs (1978) argues that product man days lost is the most appropriate measure, this is disputed by Shalev (1979) and Korpi and Shalev (1980). The choice to use size permits a longer time period to be examined with more cases, as the number of man days lost is not available for earlier years for several countries. Second, while there is some understanding of the theoretical implications of strike frequency and strike size, that of duration has yet to be clarified.

[15]Cameron (1984) shows that the dichotomy between high strike/low unionization nations and low strike/high unionization nations continues since the 1960s.

[16]Goldfield's (1987) disagreement with this thesis in *The Decline of Organized Labor in the United States* rests, in my judgment, on an ecological fallacy. Strong unions may strike more often than weaker unions in nations with less cohesive labor movements, but strikes occur less often in nations with more cohesive labor movements.

CHAPTER 2

Pathways to Capitalist Democracy
What Prevents Social Democracy?

Although there is perpetual interest in capitalist democracy's current state, its origins rarely attract sustained attention. Certainly the frequent conflation of the origins of capitalist democracy with those of political democracy obscures any distinction between the establishment of institutions of representation and the impact of mass participation. Perhaps equally responsible for the opacity of its origins is the substantial linkage between capitalist democracy and class conflict.

According to Therborn (1977), capitalist democracy is a product of the struggle among elites over the extent and scope of unlimited authority. Eventually this leads to the sharing of power with the masses, albeit not necessarily voluntarily. But although class conflict is often considered essential for explaining variations in welfare states, its role in the formation of capitalist democracy is less understood. What is typically stressed is the role of crises requiring political mobilization—warfare, civil strife, general strikes, and so on—as a prologue to the establishment of democratic conditions (Grew, 1978). Such "crises of participation" could be resolved only by opening up the system to the heretofore unrepresented.[1]

The beginnings of capitalist democracy are generally to be found in the nineteenth century, notwithstanding the far longer history of institutions of representation. Its beginnings are defined not by the point at which *all* formal and substantive barriers to participation have been removed, as suggested by Therborn, but rather by the point at which expansions of the franchise necessitate responsiveness to the views of its citizenry.[2] Thus, from the point at which a majority of those individuals

in a society who share the obligations of citizens (e.g., taxation and military service) also share its rights, such as a formal voice in decision making, democracy has emerged, if perhaps incompletely.[3] This may of course entail accommodations in the views of those now enfranchised, as in the left's embrace of a parliamentary road to power and disavowal of violent overthrow (Joll, 1966; Gay, 1962; Kautsky, 1971). But if Therborn's stringent criterion is relaxed, it is evident that the exclusion of some groups from the franchise does not necessarily mean that the society in question is not a capitalist democracy (although more restrictive franchise entitlements are clearly less democratic than less restrictive ones).

This chapter will show that the origins of capitalist democracy embody patterns of class relations that signify divergent pathways of development. Based on historical antecedents, variations in class alliances and class power distinguish those regimes that have become social democratic from those that have become bourgeois democratic.

CLASS ALLIANCES IN THE FORMATION OF CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY

The model of class alliances used in this chapter is based on Barrington Moore's magisterial *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966).[4] Moore emphasizes the changes that occur in the interdependent relations that intertwine peasants, landlords, manipulators of the cash nexus, and the managers of royal or public bureaucracies (Smith, 1983). The class structures of agrarian societies engaged in early stages of economic modernization are connected to alternative political outcomes as a consequence of critical political moments (Skocpol, 1973).

Moore argues that the path traveled by a society to modernity is in large measure a consequence of the permeability of ruling groups during the era of transition. Where feudal landowning elites are relatively pure and uncorrupted by and free of mercantilist influences, they will try to restrain capitalist development. His major thesis is that the elimination of agriculture as the predominant economic activity forms the basis of indigenous democracy. This step facilitates the destruction of the political hegemony of the landed elite and the conversion of the peasantry into substantial farmers producing for the market. If landlords and peasants make successful adaptations to industrialization, resistance to democracy will be weakened. On the other hand, if landowning elites are left behind, they will obstruct social change. Hence, the emergence of a

strong bourgeoisie exercising the lion's share of political power in combination with an independent, entrepreneurial, yet restrained nobility are the most favorable precursors to democracy.

According to Moore, democracy develops where the employment of violence is eventually restricted to eliminating and subordinating rural elements hostile to those forms of commercial growth adaptable to a free labor market. The more commercialized the rural gentry, the weaker their opposition to franchise extension. Such intermingling of noble and commercial interests thus prevents a solid front of opposition from forming. By contrast a nobility disinterested in or ineffective at commercialization will fight that much harder to maintain a traditional relation to its peasantry.

Cross-class alliances between agrarian and urban upper classes constitute a critical moment in democratic development whereby the strength of the bourgeoisie is pivotal: If strong, it will set the cultural and political tone of any coalition with a landed upper class.[5] If of medium strength (or less), the landed upper class will set the tone. Market commercialization created agrarian political allies for strong bourgeoisies in England and the United States. In contrast, labor-repressive agrarian systems are unfavorable terrain for the growth of democracy. Thus, differences in democratic development strongly reflect differences in the development and structure of class alliances.[6]

However, Moore's implicit assumption of basic similarity in the preindustrial sociopolitical environments of the cases analyzed has been severely challenged. Britain, France, and America, Moore's exemplary cases, started the modernizing process with very different social structures, and the political upheavals these societies underwent were characterized by very different patterns of class struggle (Skocpol, 1973). Thus the implication in Moore's analysis that preindustrial environments are roughly equivalent obscures variations in social structural factors that have strongly affected subsequent development. Moreover, by ending his analysis before the full emergence of capitalist democracy, Moore reinforces the supposition that the critical formative events occurred well in advance of such emergence.[7]

Most importantly, because of his premature ending and omission of small nation cases, Moore conflates differences among capitalist democratic nations that are inherent in his theoretical framework. By so doing, he neglects one of the more provocative implications of his theory: Differences in patterns of class alliance account for contrasting routes to social democratic and bourgeois democratic regimes.[8] It has thus been

left to others to consider these implications of Moore's class alliance model (Castles, 1973; Esping-Andersen, 1985a, 1990; Alestalo and Kuhnle, 1986; Tilton, 1974).

Starting with Moore's thesis that class alliances are the centerpiece of the indigenous formation of democratic regimes leads to the following hypothesis: If the alliances found in the United States, France, Germany, and Scandinavia (for the moment aggregating Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) are considered, it is clear that industrial manufacturers and agricultural landowners formed political alliances in the first three cases (though in the United States it was more precisely midwestern farmers that were allies of industry) but not in Scandinavia.

This comparison immediately presents a paradox. Given the reactions to crises based on market intrusion and commercialization, democracy seems easier to establish if the peasantry is eliminated. But from the reactions to the later crises that intensified pressures for intervention in and regulation of market economies (generally occurring between the two great depressions of the 1870s and the 1930s), the consequences of declining peasant influence lead to an alternate conclusion. Where peasants survive the intrusion of market commercialization, and became more independent in the process, the eventual result is a broader, more solidaristic labor movement.

Extrapolating from Moore's analysis, liquidation of the peasantry appears to be both the most favorable precondition for the establishment of political democracy, yet that least favorable to the establishment of social democracy. The survival of an *independent* peasantry promotes the development of the labor/agricultural class coalitions that are the historical foundations of social democratic regimes (Esping-Andersen and Friedland, 1982). Throughout Scandinavia, the future citadel of social democracy, the enclosure movement and growing peasant proprietorship reduced intra- and intersocietal variations in landholding practices. As a result, the "individualization of agriculture took place before the true agricultural revolution of farming methods and the extensive change to market and money economy" (Alestalo and Kuhnle, 1986:9). Thus strong peasant resistance to commercialization reduced the likelihood of democracy emerging by internal development, even as their resistance favored the eventual emergence of social democracy.

The relationship between patterns of class alliances and alternative paths in democratic development can be illustrated in a series of examples. Considering Scandinavia as a whole, farmer/labor coalitions were essential to the eventual emergence of social democracy. Decomposing

this aggregate into individual national cases supports the overall premise while suggesting a further nuance. Denmark's early industrial development involved extensive "defeudalization," leading to the emergence of a free peasantry and comparatively well-organized farmers (Senghaas, 1985). But its farmer/labor coalitions were less stable because of the sizable class of independent farmers, whose position as independent landowners provided a social base for right-wing alliances. Gourevitch (1986), for example, has argued that the contrast between the use of servile labor in East Prussia and the independence of small-scale farmers in Denmark is a key factor explaining the different outcomes for the type of class alliances that succeeded in becoming dominant in each.

Meanwhile, in Norway and Sweden, peasants were less vulnerable to right-wing appeals (Eley, 1983). The existence of quasi-proletarian landholders in Norway and peasant self-sufficiency in Sweden made each more reliable members of farmer/labor coalitions.[9] In each case, survival of an independent peasantry promoted the eventual development of social democracy, whereas peasant demise or continued dependence aided conservative alliance formation. Their stronger farmer/labor coalitions help explain why even within the confines of relatively similar social structural environments, the Norwegian and Swedish welfare states are stronger, more universalistic, and less susceptible to decomposition than is the Danish (Esping-Andersen, 1985a and b).

This comparison suggests that the relationship between the degree of independence of agricultural labor and bourgeois-democratic/social-democratic alignments may be such that the more independent the peasantry as peasants the more likely they are to align leftward. More dependent peasants dominated by landlords will tend to be right-wing allies, as will the opposite case of independent farmers, having made the commitment to a market economy.[10]

Turning to the United States, we see that an independent farmer-labor coalition did not survive the transition from early industrialization. Rather, the class alliances emerging in the North and the South were centrifugal, exacerbating strains in the political system. The pro-business Republican political hegemony of 1860–1912 exemplified the industry/agriculture alliance that characterizes several larger nation-states (with some variation in the degree of domination by manufacturing interests). While the Republican tilt of independent self-sufficient midwestern farmers for the Republican party was severely strained by the economic crises that spawned Populism, unity consistently eluded the major disadvantaged groups (Burnham, 1982). In political terms, agricultural

interests were divided between supporters of Populism concentrated in the South and Southwest (although there were strong pockets of support wherever farmers lived on the margins) and the more highly capitalized farmers to be found in the Northeast and Midwest often repelled by the movement's radicalism and emphasis on free silver (an emphasis disliked by many northern workers as well).

Class coalitions in the American South were formed within a post–Civil War reconsolidation of agricultural relations of production that strongly resembled the reactions to economic and social crisis of landowner elites in Germany and Eastern Europe (Mandle, 1978).[11] Even before the war, the degree of concentration of landownership in the cotton-growing areas of the South in 1860 exceeded that of every northern state, while the distribution of wealth in the prewar cotton South between slaveholders and nonslaveholders was growing more unequal, although at a moderate pace (Wright, 1978). Slaves were becoming too expensive for the average southern farmer. Hence, the growing inequality between slaveholders and nonslaveholders was a significant albeit perhaps not yet a decisive manifestation of the formation of a distinct slaveholder elite, unified on the necessity of protecting and maintaining slavery (Wright, 1978).

Following the war, the concentration of landownership remained much the same (Wright, 1978). Credit dependency and tenant farming based on the use of both legal and extralegal methods established a modified but still essentially labor-repressive form of labor control for both black and white farm labor. By 1900, a majority of tenants were white.[12] The excessive reliance on cash crops led to a relatively undeveloped economy and a class structure that was quite large at the base and narrow at the top (Valelly, 1989).[13]

Of course, while dependent (white) southern agricultural laborers favored the Democrats, southern Democrats were not merely a farmer/labor coalition, inasmuch as the political allegiance of the entire white South was Democratic. Even as strong a sentiment as racial antipathy to blacks was less than steadfast, however, occasionally tamed by the tentative if ultimately unsucessfully political coalition of southern Populism (Goodwyn, 1978; Woodward, 1974). But in the final analysis, potential farmer/labor coalitions in each region faced too many powerful obstacles. In nineteenth-century America, both North and South farmer/ labor coalitions were hampered by their own fragmentation and the strength of their respective oppositions, which suggests that the structural forces ill disposed to dominant labor/agriculture alliances were considerably stronger in the United States than in Scandinavia.[14]

In sum, the structure of class alliances provides a necessary initial step for an explanation of divergent pathways in capitalist democracy. Dependent agricultural masses, as in Eastern Europe, Germany, and the American South, form a reservoir of support for conservative alliance mobilization. Independent capitalist farmers may also be allies for the right, if somewhat more vacillating ones. But the (long-term) success of conservative producer-oriented class coalitions depends considerably on the availability of payoffs from trade protection to domestic interest groups.

THE IMPACT OF TRADE PROTECTION

Protectionist coalitions are based on the common interests of producers, including (some but not necessarily all) capitalists, farmers, and workers. Governments resort to protection when pressured by powerful actors to ameliorate the effects of crises, in the absence of alternative policy instruments (Katzenstein, 1985). But even the *possibility* of forming producer coalitions may be sufficient to prevent the formation of the kind of cohesive class-based economic actors that are necessary for solidaristic working-class formation. Rather, cross-class alliances within industries divide classes between industries (Wallerstein, 1985; 1987b).

Protectionism reduces the probability of zero-sum, polarized class conflict, since domestic and international producers are the antagonists, rather than labor and capital. By retarding modernization in agriculture, tariff protection of agricultural goods helps to preserve a larger agricultural population (Gourevitch, 1986). In nineteenth-century Europe, for example, landowning elites used state policies to slow down the rate of their economic decline and insulate themselves from vicissitudes of the business cycle (Mayer, 1981).[15]

Each of these propositions shares a common element based on the constraining influence of national size: Protectionist coalitions are more successful in larger rather than smaller states, with the notable exception of Great Britain (to be considered shortly). Furthermore, for large landowners to be politically significant, they must be numerous enough to constitute a distinct interest group, a condition that can be fulfilled only in larger countries (Stephens, 1989).[16]

An example that supports this interpretation can be drawn from the worldwide late nineteenth-century economic depression. During the Great Crisis of 1873–1896, nations throughout Europe turned to protectionism. Industrialists joined agrarians to secure such forms of government aid as favorable treatment on tariffs, interest rates, subsidies, taxes,

and contracts. Organizing in opposition to free trade liberals, powerful (predominantly agrarian) elites organized lobbies, pressure groups, peasant leagues, parties, and factions within parties. In almost every case, the forces of the national conservative bloc triumphed free trade liberals, promoting protectionism, imperialism, and rearmanent. Tariff protection and subsidies for agriculture were key levers for gaining support from peasants and others threatened by industrial and urban development (Mayer, 1981). In the European cases, agrarian interest groups often took the lead in establishing tariffs, so their weakness in smaller nations reinforced the political as well as economic futility of trade protection.

Gourevitch's analysis of Britain, the United States, France, and Germany (each a bigger state) corroborates this interpretation.

> There is a striking similarity in the identity of victors and losers from country to country: producers over consumers, heavy industrialists over finished manufacturers, big farmers over small, and property owners over laborers. In each case, a coalition of producers' interests defined by large-scale basic industry and substantial landowners defeated its opponent. (Gourevitch, 1977:307)

But the constraint of national size ruled out sustaining trade protection over the long term for smaller nations (given their smaller domestic markets) unable to achieve economies of scale without international trade. For countries whose domestic markets are small, protectionism extracts substantial opportunity costs. Smaller countries are more likely to adhere to free trade than are large ones (Lake, 1990:225). According to this reasoning, Sweden's small size made protection an obstacle, an inferior strategy for long-term growth. As the alternative of support for free-trade policies grew, the realignment of interest groups led to a reversal of tariff policy and an emerging emphasis on export specialization (Gourevitch, 1986:113). Similarly Denmark's small size is a major factor accounting for the failures of its conservative class coalitions for whom protectionism was not feasible. The economic vulnerablility of small states outweighed any advantage from tariff protection.[17] Synthesizing this argument with Rogowski's points to the following conclusion. Coalitions of the skilled—a product at least in part of high labor productivity—are more likely to succeed in larger states than in smaller ones.

The structural weakness of the protectionist coalition in Britain can be derived from the following basic condition: England industrialized in

an environment devoid of rivals. This meant free trade served the interests of its industrialists in a manner not replicable by later industrializers. The relatively open borders encountered during its earlier industrialization encouraged international specialization, as well as the import of lower value and the export of higher value products (Gourevitch, 1986).

Britain adopted free trade only after successfully modernizing agriculture and becoming the leading (hegemonic) industrial power in the international economic system (Senghaas, 1985). Agricultural modernization also eliminated a peasantry long before any issue of alliance with an industrial working class could emerge. Britain's early industrialization also meant capital generated from textiles and iron could be reinvested in banking and shipping, which created a strong financial sector in support of free trade.

English financial and manufacturing sectors were built on surplus appropriation from peripheral and semiperipheral nations (Burawoy, 1985). And, of course, one of the prime controversies of the labor aristocracy debate is the importance of imperial expansion in the formation of a reformist labor constituency (Hobsbawm, 1969). For all of these reasons, the nineteenth-century relaxation of tariff protection in Britain was the result of circumstances that were not applicable to later industrializing nations and were therefore not replicable by them.[18]

The general principle to be drawn from this section is that trade protectionism is both (1) essential to the formation of conservative alliances composed of agrarian and industrial interest groups; and simultaneously (2) a form of economic policy that undermines the cohesion of labor by stimulating divisions vertically (based on industry, rather than horizontally by class). Such divisions both stimulate and are reinforced by cleavages within labor. In general, then, large and relatively early industrializing nations possess structural characteristics favoring conservative class alliances of industrial manufacturers and agricultural landowners. With this proviso, Britain can be placed with other large and relatively early industrializing nations whose structural characteristics favor conservative class alliances of industry and agriculture.

In contrast, the formation of a political alliance between labor and agriculture represents a historical foundation for the eventual emergence of social democratic regimes. Such differences in the history of coalition formation can often account for even contemporary differences in policy outcomes in the midst of comparable levels of working-class mobilization (Esping-Andersen, 1990).[19]

FROM HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO STRUCTURAL PATHS

The success of particular alliances depends on the extent of labor solidarism as well. I will argue in this section that variations in patterns of class alliances and class solidarity form the core of alternative pathways in capitalist democratic development. These factors in turn depend on distinct configurations of historical structural forces. Thus, structural factors are responsible for (1) distinctive patterns of class alliances, and (2) key differences in the formation and subsequent development of working-class collective actors.

In Chapter 1, I argued that the changing relation between class solidarity and strike rates encapsulates the divergent historical trajectories in the development of working-class movements within capitalist democracies. Consequently, national labor militancy ceases to be a characteristic associated with high class mobilization (in the formative stages of national labor movements) and becomes one associated with low to moderate levels of class solidarity. Building upon the analysis of the prior chapter, based on whether their strike rates diminished in the post–World War II era or not, North American and Western European capitalist democracies can be divided into two groups: those nations whose strike rates were high or moderately high early in the twentieth century and whose postwar strike rates remained high (generally increasing) and those nations whose strike rates were low or moderately low early in the century and whose postwar strike rates remained low (generally declining), the category including those states identifiable as strongly or moderately social democratic.[20]

Group I	*Group II*
Declining strike rates (date of decline)	*Nondeclining strike rates*
Denmark	Austria*
Germany (early 1950s)	Belgium
Netherlands (early 1950s)	Canada*
Norway (late 1940s)	Finland
Sweden (early 1950s)	France
Switzerland	Italy
	United Kingdom
	United States

As shown in Table B.2 in Appendix B: (1) Contemporary Group I nations had higher export rates between 1890 and 1920. (2) The timing

of industrialization for Group I nations followed that of Group II nations. Industrialization also occurred more rapidly in Group I than in Group II. (3) The period between democratization and industrialization was greater for Group I than for Group II. (4) Contemporary Group I nations had lower immigration rates between 1890 and 1920. Furthermore, strike rates of Group I nations have declined since 1950, while those of Group II nations have risen dramatically.

1. Group I nations had higher export rates between 1890 and 1920. Thus, since high tariffs on agricultural imports aid alliances between industrial manufacturers and agricultural landowners, then right-wing political solidarity should be greater in larger countries than smaller ones. By contrast, social democracy should be more feasible in smaller countries where protectionist coalitions are difficult to sustain, and labor is centralized, especially as trade union density is higher the smaller the country (Kelly, 1988). Moreover, benefits from unionization begin at lower levels of union density in large countries, undercutting development of the broad cohesive labor movements found in some smaller nation-states (Wallerstein, 1987a).
2. Nations in the second group industrialized earlier but more gradually than those in the first. Thus the heterogeneity of production processes in early and gradual industrialization should promote fragmented and narrowly organized labor movements (Luebbert, 1987; Lorwin, 1958). Alternatively late and/or rapid industrialization leads to homogenization given more uniform production techniques, useful to broader, more encompassing unions.
3. Nations in the first group had more time between the onset of industrialization and mass democratization than did those in the second.[21] Thus, solidarism should be stronger in the former than in the latter group.
4. Nations in the first group had lower immigration rates between 1890 and 1920 than did those in the second. High rates of immigration can be expected to exacerbate internal cleavages aiding the growth of narrow particularism.

Of course, such differences are not necessarily of similar weight nor explanatory. In order to evaluate the power of these categorizations, probit analyses were performed on three groupings implicated in the hypothesis of structural determined pathways: (1) diminished strike

rates; (2) the extensiveness of corporatist bargaining; and (3) national size. The first division is based on the earlier-mentioned categorization of diminished versus nondiminished strike rate nations. The second is based on the extent of corporatism in national bargaining (as defined by Katzenstein's [1985] classification), and the third is based on national size, and coincides with the divergent patterns of class alliances discussed in the prior section. Varying the lineups allows a degree of replication, reducing the likelihood that any significant findings are solely the result of chance.[22] The results are shown in Table B.3 in Appendix B and in note 22.

In each of the comparisons, the historical structural antecedents successfully predict the distribution of cases. The most significant indicators across the comparisons are characteristics of industrialization (its timing and rapidity) and export rates. The expectation that nations can be grouped based on variations in their structural antecedents is supported, given credence to the main argument that there is a divergent pattern in capitalist democratic development. On one path, eventually bourgeois democratic nations industrialized more gradually, immigration rates were higher, while larger domestic markets made possible the formation of protectionist coalitions. These characteristics aid the formation of right-wing political blocs and propel working-class fragmentation. Such characteristics are consistent with the view expressed by Castles (1981) that right-wing strength mediates economic closure.

In contrast, on the second path, industrialization was later and more rapid, immigration rates were lower, while a more vulnerable economic position in the world economy obstructs the survival of protectionist coalitions. In these circumstances, the right is less powerful, while solidaristic working-class formation is more prevalent. Under these conditions, an independent peasantry is more likely to survive industrialization and farmer/labor coalitions will be a realistic possibility.

In a somewhat similar vein, Luebbert (1987) has argued that the strength of prewar liberalism is the critical influence explaining democratic development. Although his analysis differs from this one in some important respects, the main conclusion is similar: Strong liberalism is a result of gradual democratization and early industrialization, leading to bourgeois hegemony and a leading role in a rural/industrial alliance. Alternatively, weak liberalism is a consequence of late industrialization and late democratization, enabling the emergence of a mobilized working class that undercuts a bourgeois-led alliance.[23]

A major perspective in historical sociology is the state-centered perspective identified with Skocpol (1979), and the contributors to Tilly

(1975). Accordingly, historical traditions of state interventionism and strong centralization bequeath a legacy of future interventionism and centralization. As a prerequisite for taming the aristocracy, the strengthening of the state has been widely recognized for its role as midwife to industrial capitalism (Anderson, 1979; Poggi, 1978). That it explains the distribution of nations between social and bourgeois democratic regimes is another matter entirely. Nor does it appear to be especially relevant to explaining particularism. In France, a sympathetic state retarded centralization after World War I, enhancing particularism; in the United States, a hostile or indifferent state forced labor to rely on its own resources, also enhancing its particularism.

The voluminous literature on theories of the state, both Marxist and non-Marxist, flounders on the question of state autonomy because of the difficulties of formulating a notion of state interests separate from the interests of social actors. Theoretical discussions of state autonomy tend to be incongruous with data.[24] Past state interventionism does not necessarily beget future interventionism. For example, as shown In Table B.4 in Appendix B, taking the ratio of taxes levied by central governments to GNP as an indicator of centralization, from the end of the nineteenth century through the 1960s, nations in the second group consistently levied higher tax ratios.

Often what is taken as evidence of state autonomy coincides with the interests of private groups whether as the representative of individual interests or through the provision of collective goods. The state autonomy thesis is also inconsistent with the centerpiece of Marxist analyses of the state: State autonomy is constrained by property rights because private ownership of the means of production severely limits the range of available political alternatives. The options of any government are circumscribed by private decisions of owners of capital. The state is thus structurally dependent on capital. Under democratic capitalism, "the institutional form of this state is determined through the rules of democratic and representative government, while the material content of state power is conditioned by the continual requirements of the accumulation process (Offe, 1984:121). Yet orthodox Marxism can claim too much. That governments can regulate investment and income distributions within relatively broad limits is a finding supported by extensive research (Schwerin, 1984; Cameron, 1984; Crouch, 1985). State autonomy may ultimately prove to be a comparative issue, rather than an a priori or theoretical one.[25]

Yet upon comparing Sweden, Germany, the United States, Great Britain, and France, in terms of their responses to the 1873–1896 depres-

sion, Gourevitch is drawn to a different conclusion; it is possible that state autonomy is an artifact due to a particular form of analysis.

> When we look at each country separately, we find the role of institutions looming large. When we look at countries comparatively, however, the importance of state institutions washes out. Countries with different structures adopted similar policies. . . . A convergence of policy outcomes despite a divergence of institutions suggests that those idiosyncrasies of political system limited to one country are not crucial in explaining results. (Gourevitch, 1986:117)

In other words, state autonomy is epiphenomenal, and can be largely explained by the impact of structural conditions on private actors. This is not to assert that state variables are irrelevant in comparative research, but rather to suggest that for understanding long-term (or synchronic) outcomes, state factors are decidedly less important than the interests of organized private actors.

THE COMPARATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF CAPITALIST DEMOCRATIC PATHWAYS

Such historical structural antecedents as the timing and rapidity of industrialization, the magnitude of the economy's export sector, the extent of fragmentation within the labor force, and the timing of industrialization relative to democratization provide the foundation for a causal explanation of pathways in the development of capitalist democracy. These pathways, based on class alliances and the extent of labor's solidarism, distinguish those nations where social democratic regimes have emerged from those where bourgeois democratic regimes have prevailed.

It is apparent that the contemporary characteristic that most clearly distinguishes the social democratic from the bourgeois democratic path of development is the pattern of their postwar strike rates, that is, the transformation that has occurred in the frequency of labor militancy. Strong unions are clearly less militant in what are nowadays more universalistic, more extensively organized countries, notwithstanding the fact that during the period of their industrial takeoffs, militancy and class cohesiveness were positively related.[26] Yet even as militancy fostered the development of the labor movement in its early phases, it eventually became, if not detrimental, then at least symptomatic of a tendency toward fragmentation. Thus, over time, militancy and class solidarity di-

verge and class solidarity becomes more strongly associated with lesser rather than greater militancy.

Perhaps the classic explanation for reduced militancy is based upon the thesis of the "end of ideology." Its proponents argue that industrialization induced Western working classes to discard revolutionary class conscious allegiances and choose nonideological pragmatism, eschewing strikes as an antiquated relic (Dahrendorf, 1959; Lipset, 1967). But if workers were becoming less militant because of changes in industrialized societies as a whole, they should have done so universally, not selectively. Neither can the end of ideology explain how social democratic reformism has come to represent an intensification rather than the attenuation of bonds of class solidarity (Hibbs, 1978; Korpi and Shalev, 1980).

A more plausible explanation of the decline in militancy is that social democratic solidarism represents a strengthening of class solidarism. Where social democracy is viable, workers will have a motivation to practice wage restraint (Cameron, 1984; Przeworski and Wallerstein, 1982). Social democracy may be an effect rather than a cause, as suggested by those who argue that participation in governments follows rather than leads labor movement solidarity. Socialist legislative strength is not linearly important. As Korpi and Shalev (1980) and Esping-Andersen (1985) have pointed out, there is little reason to expect socialist legislative strength to be meaningful below a relatively high threshold and without continued tenure in office meaningful reforms will not be enacted.[27]

What is clear is that as the evidence mounted of diminishing returns from strikes, a substitution of more effective methods of pursuing class interests occurred in a number of countries. Thus the industrial recoveries that took place following the Great Depression and World War II had contrasting results in terms of labor militancy. In some countries, strikes receded as a weapon, and in others they either remained at high levels or increased in frequency. One of the distinguishing features of the low strike labor movements is their more universalistic solidarism, which is testimony to an ability to use their organized voice in bargaining and to secure political participation in governments.

In such countries, strikes began to be perceived as an exercise in futility for labor's *collective* interest. They can strongly antagonize third parties who depend on the delivery of goods and services that are interrupted (Przeworski, 1977). Furthermore, as numerous episodes in the United States from the 1890s through the 1930s, the Great Strike of 1926 in Britain, and the post–World War I factory occupations in Italy

demonstrate, without at least tacit acquiescence by the state, militancy usually fails to achieve lasting gains, and may invite repression (Miliband, 1972; Maier, 1975).

Though initially labor militancy promotes labor's solidarity, it eventually becomes an inferior tactic employed by labor movements in nations where *both* of the following are true: (1) the establishment of social democratic regimes is not possible; and (2) the state is insulated from labor interests, an insulation not determined solely by the existence of a governing socialist party. Under these circumstances, labor movements eventually reach an organizational impasse. The returns from strikes have diminished, but labor remains too weak to carry out social democratic reformism. Those nations in which strike rates have remained stable or increased have in common a historical background that favors stronger bourgeoisies, more divided working classes, and either dependent or nonexistent peasants. In such cases, hegemonic conservative political alliances are likely to prevail.

Class alliances are therefore a necessary but not a sufficient factor in the development of divergent capitalist democratic alternatives. Class alliances and the extent of labor solidarism/particularism are critical and can in turn be explained by particular combinations of historical structural antecedents. Such combinations establish the foundation for the organizational contours of labor and capital, the strength of potential class coalitions, and the eventual emergence of social democratic versus bourgeois democratic regimes.

Hence, a short answer to the question of the subtitle "What Prevents Social Democracy?" is simply the establishment of hegemonic conservative political alliances, usually based in protectionist coalitions in conjunction with particularistic labor movements. This essential albeit negative defense against social democracy is predicated on the historical antecedents of an early and gradual industrialization that aids economic closure and promotes sectoral alliances favorable to the formation of right-wing coalitions. High rates of immigration during the industrializing era and democratization in advance of or proximate in time to industrialization also favor, if less emphatically, the development of conservative political alliances.

At the same time, the apparent Scandinavian route to social democracy is based on a concurrence of conditions that are not found solely in Scandinavia; e.g., the Netherlands shares several characteristics of the Scandinavian prototype (Van Kersbergen and Becker, 1988). This con-

currence can be seen as a structural route, rather than some form of "Scandinavian exceptionalism" based on unique cultural values.

Both Germany and Austria, perhaps not too surprisingly, are difficult cases because they share characteristics found on both paths. Germany provides perhaps the classic example of an industry/agriculture class alliance, and like other large nations, its industrialization was relatively early and sheltered, both of which favor a strong and perhaps even hegemonic bourgeoisie. Yet, in other ways, it is more like smaller nations in that industrialization preceded democratization, the rapidity of that industrialization, and in having one of the lowest postwar strike rates in the industrialized world, characteristics associated with the emergence of a universalistic working class. For example, several social policies of the Weimar governments are now considered staples of postwar (WW II) solidaristic welfare states (e.g., the introduction of labor mediation and obligatory works councils). By the late 1920s, Germany had a higher level of housing conditions for its working-class population than any other European nation (excluding the wartime neutrals). Each of these factors testifies to the long-term broad, encompassing organization of German labor (Hardach, 1980). Perhaps these contradictory developments contain a key component of the explanation for the repeated confrontations between organized capital and organized labor that characterized the Weimar Republic (Abraham, 1981).[28]

In Austria protectionist cartels were a significant force during the imperial era, although perhaps of lesser significance simply because of the less industrialized setting in which they operated. Furthermore, what remained of the Empire after revolution (and civil war) was more consistent with the small nation profile: ethnic homogeneity, late industrialization, democratization in the midst of industrialization, and economic openness (Katzenstein, 1987).

Esping-Anderson and Friedland (1982) have argued that one key distinction between Germany and Sweden lies in the ability of a cohesive big business sector to impose reforms on a weaker working class, first shown in the pattern of reforms from above established by Bismarck in the late nineteenth century. The left's exclusion from political power in the first two postwar decades and the modest levels of unionization and left voting support this view. Nonetheless, instituting reforms can be seen as the necessary instrument for gaining the quiescence of a working class that though weaker than Sweden's has been more solidaristic than those of most countries with dominant bourgeoisies.

Another implication suggested by their argument is that bourgeois hegemony (the dominance of big business) depends on its capacity to incorporate other class interests in an alliance. So working-class hegemony is in effect residually determined by the extent of bourgeois fragmentation. Perhaps it is not too much to suggest that notwithstanding the growing solidarism of German and Austrian labor, the power of the (feudal) right had to be broken for social democracy to emerge. The course of developments in the United States suggests that the cohesiveness of the business sector is not a prerequisite for its hegemony; rather what is most important is the potential for alliances in which industrialists play a major if not invariably the leading role.

Weimar Germany illustrates (although once again this must be qualified since the instability of the Weimar regime is attributable to many special circumstances and may consequently be regarded as overdetermined) that a cohesive bourgeoisie can neutralize even a relatively effective socialist milieu (Schmidt, 1982b). This premise concurs with Offe and Wiesenthal's (1980) analysis that organization is a prerequisite for the pursuit of the political and economic interests of labor, *not capital,* and contradicts Therborn's (1983) argument that class capacities are typically positive rather than zero sum. Rather, political class power may be inherently zero sum and levels of cohesion and fragmentation inversely related, at least during normal times, as has been argued by orthodox Marxists since Engels.

Hence, high strike rates in the postwar era reflect tactical choices made from positions of weakness not strength. In the United States, France, and Italy, much of the postwar period was characterized by either exclusion or limited participation in government for labor. It is true that labor participated in the Democratic party coalition in the United States, but a clear articulation of labor interests was constrained by the necessity inherent in a plurality electoral system of building a majority coalition aggregating diverse and perhaps at times even contradictory interests before elections rather than following them (as in electoral systems based on proportional representation).

Second, the late 1940s and early 1950s was a period of rollbacks from the New Deal (the example of the most successful electoral coalition in American history in which organized labor has been a major influence). The Taft-Hartley Act reflected a concerted effort by business to reduce the economic gains made by labor during the New Deal and World War II. McCarthyism, by making certain ideas and affiliations subversive and hence unfit for democratic participation, weakened labor

and the left on the cultural and political fronts (Rogin, 1967). Certainly the failure of organized labor to make a greater commitment to organizing the South participated in its own decline in a manner that cannot be attributable solely to structural factors (Goldfield, 1982). But even here, their decision was consistent with a particularism long dominant in the American labor movement, which, I will argue in the succeeding chapters, is primarily a consequence of the structural environment in which the American labor movement emerged.

The logic of this analysis leads to some educated guesses about the prospects of particular alignments for success and failure. Relations between agriculture and labor in larger countries can be characterized as oscillating between poles of foul-weather friendship and fair-weather antagonism.[29] Early on, agriculture and industry will tend to form dominant coalitions in which labor is either excluded or at most a junior partner. Nations with particularistic labor movements and historically dominant industry/agriculture coalitions are thereby poor candidates for social democracy.

Although the autonomy of democratic politics may be sufficient to allow left and left-center parties to win elections and govern in larger nations regardless of unfavorable structural characteristics (perhaps even for periods of some duration), one implication of this analysis is that the composition of class coalitions in such countries will prevent left-leaning regimes from following through on even modest versions of a social democratic agenda. Perhaps the most obvious example is shown by the experience of the British Labor party, whose occasional postwar success gave rise to what certainly proved to be premature speculation that it was on the way to becoming the natural party of government. Possibly, the periodic electoral success of (postwar) left and left-center parties in larger countries has been due to the existence of room for maneuver during good times. In other words, favorable macroeconomic conditions gave governments the leeway to reward their supporters and recruit at the margins without making difficult choices to redistribute directly.

Certainly, principles of postwar Keynesian economic stabilization and demand management allowed left and left-center coalitions to argue for increased consumption for wage earners on universalistic terms, transforming the particularistic interests of their constituents (who typically consume the bulk of their incomes) into long-term interests of society as a whole (Przeworski, 1986:37). But redistribution to wage earners and other policies favoring consumption lose their viability when macroeconomic performance turns sour, populations age, and taxes increase.

Thus, even though parties can augment the base of their support by attracting allies, they rapidly lose these marginal supporters when traditional antagonisms are reasserted, and it becomes impossible to simultaneously satisfy all constituents.

Deteriorating macroeconomic performance certainly proved very costly to the Labor party because of the concentration of unemployment among manual-grade workers (Hibbs, 1987b:260). Moreover, the lack of classwide unity in British labor (its particularism) has meant its more privileged members were prime candidates for defection. The increasing wealth of skilled manual workers (when compared to other wage earners) during the Thatcher administration suggests they may have been amply rewarded for defection (Freeman, 1989:152). Somewhat analogously in the United States, Democratic dependence on black voters has grown with the relatively recent full democratization of the South, and a concomitant loss of support from middle-class and lower middle-class whites.

Based on this analysis, it is possible that both the crisis of 1873–1896 in Sweden and the Great Depression in the United States provide illustrations of what are paraphrasing Gourevitch (1986): "the false promise of hard-times." In other words, hard times create illusory opportunities based on the short-term weaknesses of strong actors, leading to alliances that cannot be sustained once better conditions return. Consequently, the Swedish protectionist coalition and the American New Deal alliance are examples that did not conform with the logic of their historical structures. This logic supports a converse principle: Good times obscure contradictions that reemerge, perhaps with a vengeance, under faltering economic conditions.

To pursue this point further in a way which is even more speculative, the decline of agriculture in most capitalist democracies has invariably left a void that can be filled by the growing numbers of white-collar workers. In smaller nations where conditions were initially favorable for dominant farmer-labor coalitions, the growth of white-collar strata has been less likely to provoke a crisis for labor (and perhap result in fewer sociological pronouncements of the "embourgeoisiement" of either). Instead the structural conditions that facilitate alliances between farmers and labor have made it easier for white-collar workers to replace disappearing farmers and peasants in coalitions favorable to the electoral success of the left.

NOTES

[1]Rokkan (1970), for example, has argued that franchise extensions are a consequence of "legitimation crises," that is, intolerable differences between the current supply and demand resources of the regime's need of legitimacy. Yet emphasizing immediate crises often obscures less visible antecedents.

[2]This definition is consistent with the notion of responsible government employed by Hewitt (1977), as well as the meaning of representative government used by Pitkin (1972).

[3]A fully realized democracy, however, will have numerous institutional guarantees beyond this minimal criterion (Lijphart, 1984).

[4]Its critical acceptance today stands in marked contrast to the frequent hostility it initially encountered (Lowenthal, 1968; Rothman, 1970; Rubenstein, 1980).

[5]The centrality of class alliance is evident in Moore's comparison of the American South and Germany. Here he points out that the notion that the clash of interests between industrialists exploiting a formally free labor force and great landowners with a servile labor force inevitably leads to violent conflict is belied by the peaceful accommodation between Junkers (members of the privileged landowning class) and the urban bourgeoisie that occurred in nineteenth-century Germany.

[6]Facism is the eventual outcome of a process whereby state-organized repression increases rural surplus appropriation, sustaining the economic interests of landowners while a nascent bourgeoisie and proletariat were acclimated to an authoritarian system. In America, by contrast, feudalism's stillbirth precluded a conflict between centralizing elites and feudal landowners. Because the absence of feudalism meant that there were no relations between lord and serf to be broken (at least not in the dominant North), independent farm owners and craftsmen have been more or less a given.

[7]This notion that subsequent events have followed prescribed routes deterministically contributes to one of the most prominent critiques leveled against Moore, that of insensitivity to the contribution of the state as an independent actor. See Skocpol (1973) and Lowenthal (1968), though Smith (1983) and Stephens (1989) dissent.

[8]Although the analysis of the German proletariat in *Injustice* (Moore, 1978) is considered by some to provide the missing element of Social Origins, it does not end until after the German Revolution.

[9]In Sweden in particular, the decline of the agricultural population was slower than in either Denmark or Norway (Senghaas, 1985).

[10]Certainly, the left-leaning potential of independent peasants is not a recent observation. It was noted by Marx in his analysis of the prospects for revolution in Russia and fits with Wolf's observation that middle peasant's possession of both a relatively independent economic base and political resources increases their receptiveness to revolutionary movements (McLellan, 1977; Wolf, 1969). Of course, Marx in other contexts viewed peasants differently (e.g., his famous "sack of potatoes" aphorism). More recently, Paige (1983) points to the relative independence of decentralized peasants as a valuable predictor of peasant revolutionary potential.

[11]Economic and social crises in Germany increased the severity of peasant serfdom (Rosenberg, 1958). Likewise, in Eastern Europe, landlords bound villagers more strongly to their estates (Anderson, 1979).

[12]According, to Goodwyn, the postwar South became a "giant pawn shop" as the crop lien system consigned millions of white and black southerners to a condition of economic slavery (Goodwyn, 1978:23). The Black Codes also evoke "refeudalization," inasmuch as every black was required to be employed by a white, to have a lawful residence, as well as to carry an official certificate that verified these conditions. Those who defaulted faced severe punishment (Lewinson, 1965:33).

[13]Paige's argument, (albeit focused on the considerably different context of Southeast Asia), that the centralization characteristic of cotton production is particularly amenable to landlord domination is consistent with this explanation.

[14]Certainly there were occassional instances of more successful intranational or regional farmer-labor coalitions, but that is another matter altogether (Valelly, 1989).

[15]For workers, protectionism is a mixed blessing: Their consumer's interests in cheap food is inconsistent with the interests of workers in protected industries in the higher wages and greater employment available therein. Of course, consumer interests are rarely if ever a match for the concentrated interests of producers.

[16]Few industrializing nations in Europe were faithful to free trade principles over any significant period of time. Of the early industrializers, only Switzerland and the Netherlands adhered with any consistency to free trade principles. According to Senghaas, for most of the continental European nations, economic growth was higher during protectionist phases (before 1860 and after 1875–1880) than during phases where free trade was dominant. Protectionist barriers in the United States were even higher than in most of Europe.

[17]Certainly fluctuations in trade affect the formation of political coalitions. Rogowski (1989) has argued that expanding trade favors locally abundant factors at the expense of locally scarce factors, whereas contracting trade has the reverse effect, as the benefits go to locally scarce factors at the expense of locally abun-

dant ones. However, while Rogowski's analysis is quite insightful in explaining short-term fluctations in the behavior of key actors in trade policy, it is less useful, in my judgment, for explaining the longer-term consequences at issue here. What I am arguing is that although variations in factor scarcity and abundance may well be the prime cause of short-term changes in the strength and weakness of particular coalitions, national size is still critical in explaining which coalition types will survive over longer time periods.

[18]Eventually the advantage of being the first to industrialize ran aground as free trade was abandoned for the (unsuccessful) pursuit of modernization through protectionist cartels in the 1930s (Leys, 1989:37). However, the advantage for Britain of being the hegemonic leader in the international economy did not invariably disadvantage its later developing competitors. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Britain's commitment to free trade allowed the United States, France, and Germany to each behave as free riders on international trade, that is, as protectionists at home and free traders abroad. This is consistent with optimal tariff theory inasmuch as large nations can increase their national welfare by erecting tariff barriers as long as others do not retaliate (Lake, 1990).

[19]Yet this premise can only be a starting point. Some smaller nations are less social democratic than their larger counterparts; for example, compare Canada, Finland, and Belgium to larger nations with pronounced if intermittent social democratic tendencies as Germany, postwar (pre-Thatcherite) Britain, and Austria (using Austria's prewar size before the breakup of the Empire rather than its smaller postwar remainder).

That right-wing cohesiveness is more prevalent in larger countries while conservative fragmentation is the rule in smaller ones is discordant with at least some expectations, in that as capital tends to be more concentrated in smaller countries than larger ones, and greater concentration implies greater cohesion, right-wing cohesion should be higher in those cases (Stephens, 1986). Yet another possibility is that strong feudalism is an essential precondition of social democracy. Accordingly, a weak landed nobility foreshadows a relatively independent farmer class, and a fragmented, hesitant political right (Katzenstein, 1985; Castles, 1973). Furthermore, large nation bourgeoisies are more likely to be independent and able to avoid a dependent or colonial status than are their small nation counterparts (Tilly, 1975; Stephens, 1987). This dependent status of small nations was Moore's rationale for excluding them to begin with. However, there were too few cases of strong feudalism to allow a meaningful systematic comparison. France, Spain, Prussia, Austria, and England can perhaps be considered strong feudal states. But absolutism's early departure in England leaves just three remaining cases (omitting Spain as a latecomer to democracy).

[20]*Austria and Canada are borderline cases. Austria's and Canada's strike rates have been lower than those in their category. But Canada's postwar strike rates are considerably higher than early in the century, making it unsuitable for inclusion among nations with diminished strike rates. Finland is excluded from the analysis in this chapter because of the absence of data on Finnish export rates in this time period.

[21]Differences in the date of attainment of universal male suffrage as measured by Hewitt did not distinguish the two groups of nations, and as universal and equal suffrage rarely occurred before the end of the relevant period, it can hardly be a critical feature in explaining developments that preceded it. Thus, in this context, pressures toward democratization may be more meaningful than the timing of the actual culmination in the establishment of a mature democracy. Here democratization is envisioned as a process, rather than an event.

[22]As shown in Table B.3 in Appendix B, in equation 1, based on the diminished vs. non-diminished strike rates grouping, 1890–1920 export rates and the rapidity of industrialization *IR* had the largest coefficients (relative to their respective standard errors) in the model (.01 chi-square significance). The second contrast between corporatist and noncorporatist nations placed Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, and Belgium in one group, with Germany, Canada, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States in the second. In equation 2, based on this corporatist/noncorporatist contrast, 1890–1920 export rates, the timing of industrialization *I,* and industrial rapidity *IR,* had the largest coefficients (.01 chi-square significance). The third contrast—between larger and smaller nations—divided Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland from Austria (pre-imperial dissolution), Germany, Italy, France, the U.K. and the U.S. In this equation, 1890–1920 export rates had a larger coefficient than industrial rapidity *IR* or the timing of industrialization *I* (.01 chi-square significance). These results were obtained from the B34SII, an econometric software program developed by Dr. Houston H. Stokes of the Department of Economics at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The *DI* variable figured less prominently in the results obtained in this analysis than in the regression analyses in Chapter 1. However, in the earlier analysis the dependent variable (strike rates) was linear, and in this case the dependent variables were categorical.

[23]In his more recent analysis, *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy* (1991) (see especially Chapter 3), Luebbert argues that neither late industrialization nor late democratization (individually) can explain alternative sequences in democratic development. However, by considering potential influences sepa-

rately and in isolation rather than simultaneously (as might be done in an explicit model), Luebbert's methodological approach omits the possibility of an interdependent causal path of the type hypothesized in this analysis.

[24]Based on an examination of the years 1933 to 1977, Esping-Andersen (1985b) argues that past social-security performance is not a useful predictor of future performance. However, Tilly (1975) and Stephens (1987) do articulate a relationship between early industrialization and state autonomy in which the light consumer goods industries prominent in some early industrializing nations required such small amounts of capital as to enable industrialization to occur without substantial reliance on the state.

In some accounts, protectionism is perceived as a form of weak interventionism. However, the anomaly that both stronger (Germany and France) and weaker states (the United States) have each relied on protectionism to solidify conservative class coalitions makes it more plausible to relate policy outcomes to structural environments faced by political and economic actors.

[25]If, for example, Katzenstein (1985) is right and large states have more discretion in the range of their choices of national economic policy than do small states, they can be considered more autonomous. State autonomy, rather than being inevitable, is dependent on particular institutional arrangements.

[26]Korpi and Shalev (1980) date the beginnings of this divergence between militancy and class cohesion in Sweden and Norway to the 1930s. Until then, they were leaders in the frequency and duration of industrial conflicts.

[27]As was shown in Table B.2 (Appendix B), nations in the first group had significantly higher levels of socialist legislative strength than did those in the second. While the square root transformation of the percentage of seats had significant mean differences between the groups, its role in preliminary analyses not included here was ambiguous, having a high correlation but being nonsignificant. This suggests that socialist legislative strength (SLS) is explained by other variables. Moreover, not all the countries that have lower postwar strike rates are social democratic. This issue may never be fully resolved because of the difficulty in distinguishing cause and consequence (Przeworski, 1988).

[28]Although the clearly exceptional circumstances of the German case cannot be ignored, one factor that is especially relevant to the present analysis is the dictated postwar modernization of the labor movement, especially in terms of its unity and organizational coherence. This postwar reconstruction of the German labor movement is one example of the advantage of late developers (Bendix, 1967), and the advantage stemming from "creative destruction" envisioned by Olson (1982). But if it is true that Germany's class relations (and perhaps Austria's as well, if only to a lesser extent) underwent a "reformation" due to the

Nazi Revolution, World War II, and the imposition of a postwar settlement, the difficulties in transforming basic long-term structural conditions become even more transparent.

[29]According to Wallerstein, unions in protected industries are typically "foul-weather" allies, supporters of protectionism when their employment is threatened but not before. "It is a desire to protect high wage jobs rather than a desire to raise wages further which propels unions to join firms in support of trade barriers" (Wallerstein, 1985:146).

CHAPTER 3

The Formation of Class Fractions

The historical setting for the next three chapters is the United States during its Gilded Age (1865–1900) and Progressive era (1900–1920). This historical period was a critical one in the formation of the American working class, and has been referred to as the era of American Chartism by Gutman (1976). Enormous changes occurred in virtually every aspect of American life. In one view, "great technological innovations in communication and production both required and made possible the organization, consolidation, and nationalization of American society" (Hoogenboom and Hoogenboom, 1967:1–2). In another, this was a time in which the relations of production fell out of favor with the forces of production (Dubofsky, 1975:31).

During the Gilded Age, workers came of age, becoming irrevocably wage earners. This process, known as proletarianization, installed wage labor as a permanent defining characteristic of the preponderant majority of workers. Concurrent with the transformation of workers' status went a transformation of the labor process as reliance on traditional techniques of production gave way to new methods. The homogenization of labor meant a spreading tendency toward the reduction of jobs in the economy to a common semiskilled denominator (Gordon, Edwards, and Reich, 1982:100). Paradoxically, as the mode of labor organization became more uniform, the statuses of different groups of labor became less so.

This chapter will show that the tremendous influx of immigrants from midcentury imposed a stratification of occupations by ethnicity among manual laborers. In earlier years, the Irish filled the need for unskilled factory labor. From 1840 on, immigration rose, and the Irish

became the first to enter factories in substantial numbers. They were also the most dependent of the early arrivals on wages. Being immobile, destitute, and possessing neither skills nor social status, they provided a noncompetitive pool of unskilled labor at the bottom of the social ladder (North, 1966:170). Eventually, Southern and Central Europeans supplanted the Irish (with a small fraction of blacks) in the lowest paying, least favorable positions. This hierarchical filling of occupations by ethnic groups was strengthened by a pattern of nativist and racialist prejudices and sentiments. Thus, class solidarities were mixed into an amalgamation that included other collective identities. But class antagonisms did not disappear, rather they were expressed in the context of sometimes coinciding and at other times competing ethnic, racial, religious, and sectional cleavages.

Such internal structuring provided the foundation for the narrow and exclusive organizing principles employed by craft workers. Skilled workers used ethnic solidarities to create and perpetuate a special, privileged position in the American working class. By forming a distinctive stratum, analogous to what Marxists term a class fraction, skilled workers created an admittedly insecure labor aristocracy. This labor aristocracy may well have preempted the development of a more solidaristic labor movement.

EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION

The enormous changes in social relations of the Gilded Age had roots in an earlier era. In the first half of the nineteenth century, American industrialization was both early and rapid. Due to its earliness, there were strong links to traditional and perhaps precapitalist economic institutions, but the rapidity of industrial development prevented it from remaining so. The United States industrialized both early and rapidly. Drawing upon technology developed in England, cotton producers passed over the preindustrial putting-out system, moving directly to Arkwright's water frame (Burawoy, 1985:99). Before 1825, the dominant form of capital investment was in building construction (Cochran, 1981). The 1830s saw the acceleration of manufacturing throughout the Northeast. New England factories developed in a region of small-commodity production and subsistence farming. This meant skilled labor was both scarce and expensive, providing a strong incentive to mechanize.[1]

Philadelphia and New York were the most important cities for manufacturing in this era. Manufacturing was only a subsidiary activity in the

older port cities until 1840. Nonetheless, by 1843 the industrial capacity of the Northeast was sufficient to permit expansion into any number of industrial goods. By 1850, the Northeast had completed the initial, most critical phase of industrialization (Cochran, 1981). From the 1840s to the 1870s, northern industries underwent rapid and continuous growth.

Before 1860, most growth in manufacturing was either resource-oriented, based on the proximity to raw materials, or the type of manufacturing that required modest amounts of capital, such as in cotton goods, shoes and boots, men's clothing, and leather (North, 1966:159). Early industrialization was not very capital intensive. Rather, improvements in the efficiency of industrial and agricultural production based on the application of technological improvements to inexpensive innovations were the rule (with the notable exceptions of building construction and transportation). Urbanization and the reduction of the cost and time necessary for transporting goods were critical for the development of internal trade. The relatively primitive state of farming in colonial America meant small improvements paid big dividends in terms of increasing agricultural productivity (Cochran, 1981). Increases in the efficiency of farming pushed workers into growing cities, while simultaneously increasing urban demand for food.

According to North, the largest single factor accounting for economic growth in this period was the expansion in the size of the domestic market. But the ability to take advantage of opportunities depended on the quality of the labor force. Thus, the widespread availability of free education in the North must be emphasized. The importance of free education as an investment in human capital was responsible both for the extent of innovations and their extensive application in the early development of manufacturing (North, 1966:176).

The diversity of early industrialization stemmed from the concurrent growth of precapitalist industries alongside capitalist ones, with growth and development by extension rather than qualitative change. Production spurted ahead in old industries like textiles as well as in newer ones like iron and steel, and electricity (where the most rapid growth occurred). Preindustrial manufactures grew right along with industrial goods. Yet notwithstanding its rapidity, the earliness of American industrialization meant that it occurred on terms that can be described as traditional and precapitalist.

> Capital accumulation was to be based on proletarianized but largely untransformed labor. Capitalists hired labor but relied on traditional

> techniques of production. They organized the production process in the social sense, gathering together labor, materials, tools, and other essential ingredients of production, and disposing of the output. Yet except where there was no preexisting organization of production to draw upon, they did not organize or transform the labor process in detail. Instead they adapted existing (precapitalist) methods, including major reliance on the worker's own knowledge of production. (Gordon, Edwards, and Reich, 1982:79)

The economy functioned in a manner consistent with the principles of classical economic theory: Flexible prices and rapid price changes did not reduce total output (Temin, 1969). Widening markets, improved transportation, and more sophisticated credit each contributed to the growth of horizontal and vertical cleavages in commercial and industrial society (Hugins, 1960:53). Trade was predominantly intraregional, located in and around urban areas where incomes and consumption were highest. Cheaper transportation hastened the decline of self-sufficient urban industrialization, thus promoting larger scale production and regional specialization. Railroads created national markets for sources of raw materials as well as for manufactured goods (Cochran, 1981).

Wage labor drew on a variety of populations, and the organization of the labor process was sufficiently diverse that labor markets were fragmented and localized. Early proletarians came from several sources. Native white males were the main source of labor in the years before 1850. They were part of the migration to cities of a surplus agricultural population and the deterioration of independent craft production, unable to compete with a growing capitalist organization of production.

The employment of primarily single women slowly expanded. Female factory workers were highly mobile and usually stayed less than a year. They created communities of solidarity, used strikes to challenge wage cuts, and joined the movement to establish the ten-hour workday (Burawoy, 1985). But when their efforts failed, the conditions of employment—long hours, low wages, discipline, and speed—drove many women out of the factories. They were replaced by more malleable immigrants with fewer alternatives to factory work (Kessler-Harris, 1982).

The Jacksonian era was a critical phase in the development of mechanical trades. Divisions between master and journeyman were rising as a result of economic and technological changes. The apprenticeship system was breaking down, and marketing was soon to take precedence over craftsmanship. With the growth of organized labor, the right of combination became a prominent issue. According to Ulman (1955), the tan-

gible benefits to workers provided by early union locals were largely due to the insurance policies they provided. Unions were not generally able to regulate their local markets; they were habitually plagued by the arrival of migrants from small towns who were used to break strikes. Initially, the artisan movement stressed free schools, relaxation of the laws governing debtors, and the ten-hour day. As inflation picked up in the mid-1830s, artisans began to add higher wages to their demands (Cochran, 1981).

The formation of nationwide product markets was a necessary precursor to any regulation of wages. As long as markets were isolated, members could ignore the state of union organization outside their locales, but the spread of railroads fostered their integration into national markets. By the 1850s, geographic mobility was sufficient that locals were led to create national unions. Here they managed labor migration by way of the traveling card system. This card obligated locals to allow migrants with valid travel cards to join without payment of an initiation fee. The creation of strike funds was predicated on the formation of insulated economic jurisdictions. However, such funds did not really come into their own until the 1880s and 1890s.

Maintaining traditional craft skills sometimes led to a splintering process dividing the work force into noncompeting groups. There were disadvantages to this, inasmuch as the versatility of craft skills was essential to prevent any single group of employers from setting wages lower than those prevailing elsewhere for those with similar skills. The economic importance of their skills determined the degree of "aristocracy" attained by any group, which was in turn a function of the extent of organization of the market for labor (Ulman, 1955:322). Skilled workers were not averse to joint federation membership with the unskilled, but were ill disposed to relinquish their autonomy.

The prevailing tendency in the labor market was one of fragmentation, given the divisions imposed by crafts, industries, and locations, a fragmentation due to combining highly diverse forms of labor with diversity in the labor supply. The growth of labor organizations committed to autonomy promoted fragmentation. Stronger constituents found it easier to organize along narrow, particularist lines. "The strength of craft organization gave rise also to its chief defect: an abiding particularism that made each trade look to itself and emphatically to hold apart from the unskilled and the alien" (Brody, 1980:23).

At the beginning of the Civil War, the United States was an underdeveloped country relying on imports of manufactured goods and overseas investments. In 1870, seven million people were employed in

agriculture, and over six million were in other occupations. Yet by 1890, over thirteen million were employed outside agriculture, while fewer than ten million individuals were employed within it (Ginger, 1965:39).

THE EMERGENCE OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

A number of developments marked the creation of an industrial society.[2] Revolutions occurred in communications and transportation as well: Railroads grew enormously, from 35,000 miles of track in 1863 to 193,000 in 1900 (Hoogenboom and Hoogenboom, 1967). Telephone, cable, and telegraph were all developed and perfected, as well as improvements in postal and express services. The new technology was annihilating distance, helping to speed and centralize the administration of proliferating business enterprises (Cochran and Miller, 1961). By 1900, the United States was no longer a nation of farmers; it had become an industrial powerhouse. At the turn of the century, not only was the United States no longer on the periphery of power and influence, but it had become in some respects the world's leading industrial power.

Accompanying the revolutions in industry were a profound dislocation of people. With the rise of modern industry came the corporation, as an answer to the increasing need for capital and management. Few if any individuals or small groups could match the immense amounts of capital made available by corporate stockholding. The corporate hierarchy also seemed to solve the problems of industrial management (Morgan, 1970).

The rise of the corporation undermined the place of the small businessman and farmer, as much as it led to dramatic changes in the status of labor. Heretofore, many workers had been only partially wage earners. They maintained considerable autonomy at work, as well as some income outside of the wage relationship, via independent commodity production. With the decline of agriculture and the expansion of industry, this became less feasible.

THE ETHNIC STRUCTURING OF CRAFT OCCUPATIONS

By exploring the situation of identifiable groups in particular market positions, we can explain how craft union workers used ethnic identity to restrict entry to well-paying occupations.[3,4,5] The development of occupational concentrations of ethnic groups in major northeastern cities is shown by data compiled for this study, based on a sample of manual labor occupations in larger northeastern cities in the years 1890 and 1900, as well as a variety of other sources. These occupations, compris-

ing an average of 27 percent of the male labor force in their cities, were among the largest manufacturing and mechanical occupations for which data on wages per hour by year were available. Manufacturing and mechanical occupations provided the bulk of working-class employment during the Gilded Age. Obviously the conclusions apply directly only to the particular occupations examined in these cities.[6]

As shown in Table 3.1, these occupations can be ranked from highest to lowest paying in the following order for 1890: (1) highest paying: plasterer, mason, plumber; (2) middle paying: painter, carpenter, ironworker; (3) low paying: blacksmith, cabinetmaker, machinist, woodworker; (4) lowest paying: laborer. For 1900, the rankings are consistent with the exception that masons are now the highest paid.

Table 3.1 Analyses of Wages by Occupation

	1890		1900	
Occupation	**Wage**	**N***	**Wage**	**N***
Plasterer	0.500	3,493	0.436	8,378
Mason	0.424	23,377	0.466	32,840
Plumber	0.334	22,542	0.368	47,261
Painter	0.287	40,012	0.320	65,081
Carpenter	0.284	60,312	0.342	77,703
Ironworker	0.272	41,072	0.277	62,044
Blacksmith	0.260	20,063	0.280	24,340
Cabinet maker	0.251	10,061	0.276	8,782
Machinist	0.247	37,103	0.254	74,407
Woodworker	0.244	13,389	0.266	2,355
Laborer	0.152	186,777	0.177	282,264
Total		458,201		685,455
Grand mean	0.280		0.310	

**N* is the number of individuals in an occupation in a city.

Source: Wages from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin #53, 1904. Occupations from U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1890 and 1900.

In 1890, plasterers, masons, and plumbers constituted a distinctly higher paid strata, all being paid more than the overall mean wage of twenty-eight cents per hour. Painters and carpenters were paid approximately the mean wage, while ironworkers, blacksmiths, cabinetmakers, machinists, woodworkers, and laborers were paid significantly less than the general mean. For 1900, the ranking of occupations by wage rates is consistent, with only slight modifications. The building trade occupations were again the highest paying, though wage rates of masons surpassed those of plasterers, which declined. Wage rates for the other occupations all increased, narrowing slightly the wage-rate differentials between the lowest paying—laborers, woodworkers, and machinists—and the higher paying—mason, plasterers, and plumbers. Metal workers and furniture makers were virtually indistinguishable, machinists were the second lowest paying occupation, and cabinetmakers were paid as much as blacksmiths and ironworkers. Laborers were still by far the lowest paid occupation in spite of their having received the highest percentage increase in their wage rates.

Thus in 1890 and 1900, differences in wage rates distinguish the more from the less attractive occupations. Those associated with the building trades—plasterers, masons, plumbers, painters, and carpenters—had the highest wage rates. The occupations associated with metalworking, ironworkers, blacksmiths, and machinists form a middle category. The two furniture-making occupations, cabinetmakers and woodworkers, and general laborers had the lowest wage rates.

Cross-tabular breakdown of occupations by ethnicity in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are based on indices of concentration of different groups in 1890 and 1900. The tables from which these figures were constructed can be found in Appendix C. In 1890, as shown in Figure 3.1, those occupations in which native whites (of both native and foreign parentage) occupied a substantial proportion of the work force were also the highest paying occupations. Comparing the six largest groups, each containing 10,000 or more members—native white of native parentage (NWN), native white of foreign parentage (NWF), German, Irish, British, and "other ethnics"—shows that the occupational situations of the Irish and the "other ethnics" were less favorable than that of the remaining large groups. Both the Irish and "other ethnics" have a substantially higher proportion of laborers and a lower proportion of workers in the building trades.

Native whites were underrepresented as laborers and overrepresented in the larger building trade occupations of carpentry, painting, and plumbing. Germans were most concentrated in the middle occupations

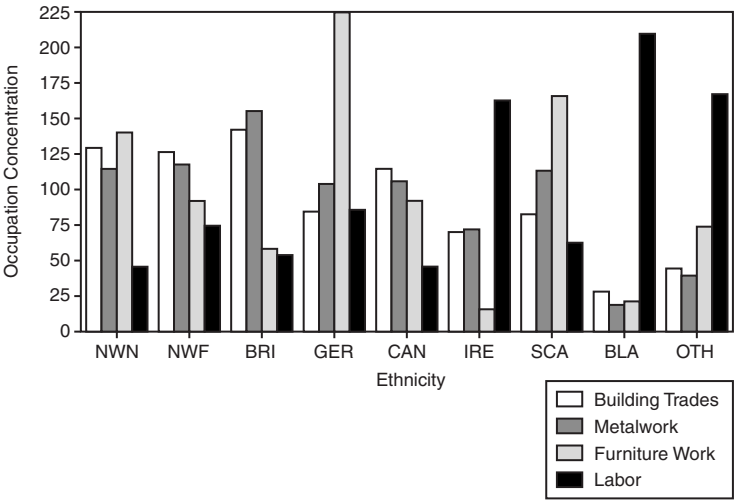

Figure 3.1. Index of Concentration: 1890.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1890.

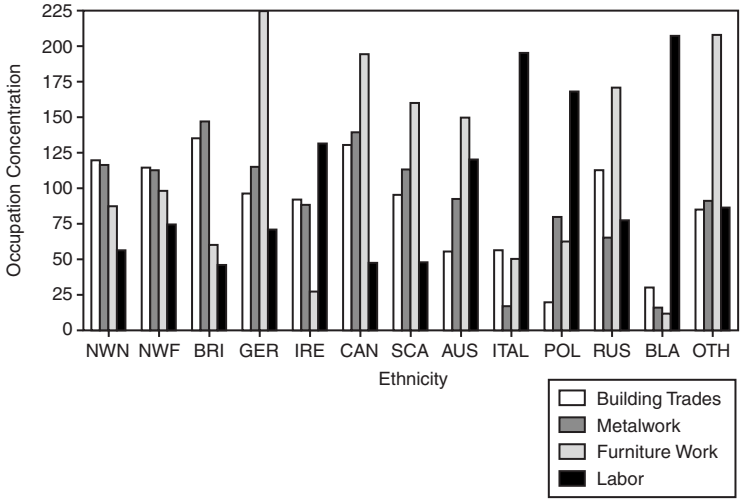

Figure 3.2. Index of Concentration: 1900.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1900.

as metalworkers and furniture makers, and underrepresented in the higher and lower paying occupations. Irish workers were overrepresented as laborers but generally underrepresented elsewhere. British workers were overrepresented in the more favorable occupations—building trades and metalworkers—and underrepresented in the others. "Other ethnics" were heavily overrepresented as laborers and just as heavily underrepresented elsewhere, most so in the higher paying metalworking and building trades.

Figure 3.2 provides a cross-tabular breakdown of occupations by ethnicity in 1900. As in 1890, native white and older immigrants dominated the better paying occupations. However, the gaps between the older ethnic groups have narrowed. The British were markedly overrepresented in the building trades and underrepresented as laborers. Germans were still overrepresented in the low-paying furniture-making occupations, but have reduced their proportions as laborers, achieved parity in the building trades, and slightly more than that as metalworkers. The gains of the Irish are perhaps most impressive. Though still overrepresented as laborers, the extent of their overrepresentation is less than in 1890 and they have reached almost equitable representation in the building trades and as metalworkers. The employment conditions of blacks is virtually unchanged. Among the new immigrant groups, the Russian immigrants were best situated, being underrepresented as laborers, and overrepresented as building trade workers. The Austrians were also better off than the remaining new immigrant groups. The Italians and Poles were substantially overrepresented as laborers and underrepresented in the building trades.

Ethnic concentrations in employment are as evident in 1900 as in 1890. These concentrations show a relationship between particular jobs and ethnic backgrounds. The best paying occupations were most accessible to native whites and older immigrant group workers. While differences between older immigrants and native whites narrowed in the ten-year-interim, newer immigrants and blacks are becomong solidly entrenched in inferior occupational positions.

Other evidence of the importance of ethnic factors in occupational selection comes from Hutchinson (1956), who examined ethnic concentration ratios for the entire country. His findings corroborate the pattern described earlier. In 1890, the British and Germans were more dispersed than the Irish, with the Italians more concentrated in manufacturing employment. By 1900, older immigrant groups (the Irish lagging somewhat) are increasingly concentrated in the better paying occupations, while the newly arriving immigrants are overrepresented in less desir-

able ones, particularly as general laborers, with the exception of the predominantly Jewish Russian immigrants.

Hutchinson found ethnic segmentation prevalent in major manual labor occupations, with the Irish and English jointly dominating the building trades. That older immigrants concentrated in better paying jobs while newer immigrants concentrated in lower paying positions led him to conclude that immigrants were concentrated in unskilled and low-paying manufacturing jobs. Moreover, as a nationwide study, it lacks the sampling problems of the earlier analysis.

Lieberson (1980) used the 1900 census as his primary data source. Finding evidence consistent with the idea of ethnic queuing effects, notwithstanding the skill and educational differentials that also divided old and newer immigrants, he argues that ethnic queues allowed native whites and older immigrants to occupy the higher positions in the occupational stratum. Blacks and new Europeans were most highly concentrated the less desirable domestic and service occupations. The representation of the new (Southern and Central) Europeans in manufacturing and mechanical occupations was roughly even to their proportions in the total population.

Relevant local studies include those of Weber and Broadman (1977) of Warren, Pennsylvania, from 1870 to 1910; Laurie, Hershberg, and Alter (1981), which examined the occupational composition of mid- to late nineteenth-century Philadelphia; and Thernstrom's (1973) study of Boston.[7] These studies all suggest that ethnic segmentation occurred in the occupations examined, both in particular northeastern cities as well as nationwide in the late nineteenth century. Members of older immigrant groups clustered in higher paying occupations, earning higher wage rates than those in other occupations, relegating newer immigrants to lower paying, less attractive jobs. Moreover, the development of a structure of ethnic occupational stratification constitutes a general trend of this period.

Of course, the existence of ethnic occupational concentrations might be due to the low level of skills brought to this country. However, a number of researchers have found moderate but widespread evidence of ethnic discrimination within Gilded Age labor markets.[8] Lieberson's analysis dissents from this viewpoint, arguing that differences in ethnic representation in these jobs are fairly representative of the skills they brought with them, in that Southern and Central European (SCE) immigrants generally possessed lower levels of education than did both older and native whites.[9]

Lieberson believes that occupational and literacy data both show

that there was no substantial upgrading in the skill levels of new European immigrants before 1917 (1980:210). Thus, in the dynamics of occupational selection in these years, the position of the new European immigrants can be largely attributed to the disparity in their human capital attributes relative to other more favorably placed groups. Taking into account their lower skills, the place of new Europeans in the labor market is not attributable to their ethnic affiliations (Lieberson, 1980:369). Consequently, he argues, discrimination is not a potent explanation for the employment situation of new immigrants.

However, Lieberson's analysis does not resolve the causal question, in part because evidence regarding human capital attributes is indirect. More important, even if differences in human capital were the most important explanation for the assignment of jobs across occupational categories, it would not necessarily explain the differentials in access to manual labor positions. What cannot be fully ascertained is whether literacy is an independent causal force or a Weberian closure mechanism. In a more recent study, Lieberson admits that "to control for education in looking at the occupational differences is to miss the driving force underlying the surface relationships. In this particular case, the dominant group attempts to use its dominance to advance its own position. . . . To put it all in a nutshell: *Those who write the rules, write rules that enable them to continue to write the rules.*" (Lieberson, 1985:166–167).

Although the evidence considered here is not definitive, it suggests that both ethnic segmentation and human capital attributes were involved in the labor market outcomes of Gilded Age workers. While human capital attributes may explain the distribution of ethnic groups between good and bad jobs, such factors do not necessarily provide a plausible explanation of the distributions within jobs of each type. Still in need of explanation is the distribution of particular ethnic groups into specific occupations, and the creation of ethnic niches whereby particular ethnic groups are highly concentrated in a relatively few occupations, for example, Germans who were not deficient on human capital measures. To accept the view that allocations within particular kinds of jobs are explained solely by human capital characteristics leaves unanswered why ethnic groups with relatively similar amounts of human capital concentrate in different positions. Thus, the contribution of ethnicity to occupational stratification needs to be more closely examined. However, for ethnic segmentation to be a plausible response of skilled workers, a microfoundation is needed. It must be shown that unions were able to extract wage differentials from employers.

UNIONS AND WAGE DIFFERENTIALS

Research on unionism has long been plagued by the problem that unionization is strongly correlated with other factors that make for high wage rates and low rates of labor turnover. As a result, it has been difficult to isolate the contribution of unionism. According to Reich (1981), the difficulty with attempting to isolate the contribution of unionism is its multicollinearity with other aspects of labor and product markets.[10]

Although a precise wage differential due to unionization cannot be identified, since it depends on particular labor market settings and cyclical conditions, the importance of unions to wage determination is inescapable. That unions increase workers' wages has both theoretical and empirical support, although contemporary findings on the effects of unionism do not prove their impact under the very different historical circumstances relevant here.[11] Unions are a necessary instrument for translating potential gains into actual wage advantages.[12] Furthermore, current findings indicate that wage differentials are more substantial for skilled workers than numerous other groups, a result consistent with the notion that the wage differentials which accrue to craft unions can be associated with the capacity of craft unions to control access to employment within trades.

Perhaps the strongest evidence that unions were the medium through which ethnic/occupational stratification was created and maintained would be provided by an analysis of the ethnic background of trade union members. Unfortunately the data necessary to systematically evaluate this question does not exist. However, several studies of working-class leaders and movements do suggest that old immigrants and the Irish dominated leadership positions in the major craft unions (Aronowitz, 1973; Van Tine, 1973; Dawley, 1976; Dubofsky, 1969). There were substantial variations in the proportions of workers organized in different industries. Among the groups comprising 5 percent or more of organized labor in the years 1900–1914, the proportion of organized workers varied from 7.3 percent of metalworkers (excluding iron and steel) to 39.8 percent of those employed in printing and publishing. Among the occupations accounting for the bulk of unionized employees—transportation, 17.7 percent; building trades, 16.5 percent; and mining, 27.3 percent—the variations were smaller.

Evidence also suggests that industries and occupations in which unions were common paid more than those in which they were not. The wages of workers in occupations with the strongest unions were higher

than those in other nonfarm occupations after the turn of the century and their advantage over unskilled workers was increasing. Workers in industries where union representation was common earned considerably more than wage earners in general in the years 1890–1914. The position of building trade workers was especially privileged. They increased their wages substantially more than manufacturing wage earners (Douglas, 1930). Faring best among the skilled trades, they were more advantageously placed than both workers in general and those in other industries in which unions were common. In the next section, I use this evidence of union-based ethnic occupational discrimination to argue that skilled workers used ethnic solidarities to create a labor aristocracy.

THE FORMATION OF A LABOR ARISTOCRACY

Did Gilded Age skilled workers, particularly in the building trades, form a labor aristocracy?[13] Hobsbawm's seminal discussion identified the following as characteristic of nineteenth-century British labor aristocrats:

> 1) the level and regularity of the workers' earnings; 2) his prospects of social security; 3) his conditions of work, including the way he was treated by foremen and masters; 4) his relation with the social strata above and below him; 5) his general conditions of living; and 6) his prospects of future advancement and those of his children. Of these the first is incomparably the most important. (Hobsbawm, 1974:139)

Hobsbawm's most important criterion involves income levels. Skilled workers earned generally higher wages with at least as regular employment as other wage earners. Although in the years 1890–1897, rough parity existed in terms of the relative earnings of skilled workers and manufacturing wage earners, after 1897 the relative income gap widens, as is shown in Figure 3.3. Skilled workers were better off materially than those employed in other manual labor occupations. His second criterion of long-term security is difficult to assess, but the advantage of high wages in this regard is undeniable. In good times it was possible for the skilled to own property, lessening their vulnerability to income loss in bad times. Living conditions, the fifth criterion, is similarly a function of income, as substantially higher incomes make possible better living conditions.

His third criterion concerns conditions of work. Here evidence is more mixed in that the status of many workers was insecure. The pres-

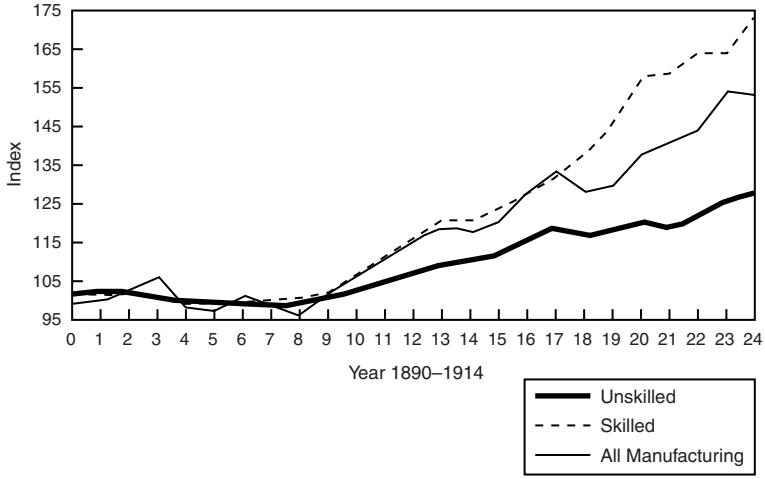

Figure 3.3. Index of Money Wages: 1890–1914
Source: Dawson, 1979.

sures of technological innovation and displacement were considerable, greater in the United States than in Britain (Holt, 1977; Brody, 1980).[14] Furthermore, the transformations in work that occurred in the early years of the twentieth century were less significant in the building trades than in other skilled occupations where the impact of innovation was greater.

His fourth criteria, relations with the social strata immediately above and below, and his sixth, the prospects for future advancement, are both aspects of occupational mobility. Thernstrom believes that mobility, both upward and downward, was fairly common in the years between 1880 and 1920, with almost as many skilled workers moving upward as downward. Katznelson disagrees, "Mobility rates are artifacts of boundary definitions. By including all white collar workers in the middle class, Thernstrom found high mobility rates within and between generations" (1981a:13). However, if Thernstrom had distinguished between the lower and upper tiers of white-collar work, he would have found a very different picture. The rate of upward social mobility for male workers (measured either within or between generations) would be dramatically lower, below 10 percent. Alternatively, those with substantial wealth or high-level jobs were likely to pass along their class position to their sons.

In the 1880s, the white- and blue-collar worlds were probably considerably more distinct than they were to become. Later, the increasing growth of firms, the ancillary effects of bureaucratization, and the entry of women into the white-collar world transformed lower level white-collar positions from apprenticeships into a semipermanent lower tier. Upward mobility seems to have been fairly common for semiskilled workers, but this mobility took them out of the blue-collar world. They were more likely to become low-level white-collar employees than they were to move into any other grouping. For both semiskilled and unskilled labor, it was easier to move into low white-collar employment than it was to enter skilled labor occupations.

Skilled workers did not generally drop into the unskilled category; rather low-level blue- and white-collar work seems to have operated as a floor below which few skilled workers dropped. However, the movement of blue-collar workers into the white-collar world was not paralleled by a movement of white-collar workers into the blue-collar world. If it is plausible to believe that skilled workers' jobs were at least as good as low-level white-collar jobs in most respects, excepting their prospects for advancement, then a position as a skilled worker was not unenviable. It was relatively secure from encroachment from other workers, though vulnerable to technological displacement. By controlling entry to protect their jobs, they were able to both reduce their own prospects of moving down and impel ambitious semiskilled and unskilled workers to move out of blue-collar occupations entirely.

Numerous investigators have found that the children of immigrants often surpassed the occupational achievements of their fathers. For unskilled and semiskilled workers, the path upward for both themselves and their children led out of the blue-collar world altogether (Hutchinson, 1956). By contrast, the intergenerational advantage for the son of a skilled craftsman lay in his superior access to skilled positions. "The chief advantage of youths with skilled fathers lay in their easier access to skilled positions. They were not more successful in penetrating the white collar world" (Thernstrom, 1973:93).

Thus, skilled workers were more likely to perceive their jobs as a permanent aspect of their social identities than were other kinds of blue collar workers. For unskilled blue-collar workers, ready access to white-collar work meant that the blue-collar world was not an insulated universe. Given the importance of occupational stability as a prerequisite for group identity and cohesion, these contrasting long-term experiences are

a significant factor in explaining the superior organizing capabilities of skilled workers. Because skilled workers could regard their situations as permanent, they were better able to organize, even as the less stable occupational expectations of semiskilled and unskilled workers did the reverse.

Skilled workers were in the process of forming a relatively homogeneous core possessing similar interests with some constancy. This sharply distinguished them from the more volatile occupational patterns of semiskilled and unskilled workers. Consequently, if in the notion of a labor aristocracy stress is given to the internal cohesiveness of this strata, then Gilded Age America did not have as developed a labor aristocracy as did Britain. But if emphasis is placed on the success of skilled craftsmen in constructing insulating niches of privilege, then the concept is a useful and valid one. Ultimately, labor aristocracies depend on the viability of craft union strategies (Hobsbawm, 1984). Whether American skilled workers formed a labor aristocracy or not hinged on their ability to form effective craft unions.

UNIONS, ETHNICITY, AND CLASS FRACTIONS

Based on the analysis of this chapter, we have strong reason to believe that the American working class was becoming increasingly stratified by occupation and by ethnicity: Skilled craftsmen occupied the top manual labor positions that could be hierarchically subdivided into native stock, British and Canadian, German, and Irish groupings; lower level semiskilled and unskilled positions were filled by newer immigrants, including Polish, Italian, Slavic, and Hungarians (Davis, 1980). The stratification of occupations by income and ethnicity overlapped considerably. The highly unequal access of different ethnic groups to jobs and industries gives credence to the view that craft unions were an essential mechanism in structuring hierarchical forms of organization that permitted skilled workers to acquire "property rights" in their jobs. This stratification of the labor force relegated the new immigrants to the least favorable positions and aided the development of a separate class fraction of skilled laborers, similar in many respects to a labor aristocracy.

Thus the distribution of workers to jobs cannot be attributed solely to the conventional forces of human capital. Instead the influence of structural and institutional factors must be considered as well.[15] Segmentation due to the strength of unions (itself a function of the prospects for

technological displacement) allowed craft unionists to isolate clusters of good jobs. Such clusters were also a sign of the way intraclass fractions inhibited classwide solidarity (Gordon, Edwards, and Reich, 1982).

Where technology reduced worker autonomy and independence, the ability of craft unionists to maintain their status weakened.[16] Those crafts that survived as strong unions were generally those in which technological innovation did not transform the content of work, leading to deskilling, or where innovations augmented the value of existing skills.[17] Even though unionists were rarely able to retard the introduction of new technology, the discontinuities between the economic and social status of skilled labor and that of unskilled labor roughly approximated other aspects of segmentation. Skilled workers were considerably better off than the unskilled in wages and employment stability. However, that many if not most skilled jobs were to be found in the declining industries rather than in its ascending mass production industries underscores the insecurity of their position.

Skilled workers were creating a distinctive, privileged position (and building trade workers were at the top of this hierarchy) as the demarcations between skilled and unskilled labor widened and remained stable enough for their effects to persist across generations. Unionists used such devices as competency exams to frustrate new immigrant entry into their ranks. By 1900, craft unionists (particularly in the building trades, where union rules prevented construction foremen from speeding up work) satisfied at least minimal criteria to be regarded as a distinctive stratum or class fraction. Relative to other workers, they possessed some but not all of the characteristics of a labor aristocracy. At their strongest, as in San Francisco, steady growth along traditional lines helped secure the primacy of building trades workers. Here they filled a position midway between employer and worker. Their wage scale was higher, practices that might cause a speedup or increase their hours were disallowed, and closed shop regulations were vigorously enforced. High wages and eight-hour days were the tangible rewards of a strong union (Kazin, 1989).

A labor aristocracy is possible only when craft tactics are feasible. Labor aristocracies express the solidarity of skilled workers, who rely on strategies of exclusion (the use of closure mechanisms to defend privileged niches) advantageous to narrowly defined constituencies. What is characteristic of such mechanisms is their tendency to rely on restrictive organizing practices that separate and divide workers, protecting stronger

constituencies at the expense of weaker ones. The formation of class fractions in the United States was an expression of this principle.

In this chapter, we have seen the centrality of wage differentials in the consolidation of the privileged position of workers in craft unions. In the chapters to follow, I will extend this analysis, arguing that the actions of skilled craft workers can be interpreted as reflecting a rational accommodation based on their appraisal of the social and economic environment of the 1890s and early twentieth century. The evolution of "pure and simple" trade unionism enhanced both the prospects for survival of a national organization, unlike its predecessors, as well as the realization of material gains for its membership.

Craft unions became the prototypical trade union organization due to their capacity to insulate skilled workers from competition with unskilled immigrant workers; in other words, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) cultivated pockets of privilege. Shared similarities in ethnic backgrounds strengthened the effectiveness of exclusionary union practices. According to Mink, the economic and political centrality of the issues of immigration and ethnicity in the Gilded Age resulted in a yielding of class solidarities in favor of nonclass solidarities. "Ultimately, under the simultaneous weight of industrialization and the steady influx of new European workers, class solidarities in the United States gave way before race and status solidarities" (Mink, 1990:47). I disagree in part with her conclusions, arguing instead that organizations based on the commonality of work experiences, that is, the relations of production, are by definition class organizations. What is not predetermined is the *form* of organization.[18] The presumption that class organization must be universalistic and holistic is responsible for the tenacity of the belief that American workers uniquely differed from their Western European counterparts in terms of their relative lack of class consciousness, as, for example, in Perlman's (1928) stress on their job rather than class consciousness.

Skilled workers were able to create niches for themselves in certain occupations. Distinct clusters of jobs came to be associated with particular ethnic groups. The consolidation of these separate clusters meant the creation of class fractions within the working class, with differences significant enough that the nominally common interests of workers were undermined and eroded. Rather than organization reducing competition and enhancing cooperation as Marx had expected, the prevalence of particularistic organizing reduced the solidarity between these differently

situated segments of workers. The strength of these intraclass demarcations is suggested by craft union durability as well as the persistent schisms between skilled and unskilled labor and manual and nonmanual labor throughout the twentieth century (Mackenzie, 1973).

Wage differentials reflected at least partly craft unions' capacity to control access to training and employment. Union power allowed particular segments of workers to maintain an important degree of control over access to jobs and training in a number of trades. Craft exclusivity strengthened intraclass cleavages between segments of the labor force. Only a relatively small group of workers were in a position to benefit directly from this, making it easier for employers to accept craft unions as legitimate bargaining institutions. In fact, conservative craft unions were a relatively appealing prospect, especially when compared to labor organizations with a strong radical bent.

Labor's heterogeneous composition and the hospitable environment early industrialization provided for craft unions led to the exclusion of most workers as a prerequisite of bargaining strength. As craft organization grew, the benefits of union membership became more evident, augmenting the ethnic divisions between various groups of workers. It was not the mere existence of distinct ethnic groups that is most important, but rather that this ethnic differentiation took place within an environment favorable to the exercise of power by small groups. Similarly, although the role of immigration looms large when the United States is examined alone or in dual comparisons, but from the broader comparative perspective used here, immigration and ethnic differentiation are important, but not necessarily decisive factors in labor particularism. In the United States, the expansion of the franchise and the onset of early industrialization each preceded massive waves of immigration.

Ethnic identity did become a valuable mechanism for building solidarity within groups and preventing cooperation with others. Ethnic affiliations and especially the expression of such affiliations in the guise of nativism and racial prejudice helped to filter the ascension of those in privileged ethnic groups into better jobs while restraining others. Ethnic stratification also diminished the tendency theoretically inherent in proletarianization to reduce wage laborers to a common level. Nativism brought trade unionism and labor politics together. Because of it, craft demarcations were drawn more sharply, its advantages were restricted to a minority, and it was perhaps the first example of how and under what circumstances the economic agenda of newly organized workers could be given effective political meaning. Nativism provided a mechanism for

mobilizing workers, one which gave their economic organization a political end. In demonstrating the ripeness of the times for exploitation of race, ethnicity, and immigration *by workers,* nativism helped consolidate the labor aristocracy, while strengthening its organizational hold over the working class (Mink, 1990:98). It became necessary for those who wished to advocate a multiracial movement to assume the burden of proof (Kazin, 1989).

There were, however, a number of obstacles standing in the way of the consolidation and perpetuation of this structure. Such conditions include: (1) The constraint on union power stemming from the existence of other sellers of labor power, outside the control of unions. Thus, union monopoly power varied over extended periods of time. (2) Intra-class demarcations were sometimes permeable even in the short run, particularly when employers faced strong competitive pressures to hire cheaper labor. (3) Perhaps most important, the increasing importance of manufacturing industries undermined the position of craft workers.

NOTES

[1]The thesis that labor scarcity was the most significant element in rapid mechanization has been criticized, most notably by Temin, who has argued that labor scarcity has been less important than interest rates.

[2]A series of technological revolutions in manufacturing took place. The index of manufacturing production increased from 7.5 in 1863 to 53 in 1897. In 1867 approximately 200,000 tons of steel ingots were produced, and by 1897, over 7 million (Kirkland, 1961).

[3]Although the distribution of individuals between good and bad jobs may be attributable in part to their possession of differing amounts of human capital, their congregation into particular occupations is unexplained. To accept the view that allocations between jobs are explained by human capital leaves this question unanswered as well as why ethnic groups with similar amounts of human capital have had differing employment patterns.

Other economists disagree with the view that human capital variables explain the contrasting labor market experiences of various groups of workers. Some believe that discrimination, often to the advantage of employers and perhaps some groups of workers, has contributed to the development of segmented labor markets, which helps to explain the differential treatment of various categories of workers (Roemer, 1979). Persistent wage discrimination prevents the labor market from producing optimal outcomes, entailing a welfare loss to

society (Reich, 1981; Wachtel and Betsey, 1972). Rather, human capital and bargaining are both intrinsic to almost all jobs (Pencavel, 1985).

[4]The data available from employment records for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America does not by itself definitively resolve this issue. The discontinous structures analyzed by segmentation theorists were at best in a state of infancy. Moreover, multicollinearity, or shared variance, among the key variables encourages conflicting interpretations, as variables representing the effects of skill and those of ethnicity are so highly intercorrelated that they cannot be independently measured. This common problem with aggregate data allows those with different views to appeal to indirect evidence supporting their view without necessarily having to rebut alternatives. Yet, circumstantial evidence is nonetheless evidence. "Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk."

[5]Some critics emphasize institutional characteristics, while others stress behaviorial patterns. This distinction owes more to contrasting emphases than basic disagreements. Piore (Berger and Piore, 1980), who is associated with the institutionalists, argues that segmentation is a response to upsurges in labor militancy, among other things. Reich (1981) has developed a model of interracial conflict based on the ways various groups exercise power in the labor market, arguing that segmentation and strong unionism are strongly interdependent. Neoclassicists counter that the critics are insensitive to the importance of labor quality and that the dualist categorization is unsupported by data, because: (1) mobility between the two sectors does exist; (2) wage structures are not bipolar; and (3) the processes that determine wages are the same (although it is recognized that the institutional arrangements differ, as do the relative importance of different factors) (Wachter, 1974). What many critics of human capital analysis share is the belief that the structural characteristics of industries must be considered.

[6]The use of composite data means that generalizations must be made with hesitation and caution. The conclusions must also be qualified due to two serious defects: (1) union rates tend to be more stable through time than the earnings received by union members; and (2) for industries only partially unionized, as is the case here, the level of wages is higher than that actually prevailing. The unit of analysis is the number of persons who are employed in an occupation in a city in either 1890 or 1900. Information on hourly wages in the respective cities for 1890 and 1900 was obtained for the following eleven occupations: cabinetmaker, carpenter, blacksmith, laborer, machinist, mason, plasterer, plumber, painter, ironworker, and woodworker. Data on occupations and ethnic composition come from the U.S. Bureau of the Census (Census of Population: 1890, vol.1, part 2, and Occupations at the 12th Census: 1900 [Special Reports]). Data on wages was obtained from the 1904 Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The occupational data comes from the following fourteen cities in the Northeast and Middle Atlantic regions of the United States: Allegheny, Pa.; Boston; Buffalo; Brooklyn; Jersey City, N.J.; Lowell, Mass.; Newark, N.J.; New Haven, Conn.; New York; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Providence, R.I.; Rochester, N.Y.; and Troy, N.Y. Brooklyn is included in New York City in 1900. These cities were all among the largest northeastern cities in the years 1890 and 1900 for which occupational classifications were available from census reports.

[7]Weber and Broadman (1977) found ethnicity to be an important variable in explaining individual success during the years from 1900 to 1910 though relatively insignificant in the earlier years." Ethnicity exerted some influence on one's initial occupation; particularly after 1900, and one's initial position influenced the type of occupation that one might attain in later life" (Weber and Broadman, 1977:67). Laurie, Hershberg, and Alter found that native white Americans and Germans dominated the most attractive skilled trades, while the Irish prevailed in unskilled occupations with the concentrations of each group in various jobs remaining relatively stable from 1850 to 1880.

Thernstrom's (1973) study of Boston shows that from 1880 onward, native Americans were favored in competition for better paying, higher status jobs, a status enhanced if their fathers were natives as well. By contrast, immigrants occupied the least attractive positions in the occupational structure of Boston. In these years of high immigration from Europe to America and for some time thereafter, there was a recognizable ethnic hierarchy (Thernstrom, 1973:142–143).

> In the late nineteenth century, native-born Americans had a distinct advantage in the competition for jobs on the higher ranges of the occupational ladder, and native born Americans whose fathers were also native born had a still greater advantage. Both immigrants and the native-born children of immigrants were far more likely both to begin and to end their careers working with their hands and wearing blue-collars. Not only did the foreign born start more often at the bottom they were less often upwardly mobile after their first job, and those who started well were more prone to lose their middle class positions and end up in a manual job. (Thernstrom, 1973:124)

[8]McGouldrick and Tannen (1977) examined separate sets of data, from the 1890 census, and the report of the 1909 Immigration Commission. They found that Southern and Eastern European first-generation workers were discriminated against in both 1890 and 1909. Such workers received about 10 percent less than comparable immigrants from Northern and Western Europe and native whites. This is true even after skill and inter-industry variations are accounted for, leading them to conclude that while Southern and Eastern European immigrants were no less productive than other workers, they were lower paid. The consistency in

their findings, obtained from separate and independent data sets, supports the notion that (at least) moderate wage discrimination occurred against some immigrant groups in this era.

Other researchers also dispute the proposition that differences in the occupational composition and socioeconomic status of immigrant groups can be traced to differences in the skills they brought to this country. Laurie and Schmitz (1981), in their study of mid-century Philadelphia, found no systematic evidence that the Irish or Germans had levels of productivity different from native whites. Thernstrom argues that while it is not yet possible to convincingly determine the source of these differences, it is just as difficult to attribute them solely to skill factors. "A fully convincing explanation of these differentials cannot be provided, but there is some basis for believing that something more than readily measurable Old World background handicaps—illiteracy, inability to speak English, poverty at the time of migration, and the like—was involved" (Thernstrom, 1973:250–251).

Schacter, based upon an analysis of occupations entered after coming to the United States during the years 1870 to 1930, argues that new immigrants were not less skilled than the old. To the contrary, the net immigration of skilled workmen and foremen rose from 11 percent in 1870–1880 to 14 percent for 1890–1910 (Schacter: 1972:97). He finds the conventional wisdom that new immigrants were less skilled inaccurate but understandable, due to the decline in the relative numbers of farmers migrating. Farmers, though unskilled, have higher socioeconomic status than skilled and semiskilled immigrant workers. Thus even though a larger proportion of the new immigrants are skilled by comparison with their predecessors, their socioeconomic position is lower.

[9]Though lacking more direct measures, as it is only since the 1940 census that information is available on years of schooling completed by adults. Mass education in SCE countries in 1900 was considerably less extensive than in Northern and Western Europe (NWE). This gap does not disappear until after World War II. Lieberson also finds much greater levels of illiteracy in SCE nations. The illiteracy rates among male army recruits, for example, show that for major northwestern European nations, the median percentage illiterate was 3.7 with a range of from 0.1 in the German Empire, Sweden, and Norway, to 17.7 percent in Ireland. The median percentage illiterate for army recruits in Southern and Central European nations was 61.7 with a range of 24 percent in Austria to 89 percent in Rumania. By way of a contrast, median illiteracy for native white Americans was only 3.8 percent.

[10]Unionism is often highly correlated with such variables as city and plant size, capital intensity, high levels of product market, high proportions of adult white males in the labor force, and above average schooling. Each is positively

correlated with high wage rates independently of unionism. Segmentation theorists believe that within a "permissive economic environment," concentration is a stimulus to strong unionism. However, historical evidence demonstrates that greater concentration can also foster greater resistance. For example, the end of the competitive era in the steel industry in 1901 did not reduce industry opposition to unions (Brody, 1969:147). Concentration can thus enable more effective resistance to unionization, rather than more support. (Levinson, 1967).

[11]Freeman and Medoff (1984) have argued that the extent of union monopoly power is the key determinant of union wage differentials. This power depends on the wage sensitivity of the demand for labor, and the change in employment that results from a given change in wages. Mulvey also finds it to be the most important variable in determining the respective wage gains of different unions. "The elasticity of demand for labour varies according to industry and occupation in such a way as to allow unions to make large or small wage gains for the exercise of the same degree of union power and to extract larger wage concessions from employers than could be obtained in their absence, other things being equal" (1978:53). The union wage advantage varies over time as union wages are less sensitive to business cycle fluctuations than are nonunion wages. Farber (1978) disagrees, arguing that wages rank relatively low in the hierarchy of preferences maximized by union members. Risk aversion and fringe benefits are both valued significantly more than wages.

Union wages affect nonunion workers as well. Rosen (1970) has argued that wages of nonunion workers can be raised by unionization. Reich (1981) similarly maintains that unions may exert important "spillover" effects on nonunion employers, forcing them to increase wages to the union level in order to remain competitive. Nonunion employers may raise wages to forestall unionism in their own firms. In particular, workers in large nonunion firms and in firms threatened by unionization are likely to gain from unionism, though some less skilled nonunion workers may suffer higher unemployment (Freeman and Medoff, 1984).

[12]Lewis (1963), a neoclassicist, puts forward 10 percent to 15 percent as the likely size of the union effect. Other support for a union effect is provided by Rosen (1970) and Stafford (1968).

[13]The notion of a labor aristocracy has been used to convey a privileged position for some workers at the expense of others. It has been argued that such workers share in the generic exploitation of wage labor, and in the "superexploitation" of the most oppressed workers (Lenin, 1916). This "co-exploitation" explains the moderation of many in the working class, in particular that of more affluent workers.

[14]However, actual displacement took place largely on the margins (Dawson, 1979:332).

[15]Segmented labor markets are characteristics of industrial societies, but in certain ways they are relevant to an analysis of the industrializing era. Craft unions' capacity to restrict access to good jobs was a mechanism of segmentation. However, skilled craft workers were not analogous to primary sector workers in other important ways. For example, while high capital intensity is associated with primary or core sectors, for turn-of-the-century craft unionists, the introduction of labor-saving technology was detrimental. The comparison of the relationship between skilled and unskilled labor to segmentated labor market structures also fails in such respects as the distribution of profits, productivity, and the market power between firms and industries with strong unions and those without them.

[16]As in the case of skilled ironworkers whose union was destroyed by the introduction of new technology (Brody, 1965).

[17]As occurred in some building trade occupations (Yellowitz, 1977).

[18]The composition of the working class is a source of some confusion in Mink's otherwise quite valuable and important analysis. In some places in the text, she considers AFL craft workers outside the working class, and in others they are (albeit illegimately) its representative.

CHAPTER 4

The Logic of Particularism
Creating Solidarity among Skilled Workers

Studies of class formation in the United States traditionally emphasize the importance of critical turning points as epiphanies, revealing working-class leaders to have been insufficiently revolutionary or universalistic, overmatched by the strength and hostility of the state and capital (Foner, 1977; Brody, 1969). The consequence is a working class divided along ethnic and racial lines, whereby a syndicalist trade union movement is isolated from national political power. But the similarity in the results extrapolated from the specifics of isolated incidents suggests the possibility of a more general explanation. The interpretation presented here will argue that a distinct model of solidarism is recognizable in the pivotal episodes of the era: evident in the failure of efforts to create a broader and more universalistic working-class movement, and through the interaction between structural constraints and the choices available to the major social movements.

In the prior chapter, I argued that the emergence of craft unions served as the catalyst for consolidating the market position of skilled laborers in the Gilded Age. Union-based wage differentials and ethnic/occupational concentrations reflected the emergence of ethnic/skill class fractions. In other words, unions allowed particular segments of workers to control access to jobs and training in a select number of desirable trades. This segmentation fit the perceptions of self-interest of those involved, and they behaved in ways consistent with this premise. Hence, the formation of class fractions among workers reflected their use of a strategy, not merely the involuntary effects of market structures or the logic of capital accumulation, or the decisions of employers to use

divide-and-conquer mechanisms. The effect of this strategy was to reinforce the divisions between distinct groups of workers.

In this chapter, the decline of the semi-autonomous workman, the rise of an industrial system, the demise of the Knights of Labor, and the rise of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) will be examined as interrelated aspects of the historical dynamics of industrialization in the United States. Consideration of the explicitly political dimension, as reflected in the class/party relationship that emerged in the United States, will be left to the next chapter.

We begin this chapter by interpreting the organization of workers into craft unions in the United States during the Gilded Age (1865–1900) as a search for viable strategy. The AFL successfully built a durable movement, based on the emergence, development, and consolidation of a distinctive "logic of particularism." Workers' strategic behavior was based on building and sustaining organizations able to survive periods of economic difficulty and political repression. The viability of the AFL's strategy was recurrently tested by historical events and offers a sharp contrast to the failure of efforts to construct more radical as well as more universalistic labor movements (as in the case of the International Workers of the World), as well as the failures of movements that emphasized politics (for example, the Workingmen's party, the Populists, and the Socialist party). From these failures, one may infer, although it cannot be proven, that the AFL did about as well as was possible; in other words, it attained a local maxima.[1]

Perhaps the clearest indicator of a new organizational pattern was the decline in working-class solidarism occurring during the Gilded Age. To repeat, narrow or particularistic solidarism is based on the use of restrictive organizing practices that separate and divide workers, protecting stronger constituencies at the expense of weaker ones. Particularism reflects the basic model of solidarity for skilled workers. In contrast, universalistic patterns of class formation embody the emergence of broadly encompassing working-class movements that are solidaristic and inclusive. Whether a universalistic or particularistic working-class movement emerges depends on whether economic, political, and social characteristics favor cohesion or fragmentation in the organization of class groups. Skilled workers use Weberian-style closure to defend particular niches in the division of labor (Marks, 1989).[2]

FORMATION: THE DECLINE OF WORKERS' CONTROL

Although the United States at the end of the Civil War was in many respects still a pre-industrial society, by the end of the nineteenth century a modern industrial economy was largely in place. The emergence of an industrial and urban society transformed relations between workers and employers. In this section we highlight: (1) the victory of trade unionists over labor reformers, certifying the primacy of business unionism; (2) the intense struggle for control over the labor process; (3) increasing divisions between skilled and unskilled labor; and (4) the failure to establish a partnership between business and labor.

The net result was a widening of the divisions separating the life chances of skilled and unskilled workers, facilitating industrialization without a transformation of the political system and the rise of a mass labor party. But what each of these developments show as well is the persistent contraction occurring in the articulation of labor's interests. Such contractions, perhaps paradoxically, made it possible for labor to survive periods of difficult economic conditions. This series of alterations in the terrain of class conflict (not unlike Gramsci's war of maneuver) made labor particularism a resourceful strategy for organized workers.

To reconstruct the development of the American labor movement, it is useful to divide the period under examination into three phases: formation, 1870–1895; consolidation, 1890–1910; and decay, 1905–1917.[3] In the previous chapter, we saw how the ethnic diversity of the labor force, in the midst of early industrialization, led to a fragmentation of class interests. Here the focus will be on the resolution of an uneven struggle for hegemony that took place in Gilded Age America, and the terms of accommodation with industrial capitalism reached by labor interests.

Workers in America did not have the several generations enjoyed by their English counterparts to adapt to industrial discipline. Most important, labor costs were substantially higher (North, 1971). Industrialization in America began from a higher base of per capita income than in any major European nation (Kuznets, 1971). Consequently, the transformation of wage laborers from semi-autonomous producers to proletarians occurred rapidly alongside the accumulation of evidence that wage labor would be a permanent, not a passing phase.

Shifting coalitions of seemingly strange bedfellows were the rule, precisely because the definition of working class itself was unclear. For the Workingmen's parties, the "producing classes" included everyone in

any useful occupation (Bridges, 1986). Through organizations combining economic and political demands, workers sought to maintain the respected, middle-class status that many of them considered their right. They were intermittently joined by a variety of allies, including traditional "Main Street" elites hoping to at least restrain if not prevent the encroachment of industrial capital, and farmers whose livelihoods were threatened by the near permanent depression of the agricultural economy. On the other side were the elites of industrial and finance capital, whose growing power was as yet unevenly distributed, for example, greater in larger communities than in smaller ones.

Industrialists' growing economic strength did not give them immediate political and social dominance. Politicians beholden to their local constituents routinely sought to modify the pressures that accompanied industrial development. Many who were committed to competitive private enterprise and the acquisitive spirit—small businessmen with local power and prestige—responded hesitantly to industrialists' prerogatives and grasp for supremacy. The very rapidity of industrialization intensified opposition, aiding efforts to restrict the industrialist's status and authority (Gutman, 1976:258).

By comparison, at mid-century many skilled workers had been as much subcontractors as employees, possessing technical knowledge of both his individual tasks and the production process as a whole (Soffer, 1960).[4] They possessed an autonomy dependent upon their "superior knowledge, making them self-directing at their tasks, and the supervision which they gave to one or more helpers" (Montgomery, 1979:11). Braverman (1974) held these early subcontracting systems to be part of a transitional phase in which capitalists had yet to consolidate control over the labor process, an essential function of industrial capitalist management. Shefter (1986) argues supportively that during this era skilled workers monopolized a knowledge of productive techniques ensuring a key role in production. Their knowledge provided the leverage to secure high wages and to establish work rules and output quotas that limited the autonomy of managers. According to Montgomery (1979), the ability of skilled workmen to adopt their own rules shows that they occupied an intermediary postion between artisans and factory workers.

Early trade unions maintained control over the actual content of labor by controlling work rules and the labor supply. Control over work rules was a part of labor's heritage. Control of the labor supply was necessary to maintain the special position of the skilled craftsmen. Even though early trade unions were not always organized by autonomous workers, they were nonetheless essential to effective organizing.

> The individual worker often depended upon the autonomous workmen who controlled or vetoed hiring of less skilled men. Without him a union could scarcely police the many small workshops where men worked with a close informal relationship to the employer. Indeed, the union had to have the support of the autonomous worker to organize and keep control whenever the employer was hostile to unionism for then the union had something to bargain with. The employer knew he would suffer from strained relationships with his most valuable workers. (Soffer, 1960:152)

The pre–Civil War labor movement was not one that can be easily fit within more contemporary understandings of labor movements. As heir to the Jacksonian era ferment, it encompassed a host of social movements and ideologies, whose linkages to the specific problems of workers lacked immediacy (Ware, 1964). The vision of the workman as a highly skilled and independent artisan, respected in his community, remained even as the substance behind the image eroded. Skilled workers played a pivotal role in the economics and politics of their cities and towns. In many cases, they were the dominant political figures of their communities. "The artisan class and its ideology dominated many towns like Newark in early nineteenth century America" (Hirsch, 1978:11). This could be seen in the "cult of the self-made man" according to which the employer was but a successful workingman (Montgomery, 1981:14).

Skilled workers were at the apex of the unit of production. The common interests of master, journeyman, and apprentice often outweighed their differences. The evolving system of inside contracting within many factories was one base of support for the high status of craft production workers. Within this system, skilled workers controlled work, directing production, and hiring and supervising workers within their areas. As inside contractors, they received both a day wage and a piece rate (Clawson, 1980).[5] The confidence of such workmen in their own importance and indispensability fit in with their wide-ranging interests in the important social movements of the day. Even their notion of "labor" was different; it was much broader and included all those who produced: laborers, skilled workers, farmers, middle-class professionals, and small businessmen. The "working classes," rather than the working class, was the most common referent. These early trade unions were even open to professionals and small businessmen. Cooperation among those in different trades came from craftsmen's awareness that support from other workers outside their particular trades was essential to create and sustain

favorable working situations. Consequently, there was substantial support for actions which expressed the mutualistic ties between skilled workers.

> . . . the goals workers pursued through strikes extended well beyond wages to the central questions of the day: Who was to control and benefit from the new economic and political order being constructed in the United States? . . . Labor reformers commonly spoke of the "emancipation of the working class" as the goal of their movement and this term, as well as "wage slavery" which also was commonly used in the late nineteenth century had both political and economic connotations. (Shefter, 1986:219–220)

URBANIZATION

The destruction of earlier forms of worker solidarity was an essential step in the evolution to modern forms of class cooperation. Urbanization transformed the environment for labor relations, undermining the vitality of preindustrial interclass coalitions and thereby weakening the capacity of autonomous private citizens to resist industrial capitalist prerogatives. The decline of these coalitions facilitated the use of repression as a tactic of class intimidation.

Although some smaller cities maintained viable alliances between workingmen, independent producers, and middle-class professionals, these could not be readily transferred to larger cities. The concentration of manufacturing in large cities enhanced control of labor, enabling capitalists to more effectively control production.[6]

> Class and status altered as the industrial city matured. The industrialists power became legitimized. The factories and their owners dug deeper into the lives of the mill towns and became more accepted and powerful. The old middle class and those who revered the old, precorporate town, lost influence and disappeared. They were replaced by others who identified more fully with the corporate community. The city government became more bureaucratic and less responsive to popular pressures. (Gutman, 1976:260–261)

Urban growth aided the use of repression in labor struggles by diminishing workers' ability to effectively resist (Gordon, 1978). Control-

ling worker resistance remained difficult in smaller cities, while the increasing size of cities expedited the use of repression in labor struggles, and ultimately the subordination of class interests. Interclass alliances proved more durable in small cities like Lowell, Massachusetts, Lynn, Massachusetts, Troy, New York, and Paterson, New Jersey. By contrast, in large cities, workers were more likely to be isolated and at times physically segregated, lessening community involvement in factory issues (Gordon, 1978). As large cities became more common, so did state-enforced repression against industrial workers.

Informal methods of social control could be as effective as formal measures. The behavior of local police and magistrates frequently outweighed the significance of injunctions and famous court precedents. Trespassing, obstructing traffic, disorderly conduct, and riot were among the laws used against labor. Given the ambiguity in the definition of these laws, the attitudes of law enforcement officials at the scene generally determined the atmosphere surrounding picket lines (Montgomery, 1979:59).[7] The courts were all too willing to be adjuncts of big business, issuing and enforcing injunctions against strikers and using antitrust regulations designed to regulate business for attacks on labor.

The regularity of repression in the late nineteenth-century United States, its frequent use and its effect on the labor movement is difficult to exaggerate. These were such volatile times that several mass strikes were sufficiently noteworthy to impress even seasoned European observers. For example, the 1877 general strike began as a railroad strike but was transformed into a conflict between collective labor and collective capital (Brecher, 1972:16). Even earlier, in 1873–1874, workers on a number of railroads in the Northeast and the Middle Atlantic states went on strike, largely to protest wage cuts, even though few railroad workers had unions (Gutman, 1976).[8] In fact, the continued reliance on repression in the United States well into the 1930s stands as an anomaly against its diminished salience in other industrializing nations.

Urbanization undermined ethnically homogeneous residential communities.[9] Linkages between ethnicity, residential patterns, and class mobilization survived longer in smaller towns and cities, with ethnic ghettos fueling political mobilization (Dawley, 1976; Walkowitz, 1981; Gutman, 1976; Fink, 1983).

> In many small towns of the 1870's, and in sharp contrast to the larger cities of that time, the discontented worker still was viewed by his fellow citizens as an individual and was not yet the stereotyped 'labor

> agitator' who so often stirred an automatic negative reflex from his more fortunate observer. (Gutman, 1976:319)

With urbanization, workingmen's coalitions lost much of their viability. In larger cities, labor interests were being integrated into party structures as one of several constituencies. Thus, big city political machines provided an alternative rather than a complementary basis of ethnic political mobilization. Here, predominantly Irish machines distributed their core resources of power and patronage among older "Western European" immigrants in order to construct "minimal winning coalitions." Less valuable benefits, such as services and labor and social welfare legislation, were parceled out to later arrivals from Southern and Eastern Europe. According to Erie (1990), machines skewed their benefits such as to overreward previously integrated groups (their insiders) at the expense of newer claimants (who remained outsiders).[10] In contrast to the broad, universalistic solidarity of early industrial workingmen's coalitions, political machines increasingly replicated the particularism of craft unions (Erie, 1990).

REFORM MOVEMENT TO TRADE UNION

As factory size increased, and the numbers of unskilled workers grew, both absolutely and proportionately, many industries still used preindustrial methods of production. However, their unions were being forced onto the defensive, as advocates of industrial unionism seemed unable to solve the problems endemic in organizing on a broad and unrestricted basis.[11]

> The rapid advance of the Industrial Revolution in the middle of the last century convinced the more intelligent workers that their special skills would not serve to protect their living standards. Machinery, the factory, and industrial combinations, so called monopolies reached during and after the Civil War unheard of proportions and, by discounting craftsmanship, broke down living standards in every direction. (Ware, 1929:vii)

The National Labor Union (NLU), prominent from 1866 to 1872, sought to provide a permanent structure for workingmen's societies. It effectively recruited mechanics, professionals, politicians, and southern and western farmers. Education, insurance, and political agitation were

its main activities. But partisanship was discouraged. The goal was to regulate the terms on which tradesmen sold their labor power. They had some measure of success: The highest proportion of industrial workers organized in the nineteenth century joined unions in this era. Perhaps the central paradox of the NLU was that its guarantee of noninterference, which affirmed the absolute autonomy of individual national unions, left it with little to offer. Its primary role turned out to be the organization of annual congresses where the common demands of labor reformers were expressed, along with the social philosophy behind these demands.[12]

The Knights of Labor were similarly heirs to the ethos of independent producers, a legacy of the Jacksonian era. Perhaps their most impressive accomplishment was their survival through the 1870s, a decade that included a severe national depression.[13] In the late 1870s and early 1880s, the Knights were in the forefront of the movement to form an independent labor party uniting trade unionists, socialists, and Greenbackers (Erie, 1990:49). While they were at times effective advocates of many of the concerns of workers, they were less adept in economic struggles, particularly for the skilled craftsmen who became the backbone of the AFL.

Their commitment to the reform agenda of the preindustrial labor movement is traditionally seen in their desire to end "wage slavery" itself through the formation of producer cooperatives. Believing that the solution to the ills of the system lay in its transformation led them to create an organizational structure of single locals for all workers in an area.

In the 1880s, when many labor markets were still local, the Knights of Labor organized workers in a variety of forms: specialized craft locals, locals based in mixed assemblies, and district assemblies. In typical mixed local assemblies, a single local organized all workers in a geographic area rather than by trade or industry. While this style of organization was well suited to education and agitation for political purposes, it was less effective in waging trade struggles via collective bargaining.

Externally, problems of jurisdiction arose with steadily growing craft unions leading to problems over "dual unionism." Internally, the leadership of the Knights was firmly committed to structural transformation through cooperatives, and tended to be suspicious of and hostile toward strikes for immediate improvements in wages and working conditions. Nevertheless, the Knights of the mid-1880s were the strongest members of the labor movement. The internal dispute about strikes between the rank and file's growing advocacy and the national leadership's hesitation could not be resolved. As agitation led to growth and growth

led to power, workers sought to use strikes in bargaining. At times the national leadership could not help becoming involved, particularly in periods of crisis.

Events reached a climax in the ferment of 1883–1886, as their ideological divisions widened and the Knight's leadership saw their reform program threatened by the rank and file's willingness to use strikes.[14] By the 1890s, in the midst of increasing deskilling and national market integration, the Knights of Labor collapsed, leaving the field to the American Federation of Labor.

The orthodox or traditional interpretation of the Knights, sometimes termed the Grob-Ware thesis, emphasizes the Knights' reliance on cooperative schemes and their disinclination toward collective bargaining and economic action (Grob, 1969; Ware, 1929). According to this line of reasoning, their proposals were anachronistic in light of concurrent technological and industrial developments. Regarding the wage labor system as temporary, they fought bitterly against its transformation of skilled craftsmen into unskilled laborers. They were undermined and eventually destroyed by an inflexibility in adjusting to the realities of the newly emerging industrial capitalist system. Accordingly, the Knights' loss of influence and the victory of the trade unions is due substantially to the inappropriateness of their agenda within an increasingly industrial era.

> The solutions advanced by the Knights of Labor—production by small units, antimonopolism, and land reform, were objectives that were no longer meaningful within the context of the changing environment. The cooperative or individually owned workshop had become an anachronism, while the small producer had been rendered technologically obsolete. Thus the program of reform unionism proved to be ineffective in an industrializing society featuring a market economy. (Grob, 1969:188)

Yet, the traditionalists' emphasis on the Knights' reactionary and anachronistic character has elements of a caricature. Their view that labor could not win late nineteenth-century industrial conflicts given the disparities in power is supported by the repeated defeats sustained. Fink (1983) maintains that the Knights cleverly used the consensual political heritage as a weapon for class struggle. According to Voss (1993), the Knights devised an ideology of "working class republicanism" to justify a broad-based model of citizenship rights. Among the economic rights

they advocated were the rights of workers to organize unions, restrict working hours, and determine wages.

The traditionalists argument certainly has merit, considering the failure of unionists to win head-on confrontations, as in the mass strikes of 1877 and in 1886. But more recent interpretations rightfully suggest that the emphasis on cooperative-inspired utopias has been overdone. In the Railroad War of 1877, for example, striking workers found themselves up against both federal troops and state militias (Lens, 1973). Perhaps the series of railroad strikes of the the mid-1880s (culminating in the "great upheaval" in 1886 and including a short-term victory over Jay Gould and the Southwestern Railroad Corporation) made even clearer the imposing difficulties for labor in conflict with capital and the state. Industrial conflict peaked in the 1890s turbulence at Homestead, Pennsylvania, and Cour d'Alene, Idaho, where workers tried to combine both violent and nonviolent tactics to maintain living standards and win union recognition. These events suggest that the Knights' leadership might have been all too painfully aware of the strength of their adversaries.

But even if the national leaderships of the Knights of Labor possessed a perceptive awareness of the inadequacies of direct confrontation, they offered no tactics able to meet the immediate material concerns of their constituents as an alternative. What becomes apparent is that leaving the Knights cost little; in other words, they could not extract a high price for exit. Furthermore, the Knights heterogeneity, a product of a diverse membership, drawn from different occupational, ethnic, and racial groupings, meant they could not easily reconcile conflicting agendas (Fink, 1983). They were inevitably vulnerable to the divide-and-conquer tactics that accompany nativism (analyzed in Chapter 3).

Perhaps the revisionist verdict against the Ware-Grob assertion that the Knights were reactionary is overdrawn also. Well in advance of the Knights, it was apparent (in at least some northern cities) that resistance to the industrial system itself was an exercise in futility. Before the Civil War, Workingmen's parties had already begun to make necessary adaptations to the more contemporary weapons and tactics represented by unions, parties, and strikes (Bridges, 1987:121). The Knights' sheer incompatibility with autonomous national unions is difficult to ignore, in part because of the inevitable and increasing opposition between the agendas of skilled and unskilled workers (Ulman, 1955).

A number of more recent interpretations have posed a new set of problems for the traditional interpretations. Sharing a perspective that

examines the local dimensions of the Knights, they suggest that local assemblies of the Knights strongly supported strikes, in spite of national doctrine (Voss, 1988, 1993; Conell, 1988). They also point to the existence of mutually beneficial spirals of Knights and craft union activism. While this perspective has merit, its relevance to the present analysis is limited because the Knights declined most during the AFL's period of infancy in the 1880s.

The mid-1890s show two key indicators of the changes that reflect the growing power of skilled workers and their reliance on particularistic strategies: (1) the declining rate of sympathy strikes (in proportion to overall strikes) serves an especially useful sign of the movement away from broad solidarism and toward narrower and more particularistic collective action; and (2) a growing wage advantage of skilled versus unskilled workers (see Figure 3.3).

As suggested by another recent analysis of the local arena of the Knights, the local assemblies of specialists (that is, those drawing upon a single trade) were the hardest to form but also the most likely to survive ten years or more (Carroll and Huo, 1988). This finding undermines the interpretation that the Knights' major problem was the mixed assembly, but it raises another possibility; as AFL tactics were becoming more prominent, the special nature of the Knights may have been declining. Hence, the most successful Knights locals were perhaps more similar to AFL craft locals than they were to their mixed local Knights brethren. Thus Knights locals that endured did so because of their concordance with the structure of craft unions.

Carroll and Huo's study supports another aspect of the traditional argument, finding that successful involvement in electoral politics contributed to organizational failure. They argued that winning local elections hastened extinction, since the Knights' immersion into electoral politics offered no real solution to the problems of labor in late nineteenth-century America.

So if the notion that the Knights' modus operandi was backward looking is an overstatement, their demise was certainly in keeping with the establishment of an industrial capitalist system in which the preponderant role for workers was as wage earners. Hence, the exit of skilled trade unionists symbolized the Knights' decay (Fink, 1983:221). Increasingly, the defense of class (production-defined) interests would occur on the narrowest possible terms. This was not, I must emphasize, because of some overarching ahistorical logic of industrialism. Rather the rationality of craft unionism was shaped by the structural environment, whose

features were especially hospitable to the strategy I have termed "labor particularism." The Knights failed because the universalistic strategy they chose, although perhaps appropriate to their goals (especially those of their national leaders), was ill-suited to the structural environment in which they found themselves having to operate, an environment growing increasingly adverse to their brand of universalistic solidarism.

Emerging craft unions were supplanting a decaying reform movement is the message provided by the rise to prominence of the AFL. Its relatively homogeneous craft unions foreshadowed the emergence of an implicit social bargain permitting high wages for the organized but only a relative pittance for those unorganized. Organized labor's complicity thereby freed capitalists from the concern that unions would make a sustained effort to mount organizing drives in basic industries.

> In return for allowing unions to bargain for their members over matters of wages, conditions, and security, employers received from labor leaders a general commitment not to disturb the capitalist system and a specific promise to adhere to the labor contract, even when it conflicted with the broader principle of working class solidarity. (Dubofsky, 1975: 61)

This story has often been told from an institutionalist perspective whereby AFL success is the result of its concordance with basic American values—its job rather than class consciousness. Perhaps the preeminent spokesman for this perspective was Selig Perlman (1928), who argued that American workers lacked class consciousness, due to the fluidity of economic society, the free gift of the ballot, and massive immigration. That American economic mobility was out of line with European rates is debatable, but there is no question that migration and the early franchise (for white males) were basic structural features of the nineteenth-century labor movement (Lipset and Bendix, 1967).

I believe Perlman's critical conditions are causal factors explaining the *form* of class organization, or class consciousness, rather than its existence.[15] Contrary to Perlman, class consciousness was present throughout the Gilded Age. Organizations rooted in production relations emerged and expressed their militancy repeatedly: in general strikes; frequent plant- and industry-wide strikes; violent confrontations, perhaps at times only a short step away from insurrection; as well as by participating in political coalitions, both radical and reformist (Dubofsky, 1975). These facts make Perlman's thesis one that is difficult to accept.

A parallel way to misinterpret the evidence lies in recounting the story by reading back into the past characteristics of what came after it, for example, presentism. As Dubofsky points out,

> What too many historians have done is to observe the national craft unions at their successful best in the Progressive years (1900–1916) and then to read the characteristics of success back into the formative years. . . . When we turn from embellished portraits of the AFL's past to its reality, a different picture emerges. Instead of a lusty, potent, and secure trade-union giant, we glimpse a scared, uncertain, insecure infant. (1975: 63)

The AFL did not start out with an antireform agenda. Nor was it necessarily committed to any structural form. What was perhaps particular to it was an emphasis on building the trade union movement. It made it its policy to defend striking workers. AFL voluntarism reflected the craftsmen's vision, a vision in combat with the amorphous reformism of the Knights. And its rate of growth in the years that followed the depression of the early 1890s was remarkable. Building trade unions grew from 67,000 in 1897 to 391,600 in 1904; unions in transportation grew from 116,000 to 446,300 (Brody, 1980).

That the AFL succeeded where others failed was in large measure due to their capacity to adapt where other working-class organizations either would not or could not. The AFL limited both the scope of issues with which they dealt and the the type of workers they tried to recruit. Such tactics lowered the initial costs in resources needed for organizing, reduced the likelihood of internal divisions, and made it easier to take advantage of those strengths they did possess. A number of stronger AFL locals were successfully determining who would be employed in the skilled trades.

The AFL came to terms with their environment, by becoming a less visible adversary in an increasingly conservative climate. Such moderation marked a crucial distinction from radicals in the Socialist party and the International Workers of the World (IWW) who claimed to represent workers' true interests (Dubofsky, 1969; Weinstein, 1969). The AFL stressed its concordance with basic American values. According to Samuel Gompers,

> The American Federation of Labor—a movement and a federation founded as a replica of the American governments, both the Federal

> Government and the State and city governments. It is formed to conform as nearly as it is possible to the American idea, and to have crystallized unrest and discontent manifested under the Anglo-Saxon or American fashion; to press it home to the employers; to press it home to the lawmakers; to press it home to the law administrators, and possibly to impregnate and influence the minds of judges who may accord to us the rights which are essential to our well-being." (Hofstadter, 1963)

The AFL did not sabotage the Knights, although the rivalry between the two at times did involve acts of hostility, but the AFL was better structured to survive. Successful trade locals of the Knights were candidates for absorption into the AFL. Meanwhile the Knights' involvement in politics, especially in third parties, undermined rather than enhanced their capacity to survive over the long haul (Carroll and Huo, 1988).

The mid-1890s were a watershed for the labor movement in numerous respects. Narrower and more particularistic interests were increasingly dominating broader, reform-minded and more universalistic ones. Craft unions, at least within the confines of the constraints delineated earlier, proved to be the superior choice for organizing under adverse conditions, because they created coalitions of the strong, even when they were not hostile to the weak. Building tradesmen were particular notable for learning how to use strikes effectively, utilizing narrow strikes of a relatively small number of workers (Friedman, 1988). By comparison, the great majority of the big strikes were failures (Vatter, 1976).

The AFL's rise was based in large measure on its acceptance of the permanence of wage labor, the necessity of improving the conditions of the laborer, and most important by far, its success at finding realistic means to carry out these objectives. Thus if from a radical perspective AFL business unionism is considered a sellout (Foner, 1977), or perhaps a strategic retreat (Fink, 1983), here it will be characterized as a strategic response. Its restrictive organizing style and business union ideology reflected a capacity for innovation sufficient to overcome the collective organization problem, turning a heterogeneity that is traditionally regarded as a disadvantage into an asset. But, the AFL's victory albeit not Pyhrric was by no means costless. What the following sections and subsequent chapter will show is that the same characteristics which made possible AFL survival and growth set limits on the value of that survival for the labor movement as a whole.

CONSOLIDATION: THE TRANSFORMATION OF WORK

The definitive struggle of the era—certainly most important in undermining opposition to capital's hegemony—involved the transformation of the work environment. The outcome undermined resistance to the imposition of new technology, lessening workers' autonomy and eroding their social status. Many nineteenth-century skilled craftsmen exercised significant control over working conditions and wages. But from the perspective of newly emerging capitalist managers workers' autonomy was an illegitimate limitation on their ability to make "rational" decisions. Managers now took the opportunity to modify the work environment and the entire system of labor relations. Disciples of capitalist management sought to confront the trade union movement, in order to devise a more flexible system—as a necessary interim step toward eliminating any remnants of worker control.

The movement to "rationalize" work had several facets. The use of subcontractors increased the numbers of semiskilled and unskilled workers, intensifying the pressure on both wages and working conditions (Clawson, 1980). Second, employers formed their own organizations in order to use collective tactics such as lockouts. Economic development was also tilting the scales in their favor, as revolutions in technology and industrial management sapped the capacity of labor for collective resistance. High wages, a consequence of the relative scarcity of labor as well as the crucial role skilled workers played in the productive process, gave factory owners the incentive to reorganize production to reduce their dependence on skilled labor (Shefter, 1986).[16]

Marglin (1974) argues that the ability to wield power and authority, insuring a role for management, has been more important than the technical requirements of production in determining choices of technology. Stone's (1974) study of the steel industry also found technology to be a subsidiary rather than dominant element in the evolution of the labor process. As the content of jobs was becoming more homogeneous, stratification of the labor market was pursued through the creation of internal labor markets. Montgomery (1979:26–27) has argued that new techniques of industrial management destabilized the foundation of craftsmen's autonomy and that the appeal of new managerial methods rested substantially if not entirely on a determination to alter work practices that were the basis of the strength of organized labor.

Perhaps the most important revisionist interpretation of the development of the labor process and its restructuring has been provided by

Braverman. He argued that techniques of scientific management, commonly known as Taylorism, provided a method by which every aspect of the labor process could be supervised and controlled from above (Braverman, 1974:90).[17]

An important element of this assertion of managerial capitalist control over the labor process at the turn of the century was the deskilling of the labor force. The essence of Taylorism could be distilled into a few simple principles: (1) the separation of the labor process from any element of workers' skills; (2) the separation of conception from execution; and (3) the systematic planning of the labor process in its entirety. The monopoly over knowledge leads to control over each step of the process, forming the necessary core of modern management, in order to systematize the transformation of labor from a process with skill at its core to one of science. The study of work processes is henceforth reserved for management and kept from workers, transmitted to them only as simplified job tasks with simple instructions from which they are to follow unthinkingly and without understanding the underlying reasons. Braverman believed this transformation to be "unnatural," inasmuch as each generation of workers must be habituated to it. In particular, such habituation requires the destruction of other forms of organization of labor and striking wage bargains that provide high wages for some, but consign the masses to low paid labor. Scientific management thus made possible the progressive elimination of any control exercised by workers.[18]

In perhaps the most systematic critique of Braverman, Burawoy (1978, 1985) has argued that Braverman's positing of Taylorism as essential for the development of monopoly capitalism eliminates its historical temporality, deemphasizing both the extent of conflict involved as well as the significance of the resistance to its imposition. Burawoy claims that such techniques were often introduced only gradually, and the resistance to them made a difference in the speed with which workplace transformation occurred. He finds that the clearest indications of Braverman's overly general approach are shown in the imposition of Taylorism outside the United States. Hence, Braverman's choice of the United States for his case study is responsible for his analysis's partiality.

According to Burawoy, Braverman ironically substituted a Marxist logic of accumulation for the logic of industrialization that he originally sought to criticize. Taylorism, rather than being an aspect of the sequential development of capitalism, was in fact an ideological weapon of the class struggle, and one that at times cost more than it delivered. Taylorism heightened labor's resistance and willingness to struggle so

greatly that its effectiveness as a weapon against trade unionism was limited. In arguing that the introduction of new technology engendered a contested terrain, Burawoy and other critics thus counterbalance Braverman's analysis that makes the prerequisites of capital the prime cause of workplace transformation.

Braverman's emphasis on deskilling as a primary and inevitable consequence of industrialization appears less plausible in light of studies showing that industrialization leads to deskilling and reskilling in turn, conditioned by needs of capitalists, and the limitations imposed both by technical imperatives as well as collective labor (Sabel, 1984; Gordon, Edwards, and Reich, 1982). According to Sabel (1984:57), increasing the division of labor generates a demand for new skills as old ones are destroyed. This reduces the average skill level, yet some craftsmen adapt old skills to new needs. Meanwhile, new forms of semiskilled work are generated in the middle of the blue-collar hierarchy. As mechanization intensifies, disturbances grow more costly.

Furthermore, a wealth of evidence suggests the situation of skilled workers is inherently unstable, involving the facing of perpetual crises. Because instability is an essential characteristic of market economies, the routinization and rationalization of mass production can never reach the actual point of eliminating skilled work in general. As Sabel has argued, the radical program of industrial rationalization can never be completed, thereby never guaranteeing safety to any *particular* groups. Rather ". . . there is always the chance that some of the ceaseless changes in materials and tools or in the fundamental definition of the product itself will undermine the market value of their skills (Sabel, 1984:169). Skilled workers can never be entirely eliminated, for only they can maintain the ability to understand the integration of individual tasks into the collectivity that constitutes production. Consequently, the traditional dichotomy between technical imperatives and political control must be rejected. Denuding craftsmen's pivotal supervisory position in the system was necessary, given the motive of profit maximization in the context of mass production. But, the political motivation for capitalists to control production was just as necessary.

In the United States, organized labor was ill prepared for mounting large-scale resistance. Their portrayal in the popular media of the times as neo-Luddites was one disadvantage. Their tactics were primarily defensive, designed to blunt the impact of industrialization by protecting employed workers against unemployment, as opposed to attempting to block mechanization or make its imposition a subject for negotiations in

collective bargaining (Yellowitz, 1977:15). Of course, this offered nothing to unorganized labor and had limited prospects for alliances outside the already organized.

By 1900, few trades or industries had not been affected by mechanization. In particular, the existence of nonunion factories limited organized labor's ability to formulate effective strategies. Oftentimes, the result was the destruction of a union, as happened to iron and steelworkers. Their union, the Amalgamated Association, had been the model craft union only a quarter century earlier. Gompers considered them the strongest unit in the labor movement. The Amalgamated Association's significance was due as well to the important role of pattern bargaining, that is, their negotiations determined the fate of unions in connected industries. Acceptance of the Amalgamated's wage scale frequently led to union recognition for firms in intermediate sectors. Mechanization weakened the base of their power. Perhaps the resources and flexibility of management made their defeat unavoidable (Brody, 1969:73). But the defects of craft organization—its narrow skilled constituency, explain why industrialists won in a rout. By 1910, for example, the steel industry was effectively unorganized.

As the importance of skilled workers diminished, their efforts to protect their positions were hampered by their concentration in industries that were on the decline (Hershberg, 1981; Aronowitz, 1973). Although many workers could not prevent the introduction of machinery, some unions did maintain or even increase their strength. These were primarily those in which innovations did not eliminate skilled labor, for example, skilled bricklayers and carpenters who could not be replaced at a low wage by less skilled immigrants (Dawson, 1979:336–337).

Workers' struggles over control of production did not end with the onset of scientific management, but after 1900, the AFL turned increasingly toward the promotion of stable contractual relationships between unions and employer groups. In their willingness to suppress intertrade cooperation, a critical manifestation of class solidarity, labor leaders sought to convince management of their reliability. They sought to prove their reliability by showing that unions would honor agreements and, if necessary, would compel compliance from their rank and file. Indispensable to this policy was the suppression of sympathy strikes and strikes in violation of contracts. It was necessary that employers believe that contracts once settled would be honored and that individual employers would not face disadvantages in relation to competitors.

Even if Taylorism was not omniscient, its value as an ideological

weapon of class struggle remained powerful. Taylorism undoubtedly helped to undermine organized labor's capacity for large-scale resistance. But what also must be appreciated is that the labor process as a whole was becoming less amenable to worker autonomy. Concurrent with labor's diminished stature in the relations of production was a diminished role outside of them.

Labor was becoming a supplicant rather than an equal in bargaining. A consensus emerging among workers that the private enterprise wage labor system was here to stay, and not necessarily to be feared, made it more difficult to oppose the introduction of machinery in principle (though not preventing opposition in specific cases). By stressing the dangers of overproduction, labor leaders sought to convince the general public of the dangers of unrestrained industrialization. They also sought to limit the impact of innovations through restrictions that maximized the amount of available work and established working conditions that made new machines less profitable. This effort in particular was widely regarded as futile.[19]

> Artisans had to concede their skill—the sole protection for their wages and working conditions—with no provision by employers or society to assist in the hard adjustment to technological change. Yet however destructive innovation might seem to be, it also seemed inevitable in most industries. Thus skilled workers and their union leaders were in a constant tension between their realization of the dangers and the resulting impulse to fight change, and the realization that innovation could not be blocked and that efforts to do so would only make the effects of change all the worse. (Yellowitz, 1977:74)

Perhaps the growth and stabilization of the labor movement even required this acceptance of its own subordination. But such subordination hastened the fragmentation of material interests as the dramatic improvement in economic conditions for skilled laborers did not extend to the unskilled. Although skilled workers gained acceptance of craft unions as a legitimate bargaining institution, they were not able to circumscribe employers' attempts to implement work rules unilaterally (though they were able to maintain restrictive access to trades). Organized labor began to accept management control over the labor process and with it the inherent risks of labor-saving technological innovations.

THE SKILLED AND THE UNSKILLED

The story of this chapter has been that the formation of a skilled labor class fraction allowed some workers to achieve at least temporary success in spite of the difficulties of organizing under unfavorable circumstances. But success for skilled workers accelerated the distance between the lives of the skilled and the unskilled, socially, economically, and culturally. In a sense, segmentation made a mockery of AFL claims to be the organizational representative of all workers' collective interests, and undermined efforts to devise a more universalistic labor solidarism.[20] The AFL staked a position as the movement of all workers. It alone had the authority to speak as their voice. It alone could grant jurisdictions and charters to nationals. Unions lacking its endorsement were illegitimate, and could be considered the enemy (Brody, 1980:27).

For unskilled laborers, austere living conditions strengthened their inclinations to restrict demands to immediate material improvements. The agenda of the unskilled was far more likely to be "crudely materialistic," limited to wages and hours (Graziosi, 1981). Such efforts were viewed contemptously by already Americanized union members, whose lofty albeit insecure perch led to resentment of the unskilled. Craft unionists believed that only exclusionary policies could preserve the special position of the skilled laborer (Dubofsky, 1961:187). This message was repetitively echoed in the failures of direct conflict.[21]

Rising nativism also eroded any remaining value attached to broader conceptions of labor. After 1893 when nativist agitation became influential in many labor unions, the range of new recruits narrowed (Hofstadter, 1955). Craft unionists could not reach out to semiskilled and unskilled workers without risking their position as the principal agent of unionization. Nor could they do so and advocate restrictions on immigration. Sustaining their monopoly power required the exclusion of migrants with fewer skills (Mink, 1990:42). For example, the 1909–1910 drive to unionize immigrants in the steelworks was fatally corrupted by the craftmen's nativism.

Nativism reinforced the segmentation between immigrant groups. Organized labor's growing legitimacy made it a more powerful advocate of immigrant restrictions. As highly visible incidents of deskilling accompanied rapid industrialization, new immigrants in turn appeared especially threatening, spurring increased prejudice against them, based on the belief that immigrants lowered labor standards and displaced natives.

The depression of 1893, a constricted labor market, real wage declines, and the use of new immigrants as strikebreakers cemented the polarization of unskilled immigrants and organized labor into separate blocs (Mink, 1990:139). By 1900, the AFL had become a forceful proponent of using literacy tests to reduce immigration. For craft unionists, exclusionary policies would best protect the special position of the skilled laborer (Dubofsky 1961:187).

> Nativism and fear of immigrant radicalism led most AFL craft union leaders to ignore the "new immigrants" until they were forced to deal with them. Before 1900, the only American union to make a significant effort to organize new immigrants without the prodding of independent organizing by radicals was the UMW, a union with a uniquely class conscious tradition. (Asher, 1982:337)

As a prime example of the underlying rationality and self-interest imbedded within nativism, consider the overlap between the cultural prejudices against ethnic groups with the ethnic occupational hierarchy explored in Chapter 3. For native stock Americans, those national groups whose cultural and racial characteristics were most dissimilar from their own were considered least favorably. Alternatively, the most similar groups, the British and Anglo-Canadians, were so readily accepted as to be practically invisible (Higham, 1975:24–25). In the ethnocultural system, British and English Canadians were hardly distinct from natives, Germans and the Irish were lower on the scale, while a large chasm separated these groups from the even newer immigrants. Such a close parallel cannot be ascribed to mere coincidence, but reflected the extent of symbiotic interaction between ethnic occupational hierarchies and popular cultural expressions of prejudice.

That skilled and unskilled laborers lived separate lives was hardly novel. Before the 1890s, for example, skilled and unskilled had lived in separate worlds at work, shown by their wage differentials, social statuses, and even differing methods of payment. Where skilled workers still saw themselves as producers, common laborers could hardly harbor such illusions. Earlier on, there had been a shared ethnic identity. This tie disintegrated under the duress of the flood of new immigrants into urban areas. Ironically, while the imposition of the new technology led to some narrowing of the distance between skilled and unskilled workers in factories, the access of skilled workers to trade unions increased it. The changing relation between the skilled and unskilled is attested to by the

transition occurring in earnings. As was shown in Figure 3.3, the stability of relative earnings from 1890 to 1897 between skilled workers and manufacturing wage earners turned into a widening gap after 1897. Skilled workers were increasingly better off materially than those employed in other manual labor occupations. But not only did unskilled immigrants work for less money in comparison to skilled workers, they worked harder and longer for it. Unskilled workers were even being forced to work longer hours than had their predecessors.[22]

THE DEMISE OF LABOR SOLIDARISM

The 1890s witnessed the virtual disintegration of the mutualistic ethos that had once nurtured craft unionism. The universalistic and reformist principles espoused by the Knights were being replaced by a defense of trade union interests on narrower and more particularistic terms. Craftsmen had once been aware that support from other workers outside their particular trades was essential to maintain their status. Support for job actions of other workers was a prime example of the mutual reciprocity that structured relations between them.

One of the most useful gauges of this awareness is to be found in sympathy strikes. Changes in the relative frequency of secondary strikes provide an important indicator of the decline occurring in class cohesion (Montgomery, 1979; Gordon, 1979).[23]

As shown in Figure 4.1, strike frequency and the percentage of strikes that are sympathy strikes were synchronous throughout the era. However, as the AFL gained stature, the proportion of sympathy strikes fell dramatically, though the trend line still follows that of strike frequency. The ratio peaked in the beginning of the 1890s, declining precipitously after 1894 in the midst of the serious economic depression, and never recovered afterward. In my view, this decline reflects a qualitative contraction in labor solidarism that was at least a partial consequence of the growing influence of the AFL. The disproportionate reduction in sympathy strikes expresses the secular decline occurring in class cohesion. The decline in consumer boycotts by laborers, being most widespread in the 1880s and diminishing later, similarly supports this interpretation (Gordon, 1979).

Mink, however, argues that the increases in sympathy strikes in the early years of the twentieth century show the growing strength of the union movement. I believe rather that the appropriate interpretation of sympathy strikes shows a critical decline occurring in class solidarism.

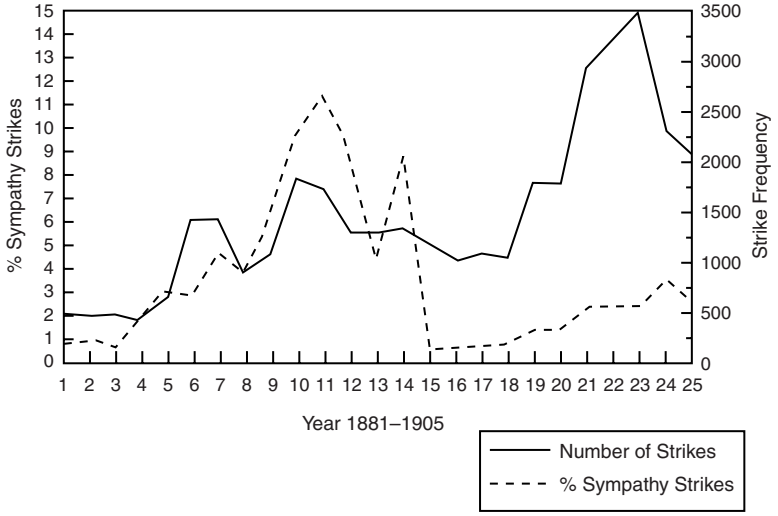

Figure 4.1. Strike Trends: 1881–1905.
Source: Montgomery, 1979:20.

Sympathy strikes are a key indicator of the internal cohesion of class relations, whereas overall strike frequencies are more appropriate for assessing relations between classes, in other words, the balance of power between labor and capital.[24]

As organized labor grew respectable, corporatist alliances became possible. Now when workers resisted management, they did so more diversely, further contracting shared common space with the unskilled and avoiding head-on confrontations with capital. Skilled workers continued to contest the implementation of technological innovations. Well into the twentieth century, craftsmen showed a willingness to strike over nonwage issues, recognizing that incentives to introduce new management techniques and new technology as an ongoing threat.[25] On the other hand, unskilled workers in industry were becoming more likely to employ covert means of resistance on the shop floor.

Innovations in both technological and managerial techniques encouraged both the turn toward accommodationist tactics as well as the continued fractioning of labor's collective responses. Technological innovations increased the homogenization of work while reducing the role of skilled labor in decision making. Skilled labor's declining importance

in the industrial economy meant these workers were increasingly susceptible to proletarianization.

Skilled workers were being marginalized, clustered in occupations less susceptible to mechanization. The source of their strength—the ability to resist innovation, which was also their weakness—relegated them to declining sectors away from the basic industries rapidly forming the core of the nation's economy. Thus workplace transformation and the arrival of newer immigrants undermine the status of skilled workers. But even so real wage differentials were expanding, and unskilled labor was becoming the exclusive province of newly arriving immigrants. Most of the growth in employment was in low skill occupations, a result of the implementation of new technology. This led over time to the replacement of higher skilled by semiskilled and unskilled laborers. Essentially, skilled workers were becoming more powerful as well as more vulnerable.

Of course, the notable achievements of Gilded Age unions did prove less satisfactory as time passed, and changing industrial and social conditions created a need for new tactics beyond the capabilities of pure and simple trade unions to deliver. The beginnings of a new era inevitably meant new social relations, within and without the workplace. Trade unions began to place more emphasis on strictly material considerations. This in turn paved the way for modes of collective bargaining less threatening to the prerogatives of management and more accommodating to the existing system.

NOTES

[1]Hannan and Freeman's (1987) analysis of union foundings shows the number of national unions to stabilize initially in 1905, which implies that national unions reached the saturation point (at least in terms of the number of unions, not the number of members) for this period.

[2]Marks's analysis uses the neo-Weberian mechanism of social closure. "Weber's concept of social closure recommends itself as a means of defining class in terms of those strategems by which collectivities lay claim to and seek to justify rewards under changing material conditions" (Parkin, 1974:15). The concept of labor particularism is consistent with Marks (1989) typology of the contrasting strategies of closed and open unionism based on their potential for closure. The strategy of closed unionism holds that craft unions will defend particular niches in the division of labor. Alternatively, open unionism as more

commonly practiced by industrial unions depends on broader, more encompassing principles of organization.

However, repression is a central causal factor in Marks's analysis in ways that are not relevant here. Hypothetically at least, the lag between industrialization and democratization should co-vary with the state's repressiveness, and though this is not the case for the United States, repression should decline with increasing democratization. Perhaps the substantive decline in democracy in the United States is responsible for the continued use of repression. And then again, perhaps not, from the perspective of the classic J-curve which anticipates that repression will rise in accordance with rising expectations. More important, Marks argues that repression forced unions into politics, but this really does not figure into their relative degree of particularism. Perhaps the differences are partly methodological, due to contrasts between case-based and variable-based comparisons.

[3]As used by Gordon, Edwards, and Reich (1982).

[4]Not unlike occupants of a contradictory class location between proletarians and petty bourgeoisie (Wright, 1978).

[5]In an interesting recent analysis, Miller (1992) argues that inside contracting was vulnerable because of its inherently high transaction costs. Although highly efficient, the high payments to contractors were an irresistible temptation to managers seeking to reduce costs.

[6]Although the technical economic advantages of increasing urbanization are not to be denied, in that cities provided easy access to product markets as well as supplies of cheap labor, evidence suggests that the advantage of urbanization in providing economies of scale has been overstated. Laurie and Schmitz have argued that Philadelphia industries in the 1850–1880 period show few if any economies of scale and substantial diseconomies. In fact, "the most efficient type of firm organization within many industries were likely to be a small factory" (Laurie and Schmitz, 1981:77).

[7]The boundaries between repression and "legitimate" political action are examined in Goldstein (1978).

[8]However, the first effective national assault on the trade union movement by capital did not occur until 1903 (Griffin, Wallace, and Rubin, 1986).

[9]In Boston and Philadelphia, the view that there was ever substantial linkage between residential patterns and occupations has been questioned (Hershberg, 1981; Thernstrom, 1973). According to Greenberg (1981), nineteenth century manufacturing cities were not characteristically immigrant ghettos. The Irish and Germans who came to the cities did not find cheap, concentrated housing readily available in the 1840s and 1850s. Industry outweighed ethnicity in understanding urban residential patterns. Workers of different ethnic groups in the same indus-

try had similar residential characteristics in comparison to their ethnic brethren in other industries.

[10]Erie (1990) argues that the failure of urban labor parties can be traced to their ineffectiveness in competition with political machines.

[11]The extreme rapidity of technical change in the United States made industrial unionism more difficult to establish *initially.* The high rate of technological innovation in the steel industry allowed employers to use the threat of innovation to force their workers into submission (Holt, 1977:28).

[12]Perhaps the central lesson drawn from their failure by future reformers was to segregate the political from the trade union functions of the organization (Montgomery, 1981).

[13]This depression destroyed many weaker trade unions (Ware, 1929:177).

[14]In their antagonism to the use of strikes by locals, the national leadership even resorted to sabatoge. Most often they were merely inept negotiators (Grob, 1969).

[15]Other aspects of Perlman's thesis: trade unionism is perpetually in conflict with intellectuals who would define its content and program; the lack of cohesion in the American working class is due to the unsettled character of the wage-earning class itself because the expansion of the labor supply reflects his dependence on the stilted American exceptionalist perspective; e.g, Europe has X, America has not X, criticized in the introduction. Poole (1984) characterizes Perlman's theory as an example of a homespun philosophy of labor articulating a communism of opportunity.

[16]A central question here is whether the industrial workplace was the result of neutral technological advances or conscious innovations designed to increase managerial control by weakening labor. Interpretations stressing the balance of power between labor and capital as an endogenous factor in decisons made by entrepreneurs about the workplace have been a useful corrective to earlier neoclassicist views, which saw the introduction of technology and choices of technique as inevitable—deducible solely from profit maximization and technical feasibility.

Individuals are rarely persuaded by overarching "logical" principles to abandon what they perceive to be their self interest. Arguments for economic efficiency and technological superiority may establish a claim to the advantages to be gained through the pursuit of certain policies, that is, they may provide for one group an ideological high ground, but the outcome is determined in the crucible of conflict. Additionally, the notion that the emerging industrial system was inevitable is a post hoc ergo propter hoc verdict that seems suspect in light of recent research (Sabel, 1984).

[17]For Braverman, this represented a central feature of the consolidation of control, and was an essential aspect of the rise and development of "monopoly

capitalism." He argued that scientific management was an attempt to apply the methods of science to the increasingly complex problems of the control of labor in rapidly growing capitalist enterprises. It involved dictating to workers the precise manner in which work is to be performed, thus assuming control of the actual performance of every labor activity from the simplest to the most complex.

[18]Braverman's analysis spawned a renewal of interest in the transformation of work. His critics have questioned the influence of Taylorism, particularly prior to World War I. They have countered that the imposition of Taylorist principles was actually much slower and that Braverman has overstated its influence by an excessively literal reliance on the writings of Taylor and other industrial engineers and experts (Syzmanski, 1978; Edwards, 1979). Clawson argues, however, in Braverman's defense, that his emphasis on these writings did not cause him to neglect real processes and that the portrayal provided by Braverman is generally accurate.

[19]Labor leaders did, however, support the eight-hour day as an alternative that might limit innovation's impact. It was hoped that the eight-hour day would allow more workers to be employed, counteracting the effects of displacement.

[20]Increasing inequality in the United States can be contrasted to a general Western European trend of narrowing inequality between skilled and unskilled labor in the same period (Kaelble, 1986:72).

[21]At Homestead, Pennsylvania, for example, unskilled and skilled workers were united during the strike, though their solidarity dissolved afterward as the union did not attempt to organize the unskilled (Foner, 1977:218).

[22]For example, Illinois workmen in 1882 averaged seven less hours per week than in 1910, excluding overtime. According to federal investigators, by May 1910, three-tenths of the labor force worked seven days a week. Growing economic concentration also increased the volatility of employment as unskilled workers faced more frequent spells of unemployment (Brody, 1969:39). Furthermore, since regularity of employment is as important as wage rates, it is conceivable that the analysis of wage trends in Chapter 3 understated the differential between skilled and unskilled laborers (at least for those in manufacturing).

[23]For example, the critical role of sympathy strikes in class solidarity has been illustrated in Great Britain in the repeated efforts of Conservative Party governments to enact statutory bans on sympathy strikes and penalties on strikers in 1927, 1971, 1980, and 1982.

[24]This principle is itself subject to the qualification that the meaning of strikes itself changes over time, as argued in Chapters 1 and 2. Hence, the ratio of sympathy strikes to total strikes is a more perceptive indicator of labor solidarism than is the total number of sympathy strikes.

[25]In fact, the incidence of control strikes peaked between 1901 and 1905 and again in 1917–1919 (Montgomery, 1979).

CHAPTER 5

The Political Contours of Class Conflict in the Gilded Age

Between 1870 and 1900, policy conflicts often came down to tests of strengths between the agrarian and industrial social orders (Ladd, 1970:178). At the beginning of the Gilded Age, sectional cleavages were dominant—a result of the divisions that led to the Civil War. The core constituencies of the Gilded Age working class were native white and Northern and Western European skilled craftsmen, and newly arriving immigrant unskilled factory laborers. But the narrowness of these divided constituencies limited labor's capacity to influence national politics. During the 1890s the political divisions between skilled and unskilled labor were crystallized by their movement into opposite parties (Mink, 1990). Once that happened the strength of labor in state and local contests was more than offset by national impotence. Generally then, for most of the late nineteenth century, the labor constituency's national voice was both minor and incoherent.

In this chapter, I will argue that the particularism of political machines ran parallel to (and thereby reinforced) labor's particularism in the workplace. The fact that the American electoral system was and is a plurality system has had several consequences on the political development of its labor movement. Plurality systems minimize conflict, moving competition in a centripetal, consensus-building direction (Sartori, 1976). Burnham (1982) has persuasively argued that the declining relevance of political alternatives is a key component in explaining the lower turnout of the nonaffluent. Thus, the high proportion of low-income nonvoters may have been a consequence of the conflict reducing properties of a plurality electoral system that, in reducing the ideological distance

between parties, minimized the prospects of a clear choice between alternative programs. Increasingly stringent registration procedures in urban areas most certainly helped to undermine the political interest and influence of urban, predominantly working-class, and immigrant voters. The response common to those consistently finding themselves to be on the losing side of political struggles was alienation and a growing disinterest in political issues. Both were symptoms of demobilization.

Electoral systems shape political competition in other respects as well. Class parties usually arise in systems of proportional representation. In plurality or majoritarian systems, it is difficult to build mass class parties because they rarely begin with the size to win elections by themselves. The aggregation of disparate groups proceeding from the necessity to seek majorities beyond segmented constituencies leads to a dilution of particularist appeals for the sake of wider support. Hence the options available for party building depend on the size of a potential working-class constituency.

In general, constituencies as much in the minority as the working class of late nineteenth-century America find their political influence to be smaller in plurality systems than would be the case in a system of proportional representation. This is especially true when, as was the case here, the pull from competing loyalties weakens the potential of electoral success by class purism. One example of this pull was shown by Republicans, who, as the party of protectionism, drew support from immigrant and unskilled industrial workers by promising high wages based on high tariffs and sound money.

Early democratization and a system of plurality voting were major formative features of the political environment. Each strengthened what may be considered innate tendencies within craft unionism toward decentralized autonomy. Political democracy's emergence prior to industrialization undermined the eventual assertion of a coherent working-class voice in politics, by insuring there would be no large blocs of uncommitted voters available to build a labor party. Moreover, the lack of any substantial independent working-class constituency made it difficult to articulate a distinctive labor agenda. Instead workers were being incorporated into politics as individuals, belonging to particular ethnic groups (Katznelson, 1981a).

CLASS POLITICS BEFORE THE AGE OF INDUSTRY

In less than two generations, the United States was transformed from a polity controlled by a narrow spectrum of notables to one controlled by

the majority of male citizens (McCormick, 1966). What is perhaps most important is that the first generation of industrial workers were able to vote. But they were a minority in the electorate, a voice that carried weight only within the confines of a small number of industrializing cities.

The attainment of the franchise by white males came about gradually and without drama, unattributable to any great crises. Rather, white males gained the franchise by the removal of restrictions on a state-by-state basis. Concurrent with this was a qualitative widening of democracy by extension of the scope of popular decision making. More offices were voted on, and fewer were chosen by executive and legislative fiat.

> Sooner than the British and at a time when Prussia protected its elites through its three-class electoral system, when each new change of regime in France brought with it a change in the size of the electorate and the nature of le pays legal, and when the basis of representation in Sweden was still the estate, America had elaborated not only the machinery and media of mass politics but a franchise which remarkably closely approached universal suffrage. (Burnham, 1982:47)

Compare, for example, Great Britain, where following the 1832 Reform Bill, the electorate consisted of about 650,000 out of 16 million, to an American presidential election turnout of 1,150,000 in 1828 (total population 12 million in 1830) and 2,400,000 in 1840 (17 million total population: 80.2 % of adult white males) (Chambers, 1967:11–12). One cannot infer from this that citizens were equal in any but the most formal sense. The hegemony of the respectable upper classes posed significant limits on formal equality. As a predominantly rural society, domination by elites still took on a personal and often face-to-face dimension. One theme of Chapter 5 will be the consequences of the growing distance between classes. Yet the advent of popular control was substantial. Early elites were neither sufficiently entrenched nor successful enough at broadening their support to maintain this leadership role in the emerging political system of the Jacksonian era. Not until the 1840s did industrialists begin to influence political decisions regularly (Cochran, 1981). By the onset of rapid industrialization in the 1830s, near universal franchise (for white males) had been attained.

Early industrialization subtly influenced democratization by undermining the habits of deference that helped elites maintain their authority. Career politicians (soon to be considered political bosses) were replacing men of wealth in positions of political preeminence (Bridges, 1987).

During the Jacksonian party system of the 1820s and 1830s, urban machines began to dot the political landscape, but they did not reach maturity until the 1870s and 1880s. In this formative stage, the size of the electorate and the public sector expanded (Erie, 1990). Martin Van Buren's election as president in 1836 is often cited as an indication of the triumphant emergence of the professional politician (Wolfe, 1977).

This transition was also shown in the formation of a class-based ideology, although the identification of workers was populist and Jacksonian, rather than Marxian socialist (Shefter, 1986; Wilentz, 1984). The definition of workers was based more on who was excluded than on the more sharply drawn cleavages common to an industrial society. Lines of division were drawn separating nonproducers (landlords, bankers, and sometimes lawyers) against the producing classes (small businessmen, skilled and unskilled laborers, professionals, and farmers). The Jacksonian era Workingmen's party cannot be readily fit into a model of proletarian protest. For them, the "producing classes" included everyone in any useful occupation (Bridges, 1986). The Workingmen struggled against the creation of privilege by law, rather than against the business community. Moreover, their status as an independent movement of the producing classes was immediately compromised and stalled, largely due to the cooptation of their agenda by ruling Democrats (Hugins, 1960). Thus Workingmen's parties were only an intermittent phase in the political development of the working class.

Political machines were becoming the dominant political institution in urban America and would remain so for almost a century. Erie (1990) argues that machine politics were a conservative influence. Such indispensable tasks as building cross-class voting alliances and creating a favorable economic climate for business forced machine leaders to relinquish links with radical activists.

Parties invariably promote some solidarities at the expense of others. Machine politics were the vehicle through which ethnic and class allegiances were transformed into a potent political force. Yet the relationships between urban city politics and national politics were diverse. In New York, workers supported the Democrats, and in Pittsburgh and Newark, the Whigs and eventually Republicans (Bridges, 1987). Party organizations competed for the support of the first generation of Irish by offering jobs on canals and highways. In some cities, public expenditure and debt rose as machines rewarded new voters with newly created jobs. But expansionary fiscal policies led to tax revolts by middle-class and business interests (Erie, 1990).[1]

Local working-class interests could not, however, be molded into a national working-class agenda. Their position as a minority faction in a majoritarian electoral system meant the interests of workers were submerged in a process designed to produce common interests large enough to win electoral majorities. The inability of wage laborers in New York, home of the largest and most advanced urban working class, to find allies to support their demands for the ten-hour day demonstrated the difficulties afflicting Jacksonian-era American laborers. They could not succeed by advancing purely class demands. Trade union leaders learned to avoid having labor issues embroiled in partisan politics. According to the newspaper of the National Trade Unions, partisan objectives were not for labor.

> Trades' Unions, it was emphasized "are not intended to interfere in party politics; nor will they attempt to favor either of the two great political parties now agitating the body politic. . . . We do not suppose there are any among us . . . who desire an entire renunciation of every thing having a political bearing; for it is generally conceded, that many of the subjects upon which we are to act, are political in their nature; many of the evils under which the workingmen are suffering, are of political origin, and can only be reached in that way. (Hugins, 1960:76–77)

This pronouncement illustrates an already perceptible wariness of political involvement. The lesson for the future was to avoid dependence on political parties (Bridges, 1987). The focus for labor should be on immediate trade union demands, while external political involvement was to be avoided whenever possible (Katznelson, 1981a:55). Labor might have political interests, hence political mediation was necessary but neither politicians nor parties could or should be allowed to define or control them. Workers might even join political parties to promote labor causes such as the ten-hour day, but the party was a vehicle and political power a necessity, a means rather than an end. Under stress, labor would especially try to avoid politics, to insulate labor issues from the agenda of political parties. Yet what is also apparent even at this early stage is the utter implausibility of this desire. No matter how attractive it might be, such insulation could never be attained inasmuch as politics could never be completely divorced from economics.

The necessary submergence of a labor agenda furthered the fragmentation of class identities. Yet, the ultimate significance of political

democracy in the early years of industrialization was that it forged a commitment to the political system before the negative consequences of industrial capitalism were fully evident. One consequence of democratization having preceded industrialization was to narrow the range of common differences available to create a collective ethos. If in Europe workers made demands against the state, in the United States, it was (at least if they were white and male) formally as much their state as anyone elses (Katznelson, 1981a:61). Dawley's description of European working-class emergence offers a striking contrast.

> The modern European working class emerged when republicanism—let alone democracy—was still a thing of the future. In fighting simultaneous battles for political emancipation and economic improvement, they concluded that the state was an instrument of their oppression controlled by hostile social and economic interests. Thus the seed of a widespread class consciousness was planted early in the history of Europe's Industrial Revolution, and as it grew to maturity along with the industrial working class, it was well watered by the remembrance of bloody class conflicts during the epoch of the French Revolution. (Dawley, 1976:237)

POLITICS AND CLASS CONFLICT IN THE GILDED AGE

As the era of working-class parties drew to a close, the belief that working Americans were exploited was rapidly turning from an impression into a conviction. But where mid-century labor parties had been inclusive melanges of middle- and working-class elements dominated by their middle-class members, growing disparities between the working and middles classes made continued political cohabitation untenable (Dawley, 1976). During the antebellum era of artisan radicalism and the fight for equal rights, class differences were somewhat ambiguous, involving distinctions that had not yet hardened.

Class parties were finding that they were less able to bridge the diverging interests of the two groups. Prewar workingmen artisans had been middle class in orientation, with similar interests and values to independent entrepreneurs and professionals. But newer workers were more often simply laborers, more akin to proletarians. At the same time, the divisions between agriculture and industry were growing. In rural America, creditors versus debtors was emerging as the dominant cleav-

age; in urban America it was labor versus capital. Yet even after the war, the lack of clarity in class boundaries shown through the lines of demarcation drawn by the Knights of Labor. "Only those associated with idleness (bankers, speculators), corruption (lawyers, liquor dealers, gamblers), or social parasitism (all of the above) were categorically excluded from membership in the Order" (Fink, 1983:9).

With the demise of the 1870s cooperative movement, working-class political activity moved toward economism and pure and simple unionism. The political arena was becoming a less desirable location for addressing workplace grievances (Walkowitz, 1981:257). By the 1886 Henry George campaign, evidence of the constriction and narrowing of common interests was strikingly clear. Even though many workers supported George, eventually they grew frustrated with the domination of the campaign by political professionals and businessmen.

> The struggle, in the eyes of George and his disciples, was not one between labor and its allies against their common exploiters. They held that it was a struggle between the masses and the classes, and by "classes" they meant political corruptionists of all kinds. In this crusade, they insisted, the business and professional men had even more at stake than the workers and were entitled to a more influential role in the movement. (Foner, 1977:147)

The hardening of interest cleavages shaped the discussion of issues, a polarization furthered by the style of late nineteenth-century politics that simplified issues, reducing complex arguments to black and white opposites. In Goodwyn's (1978) phrase, everyone but northern urban workers—a substantial majority of the nation—"voted as they shot" well into the 1890's. The highest percentage of Americans voting at any time in the nation's history occurred between the mid-1850s and the 1890s. This era, known as the third party system, was one in which Republicans and Democrats contested elections on relatively even terms. Close elections dramatized the importance of political issues. Partisanship provided a lens through which to view and interpret the world. Newspapers created a common language for political issues, reinforcing partisanship. Spectacular campaign pageantry was used to woo and hence validate the special importance of workers and farmers. Parades and rallies gave added meaning to voting, turning politics into displays of entertainment, fusing military nostalgia and class theater (McGerr, 1986). In the North political campaigns were highlighted by spectacular

displays of partisanship. Partisanship was expressed in torchlight parades, rallies, clubs, and marching companies. Newspapers promoted and reinforced one-sided interpretations of popular issues.

> The product of a constellation of social forces, spectacular campaigning powerfully influenced Northern political life. Along with the party press, the partisan display of elections made it easier than before or since for Northerners to act politically. Both cause and result of political participation, spectacular campaigns helped to push voter turnout upwards toward the record highs of the late nineteenth century." (McGerr, 1986:23)

Gilded Age politicians were becoming more dependent on support from the business community—a key indication of the rising value of raw economic power.[2] Valelly (1989), for example, characterizes the emphasis of public policy during the post–Civil War era as "accumulationist," due to its consistent tendency to support the interests of private economic power. In the words of President Grover Cleveland, "No harm shall come to any business interest as a result of administrative policy so long as I am president" (Valelly, 1989:6). However, this explanation is at best only a partial one. In democracies, the outcomes of struggles between private interest groups can rarely be reduced to coercion alone, more than the sheer power of competing actors is involved. For those not directly dependent on capital, indirect influences must be considered in accounting for how and why big business came to assume such a hegemonic position in American society.

One perspective on such indirect influence is provided by the structural variant of Marxist theory of the state which holds that a prime reason for capitalist class domination is that society's general welfare is determined by private profit (Marx, 1963; Gramsci, 1971; Przeworski, 1980a; Poulantzas, 1973). According to this thesis, the dependence of general or collective interests on the decisions of private individuals to invest or not ensures that many will be encouraged to take the interests of capitalists as synonymous with the general or public interest. Consequently, the private interests of capital are seen as the common interest of all.[3]

THE AFL'S VOLUNTARISM

The split between the Knights and the AFL embodied an important rite of passage. Economism implied that trade unions would deal primarily

with job-related issues. The AFL's growing prominence did not end labor involvement in social and political issues, but did reflect the growing primacy of immediate economic concerns. Ineffectual attempts to re-create Jacksonian-style political reform coalitions showed once again the difficulties caused by putting politics first. And such difficulties boosted the persuasiveness of the AFL's (at least rhetorical) posture in regard to politics: crude economic determinism, leavened with a large dose of syndicalism. Samuel Gompers expressed it best, arguing that labor received only what it was powerful enough to take (Brody, 1980:45). Yet while the AFL seemed to eschew involvement in partisan politics, this was true at best when the issues either did not immediately affect trade unionism or were especially divisive. The AFL was preoccupied with obtaining relief from Congress from injunctions brought by businessmen against job actions (Karson, 1958:32). Many members continued to actively participate in the important social issues of the day, although the AFL leadership did its best to avoid major involvement.

The AFL's philosophy in this period has been frequently called voluntarism. Voluntarism aided efforts to prevent the intrusion of what were seen as extraneous and divisive issues on the labor movement. Voluntarism's unifying theme was that workers could best realize their objectives by relying on their own associations. As a doctrine, it asserted the preeminence of unions, but did not rule out selective alliances between unions and local political machines. Thus, craft autonomy was defended against state interference, and interference from the national AFL as well (Rogin, 1971).

The AFL's leadership still took positions on national issues due to pressures from below. On a few issues, such as restriction on immigration, they were among the leaders (Mink, 1990). On the local level, the political involvement of organized labor grew steadily. Hence, while voluntarism had been useful in the conflict against the Knights, it never signified a total abstention from politics.

Trade union leaders argued that most issues were best left to the bargaining table, believing that they could do better there than through political action. This attitude was not unreasonable, given the lack of support in the federal government, and all too often at the state and local levels as well. While the antagonistic role of the national state in such dramatic episodes as the Pullman strike was undeniable, perhaps more important was the regularity of repression—by states, localities, and private companies, often with ambiguous dividing lines between them. For example, state militias and local police were the ones intervening in most labor

disputes (Valelly, 1989). Government hostility at all levels thus strengthened the case for minimizing political involvement when possible.

But this philosophy of voluntarism generated such severe contradictions that the AFL could not often sustain its position in any way even remotely consistent with its rhetoric. Eventually, they did have to deal with politics more realistically and explicitly. In some accounts, moderation of the strong version of voluntarism occurs in the 1890s when the Pullman strike failed. The use of federal troops and court injunctions made crystal clear voluntarism's inherent problems. The support of AFL affiliates for William Jennings Bryan's 1896 presidential campaign has been perceived as a watershed event. Even though the national organization officially abstained, the strong support by member unions made its official abstention a matter of rhetoric.

Karson, however, argues that the AFL's first major move into political activity took place in 1906, after they achieved a preeminent status. He believes that from this point on, AFL nonpartisanship is only a myth. Gompers had advocated nonpolitical involvement to defeat the socialists, but because of such factors as: court injunctions to curtail strikes, picketing and boycotts, imprisonment of union officials, the levying of fines for contempt, growing employer hostility, a challenge to the left from the International Workers of the World (IWW) and the socialists, as well as the decline in AFL finances; this position had to be revised (Karson, 1958:40). But the exact dating is less important than the consequences in terms of what followed voluntarism: Political engagement led to corporatism, not to reconstructing the labor movement on more universalistic and inclusive terms.[4]

In certain respects, the AFL became perhaps even more inflexible in the extent of its opposition to state involvement in union affairs. Their firm preference was for negative state action—the removal of impediments to organizing, limited benefits to special populations such as women and children, and prevention of competition with cheap labor by restricting immigration—rather than positive state assistance in welfare and general assistance programs. The movement into politics was largely defensive, a response to the provocative and hostile actions by powerful adversaries (Marks, 1989).

The response to Populism exemplified the AFL's approach to national issues. The AFL national leadership made every effort to avoid endorsement of the Populists in spite of the strong support shown for the cause by many trade unionists. But Gompers spoke more for the elite than for the rank and file. Many of the roughly three hundred labor candidates in 1894 political campaigns ran as Populists (Pollack, 1966).[5]

The ideology of agrarian Greenbackism brought together southern and western farmers. But the Populist message did not play well in industrial America. No matter how much free trade and free silver resonated with farmers, it did not prove attractive to urban immigrant factory workers. But this is not to say the Populists had *no support* from workers; rather they did not have enough, especially from organized labor whose leadership regarded the Populists as radicals whom they were more than happy to abandon (Pollack, 1966).

THE SYSTEM OF 1896

The year 1896, it has been argued, represented a watershed marking the beginning of a decline in working-class electoral participation in politics. In contrast to the relatively even contests of the postbellum period, this was the beginning of an era of firm Republican control (with the exception of Woodrow Wilson's two terms due to the split in the Republican ranks between Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Progressives and William Taft's traditionalists). This campaign culminated a generation-long evolution in the style and substance of politics: The candidates' personality took priority over his party, while the tools of modern advertising were utilized to package candidates for sale to the voters (McGerr, 1986:145).

According to Goodwyn, certain boundaries of modern American politics can be traced to the outcome of the 1896 election: Its outcome certified the power of corporations relative to that of citizens, forecasting the power of private money on election campaigns. Although, the influence of money had been growing since the 1850s, the techniques of corporate politics were pioneered here. Mark Hanna raised money on an unprecedented scale for the Republican campaign. The over $3,500,000 raised included contributions from wealthy Democrats greatly discomforted by Bryan's nomination as well as from rich Republicans (McGerr, 1986:140). The efforts of metropolitan newspapers to defend the gold standard were coordinated by Republican press bureaus (Goodwyn, 1978:270). While Democrats struggled to find volunteer speakers in crucial midwestern states, Republicans paid their speakers through contributions from wealthy supporters.

> Cultural intuitions about respectability, civic order, and the sanctity of commerce, augmented by large-scale campaign organizing, coordinated newspaper and publishing efforts, and refurbished memories of Civil War loyalties combined to create a kind of electoral politics never

> previously demonstrated on so vast a scale. Though individual pieces of this political mosaic had been well tested in previous elections, the sum of the whole constituted a new political form: aggressive corporate politics in a mass society. (Goodwyn, 1978:270–271)

Republicans were able to successfully argue that Bryan's remedies were ill advised, that free trade would lower wage standards, and that monetizing silver would be inflationary. Their preferred policies of high tariffs and sound money would produce "full dinner pails" for all. Of course, sound money meant a windfall for creditors, but their "rising tide lifts all boats" philosophy, perhaps the immutable core of political conservatism, was effective. Of course, rougher forms of persuasion were also used, but how significant *political* repression was is difficult if not impossible to say.

The 1896 election resolved the issue of farmer/labor coalitions for a generation but resolved the terms on which such coalitions could be built forever, by ending any prospects of radical grassroots alliances between farmers and workers. In the decades to follow, the centralization of agriculture in corporate form, or agribusiness, effectively destroyed any potential foundation for a national alliance between independent farmers and industrial workers (Goodwyn, 1978:268). William McKinley's victory pushed agrarian radicalism to the sidelines, and along with it the vision of economic democracy based on the ability of laborers to control their destiny (McNall, 1988).

Even though the severe economic depression of 1893 meant prolonged privation for many, as well as starvation for some, alliances with farmers in an independent political party were shown to not be a plausible response. Common interests were insufficient to sustain a farmer/labor alliance: The divergence between a growing industrial work force whose adversary was concentrated and at times monopoly capital, and a declining farm population whose immediate problems lay in the credit system, proved unbridgeable. The tariff issue also pushed farmers and labor in opposite directions. While many workers saw high tariffs as a means to protect their jobs from foreign competition, for farmers, high tariffs depressed farm prices and increased the price of necessities. Rogowski argues that tensions between workers and farmers were exacerbated by conflicting interests over trade issues. Given an environment in which labor was relatively scarce (in the context of the world economy) and land relatively abundant, trade policies that would support their interests were contradictory and thus difficult to reconcile (Rogowski, 1989).

Even though the Populists mobilized hundreds of thousands across the nation in the 1892 and 1896 presidential elections, by 1900 their force was spent (McNall, 1988). According to McNall, the alliance's extremely rapid growth damaged its prospects for long-term success, because there was insufficient time to develop the necessary organizational structure and disciplined cadre. The spectacular rise and perhaps even more spectacular decline of the Populists nonetheless set the high-water mark for progressive class coalitions in the Gilded Age. Their defeat symbolized organized labor's retreat from any remaining vestiges of broad-based politics with a potentially radical bent initially into the narrow cocoon of "pure and simple" unionism. But the initial retreat was only a prelude to alliances with a soon to be hegemonic elite of industrial and financial capital.

> Unions affiliated with the AFL in the main chose this course of action because their leaders concluded from the experiences of the late 19th century that pure and simple craft unionism was the only viable form of working class organization in the United States as the twentieth century began: the only form that at once could meet the imperatives of internal organizational maintenance; carve out a niche for itself in the age of corporate capitalism; and accommodate itself to the harsh political climate confronting labor at the turn of the century. (Shefter, 1986:259)

The party system of 1896–1932 essentially reformed existing regional divisions into a solidly Democratic South facing an almost as strongly Republican Northeast in presidential politics (Burnham, 1974:711).[6] Political reorganization cemented the Republicans' status as the party of industrialism (one virtually belonging to industrialists), and the Democrats as the party of rural and peripheral constituents, notwithstanding the inclusion of AFL craft unionists on their side.

The dominant center of the Republican party during the years of the system of 1896 was a massive bloc of core industries: steel, textiles, coal, and shoes. Sharing labor-intensive production processes, these industries were staunch opponents of organizing labor and advocates of laissez-faire. Facing insistent pressure from foreign competitors, they generally favored high tariffs. Thanks largely to Britain's commitment to free trade, the United States was able to free ride on free trade, pursuing free trade abroad and protection at home, effectively building a tariff wall protecting these industries from foreign competition. American tariff

levels during this era were also high by comparative standards, exceeding, for example, those in Germany and France (Lake, 1990). For much of the era, investment and commercial bankers were critical supporters of this bloc of national industrial capitalists (Ferguson, 1989). Under the aegis of the Republican party, the United States pursued generally protectionist trade policies into the 1930s, although with considerable variation in the specific details.[7]

Republicans added to their base of support in rapidly developing rural areas, thereby consolidating their status as the party of the rapidly expanding metropolitan areas (Montgomery, 1981). Urban workers and affluent farmers became the solid core of national Republicanism (Valelly, 1989).

Urban Politics

The year 1896 also highlighted the beginning of a new era in urban politics. As the migration of middle-class Yankees to the suburbs weakened machine opposition, welfare legislation sponsored by Progressive era reformers opened the door for local public sector expansionary fiscal policies. Machine politics provided a home for many members of the Irish-American working class, dampening their interest in radical labor politics.

> Patronage tamed the restless Irish working class. With jobs and money, the new machines built a sizable electoral following. To win elections, machines merely mobilized the sizable Irish payroll army, Irish families, jobseekers, and when needed, purchasable voters. (Erie, 1990:69)

Machine politics promoted the particularistic organization of narrow constituencies in several ways: (1) by dividing its constituents into ethnic blocs, separating old from new immigrants, and each from blacks; (2) by discriminating in the kind and quality of services it provided to middle- and lower-class voters (whereas middle-class support depended on low taxes and homeowner services, supervision and mediation of welfare state benefits were reserved for the poor); and (3) within its core constituency of the Irish, who received the bulk of the available patronage and power, machines provided individual benefits to individual supporters, rather than mobilizing voters by means of group-centered bases. In sum, given their status as localized party structures tangentially linked to the national political system, urban political machines helped create

and make durable the federalized, parochial, and particularistic tendencies dominant in American politics. "The machine's ethnically segmented electoral-mobilization and resource-allocation policies promoted interethnic conflict within the working class rather than interclass cleavages" (Erie, 1990:226).

Political machines employed a logic that paralleled and thereby reinforced the logic of labor particularism. Effective machines depended on the construction of efficient minimal winning coalitions, excluding those whose support was not necessary for victory. Party organizations did not mobilize Southern and Eastern Europeans to any degree comparable to their earlier inclusion of the Irish. Rather, by monopolizing political and economic resources for the benefit of its previously incorporated insiders, machines applied a strategy similar to that used by craft unions (Erie, 1990).

The attention paid to the political realignment of industry and agriculture has somewhat obscured a second dimension of sectoral realignment, involving the redrawing of allegiances within labor. Unskilled and semiskilled recent immigrants moved into the Republican coalition while the AFL unions were aligning with the Democrats (Mink, 1990:34). Trade unions were becoming an important constituency within the national Democratic coalition, providing the strongest urban voice in the party.

Boundaries between groups of workers were both defended and expanded upon by the AFL through their support for immigration restrictions. The growth of nativism and acceptance of racism—initially by the rank and file and then eventually by the leadership—helped bind AFL craft workers and racist southern Democrats. Unsurprisingly, newer immigrants found the Republican message, which stressed sound money (via adherence to the gold standard), economic growth, and commitment to tariff protection, more appealing (Mink, 1990:131). The Republicans argued that high tariffs would produce higher wages, that immigration was not to be feared, and that further immigration was desirable.

Hence, by relocating blocs within the electorate, electoral realignment disentangled what had become incompatible working-class constituencies. "Settled workers who sought protection for unions and against immigration now faced their immigrant nemesis across party lines" (Mink, 1990:129). The net result of the sectional and sectoral party realignments established in the wake of 1896 diminished party competition in much of the country (Ladd, 1970:168). Thus, the establishment of national Republican hegemony coincided with a decline in

the percentage of the population voting. With less competitive elections went declining turnout. The decline in voting meant a diminution of the political influence of less affluent citizens (McGerr, 1986). In sum, the formation of a Republican-led protectionist coalition helped cement the cleavage between skilled and unskilled labor, assuring national Republican hegemony until the Great Depression and the beginning of the New Deal.

Mink (1990) argues that immigration played the decisive role in shaping American labor politics, in large measure because their conception of labor politics was rooted in the exploitation of nativism and racism.[8] It is certainly undeniable that immigration and ethnic differentiation played a major role in working-class segmentation, and the AFL's status as the agent of the strongest group using racism and nativism was critical. But, it may well be as Bridges (1987) argues, that the periodic emergence and success of *political nativism* is a function of realignments occurring in the political system, due to the political displacement of some ethnic groups in favor of others. Perhaps nativism, as Bridges argues, becomes politically significant only when realignment is occurring, and is not the cause of that realignment itself.[9]

The Rise of Reform

Electoral politics was increasingly viewed as an expensive and unreliable forum for the pursuit of corporate interests by an ascending financial and industrial elite. An underlying trend of depoliticization was emerging that would effectively reduce the saliency of partisan politics by insulating industrial and financial elites from effective pressures from below (Burnham, 1970:51). One aspect of this depoliticization was the substitution of a "bureaucratic" for a democratic mode of politics. The trend in city and state governments was to create nonpartisan and independent regulatory commissions as a means of reducing popular pressures. The rising status and use of professionals in city management also showed the tendency to separate politics from the populace (O'Connor, 1973).

Post–Civil War northern reformers had initially favored the revocation of voting rights. Due to immigration, respectable patricians like Charles Francis Adams foresaw a nightmarish future based on domination by Irish and Chinese immigrants and blacks. He spoke for many of his class in saying that

> Universal suffrage can only mean in plain English the government of ignorance and vice—it means a European, and especially Celtic, proletariat on the Atlantic coast; an African proletariat on the shores of the Gulf, and a Chinese proletariat on the Pacific. (McGerr, 1986:46)

Their proposed solutions included educational and property requirements for the franchise and municipal disenfranchisement. But these proposals were regarded as divisive by reform liberals and unsurprisingly vehemently opposed by others. It was inconceivable that politicians would destroy the base of their political support. Ruling radical Republicans legislated restrictions on suffrage and federal control of elections, for example, by passing the Enforcement and Naturalization Acts, to undermine Democrat's efforts to mobilize urban voters. But the net result was to strengthen immigrant support for Democratic machines (Erie, 1990).

But if reformers failed to enact the suffrage restrictions they had been advocating for a generation, they were able to move toward the same ends through less provocative means. Chipping away at the "fabric of party loyalty" through independent nonpartisanship, reformers created clubs and associations to influence legislatures by means of education and lobbying. Parties were forced to respond to the challenge of a growing number of more independent-minded voters by adopting their own version of educational politics. Pamphlets and documents began to replace the demonstrative partisanship of torchlight parades. By the presidential election of 1892, a less partisan and emotional campaign had largely supplanted spectacular displays (McGerr, 1986).[10]

The successful challenge of reformers to the system of popular partisanship can be seen in a number of dimensions, including changes in the legal rules, the creation of a civil service, ballot and municipal reform, the formation of a bloc of voters who rejected demonstrative partisanship, and the creation of a political style hostile to party politics (McGerr, 1986:66). The net result was a less intimate style of class relations, one with more distance between classes than before. The hardening and polarization of class cleavages may explain the concurrent upsurge in violent episodes of class conflict.[11]

So if liberals were unsuccessful in preventing the "great unwashed" from voting, they were able to restrict the value of their political participation, transforming politics by reshaping the political world, modifying its meaning, reducing its significance, and casting doubt on the validity

of partisanship. By the 1890s, a new model of limited partisanship was emerging (McGerr, 1986). This more bureaucratic mode of politics protected elite interests by insulating the state from popular pressures. Although electoral politics continued to perform "legitimating functions," bureaucracies segregated from popular control were gaining importance (Roy, 1981:175).[12]

Through the Naturalization Act of 1906, Republicans raised the hurdles to citizenship: Literacy in English, proof of lawful entry, and five years of continuous residence were made requirements for gaining citizenship. Denials of naturalization petitions rose roughly five fold, from 3 percent to 15 percent, while the length of the process doubled in duration to eleven years. Alien suffrage was abolished in the Midwest. Literacy tests were employed in much of the Northeast. Personal registration laws were applied only to urban voters (Erie, 1990:94–95). The adoption of requirements of personal registration in many cities also showed that political reformers, concerned about the impact of political machines and corruption, were willing to use undemocratic methods to control the influence of "unassimilated" working-class immigrants.

If machine politicians did not lead the drive to restrict the franchise, they nevertheless adapted quite comfortably to the shrinking universe that the restrictions produced. They were able to turn such restrictions into an advantage because reducing turnout raised the hurdles confronting potential challengers by decreasing the available pool of voters (Erie, 1990).

Overall, the extensions of political democracy that had preceded the Civil War were being reversed, indicative of a general trend limiting lower class participation in political life. The United States went through an era of setbacks in electoral participation in both formal as well as substantive terms. These characteristics were associated with what has been termed the "fourth party system." The disenfranchisement of southern blacks made the voting rights of poor southern whites more tenuous (Wiebe, 1967:109). Also pernicious were the barriers to mass participation being erected in the rest of the country that reduced the salience of electoral participation for working-class and other low-income voters (Burnham, 1982). Turnout in the South dropped from 64 percent in the presidential campaigns between 1876 and 1892 to 32 percent in those of 1900 to 1916. In the North, 83 percent of those eligible voted in the presidential elections of 1896 and 1900. The percentage declined to 65 percent from 1900 to 1916, and to 58 percent in 1920 and 1924 (McGerr,

1986:186). The de-emphasis on partisanship made turnout heavily dependent on the attractiveness of candidates and issues.

In the development of capitalist democracies, the retrogression that occurred in the United States in these years stands out against the general extensions and expansions of democratic principles in Western Europe.[13] It is not unreasonable to suggest that this substantive decline in democracy facilitated the repeated reliance on repression of labor conflict well into the twentieth century in the United States.

Growing economic and political cleavages between skilled and unskilled workers, depoliticization, diminished political competition, the decline of partisanship, and the increasing restrictions on the franchise were all effectively reducing the substantive meaning of democracy for many citizens—most especially new immigrants in the North and blacks in the South. According to Burnham (1982), this created a hole in the electoral universe as working-class voters dropped out of the electorate. According to Katznelson (1981a), the incongruity or lack of correspondence between workers' economic and political institutions led to a stabilization of a two-party structure without a labor party.[14] For these reasons and others, it is clear that northern public life was ceasing to embrace all classes. With the disappearance of spectacular displays of partisanship went the disappearance of the strong sense that the governed must visibly consent. As northern upper- and middle-class reformers undermined the role of parties, many of the masses withdrew from public life. One must conclude that partisanship and popular politics, indeed perhaps even popular sovereignty, have symbiotic linkages. Damage to one element perhaps inevitably damages them all (McGerr, 1986:209).

The support given by industrial workers to the Republicans facilitated the entrenchment of the party of capital, boosting capitalism's domination and the demobilization of forces favoring economic democracy during the first quarter of the twentieth century (Mink, 1990:151). But the party that industrial workers supported was one loyal to the interests of capital first, foremost, and at times it appeared to be only. Meanwhile, the Democrats' working-class constituency consisted of a single class fraction. That old and new immigrants found allies in opposite camps was perhaps the final straw, the one virtually assuring that the crisis of industrialization would not give rise to a mass labor party.

The AFL made its own contribution to capitalist hegemony. Its preference for pure and simple trade unionism and the rejection of any political agenda that might promote the transformation of social institutions

reflected an acceptance of a capitalist system and consent to struggle for improving conditions for its membership within that system (Karson, 1958:118). Both responses indicate labor's submissiveness and acquiescence in the face of a rising hegemonic capitalist elite.

> The election of 1896 thus marks a profound mutation in American political culture. At a time when the European proletariat was becoming more politically engaged than ever before, the American working class was undergoing a striking electoral demobilization as a result of the nativist backlash, and of new restrictions on the popular suffrage. This combined process of exclusion/abstention dispersed the working class vote while simultaneously creating a huge "gap" absent proletarian votes whom every third party movement of the twentieth century would seek to identify and mobilize. (Davis, 1980:34)

THE HEGEMONY OF CAPITAL: THE DECLINE OF ORGANIZED LABOR

Business was becoming increasingly dominant, and leaders of the American business community were achieving unrivaled power and influence between 1890 and World War I (Morgan, 1970). The business collapse following the depression of 1893 led to a period of unparalleled rivalry among steelmakers (Brody, 1969). Industrial concentration was on the rise, and there was a continuing increase in factory size from the 1880s to the 1920s. Even without merging, industrialists were coordinating their strategies. Collaboration often took place under the leadership of a single firm.[15] "By 1899 manufacturing was so consolidated that monopsonistic industries—those in which the four leading corporations controlled more than ½ of the nation's total production—earned 32 percent of the manufacturing income" (Hoogenboom and Hoogenboom, 1969:26). The business class wished to be custodians of an industrial America. In their eyes, the needs of industrialization should be paramount, and government should concentrate on policies and programs aiding their agenda. This agenda entailed protective tariffs, national banking and sound money, aid to Pacific railways, a docile labor force, and ultimately high profits (Ladd, 1970:115).

The growth of corporate and financial elites symbolized the increasing diversity of the business class. From the mid-1890s, the size of their investments and the formation of huge trusts gave financiers a large and

perhaps even a controlling stake in industry, facilitating convergence of their interests with those of industry, especially in regards to tariffs (Ferguson, 1989). This segmentation of capital prepared the way for the emergence of a reform movement advocating a new approach to labor relations. The approach favored by the larger and more concentrated firms depended on the maintenance of a stable and predictable environment to sustain an increasingly specialized division of labor (Berger and Piore, 1980).

The emergence of a hegemonic financial-industrial bloc was a major factor in the growth of the Progressive movement. The increasingly distinctive interests of this class fraction paralleled the emergence of an aristocracy within labor.[16] For many of the corporate elite, more harmonious relations between labor and capital were to be encouraged, and this was the vehicle they chose.[17]

Because larger firms often gain benefits from more harmonious labor relations that smaller firms, vulnerable to cutthroat competition, cannot, labor relations presented an especially thorny problem for those interested in reform. Diversity in the circumstances of small and large businesses often overrode any similarities in interests favorable to cooperation, that is, the contrasting preferences of export firms favoring increased foreign trade from those of firms that compete with importers who prefer high tariff barriers is one example (Kirkland, 1961:188). Most importantly, the inability of this emerging corporate elite to restructure labor relations in accordance with their personal preferences points to the limits of their influence.

The Progressive movement channeled reform impulses toward moderation. Encouraging the belief that antagonisms between labor and capital could be controlled, they sought to resolve industrial disputes peacefully. But any relationship sponsored by Progressives depended most of all on the benevolence and paternalism of enlightened members of the dominant class.[18] Consequently, those most influential in establishing a framework for accommodation between labor and capital were most sympathetic to the interests of capital.

Changing industrial and social conditions created a need for new tactics. Lacking the power to confront concentrated capital, workers also began to seek out explicit forms of accommodation. This in turn paved the way for modes of collective bargaining less threatening and more respectful of managerial prerogatives. Enlightened corporative representatives together with leaders of organized labor sought to create a new model for mediating conflict. The model was corporatism, "an ideology

of social partnership, a centralized and concentrated system of economic interest groups, and an interrupted process of bargaining among all of the major political actors across different sectors of policy" (Katzenstein, 1985:80). For corporate leaders, conservative craft unions were an appealing alternative to radical labor organizations. The National Civic Federation (NCF), the most prominent attempt to develop a corporatist alternative, encouraged mediation and trade agreements as an alternative to strikes and industrial strife in general. At its best, it offered a less conflictual alternative that was also businesslike (Montgomery, 1979:65–66). For NCF leaders, corporatism was a means to resolve social and industrial issues outside the political arena based on consensus among the relevant actors (Weinstein, 1969).

But the policies advocated by the NCF ran head-on into the preferences of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). While the NCF promoted harmonious labor policies, advocating the acceptance of conservative trade unionism, the NAM promoted "open-shop" policies and legislation designed to destroy the trade union movement. Open shops were viewed as essential as the right of property. According to NAM president David M. Parry, "organized labor . . . does not place its reliance upon reason and justice. . . . It is, in all essential features, a mob knowing no master except its own will. Its history is stained with blood and ruin" (Brody, 1980:26). The animus of the smaller entrepreneurs epitomized by the NAM was both antilabor and antimonopoly.

> The roots of hatred lay deeper than a difference over labor policies. The threat of "Socialized Industry"—big labor and big business combined—horrified members of the NAM who believed their future depended upon an economic fluidity which the recently formed trusts and the AFL would destroy. Thus they saw the National Civic Federation as a conspiracy between the magnates and unionists aimed directly at them. (Wiebe, 1968:31)

Although the NCF was not in favor of the NAM's all-out efforts to destroy the labor movement, it was also not prepared to accept unionization of their own firms and industries. Industrialists were merely recognizing that some workers (typically not their own) had legitimate concerns that could be addressed through voluntary consultation. Corporatist leaders understood the tension between general and particular interests. Accepting conservative unionism in the abstract did not mean accepting it in their own workplaces (Weinstein, 1968:11). This contra-

diction between particular and general interest reflected the existence of the now familiar prisoner's dilemma. Under imperfect competition, the altruistic or cooperative choice to support unionization was vulnerable to pressures to defect, since sanctions to prevent free riding were too weak to be effective. Cooperative incentives were weakened as well by business cycle pressures, since periods of contraction invariably destabilized existing agreements.

The AFL did not endorse the social programs advocated by NCF employers and allied reformers, who tried to "navigate between class politics and plutocracy." They did accept the need for the kinds of state intervention that would "level the playing field." For organized labor, social and economic programs were threats to the independence of unions. If accepted, workers would lose control on such matters as wage guarantees, job security, comprehensive workmen's compensation and unemployment insurance" (Mink, 1990:185). Their diametrical opposition on these issues meant confrontation between the AFL and the NCF over welfare policies was unavoidable: The interests of employers in forestalling unionism through such programs ran head-on into the AFL's position that such programs would diminish incentives to unionize. The unsurprising result: NCF-style corporatism did not favor the extension of trade unionism into new areas.

This outcome was due in no small degree to the national state's partiality to capital, clearly demonstrated in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Danbury Hatter's case. In this case the Court decided unanimously that the Sherman Act applied to unions, and awarded damages to the hatter's employers, for which individual union members could be held liable. In this and other cases, such as Bucks Stove, the labor boycott was held unacceptable. Through a merging of antitrust law and common law notions about trade restraint, the Supreme Court and its subordinates were able to devise principles governing labor law that aided attacks on unions (Valelly, 1989:78)

Thus, if the growth of large industry and organized labor made an interest in corporatism inevitable, its demonstrable lack of success can be traced to several forces: (1) Corporatism was somewhat premature given that unions represented approximately 10 percent of the country's wage earners, and most of those were in the declining craft sector rather than in rapidly growing industries. Employers routinely ignored weak unions unable to enforce or maintain collective bargaining. (2) The high level of economic insulation and large size of the domestic market in the United States aided the formation of narrow decentralized labor

federations unsuitable for corporatist-style bargaining. (3) Corporatism is unlikely to thrive when the extent of organization of capital is as low as at the turn of the century in the United States. Diversity in interests often limited potential business solidarity. The incentives to cooperate often fell victim to competitive pressures after 1901, as competition racheted upward within manufacturing. Trade associations tried to restrain competition in a variety of ways. They sought to limit output, divide the market among members of pools, consolidate sales, and eventually control patents. The objective was to maintain prices at profitable levels. The effect, however, was to make price fluctutations more volatile, increasing instablility rather than reducing it (Cochran and Miller, 1961:117). Most efforts to stabilize competition were unsuccessful (Kolko, 1963:54).

The sincerity of the interest shown by many larger industrialists in corporatism is itself somewhat questionable. While the rhetorical appeal of corporatist organization was undeniable, the economic costs accompanying union recognition would have been paid mostly by small business. Within the core protectionist coalition of heavy industry, banks, and textiles identified by Gourevitch (1977), there is little if any evidence that firms sought to extend the boundaries of union recognition beyond existing limits. It was one thing to advocate mediation, but quite another to accept unionization in basic industry. Efforts at corporatism may have been more symbolic than substantive, a tactical facade meant to convince workers of the virtues of participation, rather than a serious effort to transform labor relations.

Wolfe has proposed as an alternative hypothesis that industrialists lacked class consciousness, that is, the ability to recognize their own long-run interests (1977:121). Yet, given this line of reasoning, it is more appropriate to point to the inadequacy in the extent of their organization (the notion of long-run interests being inherently problematic).[19]

Given this array of obstacles, and notwithstanding the strong influence of "corporate liberals" on Wilson's "New Freedom" reforms, the NCF found it necessary to alter its emphasis from controversial labor reform policies to a more palatable paternalistic focus on welfare work. This was seen as a safer, less dangerous substitute for union recognition. Furthermore, by avoiding direct political confrontation, the NCF hoped to increase harmony among business interest groups.

> The business leaders in the NCF were exploring ways in which social questions could be solved whenever possible by extra-political means and were coming to understand that these solutions should represent a

> consensus of business, trade union, and other opinion rather than an external imposition of power. (Weinstein, 1969:30)

Labor union recognition could not be reconciled with the more onerous competitive environment of small firms. From their perspective, trade unions were agents of inefficient fetters on rational production. Unions reduced productivity, increased wage and unit costs, and caused more business failures. Thus small businessman had the most rational of economic motives, because their survival frequently depended on preventing and destroying labor organization (Griffin, Wallace, and Rubin, 1986:154–155).

The suspiciousness with which the NAM regarded the corporatist schemes of large industrialists and labor leaders and their mutual antagonisms were also affected by the cultural chasm between enlightened Progressives from urban, eastern settings and residents of rural America. Progressives' internal disagreement among themselves about the appropriate place of unions only added to the dissensus (Hofstadter, 1963:97). Furthermore, the social distance between urban and rural America may have been at an all time high. Fears about urbanization, immigration, and the decline of the cutural and social hegemony of small town Wasps contributed to the underlying anxieties that hampered corporatism.

The decentralized federal structure also restricted any possible corporatist influence. The relatively weak level of penetration of central authority in the United States made intergroup cooperation difficult to establish, easing the way for strong interest groups to lobby public officials directly (Hollingsworth, 1978:165). The strongest and most politically mobilized groups were committed to protectionism, that is, protectionists exerted the strongest pressure on Congress until the late 1930s.[20] Within a political system of single member districts, legislators frequently faced strong pressures from powerful interest groups, encouraging protectionist policies and pork barrel raids on the public treasury. Federalism also limited national sovereignty by devolving important responsibilities on state governments. State competition for investment, through offers of favorable business climates with minimal regulation, further weakened the discretion of public authorities (Valelly, 1989:9).

> The United States, for example, has always generated many pressure groups, in part because the committee system of the Congress and relative government decentralization offer multiple points of contact for

> vocal interests. On the other hand, the very diffusion of authority that encourages interests to present their claims has made experiments in corporatism brief and fragile. (Maier, 1983:50)

The inability of American capitalists to mold institutions and policies to serve their common interests meant the stillbirth of corporatism. The "enlightened" business community could not convince smaller firms that their interests would be served. Additionally, the small business perception that corporatism was an expensive and unneccessary hindrance was a valid concern. Bargaining depends on each party's capacity to impose costs as well as acquire benefits. Gilded Age America was not a society in which organized interests were the rule. Nor was labor sufficiently threatening to make cooperation preferable to other alternatives. Suppression remained a viable method of controlling dissent. According to one influential recent study, ". . . the relatively low level of organization during the entire pre–New Deal era can be partially attributed to efforts of capitalists to defeat labor organization (Griffin, Wallace, and Rubin, 1986).

The United States was becoming a society in which business occupied a position described by Burnham as one of "uncontested hegemony," making the corporatist approach an irrelevant but expensive luxury inasmuch as the large size of the American domestic markets made protectionism a profitable alternative. Yet if organized business and organized labor could not agree in practice on organization in basic industry, keeping unskilled industrial workers unorganized provided some common ground (Mink, 1990:164). Disorganization of industrial workers assured both business domination of the economy and AFL hegemony over labor. Labor organizations thus ignored employer-sponsored violence and repression against the unorganized. All in all, the AFL's bond to corporate progressives established a significant precedent: Labor would negotiate from a position of weakness, allowing business to abrogate agreements when it suited them, and the unorganized would be ignored.

Corporatist policies were more likely to be successful in societies markedly different from the United States of 1900. Such societies, having smaller domestic markets and strongly centralized labor federations promote the formation of broad interest groups that are quite the opposite of the narrowly structured AFL. In socioeconomic environments like the United States, producers can resort to protectionist cartels, for which the existence of weak, unorganized groups onto whom costs can be shifted is a necessity. Where protection is feasible, producer interests

dominate those of nonproducers, and competing producer groups are typically the major adversaries. Instead of the solidaristic labor and organized business actors that underlie the formation of corporatist bargaining, the environment of the United States in the early twentieth century was one in which organized workers were dwarfed by the unorganized. Thus, it is not surprising that the stronger interest groups would prefer protectionism to compromise.

In the 1890s, Republicans began to successfully target new immigrant voters, through their advocacy of tariff protection, and a partial shift in their position on immigration. Protection had been an issue in national politics since the 1850s, but initially, tariffs divided the parties internally. But in the 1880 and 1884 elections, Democrats and Republicans moved toward more coherent and polarized positions—Democrats adopting a low tariff stance, the Republicans a high one. President Grover Cleveland's 1887 Annual Message to Congress severed the bipartisan consensus favoring protectionism, by proposing that raw materials be free of duties (Lake, 1990).

Linking tariffs to higher wages gave Republicans an issue attractive to unskilled workers. The tariff issue also helped the Republicans surmount their own nativist inclinations, by stressing the virtues of assimilation and its relation to profits. The contrast between Republican emphasis on Americanization and assimilation and Democrats' outright rejection of immigrants made it clear which of the two main parties recent immigrants should support. Republican advocacy of protection based on high tariffs strengthened particularistic tendencies in labor, and provides a specific example of the argument of Chapter 2—protectionism imposes vertical cleavages reinforcing divisions within classes by economic sector and industry rather than strengthening horizontal class-based cleavages.

Although corporatism failed, a management-sponsored and -directed pseudo-corporatist alternative gained prominence, particularly after World War I. This was the system that Brody has called "welfare capitalism." The idea was to woo employees away from unions, but welfare capitalism was indifferent to workers most pressing concerns (Griffin, Wallace, and Rubin, 1986). Welfare capitalism's emergence in the United States can be traced to the development of a defensive strategy by managers to prevent the enactment of state social insurance. Through preemptive action, business would provide a "business controlled" alternative to a public system of social insurance (Rein and Rainwater, 1986:40).

Yet welfare capitalism offered no protection against joblessness, in spite of the growing evidence of technological unemployment. The welfare capitalists were unsympathetic to the desire for a shorter workweek. The decline in hours of work that had occurred since the 1890s ceased after 1920. The fashionable "doctrine of high wages" did not translate into meaningful action. Though labor productivity increased by 5 percent per annum, wage levels in manufacturing grew at half that rate during the decade (Brody, 1980:59).

Neither organized workers nor employer interest groups were truly representative of labor or capital. Far too great a proportion of each was left out. Given the rapidity of industrialization and high rates of immigration, the AFL's strategy was no longer viable. However, the tradition of protecting the strong at the expense of the weak lived on. Most important, the limitations in the labor movement demonstrated the difficulty of addressing collective problems in such relatively individualistic terms. Collective problems need collective solutions, but workers' collective power was clearly inadequate to the task of shaping an industrial society.

Sustaining a more universalistic labor movement would have required dramatic changes in the larger environment, not least of which was an end to state sponsorship of and acquiesence in the repression of labor. It took the rise of the New Deal in the midst of the Great Depression to reduce public and private authority's reliance on repression.[21]

CLASS FORMATION IN THE GILDED AGE

The dominant trend in Gilded Age labor was the increasing separation between those workers who were well off and those who were not. This widening gap between skilled and unskilled workers was in clear contrast to the experience of many American workers in the North prior to the Civil War when

> the different statuses within the class were not barriers to advancement but clearly defined stages of transition for the individual and the unity of the artisan class originated in the expectation of its lowest members that with age, experience, and hard work they could rise to the highest level as self employed master craftsmen. (Hirsch, 1978:7)

Workers' political incorporation prior to industrialization, rapid industrialization, and immigration together made this earlier sense of a common identity obsolete. In the 1870s and 1880s, there were efforts to

revive the workingmen's parties and with them the tradition of broad interclass political coalitions. However, the growth of large cities made it much more difficult, perhaps even impossible, to sustain the coalitions of independent producers, workers, and professionals. Increased social distance between workers and their former allies also increased their vulnerability to tactics of repression and legal intimidation. The scope of common interests between working-class and middle-class citizens was diminishing in other respects. Democratic decision making was declining, with diminishing working-class participation in electoral politics, and the growing insulation of key decisions from electoral pressures.

The consolidation of craft unions paralleled changing political relations among workers. Southern and Central Europeans, shut out from craft trades, extracted minimal concessions of representation from urban political machines, which preferred (with few exceptions, such as in Chicago) to exclude these newer immigrants. Their relations to political machines were based on dependency and provision of welfare rather than any redistribution of political power. Irish-led machines made accommodations to these newcomers as sparingly as possible in order to preserve power and patronage for their own.

Republican big city machines did not mobilize immigrant voters either; instead they relied on middle-class Yankee voters. But their true purpose was usually to encourage passivity and nonparticipation to forestall effective challenges to Republican state and national hegemony. By contrast, their Democratic counterparts did make the effort to incorporate their immigrant constituents, naturalizing and registering them to vote, and rewarding their loyalty with patronage jobs. But these immigrants were Irish. And since industrial workers were not an organized bloc in the party, their support did not require much in the way of reciprocation. Within a political coalition dominated by capital, their relations were based largely on their exploitation (Erie, 1990). Black workers (admittedly few in number) had access to neither the strong bargaining power of craft unions nor even the weaker protection offered by political machines.

Craft unions thereby defended the particular interests of their constituents—skilled native and Northern European workers against the interests of other wage earners. The domination of labor issues by conservative craft unions and their consolidation of a monopoly on representation and organization limited the spread of unionism. By endorsing a political program that defended its interests to the detriment of any larger, more universalistic conception of common interests, organized

labor became an obstacle to any further organizing of labor. An essential aspect of the defense of the institutional position of the AFL was the disorganization of other workers.

Political machines replicated the core of the craft unionist strategy, adapting particularistic tactics to their own devices. Craft unions and political machines each behaved as rational oligopolists in the marketplace, keeping competitors out, and reserving their benefits for privileged insiders. An alternative more universalistically oriented strategy based on mobilizing the entire working class would have been quite costly, draining the limited stock of benefits available, and undermining the position of labor and machine leaders by redistributing power and patronage from insiders to outsiders. According to Erie, political machines and craft unions worked "in tandem to fracture the working class, pitting an ethnic aristocracy of labor and politics against later arrivals" (1990:253).

The fact that unorganized workers dwarfed those who were organized was simultaneously a source of strength and weakness. Its advantage was that the source of the power of craft union strength lay in their restrictive organizing; their small numbers meant that the costs of their exercise of monopoly power were widely shared. Among the disadvantages of the small proportion of unionists in the work force were that the threat to use nonunion labor was always a real one, particularly outside large cities, and that the possibilities of linking trade union organizing to electoral politics were limited. The ever-increasing proportion of semiskilled and unskilled workers were vulnerable as well to the consequences of proletarianization. The absence of any mobilization of industrial workers—in fact the evidence suggests they were more often demobilized—made the AFL's claim to be the organizational representative of the working class more plausible (Mink, 1990:156). Notwithstanding the growing homogenization of work, one outgrowth of the second industrial revolution was that a smaller and smaller proportion of workers were able to mount effective means of resistance.

The stratification of workers by occupation and ethnicity inhibited the development of class solidarity during the years of rapid industrialization and the establishment of industrial capitalism as the dominant mode of production. In response to Brody's (1980) (somewhat rhetorically posed) question as to why such a narrow, particularistic movement developed so strong a sense of its own legitimacy, I would answer that this position served the immediate material interests of its most powerful constituents. For those inside the movement (and who could count on remaining so), AFL inflexibility served to protect their immediate material

interests. This worked to the advantage of skilled craft unionists, in particular, the building trade workers, who best exemplified the status of labor aristocrats. That AFL-style particularism carried the seeds of longer term difficulties was a view not likely to gain support from insiders, partly because outsiders were viewed as un-American, radicals, or both, as well as because sacrificing short-term gains for longer term and inevitably more uncertain benefits is always a difficult proposition to sell.[22]

Building trade workers may have come closest to labor aristocrats because they were least vulnerable to technological displacement. The major advantage of construction trades was due to the immobility of their work. It could be done by workers from elsewhere, but could not be done elsewhere. Building trade unionism was local everywhere. Their product could not be exported, and except under duress, they faced only limited outside competition, so construction workers held an unusually high level of bargaining power against (typically) small employers (Kazin, 1989). The guildlike conditions of their crafts and their protection from displacement made it possible for many of these workers to restrict access to the relevant labor markets.

Positions of privilege, however, do not inevitably translate into conservative politics. Skilled workers have been strongly represented in socialist movements. In England, this upper stratum of the working class played an important role in the creation of the labor party (Laslett and Lipset, 1974). Or consider France, where during the Second Republic, newly arriving skilled workers to Marseille were radicalized, due in large measure to their inability to gain entrance into the already formed exclusive subcultures that protected the indigenous skilled work force (Sewell, 1974).

Union federations' reluctance to formally engage political issues reflected both a belief that such issues invited unnecessary contention and hence were better avoided, as well as a historical legacy that the state was not an impartial arbiter, and that the national state in particular could be expected to defend the interests of capital. At the local level, unionists did participate in political machines, both Democratic and Republican. The lower profile of the internationals in electoral politics avoided frictions with locals, an invaluable tactic given the local concentration of union power. As a result, economistic voluntarism did not entail total abstention from politics but did reduce the divisions over what were seen as nonessential issues.

Perhaps a major reason for our inability to fully grasp the meaning

of voluntarism is that its meaning is ambiguous. Voluntarism is a useful concept in comparative analysis because it draws attention to the relatively restricted pattern of class-party linkages found in the United States. American workers lacked the organic linkages of (some) of their European counterparts. Yet, this notion of voluntarism too readily becomes encrusted, devoid of the necessary flexibility to accommodate the numerous nodes of contact between politics and class conflict across the national landscape, especially given the multiplicity of institutional levels—local, state, and federal. In the twentieth century for sure, "voluntarism" is primarily a question of a limited national relationship. But what is termed voluntarism is in large measure the consequence of a constraint imposed by small size (Marks, 1989). Organized labor's tiny proportion in the electorate meant labor was only a minor power in national elections. But, in cities, organized labor was an active participant, and where their size was sufficient, labor actively participated at the state level as well.[23]

At what point (if any) did voluntarism cease being a tactic and become a reflex inhibiting more favorable alternatives. This is difficult to say, in part because even when organized labor created enclaves of strong unionism, as in San Francisco, they faced national opponents. Even their purportedly local opponents were sometimes national due to their dependence on national financial institutions. Economic markets were often national in scope, if not international. The national state affected labor relations but labor's influence on the state was limited for virtually all of this (predominantly Republican) era. Only during Wilson's administration and during the war years did organized labor make institutional gains. Union membership reached an all time high of five million members during the war. The wartime state was a powerful but somewhat inconsistent ally, one which encouraged organizing, advocated conciliation between management and labor, while supporting some parts of their political program (Kazin, 1989).

But afterward, the resistance of capitalists, large and small, restrained further extension of the union cause. Antilabor Republicans won control of Congress in 1918 and the presidency in 1920. In 1920, the Chamber of Commerce held a referendum on the open shop. Business groups were firmly committed to rolling back labor's influence, and the open-shop drives of the 1920s showed the depths of their willingness to act on this commitment. Not to be overlooked is the role of the AFL leadership in effectively sabatoging the strike wave that followed the war.

The national leaders opposed the Seattle general strike even though it had been organized by AFL locals (Kazin, 1989).

According to one perspective, the popularity of economism was due to the inadequacy of American government as an instrument of reform (Perlman, 1928). Only on economic terms could labor be unified. Yet economistic voluntarism, in all its guises, was largely a strategy of defense, on two fronts. The AFL fought two struggles: It had to defend its members against capital on one side and against unskilled labor on the other. The AFL's opposition to social legislation favored by reform and progressive elements had much to do with its desire to retain its relative standing with respect to those beneath it, while pushing for increases in private sector wages and benefits to reduce the gap relative to those above. They argued that it was not in the self-interest of union members to have mandatory statutes on unemployment insurance, and minimum wages (Rogin, 1971:113). Craft workers were generally not as vulnerable to unemployment as were industrial workers. But in such matters as the regulation of working hours, and compulsory health insurance, their opposition reflected their strong preference for private collective bargaining. By oppposing national reform, the AFL leadership wanted to insure that union responsibility for benefits could not be forgotten. AFL opposition to national regulation was so extensive as to lead to the repudiation of one of the heretofore sacrosanct demands of union movements internationally (including the United States)—limitation on the working day.

This position may have been consistent with the structure of a decentralized autonomous trade union movement. But as a "strategic response," its usefulness was certainly declining. The passage of time locked the AFL into an ideological posture from which they could not readily extricate themselves. "Pure and simple" trade unionism, though a reasonable adaptation to the hostile social and economic climate of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century United States, proved less successful especially in the postwar (WWI) years (Brody, 1980:27). The increasing size of industrial establishments renewed offensives by capital, and technological displacement all worked to erode the labor movement. Business-government relations during the war encouraged the formation of trade associations that helped spread antilabor fervor across the country (Valelly, 1989). While the AFL's corporatist alliances enhanced their standing as the representative of labor interests, it added to the cleavage between skilled and unskilled labor.

The decline of labor through the 1920s led some, with the advantage of hindsight, to prematurely forecast the disappearance of unions. At the time, these forecasts seemed accurate because employers' tactics during the 1920s were largely a success. Using coercion and selective incentives, for example, welfare capitalism, employers were able to prevent the formation and growth of independent unions (Plotke, 1988).

According to Mink (1990:248), the AFL sucessfully deflected instances of state intervention that might have led to a more extensive welfare state. The fear that such interventions would be at the expense of weakening unions deprived those desirous of more extensive social protection of critical and badly needed support. According to others, the genius of America's progressive and corporate liberals lay in the ability of their leaders to win over labor constituencies, especially those best off, for piecemeal incremental gains. In this era, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and more recently Franklin Roosevelt are credited with gradually enclosing labor politics within the "seductive folds of statist liberalism (Kazin, 1989:284). But I disagree with this critical moment thesis, because efforts at seduction are a part of the routine of normal behavior. The regularity of the efforts and (according to this scenario) the success of seduction and the (at times) minimal concessions extracted each suggest the need for an explanation that relies less on repeated bursts of individual brilliance on one side, and ineptitude, or malfeasance on the other.

AFL preeminence as the voice of labor inhibited organizing industrial workers, aiding the concentration of capital. Thus, in the United States, monopoly capital preceded rather than followed the emergence of industrial unionism. According to Burawoy, this fact is responsible for both the extent of labor market segmentation as well as the high degree of rationalization of production, or mechanization in the United States (Burawoy, 1985:64). Even though industrial workers sometimes won short-term victories, they did not translate into lasting gains. The social conflicts of the late nineteenth century demonstrated that the biggest problem for industrial workers was not in organizing and winning initial battles but in sustaining them. The problem of sustaining industrial labor organizations, however, was one that could not be solved without changing the existing "rules of the game," according to which employers grudgingly accepted only craft unions.

Partly as a result, the existing political structure was able to absorb the development of industrial capitalism without a dramatic fundamental political transformation. But if not revolutionary, the modification of pol-

itics was substantial nonetheless. Burnham (1970) maintains that the emerging political system was fragmented and disintegrative, frustrating strong leadership, and maintaining an incongruity between political conflict and the system.

> A deep seated dialectic has operated over the entire history of the country: while the socioeconomic system has developed and transformed itself from the beginning with an energy and thrust unparalleled in modern history, the political system from parties to policy institutions has remained astonishingly little transformed in characteristics and methods of operation. (Burnham, 1970:176)

This acceptance of "rules of the game" can be seen as an important element in a maturing industrial capitalist order, as on both sides there were those who grew to accept the notion that implicit in bargaining was the acceptance of the legitimacy and even permanence of their adversaries. For workers, this meant accepting that their history as producers and autonomous workmen was a thing of the past. Henceforth, they would be subject to a system of industrial discipline increasingly controlled from above. Employers for their part conditionally accepted trade unions in some occupations. Yet, this acceptance was gradual, begrudging, and often duplicitous. It was preceded by a renewed antilabor crusade that peaked after Haymarket in the early 1890s. In many cities, this took the form of drives for open shops. The offensive by business and the state, though unsuccessful in the ultimate goal of eradicating trade unionism, helped set the style of trade unionism that would survive, that it would be defensive, conservative, and fully accommodating to the interests of capital. Many AFL leaders came to believe that "a successful labor federation must be built on a foundation of craft unions, binding together primarily the most skilled, the steadiest of union men, who would stay organized in boom or depression" (Foner, 1977:346).

These "rules of the game" were a first, certifying the legitimacy of distinct labor interests and the labor movement. Imperfect as they were, from labor's viewpoint, their legacy is still evident, particularly in relations between workers: that the advantages of particularism for the few would outflank the appeal of universalism for the many, in this instance through the consolidation of a labor aristocracy of craft unionists. Thus, the outlines of the initial incorporation of workers within the confines of capitalist democracy, reflected in the terms of the AFL's craft accommodation, are still visible.

NOTES

[1]However, the pre–Civil War party system disintegrated due to the resurgence of nativism and sectionalism. Republicans and Know-Nothings combined forces in order to impose a literacy test on voting in 1857, and a two-year waiting period barring naturalized immigrants from voting or holding office until two years after attaining citizenship in 1859 (Erie, 1990).

[2]Some consider the relations between business and politicians to have been so intertwined as to constitute one of the few cases where the instrumentalist Marxist conception of the state has been valid (Lash and Urry, 1987).

[3]The development of Social Darwinism offers a specific example of the tendency to conflate capitalists' private interests with the general or common interests. The idea of "survival of the fittest" was used to justify and legitimate the most rapacious economic practices as being in the public interest. "Natural selection" of the strongest and most able explained their success and prosperity. Social Darwinism thus provided an apologia for conservatives wishing to justify existing conditions and opposition to social reforms. "The most popular catchwords of Darwinism 'struggle for existence' and 'survival of the fittest' when applied to the life of men in society, suggested that nature would provide, that the best competitors in a competitive situation would win, and that this process would lead to continuing improvement" (Hofstadter, 1955:6). Thus, Social Darwinism strengthened the ideological justifications for the "rule of capital." Of course, Social Darwinism fit nicely with the worldview of Europe's ruling classes as well (Mayer, 1981).

[4]The timing of the AFL's political involvement is a source of some controversy. According to Mink (1990), politics and the exclusion of immigrants are central right from the beginning. Rogin's (1971) analysis comes to much the same conclusion: Voluntarism expresses the enduring logic of the AFL. But for Karson (1958), AFL political activity follows its establishment of dominance over labor rather than preceding it.

[5]Although the Populists were most powerful in the South, Goodwyn (1978) argues that the conflict over monetary policy, or Greenbackism, was neither a sectional nor an anachronistic concern, as maintained by Hofstadter (1955). Rather this was a part of the popular challenge to the increasing domination of the nation by big business in finance and industry. The backlash against the soft-money crusade and the spread of cooperatives by bankers, wholesalers, and manufacturers radicalized the conflict sufficiently to generate an alternative democratic vision.

[6]As perhaps with any influential thesis, Burnham's has its critics who find his argument overdrawn. The essence of much of the criticism is that 1896 may not have been such a critical moment (Lichtman, 1983), while the concept of crit-

ical realigments compresses changes that take longer to occur (Carmines and Stimson, 1989). For example, Wattenberg (1986) argues that the election of 1900 was also pivotal in terms of cementing the changes of 1896.

[7]With the passage of the Underwood Act in 1913 under the leadership of Democratic President Wilson, there was signficant reduction in some tariff rates (Lake, 1990).

[8]I believe Mink overestimates the importance of nativism. She holds nativism to be primarily responsible for the segmentation of labor. But because the nativist upsurge is closest in time to the events under examination and related to the last of the major structural factors (the level of immigration) to emerge does not make it necessarily most important, anymore than the final piece of a puzzle is necessarily the most important.

[9]Again, recency does not assure primacy. Furthermore, particularism can take different guises (and occurs independently of ethnic fragmentation) will be discussed in Chapter 7, where the comparative implications of other national cases will be examined.

[10]The emphasis on education raised the cost of campaigning. The costs of national campaigning rose steadily, from $100,000 for Democrats and less than $50,000 for Republicans in 1856, $200,000 for Republicans in 1872 to over $1 million for each party by 1892 (McGerr, 1986).

[11]As in the Great Railroad Strike and the Haymarket Affair.

[12]Among the major Progressive era antiparty reforms were: (1) the Australian ballot, which ended parties' printing and distributing of ballots; (2) nonpartisan local elections diminished party control at the local level; (3) the growth of merit systems for administrative appointments undermined parties' control of patronage; while (4) direct primaries reduced party leaders' control of candidate nominations (Galderisi and Ginsberg, 1986:115).

[13]However, the antidemocratic tides in France and Germany make clear that the reversals in the United States were not unique. Moreover, the European expansions were from a baseline of far more restrictive suffrage requirements than existed at the time in the United States (Goldstein, 1981).

[14]Erie (1990), however, criticizes Katznelson's thesis, arguing that the similarities of craft unions' and political machines' particularisms were mutually reinforcing.

[15]Many historians endorse the view that from 1865 to 1900 the business leader emerged as the dominant figure in American society. Held up as a symbol of individualistic capitalism, businessmen, not politicians, nor men of letters, nor theologians, came to reside on the highest rung of the status ladder. He epitomized the Gilded Age. From 1898 to 1902, more large mergers took place in the United States than in any other country (Cochran, 1961:157). In steel, the newly formed U.S. Steel led the way; in finance, the House of Morgan (Brody, 1969).

[16]Yet too much can be made of this trend, especially as the Gilded Age has been portrayed as a time in which the increases in industrial concentration reflected the emergence of an era of monopoly capitalism, characterized by the establishment of cartels and trusts, backed by an increasingly powerful financial and industrial elite. This view, accurate in broad strokes, must be qualified in a number of respects. That increasing size decreases competition is an overgeneralization. Increasing size did not always end competition; in some industries competition increased. Even in those industries where mergers and/or centralization led to the creation of giant industrial establishments, the percentage of the market controlled by a single firm rarely reached 50 percent. While the largest firms were able to influence behavior through mechanisms of price leadership, such mechanisms were often imperfect (Kolko, 1963).

[17]An example that had the admiration of many American intellectuals and reformers were the achievements of Bismarck, who introduced reforms bureaucratically, attempting to circumvent pressures for social revolution.

[18]In his classic study, Hofstadter maintained that the Progressives created a climate of opinion that stimulated a "noblesse oblige" among the better off, successfully dampening the rush to overt class warfare between polarized opponents. "Thanks in part to their efforts, the United States took its place alongside England and the Scandinavian countries among those nations in which the upper and middle classes accepted the fundamental legitimacy of labors' aspiration and labor unionism (Hofstadter, 1955:243–244).

[19]Class consciousness can better be thought of as a euphemism for the ability to invest in the future (Elster, 1982), to make immediate sacrifices with the expectation of future net return, taking one step backward in order to take two steps forward. Under certain circumstances organized groups may resolve the problem of free riders.

[20]For example, the strength of the protectionist coalition was sufficient to thwart the executive branch from using reciprocal tariff agreements to reduce tariffs against American exports (Lake, 1990). Furthermore, a profusion of narrowly defined interest groups played a major role even during the period of greatest expansion of the state, the New Deal (Valelly, 1989:153).

[21]Which is consistent with Olson's (1982) premise that cataclysmic events are required to unravel stable arrangements among organized interest groups.

[22]It is, of course, much more obvious today just how much the successful consolidation of AFL craft unions produced a movement imprisoned by its early success. It may be useful for some readers to think of the AFL's consolidation as an example of the economic theory of investment known as the putty-clay model, whereby choices among alternative technologies are wide open before they are made, but become inflexible afterward.

[23]Yet, the doctrine of voluntarism has undergone a certain amount of reification due to the pronouncement of leaders and sympathetic intellectuals (such as Perlman), and the fallacy that results from taking such pronouncements as an adequate proxy for the underlying reality. This shortcoming is reminiscent of the conflation of the differences between socialist ideology and the behavior of socialist cadres and trade unionists in Europe, perhaps most clearly in pre–World War I Germany. In spite of the rhetoric and ideology of internationalism, for example, the August 1907 congress of the Socialist International at Stuttgart showed the German Social Democrats party willingness to accommodate itself to colonialism, under pressure from its trade union supporters who wished to let nothing stand in the way of parliamentary success (Schorske, 1955).

CHAPTER 6

The Limits of Particularism
Labor Solidarism and Social Welfare in the United States

The historical approach to the welfare state emphasizes the contrasts of and continuity with the "Poor Law Period," a prehistory of modern welfare states (Flora and Heidenheimer, 1984). The phrase "the welfare state" was first used for post-1945 Britain. Ever since, it has been used to describe economic and social protection for citizens, especially the demand for comprehensive social security. Freedom from want has been tied to greater equality of opportunity via educational reform (Briggs, 1961). Any differences between objectives were often left unstated, perhaps for the sake of expediency.

Up to 1945, the welfare policies of Western nations were imposed from above. The working class was an object of concern and worry for traditional ruling elites. Postwar welfare state development breaks sharply with this tradition. The contemporary welfare state involves a transfer of distributive conflicts from the marketplace to the political arena. The degree of this transformation varies among capitalist democracies. The differences among welfare states are greater now than they were in past generations. This lack of convergence is most noticeable for those policies that trespass the traditional boundaries that define capitalism: full employment and collective consumption. Distinguishing welfare from welfare states means separating relief for the poor from the plethora of redistributive policies that have emerged in capitalist democracies since the 1930s. It is the development of this complex—the welfare state—to which labor's capacity for collective action is most central.

The central premise of class power analysis is that given the labor movement's centrality in the political/economic matrix of capitalist

democracy—in particular its role as the primary advocate of welfare state advance—differences in the degree of solidarism of labor are substantially responsible for variations in welfare state extensiveness. By attributing much of the variation in Western political economies to differences in class solidarism, numerous studies have shown that effective political mobilization can counteract inadequate market capacities (Castles, 1978; Korpi, 1983; Stephens, 1986; Therborn, 1983). However, such interpretations, which typically emphasize the relation between the strength and structure of labor organizations and the degree of universalism of welfare states, have fallen into disfavor in recent years. A number of influential studies have held that demographic variables are the dominant category in welfare state outcomes (Pampel and Williamson, 1991; Jackman, 1986; Wilensky, 1975). Others maintain that the presence and/or strength of distinct interest groups, especially racial minorities (and/or immigrants), are most important (Quadagno, 1994). Still others have argued that the strength of capital dominates the distribution mechanisms of contemporary capitalist democracies (Swenson, 1989; Thelin, 1991).

I will build upon this premise in arguing that the most important determinants of labor solidarism are the structural conditions existing during labor's emergence as a collective actor and that differences in welfare state extensiveness are considerably influenced by historically conditioned structural forces that influence the degree of solidarism of national labor movements.

The organizational strength of labor remains essential for a comparative understanding of the broad parameters of welfare states in capitalist democracies. Accordingly, the low solidarism of the American labor movement is a fundamental, albeit by no means the only factor responsible for the restrictive American welfare state. Consequently, American labor's low organizational solidarism—its particularism—is a key factor in the restrictive boundaries of the American welfare state: (1) in its minimal insulation of wage earners from economic competition; (2) in its propensity to relegate constituencies with limited power to the margins of social policy; and (3) in the considerable retrenchment in recent years. Hence, the particularism of constituencies of wage earners in the United States has strongly influenced American welfare state policy.

This thesis should not suggest that the organization of labor is the only significant factor governing formation and contours of welfare states. Demographic variables such as the size of the elderly cohort are undoubtedly a central distributive feature of welfare states. But the rela-

tive importance of age versus class depends in large measure on the choice of the appropriate universe of comparison. When the universe of interest includes nations across the spectrum of economic development from low to high, the size of the elderly cohort has been shown to be the most powerful variable. But when the cases of interest are restricted to the advanced capitalist democracies, the influence of class variables is considerably more robust.[1]

Class power arguments that cross-national welfare state differences in advanced capitalist democracies are a function of differences in class solidarism have been criticized as having limited relevance to the American welfare state because their explanations rely on such factors as class political mobilization, which have limited applicability to the United States.[2] Given the inordinately low level of class political mobilization in the United States, a negative factor—the absence of a mass labor, socialist, or social democratic party—cannot explain specific positive outcomes. Rather the American welfare state is the result of different conditions than its capitalist democratic counterparts (Skocpol and Ikenberry, 1983; Skocpol, 1980; Weir, Orloff, and Skocpol, 1988).[3] Thus in countries with low levels of class political mobilization, other explanations are necessary.

Furthermore, class power analyses have also been criticized as having great difficulty integrating cases in which Christian Democratic parties have been prominent, because of their exclusive focus on the left party/trade union alliance preeminent in social democracy (Van Kersbergen and Becker, 1988). Skocpol and Amenta (1986) have argued that the existence of strong Catholic social movements creates difficulties for analyses that emphasize left political mobilization through the formation of a labor/left alliance. Thus, countries with low levels of class political mobilization, as well as others in which hegemonic socialist parties have not provided the impetus for welfare state development, are not well explained by existing versions of the theory.

There is certainly truth to this insight: Explanations at the level of generality of working-class political mobilization cannot account for specific programs in detail. But, general explanations can often illuminate general causal sequences that explain the successes, failures, and limits of specific programs. Macro-comparative analyses may be especially useful in accounting for patterns of omission (Jenkins and Brents, 1989).[4] The long history of repeated failures to create universalistic policies in the United States, as recently shown in the failed attempts to provide universal national health insurance coverage, suggest the continuing

need for broad theoretical comparison. Furthermore, the case-specific analyses tend to underplay the persistent relevance of the core of the class power argument: In the absence of organized mass constituencies advocating such programs, universalistic programs are unlikely to prevail.

Hence, differences in class solidarism may well explain the relative emaciation of the American welfare state. The American welfare state is one case in which universalistic programs have only infrequently been a part of the mainstream political agenda, and when enacted were usually implemented on considerably less than universalistic premises. Some believe the New Deal constitutes a major exception to this trend. However, by applying the theoretical analysis to the New Deal, I will show that its special circumstances are consistent with the larger thesis. It is not an attempt to *explain* the New Deal. Rather, I explore certain broad contours that the theory of labor particularism helps to illuminate: the means by which organized labor's particularism and the structure of class alliances have inhibited the emergence of a more universalistic welfare state. In terms of the overall theory, the analysis will show that the structural constraints affecting historical patterns of class formation and class alliances have continued to influence available choices as new organizations emerged and to some extent even surpassed older ones.

THE NEW DEAL ERA

The CIO's practice of solidarism was restrained by its environment. In spite of good intentions and a promising start, the CIO could not simply avoid labor particularism as a shopworn relic, but was instead forced to make accommodations in adapting to a structural environment that impeded greater universalism. There are several theoretical rationales for this proposition: First of all, structural environments change very slowly, even during crises. Newer organizations face many of the same constraints as those encountered by their predecessors. Second, initial success alters the environment faced by others. In order to establish itself, the CIO not only had to take into account the AFL's prior existence and preeminence, but it very quickly found itself engaged in fierce competition with the AFL.

Thus, (1) the AFL inevitably altered the environment with which the later CIO had to contend, and (2) given the absence of a catysclysmic event, that is, total war or revolution, the entrenched network of interest groups made it difficult to pursue creative responses to new possibilities.[5]

Rather, the CIO was constrained to restrict its behavior to a range which facilitated its competition with the AFL. Furthermore, it had to compete on terms in which the AFL was already efficient.

The AFL's entrenchment posed several obstacles to the development of the CIO. The AFL's strategy was one of organizing only "strategic workers"—those who cost more for a company to replace than to meet their demands. The federation made no effort to organize unskilled or semiskilled mass production workers. After the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the AFL began to organize workers in mass production, but its insistence on sustaining the existing jurisdictional framework ensured the primacy of its large and powerful craft unions. Newly organized workers were divided among fifteen to twenty unions, creating insurmountable divisions and insuring paralysis (Piven and Cloward, 1979:117). The AFL's lethargic commitment to extending the boundaries of organization and its perhaps anachronistic manner of carrying this task out demoralized thousands who were ready for organization in the wake of section 7A of the National Recovery Act (Fraser, 1989).

Faced with half-hearted organizing efforts designed to protect core AFL constituencies, John L. Lewis and other union leaders withdrew from the AFL to form the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) (the precursor to the modern day CIO). The CIO grew rapidly, aided by government and employer recognition. But its success led immediately to conflict over the jurisdiction of each movement, raising the specter of "dual unionism." AFL leaders regarded the CIO as an illegitimate stepchild of a power-hungry elite from the beginning. The CIO, in their eyes, was out to raid the AFL. For the conservative AFL leadership, the "Red peril" (the specter of communist infiltration) only dramatized its apprehensions. The AFL made a concerted effort to destroy the unionization drive of unorganized industrial workers (Piven and Cloward, 1979:115). Such dissension in organized labor gave capitalists an opening to attack the New Deal itself.

The fragmentation within the business community reflected the growing diversity of their economic interests. Overall economic trends were promoting the formation and growth of an alternative bloc of capital-intensive "high-tech" industries and firms led by Standard Oil and General Electric (Ferguson, 1989). These firms, including many of the largest and most dynamic corporations, advocated "multinational liberalism" policies of free trade and were somewhat more sympathetic to accommodations with labor, although not to the point of supporting unionization drives. The United States' transition from net debtor to net

creditor status during World War I, the crises surrounding restabilization in Europe, and the great economic boom of the 1920s each exacerbated capital's disunity. Divisions among the core industrial-financial elite of the Republican party grew throughout the 1920s.[6]

Changes in trade policy paralleled the shifts in relative power of different business groups. From 1900, the internationalist orientation of the American business community took off. By 1909, the proportion of manufacturers dependent on exports was up to 64 percent (Lake, 1990). As pressure mounted for change, American trade policy, although still protectionist, began to shift toward the promotion of exports through bilateral bargaining, backed by the sanction of high tariffs. The 1913 Underwood Act marked a dramatic departure from the policy of uniformly high tariffs to one of reciprocal tariff reductions. It set competitive tariffs low enough to allow substantial importation.[7] During the almost ten-year life span of the Underwood Act, average rates of duty were lower than in any other period between the Civil War and 1958. The 1922 Fordney-McCumber Act raised duties but retained the explicit compromise on protection for the sake of export expansion.[8]

The weaknesses of traditionally powerful actors (due largely but not solely to the Great Depression) are a central factor explaining why it was possible to have the burst of activism that inaugurated Franklin Roosevelt's first term. In spite of Roosevelt's campaign pledge to balance the budget and eschew radical alternatives, the severity of the crisis necessitated dramatic steps to provide at least some partial amelioration. Among the emergency efforts undertaken in the "first hundred days" were the following: relief for the unemployed; the Glass-Steagall Act to reform the banking structure; the Securities Act to reform the Stock Exchange; the National Industrial Recovery Act, effectively legalizing industrial cartels; and the Agricultural Adjustment Act for the relief of the farm sector. Additionally, Roosevelt suspended convertibility of dollars into gold, thereby abandoning the gold standard, and passed legislation to aid exports (Ferguson, 1989:4).[9]

The combination of long-term disunity and the extreme need for immediate (and at least symbolically dramatic) responses to the Great Depression explain why a number of traditionally powerful conservative interests groups were ineffective and ineffectual in the early years of the crisis (Plotke, 1988). Not surprisingly, the first New Deal coalition brought together groups whose differences greatly exceeded their common interests. This grand coalition of industrialists from the protectionist core—oilmen, pro-oil bankers, and farmers—began to disintegrate virtu-

ally from its conception. "Free traders fought with protectionists; big firms battled with smaller competitors; buyers collided with suppliers. The result was chaos" (Ferguson, 1989:18). In the wake of the collapse of this first coalition, a second coalition formed, drawn from administration supporters who favored free trade, organizing labor, and social welfare provision. These generally more militant supporters of the reform agenda of the second New Deal, energized by the electoral victory of 1936, are commonly viewed as the New Deal's most fervent partisans (Fraser, 1989).

A necessary prelude for the Wagner Act were the Democratic victories in the mid-term election of 1934. These increased their margins in the House and Senate. Between 1935, when Roosevelt reluctantly endorsed the Wagner Act, through the great landslide of 1936, all the legislative essentials of the "second New Deal"—the Wagner Act, the Social Security Act, the second banking act, the public utility holding company act, and the wealth tax act—were enacted. Prior to these events (all before the emergence of the CIO as a mass organization), the CIO resembled a general staff minus the troops. This series of triumphs transformed the CIO from a strategic blueprint into a mass movement (Fraser, 1989:68). But only in 1937 did the Supreme Court accede, accepting the argument that the Wagner Act would discourage industrial strife, and thereby aid commerce.

The modern era of American industrial relations emerged from the institutional structure formed during the Great Depression and the reforms of the second New Deal (at the beginning of Roosevelt's second term). Among the most important for labor were the National Labor Relations Act, which defined the role and scope of trade union activity; the Social Security Act, which introduced both old-age pensions and unemployment insurance; and the Fair Labor Standards Act, which established the minimum wage and other minimal labor standards. Already passed during FDR's first administration was the Norris-LaGuardia Act, which ended the use of court-ordered injunctions to prevent workers from striking and picketing.

The Wagner Act gave responsibility for federal labor relations to an independent agency with the power to investigate and enforce provisions. It encouraged collective bargaining by independent unions, and promised that the government would establish fair procedures for bargaining and mediation of charges of unfair practice. The new policy enabled organized labor to innovatively use newly established government agencies such as the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The

federal government became an active proponent of unionization, in part by establishing mechanisms to enforce the authority of the NLRB.

The NLRB outlawed such customary employer weapons as yellow dog contracts, labor spies, and antiunion propaganda. It required employers to bargain with workers' elected representatives with government supervision of voting. The NLRB formed the strongest link between organized labor and the administration. Its purpose was to promote industrial unionism, and its jurisdictional rulings favored the CIO, enraging the AFL, especially in light of the NLRB's inclination to define the ideal bargaining unit in terms of the largest feasible unit (Fraser, 1989:71). CIO membership grew to over 3.5 million workers in thirty-two affiliated national and international unions by the end of 1937. The net result was substantial wage increases for millions of workers (Zieger, 1986). Employment security was a central bargaining issue, given the depressed economic conditions in which the expanded labor movement occurred. After recognition, it was probably the most important concern of newly organized unions and was met through a series of provisions in locally negotiated agreements at the plant or workplace level that governed economic layoff, promotion, and disciplinary discharge. The rules gave heavy weight to seniority, establishing rules for the distribution of insecurity among members of the labor force.[10]

By 1937, business and conservative groups began organizing a counter-reaction to what were perceived as "New Deal excesses." In particular, the Revenue Act of 1936, which taxed undistributed corporate profits, was a source of considerable anti–New Deal fervor (Valelly, 1989:130). AFL unionists had been incensed for some time by the favoritism shown by the NLRB (which in effect opted to replace AFL with CIO unions). As the conflict reached a boiling point, business mobilized in an alliance with the AFL around opposition to the undistributed profits tax, the Wagner Act, FDR's dictatorial ways, and the influence of radicals and radicalism in general. "The Wagner Act helped polarize political forces and was a major source of the continual attacks made on Roosevelt by Republicans and conservative Democrats" (Plotke, 1988:130).

By 1938, in the midst of another recession, the era of dramatic policy innovation was over.[11] Henceforth, labor-liberalism was on the defensive, hampered by the defection of southern agriculture and the resurgence of industry (Lichtenstein, 1989). The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was hamstrung from the very beginning due to opposition from the AFL and the powerful farm lobby, which was greatly concerned about the potential impact on agricultural wages. The unavoidable com-

promise necessary to secure its passage exempted millions from coverage—only one-fifth of the work force was within its jurisdiction. Only 325,000 workers benefited immediately from the $0.25 wage increase mandated (Fraser, 1989). The recovery of power by traditionally strong interest groups was also central to the failure of the 1938 Textile Workers Organizing Committee drive to organize southern textile workers.

If the weaknesses of key economic and political organizations made possible the rise of the New Deal, the rapidity of their recovery similarly accounts for its decline. It is here that an explanation based on the impact of broader structural forces over the long term becomes most germane. Crises based on hard times may open up new possibilities, as Gourevitch (1986) convincingly argues, but the easing of the crisis atmosphere not only forecloses certain options, but may provoke outright policy reversals as the necessary mass support withers and the power of traditional antagonists returns.

Limitations in the CIO's practice of solidarism were not merely a consequence of the unavoidable tendency to repeat what had worked before, but reflected the substantial overlap between the structural environment faced by the CIO and that encountered by its predecessor, the AFL. The ethnic and racial divisions of the American work force circumscribed labor solidarism once again. Ethnic divisions in the base of the CIO's support plagued it right from the start. Skilled industrial workers of German and Irish descent perceived their positions to be threatened by the improving conditions of newer immigrants, due to the New Deal unionization of core industries. CIO efforts to support racial integration within and without the workplace often fared similarly (especially in the drive to organize the South). Ethno-religious and racial divisions also helped enemies of organized labor use anticommunism against it through much of the postwar era (Fraser, 1989:73).

Furthermore, the New Deal established a foundation for a racially charged fault line in social policy, based on the isolation of social security from welfare. The core programs—old-age protection and unemployment insurance—did not address the pressing needs of many black Americans employed as domestic and agricultural laborers. The crafting of programs so as to maintain racial apartheid in the South was part of the price of keeping southern whites within the coalition (Skocpol, 1988). Furthermore, their control of key congressional committees meant southerners maintained a veto over social welfare legislation. The price of southern support was local control in administering relief that protected the economic structure and racial characteristics of the region.

Southerners also insisted on maintaining the existing practice of paying higher benefits to whites than to blacks, in part through the subterfuge of paying higher benefits to Confederate veterans and their widows (Quadagno, 1988). Hence, New Deal social policy relegated blacks to the periphery, assuring they would be a marginal constituency within the New Deal coalition.

To this day, black employment remains minuscule in skilled craft and construction trades. Racially tainted practices limit black upward mobility in both union and occupational hierarchies even in the egalitarian-minded United Auto Workers (Zieger, 1986:177). Civil rights activists have repeatedly challenged the structure of craft unionism, arguing that such practices as secret admission exams, verbal tests, grandfather clauses that favor applicants whose fathers were union members, and other forms of nepotism constitute racist obstacles that hinder the employment of blacks in craft occupations (Quadagno, 1982).

Structural factors also figure into the success of conservative-led class coalitions (as discussed in Chapter 2). Roosevelt pledged during the 1932 campaign that the interests of all farmers would be taken into account, and major New Deal farm legislation, such as the AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Act) of 1933 did seek to raise prices by creating scarcity. But it soon became clear that large and politically influential farmers would be favored at the expense of tenants and sharecroppers. In general, New Deal farm policy tended to favor conservative farm groups adopting narrow interest group perspectives, rather than those favoring alliances among all producers damaged by big business (Valelly, 1989). The New Deal coalition was from its very beginnings (perhaps fatally) compromised due to the difficulties in maintaining a balance between constituents whose interests quickly brought them into conflict, once the recovery was underway.

By 1938, efforts to erode labor gains were underway, commencing with the red purge in the CIO. Numerous legislative measures supported by business and its political allies hastened the deterioration in labor's political and economic strength. The Supreme Court ruled sitdown strikes were illegal, and state legislatures began to prohibit some strikes and secondary boycotts, restricted picketing and the amount of union dues, outlawed closed shops, required union registration, with jail sentences for violators (Piven and Cloward, 1979:165).

THE POSTWAR ERA

After World War II, as the era of rapid union growth came to a close, the drive to roll back prior gains intensified. The Republican Congress reduced Social Security benefits in 1948 (Quadagno, 1988). In the late 1940s, it was clear to allies and enemies that the growth of the CIO and mobilization of blacks were complementary. Labor federations did succeed in organizing over 800,000 workers in the South during the war. In 1946, Operation Dixie sought to extend these local beacheads regionwide. But they failed abjectly. The southern elite was still too powerful, and its monolithic committment to racism too complete.[12]

The CIO's efforts to unionize the South failed. This failure has at times been attributed to internal strife stemming from anticommunist obsessions and an unwillingness to exorcise racism from its ranks. Davis calls the postwar defeat of southern labor organizations "the Achilles heel of American unionism" (Davis, 1986:87). Goldfield concurs, arguing that "the central cause of the political weakness of U.S. labor unions, and the underlying reason for their generally defensive stance, is the failure to organize the South immediately after World War II" (1987:238). The South remains the least organized region of the nation; those states with the lowest union densities are in the South or Southwest, leaving aside the small and rural states (according to 1980 data) (Goldfield, 1987:118).

The hostile terrain for labor organizing in the South is legendary: Unionism in the South (whether in metropolitan or nonmetropolitan areas) lags behind the North. Such impediments as a long-standing surplus of cheap labor, the hostility of political and economic elites, the dispersion of industrial development into less concentrated populations, the chasm in political attitudes of blacks and white, and the resulting exploitation of racial cleavages each help account for southern states' status at the lower end of the national scale in terms of union membership, led by the Carolinas, Texas, and Florida (Black and Black, 1987:65–66).

Undoubtedly, American unionism has been haunted ever since by the threats of business to move to the less unionized South, just as American wage earners have suffered from limits on social welfare provision due in part to the entrenchment of southern Dixiecrats in powerful legislative positions. For much of the postwar era, the resistance of southern Democrats and conservative Republicans frustrated virtually the entire liberal Democratic policy agenda, especially federal aid to education, civil rights, and medical care for the elderly (Vogel, 1989:35).

According to Goldfield, the two central reasons for the failure of

Operation Dixie are: (1) the failure of the CIO to exorcise racism and promote black equality; and (2) the disruption that an all-out unionization campaign would cause to the Roosevelt coalition, given its dependency on southern Dixiecrats (Goldfield, 1987:240). Arguably, CIO participation in this coalition caused them to effectively pull their punches. These are certainly valid *proximate* causes of union failure in the South, but it is clear that each point is consistent as well with a broader theoretical analysis that labor's particularism was an adaptation to an unfavorable structural environment that did not augur well for broad-based, encompassing organizations.

Moreover, potential advances in southern unionization were clearly constrained by the absence of full citizenship to its most oppressed residents. To grant full citizenship to blacks (and have them exercise those rights) would have struck at the heart of the powerful reactionary coalitions ruling the South, which were also a vital and integral part of the national Democratic party. The arduous task of enacting such (largely) symbolic legislation as a national antilynching law, the absence of civil rights legislation, the concessions to states' rights in setting requirements and benefits for public assistance each reflect the accommodations that the national Democrats willingly made to retain white southern support (Katznelson, 1989:193).

The efforts of businessmen and their political allies to roll back labor's advances were comprehensive. Of special importance for this purpose was the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947, also known as the Taft-Hartley Act, which limited the right to strike, required union officers to sign anticommunist affidavits, allowed states to forbid closed shops, and recast the National Labor Relations Board from an advocate of union recognition to one that made employers at least coequal. The rights of employers to prevent unionization were expanded, while union shops were subjected to special referenda. Taft-Hartley barred wildcat strikes, and empowered the courts to fine unions for damages resulting from them. Under Taft-Hartley, secondary boycotts, sitdowns, slowdowns, and closed shops were declared illegal, while the power of government to impose injunctions was increased; informal methods that allowed the NLRB to determine if a majority of workers wanted to unionize were eliminated; and employers were granted free-speech rights that allowed them to legally and overtly campaign for the defeat of union campaigns (Goldfield, 1987:185); States were allowed to pass right-to-work laws that barred union shops.

There is no plausible way to characterize Taft-Hartley except as a devastating setback for organized labor. In one view, "Taft-Hartley furthered a legalistic conception of the relationship between workers and unions and between unions and employers, modifying the basic orientation of the original Wagner Act" (Zieger, 1986:110). In another, Taft-Hartley created a legal/administrative straitjacket that encouraged parochialism, thereby penalizing efforts to utilize more class-inclusive strategies (Lichtenstein, 1989). Clearly, Taft-Hartley reduced interunion solidarity, eliminated labor radicals from the mainstream of the movement, and contained organized labor within its existing geographic and demographic limits. Restrictions based in Taft-Hartley undermined the effectiveness of unions, leading to a decline in union membership in the years following its passage (Piven and Cloward, 1979).[13]

The critical statute in this assault was section 14b, which let states individually override federal statutes and construct "right-to-work laws" (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982:136). This clause set union organizing back in the South, enabling the decertification of a number of unions that had won representation elections, making payment of dues voluntary, undermining unions' financial base. By holding unions legally liable for such purportedly unfair labor practices as sympathy strikes and secondary boycotts, Taft-Hartley negated one of the strongest tools available in building classwide solidarity.

The net result was to weaken labor's opposition to postwar corporate resistance. Once enacted, it became much easier for management to modify work rules in older Frostbelt factories and to devise plans to rationalize production by closing older plants, thereby releasing corporate resources for southern and global expansion (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982:136). This geography of deindustrialization reflected the desire of companies to relocate capital from older industrial areas in order to utilize nonunionized labor with a lower standard of living and less voice in the workplace (Bluestone and Harrison, 1982:165). As a result the trade union movement lost much of its remaining momentum.

Checks on union growth established by Taft-Hartley have remained in force ever since (labor relations have become more bureaucratic), stabilizing existing divisions. Such obstacles have made it difficult for unions to extend their base into new sectors of the economy—existing unorganized occupations and trades, relatively unorganized geographic regions, and perhaps even demographic groups whose proportions are growing in the labor force. The net effect is to strengthen the wall

between those arenas where unions are already strong and vital and those where they are weak and ineffectual.

"Workers in even the strongest industrial unions with strong contracts are plagued with problems of business unionism unheard of in most European countries" (Goldfield, 1987:87). For example, the United Mine Workers have refused to organize strip miners. Construction unions have failed to organize residential construction workers. Most industrial unions have not actively fought the subcontracting out of work to nonunion sources, nor have they actively struggled in favor of rights to transfer for their members when plants close.

American unions have failed to keep pace with occupational shifts in employment from blue- to white-collar work and from manufacturing to services. The proportion of unionized white-collar workers is far lower in the United States than in the majority of its industrialized counterparts (Oppenheimer, 1985). Many white-collar unions have come into existence by federal executive order, without the kind of struggle that makes for a militant membership. For the most part, they have gained relatively little for their members. Hence, unionized white-collar workers have little clout. Moreover, the courts have limited the matters on which they can bargain. Unions in the white-collar field are weak by comparison to major blue-collar unions. Public sector unions are crippled by laws forbidding or inhibiting the right to strike, as well as the right to struggle for a closed or union shop.

Furthermore, organized labor has historically not done well in fields dominated by women: clerical, secretarial, insurance, banking, and white-collar fields. The growth of the white-collar strata is closely associated with the increasing participation of women in the labor force. About half of all white-collar workers are women; over 60 percent of the women in the official labor force are white-collar occupations. It is reasonable to say that unions have poorly adapted to the recasting of economic segmentation in areas such as the feminization of certain occupations, the creation of pink-collar ghettos, and the overall growth of white-collar workers. While this subject is tangential to the present analysis, the frequent hostility of craft unions to organizing efforts of women workers from the turn of the century to World War I foreshadowed these more recent issues (Greenwald, 1990).

Perhaps the most revealing confession of the kind of cramped vision that AFL-style organized labor has led comes from George Meany, who in 1972 immortalized the following remark:

> Why should we sorry about organizing groups of people who do not want to be organized? If they prefer to have others speak for them and make the decisions which affect their lives without effective participation on their part that is their right. (Moody, 1988:125)

This reasoning conforms to the theoretical expectation developed earlier in the analysis that when craft union organization stabilizes before industrial unions are widespread, the labor movement will be narrower and more fragmented than if craft unions are by and large supplanted by industrial unions.

This chapter has offered a rather abbreviated interpretation of a number of the major consequences of the New Deal and its aftermath. In it, I have suggested that the theory and analysis of skilled workers' solidarism I have employed throughout this study is sufficiently flexible to accommodate short-term outcomes that seemingly contradict its premises. Furthermore, I do not claim that *no* significant accomplishments occur when political coalitions dissonant with their larger structural environments are able to gain power. My argument is not that the Wagner Act was irrelevant; it undeniably facilitated a breakthrough by organized labor into the core of the nation's economy. The new industrial union movement was able to make the state an active participant in the struggle for union recognition. As a result of the New Deal, basic citizenship rights were extended to new groups (Plotke, 1988). Furthermore, the New Deal invigorated the civil rights movement, as many organizations joined the battle for racial equality and justice (Sitkoff, 1978).

On balance, the CIO has undoubtedly been a formidable force promoting egalitarianism and combating racism. There is more equality in the unionized industrial sector than in any other private sector of the economy (Freeman and Medoff, 1984). For example, long-term contracts were a significant positive step in the institutional setting of the postwar labor environment. Multiyear pacts were virtually unknown before the Wagner Act, but they reached the level of 25 percent of major labor contracts by 1948, and by 1960 between 70 percent and 85 percent of major labor agreements were multiyear. Business learned (in time) to accept long-term contracts as a means of reducing bargaining confrontations and strikes (Hibbs, 1987a:25).

What I do maintain, however, is that notwithstanding the CIO's successes, the gains made by predominantly particularistic labor movements in societies in which dominant political coalitions are regularly

right of center will be more tenuous than those that occur as a result of alliances led by solidaristic labor. Many arguments about American social policy are based on the notion of a critical turning point, be it the 1890s Populists, the 1900–1920 Progressive era, 1930s–1940s in the New Deal, or perhaps least plausibly the 1960s during the New Frontier–Great Society era. Each is indicted as a point at which failures of leadership—poor tactics or strategy, bureaucratism, racism, parochialism, and so on—sealed the fate of Progressive forces.[14] I disagree with the critical turning point perspective, arguing instead that there was no distinct crisis whose outcome was decisive in propelling labor onto a different trajectory (Fraser and Gerstle, 1989). Rather, American labor's particularism became noticeable quite early because this was the most accessible response given existing structural constraints.

It is misleading to look at the New Deal era in isolation when organized labor was at its apogee and argue that any slippage is due to critical errors made, while failing to recognize the exceptional characteristics of the era. From a longer term perspective, the similarity in the patterns established by the AFL analyzed in the previous three chapters and those of the CIO (especially after the war) discussed here outweigh many of their differences. Organized labor has been particularistic as long as it has organized.

Organized labor never surmounted its exclusionist principles of formation. Unionization is today and has usually been (with the exception of several years in the 1940s) lower than any other capitalist democracy (except France). Second, and this is where the causal analysis comes into play, unions have at many points in time organized selectively, skimming the cream of manual wage earners who are most easily organized while dealing with the remainder via indifference, if not outright hostility.

Before 1932, the issue of union survival necessarily took precedence over the pursuit of a broader social and political agenda, an agenda to which the leaders of American unions were most often hostile (Quadagno, 1987). After 1932, American unions never really challenged the political mainstream. Consequently the post-1932 allegiance of skilled and unskilled workers to the Democrats could hardly heal the established fracturing of the working class. The clash of contrasting jurisdictional interests and visions among unions continued to generate conflicts in the workplace. Possibly, such conflicts even increased as unions achieved formal legal and political recognition. The Democratic coalition's de facto party-class alliance did not create a coherent alignment of party and class. Rather than becoming a labor party,

> . . . disjointed work-class groups organized as discrete interests within the Democratic party, alongside farmers, reformers, some of business, and the South: they entered the party union by union (sometimes union against union), ethnic group by ethnic group, and for the majority who remained unorganized, worker by worker. (Mink, 1990:260)

After the 1940s, as Nelson Lichtenstein argues, organized labor's influence was undermined by committed adversaries (similar to the open-shop drive that followed World War I). Its efforts to influence the nature of the postwar political economy were blocked by powerful business and conservative political adversaries. Moreover, dissension in the organizational bases of the AFL and CIO unions each contributed strongly to labor's failure to produce a unified and coherent commitment to fight for the retention of wartime tripartite bargaining. The concentration of CIO unions in manufacturing with oligopolistic employers able to pass on costs of contracts to consumers was hardly compatible with the conditions governing the AFL, where only 35 percent of AFL members were employed in heavy industry. Instead, the AFL, still 30 percent larger than the CIO in 1946, was far more restrained in its support of the wartime system given the concentration of its membership in decentralized firms in more competitive sectors (Lichtenstein, 1989:131).

Thus, the failure of the CIO's corporatist agenda was predictable, or more bluntly, the organizational structure of interest groups in the United States has by and large been unsuitable for corporatism.[15] Unions have focused on improving private pensions as an alternative to an expanded welfare state. "American unions remain supporters of Social Security, national health insurance, and minority-targeted welfare programs, but their ability to mobilize either their own members or a broader constituency on these issues declined during most of the postwar era" (Lichtenstein, 1989:145). It took until 1974, after seventeen years of union advocacy, for minimum standards to be set for private pensions (Vogel, 1989).

Piven and Cloward (1979) attribute the limits of union success to mechanisms of cooptation—initially in the accommodation of trade union bureaucrats to imperatives of capital and secondly in the accommodation of union bureaucrats to the Democratic party. They argue that union bureaucrats grew dependent on the party; they repeatedly muted working-class political insurgency. But assessing the long-term meaning of the New Deal cannot be done only by examining the conditions that led to its passage. The historical meaning of the Wagner Act cannot be

deciphered solely by examining the intentions of its specific proponents and opponents at the time of its passage. In Piven and Cloward's analysis, worker agitation is responsible for the success of the sit-down strike and the acceptance of industrial unions. Hence, their emphasis on the critical importance of the mobilization of insurgents is incomplete, inasmuch as the Wagner Act passed in part because of "the conjunctural weakness of normally opposing political forces" (Plotke 1988:115).[16]

Unorganized workers were the direct agents building the new movement, but their efforts were not necessarily the primary or most compelling reason for its success. Rather, I believe it is essential to emphasize capital's (temporary) loss of influence due in part to: (1) a secular (long-term) decline in unity based on the rapid growth of international export-oriented business; (2) the inadequacy of the responses from this sector and the government to the Great Depression; and (3) the impotence of traditional powerful actors given the extent of the crisis. For example, the possibility of a capital strike was rendered moot by existing economic difficulties. But it was not only business that suffered from a temporarily paralysis; the AFL was in no position either to sabotage positive state intervention.

The AFL's accommodation with corporatist leaders created obstacles to new unionism. AFL hesitancy to expanding the acceptable confines of unionism effectively extended the period of what Goldfield terms "trade union illegality" in the United States. Trade union illegality being defined as

> a de facto state based on the unwillingness of companies and the government to accept fully the rights of workers to be represented collectively by an organization of their own, whatever the extent of de jure trade union rights. Under conditions of trade union illegality, not only the laws make it difficult for unions to function but even illegal actions against them by the companies are often overlooked by the government. (Goldfield, 1987:66)

Goldfield believes the acceptance of trade union as legitimate and legal bargaining institutions began with the establishment of the National Labor Relations Board in 1935. However, I believe it might be more useful to depict trade union legality as occurring in waves (rather than stages, which implies linear and progressive one-way development). Craft union legality arrived with the consolidation of the AFL and its

concordat with progressive reformers. Industrial union legality outside the South and Southwest can be dated from the organizing drives of the late 1930s, catalyzed by the NLRB. Trade union legality in the South, and some parts of the Southwest, arrived only in the 1970s (and perhaps not fully yet) for a number of reasons: (1) the achievements of the civil rights movement and the establishment of legal and juridical equality for blacks were necessary prerequisites for southern trade union legality, given the impossibility of disentangling workers' economic rights from the political rights of the large bloc of black workers.[17] Trade union legality has perhaps declined in recent years due to capitalist offensives (Goldfield, 1987; Harrison and Bluestone, 1988).

The significance of the intense rivalry between the AFL and the CIO meant that the CIO was forced to struggle on terms defined by the legacy of what worked before. Whereas the AFL's successful emergence and durability depended on surmounting a legacy of past failures, the CIO had to adapt to both the past failures of industrial unions and the past success of craft unions. What the CIO might have been able to do in the absence of this latter paradox is of course counterfactual, but the CIO had to immediately play to its strengths because its weaknesses would be exploited by its enemies within and without the House of Labor.

So although it is true the CIO sought to organize those whom the AFL excluded, and jurisdictional conflicts resulted from the ambiguity of the boundaries between craft and industrial unions, it was difficult if not impossible to avoid emulating what had worked—by favoring those well placed at the expense of the less advantaged. Because of the already existing rules of the game, there were unavoidable parallels between the AFL and the CIO.[18] Perhaps it is an exaggeration, but one with a valid core of truth, to say that the CIO has to some degree emulated its predecessor. Its political commitments have been more in terms of adjusting at the margins to already established constraints, efforts to "level the playing field," rather than to change the rules of the game.

Like the AFL, the CIO has frequently favored the strongest and most easily organized workers, at the expense of weaker, less easily organized constituencies. This favoritism has promoted segmentation and fragmentation. Thus the particularism of labor is an aspect of the lack of continuity, or disjuncture, in legalizing trade unionism. A disjuncture reflecting the establishment and consolidation of craft unionism, which then sought to limit further extension of legality to unorganized sectors and regions. Unions have been conditioned to behave in a manner that can be characterized as defensive voluntarism. And their tendency to behave in

this manner has contributed to a legacy that grows more powerful with each passing decade.

LABOR PARTICULARISM AND RECENT TRENDS IN SOCIAL WELFARE

A dominant theme in social policy in liberal welfare-state regimes, of which the United States is a prime example, is to rely heavily on needs-tested aid to the poor. According to Esping-Andersen, the single strongest factor explaining the liberalism of a welfare state is the (negative) strength of the working class (1990:136). Welfare state liberalism carries the stigma of dependency while stimulating dualism in social policy. This dualism involves generous benefits in private insurance bargained for by more privileged strata, and parsimony in public programs for more dependent citizens. Such dualism thereby reproduces market inequalities rather than ameliorating them. The greater is working-class strength, the smaller the means-tested bias in welfare state programs (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

The resistance of the AFL to collectivist remedies provides an obvious precedent for the segmentation of marginalized and vulnerable constituencies such as women heading single family households, children, and the disabled (Mink, 1990:266). The American welfare state's incomplete and segmented structure is in large measure a result of the historic preference of organized labor for private sector solutions. Such residual welfare statism inhibits the development of solidarity because more privileged workers support more private welfare programs while (in general) parsimonious state support has become the preserve of destitute and weak minorities (Esping-Andersen, 1985b).

Welfare states characterized by low levels of social spending, narrow and means-tested eligibility, limited redistribution in public spending, and private rather than public spending virtually invite welfare backlash, by separating the poor from the majority of the population and particularly from those just above the poverty line. "Marginalist policies divide the poor from the working and middle class, creating (or at least increasing) an underclass" (Hollingsworth and Hanneman, 1982).

The United States Social Security system maintains sharp divisions between the poor and the near poor, providing uniform federal benefits for the aged and disabled, little if any assistance except food stamps to unemployed single people or childless couples, and varying levels of assistance (depending on state and local generosity) to families with chil-

dren. Welfare programs for the poor do not share the legitimacy of Social Security. Social Security benefits are treated (erroneously as it were) as an honorable contract between working citizens and the government. Recipients of public assistance are treated with condescension, and federal and state governments make sure these programs do not become easily accessible to many of the needy (Skocpol, 1988). Public assistance and social service spending (among the programs specifically for the poor) form a minor component of America's social protection and have grown more slowly than other programs during the period from 1952 to 1978 (Rein and Rainwater, 1986). On the other hand, benefits for wage earners eligible for age and disability pensions are relatively high in comparative terms (Bolderson, 1988).

Of course, current conditions reflect the legacy of the past. The New Deal did not create the foundation for an expansive welfare state. The expansions in private benefits after the war were dominated by professional and managerial employees and workers in strong unions (Stevens, 1988). Taft-Hartley undermined existing labor solidarism (outlawing secondary strikes), and industrialists exploited regional divisions (abetted by the CIO's decision not to strongly pursue unionization drives in the South). The state-centered perspective considers these failures to be attributable to limitations imposed by state structures. But as in the Gilded Age when the failure of efforts to sustain universalistic movements provide hints of general structural impediments, the more recent failures similarly suggest the existence of more deeply rooted structural barriers and the limitations in the collective movements that survive under such circumstances.

Arguably, current working-class retrenchment is at least partly a consequence of the early success of labor particularism—that is, its having been the most accessible strategy in the early phase of industrialization—due to the preeminence of the eventually anachronistic tactics of craft unions. Labor particularism has proven to be better at exploiting economic resources than political ones. As suggested by Hirschman's classic metaphor (1970), the strategy of labor particularism reflects an excessive reliance on exit at the expense of voice, thereby opting out of encompassing solidarism. The reliance on exit reinforces the formation of narrow solidarities at the expense of broader ones.

Perhaps it is even fair to say that particularistic labor movements built to exploit closure are invariably less skilled in political competition. Of course, particularistic labor movements may not only be too weak to prevent welfare state restrictiveness, but they may in fact invite it, since

their core constituency is frequently well served within the narrow range of benefits provided. Strong unions in the United States have often been tepid supporters of national social legislation because such programs are included in their individual contracts (Goldfield, 1987). As Wallerstein (1985) has argued more generally, national union movements make a strategic choice on whether to push for benefits through social welfare programs or in terms of separate contracts. The attitudes of stronger American unions in the postwar era echoes the arguments once made by the AFL against national benefits. The constituencies of strong unions benefit from private programs, and their middle-class wage earners fall within the criteria for inclusion of the programs targeted to the middle class that constitute the heart of the American welfare state.

The postwar era of high economic growth has given way to a more difficult economic period. The transition has exacerbated preexisting tendencies, due in no small measure to a capitalist offensive (the most widespread since the late 1930s) spearheaded by a Republican-dominated conservative coalition (Katznelson, 1981b:314). The 1980s witnessed a dramatic turn for the worse for America's have-nots. Tax structures became more regressive, and public goods, services, and infrastructures were underfunded and poorly maintained. Altogether there has been a sharp upturn in inequality in income, wealth, and material conditions of life.

> The gross boundary between the top and bottom halves of the nation on this long term trend line broadly etches the difference between those parts of the country which have acute and obvious urban decay problems and those which do not; between those parts of the country which are absolutely or relatively losing population, and those which are not; between those parts of the country whose surplus energy "taxes" in an age of expensiveness are high and those whose are not; between those parts of the country where blacks and unions are relatively well organized, and those where they are not. (Burnham, 1981:113)

Arguably, a central factor in the failure of America's welfare state to adequately supplement the private incomes of its wage earners are the limits imposed by the prior establishment of a particularistic labor movement. The 1970s and 1980s illuminate what may be inherent limitations in labor particularism: Capitalist offensives were most successful where labor was strongly particularistic, and considerably less so where the

labor movement was more universalistic.[19] There can be little doubt that business has become more effective in building political coalitions able to mount sophisticated campaigns to advance common interests in recent years. Coalitions led by capital have been especially successful when they have been able to present a unified front, as in the fight against common situs picketing, labor law reform, and pressure to shift the NLRB in a more conservative direction (Vogel, 1989). Due to the political mobilization of business, commencing in the mid-1970s, major initiatives supported by labor and liberals were thwarted, while a probusiness policy agenda was enacted. Business groups successfully created a unified political front on a number of major issues (Akard, 1992).

Programs targeted for the poor are the ones that have absorbed the bulk of the Reagan era budget cuts.[20] Comparing Medicare (a solidly middle-class entitlement) to Medicaid and subsidized housing, which are means-tested programs for the poor, Slessarev (1988) finds that the recipients of benefits of Medicare are strikingly different from those receiving benefits from Medicaid and subsidized housing. Medicare recipients are elderly, white, and more affluent than Medicaid and subsidized housing beneficiaries.

The recent underfunding of public goods and infrastructures is particularly damaging to those in poverty. Over the past quarter century, there has been no inclination to improve public capital. Consider that from World War II's end to 1952 (an era in which the New Deal coalition was still powerful albeit in a weakened state), spending on infrastructure constituted 7 percent of the nonmilitary federal budget. By the 1970s, the infrastructure's share was down to 1.5 percent, and dropped further to 1.2 percent in the 1980s. More specifically, spending on elementary and secondary education alone had declined by 10 percent in the 1980s (Heilbroner, 1990:30). The limits of particularism's efficacy thus resonate in yet another and perhaps ultimately more serious era of retrenchment.

Certainly one telling outcome—one that raises moral issues as well as those of political economy—is the alarming rise in infant mortality. Differences in infant mortality are perhaps not incontrovertibly reducible to any single influence. But there are several indications that the links between infant mortality and equalization measures attributable to labor solidarism are substantal. Social policy can dramatically affect rates of infant mortality. Japan has shown that with a national commitment to accessible health services, dramatic improvements in infant mortality are possible. "Japan's infant mortality rate was 20 percent higher than the

United States in 1960, but it is now the lowest in the world, about half the American figure" (New York Times, 8-06-90).

Class differences in infant mortality were growing in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe (Kaelble, 1986), but the declines in infant mortality since are associated with diminishing interclass differences. The United States' relative status on infant mortality is something of an embarrassment, lagging behind most advanced capitalist nations, including several relatively poor ones (Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 1988). Infant mortality rates for black Americans lag behind some third world nations. Unsurprisingly, however, the relation to policies of equalization is disputed. According to one recent study, policies linked to equalization are only a secondary factor in explaining differences in infant mortality (Pampel and Pillai, 1986). This is, however, a finding that has sparked strong disagreement (Geronimus and Korenman, 1988).

LABOR SOLIDARISM AND SOCIAL WELFARE

If particularistic labor movements have been ineffective in adapting to and formulating effective responses to the crises of contemporary capitalist democratic societies, more solidaristic labor movements and extensive welfare states have certainly not avoided the stresses of recent years either. The desire to shrink the welfare state, even at the expense of expanding inequality, is impossible to suppress in capitalist democracies during periods of low growth or contraction. Yet, the profile here is strikingly different.

The strength of the labor movement in terms of its ability to collectively articulate non-elite interests in capitalist democracies is an essential determinant of welfare state extensiveness. Furthermore, the welfare state's significance is greater than any sum based on an individualistic accounting of program characteristics.

> The distribution of income and wealth in a democratic country goes to the heart of its political ethic, defining the basic contours of a nation's sense of justice and equity as it pursues economic growth, and determining how the benefits of growth or the burdens of decline will be shared by its citizens. (Edsall, 1985:18)

Broad, encompassing movements act on principles that can be termed "conditional solidarity." This solidarism is an essential founda-

tion for a strong welfare state. In such cases, trade unions, political parties, and their associated cultural and social organizations have together created environments that can reinforce the solidaristic bonds of the more rationalist and economistic associations provided by unions and parties. While the demise of the conditions amenable to political Keynesianism has severely taxed the welfare states of capitalist democracies across the board, the disintegration of the welfare state has been greatest in regimes where labor movements have been most particularistic.

It is true that quite recently stresses due to the changing national and international economic environment, sometimes referred to as globalism, have subjected labor solidarism to new tests. While conclusions must remain tentative, it is unlikely that recent forces will sufficiently undermine long-standing differences in labor solidarism to the point of achieving convergence. The differences that remain evident in both programs and outcomes suggest that poorer citizens in nations with high degrees of labor solidarism are considerably better off than they are in nations with particularistic labor movements and restrictive welfare states.

In the United States, the disintegration of the New Deal coalition has led many to favor the construction of what have been termed race-neutral coalitions (Wilson, 1990). Such coalitions are to be created through common class interests that will hypothetically subsume or override racial cleavages. However, one major implication of this analysis is that such coalitions are unlikely to have long-term viability in the United States because of specific features of its structural environment. This environment is one poorly suited to the formation of broad and universalistic forms of solidarism.

In the United States, for example, the potent political symbols attached to such issues as crime, welfare dependency, and affirmative action regularly and repeatedly trump the similarities in economic interests between white and black workers. While the New Deal Democratic coalition may provide a significant counter-example to this principle, it may alternatively be the exception that "proves the rule," as argued earlier. Perhaps the answer to the question of how to understand the future of broad, encompassing, race-neutral coalitions rests upon how we understand the New Deal. If the New Deal was an exceptional era reflecting in large measure a temporary collapse of conservative political and economic forces, then the prospects for viable class-based race-neutral coalitions are in fact bleak. Alternatively, the New Deal might represent a turning point, opening an era in which class-based race-neutral coalitions became viable. The thrust of this analysis has been to suggest that the

former is far more likely than the latter. Furthermore, more recent efforts to form race-neutral political coalitions have, on balance, tended to be reactive, leading to charges that the Democrats are engaged in Republican "lite" policies. Such a view is consistent as well with the overall thesis of this work, that conservative coalitions have been dominant most often over the history of American capitalist democracy.

NOTES

[1]Within the more restricted universe of advanced capitalist democracies, Pampel and Williamson's (1988) finding of superiority for age-based variables depends greatly on their use of a particular methodology—pooled research designs that incorporate cross-sectional and time-series variation. However, pooled designs do not allow the evaluation of the significance of factors that may be quite important but are constant over the time period in question.

[2]"Recent empirical work has succeeded in uncovering substantial regularities between class power and a number of dimensions in the political and economic behavior of advanced capitalist societies" (Hollingsworth and Hanneman, 1982).

[3]Although such criticisms cannot be taken lightly, it is apparent that the case-based and variable-based analyses often fail to recognize that their perspectives are reconcilable—and that their research agendas can be complementary rather than contradictory (Ragin, 1989).

[4]Jenkins and Brents (1989) have usefully distinguished policy formulation (defining the goals for major policy innovations) from policy-making (specifying the statutory and administrative means to realize the goals of policy formulation), arguing the state-centric approach concentrates on the latter not the former.

[5]The first point is adapted from Gerschenkron's model of economic backwardness; the second is from Olson's *The Rise and Decline of Nations.*

[6]I cannot possibly give these events the attention they deserve. Ferguson (1989) and Lake (1990) provide important interpretations (which I have relied on extensively).

[7]Part of the rationale for adopting more liberal trade policies was that lower tariffs were viewed as an antitrust measure that would increase competition and forestall greater industrial concentration.

[8]Even the infamous Smoot-Hawley tariff passed in 1930, which increased a number of tariff duties, affected a relatively small range of goods (Lake, 1990).

[9]The National Industrial Recovery Act of June 1933 provoked a strike wave, culminating in three major strikes in San Francisco, Toledo, and Minneapolis, in

1934 (Valelly, 1989). Federal arbitrators' neutrality—siding with neither business nor labor—put an end to efforts to conciliate business during Roosevelt's first administration.

[10]When layoffs are governed by seniority, a significant obstacle is added to them, improving the security of all employees. Employers can no longer pick and choose among their work force and are obliged to lay off at least some of their more productive employees. Rules on layoff are frequently linked to a system of internal job distribution. So every layoff involves a considerable redistribution of remaining jobs, which is of considerable expense, and is exacerbated by the fact that employers have little control over who gets distributed where.

[11]It has been argued that a key maneuver of the second "New Deal" was the pragmatic decision to eschew collective solidarity in exchange for a rhetoric of protecting traditional American values of individualism (Skocpol, 1988).

[12]Uncoincidentally, a major product of the more favorable political climate has been diminishing economic inequality. The tighter labor markets of the postwar era were a key influence in the decline in inequality from the late 1940s to the mid-1970s—by approximately 25 percent—a decline concentrated during Democratic administrations, and no doubt related to the Kennedy-Johnson administration coinciding with the longest economic expansion of the postwar era. This in itself provides a sharp contrast to the expansion during the Reagan era when inequality rose to a postwar high. By 1986, all the progress made toward greater inequality since the mid-1960s had been erased (Harrison and Bluestone, 1988:118). The ratio of the top 20 percent to the bottom 40 percent from 2 to 1 was to roughly 1.5 to 1 (Hibbs, 1987a:239).

[13]Government intrusion into industrial relations increased even more once the Landrum-Griffith Act of 1959 passed. This act allowed the government to review unions' internal functioning.

[14]As Vogel points out in contrast to the New Deal, the Great Society "neither expanded the authority of government over industry nor acted to empower political constituencies that threatened corporate interests" (1989:25).

[15]The 1946 autoworkers strike failed to achieve a role in redirecting class relations and postwar economic policy, which some observers believe was possible. However, in my view, this failure was a manifestation of the CIO's inability (or any reform movement) to surmount the structural constraints imposed by its environment. It is in this sense that Orren's (1986) analysis, in my view, misses an essential point. It is true that labor has had some (modest) success in interest group politics. But the trajectory of the decline of the American labor movement is one unprecedented among advanced capitalist nations. Only Japanese unions have declined as consistently and for as long as have American unions (Kelly,

1988). Furthermore, that labor has been unable to protect even its own particularistic interests is shown in the passage of the Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffith Acts, over its vehement opposition. Significant failures more recently include:

1. 1975 organized labor put its remaining muscle behind legislation to legalize common situs picketing that would allow picketing of entire construction sites in disputes with individual contractors. Although the measure passed Congress, it was vetoed by President Gerald Ford.
2. The failure of efforts to repeal section 14b, the right-to-work clause of the Taft-Hartley Act.
3. The emasculation of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act; once any government responsibility to provide jobs as a last resort was eliminated, it became an empty symbol (Vogel, 1989).

Orren's analysis does show labor to have been an important advocate of policies to promote economic expansion, which may constitute a contemporary variant of the trade protection strategy, given a reduced capacity to pursue autarky in an environment of greater international economic dependency. Such policies do not divide interests of labor from those of capital, or other class groups; rather, they tend to coordinate those interests.

Examining the 1946 legislative agenda, which included "national health insurance, hospital construction, federal aid to education, government support for public and private housing, higher and more comprehensive minimum wages, social security programs, and unemployment insurance, school lunches, mine safety, and nondiscrimination in employment. I think it is fair to say that success was modest. Since then union strength has declined steadily" (Goldfield, 1987:25). I would argue, moreover, that the 1980s should have put this view to rest, having revealed even more dramatically the limitations of the interest group approach with which the postwar labor movement has been most successful.

[16]However, Plotke's analysis suggests the Piven and Cloward thesis may well be wrong, because working-class radicals were by no means the major force accounting for the passage of the Wagner Act.

[17]In fact, the stunted democratization of the South caused Therborn (1977) to date full democratization in the United States from the 1970s.

[18]Even strong CIO unions failed to make concerted efforts to stem losses of membership and bargaining leverage (Goldfield, 1987:50).

[19]In addition to the long-term, or secular, causal relationships, there are also recurrent cyclical patterns. In this vein, Vogel (1989) has argued that over the past thirty years, the political power of business has been greatest during downturns and least during booms.

[20]Reagan's efforts to trim social programs concentrated on these low-income public assistance programs (Skocpol, 1988). According to a recent study, even though the Reagan administration promised to preserve a "safety net" of social programs for the poorest Americans, the reality was strikingly different. The programs protected provided benefits primarily to the nonpoor. Defense spending was to be untouched and the main Social Security programs were off limits, so that the bulk of the cuts had to come from the means-tested programs benefiting the poor. This meant that the cuts would disproportionately fall on African-Americans, especially black women and children" (Slessarev, 1988:357).

CHAPTER 7

Homogeneous Labor and Class Formation

Class formation presupposes a prior conception of class. As Therborn has elegantly described it,

> The rationale for paying attention to class and class formation is our assumption that such a common economic location ensures an inherent tendency to common collective action. In general, class is simultaneously an objective and subjective phenomena, both something independent of members' consciousness and something expressed in conscious thought and practice. From this it follows that "class formation" must be conceived as a double process. In its objective aspects, class formation is a socio-economic process accompanying the development of a mode of production: the process of agents moving into, being shaped by, and being distributed between the different kinds of economic practices which constitute the given mode of production. . . . In its subjective aspect, on the other hand, class formation is an ideological and political process of the tendential unification of class members into forms of common identity and of concerted action as conscious class members in relation to members of other classes. (Therborn, 1983:39)

The links between class formation and class theory, however, are at times concealed by the presumption that labor as an entity, "collective labor," is homogeneous. This expectation that class collective actors are invariably homogeneous shapes the debate regarding the relative significance of cleavages due to racial and ethnic factors versus those due to

class solidarities as axes structuring social competition and conflict. It is not infrequently maintained that, given the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States, class cannot be a significant principle of cleavage. But the emphasis on autonomous primacy obscures what may be most important as well as most interesting from the vantage point of understanding collective behavior—those instances in which racial and class cleavages intersect.[1] Accordingly, racial, ethnic, religious, and regional identities may often be structured through relations of production. As Allen and Smith have argued, whenever bases of social differentiation produce corporate groups, they are as essential to national class structures as are any other forces (Allen and Smith, 1974:41). Of course, they are not necessarily reducible to or fully explicable in terms of such structuring.

In this concluding chapter I will argue that class theorists must accept the proposition that the predisposition to regard classes as normally or naturally homogeneous is untenable, that sources of fragmentation are not second order imperfections, comparable to the status of market failures for neoclassical economists. This central proposition leads to a number of issues that reflect the relevance of this analysis to Marxist class theory.

A theory of class formation must provide a plausible microfoundation. Clearly, the traditional Marxian microfoundation of class formation is inadequate. The classic argument of the early Marx that a transition occurs from a class-in-itself determined strictly by objective and generally anomic economic relationships to a class-for itself where positions within an economic structure are modified by political and ideological considerations is untenable in the absence of an adequate microfoundation. As Erik Olin Wright has argued, Marx's class theory combined "a polarized abstract concept of the 'empty places' generated by class relations and a descriptively complex map of concrete actors within class struggles, with no systematic linkage between the two" (1985:7).

Marxists have erred by relegating intraclass cleavages to the status of superstructural effects, such cleavages being considered epiphenomenal, but their bourgeois counterparts are no less guilty of emphasizing race at the expense of class, in effect subsuming class categories into racial and ethnic identities. For example, Parkin's influential *Marxism and Class Theory* (1979) asserts the primacy of race and ethnicity but fails to specify the relevant criterion used to make this judgment. Thus, his claim that race, language, and religion are either as important or are more important than production relations in creating social cleavages de-

pends largely on their capacity to generate open conflict. But the incidence of violence is a poor measure of relative importance in collective action (Korpi, 1983:23). Yet the reasoning here is consistent with a long-standing presumption in class theory that collective labor is invariably homogeneous. Consequently, one category is deemed essential, the other subordinate.

This analysis has provided a means to integrate racial/ethnic divisions and class solidarities without the reduction of either. Marxian class theory is based upon the homogenizing tendencies of the capitalist mode of production. While Marx believed that classes must be at least potentially capable of behaving as collective actors, this hardly means social classes as Marx understood them were necessarily homogeneous. For example, there is "a very long list of important points of short-term and long term conflict inside the class—about as much as beset the capitalist class. All of them are rooted in, and some concern only, intra-class competition for livelihood" (Draper, 1978:66). Thus Marx argued in *The Poverty of Philosophy"* (1963:172) that for the proletariat, internal organization to restrict competition with each other must precede organizational competition with the bourgeoisie.

Nor is it only the Marxists who have overemphasized homogeneity. Non-Marxian analysts of economic development, especially those associated with modernization theory, have long argued that economic development diminishes differences in the living conditions of wage earners. But as we have seen, the economic organization of workers in the Gilded Age offers a contrary example. This was an era in which the United States was on the threshold of becoming the world's leading economic power. Yet its labor force was becoming more heterogeneous, not less. That this occurred in an advanced and ascending economic power, rather than a backward and declining one, means that the assumption that heterogeneity is unnatural, exceptional, or the result of marginality is unacceptable.

This analysis has argued that homogenization is only a tendency, that labor is neither invariably homogeneous nor heterogeneous. Rather, where craft unions offer a viable strategy of representing the economic interests of significant portions of labor, the mode of class formation will be strongly particularistic, and heterogeneous class fractions are likely to emerge. In dispensing with the presumption that labor is necessarily homogeneous, we must recognize that the institutional context of class organization is not given. Rather, groups and organizations respond to the structural constraints embedded in their environments.

Episodes of class formation and class conflict do not organically emerge as the oppositions of holistic homogeneous unities. Rather the degree of heterogeneity is a product of the forces that determine the manner of working-class organization, and may emerge in a number of ways. Workers (particularly at relatively early stages of capitalist development) are rarely equally dispossessed of all the means of production nor equally free in their ability to dispose of their labor power. Maintaining access to means of subsistence outside the wage relationship signifies an only partially proletarian class position. To use Olin Wright's terminology, contradictory class locations result from the pace of development of capitalist relations of production. Female factory workers up to the mid-nineteenth century in the United States had alternatives to an increasingly proletarianized factory life (Kessler-Harris, 1982). They were displaced by European immigrants who lacked such alternatives. Similarly, at the beginning of the Gilded Age, workingmen partway down the path between journeymen and factory wage laborer sought to unilaterally adopt rules controlling the sale of their labor power (Montgomery, 1981). Or turning to the case of miners in Carmaux, who in the 1880s and 1890s underwent a transition from *paysan mineur* to *ouvrier mineur.* While the *paysan mineur* had still been half farmer, half miner, and therefore somewhat independent, the *ouvrier mineur* was entirely dependent on mining for his subsistence (Kaelble, 1986:55). Thus, differences in the pace of proletarianization are one major reason for the fragmentation of class collective actors.

If class issues have at times appeared to be artificially grafted onto explanations of American social and political conflict, and therefore seem out of place, it is because we insist on viewing classes from a perspective biased in favor of class organizations as universalistic. The significance of class in the United States is undervalued by the presumption that class action requires holistic actors. Rather, class as an aspect of social interaction presupposes the ability to behave as a collective actor. To put it another way, collective actors structured by production relations are class actors. Organizations composed of associated producers in relatively common or equivalent relations of production are class organizations. Although the extent of universalism or particularism depends on forces other than the relations of production, workers are organized as a class whenever they are organized as workers.[2]

Universalism and particularism are not embedded in the relations of production, although production relations do cause fragmentation (Burawoy, 1985). There is no inherent reason why class organization must be

universalistic. According to Przeworski, individual workers, firms, and sectors each have incentives to pursue particular interests at the expense of more general ones. Collective discipline, or in other words, organization, is required to overcome intragroup competition. "Hence in order to overcome competition, workers must organize and act as a collective force" (Przeworski, 1986:21). The AFL in the Gilded Age was a class organization inasmuch as it organized a specific class fraction. Yet, class is a salient principle in political conflict only when workers through their representative institutions make it one. Forms of class organization are partly tactical based on strategies used by specific class interests (Przeworski and Sprague, 1986). Where emphasizing class is successful, it becomes more visible.

Neither homogeneity nor heterogeneity is preordained; it results from the interaction between structure and choice. I would challenge and seek to extend E.P. Thompson's well-known thesis that classes are primarily formed through conflict and consciousness. That classes are formed in struggle does not free class struggle from structural constraints. The constraints are also not merely those defined by "capitalist relations of production," as is the inclination of many Marxists, orthodox and revisionist. But I do not mean to imply that class formation can be reduced to structural antecedents alone. Here, we enter the domain of choice. Individuals, groups, and classes confront structures of choices whereby their decisions make a difference. If workers did nothing, no organization would emerge, and they would find themselves trapped in a Hobbesian state of competitive anomie—perhaps the condition that capitalists (at least through most of the industrializing era) would choose for them. But the choice of how to organize is limited, based on constraints in their environments.[3]

The thrust of this analysis has been that particularism (the inclination to organize on the narrowest basis possible) is an initial impulse, because organization is difficult, but one that prevails only where and when it is a reasonable adaptation to the social structural environment. Yet it is not only the United States for which homogeneous labor is an untenable assumption. I would argue that the historical conditions in Britain and France during the eras in which industrial capitalism was becoming dominant also favored the emergence of (moderately or strongly) particularistic labor movements. Conditions such as early industrialization, the availability of large domestic markets, and (in France and the United States) mass democratization prior to modern industrialization furthered already present tendencies toward labor stratification. The result has

been a particularistic mode of class formation in each nation. In each case, artisans formed a strong labor constituency, supporting the premise that early industrialization favors the emergence of working classes with strongly heterogeneous tendencies. The recourse to restrictive organizing practices by particularistic labor movements simulates the options available to small or narrowly defined groups, as explained by rational choice theory. The resolution of the collective action problem favored the emergence of small stable groups.

Informal solidarity both preceded and stimulated formal organization. In Britain and America, high wages provided an economic base for trade unions jerry-built onto preexisting organizational forms. Artisans played a critical role in early industrialization in Britain and America. According to Cochran (1981), they increased the pace at which technological advances were applied. Thus, supporting Hobsbawm's (1984) argument, craft unions viability is critical for forming labor aristocracies whence heterogeneous class formation is to be expected. In France, the emergence of highly paid semiskilled workers made possible a coalition of industrial and artisanal labor in contrast to the exclusivity evident in British and American working-class development. Moreover, French wage differentials between skilled and unskilled workers were narrower (Tilly, 1988). Yet the appearance of greater French solidarity obscures a pervasive underlying heterogeneity, evident in a manner of class formation weighted in favor of long-surviving artisans well into the era of relative industrial maturity. Consequently, the capacity to create a cohesive collective actor floundered, while emphasis went to the inevitable preoccupation of artisanry—the prevention of their own obsolescence.

The size of domestic markets in the United States (and in France as well) was sufficient to promote protectionism. The intersectoral payoffs associated with trade protection facilitate cross-class alliances that fragment labor (Gourevitch, 1977). Hence, the labor federations most likely to become dominant in larger, relatively closed economies are decentralized and supportive of protectionism. Protectionism encourages decentralization in the labor movement, aiding the development of strong producer coalitions. Moreover, as gains from unionization begin at lower levels of union density in larger countries, any further development toward the broad, cohesive labor movements characteristic of smaller nation-states is often short-circuited (Wallerstein,1987a).

Certainly, distinctive national characteristics remain discernable in these examples of heterogeneous class formation and the emergence of particularistic labor movements. In America, intra-ethnic solidarity was

heightened by the emergence of mass enfranchisement prior to industrialization, depriving workers of an explicitly political basis for cohesion (Dawley, 1976). That Britain industrialized first and possessed a colonial empire gave labor aristocrats both symbolic and tangible stakes in a conservatively defined national interest. For France, gradual economic development permitted a closure around particularisms, sectoral, regional, and industrial, resulting in one of the lowest levels of union densities of any capitalist democracy.

HETEROGENEOUS LABOR AND CLASS THEORY

The implications of this comparative analysis of class formation extend to the core of class theory. If classes are to be at least potential collective actors, the a priori presumption in favor of homogeneous labor must be rejected. Instead homogeneity and heterogeneity must be seen as varying along a continuum determined by distinct historical structural contexts. In the United States, for example, the labor market situation of various ethnic and racial groups was sufficiently distinctive to permit the emergence of separate class fractions. Unions provided a means to control access to jobs in a number of industries, and by restricting such access, ethnic and occupational queues and wage differentials could be established. The above comparison of national cases suggests that the strong relationship between skilled workers and craft unions represents a structurally conditioned alternative, rather than "an inertial tendency that skilled workers will follow naturally unless diverted by fear of mechanization or other powerful countervailing forces" (Hanagan, 1988).

Where skilled workers and craft unions are most prominent, it is because structural conditions favor labor particularism. Thus, it is not that craft unions offer the *only* rational alternative for labor solidarism, as Hanagan believes Grob is guilty of suggesting, but rather they provide perhaps the most rational recourse in environments with certain definite characteristics.

The ossification afflicting the corpus of orthodox Marxism is shown by the fact that each of the factors considered earlier falls into the category of superstructure. But classes do not emerge objectively, that is to say in economic terms, and then undergo political and ideological modification (Burawoy, 1985). Poulantzas perceptively criticized such economistic presumptions, arguing classes are formed simultaneously within economic, political, and ideological relations.

> There is no economic self-reproduction of classes over and against an ideological and political reproduction. . . . There is, rather precisely a process of primary reproduction in and by the class struggle at all stages of the social division of labor. This reproduction of social classes (like their structural determination) also involves the political and ideological relations of the social division of labor (Poulantzas, 1975:30)

Thus, the tension between homogeneous and heterogeneous labor emanates from the very essence of economic relations. Marx argued that capitalism promotes homogenization of labor, through the concentration and standardization of large-scale industrial production. But as Olin Wright points out,

> Yet his [Marx's] political analyses reveal a complex depiction of classes, fractions, factions, and social categories. For example, in the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, all of the following social actors are referred to: bourgeoisie, proletariat, large landowners, aristocracy of finance, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, the middle class, the lumpen proletariat, industrial bourgeosie, high dignitaries. Marx made no effort to present a sustained theoretical analysis of these categories and of the underlying concepts being employed. (Olin Wright, 1985:7)

The emphasis paid here to structural constraints must not obscure the role of strategic calculations in forming collective labor. Market relations invariably individualize class relations: Workers competing against each other are inevitably driven to undercut each other's wage demands. Organization can eliminate or at a minimum attenuate competition among workers, allowing a collective identity to emerge. But when mechanisms of segmentation permit association into clusters, between-cluster competition is inevitable, and such competition can sow divisiveness. Given segmentation, individuals confront different structures of choices, and because of segmentation, they will confront those choices in a less unified, less coherent (and more particularistic) manner (Przeworski, 1986:97).

The preceding chapters have shown how mechanisms of fragmentation and closure are each implicated in the formation of class identities. Fragmentation proceeds from the fact that seemingly coherent group interests have a strong tendency toward decomposition, demonstrating the necessity of continual reinforcement. Group solidarity depends upon the

frequent reinforcement of material incentives. But internal solidarity also rests on the effective use of strategies of closure, that is, upon mechanisms that define a principle of inclusion (Parkin, 1979). While efforts at closure are never completely successful, they are more attainable when certain characteristics—small size, ascriptive identities, simple motives, and so on—are present than in their absence. Efforts at closure follow what can be termed a principle of least resistance, whereby narrower forms of solidarity preempt the possible attainment of broader forms, an expectation that follows the "logic of collective action" (Olson, 1971). Particularistic forms of class solidarity effectively transfer this simulation of a small group to larger environments by means of important scale economies, for example, the lower unit cost of organizing large groups given the more efficient amortization of fixed costs in such assets as the dissemination of information, education, and propaganda.[4]

Marx believed capitalist relations of production generated mechanisms consistent with this principle: The association of individuals in production leads to the recognition of shared conditions and common interests that facilitate but do not assure their organization. But paradoxically, association is transformed into solidarity only by fostering closeness, for example, as in the manipulation of racial, ethnic, religious, and gender similarities that simulate small group environments in building group identities. Internal solidarity and external exclusion are thus complementary rather than oppositional tactics. Offe reiterates this conclusion, arguing that

> . . . organized trade union coalitions always display a dual tendency of building up internal solidarity only to the degree that they practice external exclusion. Before the potentially coercive strategic advantages of collective action can be realized, those competing suppliers who cannot be included in the framework of solidarity . . . must be driven out or eliminated through sanctions. (Offe, 1985:34–35)

Yet segmentation does not merely resolve the collective action problem for workers; it is a preferred option for capital as well.[5,6] Segmentation and class organization each facilitate the reassignment of a substantial proportion of the risk inherent in capitalism to weaker, unorganized segments. Just as capital prefers monopolistic to competitive competition in the markets in which they sell (while preferring competitive to monopolistic competition in the markets from which they buy), workers likewise prefer monopolistic to competitive selling of their labor

power, or to put it another way, they desire to not be homogeneous labor. "Strategies pursued by actors in the labour market also prevent the market form of perfect competition from prevailing" (Offe, 1985:58). For example, in 1896, Republicans and Democrats each advocated a type of protectionism. But differences in its form were due to the contrasting perspectives of capital and organized labor. Capital, seeking protection from foreign goods, promoted tariffs as the preferred remedy. Organized labor desiring protection from foreign workers preferred restrictions on immigration (Mink: 1990:135).

The drive to protect is innately structural. According to Berger and Piore (1980), segmentation is a commonality in capitalist societies, a response to the inevitable problems of political instability and economic uncertainty. The redistribution of uncertainty is a consequence of labor market institutions that arise in response to worker unrest and are the proximate cause of duality in the labor markets of advanced capitalist societies. Structuring is a response to the conflict between the inherent insecurity of capitalist economic activity and pressures by organized groups for protection and security. But the dissimilarity in the agendas of capital and labor are also illustrated by an additional twist—capital desires not merely its own segmentation, but also the segmentation of labor. By coordinating their interests with those of some workers at the expense of the rest, capitalist control—which is to say their political domination or hegemony—is strengthened. Segmentation benefits capital.[7]

In their understandable desire to exit from environments governed by conditions of perfect competition, workers can form trade unions (a collective strategem) as well as acquire skills (primarily an individualistic one). These appear to offer contrasting alternatives, one individualistic, the other solidaristic. However, craft unions provide a means to reconcile the two, exemplifying the simultaneous use of association for particularistic ends and the augmentation of individual attributes through collective action. The adaptability this suggests is perhaps responsible for their endurance, especially as these characteristics are also found among occupational associations that operate similarly for middle-class and professional workers (Oppenheimer, 1985).

This adaptability is at best a mixed blessing. Craft unions are a dominant but dynamically suboptimal choice because of their limited political power, whereas the at times lesser economic power of industrial unions is balanced by their influence over a much larger constituency, essential to the exercise of political influence (Marks, 1989). Yet, since capital inevitably possesses the advantage of superior resources, craft

labor's advantage against other workers is itself a disadvantage against capital because labor's primary advantage lies in its superior numbers. This numerical advantage is meaningful, however, only through organization, or as Therborn argues, "collectivity—the capacity for unity through interlocking, mutually supportive and connected practices" (1983:41).

What this suggests is that the strategies employed by closed unions and particularistic labor movements inevitably surrender a vital resource, perhaps indicating why particularistic labor movements have been especially ineffective in adapting and formulating effective responses to the crises of contemporary capitalist democratic societies. As discussed in Chapter 6, there is not only a logic in particularism, there are also limits to its efficacy.

Arguably, the organization of workers is invariably problematic due to the necessity of superseding "the paradigm of hegemonic individualism" endemic to the social relations of capitalism. According to Offe and Wiesenthal (1980), workers can only associate, while capital can merge. Labor particularism is perhaps the most accessible form that such association can take during the early phases of industrial capitalist development. As Perrot (1987) argues for France, in what may be a valid universal generalization, skilled laborers are the primary beneficiaries of labor movements in their early phases.

To reconcile the essential Marxian premises of class action with a plausible account of collective action, class theorists must recognize that the predisposition to regard classes as normally or naturally homogeneous is untenable, and that sources of fragmentation are not second-order imperfections, comparable to the status of market failures for neoclassical economists. This means we must specify the factors that influence the form of class organization, because that form is not determined by capitalist relations of production.

Classes exist only within specific and definite institutional contexts, and class formation depends by definition on the extent of integration of the economic, political, and social institutions of the working class. Symbiosis enhances class cohesion: When parties organize unions or vice versa, the links between them should be closer and more organic than when they emerge separately and autonomously. Alternatively, if unions are securely in place well in advance of the formation of working-class parties, their relationship will be more disjointed and particularistic forms of class formation should be more evident. Whereas if parties substantially precede unions, the reverse is more likely, given that parties

(once they reach the stage of maturity where trade-offs between constituencies are necessary) are more effective with supraclass as opposed to purist electoral strategies (Przeworski and Sprague, 1986).

But according to classical Marxism, the relationship between economic and political organization is evolutionary and inherently uniform. Economic and political interests necessarily coalesce, leading inevitably to revolution. For Marx, then, the organization of workers as a class grew naturally from their association and pursuit of self-interest. Economic interests were particular and political interests were general, and they essentially could be perceived as complementary.

> Every movement in which the working class comes out as a class against the ruling classes and tries to coerce them by pressure, from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt to force a shorter working day out of individual capitalists by strikes, etc. is a purely economic movement. On the other hand the movement to force through an eight-hour law is a political movement. And in this way, out of the separate economic movements of the workers there grows up everywhere a political movement, that is to say, a movement of the class, with the object of enforcing its interests in a general form, in a form possessing general, coercive force. (McLellan, 1977:589)

Luxemburg extended this reasoning, arguing that the relations between trade unions and political parties were complementary as well as contradictory. She argued that each represents, during periods of normalcy, institutions through which the organization of workers as a class takes place.

> In the peaceful "normal" course of bourgeois society, the economic struggle is divided, dissolved into a manifold of individual struggle in each enterprise, in each branch of production. On the other hand, the political struggle is not directed by the masses themselves through direct action but, corresponding to the form of the bourgeois state, takes place in a representative manner through pressure on the legislative agency (Luxemburg, 1971:252). . . . Trade unions represent the group interests and one stage of the development of the labor movement. Social democracy represents the whole class and the cause of its liberation as a whole. Therefore, the relation of the trade unions to Social Democracy is that of a part to the whole. (Luxemburg, 1971: 253)

At the time, the significance of such distinctions was obscured by the orthodox presumption that the working class would become the vast majority of the population (Engels, 1964:27). This notion was based on a belief that the logic of capitalist development was such that the middle class would be undermined, and most individuals would become members of one of the two dominant classes. Most of these individuals would sink into the proletariat, and it was therefore only a matter of time before the proletariat represented the majority of the population, and with the establishment of universal franchise, workers would realize their goals. Hence, workers' exercise of political power held out the promise of achieving what economic power alone could not—a series of victories whose end result would be socialism.

In class struggles, there must be an initial although not static understanding of who is and is not included. Before a class can engage in conflict, there must be some means of identifying its principals: core agents, allies, and enemies. The United States may never have produced a grand theorist like Karl Kautsky able to convincingly if erroneously assign actors to definite places (Przeworski, 1977).[8] But even without such mapping in theory, a process of mapping in practice is unavoidable. Labor particularism effectively assigns actors to places as a tactical recourse, perhaps that most likely to emerge during industrial capitalism's early phases—when the numerical weight of artisans and craft workers is still such as to constitute the major working-class force to be reckoned with.

Class as a determinant of social interaction presupposes the ability to behave as a collective actor. To put it another way, collective actors structured by production relations are class actors. But class is a salient principle in political conflict only when workers and their representatives, particularly their political representatives, make it one (Przeworski and Sprague, 1986). Class organization is at least partly endogenous, a consequence of strategies used to pursue working-class interests. Institutions create classes—at least when what we mean by class is an organized collective agent. Thus organizational capacities shape even the very recognition of classes.

THE INCORPORATION OF WORKERS INTO PARTICULARISTIC SOLIDARISM

Chapters 3 to 5 of this book analyze the evolution of American workers in a period of rapid industrialization. In the development of the American

working class, ethnic divisions, operating through the medium of trade unions, created barriers between groups of workers, restricting the possible avenues of cooperation. At the same time, increasing economic concentration and the emergence of a hegemonic corporate elite stimulated major changes in the relations between labor and capital. A less antagonistic, perhaps more enlightened but certainly more paternalistic approach began to supplant the consistently acrimonious style of labor relations. Even though the era of cooperation did not last, it further encouraged the separation of the strong from the weak, insulating less organized from unorganized segments of the working class.

> The essence of this trade union strategy can be stated simply: Labor must never seriously challenge big business and the government. Avoid head-on collisions with big corporations and with government. Team up with those industrialists and politicians who seem inclined towards a live and let live policy with the craft unions. Make peace with the employers on certain terms which keep the craft unions alive even if this means increased victimization of the unskilled and semi-skilled. This policy was soon institutionalized in the National Civic Federation. (Foner, 1977:277)

The AFL came to represent the most effective voice for the organized, by providing a respectable alternative to the more militant voices that advocated social disruption. The willingness of some sections of the business and reform communities to accept the AFL as a legitimate representative of labor gave credence to the enlightened view that class antagonisms were controllable by means other than force. The legitimacy conferred on the AFL strengthened the hand of those like Samuel Gompers on labor's side who favored "pure and simple" trade unionism. That this relationship favored capital immediately is suggested by the inclusion of trade unionists in a movement of reform-minded capitalists—the Progressives.

The attempts to establish active cooperation between business and labor were in the best of times only partially successful and ultimately failed due to:

1. an environment in which the benefits from collaboration were less appealing than those from the unrestricted pursuit of self-interest.

2. the narrow articulation of interests consistent with decentralized autonomous unions meant that organized workers were dwarfed by the unorganized. Potential strikebreakers were thus ever-present in the calculations of industrialists, and organized labor was incapable of representing the excluded.
3. the source of labor's strength, the ability to restrict access to employment in craft trades was itself a major weakness as new occupations and industries became more important to the nation's economy.
4. the fact that the corporate elite was unable to win sufficient support from other capitalists, particularly small businessmen, partly because labor repression was still a viable option.

Though the period of peaceful relations did not last, it did help to redirect labor away from radical tendencies and class-exclusive politics. The significance of the adaptation made by the AFL trade unions then lies not just in the immediate wage and status gains made, but perhaps more importantly in its ability to survive. While pre-AFL unions had risen, declined, and disappeared in accordance with business cycle fluctuations, the AFL was the first to avoid this pattern. Though susceptible to the rhythms of the economy, they did survive until better times returned.

That the AFL was able to achieve a place as an accepted representative of the economic interests of labor was related as well to the willingness of members of the business community to recognize the advantages a conservative, economistic labor movement offered to their own interests. Though counterfactuals are never provable, it is at least plausible that if American business leaders had not shown flexibility, but remained wedded to the hard-line approach preferred by many smaller and more conservative businessmen, then the AFL's philosophy of accommodation may well have been repudiated, or deferred to a later date, in conjunction with more extensive organizing of industrial workers.

The theoretical, historical, and comparative portions of this analysis have sought to show that, properly understood, neither the development of the American labor movement nor that of the American welfare state are extraordinary. The seemingly exceptionalist characteristics of the United States are consistent with a general pattern. American exceptionalism is a paradigm in search of a problem. Within the appropriate context, references to exceptionalism are unnecessary, and violate the rule of

parsimony in theory construction. The same variables can be employed to explain the structure of the labor movement in the universe of democratic capitalist societies. Degrees of universalism versus particularism can be accounted for by examining the conditions existing during the industrializing era of these national societies.

The collective power of labor is determined by a combination of historical and structural conditions. Such conditions as the extent of ethnic fragmentation, the timing and rapidity of industrialization, the relative sequencing of democratization to industrialization, and the export sensitivity of the national economy in combination create environments conducive to alternative, fragmented particularistic labor movements and broader, more encompassing ones. The fragmented particularism that characterizes the American trade union movement is a consequence of the conditions within which it developed.

Furthermore, differences in the collective power of labor strongly influence the general characteristics of welfare states. The strength of the labor movement in terms of its ability to collectively articulate non-elite interests in capitalist democracies is strongly associated with welfare state extensiveness, for example, the degree to which citizens are insulated from the vagaries of the marketplace. The stronger the particularism of working-class movements, the less universalistic are their eventual welfare states.

Contemporary welfare state characteristics combine the influence of different national structures and of differing national strategies. Universalistic welfare states are founded on historic compromises between labor and capital. The solidarism of broad, encompassing labor movements is essential for creating a strong universalistic welfare state. Workers in these countries underutilize their organizational power, in effect exchanging lowered strike rates, a manifestation of a cooperative bargaining stance, for more expansive welfare states. Sometimes, though, not always left governments are the medium for this exchange.

Broad, encompassing movements act on principles that can be termed "conditional solidarity." Periods of protracted economic difficulties subject this mode of organization to great stress. Yet the lower levels of infant mortality in such nations suggests that differences in national strategy are not simply different routes to the same goal but that outcomes differ depending in part on the mixes of political strategies and government policies with social structural constraints.

Examining class formation comparatively, it is evident that national labor movements go through periods during which their institutions for

collective action emerge and become distinct. By moving from bargaining over the existence of wage labor to the conditions and terms of wages, the strongest and most cohesive of national labor movements have been able to negotiate compromises that have increased the social wage, permitted a voice in decisions concerning production, and so on, culminating in the social democratic compromise of wage restraint in exchange for full employment. Inadequate individual bargaining power through markets has been supplemented, although not eliminated, by superior political bargaining power through collective institutions. The decommodification of labor and a high degree of relaxation of the sovereignty of the marketplace are key objectives in this case (Esping-Andersen, 1985b).

On the other hand, particularism, once established, is extremely difficult to dislodge. Viewed through a rational choice perspective, particularism represents a dominant though suboptimal choice strategy. Yet particularism as an option is not simply a choice but is also a trap (Macy, 1989). Its immediate accessibility carries with it a burden that is only recognizable past the point in time dramatic changes are possible. Rather, once interest groups establish noncooperative modes of interest bargaining, cooperative encompassing modes become unattainable. Olson (1982, 1983) has argued that destabilizing upheavals (e.g., war or revolution) are required to change existing patterns of interest group intermediations.

An interesting question in light of contemporary developments concerns the consequences for those societies where particularistic modes of interest intermediation are no longer viable. Arguably, the growing interdependence of the United States within the international political economy has lessened the viability of its ingrained particularism. For example, the intensification of international economic competition undermines the capacity of domestic economic actors to maintain accords out of line with wage and benefit packages elsewhere. Interests groups, however, are not analogous to lizards or leopards—they can't shed their skins or remove their spots—and then choose more suitable responses (they may in fact be more appropriately compared to dinosaurs). In this manner, they are prisoners of their pasts. Second, the collapse of solidarism can be expected to lead to greater particularism, but it is not necessarily the case that the converse is true as well, that particularism's inadequacies inevitably strengthen solidarism. In terms of the Olson scenario, the more likely outcome for labor movements under such circumstances is decline.

NOTES

[1]Katznelson (1981a) has cogently argued that class collectivities may be composed of amalgamations of heterogeneous subgroups which are serially linked.

[2]In this sense, I would suggest the classic orthodox Marxist dictum needs to be inverted. While it is argued that workers' economic organization reflects only partial interests and are hence vulnerable to economism, their political organization is considered as the true representative of their class interests. But unions are necessarily class organizations; political parties may or may not be.

[3]The relative importance of structure versus agency can be addressed only in particular contexts. In making comparisons, the more similar the structures, the more differences can be attributed to volition. The more dissimilar the structural environments, the less important is agency. Second, the truism that action can change structures is valid in that institutional structures are in effect residues of past behavior.

[4]Less obvious scale efficiences involve the lowered average costs of surveillance, to insure compliance (Bowles, Gordon, and Weisskopf,1984).

[5]As has been independently recognized by the Marxian divide-and-conquer model of intraclass segmentation (Reich, 1981; Roemer, 1979) and the institutionalist theory of economic segmentation.

[6]The limitations of the Olson model are evident here in that his optimal state of perfect competition condition is inconsistent with the incentive structures faced by labor and capital. "Olson implicitly posits an absurd counterfactual: a society without political organization except for the ideal liberal state, distributionally neutral and Pareto optimal" (Bowles and Eatwell, 1983:219).

[7]Two recent innovations in segmentation are urban enterprise zones and the reemergence of sweatshops. As Burawoy has argued, such zones are attempts to return some areas to the nineteenth century by withdrawing labor protection, abrogating minimum wage laws, health and safety regulations, and national labor legislation. In some countries, Italy and the United States in particular, artisanal workshops and sweated domestic work subcontracted out by large firms have reemerged. According to Portes and Walton, this phenomenom is a peripheralization of the core (Burawoy, 1985:149).

[8]Although it has produced many claimants to that throne, beginning with Daniel DeLeon.

Appendix A

Cross-sectional data is used throughout this analysis. Though criticized by Lieberson (1985), Bollen and Jackman (1985) argue that cross-sectional data are more relevant for examining long-term changes than are time-series data. Immigration rates were derived by dividing total immigrants by total population. Measures of immigration rates, export rates, and strike rates are generally averages of ten-year periods, reducing the chances that a temporary yearly fluctuation will carry undue weight. For example, 1960 measures are averages of 1955–1964. War years were excluded, making 1920 an average of 1919 to 1924, and 1950 the average of 1948 to 1954. For obvious reasons data was not available for 1940.

The timing of industrialization was determined by averaging a number of indices—the year in which 1 million tons of iron ore were first produced, the year in which 1,000 kilometers of rail lines were first in operation, the year in which 500,000 tons of pig iron were first produced, and the year in which industry was first half as large as agriculture in national product (Mitchell and Deane, 1962; Flora,1983). These are traditional measures of economic development used to explain the advent and extent of industrialization. Cippola (1973) uses iron production and railway line development in his determination of levels of industrial development. Landes (1969) uses railroad mileage and pig iron production. Mathias (1969) makes use of iron and steel production, structure of the national product, and the distribution of the population by occupation. According to Hobsbawm (1969:39), "The arrival of the railway was in itself a revolutionary symbol and achievement, since the forging of the

globe into a single interacting economy was in many ways the most far-reaching and certainly the most spectacular aspect of industrialization." Railway building stimulated industrialization in every nineteenth- and early twentieth-century industrializing country (Gourevitch, 1986:73).

Both iron ore and pig iron production favor mineral producers. However, Shorter and Tilly similarly distinguish metallurgy, engineering and hardware, mining, and transportation as examples of modern industry, and agriculture, wood, paper, food, and construction as representative of artisanal technology (Shorter and Tilly, 1971:75–76). These indices are meant to approximate threshholds of substantial *initial* industrialization, in ways conducive to mass production. Thus, while measures of industrialization based on railway lines or iron production may be biased against particular countries, the seriousness of this bias is lessened by the limitation that it only used to indicate attainment of a *threshold.* Moreover, the growth of the textiles industry, perhaps the only general alternative, does not effectively discriminate between nations undergoing industrial transformation and those which do not. Textiles lack the strong backward and forward linkages that stimulate further industrialization (Cochran, 1981).

The paucity of available data limits the indices in other cases, especially for Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. In these countries, sources indicate that significant industrialization was underway well before aggregate historical records became available. Cases in which the earliest year recorded was the year in which the criterion was reached were not used unless it was later than the year established by another indicator. Presumably, the variety in the components of the indices will partly counterbalance the weaknesses of individual measures.

For the measures of the timing of industrialization (I) and democratization to industrialization (DI), square root transformations were used as indicated by the square root sign ($\sqrt{\ }$) (in Chapter 1). This technique is used to stabilize variance when threshold effects may exist.

The index of industrial rapidity (IR) is based on the per capita levels of industrialization in Tables 9 and 15 in Bairoch's (1982) "International Industrialization Levels from 1750 to 1980." The index of industrial rapidity is created by dividing the level of industrialization reached in 1913 by that reached in 1860 for each nation, respectively.

There is no best way to measure industrialization's rapidity (IR). Bairoch's use of percentage increases exaggerates the rate of growth when beginning from a small base. This problem has both a statistical

and substantive dimension because as Gerschenkron (1962) has pointed out, the more delayed the industrial development, the more explosive the growth, or in other words the smaller the base, the larger the percentage increase. By using absolute standards we reduce this problem, although it raises the bias given the lack of uniformity of industrialization in different countries. Second, as argued by Gerschenkron, per capita measures can be due to extraneous conditions such as resource endowments, or climatic conditions. I have relied upon those factors emphasized by economic historians as being most important within the confines of available published data for the relevant period given the constraint that such data be available for most if not all of the nations in the group.

Economic openness is measured by export rates that were derived by dividing total exports by GNP. Immigration and export rates between 1890 and 1920 (where available) were averaged over the entire period.

Democratization was determined by the year in which 85 percent of the male population age twenty years and over achieved the franchise (Flora, 1983; Mackie and Rose, 1982). While the difference between the year of democratization and that of industrialization is meant to provide an indication of the relative proximity of these two transcendent forces, it is insensitive to qualitative differences in democratic development, as well as to interruptions in democratic conditions.

For example, suspensions in democratic development are neglected such as occurred via the antisocialist laws in Germany from 1878 to 1891, in France under Napoleon III, and the United States following Reconstruction. Instances of gerrymandering (unequal representation), are also disregarded. However, the attainment of universal and equal suffrage generally occurred after the period relevant here, meaning it can hardly be a critical feature for developments that preceded it. Pressures toward democratization may thus be more meaningful in this context than the actual arrival of full democratization as represented by full universal and equal suffrage. Second, the 85 percent benchmark indicates the entry into and participation of wage earners in the political system, yet maintains a relatively stringent criterion consistent with the timing of mass democratization used by other observers. For example, similar dates are used by Hewitt (1977) for the year attaining responsible government.

Table A.1 Indices of Industrialization and Democratization

Country	iron ore 1 mil ton	rail line 1000 km.	pig iron 500 tons	I = ½ Nat. Prod.	Composite Index	85% Democratization
Austria	1873	1847	1887		1869	1897
Belgium		1854	1869		1861	1894
Canada		1854		1870	1862	1920
Denmark		1880			1880	1895
Finland		1883		1938	1910	1907
France	1838	1846	1846	1825	1838	1849
Germany	1854	1843	1856	1857	1852	1874
Italy		1854	1926	1908	1896	1913
Netherlands		1870			1870	1918
Norway		1880		1865	1872	1900
Sweden	1892	1863	1897	1889	1885	1921
Switzerland		1860			1860	1919
U.K.	1855	1838	1827	1788	1817	1918
U.S.	1860	1834	1846	1869	1852	1830

Appendix B

The correlation between 1960s unionization and 1960s industrial disputes is ($r = –0.55$, $p = 0.05$).

As shown in Table B.1, in Equation 1 the relationship between the DI index and industrial disputes was significant ($p= 0.05$, $n = 14$). In Equation 2 (which excludes the U.K.) *DI* and *I* were significant ($p = 0.05$, $n = 13$). Equation 3 (excluding the U.K. and Finland) adds the effect of 1890–1920 immigration rates to the variables in Equation 2, and was not quite significant ($p = 0.08$, $n = 12$). In Equation 4 (also excluding the U.K. and Finland), the combination of *DI* and 1890–1920 immigration rates was significant ($p = 0.05$, $n = 12$). In Equation 5 (also excluding the U.K. and Finland), the combination of *DI* and 1890–1920 export rates was significant ($p = 0.05$, $n = 13$). Italy is excluded in Equation 6 in which the *DI* and *I* indices significantly predicted 1960 industrial disputes ($p = 0.01$, $n = 13$).

Given the exploratory nature of this analysis there is no inherent basis to assume that the relation between the dependent and independent variables is strictly linear. The pattern of residuals indicated that square root transformations of the independent variables might be appropriate, which was done for the democratization to industrialization (*DI*) and industrialization (*I*) indices. These indices were standardized on a 0 to 1 scale that allows a square root transformation of what would otherwise be negative numbers for *DI* in the case of the United States and Finland. Square root transformations mean increasing returns, indicating that as the period between democratization and industrialization increases, the reduction in the rate of industrial disputes accelerates. The Cook distance

Table B.1 Regression on 1960s Industrial Disputes

Independent Variables	1	2*	3**	4**	5*	6***
(√) DI	–0.54	–0.69	–0.70	–0.69	–0.62	–0.78
(√) I		0.15	0.17			–0.51
1890–1920 Imm. Rates			0.12	0.09		
1890–1920 Export Rates					–0.16	
R-SQUARE	0.29	0.50	0.51	0.48	0.49	0.59
P	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.05	0.05	0.01
SE	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.08
N	14	13	12	12	12	13

(√) square root transformation
* minus U.K.
** minus U.K. and Finland
*** minus Italy

statistic indicated that the United Kingdom was a significantly influential case, and suggested that Italy might be influential as well.

As shown in Table B.2, contemporary Group I nations had higher export rates and lower immigration rates between 1890 and 1920. The timing of industrialization for Group I nations followed that of Group II nations. Industrialization occurred more rapidly in Group I than in Group II, while the period between democratization and industrialization was greater for Group I than for Group II. Strike rates of Group I nations have declined since 1950, while those of Group II nations have risen dramatically.

As shown in Table B.3, in equation 1 based on the diminished vs. non-diminished strike rates grouping, 1890–1920 export rates and the rapidity of industrialization *IR* had the largest coefficients (relative to their respective standard errors) in the model (.01 chi-square significance). The second contrast between corporatist and noncorporatist nations placed Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, and Belgium in one group, with Germany, Canada, France, Italy, the U.K., and the U.S. in the second. In Equation 2 based on this corporatist/non-corporatist contrast, 1890–1920 export rates, the timing of industrialization *I,* and industrial rapidity *IR,* had the largest coefficients

Table B.2 T-Tests of Means of Historical/Structural Indicators of Diminished Strike versus Nondiminished Strike Rate Nations

	Group I Nations	Group II Nations
Years between industrialization and democratization (DI) ($\sqrt{}$) *	34.5	26.8
Year attaining substantial industrialization (I) ($\sqrt{}$) *	1870	1864
Years between substantial industrialization and industrial maturity: Rapidity of industrialization (IR) ($\sqrt{}$) (a) **	20.2	36.7
Socialist Legislative Strength (1945–1965) (SLS) ($\sqrt{}$) (b) *	38	26
Year attaining responsible government ($\sqrt{}$) * (a)	1886	1874
1890–1920 Export rates/GNP (b)	0.29	0.17
1890–1920 Immigrant rates/pop. *	0.001	0.006
1950 Industrial disputes **	0.03	0.31
1960 Industrial disputes **	0.02	0.20

* 0.05 significance
** 0.01 significance
(a) minus Belgium
(b) minus Finland
($\sqrt{}$) square root transformation

(.01 chi-square significance). The third contrast—between larger and smaller nations—divided Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland from Austria (pre-imperial dissolution), Germany, Italy, France, the U.K., and the U.S. In this equation, 1890–1920 export rates had a larger coefficient than industrial rapidity *IR* or the timing of industrialization *I* (.01 chi-square significance). The results were obtained from the B34SII, an econometric software program developed by Dr. Houston H. Stokes of the Department of Economics at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Table B.3 Probit Models of Capitalist Democratic Groups

Structural Variables	1	2	3
Democratization/ industrialization (DI)	1.77 (12.32)	–0.75 (7.81)	
Timing of industrialization (I)		2.82 (6.22)	12.04 (14.32)
Rapidity of industrialization (IR)	5.32 (22.98)	–1.89 (5.76)	8.02 (7.92)
1890–1920 export rates	10.34 (101.06)	21.37 (43.86)	28.08 (56.37)
1890–1920 immigrant rates	–4.28 (2242)	0.28 (572)	–1.62 (417.77)
Chi-square significance	0.01	.01	.01
N	13	13	13
(–2.0) times log likelihood ratio	13.98	17.37	15.80

Coefficients = Maximum Likelihood Estimate * variable mean
(Standard errors in parentheses)
(1) *Diminished strike-rate vs. nondiminished strike-rate nations*
(2) *Corporatist vs. noncorporatist nations*
(3) *Larger nations vs. smaller nations*

The *DI* variable figured less prominently in the results obtained in this analysis than in the regression analyses in the earlier paper (Joseph, 1992). However, in the earlier analysis the dependent variable (strike rates) was linear, in this case the dependent variables were categorical.

As shown in Table B.4, using the ratio of taxes levied by central governments to GNP as an indicator of centralization, it is the nations in the second group that consistently have levied higher tax ratios, significantly so in 1900 ($t = 0.05$) and 1910 ($t = 0.05$), and nonsignificantly from 1890 through 1950. While this is obviously not a definitive test, especially for earlier years where only a few cases are available, there is no evidence here that past state interventionism begets future interventionism.

Table B.4 T-Tests of Means of Central Government Taxes/GNP Ratios of Diminished Strike Versus Nondiminished Strike Rate Nations

	Group I Nations	Group II Nations
1890 Taxes	0.04(a)	0.06(b)
1900 Taxes *	0.05(c)	0.06(b)
1910 Taxes *	0.04	0.06(b)
1920 Taxes	0.07(d)	0.12(e)
1930 Taxes	0.08	0.13
1950 Taxes	0.17	0.19
1960 Taxes	0.18	0.19

* .05 significance

(a) Includes Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden; minus Netherlands, Switzerland.

(b) Includes Italy, U.K., and U.S.; minus Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France.

(c) Includes Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden; minus Switzerland.

(d) Includes Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland; minus Germany.

(e) Includes France, Italy, U.K., U.S.; minus Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland.

Appendix C

The index of concentration is obtained by dividing the percentage of the ethnic group in the particular occupation by the percentage of members of the occupation in the total sample. For example, since laborers were approximately 41 percent of the total and 19 percent of laborers were NWNPs, the concentration ratio of NWNP laborers is 47, demonstrating that NWNP laborers were underrepresented by more than half. However, since native whites of both native and foreign parentage were substantially overrepresented in white-collar and professional occupations, the results shown here do not as fully reflect their overall employment situation as for ethnic groups lacking access to higher status positions. Furthermore, underrepresentation and overrepresentation can only be assessed relative to other opportunities. Given native white American's superior access to white-collar occupations, being underrepresented in some blue-collar occupations is an advantage; on the other hand the underrepresentation of blacks in blue-collar occupations is to their detriment.

Index of Concentration: 1890

Occupation	NWNP	NWFP	BRIT	GERM	CANA	IRISH	SCAN	BLACK	OTHER
laborer	47	75	55	87	48	165	64	212	170
blacksmith	86	94	128	133	171	108	110	21	44
cabinetmaker	72	84	60	314	91	15	254	23	87
carpenter	162	84	121	117	296	46	209	21	52
ironworker	99	136	176	85	60	79	82	34	49
machinist	159	123	174	95	91	35	153	7	38
mason	106	102	169	102	55	95	36	35	73
painter	142	133	100	115	113	35	124	28	68
plasterer	58	116	250	63	49	138	29	59	26
plumber	165	197	82	28	67	43	20	8	14
woodworker	211	100	56	138	96	19	82	23	64
bld. trade	127	127	144	85	116	71	84	30	47
metalworker	115	118	157	104	107	74	115	21	44
furniture maker	142	92	58	226	94	17	168	23	76
laborer	47	75	55	87	48	165	64	212	170

Source: U.S .Bureau of the Census: 1890

Index of Concentration: 1900

Occupation	NWNP	NWFP	BRI	GER	IRE	CAN	SCA	AUS	ITAL
laborer	58	78	47	73	133	49	50	124	198
blacksmith	85	100	130	122	121	133	102	103	30
cabinetmaker	63	68	57	318	16	270	280	209	43
carpenter	161	85	145	125	56	299	265	82	32
iron/steel	106	120	139	109	92	173	89	134	16
machinist	158	124	175	121	60	119	153	51	8
mason	100	99	147	87	115	50	35	26	149
painter	139	118	113	135	54	150	148	116	22
plasterer	89	112	176	63	141	84	23	24	86
plumber	116	167	103	85	103	86	22	44	8
woodworker	115	132	68	171	41	121	44	94	62
bld. trade	121	116	137	99	94	133	99	58	59
metalworker	116	114	148	117	91	142	115	96	18
furniture maker	89	100	63	245	29	196	162	152	53
laborer	58	78	47	73	133	49	50	124	198

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census: 1900

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