

# CLASS AND POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENCE

*"Marxism Lite"  
and Its Blind Spot  
for Culture*

Dick Houtman



# **Class and Politics in Contemporary Social Science**

*“Marxism Lite” and Its Blind  
Spot for Culture*

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Class and Politics  
in Contemporary  
Social Science

*“Marxism Lite” and Its Blind  
Spot for Culture*

DICK HOUTMAN

Translated by Sheila Gogol



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For Veerle, with love

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## Preface

This book is an expanded revision and translation of my book *Een blinde vlek voor cultuur: Sociologen over cultureel conservatisme, klassen en moderniteit* (A Blind Spot for Culture: Sociologists on Cultural Conservatism, Class and Modernity), published by Van Gorcum in the Netherlands in 2000. It argues that contemporary non-Marxist social scientific theories such as Lipset's on working-class authoritarianism, Kohn's on class and conformity, and Inglehart's on the Silent Revolution are nevertheless examples of Marxism lite because they assume it is class or economic background that shapes people's values.

Despite their differences, the three theories are based on largely identical research findings—in particular a strong negative relation between education and authoritarianism. Unobstructed by the conclusions these authors felt called upon to draw from the findings themselves, they are theorized here in a new way. The hypotheses derived from this new theory allow for a systematic strict and competitive testing of the original ones. This procedure leads me to conclude that authoritarianism/libertarianism cannot be explained by class or economic background, but rather by position in the cultural domain (cultural capital). Although all of the statistical relations Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart base their theories on are replicated in this book, it nevertheless demonstrates that the conclusions they draw from them at a more general theoretical level are untenable.

Apart from demonstrating that authoritarianism/libertarianism cannot be explained by class or economic background, I study the implications of this for today's death of class debate in political sociology. I demonstrate in this context that it is quite unfortunate that the relevance of class to politics is typically addressed by studying the relation between class and voting. This conceals a complex cross-pressure mechanism that causes this relation to capture the net balance of class voting and its opposite, cultural voting, instead of class voting. Although references to a decline in class voting are basically correct, reliance on this relation between class and voting to prove the point systematically underestimates levels of class voting

and produces an exaggerated picture of the decline. Political sociology's deeply rooted one-sided class approach to politics thus in quite an ironical way prematurely digs its own grave.

My point is not that class plays no role in the explanation of political values. Indeed, there is ample evidence in this book that unlike authoritarianism/libertarianism, economic liberalism / conservatism *can* be explained this way. My point is simply that class can not explain *every* type of value orientation and that authoritarianism / libertarianism figures prominently among the values it can not explain, notwithstanding the "Marxist lite" theories cited above that claim otherwise. Although I feel that in Marxist and non-Marxist sociology alike, the traditional dominance of a one-sided class approach to politics seriously impedes the social scientific understanding of cultural and political change over the past few decades, an equally enthusiastic embrace of a cultural approach can not satisfactorily solve political sociology's problems in dealing with these processes either. As each has its merits, be it for the explanation of fundamentally different types of political values, a dogmatic acceptance of one approach paired with a downright rejection of the other impedes an adequate theorizing of the complexities that underlie today's changing patterns of voting behavior. This book has achieved its goal if it can convey these points to at least some of its readers.

This book has benefited from the efforts of any number of people. First and foremost, the numerous colleagues who commented on some of its ideas over the past eight years or so, be it in positive, negative, or even downright destructive ways. Their reactions have convinced me that the book's argument is empirically and theoretically sound and defensible. In a more general sense, the ideas and findings of all the authors listed in the References have been indispensable in developing my own position. Two of them should be mentioned by name because their work has so profoundly influenced this book, albeit in ways not easily discernible to the casual reader.

The first is American neo-Marxist sociologist Erik Wright. He was one of my intellectual heroes when I was a sociology student in the mid-1980s. Not because I considered myself a Marxist then—or now—but because of the exceptional clarity, analytical rigor, and utter originality of his work. It convinced me at an early stage that class analysis can and should be much more than messing around with tenuous class measures used in isolation from any theoretical context. This is characteristic of much of mainstream sociology's reliance on the class concept, which is presented as a sort of black box that is indiscriminately linked to whatever other variables happen to be at hand.

The second is Cees Middendorp. I feel that his *Ideology in Dutch Politics: The Democratic System Reconsidered (1970–1985)* (Assen: Van Gorcum 1991)

is the finest book available on the topics addressed here and deserves far more international attention than it has received. Everyone who knows this book will undoubtedly note its influence, although I do disagree with Middendorp on a number of points. His death in the summer of 1995, when I was in the United States on a TALENT Fellowship from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), came as a shock. Though he was also at the Erasmus University Faculty of Social Sciences, albeit in another department, his untimely death kept me from discussing my ideas on class and politics with him. I nevertheless want to pay my intellectual debt and posthumously pay my respects to him here.

Then there are of course the people who helped make this book possible in more conscious and deliberate ways. Peter Achterberg, who is working on a Ph.D. thesis on the decline of class voting, is the co-author of Chapter 7. Without his exceptional skills in large-scale data analysis, the book would not have included this chapter. I thank him for his efforts and it is with pleasure and confidence that I look forward to our further collaboration in the years ahead.

In 1998 Manu Busschots, my research assistant at the time, skillfully conducted the statistical analysis cited in Chapter 5 of this book and was the co-author of a previous article in Dutch that was based on it. Inge van der Tak has been my extremely helpful research assistant for a couple of years now. A promising young sociologist herself, she has displayed an accuracy, speed, and insight that have never once disappointed me. Her assistance in producing the tables and the list of references for this book was indispensable.

Sheila Gogol translated the original Dutch text and corrected the English of the newly added material. I lost count of the number of e-mails we exchanged on the translation of technical sociological and statistical concepts. So the reader is warned: if he or she comes across English that raises the eyebrows, it must be one of the few passages I inserted at the very last moment without consulting her. By then she had already been so sympathetic to my numerous proposals for changes and revisions that I did not dare bother her with even more of them. I appreciate her patience and understanding and I am perfectly satisfied with the end result of her efforts. She is the perfect translator to work with.

Roelof Meijering of Van Gorcum Publishers, the Netherlands, deserves my gratitude for his generous efforts in furthering the publication of an English translation of my Dutch book. Thanks are also due to his American colleague, Aldine de Gruyter's Richard Koffler, of course. Mostly because of a combination of my youthful naiveté, the holidays inconveniently planned by Peter Achterberg and myself last summer, and an unforeseen work load in July and August, I could not hand over the manuscript until a few months later than we had originally agreed upon. I

appreciate his patience and understanding, as well as his sense of humor. I feel that at last I even understand his “tovarich” joke.

My closest colleagues at Erasmus University, Peter Achterberg, Stef Aupers, and Peter Mascini, deserve my gratitude for creating the perfect working conditions. I appreciate the way they contribute to a climate that is intellectually challenging and socially enjoyable, effectively eliminating any excessive friction between professional and private life and between work and fun. Stef, gifted young sociologist of culture and religion that he is, will probably consider this remark another striking confirmation of one of his own theories.

Finally, I want to acknowledge two institutions for their invaluable support. This book could not have been written without the financial support of Erasmus University and NWO. Both of them gave me postdoctoral fellowships that enabled me to continue my research efforts until January 2000. NWO also provided a translation grant, without which this book might not have appeared. As it happens, I initially felt I would find it too much to bear to spend endless hours translating older work rather than exploring new territories where the grass is always greener, or so one believes. Somewhat to my own surprise, however, I enjoyed working on this book, but then again that is where Sheila came in as a translator.

Chapters 2, 3, and 5 are marginally revised translations of three chapters in the Dutch book. Chapters 1 and 8 have been reworked in such a way as to reflect that this book addresses the debate on the decline of class voting more extensively than its Dutch predecessor. This issue is taken up in Chapters 6 and 7, which together replace Chapter 6 in the Dutch book. This Chapter 6 was radically revised, and its final section has been transferred to Chapter 7, which is otherwise new. Chapter 4, on Inglehart’s theory of the Silent Revolution, is also largely new. It replaces another chapter on the same topic.

Just as I started making the initial preparations for this book in January 2001, Veerle was born. Now that it is finished, my cute fluffy red-haired little devil is actively and spiritedly exploring the world Astrid and I feel grateful to have put her in—a world as yet mostly inhabited by friendly creatures such as her four-year-old brother Joep (“Jappe”) and a flock of pet cats (“mauw”), dogs (“eit”), sheep (“sjaap”), and pigs (“jarke”). It is to her that this book is dedicated. I love her more than words can express.

Middelharnis  
November 2002

# 1

## **“Marxism Lite”: Modernity, Industrialism, and Culture**

The Marxist interpretation of society seems in decline throughout the industrialized world. Its emphasis on economic factors as the driving force of history . . . is of diminishing value as scarcity diminishes and new problems emerge.

—Ronald Inglehart, “Value Change in Industrial Societies”

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Especially after the dramatic collapse of Communism behind what was once the Iron Curtain, symbolized about fifteen years ago by what has since come to be known as the Fall of the Wall, Marxism has been widely viewed as politically bankrupt. Nowadays there is a tendency to conclude that Marxist social scientific theories are similarly no longer to be taken seriously. All things considered, however, this is an odd notion.

After all, political ideas ought to be measured by quite different standards than social scientific theories: they do not have to be “true.”<sup>1</sup> The only thing that matters is whether they can inspire social movements, political elites, and voters to work toward a better world. They can only play this role as long as there is a discrepancy with the surrounding social reality. Once political ideals are realized, this discrepancy disappears and they consequently lose their significance as sources of inspiration for political action and fade into history’s oblivion. Social scientific theories, however, should not be judged by their capacity to inspire political action. What matters is that they accurately represent reality: the effort to capture a certain similitude between scientific theories and the reality outside them is the guiding principle of science. Of course we find certain theories beautiful or attractive for aesthetic, political, or other reasons, but in the end, as the English say, the proof of the pudding is still in the eating.



The value of a social scientific theory might thus be said to diminish as the discrepancy with the surrounding social reality grows, whereas the value of a political idea only increases. This is why it is somewhat surprising that nowadays with the world more capitalistic than in the 1960s or 1970s, Marxism should have lost so much of its political standing in Western societies. It is even more surprising to see how many social scientists conclude that ever since the collapse of Communism, Marxist social scientific theories are also no longer "true." The most surprising thing of all, however, is that many of the non-Marxist theories now considered superior are just as based on the assumption that culture is solely a reflection of material states of affairs as their Marxist counterparts were. It is this assumption, as it is elaborated in several influential contemporary social scientific theories, that occupies a central place in this study. None of these theories are Marxist, but they do nonetheless all work from the point of departure that people's values are shaped by their economic position or background. This is why they are referred to as "Marxist lite" theories in this book.

By way of introduction, this chapter addresses several issues that are crucial to a proper understanding of the theme of this book and how I approach it. I focus on the sociological roots of the above-mentioned materialist assumption in Section 1.2, formulate the research questions addressed in this study in Section 1.3, and briefly outline my approach in Section 1.4. I close this introductory chapter with a discussion of the data files I use in Section 1.5 and the further structure of the book in Section 1.6.

## 1.2. MODERNITY AS INDUSTRIALISM

### 1.2.1. Conflict Sociology and Functionalism

Very few periods in the history of sociology have been as consequential as the 1960s, which marked the end of a lengthy period of intellectual domination by American structural functionalism with Talcott Parsons (Harvard) and Robert Merton (Columbia) as its leading spokesmen. The question of exactly what happened in this period and why, and what the effects were, is still dividing sociology today. Should the events at the time be predominantly viewed as intellectual or as cultural and political developments? Was it the start of a crisis in sociology or indeed the birth of a new and better sociology? And if so, how does this new and better version differ from its predecessor? Have sociology and politics since become more intertwined or less? And has this done any damage to sociology or not? These are a few of the important questions whose answers are still controversial and probably always will be (Cole 2001; Horowitz 1993; Lemert 1995; Lopreato and Crippen 1999; Seidman 1994).

These questions go beyond the scope of this book and will thus remain unanswered here. Only one ramification of the turbulence of the 1960s needs to be addressed to put the themes examined in this study in their proper perspective. It has to do with the tendency since that time, especially evident in American sociology textbooks, to contrast functionalism and conflict sociology as two diametrically opposed paradigms. It is undisputed that sociology has since been characterized far more than before by theoretical pluralism. It is also undisputed that conflict sociology and functionalism are two of the most influential theoretical approaches. It is ironic, however, that precisely because conflict sociology has since been so widely accepted as an attractive alternative for functionalism, important similarities between the two should have faded into the background.<sup>2</sup>

This is obvious from the very way Durkheim and Marx have been presented for the past three decades, once again mainly in American textbooks, as the respective founders of functionalism and conflict sociology (e.g., Conklin 1984; Macionis and Plummer 1997). Durkheim is viewed in this connection as a go-between linking Comte's work on the importance of a moral consensus for the preservation of social order and modern functionalism. Marx is depicted as the nineteenth-century founder of conflict sociology, in which coercion rather than moral consensus is viewed as the underlying cause of order and stability. Although this depiction is not entirely erroneous, it is one-sided and problematic.

In line with Collins (1975), perhaps the most influential conflict sociologist since the second half of the 1970s, one might wonder whether it is accurate to view Marx as the most important founder of the conflict paradigm. Collins himself seems to attach greater importance to Weber, who had much less of a tendency than Marx to reduce every conceivable disharmony in society to the conflict of interest between labor and capital (1986:11, 1992:7). As a questionable result of the fact that it is nonetheless common practice to cite Marx and Marx alone as the founder of conflict sociology, many textbooks give the impression that conflict sociology is little more than Marxist conflict sociology. It is more important for this study, however, that the construction of this opposition between Durkheim and Marx has caused two important similarities between them to fade into the background.<sup>3</sup> They can largely be traced back to the influence of Saint-Simon on both of them.

### **1.2.2. Marx and Durkheim: A World of Difference?**

The analysis of modern society as an industrial society is central to the sociology of Saint-Simon (1760–1825). In his view, industrialism heralds a new era in history, with all the ramifications this might have for social relations. He has no doubt about who will be the winners and the losers in this

new type of society. The nobility and the clergy are the most significant losers. They might well have occupied dominant positions in medieval society, but they no longer have a role of any importance to play in industrial society. Their parasitic and essentially useless military, political, and religious activities are replaced by a far more important one: contributing to industrial production (Kumar 1978; Manuel 1956).

According to Saint-Simon, the winners in the industrialization process are those who contribute to the preservation and expansion of industrialism. More than anyone else, they are the occupational categories responsible for the discovery and application of new technologies—inventors, scientists, industrialists, workers, and artisans. These changes in power relations are inevitable because an industrial society requires meritocracy. In this type of society, it is hardly possible to avoid rewarding people and giving them positions in society on the grounds of their skills and expertise. The importance of ascribed features such as social background and family ties is thus inevitably reduced under the influence of industrial development by achieved features like these. An industrial society is inevitably an open society.

Marx is not only strongly influenced by German philosophers and British political economists, but also by French thinkers like Saint-Simon. He was especially open to this influence during his stay in Paris in the 1840s (Cosser 1977:56–62). Marx conceptualizes modern society as a capitalist society. Its dynamics stem from the contradiction between the development of technology—the forces of production—and capitalist property relations—the relations of production. Since entrepreneurs have no choice in a system of capitalist relations but to strive to reduce their costs by way of technological innovation and exploitation of the working class, this contradiction inevitably increases. The same holds just as inevitably true of the intensity of the struggle between labor and capital. It will ultimately mean the end of capitalism. This then is Marx's social theory in a nutshell (Marx and Engels 1948 [1848]; Marx 1967 [1867]).

Like Saint-Simon, Marx sees modern society as an industrial society. He too feels its dynamics come from the development and application of new technology—the development of the forces of production. We have seen, however, that Saint-Simon awards a central position to the conflict between the two dominant estates of the old society, the nobility and the clergy on the one hand, and the two industrial classes, labor and capital, on the other. It is true that Marx adopts Saint-Simon's notion of antagonistic relations, but he uses it to drive a wedge between the two industrial classes: he does not position labor and capital side by side countering the nobility and clergy, but sees them as countering each other. Thus the relation between labor and capital is not depicted—as in the work of Saint-

Simon—as characterized by common interests and mutual dependence, but as based upon conflicting economic interests. Localizing the central social conflict in the heart of industrial society itself results in Marx's familiar depiction of modern society as a capitalist society.

In *The Division of Labor in Society* (1964 [1893]), Durkheim explains that shared values and norms can only constitute the basis for social cohesion in premodern societies. Partly because of the influence of industrial development, this mechanical type of solidarity is subject to erosion. In modern society, which consequently, also according to Durkheim, "is, or tends to be, essentially industrial" (1964 [1893]:3), social cohesion can no longer be based upon this kind of cultural similarity between people. Durkheim's central idea is that in this new type of society, solidarity comes instead from economic and functional differences between people: differences in capacities and occupational activities, as are manifested in the industrial division of labor. It is indeed the awareness of the mutual dependence this implies that is at the foundation of the social cohesion of industrial societies: mechanical solidarity is replaced by organic solidarity (Durkheim 1964 [1893]).

Because of this influential analysis, Durkheim cannot simply be viewed as a go-between linking Comte and functionalism. In essence, as Gouldner rightly notes, *The Division of Labor in Society* should be construed as a critique of Comte: "In his *Division of Labor* . . . Durkheim was not gropingly moving toward an appreciation of shared moral norms; he was, in fact, moving away from Comte's emphasis on their significance in modern society" (1958:xiii). It is precisely when he disagrees with Comte and holds that in industrial society, shared values and norms can no longer function as sources of social cohesion that Saint-Simon acts as Durkheim's most important source of intellectual inspiration. Since in the end both industrial classes have an interest in the preservation and expansion of industrialism, in Durkheim's opinion this is exactly what serves as the basis for the social cohesion of modern society (Fenton 1984:16).

In short, Saint-Simon's influence is evident in the work of Marx as well as Durkheim. Their analyses consequently have more in common than one might think, judging from most modern textbooks. Both of them see modern society primarily as an industrial society; they both localize the engine of social development in the heart of the industrial system, which they consequently view as the central institution of modern society. But of course there are also important differences between the analyses of Marx and Durkheim. The most striking one pertains to how they conceptualize the relation between labor and capital; Marx sees it as antagonistic and Durkheim as cooperative. Marx consequently views exploitation, labor conflicts, and class struggle as normal and inevitable side effects of capitalism,

whereas Durkheim sees them as abnormal excrescence. A somewhat deeper analysis of this difference soon reveals it to be a direct result of a second important similarity between the two. What similarity is this?

### 1.2.3. Industrialism and Culture: Marx and Durkheim on "Being" and "Consciousness"

Durkheim does not view conflicts between labor and capital as inevitable, but as resulting from a faulty organization of the industrial system. They can and should be avoided by organizing the system in a rational manner. This is his underlying line of thought when he propagates cooperation between labor and capital. He does so under the title "Some Notes on Occupational Groups" in the foreword to the second edition of *The Division of Labor in Society* (1964 [1893]:1–38). It is precisely the corporations Durkheim propagates here that can nourish the awareness of mutual dependence and thus further the industrial peace and reinforce organic solidarity.<sup>4</sup>

Durkheim's opinion on the abnormality of exploitation, strikes, and class struggle is not based on how frequently they occur. After all, whether strikes are only occasional or a society is plagued for years by class struggle does not affect Durkheim's answer to the question of whether they are "normal" or not. They simply are not normal. Just like employers who feel they have a right to exploit their workers, workers who feel there is an unsolvable clash of interests with "capital" bear witness, according to Durkheim, to a lack of insight into their shared interests. Although they cannot rightly be blamed, since this misunderstanding is due to the improper organization of socioeconomic life, the lack of insight still remains. Since it goes against the true nature of industrialism, Durkheim refers to the resulting conduct (strikes, exploitation, class struggle, and so forth) as pathological.

The notion of organic solidarity consequently plays a paradoxical role in Durkheim's analysis. Though according to him it is the normal course of affairs in an industrial society, in reality it is such a rare occurrence that in the foreword referred to above, he feels the need to recommend specific steps to reinforce it. His analysis thus leaves the possibility that though organic solidarity is quite normal, it nonetheless does not exist, as he indeed makes explicit in *The Rules of Sociological Method*: "A phenomenon can . . . persist throughout the entire range of a species although no longer adapted to the requirements of the situation. It is then normal only in appearance. Its universality is now an illusion since its persistence, due only to the blind force of habit, can no longer be accepted as an index of a close connection with the general conditions of its collective existence" (1964 [1895]:60–61).

Marx's assessment of these phenomena is diametrically opposed to Durkheim's. Industrial peace and cooperation between labor and capital are not normal at all, as Durkheim claims. In fact they are quite abnormal. This assessment is also independent of the extent of class struggle or industrial peace in a society. This is why, according to Marx, workers who feel they have the same interests as the capitalist entrepreneurs they work for have a false class consciousness: they lack rational insight into the true nature of capitalist society. Only workers who—like Marx himself—are able to totally comprehend capitalism and rationally translate their insight into a political struggle against capitalism have a true class consciousness.

In Durkheim's perspective, in short, there does not necessarily have to be organic solidarity for it to be normal, and from Marx's angle true class consciousness and class struggle also do not have to exist to be normal. Their ideas may indeed be diametrically opposed in this respect, but there is no denying that an important similarity is at the bottom of this difference between Durkheim and Marx: both of them have a tendency to use their own theories as the standard in judging the level of rationality of the ideas of the participants in social life. What is the relation here between scientific analysis and political evaluation? Is there indeed—as Marx and Durkheim suggest—a scientific basis for these judgments?

Marx and Durkheim are both convinced they have discovered the true nature of modern society. The problem, however, is that their characterizations are so different that they lead them to arrive at irreconcilably different ideas about the level of rationality of the ideas held by the participants in social life. According to Marx, industrial peace and cooperation between labor and capital are indicative of a widespread irrational false class consciousness in the working class. According to Durkheim, they are indicative of rational insight into the real nature of things. And, vice versa, according to Marx workers with Communist sympathies are the ones with a true class consciousness, whereas Durkheim views this as an indication of a situation that is pathological and wrong.

Since the two positions are logically irreconcilable, they cannot both be "true" or "scientifically grounded." What is really happening here is that moral and political judgments are being extracted from sociological theories, judgments that were inserted beforehand in the form of theoretical assumptions about what is "normal" or "abnormal," about what is "desirable" or "undesirable."<sup>5</sup>

Marx brings in political values via the labor theory of value he elaborates on in *Das Kapital* (1967 [1867]). According to this theory, the extent of exploitation of a worker is equal to the difference between the exchange value of the goods he produces and the wages he is paid. But is this a political value or a proposition that can be empirically tested? Why shouldn't the profit, for example, be interpreted as compensation for the risk taken

by the entrepreneur? Or as based on the surplus paid by the consumer? If we accept one of these alternatives, it means the collapse of the hard core of Marx's analysis of society. Only if we are willing to go along with Marx and view the worker's wages and the entrepreneur's profit as inextricably linked does this result in (1) a depiction of modern society as a capitalist society, (2) an irreconcilable conflict of interests between labor and capital, and (3) the possibility of accusing workers of false class consciousness if they do not declare themselves fond of socialism (Seidman 1994:40–45).

Durkheim similarly brings political values into his theory as assumptions. What he focuses on is the interdependence of workers and entrepreneurs. But is this a proposition that can stand up against scientific criticism? Or is this too a political value? How asymmetrical can a dependence relation be before we classify it as a power or exploitation relation? Aren't workers far more dependent on entrepreneurs than entrepreneurs are on workers? After all, aren't workers unable to earn a living if entrepreneurs are unwilling to hire them? And can't entrepreneurs replace workers with technology? If we answer these questions the way Marx does, then Durkheim's theory collapses as well. Only if we are just as willing as he is to assume that workers and entrepreneurs are mutually dependent does this result in (1) a depiction of modern society as an industrial society, (2) the mutual dependence of labor and capital, and (3) the possibility of calling conflicts between the two "pathological."

In addition to the fact that they both characterize modern society by how industrial production is socially organized, there is thus a second important similarity between Marx and Durkheim. Neither of them tends to take the ideas of the participants in social life very seriously. They both feel they can evaluate them as more rational or less rational. As their standard of judgment, they use the extent to which they coincide with their own politically charged assumptions about the true nature of modern society. In short, their theories have the same point of departure that under "normal" conditions—in other words conditions where everyone has rational insight into the real nature of modern society—the industrial system serves as the foundation of the moral and political values of the participants in social life. In reality, however, conditions are only rarely "normal" and people consequently often behave "abnormally." Fortunately there are sociologists like Marx and Durkheim then who are able to point out that we are dealing with false class consciousness or pathological conditions.

This shared logic has influenced modern sociology in a deep but paradoxical fashion. The notion that sociologists are able to draw a distinction between what is normal and what is abnormal has faded into the background. We rarely come across notions like false class consciousness or pathological conditions in modern sociological studies. This does not

mean the economic determinism of Marx and Durkheim has disappeared; it has only been radicalized. In the opinion of Marx and Durkheim, "being" only determines "consciousness" under "normal" conditions, but many contemporary sociologists assume that, in principle, this is always the case.

This idea manifests itself in three theoretical assumptions that are deeply ingrained in sociology's neopositivist mainstream: (1) that modern society is first and foremost an industrial society, (2) that cultural change is generated by industrial development, and (3) that the position people occupy in the industrial system determines their moral and political values. I will only go into the last of these assumptions at this point.<sup>6</sup>

#### **1.2.4. Class and Culture**

Until the rise of industrialism, European societies had a system of social stratification consisting of three estates. Clergy, nobility, and citizenry, each of course with further subdivisions, had their own roles and the privileges and obligations those entail. The clergy dominated the religious domain, the nobility the political and military ones, and the citizenry, trade and industry. The champions of industrial society focus on the first two estates as their targets. The activities of the nobility and the clergy, or so Saint-Simon and others complain, were essentially useless. Like parasites, they lived off the work done by the citizenry.

So it is not surprising that the first steps toward industrialism should have changed the thinking about social stratification. The traditional distinction between the three estates has been replaced by new economic distinctions alluding to positions within the division of labor. Starting in the eighteenth century, the concept of estate began to be replaced by that of class, in everyday language as well as the terminology of the political economists at the time. In the nineteenth century, a striking and revealing fusion of the concepts of estate and class took place, when estates came to be interpreted as occupational groups as well. This is still evident today, mainly in American sociology, where "class" and "status group" are often used as interchangeable concepts that both refer to occupational groups (Scott 1996:13–15).

In the discourse on social stratification in industrial society, it is thus economic distinctions, mainly occupational ones, that have come to play a prominent role. There are essentially only two different answers, linked to (mostly American) functionalism and (mostly Continental) Marxist and non-Marxist conflict sociology, to the question of how exactly sociologists should classify occupations into classes or status groups. In functionalism there is a conception of social stratification in terms of status groups, that is, occupations that rank higher or lower on a social ladder. In Marxist and



non-Marxist conflict sociology, two classes, and nowadays usually more than two, are distinguished on the grounds of their antagonistic relations in the economic domain. Although this often also happens on the grounds of occupation, the gradual functionalist conceptions of social stratification are replaced here by relational class divisions (Ossowski 1963; Wright 1979).

The differences between these two sociological approaches to social stratification are not relevant to this study. What is relevant is the observation that people's occupations or economic positions are often viewed as the foundation for their moral and political values. This idea is accepted in conflict sociology and functionalism alike. In writing about the significance of Marx in modern sociology, conflict sociologist Collins makes the following comment: "When properly understood, Marx's sociology appears to be basically correct. . . . A considerable amount of modern research indicates that one's economic position (that is, occupation) is a major determinant of one's life style, interests, and beliefs. . . ." (Collins and Makowsky 1972:41).

Inkeles, who is very much a thinker in the functionalist tradition, refers to precisely the same research results, although this time of course without concluding that Marx is right: "There is substantial evidence over a wide attitudinal and experiential range that perceptions, opinions and values are systematically ordered in modern societies. The proportion of people who give a particular response increases or decreases fairly regularly as we move up or down the typical status ladders of occupation, income, education and prestige. These patterns emerge not only in realms which are obviously closely related to status pressures but also in areas seemingly far removed" (1960:28).

What has been noted above pertaining to Durkheim and Marx is confirmed here as regards functionalism and conflict sociology: they are much closer to each other than contemporary textbooks would have us believe. The idea that people's occupations or economic positions shape their ideas plays such an important role in modern sociology that it goes way beyond whatever differences there might be between functionalism and conflict sociology. If this idea is belied by empirical research, rather than leading researchers to refute it, it inspires them to assume that the occupations have been mistakenly classified (e.g., De Graaf and Steijn 1997). And thus the hunt for the "correct" classification of occupations goes on. The question of how exactly occupations should be classified for the purpose of modern sociological research almost constitutes a field of empirical sociological research in itself. And of course the point of departure for this kind of research is: "Once we know people's occupations, this is a simple way to get a first impression of their identities" (Blees-Booij 1994:1).

### 1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### 1.3.1. Introduction

Of course I do not address the question of whether *all* people's ideas and conduct can be explained on the basis of their occupational group or class in this book. Instead I confine myself to only two types of political value orientations—economic liberalism/conservatism and authoritarianism/libertarianism—and voting behavior. As it happens, in much the same way that sociologists who position their work within the tradition of class analysis attribute economic liberalism/conservatism and voting behavior to class, influential American theories assume that authoritarianism/libertarianism can also be explained on the basis of someone's economic position or background.

#### 1.3.2. Economic Liberalism/Conservatism and Authoritarianism/Libertarianism

Numerous empirical studies demonstrate how necessary it is to draw a systematic distinction between two types of political value orientations. The first type is economic liberalism versus economic conservatism. It entails the extent to which people are for or against the state imposing restrictions on the inequality generated by a free market. The second type, authoritarianism/libertarianism, entails the extent to which people believe deviations from traditional values and norms are acceptable. As regards economic values, people who are in favor of economic redistribution by the state are defined as liberal and people who prefer a distribution based on the free market are defined as conservative. As regards the dichotomy between authoritarianism and libertarianism, people who feel individuals should be free to live their lives as they wish are defined as libertarian and people who believe deviations from traditional values and norms are unacceptable are defined as authoritarian.

Both types of political value orientations turn out to exist virtually independently of each other among the general population. Knowing people's ideas about the desirability of a more equal income distribution (economic liberalism/conservatism) thus hardly makes it possible to predict how authoritarian or libertarian they are. Libertarian values might well bear virtually no relation to ideas about income distribution, but the various values that constitute the former category are definitely strongly related to each other. People who find freedom of expression less important than maintaining the social order are also apt to feel that stimulating the individual development of children is less important than having them adjust well to the demands made by society. They are also apt to have a problem

with homosexuality, sexual liberty, and the decline of traditional gender roles and tend to be in favor of strict sentences for criminal offences and against immigration from non-Western countries (e.g., Mitchell 1966; Kelly and Chambliss 1966; O'Kane 1970; Felling and Peters 1986; De Witte 1990; Fleishman 1988; Middendorp 1991; Scheepers et al. 1992; Olson and Carroll 1992; Evans et al. 1996). This study includes values pertaining to economic distribution mainly to help clarify the explanation of the second type of political values. So the question is whether authoritarianism/libertarianism, like economic liberalism/conservatism, can be explained on the grounds of economic position or background.

In the literature, the reader will come across other terms for what I call "authoritarianism/libertarianism" in this book, in the same way as, for example, Flanagan (1982), Middendorp (1991), and Evans et al. (1996). Dutch authors often refer to cultural conservatism (authoritarianism) versus cultural progressiveness (libertarianism) (e.g., De Graaf and Steijn 1997; De Witte 1990; Felling and Peters 1986), and American authors use the terms "noneconomic" (O'Kane 1970), "moral" (Woodrum 1988a, 1988b) or "social" (Zipp 1986; Phelan et al. 1995), and "progressivism" (Davis and Robinson 1996) or "liberalism" (e.g., Brint 1984; Lamont 1986; Mitchell 1966; O'Kane 1970). All of these concepts thus refer to essentially the same type of authoritarian or libertarian values.

### **1.3.3. Martin Lipset and Melvin Kohn: Working-Class Authoritarianism**

Two influential American theories explain authoritarianism/libertarianism (i.e., the importance people attribute to individual liberty) on the basis of class. One was formulated in an influential article by Martin Lipset in 1959 and is included in his book *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (1960, 1981). In addition to introducing the important distinction between the two types of political values discussed above, in this article Lipset also argues that both of them are related to class, although in fundamentally different ways.

According to Lipset, the working class is only more liberal than the middle class if liberalism is defined in economic terms. If it is defined in the cultural terms of authoritarianism/libertarianism it is the middle class that is libertarian and the working class that has some pretty undemocratic, intolerant, and narrow-minded attitudes toward people who think differently. This is why Lipset's article is titled "Democracy and Working-Class Authoritarianism". Although it was published forty years ago, researchers are still debating the tenability of this theory. In this study, their differences of opinion are used as the point of departure for a systematic testing.

American sociologist Melvin Kohn also draws a link between class and authoritarianism. He does so more systematically than Lipset as regards theoretical precision as well as empirical proof. Kohn wonders why the position of the working class should yield authoritarianism in the first place. In an effort to answer this question, he breaks open the very concept of class, which leads him to the theory that the limited occupational self-direction of workers is responsible.<sup>7</sup> It is precisely this opening up of the concept of class, according to Spenner, that is Kohn's most important contribution to the study of the underlying causes of authoritarianism: "Two phenomena that one always sensed were linked in everyday life, social class and values, had a deeper causal explanation in work conditions. Earlier research had established clearly the empirical correlation between social class and values, but a puzzle remained as to the underlying mechanisms. The puzzle was solved when Kohn and colleagues dug deeper into the structured conditions of everyday life than the abstract labels of middle and working class that had dominated previous studies" (1998:169).

#### **1.3.4. Ronald Inglehart and the Silent Revolution**

In *The Silent Revolution* (1977), American political scientist Ronald Inglehart presents a third explanation for how people feel about the importance of individual liberty. He holds that those values cannot be explained by class. In this sense, his theory is very different from the ones formulated by Lipset and Kohn. Inglehart is mainly critical of Marxist theories, however, which he feels have decreased in value since World War II. He makes this very clear in the title of a chapter in one of his books, "The Diminishing Marginal Utility of Economic Determinism: The Decline of Marxism" (Inglehart 1990:248–88).

Inglehart holds that the political process in modern Western societies is shaped less and less by the economic distribution conflict between labor and capital and more and more by a conflict pertaining to political values. He refers in this connection to the political protests in the late 1960s, in which youngsters and students demanded a further democratization of society. They were not workers, Inglehart rightly notes; there was something new going on here that had nothing to do with the old-fashioned class struggle between labor and capital. However, he himself also attributes this new type of political conflict since the late 1960s to economic changes accompanying the development of industrial society. He does not emphasize the effects of changing structures of economic inequality in this connection, but refers instead to the consequences of greatly increased prosperity: "The emergence of a new type of protest in a time of high

prosperity was not a matter of sheer coincidence. Economic collapse may have produced a swing to the Left in the 1930s, but a prolonged period of affluence and physical security have led to the rise of a *new* Left in the late 1960s and early 1970s" (Inglehart 1977:262, his emphasis).

Inglehart thus denies that people's political value orientations are shaped by class, but nonetheless also explains cultural changes on the basis of economic ones. He too thus works from the Marxist lite assumptions that modern society is essentially an industrial society and that cultural features are shaped by economic ones. According to Inglehart, cultural change manifests itself in the ever-widening distribution of post-materialist values. He feels this new mentality is relatively stable and barely open to changes in people's personal prosperity, such as the changes that accompany an alteration in class or income. He attributes this to the fact that people's value orientations develop during their formative years and do not essentially change afterward. "For the most part, the Post-Materialists have grown up during times of economic and physical security; consequently they tend to take material security for granted and place more emphasis on other goals. Their parents and grandparents, on the other hand, grew up during the Great Depression or during one of the World Wars, when scarcity and physical danger were pervasive in many countries. Their value priorities today still reflect these formative experiences" (Inglehart 1977:364).

In addition to an important similarity, there is thus also an important difference between Lipset's and Kohn's theories on the one hand and Inglehart's on the other. The difference is that Lipset and Kohn explain the importance people attach to individual liberty on the grounds of class, whereas Inglehart alludes to the decisive role of the prosperity they experienced during their formative years. The similarity is that in both cases, people's *economic* position or background is assumed to determine their political value orientations. This is why these three non-Marxist theories are examples of what is called "Marxism lite" in this book.

### 1.3.5. The Relevance of the Three Theories

The reader has a right to know why I have selected precisely these three theories on the underlying economic causes of authoritarianism/libertarianism. Aren't there any other ones? There undoubtedly are, but there is a certain logic to my choice of these three. They are the three theories that have dominated this research field for the past forty years far more than whatever more or less random ideas might have been launched. It is simply infeasible for any research to be conducted into the importance people attach to individual liberty without repeatedly coming across the names and publications of Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart.

For four decades, Lipset has played an extremely active role in political sociology. Very few if any books in the field are cited as often as his classic work *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Lipset 1960, 1981). In addition, he has written numerous other prestigious books, articles and chapters and is perhaps the most influential political sociologist since World War II. I do not know who else would even remotely qualify for the title.

For about thirty years, Kohn's research has occupied a prominent place in American sociology, not so much in political sociology but more in the sociology of social structure and personality. This is underlined by the fact that Spenner referred in a recent overview to the research program of Melvin Kohn and his co-workers as "one of American sociology's most cumulative and productive research programs" (1998:170).

The same holds true of Inglehart. His first publications in the 1970s about the vast political consequences of rising prosperity generated a huge quantity of reactions and research. Lafferty and Knutsen made the following comment fifteen years ago on the research literature on Inglehart's work "The literature is . . . so extensive as to constitute a sub-discipline of 'post-materialist studies'" (1985:411), and Layman and Carmines more recently spoke of a "not-so-modest cottage industry" (1997:767).

In short, we are dealing here with the three most influential researchers and theories in the field. More than anyone else, Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart are the ones who have provided the intellectual stimuli over the past forty years: Lipset since the late 1950s, Kohn since the late 1960s, and Inglehart since the late 1970s. This is why the selection of their three theories is more or less inevitable. It is simply the most important work that has been done in the field.

### 1.3.6. Class and Politics: A Death of Class?

One of the issues addressed in Inglehart's *The Silent Revolution* is once again high on the research agenda of political sociologists since the 1990s, partly as a result of Lipset's efforts. As it happens, Clark and Lipset, in their polemically titled article "Are Social Classes Dying?" (1991, 2001a), put the cat among the pigeons of class analysis by defending the thesis that the political relevance of class has declined substantially since World War II. Class, they maintain, is considerably less relevant to the explanation of voting behavior today than was several decades ago. Since the class approach to politics is deeply embedded in contemporary social science, it is hardly surprising that this article quickly became the focus of an international debate that is still going on today.

Publications by Clark et al. (1993, 2001), Pakulski (1993) and Pakulski and Waters (1996a, 1996b), sometimes bearing such polemic titles as *The Death of Class* (Pakulski and Waters 1996c) and *The Breakdown of Class Politics*

(Clark and Lipset 2001b), repeat Clark and Lipset's thesis on the decline in class voting. It is criticized by researchers around John Goldthorpe (Oxford) and Michael Hout (Berkeley) (Hout et al. 1993, 2001, Manza and Brooks 1996, Manza et al. 1995, Wright 1996, Evans 1999a, Goldthorpe 2001) in publications sometimes bearing equally revealing titles, such as "The Promising Future of Class Analysis" (Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992).

Given the importance of this death of class debate, I not only systematically test the theories of Lipset, Kohn and Inglehart on the causes of authoritarianism/libertarianism in this book, I also study the implications of my findings for this debate.

### 1.3.7. Research Questions

The two research questions addressed in this book can then in short be formulated as follows:

Can authoritarianism/libertarianism indeed be explained by class or economic background, as Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart claim?

Has voting behavior indeed become less and less dependent on class in recent years?

## 1.4. APPROACH

### 1.4.1. Three Points of Departure

There is no need to confine myself to a discussion of the books and articles by Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart in this study, since numerous publications by other authors, some more critical than others, about their work are also available.<sup>8</sup> But what point is there to once again testing influential theories like those of Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart that have already been so widely tested and confirmed in so many different studies? If we derive the same hypotheses for the umpteenth time from the same theory, and go on to test it in the same way with the same sorts of data, won't we inevitably arrive at the exact same conclusions? This is indeed the case, and it is definitely the wrong way to go about testing the tenability of these theories.

So how do social scientists arrive at statements that deserve being called "true"? This is not a question that can be answered in a few pages, but it is a question I should say something about to clarify my approach. Nowadays it is predominantly two answers that are given to this question—the first a bit old-fashioned and the second a bit too fashionable. Neopositivists believe they can "find truth," whereas postmodernists see this as a misunderstanding and believe scientists can only "make truth." I do not think it is wise to believe that either of these answers is satisfactory, and it is even more foolish to believe that they are irreconcilable.<sup>9</sup>

Believing that scientists “find” truth implies a risk of becoming insensitive to the possibility that the conclusions we feel we should draw from our empirical material are deeply influenced by the theoretical assumptions being used. The more convinced we are we can simply “find” truth, the greater the risk that in reality we only “make” it. Of course believing we can do no more than this is also foolish. After all, it easily distracts us from the need to empirically test our ideas about the nature of social life in a systematic way. In short, there is the greatest chance of our actually being able to “find” something via our research that deserves being called “truth” if we are willing to seriously take into account the possibility that in reality we are only “making” it. This generates three points of departure for the approach to be used in this study.

The first point of departure is that one cannot conclude from the confirmation of a hypothesis derived from a theory that this theory is tenable. This is only possible if there is no other theory precisely the same hypothesis can be derived from.<sup>10</sup> If there is such a theory, or if the researcher can construct one, it is impossible to draw the conclusion that the original theory is tenable. A situation of this kind, in which it is unclear which theoretical conclusions can be drawn from the confirmation of a hypothesis, certainly should not be viewed as a troublesome deadlock just because there is no way to solve it. Instead it should be considered an excellent opportunity for making scientific progress.

Consequently it is not enough for a researcher who wishes to test an existing theory to derive and test some hypotheses derived from it. A situation with conflicting theoretical interpretations of the same research findings must be created. As a rule, this means that new theoretical interpretations have to be sought for the familiar findings. This leads to my second point of departure, which is that *constructing* theory is just as indispensable in the research process as *testing* theory. This process of theory construction requires a systematic exploration of the interpretation space between the existing empirical findings and the conclusions commonly drawn from them at the theoretical level. By way of a logic that is by definition inductive, and consequently unobstructed by the theoretical conclusions other researchers have felt called upon to draw from their findings in earlier studies, these findings are used to arrive at alternative theoretical interpretations.

If we then derive supplementary hypotheses from the alternative theory, hypotheses that cannot be derived from the original theory, this results in the strictest possible testing of the latter. This takes me to my third point of departure, which is that our scientific insight is mainly augmented by way of a systematic empirical confrontation of contradictory theories. In short, if we view the competitive testing of theories as an excellent way to make scientific progress, then in addition to theory testing,



theory construction is indispensable, and we cannot confine ourselves to a one-sided hypothetical-deductive approach. If this is overlooked, we increase the risk of "making" truth instead of "finding" it. After all, the confirmation of hypotheses derived from a theory would then simply be construed as support for this theory, which would be logically erroneous.

This study thus devotes ample attention to a theoretical exploration of the interpretation space between the well-established research findings and the conclusions drawn from them at a theoretical level. An effort is made to generate alternative theoretical explanations for the research findings we are already familiar with, after which supplementary hypotheses are tested to see whether or not they are any better than the original one. Because that is what science is all about: replacing bad theories with others that are not as bad, and good theories with better ones. Now that I have arrived at this point, let me take this opportunity to present the reader with my answer to the questions that were posed: There is no empirical support for the notion that authoritarianism/libertarianism can be explained by someone's economic position or background, and the importance of class in explaining voting behavior has indeed decreased, although certainly not to the extent assumed by the supporters of this proposition.

#### **1.4.2. Intellectual Division of Labor and Intellectual Stagnation**

If making scientific progress really requires the competitive testing of irreconcilable theories, then research specialization constitutes a major cause of intellectual stagnation. In fact it increases the risk of no one ever seeing that irreconcilable theoretical conclusions are drawn from essentially identical findings in totally separate research fields. Thus the possibility of the competitive testing of theories is overlooked and untenable ideas are preserved longer than is desirable. Wherever the aim of science is to replace poor theories with good ones, there is thus good reason to be skeptical about excessive specialization.

Research into authoritarianism and postmaterialism is a good example. Authoritarianism, conceptualized and operationalized shortly after World War II by Adorno et al. (1950), has since come to be viewed by most researchers as a personality trait with a rigid emphasis on preserving social order. In fact it has mainly been psychologists who conduct studies on the underlying causes of authoritarianism (see for surveys Muelken 1983; Scheepers and Eisinga 1991). Postmaterialism is considered a political value orientation focused on the importance of individual liberty and mainly plays a role in sociology and political science. In short, research into authoritarianism has largely remained separate from research into postmaterialism, even though the idea that authoritarianism is a personality trait rather than a value orientation is contested (e.g., Ray 1983, 1990, 1991).

There is nonetheless a striking similarity between the two concepts. Doesn't the emphasis put on maintaining social order by authoritarianism as conceptualized by Adorno et al. mean it is the opposite of postmaterialism, with its focus on individual liberty? Aren't they essentially two sides of the same coin? Anyone who expects this to have been widely acknowledged by researchers as an important research question is bound to be disappointed. At any rate, I have never once seen an article that addresses this issue.<sup>11</sup> Even more importantly, Kohn and Inglehart, both of whom have conducted research for at least twenty-five years on how to explain the phenomenon that some people attach more importance to individual liberty than others, do not make even the slightest allusion to each other's work.<sup>12</sup> This illustrates the dangers of an excessive intellectual division of labor. It overlooks excellent opportunities for testing theories in a manner that is competitive and consequently strict. As I demonstrate below, the research findings of Inglehart and Kohn exhibit far greater similarities than the widely differing theoretical conclusions drawn from them might suggest.

## 1.5. DATA

Three different data files are used in the empirical analyses to be conducted. Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6 are based on data especially collected for this study. This was done in the summer of 1997 via the panel of Centerdata (Catholic University of Brabant, Tilburg, the Netherlands), which is a representative sample of the Dutch population above the age of 18. The members of the panel were given computers at home so they could regularly answer the questions posed by researchers. The questionnaire was so long it was divided into two parts, the first part with questions for employed people about their jobs, and the second part with questions for the employed as well as nonemployed respondents. The two parts of the questionnaire were presented separately to the panel members within a period of a few weeks, and the resulting information was combined afterward into one data file.

The questions for the employed respondents mainly had to do with the economic position features emphasized by the theories of Lipset and Kohn. They were questions to determine the respondents' class position, the strength of their labor market position, their experiences in social and economic life, and their occupational self-direction. The questions for all respondents mainly had to do with political value orientations, family background, and ways of spending leisure time.

The latter part of the questionnaire was presented to the panel first and was answered by 1,856 respondents, which amounts to a 90 percent response. The questions for the employed respondents were only

presented to those with a paid job for twenty hours a week or more. A total of 792 employed respondents answered them, once again a response of approximately 90 percent, 711 of whom had also filled in the other part of the questionnaire. The theories of Lipset and Kohn can only be tested based on the data on these 711 employed respondents. Nonemployed respondents do not, after all, have a class position as Lipset and Kohn see it. Since Inglehart's theory does not draw any link to class, in that case there is no need to confine the analysis to the employed respondents.

To avoid any overlap between the chapters, each of the operationalizations used in this study is discussed only once. This is done in the chapter where they are included in the analysis for the first time. Since Chapter 2, the first empirical chapter, is confined to an analysis of employed respondents, the scale analyses for the political value orientations, which are also important for the following chapters, are conducted there for all of the respondents collectively. In the construction of three scales to measure occupational self-direction in Chapter 3, the data on all 792 employed respondents are used. If these scales are then used for the explanation of political value orientations, of course the analysis is limited to the 711 employed respondents for whom they are also available.

Chapter 5 is not based upon the data especially collected in the Netherlands for this book. It contains an international comparative analysis that is mainly important in connection with Inglehart's theory. This is why the same data are used here that Inglehart based his recent research on, that is, data from the *World Values Survey 1990–1993*, designed "to enable cross-national comparison of values and norms in a wide variety of areas around the world" (World Values Study Group 1994). The questionnaire that is used contains a wide range of political value orientations, including Inglehart's index for postmaterialism. The data were collected between 1990 and 1993 in forty-three countries, and the resulting samples collectively represent almost 50 percent of the world population.<sup>13</sup> For a list of the countries included and the size of the sample in each country, see Table 5.2 in Chapter 5.

Chapter 7, co-authored by Peter Achterberg,<sup>14</sup> is similarly not based on the data collected in the Netherlands. Using data from the *British Election Studies*, this chapter addresses whether Britain witnessed a decline in class voting in 1974–1997. The *British Election Studies* consist of a set of surveys, representative of the British electorate and held in all election years from 1964 onward. The reader is referred to Thomson (2001:167–170) for more detailed information. As the relevant theoretical concepts can only be operationalized with the data from the surveys of 1974,<sup>15</sup> 1979, 1983, 1987, 1992, and 1997, the analysis is limited to these six election years, which together cover twenty-five years of British political history.

## 1.6. DESIGN OF THE BOOK

In short, this book contains six empirical chapters. The first four test the theories of Lipset (Chapter 2), Kohn (Chapter 3), and Inglehart (Chapters 4 and 5). Chapters 6 and 7 then examine the implications of the findings for the death of class debate on the alleged decline of the relevance of class for voting behavior. In addition to summarizing the research findings, Chapter 8 elaborates upon their theoretical implications, mainly focusing on the issue of how problematic the assumptions are that the “Marxist lite” theories tested in this study are based upon and that, as we have seen, can already be detected in the work of Marx and Durkheim.

### NOTES

1. Of course one might disagree with me on this point. First, one can view politics as subordinate to science, in which case political ideologies would be judged by scientific standards. Do they “work”? What are the ramifications for society? Does political practice show them to be empirically tenable or untenable? Isn’t Marxism as a political doctrine simply a refuted hypothesis? Isn’t its political bankruptcy merely the result of the economic and political slump behind the former Iron Curtain and the remaining more or less shaky Communist systems in China, Cuba, and North Korea? From the other way around, of course, one can view science as subordinate to politics. Scientific theories confirmed by research findings are then rejected because they contradict deeply rooted convictions and beliefs about what the world is all about or ought to be (Gouldner 1970). If there is a logical gap between what is and what ought to be—and like Weber (1949) I believe there is—I do not really see the point of efforts to make either of the two subordinate to the other. It would lead to a scientification of politics or a politicization of science, and I do not see how that could possibly benefit either of them.

2. See also Section 7.3.

3. This pertains more to the early Durkheim of *The Division of Labor in Society* (1964 [1893]) than to the late Durkheim of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1965 [1912]). It is also precisely this early Durkheim, however, with his analysis of mechanical and organic solidarity who the focus is on in these textbooks.

4. There are also traces of Saint-Simon’s ideal of meritocracy in Durkheim’s work when he criticizes the custom of children inheriting property from their parents (Fenton 1984:100–01) and when he holds that “The property of individuals should be the counterpart of the services they have rendered in society” (quoted by Fenton 1984:100).

5. In other words, this judgment is not derived from an empirically founded scientific theory, but is a political value judgment without any scientific backing. Of course the fact that political values can not be derived from scientific theories does not mean that science is more important than politics. At any rate, if I had to choose, that would not be my choice. I believe the two of them should be taken

equally seriously, which is precisely why each of them should be judged according to its own criteria (cf. Note 1, this chapter). Of course this position differs from the one taken by Durkheim and Marx, who both felt it was possible and indeed desirable to arrive—on scientific grounds—at judgments about what is normal, pathological, or desirable. As Durkheim wrote, "The principal object of all sciences of life, whether individual or social, is to define and explain the normal state and to distinguish it from its opposite. If, however, normality is not given in the things themselves—if it is, on the contrary, a character we may or may not impute to them—this solid footing is lost. The mind is then complacent in the face of a reality which has little to teach it; it is no longer restrained by the matter which it is analyzing, since it is the mind, in some manner or other, that determines the matter" (1964 [1895]:74).

6. I go into the other two assumptions in detail in the last chapter of this book.

7. In Chapter 3 I demonstrate that the main objection to Kohn's theory and research approach is that he does not break open the concept of class far enough.

8. In my discussion of the literature I confine myself to the publications by Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart that are relevant to the tenability of the common point of departure of their three above-mentioned theories—that the importance people attach to individual liberty can be explained on the grounds of their economic position or background. I have done the same regarding the more or less critical publications other authors have devoted to their work. Particularly in the case of Inglehart's theory, there is an extremely useful body of critical literature, though there is barely any at all on Kohn's.

9. It is true that, as postmodernists emphasize, researchers always use theoretical distinctions in their observations. It is also true that there is no empirical foundation for these distinctions themselves, though they do nonetheless determine what one can or cannot observe. This does not lead, however, to the conclusion that they also determine what people truly perceive. The point of departure that "truth" is simultaneously "made" and "found" would seem to me to be more realistic than either of the alternatives.

10. By "other" theory, of course, I mean a theory that is logically irreconcilable with the original one.

11. Although I have not made a systematic search, I do not believe a single empirical article in any major social science journal ever addressed this issue.

12. In the work of Lipset and Kohn, who are both of the opinion that the importance people attach to individual liberty can be explained on the basis of class, there are references to each other's work. The same holds true for the work of Lipset and Inglehart, who are both of the opinion that the political process, particularly voting behavior (Chapters 6 and 7), is based on class conflicts to a decreasing extent in modern Western societies. An important question is whether what this suggests is indeed true, that the greater the similarities between the ideas of researchers and the less they contradict each other, the greater the tendency for researchers to refer to each other's work. If this hypothesis is confirmed, it would justify wondering whether it is true at all that scientists strive to replace untenable ideas with tenable ones. Perhaps this is a self-serving scientific ideology that preserves the idea that scientific knowledge is one (epistemological) step ahead of other types of knowledge rather than an adequate depiction of scientific practice.

13. In addition to the data on the forty-two countries examined in Chapter 5, Inglehart (1997) also uses data in his analysis from a separate sample of the population of Moscow. These data were not taken into consideration in this study because including them did not seem appropriate in an analysis that is supposed to be comparing countries.

14. Peter Achterberg is a Ph.D. student at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands. He is preparing a doctoral thesis on the alleged decline in class voting.

15. In 1974 data were collected in February and October. We use the October data collected just after the national elections of 1974.

## 2

### What Is Actually a “Class”?

#### *Martin Lipset and “Working-Class” Authoritarianism*

The concept of “class” has . . . often been seen by critics of sociology as a defining characteristic of the discipline: sociologists, they hold, reduce everything to class.

—John Scott, *Stratification and Power*

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Lipset’s article “Democracy and Working-Class Authoritarianism” (1959), published more than four decades ago, still plays a major role in the discussion on the relation between class and political values.<sup>1</sup> It introduces the distinction between the two types of political values discussed in Chapter 1: economic liberalism/conservatism and authoritarianism/libertarianism. According to Lipset, the working class is at the liberal end of the former ideological dichotomy. Its members advocate economic redistribution by the state and thus reject a distribution based on the free market. Regarding the latter, pertaining to tolerance of nonconformity, acceptance of unconventional lifestyles, and respect for individual liberty, working-class liberalism is out of the question: “Economic liberalism refers to the conventional issues concerning redistribution of income, status, and power among the classes. The poorer everywhere are more liberal or leftist on such issues. . . . On the other hand, when liberalism is defined in non-economic terms—so as to support, for example, civil rights for political dissidents, civil rights for ethnic and racial minorities, internationalist foreign policies, and liberal immigration legislation—the relation is reversed” (1959:485).

So, according to Lipset, if liberalism is conceived as a preference for economic redistribution, the working class is more liberal than the middle class. If liberalism is viewed as tolerance and respect for individual liberty, however, the working class is less liberal than the middle class—hence his thesis of “working-class authoritarianism.” Left-wing intellectuals, or so Lipset concludes, have too facilely presented the working class as a liberating force in history because “the struggle for freedom is not a simple variant of the economic class struggle” (1959:483).

Although it is now more than forty years later, there is still no consensus about the tenability of this theory.<sup>2</sup> I start in Section 2.2 with an examination of the most important research findings to explain how researchers have interpreted the very same findings in different ways. Some feel they confirm Lipset’s theory, while others hold that they refute it. An elaboration of this theoretical controversy justifies doubts about the tenability of Lipset’s theory that authoritarianism, like economic liberalism, can be explained by class. It also produces three clusters of hypotheses that are tailored to clarify this issue (Section 2.3). After a discussion of the operationalization (Section 2.4), I test those hypotheses in Section 2.5 and summarize my findings in Section 2.6.

## 2.2. WHAT IS ACTUALLY A “CLASS”?

Research conducted since the 1960s demonstrates that “the conceptualization and measurement of social class has a great deal of influence on whether . . . the theory of working-class authoritarianism [receives] support or not” (Grabb 1980:369; cf. Lipsitz 1965; Grabb 1979). The more the operationalization of class is based upon differences in education, the stronger the observed relation between class and authoritarianism. In fact, it is mainly the poorly educated who are authoritarian. In the new and revised edition of his book *Political Man*, Lipset himself notes, “A consistent and continuing research literature has documented relationships between low levels of education and racial and religious prejudice, opposition to equal rights for women, and with support of, and involvement in, fundamentalist religious groups” (1981:478).

The fact that working-class authoritarianism is mainly an “authoritarianism of the poorly educated” is evident from studies on authoritarianism, racial prejudice, and tolerance of nonconformity, three strongly interrelated variables.<sup>3</sup> Well-educated people invariably turn out to be less authoritarian, more tolerant of nonconformists, and less racially prejudiced than people with less education. On the issue of authoritarianism this is exemplified by studies by Dekker and Ester (1987) and Eisinga and Scheepers (1989); on tolerance of nonconformity it is clear from studies by



Stouffer (1955), Nunn et al. (1978), Grabb (1979, 1980), and Bobo and Licari (1989); and on racial prejudice, from studies by Eisinga and Scheepers (1989), Case et al. (1989), and Pedersen (1996).

There is thus consensus in the research literature that authoritarianism, intolerance of nonconformity, and racial prejudice are far less frequent among the well educated than the poorly educated.<sup>4</sup> There is no consensus on whether this effect of education confirms or refutes Lipset's theory, however. Some researchers view education as a valid indicator of class and consequently interpret education's negative effect on authoritarianism as a confirmation of Lipset's theory (e.g., Lipset 1981:480; Kohn 1977 [1969]; Middendorp and Meloen 1990). Other researchers acknowledge that education is often considered a "straightforward proxy variable" for class (Dekker and Ester 1987:397) or an "aspect of social inequality" (Grabb 1980:373) but nonetheless hold that "education is not the same as social class and thus educational differences cannot be used as evidence for class distinctions" (Dekker and Ester 1987:409). Since they feel education is not the same as class, they view the strong effect of education on authoritarianism as being contradictory to Lipset's theory.

It is clear that this difference of opinion hinges on a theoretical question: What is actually a class? Or more specifically: Can the negative education effect on authoritarianism be interpreted as a class effect? If education has an effect here as a class indicator, it is only logical that other class indicators should have comparable effects. Against this background, the absence of any substantial negative effect of income on authoritarianism is quite striking (Kohn 1977 [1969]; Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990; cf. Zipp 1986).<sup>5</sup> After all, in class analysis, income is viewed as closely linked to class. More than that: the validity and explanatory power of a class schema is usually determined by its ability to explain income differences (e.g., Wright 1979, 1985; Marshall et al. 1988; cf. Middendorp and Meloen 1990). Consistent with this, strong class effects on income are presented as evidence that classes in the Marxist sense of *Klassen an sich* instead of *Klassen für sich* still exist today (Hout et al. 1993, 2001).

According to a central tenet of class analysis, people's class position shapes their political values, which tend to be in keeping with their economic interests: "Those who are weak in labor and consumption markets become more dependent on collective and politically determined redistribution, and those with higher risks of unemployment and poverty are more reliant on a safety net protecting against the uncertainties of paid labor" (Svallfors 1991:619; cf. D'Anjou et al. 1995:357-59). This hypothesis has been confirmed by empirical research. Members of the working class, who are in a relatively poor economic position and consequently have an interest in an egalitarian distribution policy, are indeed more apt to support this kind of policy than are people in more privileged class positions.<sup>6</sup> More-

over, this working-class economic liberalism can indeed be largely attributed to low income and poor education (e.g., Wright 1985:259–78; Marshall et al. 1988:179–83; De Witte 1990:207–09; Steijn and De Witte 1992). In short, the central tenet of class analysis mentioned above is confirmed by the fact that a poor education and a low income both lead to economic liberalism.

The strong negative effect of education on authoritarianism cannot be interpreted on the grounds of this theoretical logic, however. Even apart from the absence of a negative income effect, it is unclear how and why the economic interests of the working class would lead to a preference for capital punishment, strict discipline in bringing up children, or limiting freedom of speech. Though an interpretation like this may still be conceivable in the case of racial prejudice among workers,<sup>7</sup> this is not the case for authoritarianism in a more general sense.

Education thus seems to indicate something other than class here. But what? Bourdieu's work suggests an obvious possibility. Shouldn't education be viewed as an indicator of cultural capital (i.e., the ability to recognize cultural expressions and comprehend their meaning) rather than class (Bourdieu 1973, 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977)? Following Bourdieu, education is frequently used nowadays in empirical studies as a key indicator of cultural capital (e.g., Kalmijn 1994; Blee-Booij 1994; De Graaf and Kalmijn 2001). It is quite plausible that having ample cultural capital entails an acceptance of unconventional lifestyles and nontraditional patterns of behavior. After all, it enables people to recognize and acknowledge those as *culture*, that is, as equally contingent and arbitrary as the culture one has grown up in oneself (cf. Bauman 1987:81–95). To put it another way, if the amount of cultural capital is limited, unconventional cultural patterns are more likely to be interpreted as not simply different, but as deviant and morally reprehensible. In other words, they are then likely to be interpreted as violations of "metasocial" norms that are made absolute, that is, as incompatible with a moral foundation that is situated beyond the social order (cf. Gabennesch 1972, Touraine 1981).

Like class, in short, education also seems a rather ambiguous variable. Depending on the type of values being studied, it can have an effect as an indicator of either class or cultural capital. If the causes of economic conservatism are being examined, education is likely to have a positive effect as a class indicator. If authoritarianism is being studied, it is likely to have a negative effect as an indicator for cultural capital. Income, which does not have anything to do with cultural capital, is a less ambiguous class indicator. It should therefore have a positive effect on economic conservatism in much the same way as education, while, unlike education, it should not have a negative effect on authoritarianism.

In short, the negative effect of education on authoritarianism cannot simply be interpreted as confirming Lipset's theory on the authoritarian-

ism of the working class. After all, effects on authoritarianism of variables such as education or class make it impossible to arrive at a theoretically meaningful interpretation, because it remains unclear whether we are dealing with effects of class or cultural capital. This is why a systematic testing of Lipset's theory requires the use of less ambiguous class and cultural capital indicators in statistical analyses. In addition, to further increase the theoretical interpretability of the findings, it is quite important to determine whether the two sorts of indicators really have divergent effects on economic liberalism and authoritarianism.

### 2.3. HYPOTHESES

Which unambiguous indicators for class and cultural capital should be chosen? Following the logic of class analysis, as briefly outlined above, it is not too difficult to add two explicit class indicators to income. First, of course, wage dependence is traditionally viewed as a key class indicator. Individuals who depend on the wages they earn occupy a weaker economic position than independent entrepreneurs who own the means of production (Marx and Engels 1948 [1848]; Marx 1967 [1867]; Weber 1982 [1921]; Wright 1979, 1985; Goldthorpe 1980). Wage earners are after all dependent on the willingness of entrepreneurs to pay them for their labor and continue to do so. Second, for wage earners and independent entrepreneurs alike, job insecurity is important, because it also implies a weak economic position. Income, wage dependence, and job insecurity are thus three unambiguous class indicators.

Education, as is noted above, is ambiguous because it indicates class as well as cultural capital. As *institutionalized* cultural capital, education can be distinguished from *embodied* cultural capital, that is, an interest in art and culture itself (Bourdieu 1986; cf. Böröcz and Southworth 1996; Lamont 1986).<sup>8</sup> So in addition to education, cultural participation is a second—and less ambiguous—indicator of cultural capital. If indeed the effect of education on authoritarianism is not an effect of class but of cultural capital, then in addition to a low educational level, a low level of cultural participation should also lead to authoritarianism. The three unambiguous indicators of a weak class position—low income, wage dependence, and job insecurity—should then not affect authoritarianism at all. In an explanation of economic liberalism, the opposite pattern should be found. Like education, the three unambiguous class indicators should affect it, whereas cultural participation should not.

This logic gives rise to three clusters of hypotheses. If members of the working class are distinguished from the rest of the working population primarily on the ground of their occupations, as is common practice in

sociology, they can be expected to have a weak economic position and limited cultural capital. Such a “working class” can consequently also be expected to be characterized by economic liberalism (Hypothesis A1) and authoritarianism (Hypothesis A2). Even if these hypotheses are confirmed, it still cannot be concluded that class can explain both types of political values. After all, this type of occupation-based class variable is likely to be quite ambiguous, capturing cultural capital as well as class proper, that is, one’s labor market position. So in essence, such an analysis does not provide an *explanation* of authoritarianism; all it provides is a *description* of the political values of various occupational categories. And since sociology should strive for more than that, the problem of explanation must be addressed next. If both hypotheses formulated above are confirmed, the logical next step is to examine whether the economic liberalism of the working class is indeed generated by its weak economic position and whether its authoritarianism is indeed a result of its limited cultural capital.

This gives rise to two other clusters of hypotheses. The first pertains to the explanation of economic liberalism (Cluster B). If economic liberalism really is caused by a weak economic position, the previously recorded effect of occupational class on economic liberalism should be attributable to labor market differences between the classes. Wage dependence (Hypothesis B1), poor education (Hypothesis B2), low income (Hypothesis B3), and job insecurity (Hypothesis B4) should then lead to economic liberalism and limited cultural participation should not (Hypothesis B5). Moreover, working-class economic liberalism may be expected to disappear once the variables mentioned above are included in the analysis (Hypothesis B6). If these six hypotheses are confirmed, this convincingly demonstrates that the economic liberalism of the working class should indeed be attributed to its weak labor market position.

The third and last cluster of hypotheses pertains to whether the authoritarianism of the working class should indeed be attributed to its limited cultural capital (Cluster C). A low educational level (Hypothesis C1) and a low level of cultural participation (Hypothesis C2) are expected to lead to authoritarianism, whereas wage dependence (Hypothesis C3), low income (Hypothesis C4), and job insecurity (Hypothesis C5) are expected not to affect it. Analogous to the cluster of hypotheses formulated above, working-class authoritarianism can be expected to disappear once these variables are included in the analysis (Hypothesis C6). If these six hypotheses are confirmed, this demonstrates that working-class authoritarianism has nothing to do with its weak economic or class position, but that it is essentially its limited cultural capital that is decisive.

After a discussion of the operationalization in Section 2.4, I start in Section 2.5 with a test of the first cluster of hypotheses about how occupational

class is related to both types of political values. Then I first examine whether, as expected, such a class variable captures not only the strength of one's labor market position, but the amount of cultural capital as well. Since the two final clusters of hypotheses are based on the assumption that this is indeed the case, they are tested only after this has been checked.

## 2.4. OPERATIONALIZATION

*Class.* To test the hypotheses formulated above, the class schema developed by Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero, the so-called EGP class schema, is used in the analysis in addition to the unambiguous class and cultural capital indicators mentioned above. This class schema was developed in the late 1970s (Erikson et al. 1979; Goldthorpe 1980:39–42), and according to observers it is the one most widely used by sociologists today (Bakker et al. 1997:8; De Graaf and Steijn 1997:131; Scheepers et al. 1989:337; cf. Nieuwbeerta 1995:38–39). Since the EGP class schema is largely based upon the classification of occupations, which are themselves strongly related to education, there seems to be no way to keep it from expressing a mixture of labor market position and cultural capital. This is precisely why it is likely that the EGP classes will differ with regard to both economic liberalism and authoritarianism.

The coding system published by Bakker et al. (1997; see also Ganzeboom et al. 1989) is used to assign EGP class positions to the respondents. This is done on the basis of (1) their occupation, (2) whether they are self-employed, and (3) the number of people they have working under them. Regarding occupational titles, the *1992 Standard Occupational Classification* drawn up by the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (1994) is used. The classification of the 711 respondents who work at least twenty hours a week results in a reasonable distribution over the seven EGP classes, although class II is much larger than the six other ones (Table 2.1).

Two points require clarification. First, it is important to emphasize that the seven EGP classes do not constitute a one-dimensional hierarchy with class I occupying the most privileged and class VII the least privileged economic position (Goldthorpe 1980:42). The nonmanual classes I, II, and III are arranged in this way, however, in the sense that class I occupies the most privileged and class III the least privileged economic position, with class II in the middle. The same holds true for the manual workers in classes V, VI, and VII: class VII is in the least favorable economic position and class V is in the best one, with class VI in the middle. However, the relation between these two separate hierarchies and each of their relations to the class of small self-employed businessmen (class IV) is not simply hierarchical in the same sense. Class III is not simply higher than class V

Table 2.1 EGP class schema

EGP class		%
Class I	Higher grade professionals, self-employed or salaried, higher grade administrators and officials in central and local government and in public and private enterprises; managers in large industrial establishments; large proprietors	15.0
Class II	Lower grade professionals and higher grade technicians; lower grade administrators and officials; managers in small business and industrial establishments and in services; supervisors of nonmanual employees	30.2
Class III	Routine non-manual workers: clerical workers, sales personnel, and other rank-and-file employees in services	21.2
Class IV	Petty bourgeoisie: small proprietors, including farmers and smallholders; self-employed artisans and all other "own account" workers apart from professionals	5.3
Class V	Supervisors of manual workers and lower grade technicians (to some extent manual work)	7.5
Class VI	Skilled manual workers in all branches of industry	5.8
Class VII	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers in industry and agricultural workers	14.2
Unknown		0.7
Total		100.0

$N = 711$ .

or even higher than classes VI or VII, and class IV is not necessarily lower than classes I, II, or even III.

Second, it is important to say a few words about what constitutes the "working class proper." Classes I, II, and IV can be classified as middle class without any problems, whereas classes VI and VII, consisting of skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled manual workers, definitely constitute the working class. Although sociologists often collapse the EGP class schema into a manual-nonmanual dichotomy (e.g., Nieuwbeerta 1995; Andersen and Heath 2002), thus considering *all* manual workers, including class V, as "working class" and *all* nonmanual workers, including class III, as "middle class," this classification of those two classes is contestable. As for class V, "a latter-day aristocracy of labour or a 'blue collar' élite" (Goldthorpe 1980:41) consisting of lower-grade technicians and supervisors of manual workers, it can be argued that it should be distinguished from the "real" working class by classifying it as (lower) middle class. As for class III, consisting of routine nonmanual employees, neo-Marxists such as Erik Wright (Wright 1979; Wright et al. 1982) argue that it is not part of the "middle class" but consists of "white collar proletarians" who should be classified as "working class" accordingly. In short, although it is

Table 2.2 Factor loadings of nine (F Scale) authoritarianism/libertarianism indicators

<i>Authoritarianism/libertarianism indicators (F scale items)</i>	<i>% Agree (strongly)</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
More and more people have recently begun to interfere with matters that ought to be personal and private.	47.3	0.39
Most people are disappointing when you get to know them better.	17.5	0.59
Young people sometimes have rebellious ideas but as they grow older they ought to grow out of them and adjust to reality.	58.2	0.62
Our social problems would be largely solved if we could only somehow remove criminal and anti-social elements from society.	32.2	0.70
What we need are fewer laws and agencies and more courageous, tireless leaders who people can have faith in.	30.1	0.73
People with bad manners, habits, and upbringing can hardly be expected to know how to associate with decent people.	44.2	0.59
There are two kinds of people, strong ones and weak ones.	18.8	0.62
Sexual offences such as raping and sexually assaulting children warrant more severe punishment than just prison sentences; criminals like these should be given corporal punishment in public.	36.0	0.61
If people would talk less and work harder, everything would be better.	35.4	0.67
Eigenvalue		3.45
$R^2$		0.38
Cronbach's $\alpha$		0.79

Principal component analysis,  $N = 1,388$ .

uncontested in the literature that EGP classes VI and VII are part of the working class and that classes I, II, and IV are part of the middle class, the classification of classes III and V is contestable.

Because the seven EGP classes cannot be classified in a universally acceptable way, they are not forced into a dichotomous distinction between working class and middle class here. This prevents me from comparing two relatively heterogeneous and contestable classes and making the political values of classes III and V invisible by considering them as parts of a larger "working class" or "middle class." Given the contestable classification of those two EGP classes, the most relevant distinction in interpreting the findings is the one between the working class proper (i.e., classes VI and VII) and the uncontested middle class (i.e., classes I, II, and IV).

*Authoritarianism/libertarianism* is measured with the use of nine Likert items that constitute a short version of the F scale developed by Adorno et

Table 2.3 Factor loadings of six economic liberalism/conservatism indicators

<i>Economic liberalism/conservatism indicators</i>	<i>% Agree (strongly)</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
The state should make social benefits higher.	26.8	0.54
There is no longer any real poverty in the Netherlands.	26.5	-0.51
Large income differences are unfair because in essence everyone is equal.	28.3	0.77
Nowadays workers no longer have to fight for an equal position in society.	27.3	-0.51
The state should intervene to reduce income differences.	32.5	0.83
Companies should be obliged to allow their employees to share in the profits.	59.6	0.53
Eigenvalue		2.48
R <sup>2</sup>		0.41
Cronbach's $\alpha$		0.71

Principal component analysis,  $N = 1,602$ .

al. (1950) that is often used in survey research (e.g., Dekker and Ester 1987; Eisinga and Scheepers 1989; Meloen and Middendorp 1991; Middendorp and Meloen 1990). Principal component analysis shows that 38 percent of the variance is explained by the first factor, which produces a scale with a reliability of 0.79 (Table 2.2). Scale scores between 0 and 10 are assigned to all respondents with no more than two missing values. Higher scores signify stronger authoritarianism.

*Economic liberalism/conservatism* is determined by means of six Likert items. Principal component analysis produces a first factor that explains 41 percent of the variance. The reliability of the scale composed of those six items is 0.71 (Table 2.3). On a scale with a range from 0 to 10, scale scores are assigned to all respondents with no more than two missing values. Higher scores signify stronger economic liberalism.

*Education.* Seven levels of education have been distinguished: (1) no more than elementary school: 2.7 percent; (2) lower vocational school: 15.0 percent; (3) advanced special school: 13.6 percent; (4) five- or six-year secondary school: 9.0 percent; (5) intermediate vocational school: 22.6 percent; (6) higher vocational school or college (B.A.): 26.3 percent; (7) university (M.A.): 8.0 percent.<sup>9</sup>

*Income.* To examine the relation between the EGP class schema and income, the net individual monthly income is used. Erikson (1984) suggests, however, that it is not the net *individual* income but the net *household*



Table 2.4 Factor loadings of seven cultural participation indicators

<i>Cultural participation indicators</i>	<i>% Limited<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
Number of books one has	23.7	0.62
Number of novels one has read in the past three months	40.8	0.46
Frequency of going to concerts	50.7	0.61
Frequency of going to plays, shows, or ballet	53.4	0.52
Frequency of going to art exhibitions	47.1	0.78
Frequency of discussing art and culture	31.6	0.81
Extent of self-image as an art and culture lover	29.5	0.80
Eigenvalue		3.15
$R^2$		0.45
Cronbach's $\alpha$		0.79

Principal component analysis,  $N = 1,854$ .

<sup>1</sup>This category includes the answers fewer than fifty books; no novels; never or almost never goes to concerts or to plays, shows, or ballet or to art exhibitions; never or almost never discusses art and culture; and definitely has no self-image as an art and culture lover.

income that should be used to determine someone's market position. This is why the net household income is used in the analyses that aim to explain economic liberalism and authoritarianism. The average net individual monthly income is Dfl. 3,072, with a standard deviation of Dfl. 1,535. Of course the average net household monthly income is higher, that is, Dfl. 4,468, with a standard deviation of Dfl. 1,119.

*Wage dependence.* Wage dependence is simply determined by asking respondents who work whether they do (1: 94.0 percent) or do not (0: 6.0 percent) work for wages.

*Job insecurity.* Job insecurity is operationalized by means of three questions. The first question pertains to whether respondents do (1: 5.3 percent) or do not (0: 94.7 percent) have a temporary contract.<sup>10</sup> The second question pertains to the number of times they have been unemployed for more than three months since they stopped attending school full-time; 86.8 percent have never been unemployed for more than three months (0), 7.2 percent once (1), and 6.0 percent twice or more (2). The third question pertains to the risk, as estimated by the respondent, that someone with the same kind of contract (either temporary or permanent) and the same kind of work will be forced to look for another job within the next three years; 20.4 percent feel there is a very small chance of this happening (1), 31.4 percent feel there is a pretty small chance (2), 3.6 percent think the chance is not that small but not that large either, or don't know (3), 8.3 percent feel

there is a pretty large chance (4), and 3.4 percent feel there is an extremely large chance (5). The three indicators have been added up after standardization and have been converted into an index with a range from 0 to 10. Higher scores stand for greater job insecurity.

*Cultural participation.* Last, cultural participation is operationalized with questions on how many books people have, how many novels they have read in the past three months; how often they go to (1) concerts, (2) plays, shows, or ballet, and (3) art exhibitions; how often they discuss art and culture; and the extent to which they view themselves as art and culture lovers.<sup>11</sup> Principal component analysis produces a first factor that explains 45 percent of the variance with factor loadings varying from 0.46 (number of novels read in the past three months) to 0.81 (frequency of discussing art) (Table 2.4). Scores for cultural participation are calculated as the sum of standardized scores, which are then converted into a scale ranging from 0 to 10 (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.79$ ). Higher scores stand for greater cultural participation.

## 2.5. RESULTS

### 2.5.1. EGP Class, Economic Liberalism, and Authoritarianism

The importance of Lipset's distinction between authoritarianism and economic liberalism is underscored by the extremely weak correlation between the two scales measuring them ( $r = 0.05$ ;  $N = 1,755$ ;  $p > 0.01$ ). Even if it is known how liberal someone is in an economic sense, there is still thus no way of using this information to predict his or her authoritarianism, and vice versa.

The first two hypotheses now predict that the working class, here simply viewed as a descriptive category, is more economically liberal (Hypothesis A1) as well as more authoritarian (Hypothesis A2) than the other EGP classes. In the EGP class schema, as is noted above, classes VI (skilled manual workers) and VII (semi- and unskilled manual workers) constitute the working class proper. They are thus expected to differ from the five other EGP classes regarding economic liberalism and authoritarianism.

With regard to the differences in economic liberalism, four of the seven EGP classes score higher than the grand mean of 4.89 and are thus economically more liberal than the average (Table 2.5). Two of them however, class III and, to an even greater extent, class V, score only marginally higher than the grand mean. The two classes that constitute the working class proper, classes VI and VII, score 0.67 and 0.75 higher than the average. They are evidently the two most economically liberal classes. They are

Table 2.5 Economic liberalism/conservatism and authoritarianism/libertarianism by EGP class

EGP class	<i>Economic liberalism/conservatism</i>	<i>Authoritarianism/libertarianism</i>
Class I	-0.27	-0.97
Class II	-0.30	-0.42
Class III	0.24	0.22
Class IV	-1.26	0.25
Class V	0.04	0.16
Class VI	0.67	0.99
Class VII	0.75	1.03
Grand mean	4.89	4.47
$\eta$	0.26***	0.35***
$R^2$	0.07***	0.12***
$N$	697	682

Analyses of variance, deviations from grand mean.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

in clear contrast to class IV, the small self-employed businessmen, who are economically the most conservative. Although Hypothesis A1 is confirmed by the observed pattern, it is striking how relatively weak the relation between class and economic liberalism is. EGP class can explain only 7 percent of the differences in economic liberalism.

In the case of authoritarianism, the differences between the classes are greater with 12 percent of the variance being explained. With the exception of classes I and II, all of the classes exhibit above-average authoritarianism. This holds most true, however, for the two classes that join to form the working class proper, classes VI and VII. Hypothesis A2 is thus confirmed as well, and the working class is not only the most liberal with regard to matters of economic distribution; it is also characterized more than the other EGP classes by authoritarianism.

Summing up, as long as class is viewed as no more than a descriptive category, Lipset's thesis is simply confirmed. Perfectly consistent with his ideas, we find a working class characterized by economic liberalism and authoritarianism. From a theoretical point of view, however, the more important question is whether this means that authoritarianism, like economic liberalism, can be *explained* by class. To find this out, the theoretical distinction between class proper (i.e., labor market position) and cultural capital must be applied in testing the two remaining clusters of hypotheses.

### 2.5.2. EGP Class: Opening up the Black Box

Of course the fact that the two first hypotheses are confirmed does not necessarily mean the same will happen with the remaining ones. After all, the last two clusters of hypotheses are based upon the assumption that the seven EGP classes differ substantially with respect to both their labor market positions and their amounts of cultural capital. This is why I address the question of whether and, if so, how exactly and to what extent this is indeed the case, before these hypotheses are tested. In comparison with the other EGP classes, does the working class, in addition to occupying the weakest labor market position, also have the least cultural capital?

Obviously there is no need to devote attention here to differences pertaining to wage dependence between the classes, since this is one of the classification criteria underlying the EGP class schema. By definition, for instance, the whole working class (classes VI and VII) works for wages, and all of the small self-employed businessmen (class IV) do not. Only opening up the black box of the EGP class schema can reveal further differences between the seven EGP classes with respect to labor market position and cultural capital. Its contents, in so far as they are relevant to the theme addressed in this chapter, are summarized in Table 2.6.

The EGP class schema is strongly related to income. It explains almost 30 percent of the individual income differences. Since income is used in class analysis as the most appropriate variable for assessing the validity and explanatory power of class measures, this is, of course, not surprising. It is exactly what would be expected from a class variable. The lowest incomes are not only observed in class III (routine nonmanual workers), they are also observed in class VI (skilled manual workers) and class VII (semi- and unskilled manual workers).

In the Netherlands, as in most other western countries, income depends not only on the kind of work people do but also on their age, since as a rule older people earn more. In addition, women tend to earn less than men, even if they do the same kind of work (Schippers 1995). Last, income also depends to a considerable extent on how many hours people work. Since it is conceivable that there are higher percentages of youngsters, part-time workers, and women in the low-income classes, one might wonder how much of the income differences between the seven EGP classes can be attributed to this. In fact this might help explain the low income of class III. To see whether this is indeed the case, the average income for each class has been recalculated while controlling for the three above-mentioned variables.

The number of hours worked per week, age, and sex all indeed turn out to influence income. The strength of their separate effects is not shown in Table 2.6, but it is evident from the increase in the explained variance from

Table 2.6 Net personal income, job insecurity, educational level and cultural participation by EGP class

<i>EGP class</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Income (corrected)<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Job insecurity</i>	<i>Educational level</i>	<i>Cultural participation</i>
Class I	991	914	-0.11	1.3	0.98
Class II	224	261	-0.36	0.8	0.49
Class III	-621	-340	0.47	-0.5	-0.15
Class IV	556	-168	-0.53	-0.3	0.49
Class V	228	38	-0.11	-0.4	-0.76
Class VI	-512	-665	-0.12	-1.1	-1.48
Class VII	-692	-718	0.47	-1.7	-1.05
Grand mean	3,080	3,080	1.65	4.5	2.97
$\eta$	0.53***	0.47***	0.23***	0.59***	0.37***
$R^2$	0.28***	0.48***	0.05***	0.34***	0.14***
$N$	678	678	706	689	705

Analyses of variance, deviations from grand mean.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

<sup>1</sup>Corrected (by means of covariates) for age, sex, and number of weekly working hours.

28 percent to no less than 48 percent how sizable their collective effect is. It is important, however, that there is barely any reduction in the relation between class and income as a result. It was 0.53 before correction and is still 0.47 after correction. The observed income differences between the classes can thus be attributed only to a very limited extent to the fact that the classes with the lowest incomes have above-average percentages of youngsters, part-time workers, and women. The one important exception, the extremely low income of class III (routine nonmanual workers), is caused to a considerable extent by the relative overrepresentation of these three categories.<sup>12</sup> There are ultimately only two classes left that deviate in a negative sense from the rest with respect to income, classes VI and VIII, the working class proper.

Classes III and VII exhibit above-average job insecurity. This bears only an extremely weak relation to EGP class, however, since the latter captures only 5 percent of the job insecurity differences. Since the EGP class schema is meant and assumed to reflect job insecurity differences, this is a surprising finding. Not that it was not observed in earlier studies—Steijn and Houtman (1998) made the same observation—but it raises questions about the validity of the EGP class schema. Although it is intended to capture differences pertaining to labor market position, this aim is barely achieved with respect to job insecurity.<sup>13</sup>

Last, education and cultural participation differences between the classes are considerable, particularly those pertaining to education. The relation between EGP class and education is no less than 0.59, which means that the EGP class schema captures approximately a third of the education differences. This figure is lower for cultural participation, but it is still considerable. The lowest levels of education and cultural participation are observed in EGP classes VI and VII, the working class. Thus the working class not only has the weakest labor market position, it also has the least cultural capital. To get a closer look at what is going on inside the black box of the EGP class schema as it is used in Table 2.5 to explain the two types of political values, the remaining hypotheses will have to be tested.

### **2.5.3. EGP Class, Labor Market Position, and Economic Liberalism**

The second cluster of hypotheses pertains to how economic liberalism is explained. Since EGP class actually captures differences in labor market position as well as cultural capital, Hypotheses B1 to B5 are all tested by means of a hierarchical regression analysis in two steps. In the first step, the five different indicators for labor market position and cultural capital are entered, that is, income, job insecurity, wage dependence, education, and cultural participation. The second step is carried out with the stepwise option in SPSS and addresses whether EGP class, represented for this purpose as a series of dummy variables, can explain extra variance after the above-mentioned indicators are included in the analysis.<sup>14</sup> If this is not the case, the previously observed effect of EGP class on economic liberalism can be completely attributed to the series of variables included in the first step. The results of this regression analysis are given in Table 2.7.

Without exception, the four hypotheses on the effects of the separate indicators for the strength of one's labor market position are all confirmed. Working for wages (Hypothesis B1), a low educational level (Hypothesis B2), a low household income (Hypothesis B3), and considerable job insecurity (Hypothesis B4) all contribute to approximately the same extent to economic liberalism. The two last hypotheses, both of which predict the absence of any effect, are similarly confirmed. First, differences in cultural participation do not have any effect on economic liberalism, which means that Hypothesis B5 is confirmed. Second, the seven EGP classes cannot explain any more extra variance than the variables already included, so that Hypothesis B6 is also confirmed.

The four labor market position indicators do not have much of an effect on economic liberalism; the effects vary from 0.10 to 0.20. They nonetheless collectively explain a bit more variance (10 percent) than EGP class (7 percent). This not only means that those explicit class indicators are

Table 2.7 Economic liberalism/conservatism explained by (indicators for) class and cultural capital

<i>Independent variables</i>	$\beta$
<i>Step 1</i>	
Wage dependence	0.15***
Income	-0.12**
Job insecurity	0.18***
Educational level	-0.15***
Cultural participation	0.08
<i>Step 2:</i>	
Class I	-0.00 <sup>1</sup>
Class II	-0.07 <sup>1</sup>
Class III	0.00 <sup>1</sup>
Class IV	0.04 <sup>1</sup>
Class V	-0.00 <sup>1</sup>
Class VI	0.05 <sup>1</sup>
Class VII	0.07 <sup>1</sup>
$R^2$	0.10***

Hierarchical regression analysis,  $N = 661$ .

\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

<sup>1</sup>Not included in regression equation ( $p > 0.05$ ).

responsible for the variance explained by EGP class above; it also means that they jointly better tap one's labor market position than the EGP class schema. This is not surprising, since job insecurity is barely expressed in the EGP class schema, though it is important in explaining economic liberalism.

The confirmation of this second cluster of hypotheses makes it clear how the observed relation between EGP class and economic liberalism should be interpreted theoretically. The economic liberalism of classes VI and VII, the working class proper, is completely due to their poor position in the labor market. Thus the statement that the working class is economically more liberal than the other EGP classes is more than just a descriptive statement. Its economic liberalism can really be explained from the circumstance that its members occupy weak positions in the labor market. State efforts to reduce income differences are therefore in their interest, and this leads to economic liberalism.

#### 2.5.4. EGP Class, Cultural Capital, and Authoritarianism

What remains now is the third and last cluster of hypotheses, which pertains to explaining authoritarianism. In this case as well, hypotheses

Table 2.8 Authoritarianism/libertarianism explained by (indicators for) class and cultural capital

<i>Independent variables</i>	$\beta$
<i>Step 1:</i>	
Wage dependence	-0.03
Income	-0.06
Job insecurity	-0.07*
Educational level	-0.29***
Cultural participation	-0.24***
<i>Step 2:</i>	
Class I	-0.07 <sup>1</sup>
Class II	-0.01 <sup>1</sup>
Class III	0.01 <sup>1</sup>
Class IV	-0.02 <sup>1</sup>
Class V	-0.01 <sup>1</sup>
Class VI	0.06 <sup>1</sup>
Class VII	0.05 <sup>1</sup>
$R^2$	0.22***

Hierarchical regression analysis,  $N = 659$ .

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

<sup>1</sup>Not included in regression equation ( $p > 0.05$ ).

are tested by means of a hierarchical regression analysis in two steps (Table 2.8).

As predicted, education, effective above as an indicator for the strength of one's labor market position, now has a relatively strong negative effect. People with a low educational level are far more authoritarian than people with a high educational level ( $\beta = -0.29$ ). This means that Hypothesis C1 is confirmed. Two findings indicate that educational level does not play a role here as an indicator for the strength of one's labor market position but as an indicator for cultural capital. First, cultural participation has much the same effect as education; the more people partake of art and culture, the less authoritarian they are. Compared with effects on economic liberalism, the strength of this effect is considerable ( $\beta = -0.24$ ). Hypothesis C2 is thus also confirmed. Second, wage dependence, a low income, and great job insecurity do not lead to authoritarianism. It is true that job insecurity does have a weak effect, but it is negative instead of positive and consequently refutes the idea that a weak class position leads to authoritarianism. Hypotheses C3, C4, and C5 are thus also confirmed; a weak labor market position does not lead to authoritarianism. In short, as expected, the findings are the mirror image of those found for economic liberalism.



Education and cultural participation jointly explain almost twice as much variance (22 percent) as EGP class, and this includes the variance explained by the latter (Table 2.5). Once education and cultural participation are included in the analysis, none of the seven EGP classes can explain any extra variance. This also holds true if job insecurity with its weak negative effect is removed from the first step of the analysis (not shown in Table 2.8). Hypothesis C6 is consequently confirmed; the effect of EGP class on authoritarianism observed above should in fact be completely attributed to differences regarding cultural capital between the seven EGP classes.

What are the more general theoretical implications of those findings for the tenability of Lipset's thesis on working-class authoritarianism? First and foremost, it is clearly completely acceptable as a non-theoretical and descriptive statement. It is simply true that the people sociologists categorize as "the working class" are more authoritarian than others. However, it is just as clear that this working-class authoritarianism is not *explained* by class, that is, by the weak position workers occupy in the labor market. In essence we are dealing here with an effect of their limited cultural capital. And since theories should offer explanations rather than descriptions of social phenomena, Lipset's thesis is untenable at a theoretical level.

## 2.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter started with Lipset's classical idea that though the working class is economically more liberal than the middle class, it is also more authoritarian and intolerant. Research conducted since the 1960s shows that in essence this working-class authoritarianism is mainly an authoritarianism of the poorly educated. There is no consensus in the literature about whether this should be interpreted as confirming or refuting Lipset's theory. The analysis in this chapter clarifies this issue.

The distinction between economic liberalism and authoritarianism is important. Since they are completely independent of each other, they cannot be viewed as two aspects of the same thing. Knowing how economically liberal people are does not in any way make it possible to predict how authoritarian they are or are not going to be. In addition, each of the two types of political values, as Lipset notes, exhibits quite a different relation with class according to the classification by Goldthorpe et al. In an economic sense the working class (i.e., manual workers) might well be the most liberal, but this is also the class where authoritarianism is most widespread.

Although at first glance these findings support Lipset's theory, it still proves impossible to conclude that class can *explain* both types of values.

If class is viewed as a theoretical concept within an explanatory sociological theory rather than as a descriptive category, then economic liberalism can indeed be explained from class. People who occupy the weakest positions in the labor market and thus have the greatest interest in economic redistribution by the state are the most liberal in an economic sense. However, labor market position does not in any way influence authoritarianism. The decisive factor in this case is cultural capital. Authoritarianism and intolerance are not the by-products of a weak labor market position but of limited cultural capital. The more cultural capital people have, the more apt they are to recognize and acknowledge deviant ideas and lifestyles as cultural phenomena and consequently to accept their existence. Lipset's thesis of working-class authoritarianism is thus tenable as a descriptive statement but not as an explanatory sociological theory.

Those findings have an important theoretical consequence. Lipset's vital distinction between two types of political values must be supplemented by an equally significant distinction between two types of social position: the strength of people's labor market position ("class") on the one hand and the amount of cultural capital on the other. Through the economic interests it entails, an insecure class position leads to economic liberalism. Through the recognition and acknowledgment of unconventional lifestyles as cultural expressions rather than deviations from an absolute moral foundation situated beyond culture, cultural capital leads to libertarianism. Ignoring this distinction between class and cultural capital yields a theoretically ambiguous "class" variable that exhibits relations with both types of political values. Applying such a "black box" in empirical research thus wrongly gives the impression that economic liberalism/conservatism and authoritarianism/libertarianism can both be explained by class and conceals the fact that they come about in fundamentally different ways. Class does not affect authoritarianism.

## NOTES

1. Under the title "Working-Class Authoritarianism" this article has also been included in his book *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Lipset 1960:97-130). A revised edition of the book was published in 1981 with a new chapter called "Second Thoughts and Recent Findings," in which Lipset focuses on the research findings since 1960 and the criticism of his earlier analysis by other authors.

2. One can dispute the notion that Lipset's article contains a (one) theory. First, one can view it as merely an account of an empirical state of affairs without any theoretical pretension, in which case the article contains no theory. Second, one can view it as a combination of various partially implicit theories that still have not been clearly formulated, in which case there are a number of theories. I follow this second interpretation in this chapter and address what I consider the two most

important theories: one on the effect of class on economic liberalism and one on the effect of class on authoritarianism. I am mainly interested in testing the second of these theories, which is also crucial to Lipset's article, as is evident from its title. The only reason I also test the first theory is to provide a clarifying perspective.

3. No clear distinction is drawn in the research literature between authoritarianism and tolerance of nonconformity. They are largely viewed as interchangeable, as is evident from the fact that in testing Lipset's thesis of working-class authoritarianism, Grabb does not measure authoritarianism with Adorno et al.'s F scale (1950), but with a scale for tolerance of nonconformity developed by Stouffer (1955). Whereas authoritarianism and tolerance of nonconformity are thus generally considered highly similar, Eisinga and Scheepers (1989) demonstrate that there is also an extremely strong relation between authoritarianism and racial prejudice.

4. It has been argued that the negative relationship between education and authoritarianism is simply a methodological artifact caused by either response set or a tendency among well-educated people to give socially desirable answers (e.g., Hamilton 1972:455–56; Jackman 1973, 1978; Jackman and Muha 1984). Such attempts to explain away the libertarianism of the well educated fail to convince, however. First, measures not susceptible to the problem of response set, such as Inglehart's index for postmaterialism, yield the same relationship with education. Second, attempts to demonstrate social desirability produce specifications of the relation with education rather than disproving its existence. They boil down to either (1) demonstrating that the well educated "know" the "right" (i.e., liberal) answers and subsequently raising the standards of libertarianism to a level at which education no longer makes a difference, or (2) inserting ideological or psychological variables between education and authoritarianism/libertarianism to conclude that this accounts for part of the initial relationship (Weil 1985:458–59).

5. Of course it is possible to use bivariate analysis to demonstrate that income has a negative effect on authoritarianism (see, e.g., Middendorp and Meloen 1990:262–63, 1991:66; Dekker and Ester 1987:404). However, analyses of this kind are not convincing because education and income are considerably related among themselves. Multivariate analyses that simultaneously include income and education as independent variables consequently reveal that differences in authoritarianism between income categories should be attributed to the fact that the lower income categories have lower levels of education as well.

6. See, for example, Felling and Peters (1986), Wright (1985:259–78), Marshall et al. (1988:179–83), De Witte (1990:207–09), and Steijn and De Witte (1992). As a rule, the effects observed in studies of this kind are relatively weak, however. For a concise discussion of a few of these and several other studies on this topic, the reader is referred to Houtman (1994:51–71).

7. Without any evidence, Reid (1977:232), for example, interprets racism among the working class as aversion to new rivals on the labor market, since competition could harm its already weak economic position.

8. In addition, Bourdieu distinguishes "objectified" cultural capital, that is, the possession of cultural goods such as books or paintings. In this book, "objectified" and "embodied" cultural capital are combined to make one scale for cultural participation. Since it is hard to conceive of the possession of cultural goods as having

an effect on authoritarianism/libertarianism independently of embodied cultural capital, only one indicator is included here for objectified cultural capital, that is, the number of books a person has.

In a previous study I used the field someone majored in as a third indicator for cultural capital—referred to at the time as someone's "sociocultural position"—distinguishing between "technical" and "sociocultural" fields (Houtman 1994). Applying this distinction confronted me, however, with considerable coding problems, and, probably partly as a consequence of this, this third indicator hardly added explanatory power to cultural participation and educational level. This applies even more to the present study, probably because of an improved operationalization of cultural participation, which is obviously related to the field a person has majored in and therefore erodes the explanatory power of the latter even more. In this study cultural capital is therefore measured by means of education and cultural participation only.

The coding problems referred to above are of two types. In the first place, even though most vocational and academic study programs can be categorized as being either "technical" or "sociocultural," this distinction is hard to apply to nursing, for example, where acquiring technical skills and learning to deal with people both play an important role. This is why a third "neutral"/"mixed" category must be added, which would of course also contain general preparatory study programs at elementary school and secondary school. In the second place, and even more importantly, a person's education simply does not provide enough information to make adequate coding possible. It overlooks theoretically important differences between taking cultural subjects such as languages or history, or technical subjects such as mathematics, physics, and chemistry in secondary school. It also overlooks the difference between attending law school and specializing in fiscal law or in human rights, between studying sociology and specializing in qualitative or quantitative research methods, between studying medicine and specializing in surgery or psychiatry and so forth.

9. No information is available on the educational level of 2.7 percent of the respondents.

10. Of course independent entrepreneurs are not asked this question. They are given the same score for this question as people who have a permanent contract (0).

11. There are six response categories for the question about how many books a person has: (1) fewer than fifty, (2) from fifty to 100, (3) from 100 to 250, (4) from 250 to 499, (5) from 500 to 1,000, and (6) more than 1,000. The question on how many novels a person has read in the past three months is an open question recoded into five categories: (1) none, (2) two, (3) three or four, (4) five to nine, and (5) ten or more. The three questions on how often a person goes to concerts; to plays, shows, or ballet performances; and to art exhibitions, have four response categories: (1) never or almost never, (2) once or twice a year, (3) three to six times a year, and (4) more than six times a year. The question about how often a person discusses art and culture also has four response categories: (1) never or almost never, (2) sometimes, (3) quite frequently, and (4) every day or almost every day. The question about the extent to which a person sees himself as an art and culture lover, finally, has three response categories: (1) definitely not, (2) to a certain degree, and (3) absolutely.

12. In addition, there is a dramatic decrease in the average income of small self-employed businessmen (class IV). This is obviously because in most cases, they work far more hours than wage earners.

13. There are two possible reasons for this, which are not mutually exclusive. The first possibility is that as part of recent economic changes Beck (1992) refers to as the rise of the risk society, nowadays job insecurity is no longer exclusively a characteristic of the working class (e.g., Steijn et al. 1998). If this is the case, then because of these changes in the "real world," the EGP class schema has become less useful. The second possibility is that this class schema, based on occupational title, number of subordinates, and being self-employed or not, has never really tapped the degree of job security. If this is the case, EGP class was a weak indicator for job insecurity in the past as well.

14. With this stepwise option independent variables are only added to the regression equation if—given the effects of the independents already included—they can still make a significant contribution to the explanation of the dependent variable. This option also makes it possible to present seven instead of six dummy variables for seven EGP classes for possible inclusion in the second step. In an ordinary regression analysis this would cause multicollinearity.

# 3

## What About Occupational Self-Direction?

### *Melvin Kohn and “Working-Class” Authoritarianism*

In industrial society, where occupation is central to men’s lives, occupational experiences that facilitate or deter the exercise of self-direction come to permeate men’s views . . . of the world and of self.

—Melvin Kohn, *Class and Conformity*

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

In his classic study *Class and Conformity* (1977 [1969]), American sociologist Melvin Kohn defends the thesis that authoritarianism definitely can be explained by class. Compared with the middle class, he holds that the working class is characterized by authoritarian conservatism and an emphasis on conformity as a parental value, and that the middle class attaches greater importance to self-direction. Kohn attributes this difference to workers’ relatively limited occupational self-direction rather than their weak labor market position. This is part of what is referred to as the *work situation* in British class analysis (e.g., Lockwood 1989 [1958]; Goldthorpe 1980:39), distinguishing it from the *market situation* central to Chapter 2.

It is clear that Kohn’s thesis is not in keeping with the conclusion drawn in Chapter 2 that authoritarianism has nothing to do with class and hinges instead on cultural capital. However, since the work situation Kohn emphasizes does not play any role in Chapter 2, the analysis conducted there can hardly be viewed as a refutation of his thesis.<sup>1</sup> This is all the more

true since the analysis does not exclude a strong effect of occupational self-direction on authoritarianism. Though the considerable relation between EGP class and authoritarianism does appear to be completely attributable to differences in cultural capital, the conclusion still cannot be drawn that occupational self-direction consequently plays no role at all.<sup>2</sup> Since it is conceivable that people with ample cultural capital—high educational and cultural participation levels—also have jobs with ample freedom, it is even possible that in fact the effect of cultural capital observed in Chapter 2 should be completely ascribed to related differences in occupational self-direction.

It is thus only possible to determine whether the factors generating authoritarianism lie outside the work situation, as suggested in Chapter 2, once the extent to which authoritarianism is affected by occupational self-direction has been examined. That is why the relative importance of occupational self-direction and cultural capital for explaining authoritarianism is examined in this chapter. If Kohn is right and occupational self-direction is decisive, these factors are mainly to be found in the work situation. However, if cultural capital is decisive, they are mainly to be found outside it.

Kohn's thesis is briefly presented in Section 3.2. On the basis of two questions, I then examine whether it is indeed supported by his own research results. The first question is whether the class differences he observes really are differences between classes. Or are they, as Chapter 2 suggests, once again mainly differences between the well educated and the poorly educated? Whatever the case may be, the second relevant question pertains to whether this effect can indeed, as Kohn claims, be ascribed to differences in occupational self-direction. In Section 3.3 several hypotheses are formulated on the effect of occupational self-direction and cultural capital on authoritarianism. After discussing the operationalization of occupational self-direction in Section 3.4, I test these hypotheses in Section 3.5. Last, I summarize the conclusions in Section 3.6.

## 3.2. MELVIN KOHN: THEORY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 3.2.1. Class and Conformity

Ever since the 1960s Kohn has been conducting research on the factors that generate the parental values workers exhibit in bringing up their children (Kohn 1977 [1969]; Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990). According to Kohn, the working class puts more of an emphasis on conformity (obedience) as a parental value and the middle class attaches greater importance to self-direction (viewed as the opposite of conformity, i.e., an emphasis on encouraging children to think for themselves and make their own judgments). In addition, Kohn holds that authoritarian

conservative attitudes are more widely accepted in the working class than in the middle class.<sup>3</sup>

Kohn holds that this effect of class on parental values and authoritarian conservatism is generated by differences in occupational self-direction. Since the middle class can take more initiative at work than the working class and makes more independent judgments and needs to think more just to do its jobs well, according to Kohn the middle class puts more of an emphasis than the working class on individual freedom and less on adjustment, obedience, and conformity.

Kohn holds that three factors are essential to determining the extent of occupational self-direction. One is the *substantive complexity* of the job. The more a job demands of a person's judgment, the more complex it is. Another is the *closeness of supervision* or the extent to which a person is supervised on the job. The third is the *routinization* of the job or the extent to which a person has to adhere to set procedures and rules, or has to engage in activities that are so varied that they cannot be carried out in accordance with set procedures. In short, Kohn holds that the authoritarianism of the working class is a result of the fact that workers have less complex jobs, are more closely supervised, and do more routine work than members of the middle class.

### 3.2.2. Class, Social Stratification, and Education

Since numerous studies show that education has a strong negative effect on authoritarianism, it is important to note that in *Class and Conformity*, Kohn's operationalization of class is largely based upon differences in education. He starts by distinguishing seven education and seven occupation categories (the occupation categories range from high-level executives and professionals to unskilled workers). He then weighs the occupation scores by seven and the education scores by four, after which the resulting scores are added up and then subdivided into five classes or reduced to the distinction between manual work (working class) and non-manual work (middle class) (1977 [1969]:11–13).

In the "Reassessment" in the second edition of his book, Kohn explains that on second thought it would be wiser to speak of "social stratification" rather than "class" when this operationalization is used (1977 [1969]:xxvi). In the studies he has since conducted, he draws a systematic distinction between the two. He has since used the term "social stratification" to refer to what he first called class and operationalizes it as a linear combination of education, occupational status, and income (Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990). The term "class" is reserved for a slightly altered version of the initial class schema of neo-Marxist sociologist Erik Wright (1979).



It is obviously not relevant to this study that in his later work Kohn uses the term “social stratification” to refer to what he originally called “class.” What is important, however, is that both measures have a lot to do with education. The first question to be posed is: To what extent is Kohn’s working-class authoritarianism essentially an authoritarianism of the poorly educated? The second question is: Can the effect of class, social stratification, or education on authoritarianism indeed be ascribed to differences in occupational self-direction?

I only examine Kohn’s research to the extent that it helps answer these two crucial questions. They can be answered by way of a critical inspection of several of Kohn’s statistical analyses. This is why readers who are neither trained nor interested in statistics will probably find the rest of this section hard to understand and definitely not very exciting. Whatever the case may be, it still remains the only way to answer these two questions. Once we have gotten past the next section, the worst of it is over.

### 3.2.3. Melvin Kohn’s Black Box

I confine myself to only a few of the analyses in Kohn’s books that are relevant to this study (1977 [1969]; Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990). As I wrote this chapter I also consulted four of his articles published since the 1960s in the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *American Sociological Review*. However, they do not contain statistical analyses relevant to the two questions or provide information on the extent to which the effects of class or social stratification on parental values or authoritarian conservatism are actually the effects of education (Pearlin and Kohn 1966; Miller et al. 1985; Kohn et al. 1990, 1997).<sup>4</sup>

This is due to the fact that the data analysis has the following structure. The first step combines education, occupational status, and income into class or social stratification, usually justified by the strength of their correlations with each other. The second step examines how this composite measuring instrument influences parental values or authoritarian conservatism. The third step addresses the extent to which this effect can be ascribed to occupational self-direction. This is done by recalculating the correlation observed in the second step via a partial correlation, keeping occupational self-direction constant, and then noting the extent to which it is reduced.

This statistical approach makes it impossible to see the extent to which this is actually an authoritarianism of the poorly educated. Before the reader has even a single correlation with authoritarianism or parental values, the black box of class or social stratification is already locked and Kohn has thrown away the key. This makes it impossible for his readers to ever know exactly what is going on inside it. Are the observed effects of class or social stratification on these attitudes just mainly or even exclu-

sively effects of education, as so many other studies suggest? All the reader can do is wonder.

An extensive footnote in the most recent of the four articles cites the reasons behind this analysis strategy. To make a long story short, Kohn et al. only want to view education as an indicator of social stratification (1997:627).<sup>5</sup> This analysis strategy thus works from the assumption that in studies on what generates authoritarianism, income and education should be viewed as two aspects of the same thing. Of course one can go beyond a mere assumption and actually test whether this is the case. This is done in Chapter 2, leading to the conclusion that the divergent effects of income and education on authoritarianism constitute a good reason not to view them as two aspects of the same thing. The analysis strategy in the articles discussed here overlooks this testing option and makes it impossible to see exactly what is going on inside the black box.

### 3.2.4. What Is Going on Inside the Black Box?

In his books, Kohn does give his readers a glimpse inside the black box. He also describes analyses that do not combine the above-mentioned indicators beforehand into class or social stratification, but include them as separate independent variables. What can we learn from this glimpse inside the black box? I shall first examine the analyses in *Class and Conformity* on the relations between education and occupational position on the one hand and conformity or self-direction as parental value and authoritarian conservatism on the other. The correlations with education, 0.23 and 0.32, are much stronger than the ones with occupational position, which are only 0.09 and 0.05. Moreover, these extremely weak effects are not controlled for differences in education, which of course are inevitably also expressed in the occupational position (Kohn 1977 [1969]:185). So it is clear that Kohn's working-class authoritarianism is also essentially mainly an authoritarianism of the poorly educated.

It is still true that this relation might derive from the fact that the more educated people are, the greater their occupational self-direction. The analyses in *Class and Conformity* show, however, that this is not the case. The weak correlations between occupational position on the one hand and conformity or self-direction as parental value and authoritarian conservatism on the other (0.09 and 0.05) are indeed reduced by more than 80 percent if they are recalculated, keeping occupational self-direction constant. This does not hold true, however, for the much stronger effects of education (0.23 and 0.32), which are reduced by only 18 percent and 13 percent (Kohn 1977 [1969]:185).

The implications are clear. Not only is it primarily an authoritarianism of the poorly educated, it is an authoritarianism that can barely be ascribed to the fact that they have less occupational self-direction than the well

*Table 3.1* Conformity/self-direction as parental value and authoritarianism/libertarianism of employed American men interviewed in 1974 explained by stratification variables and occupational self-direction ( $\beta$ s)

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Conformity/self-direction</i>		<i>Authoritarianism</i>	
Educational level	0.55*	0.47*	-0.54	-0.37*
Occupational status	0.09*	-0.04	-0.08	0.06
Income	0.07	0.04	-0.07*	-0.01
Substantive complexity		0.19*		-0.23*
Closeness of supervision		-0.11*		0.04
Routinization		0.04		-0.02

\*  $p < 0.05$

Source: Kohn and Slomczynski (1990:100–01, 140).

educated. Only the effect of occupational position, which is relatively weak in comparison, can be largely explained in this way. The relative unimportance of occupational self-direction is confirmed in Kohn's later books, which are based on a second series of interviews conducted in 1974 with some of the American workers interviewed in 1964 for *Class and Conformity*. The results of the relevant analyses are presented in Table 3.1, which is based on two different tables in *Social Structure and Self-Direction* (Kohn and Slomczynski 1990). Comparable research results can be found in the book by Kohn and Schooler (1983:158–61, 164–70).

It is obvious that of the three social stratification indicators, education is the only important one. A low educational level definitely leads to an emphasis on conformity as parental value and to authoritarian conservative attitudes, whereas the effects of occupational status and income are negligible. With respect to the three indicators Kohn uses for social stratification, the conclusion is once again quite clear: only differences in education are of any importance.

If substantive complexity, supervision, and routinization are added as independent variables to these three stratification variables, this once again confirms that they have only a limited supplementary effect. It is true that this leads to a considerable weakening of both effects of education, but they nonetheless remain by far the strongest effects. In both cases, they are considerably stronger than the effect of substantive complexity, which is in turn the most important aspect of occupational self-direction. So for explaining authoritarianism, education is not only more important than occupational status and income; it is also much more important than occupational self-direction.

Table 3.2, similarly taken from Kohn and Slomczynski, summarizes what is noted above. The composite measurement instrument for social

*Table 3.2* Total and indirect effects of educational level and occupational position on conformity/self-direction as parental value and authoritarianism/libertarianism for working American men interviewed in 1974

	<i>Conformity/self-direction</i>		<i>Authoritarianism</i>	
	<i>Total effect</i>	<i>Indirect effect<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Total effect</i>	<i>Indirect effect<sup>1</sup></i>
Educational level	0.63	0.16 (26%)	-0.50	-0.14 (28%)
Occupational position <sup>2</sup>	0.20	0.21 (100%)	-0.14	-0.19 (100%)

<sup>1</sup>Solely the indirect effect via occupational self-direction.

<sup>2</sup>Linear combination of occupational status and income.

*Source:* Kohn and Slomczynski (1990:144).

stratification is divided into two parts. The first is the occupational position, which consists of a linear combination of occupational status and income. The second is the educational level. Occupational position is not only far less important than education in explaining parental values and authoritarian conservatism, its effect is completely generated by the fact that people with a higher occupational position have greater occupational self-direction. However, the far stronger effect of education is largely (about 75 percent) direct and thus independent of differences in occupational self-direction.

Both links from Kohn's thesis, that classes differ with respect to authoritarianism and parental values and that this is due to a difference in occupational self-direction between these classes, are consequently refuted by his own findings. First, it is not classes that differ with respect to authoritarianism, but people of different educational levels. Second, the differences cannot be ascribed to the fact that the poorly educated have less occupational self-direction than the well educated. In essence the differences have very little to do with this. A critical inspection of Kohn's research findings thus shows that they deviate much less from the results in Chapter 2 than his thesis suggests. Regardless of the fact that about a quarter of the effect of education can be ascribed to occupational self-direction, they confirm the decisive role of differences in education observed in so many other studies.

### 3.3. HYPOTHESES

A crucial difference between Kohn's work and this study lies in the theoretical status given to education. Chapter 2 shows that in studies on the causes of authoritarianism, it should be interpreted, for two reasons, as a cultural capital indicator. One reason is that class or social stratification

indicators other than education—income is of particular importance in this connection—are of no significance in explaining authoritarianism. As noted above, this is confirmed by Kohn's research results. The other reason is that in addition to education, cultural participation has almost as strong a negative effect on authoritarianism. In studies on the causes of authoritarianism, it is consequently erroneous to simply view such variables as income, occupational status, and education as being interchangeable indicators of the same thing, whether it is referred to as class or as social stratification.

Education might well be the decisive variable in Kohn's study, but occupational self-direction still has a weak supplementary effect. This is probably due to the fact that Kohn only addresses the effect of education in his study and completely leaves out the almost equally important effect of cultural participation. If employees with ample occupational self-direction also have a great deal of interest in art and culture, it is quite plausible that this might be exactly what the supplementary effect of occupational self-direction should be ascribed to.

Of course this explanation of the effect of occupational self-direction that Kohn observes can only be tenable if the assumption it is based upon is tenable, that employees with ample occupational self-direction also have a great deal of interest in art and culture. Kohn's own study shows that this is indeed the case. Chapter 9 of *Work and Personality* examines the relation between occupational self-direction and the intellectuality of leisure-time activities (Kohn and Schooler 1983). The measuring instrument for this resembles the one used in this study for cultural participation.<sup>6</sup> To answer the question on the relation between occupational self-direction and intellectuality of leisure-time activities, the researchers analyze the data gathered from the same employed American men at two different moments (1964 and 1974). Taking into consideration the differences in education, intellectual leisure-time activities and occupational self-direction—in essence substantive complexity—do indeed have a positive effect on each other.<sup>7</sup>

Although this finding makes one wonder whether the weak supplementary effect of occupational self-direction on authoritarianism should not be ascribed to this greater interest in art and culture, Kohn does not answer this question. In short, in this chapter first and foremost I need to confirm that there is indeed a positive relation between cultural participation and occupational self-direction. The very fact that the two variables are closely related to education is reason enough to assume there is. After all, well-educated people not only have greater occupational self-direction, as Kohn's study shows; they are also far more interested in art and culture than poorly educated people (DiMaggio 1982; DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990; Ganzeboom 1989; DiMaggio and Mohr 1995). If this only

generates a spurious relation between cultural participation and occupational self-direction, it is obvious in advance that the supplementary effect of occupational self-direction on authoritarianism is not due to the fact that people with greater occupational self-direction are also more interested in art and culture. This is why the first hypothesis to be tested is that, just as in Kohn's above-mentioned analysis, there is a positive relation between cultural participation and occupational self-direction, even if education is held constant (Hypothesis 1).

If this hypothesis is confirmed, it is quite possible that the supplementary effect of occupational self-direction on authoritarianism should actually be ascribed to the greater cultural participation on the part of people with greater occupational self-direction, though of course this is not necessarily the case. The hypothesis that in addition to education, cultural participation has a strong negative effect on authoritarianism need not be tested again here, since it was confirmed in Chapter 2. Instead, the tenability of two other hypotheses should be examined, that is, that greater occupational self-direction leads to less authoritarianism (Hypothesis 2) and that this effect completely disappears if education and cultural participation are both kept constant (Hypothesis 3). If these hypotheses are confirmed, the effect of occupational self-direction on authoritarianism can be completely ascribed to related differences in cultural capital.

### 3.4. OPERATIONALIZATION

Occupational self-direction is measured with the use of twenty statements taken from earlier studies by American (Vallas 1988) and Flemish and Dutch sociologists of work (De Witte 1990, Steijn and De Witte 1992). Routinization, one of Kohn's three aspects of occupational self-direction, is not used. Kohn's own research demonstrates that it does not affect either parental values or authoritarian conservatism (see Table 3.1). For that matter, it is difficult to see how routinization, regardless of substantive complexity and closeness of supervision, can still have an effect on authoritarianism.

The twenty items pretty much collectively cover Kohn's measuring instruments for the two remaining aspects of occupational self-direction, that is, autonomy (closeness of supervision) and complexity (substantive complexity). Eight of the items have to do with independent decisions that can be made about the work and are thus indicative of *autonomy*. Kohn measures *substantive complexity* as (1) the extent to which people work with things, data, and people and (2) the extent to which the work itself is complex. In essence, low substantive complexity scores are given to people who mainly work with things, and higher scores are given to people who work

Table 3.3 Factor loadings of twenty occupational self-direction indicators

<i>Occupational self-direction indicators</i>	<i>% Limited<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>
It makes one dirty.	86.1	0.85		
One works in surroundings that smell bad.	94.1	0.71		
One works outdoors no matter what kind of weather it is.	89.6	0.69		
One works in noisy surroundings.	84.6	0.71		
The work is dangerous (a high risk of accidents occurring).	93.4	0.77		
The work requires a great deal of physical exertion.	77.7	0.73		
One has to do things exactly the way one is told.	60.0		0.52	
The boss starts wondering where one is whenever one leaves one's fixed spot.	93.4		0.55	
It is easy for the people above one to see how much work one does on any given day.	74.2		0.65	
One has to do a certain amount of work in an hour or a minute.	85.1		0.61	
One can decide for oneself to not work so hard on a given day.	56.6		-0.67	
Most of the decisions about the contents of one's work are made by the boss.	76.9		0.62	
One can decide for oneself what work one is going to do on a given day.	41.0		-0.70	
One can decide oneself when to take a break.	38.6		-0.56	
One has to convince other people to think the way one does.	67.7			0.56
One has a lot of responsibility.	30.8			0.56
The work requires mental exertion.	18.4			0.69
One can learn new things.	38.0			0.70
One has to consult the people one works with.	29.3			0.67
The work requires new ideas.	44.3			0.75
Eigenvalue		3.68	3.25	2.75
R <sup>2</sup>		0.18	0.16	0.14
Cronbach's $\alpha$		0.85	0.78	0.75

Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation, factor loadings < 0.35 omitted,  $N = 792$ .

<sup>1</sup>For all twenty statements, this pertains to a combination of the two categories, never or almost never and sometimes.

with people or data; the more complex the work is, the higher the scores are (Kohn 1977 [1969]:153–58; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990:110–13).

Kohn's operationalization of substantive complexity is thus largely based on the distinction between manual work (working with things) and nonmanual work (working with people or data). Research results show

Table 3.4 Working conditions, autonomy, and complexity by EGP class

<i>EGP class</i>	<i>Working conditions</i>	<i>Autonomy</i>	<i>Complexity</i>
Class I	1.10	0.74	0.93
Class II	0.87	0.55	0.60
Class III	0.98	-0.24	-0.70
Class IV	0.12	1.41	0.34
Class V	-1.34	0.04	0.88
Class VI	-3.04	-1.02	-1.10
Class VII	-2.61	-1.75	-1.36
Grand mean	8.04	6.59	6.05
$\eta$	0.65***	0.43***	0.46***
$R^2$	0.42***	0.18***	0.21***

Analyses of variance, deviations from grand mean,  $N = 706$ .

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$

that this distinction is closely linked to working conditions (Gagliani 1981:267–70; Steijn and De Witte 1992:202). It is evident that working with people or data less frequently entails dirty and physically demanding work than working with things. So in addition to substantive complexity, Kohn's measuring instrument also addresses working conditions. This is why it is replaced here with two separate clusters of six statements, one cluster pertaining to *working conditions* and the other to *complexity*.<sup>8</sup>

The twenty statements are presented to the respondents, who are asked how often they hold true for the work they do. They can choose from the following four answers: never or almost never, sometimes, very often, and almost always or always. The answers are subjected to a principal component analysis. As was the case in earlier research (Houtman 1994:163–65), this does indeed produce the three desired dimensions. The first factor pertains to working conditions, the second to autonomy, and the third to complexity (Table 3.3).<sup>9</sup> The reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) of the three scales composed on this basis is 0.85 for working conditions, 0.78 for autonomy and 0.75 for complexity. The scale scores are calculated by adding up the items loading on each of the three factors, and transforming the results into scales with a range from 0 to 10. Higher scores stand for better working conditions, more autonomy, and greater complexity. This yields three correlated aspects of occupational self-direction. The correlations are 0.30 between autonomy and complexity, 0.40 between working conditions and autonomy and 0.19 between working conditions and complexity.

Table 3.4 shows that just as in Kohn's study, the seven EGP classes distinguished in Chapter 2 differ considerably with respect to occupational self-direction (cf. Kohn and Slomczynski 1990:113–17). EGP classes VI and



*Table 3.5* Correlations (1) and partial correlations controlling for educational level (2) between cultural participation and three aspects of occupational self-direction

<i>Occupational self-direction indicators</i>	1	2
Working conditions	0.28***	0.14***
Autonomy	0.16***	0.06
Complexity	0.24***	0.12***
<i>N</i>	710	689

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$  (one-sided testing)

VII (i.e. the working class) are not only characterized by the poorest working conditions ( $\eta = 0.65$ ); they also exhibit the least autonomy ( $\eta = 0.43$ ) and complexity ( $\eta = 0.46$ ). The seven EGP classes thus differ considerably in all three aspects, but far more in working conditions than autonomy or complexity.

### 3.5. RESULTS

#### 3.5.1. Occupational Self-Direction and Cultural Participation

The first hypothesis predicts a positive relation between cultural participation and occupational self-direction, even if education is held constant. The zero order correlations and the three partial correlations needed for the testing are shown in Table 3.5. Good working conditions, ample autonomy, and complex work do indeed appear to coincide with greater cultural participation. Only in the case of autonomy can this be completely ascribed to the effect of a high educational level on both variables; the observed relations between working conditions and complexity on the one hand and complexity and cultural participation on the other also exist on their own. Regardless of whether their educational level is higher, on the average employees with good working conditions and complex work are more interested in culture than employees with poor working conditions and simple work.

If cultural participation is explained in a regression analysis by education and occupational self-direction, then the three variables measuring occupational self-direction add more than 2 percent to the variance already explained by education.<sup>10</sup> Although Hypothesis 1 is confirmed by these findings, the observed relations are not especially strong. This is not necessarily a problem, since the same holds true for the effect of occupa-

Table 3.6 Authoritarianism/libertarianism explained by cultural capital and occupational self-direction

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>r</i> <sup>1</sup>	$\beta$	$\beta$
Educational level	-0.40***	-0.31***	
Cultural participation	-0.36***	-0.23***	
Working conditions	-0.25***		-0.22***
Autonomy	-0.15***		-0.01
Complexity	-0.22***		-0.17***
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>		0.21***	0.09***

Regression analyses  $N = 667$ .

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

<sup>1</sup>One-sided testing and pairwise deletion of missing values.

tional self-direction on authoritarianism. The question is whether this effect completely disappears if differences in cultural participation are considered in addition to differences in education. To see whether the effect of occupational self-direction is indeed an effect of cultural capital, Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 have to be tested.

### 3.5.2. Occupational Self-Direction and Authoritarianism

Hypothesis 2 predicts that limited occupational self-direction leads to authoritarianism if education and cultural participation are not held constant. Table 3.6 shows that this second hypothesis is also confirmed.

The three aspects of occupational self-direction collectively explain almost 10 percent of the differences in authoritarianism. It is striking that autonomy does not have any effect at all. Working conditions and complexity, which together cover Kohn's operationalization of substantive complexity, have approximately the same effect. Since complexity appears to be the most influential aspect of occupational self-direction in Kohn's study as well, these results largely coincide with his. Of course it does not come as a surprise that cultural capital explains approximately 20 percent of the variance of authoritarianism. After all, the same observation is made in Chapter 2. It is more important that it has approximately twice as much explanatory power as occupational self-direction.

### 3.5.3. Occupational Self-Direction, Cultural Capital, and Authoritarianism

The question is whether the effect of occupational self-direction disappears if we not only take into account that people with greater

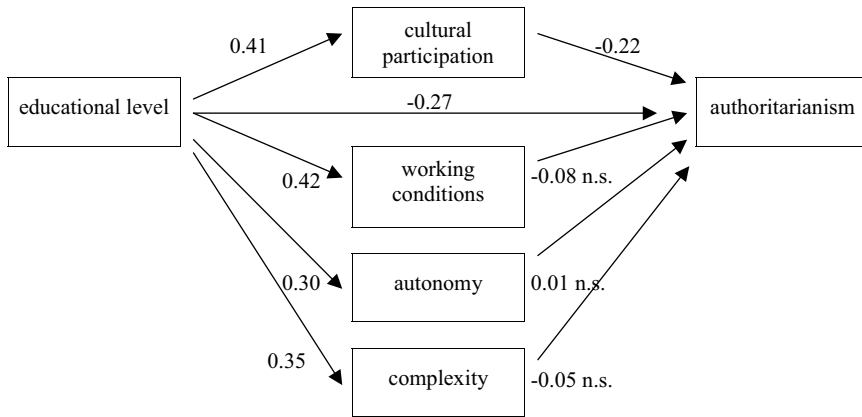


Figure 3.1 Authoritarianism/libertarianism explained by cultural capital and occupational self-direction (all paths significant at  $p < 0.001$  unless otherwise indicated ( $p > 0.05$ ),  $R^2$  authoritarianism = 0.22,  $N = 667$ ).

occupational self-direction are better educated, but that regardless of this, they are also more interested in art and culture. It is problematic that Kohn only does the former, since the effect of cultural participation is not much weaker than the effect of education. A path model has been constructed to make it possible to see the effect that education, cultural participation, and the three aspects of occupational self-direction have on authoritarianism. In the path model, education is viewed as the independent variable, occupational self-direction and cultural participation as the mediating or interpreting variables, and authoritarianism as the dependent variable. This causal sequence makes it possible to see exactly what causes the strong negative influence of education on authoritarianism, in other words, the extent to which it entails (1) a direct effect, (2) an indirect effect via cultural participation, and (3) indirect effects via the aspects of occupational self-direction (see Fig. 3.1).

If, unlike the case in Kohn's study, the fact is taken into consideration that people with greater occupational self-direction are more interested in art and culture as well as better educated, the observed effect of occupational self-direction simply disappears. A high educational level not only leads to a greater interest in art and culture; it also leads to greater occupational self-direction, though this has no effect on authoritarianism. The conclusion can thus be drawn that authoritarianism is completely a matter of how much cultural capital people have. The first striking point is the strong direct effect of education ( $-0.27$ ). This is similarly the decisive vari-

able in Kohn's own study. In addition to this direct effect, education also has an indirect effect ( $-0.22 \times 0.41 = -0.09$ ).<sup>11</sup> However, it goes via cultural participation and not—as Kohn's thesis suggests—via occupational self-direction.

It is clear that Hypothesis 3 is also confirmed by these results. If differences in education and cultural participation are taken into consideration, limited occupational self-direction does not lead to authoritarianism. Only if this is not taken into consideration can the impression be given that it does. This is the case in Kohn's study.

### 3.6. CONCLUSION

In the second edition of *Class and Conformity*, Kohn presents his thesis as follows: "The heart of the thesis of *Class and Conformity* is that the class-values relation can be interpreted as resulting from class-associated conditions of life, occupational conditions in particular. The crucial occupational conditions are those that determine how self-directed one can be in one's work—namely, freedom from close supervision, substantively complex work, and a nonroutinized flow of work" (1977 [1969]:xxxiv). Neither of the claims implied by this thesis is in keeping with his own research results. First, there is no relation between class and authoritarianism, since in essence it is not classes that differ in this connection, it is people with higher and lower educational levels. Second, this strong effect of education can barely be ascribed to differences in occupational self-direction.<sup>12</sup>

Upon closer examination, Kohn's research results do not contradict the conclusions drawn in Chapter 2. His work similarly shows that in essence, differences in education are decisive. The only important difference is that it demonstrates that occupational self-direction plays a very modest supplementary role in explaining authoritarianism. Given their educational level, the more occupational self-direction employees have, the less authoritarian their attitudes are. Since Kohn's study overlooks the effect of cultural participation, it is asked whether this supplementary effect of occupational self-direction cannot be ascribed to a greater interest in art and culture on the part of people with a great deal of occupational self-direction.

This does indeed prove to be the case. All things considered, the strong negative effect of education on authoritarianism is largely direct, and, insofar as it is indirect, it goes via cultural participation rather than occupational self-direction. Occupational self-direction is not important in explaining authoritarianism; instead it is cultural capital that is decisive. Although people's economic position is conceptualized quite differently here than in Chapter 2—as *work situation* and not as *market situation*—the

conclusion is still the same. This discussion of the work of Melvin Kohn also makes it clear that people's economic position is not important in explaining the importance they attach to individual liberty. It is not the kind of work they do but the cultural influences from outside the work situation that are decisive in this respect.

## NOTES

1. The extent to which the analysis conducted in Chapter 2 can be interpreted as refuting Kohn's thesis depends on the extent to which the EGP class schema includes differences regarding occupational self-direction in addition to differences regarding labor market position (see Table 2.6). It is logical that occupational self-direction can only have a substantial effect on authoritarianism if it is solely expressed to a limited extent in the EGP class schema. It has already been noted, after all, that EGP class cannot explain any variance in authoritarianism after differences in cultural capital are taken into consideration (see Table 2.8).

2. This is due to the fact that the extent to which the EGP class schema incorporates differences regarding occupational self-direction is still unknown (see Note 1, this chapter).

3. In *Class and Conformity*, Kohn examines the influence of class on a total of fourteen different attitudes. The twelve that I do not devote any further attention to here are not theoretically relevant to this study because they do not pertain to the importance people attach to individual freedom or to maintaining order. They either pertain to work (e.g., work orientation) or are strongly psychological (e.g., self-confidence). If the relations between class on the one hand and authoritarian conservatism and parental values on the other are 0.39 and 0.34, the relations with the other attitudes are much weaker. The only exception is extrinsic job orientation (0.37), which is not relevant to this study. One of the remaining relations is 0.21, others are weaker than 0.20, and three of them are even weaker than 0.10 (Kohn 1977 [1969]:73–87).

4. These are the only four articles by Kohn that I used in writing this chapter. Since I did not select them because of the omission I referred to (see Note 12, this chapter), it is striking that all four of them nonetheless make it impossible to answer the two questions. For three reasons, I did not think it was wise to consult any other articles by Kohn. First, given the disappointing experience with these four articles, I would barely expect them to produce any relevant information. Second, all of Kohn's books (Kohn 1977 [1969]; Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990) are largely based on his earlier articles, so there is not much point to reading both. Third, this is all the more true since these books do report the relevant statistical analyses (see the last part of Section 2.2). I do not know whether there are any articles by Kohn without the shortcoming referred to above, but on the grounds of my own minisample of  $N = 4$ , I feel I am justified in concluding they are extremely scarce.

5. The researchers added this footnote after they demonstrated that the relations between class or social stratification on the one hand and self-direction on the other

decrease when occupational self-direction is controlled via a partial correlation (the above-mentioned third step in the analysis). The orientation referred to here is a second-order concept that authoritarian conservatism is part of. The researchers then posed the question of whether these relations can be ascribed to other variables in addition to occupational self-direction. The footnote explains why the researchers will not consider this for education.

Their first argument is as follows: "We deliberately do not include the respondent's own educational attainment as one of the conditions to be statistically controlled. If educational attainment is thought of as a major component of stratification, to do so would be to overcontrol. . . ." Of course the key word here is "if": If this is how educational attainment is thought of, then this is indeed the case. But why should this be how it is thought of? No one is forcing the researchers to do this, are they? And would it be such a good idea to decide beforehand to do it anyway? Wouldn't another option be to examine, as in Chapter 2, how sensible it is to view education and income as two aspects of the same thing? Kohn et al. obviously are not interested in posing questions of this kind. Their preference for the above-mentioned three-step analysis strategy is a direct product of their desire to be able to continue to think of education and income as two aspects of the same thing.

This is followed by a second argument: "If education is considered in its own right, to do so [controlling for education] would be to assume that the causal sequence is from class position to educational attainment to orientation." The fact is all too easily overlooked here that the effect of education in its own right can also be determined in a way other than as a control variable in the calculation of a partial relation. Here again, no one is forcing them to do it this way. If the researchers were, for example, to simply include a series of dummy variables for classes side by side with educational attainment as independent variables in a regression analysis, there would be no need for them to make the rather bizarre assumption "that the causal sequence is from class position to educational attainment to orientation." They could simply examine the direct effects of these variables without having to bother about their causal ordering. This problem of an unrealistic causal ordering is thus similarly not unavoidable. It is created by the unwillingness on the part of researchers to reveal the strong independent effect of educational attainment.

In short, both arguments are generated by a desire to keep the black box safely under lock and key. In other words, Kohn et al. simply feel education is a social stratification indicator and want to keep it that way. They have no desire to conduct any statistical analyses that might require them to reconsider this point of view.

6. This measuring instrument consists of the following seven indicators: (1) frequency of going to plays, concerts, and museums; (2) number of books read in the past six months; (3) intellectual level of magazines read; (4) intellectual level of newspapers read; (5) intellectual level of athletic activities; (6) number of hours spent watching television (the less time spent watching television, the more intellectual the leisure-time activities); and (7) the amount of time spent on hobbies. The last three indicators, which appear to be less valid for measuring cultural participation, also produce the lowest factor loadings (always below and usually far below 0.30). This indicates that the intellectuality of leisure-time activities does indeed resemble cultural participation as it is measured in the present study.

7. I do not know of any further systematic empirical research into the relation between cultural participation and occupational self-direction. De Graaf and Steijn (1997) do demonstrate though that in comparison with other professional groups, social and cultural specialists such as social scientists, teachers, and welfare workers do exhibit a somewhat greater interest in art and culture. In addition, Macy (1988) shows that these very same social and cultural specialists have a great deal of occupational self-direction. If these two findings are combined, this might well indicate a positive relation between occupational self-direction and cultural participation.

8. For my present purposes, this distinction does not have any theoretical consequences. Like job complexity, working conditions are simply viewed as an aspect of occupational self-direction without addressing the difficult question of whether and, if so, why they really are related. My pragmatic, nontheoretical justification is that in Kohn's research it is plausible that exactly the same thing happens, although it is unclear there to what extent the observed effects of complexity are in fact effects of working conditions. Of course in this chapter any refutation of the hypotheses derived from Kohn's thesis cannot be ascribed to the addition of working conditions. Thus the range of the concept of occupational self-direction is expanded rather than restricted, so that, logically speaking, its effect can only become stronger.

9. This analysis is conducted on the data of all 792 respondents who filled in the subquestionnaire for employed people. Of course only the ones who also filled in the subquestionnaire for all of the panel members ( $N = 711$ ) are included in the testing of the hypotheses.

10. If only the three aspects of occupational self-direction are included in the explanation of cultural participation, the explained variance is 11.3 percent, and if only education is included, it is 16.8 percent. If all four variables are included, the explained variance is 19.1 percent, which is more than 2 percent more than if occupational self-direction is left out.

11. Evidently this finding is not an artifact of the decision to include occupational self-direction and cultural participation side by side as mediating or interpreting variables. Whether occupational self-direction is viewed as the cause of cultural participation, or cultural participation is viewed as the cause of occupational self-direction, by definition the result is the same. After all, only a few paths between the three aspects of occupational self-direction and cultural participation are added in these two alternative specifications of the path model. Whether these paths go from occupational self-direction to cultural participation or the other way around consequently does not influence in any way the direct effects of these variables on authoritarianism, which is what is being addressed here. The causal structure shown in Figure 3.1 is used here because it is not possible to select either of the two alternatives above the other. It is just as logical or illogical to view cultural participation as the cause of occupational self-direction as it is to view them the other way around (cf. Section 7.4.4 in Chapter 7).

12. I consulted the four articles by Kohn et al. referred to above to see whether the criticism of Kohn's thesis formulated in this chapter is applicable to countries other than the United States. In these articles, the United States is compared with Italy (Pearlin and Kohn 1966), Poland (Miller et al. 1985), and Poland and Japan (Kohn et al. 1990), and Poland is compared with Ukraine (Kohn et al. 1997). The aim of these articles is thus to empirically test the prediction Kohn published at an

early stage that “we shall come to conclude that the American situation represents a perhaps extreme instance of a very general pattern. . . . [We] doubt that there are any sizable industrial societies—Western or non-Western, capitalist, socialist or communist—in which the relationship of class to conformity is much different, or in which occupational self-direction does not play a major part in this relationship” (1977 [1969]:196). Since these articles do not provide the information needed to evaluate the tenability of Kohn’s thesis, the only option is to use the comparison between the United States and Poland published in the book by Kohn and Slomczynski (1990). However, the analyses presented there provide such a confusing picture that is so difficult to interpret that no unambiguous conclusions can be drawn.

If the two questions in this chapter are posed with respect to Poland, the responses show that education is approximately as important there as in the United States in explaining parental values and authoritarian conservatism ( $\beta$ s of 0.45 and  $-0.52$ ), and income and occupational status have no effect at all (1990:101). Regarding this first question, the patterns for the two countries are similar. Second, unlike the case in the United States, in Poland these strong effects can be almost completely ascribed to the fact that better educated people have greater occupational self-direction. The effect of being under close supervision is negligible in the United States (see Table 3.1), but in Poland it has much the same effect as job complexity, which in turn has much the same effect as in the United States (1990:141). According to the researchers, these research findings “strikingly confirmed” the assumption that Kohn’s thesis is as applicable to Poland as it is to the United States (1990:149). In view of the fact, however, that the thesis is in fact rejected for the United States, this is a rather bizarre conclusion. In reality, the comparison demonstrates that what holds true for Poland does not hold true for the United States.

Of course it is extremely difficult to see which of the two patterns constitutes the exception to the rule, in other words, whether there are perhaps specific historical contexts in which Kohn’s thesis is or is not tenable. Chapter 8 in the book by Kohn and Slomczynski, in which they examine the observed differences between the two countries (1990:202–31), nonetheless suggests that the Polish pattern is a result of specific historical circumstances and that the American pattern—with the causes of authoritarianism outside rather than inside the work situation—is the common one, certainly in Western societies. According to the researchers, the period when many of the Polish respondents started to work for the first time was “a particular historical period in the aftermath of the Second World War” (1990:203), a period of industrial reconstruction characterized by a severe shortage of skilled technicians and well-educated managers. This is why, until the 1960s, many people were appointed to hold positions in Poland that they were not really qualified for. They were expected to attend evening classes and acquire whatever qualifications were needed outside their regular working hours (1990:204). In the United States and in most Western societies, the common pattern is for people to first complete their education and then start working, but this was not the case in postwar Poland: “For Poland, where many men continue their formal education well into their occupational careers, educational attainment is part of an ongoing process” (1990:134–35). It is quite plausible that this socialist manpower planning resulted in relations between education, occupational self-direction, and authoritarianism that are quite different from those in Western societies.



# 4

## Is Postmaterialism Really Different from Libertarianism?

### *And Can It Be Explained Materialistically?*

The kinds of intergenerational value change that are taking place in advanced industrial societies are better described as authoritarian to libertarian rather than . . . materialist to post-materialist value change.

—Scott Flanagan, “Changing Values in Advanced  
Industrial Societies”

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The importance someone attributes to individual liberty (or so we see in Chapters 2 and 3) cannot be explained by either labor market position or occupational self-direction. In reality it is cultural capital that is decisive: a high educational level and ample interest in art and culture lead to an emphasis on individual liberty. However, this conclusion, based on an analysis of the causes of authoritarianism, is not unequivocally in keeping with the third theory mentioned in Chapter 1. According to American political scientist Ronald Inglehart, an emphasis on individual liberty and self-expression, which he refers to as a postmaterialist value orientation, can definitely be explained by one’s economic position. He does not feel, however, that an individual’s present economic position is important, and in this sense his theory is in keeping with the conclusion drawn in the previous chapters. Instead he feels the economic conditions an individual grew up in are decisive.

Ever since the publication of his contemporary classic *The Silent Revolution* (1977), Inglehart has argued that the increasing affluence in Western societies underlies the increasing support for postmaterialist values such as individual liberty and self-expression. This theory is based on the two straightforward assumptions that people value scarce things most (the scarcity hypothesis) and that their values are shaped during their formative years and remain relatively unchanged throughout their lives (the socialization hypothesis) (Inglehart 1981). A combination of these two assumptions yields Inglehart's central thesis that younger age cohorts who have grown up in affluence are more apt to have postmaterialist values than older cohorts who have grown up in a period of material scarcity.

Since younger cohorts inevitably replace older ones, Inglehart argues, a creeping process of value change is taking place. This is not only significant in itself, it also has profound political consequences. The most notable ones include a decline in traditional class voting (Inglehart 1977:179–215, 1990:248–88, 1997:252–56), a rise of new left and green political parties (Inglehart 1990:281–83, 1997:237–52), and a rise of new social movements (Inglehart 1990:371–92), which are all part of what Inglehart calls a Silent Revolution. Although this theory has been criticized on two points since the mid-1970s, there is still no consensus on their validity. Both points are directly relevant to the theme of this book; they both raise doubt about the tenability of Inglehart's claim that advanced industrial societies have witnessed an affluence-driven shift toward values "beyond materialism."<sup>1</sup>

First, Inglehart's postmaterialism index has been extensively criticized. Most critics argue that because of technical deficiencies, it produces measurement artifacts that cannot be used to justify Inglehart's ideas on value change. The forced ranking of four political goals has been criticized for erroneously assuming that materialism and postmaterialism are invariably incompatible (Van Deth 1983; Bean and Papadakis 1994; Braithwaite et al. 1996; Sacchi 1998; Davis and Davenport 1999; Davis et al. 1999; Davis 2000). In a similar vein, Clarke et al. argue that declining rates of inflation have artificially produced declining numbers of materialists since the beginning of the 1980s. They hold this to be due to a decrease in the salience of *fighting rising prices* as the single real materialist political goal used in the index construction. They argue that replacing it with the equally materialist goal of *fighting unemployment* would produce many more materialists (Clarke and Dutt 1991; Clarke et al. 1999). In this chapter I bypass mainly technical criticism of this kind and focus on Flanagan's (1979, 1982, 1987) more substantially relevant assertion that the postmaterialism index simply taps the libertarian opposite of authoritarianism rather than a value orientation beyond materialism. The second type of criticism is related to the first in that it also raises doubt about the increased orientation toward values beyond materialism. Inglehart's assumption that the postmaterialism of

the well educated is attributable to their having grown up in relatively affluent families is also challenged (e.g., Eckersley 1989; Duch and Taylor 1993; De Graaf and Evans 1996; Davis 1996). The validity of both types of criticism is addressed in this chapter. They are first elaborated theoretically to yield more specific hypotheses. I then discuss the measures used, present the findings, and examine their implications for the tenability of Inglehart's theory of value change.

#### 4.2. WHAT DOES INGLEHART'S POSTMATERIALISM INDEX MEASURE?

Explaining that "Post-Materialist values emphasize individual self-expression and achieving a more participant, less hierarchical society" (1977:179), Inglehart raises the obvious question of whether "the Materialist/Post-Materialist phenomenon [is] simply a manifestation of authoritarianism and its opposite" (1977:67). Ever since his first article on his theory of value change (1971:997), he has maintained that this is not the case: "Authoritarianism . . . has a poor empirical fit with Materialism/Post-Materialism" (1977:67; see also 1990:70–71, 1997:47–48). However, Inglehart has never presented any empirical evidence to substantiate this claim. Instead, he refers to his own early article (1970), in which the post-materialism index plays no role whatsoever.

The absence of any supporting evidence for the alleged nonexistence of a substantial negative relation between authoritarianism and postmaterialism is problematic. Whereas Ray (1983, 1990, 1991) rejects the idea that authoritarianism is a personality trait, authors such as Flanagan (1979, 1982, 1987) and Middendorp (1991:259–62) maintain that Inglehart's index taps the libertarian opposite of authoritarianism with its emphasis on increasing individual liberty rather than maintaining social order. Flanagan argues that two of the four political goals Inglehart uses to construct his index are indicative of libertarianism ("Giving the people more say in important government decisions" and "Protecting free speech"), and a third one, "Maintaining order in the nation," seems to tap authoritarianism. Only one political goal, "Fighting rising prices,"<sup>2</sup> unambiguously indicates a materialist value orientation. Restricting the notion of postmaterialism to a *libertarian* emphasis on noneconomic matters and lumping authoritarianism and an emphasis on economic issues together under the heading of materialism, Inglehart might too readily assume that his post-materialism index measures something new and different. As Flanagan rightly observes, "We would expect Authoritarians, who are more conformist and deferential in outlook, to stress social order, and Libertarians, who are more independent, self-assertive, and anti-authoritarian, to stress participation and free speech" (1982:413; see also 1979, 1987).

To demonstrate the validity of his criticism, Flanagan analyzes Japanese data, using subscales for the two subdimensions combined by Inglehart, authoritarianism/libertarianism<sup>3</sup> and materialism/nonmaterialism. He demonstrates that there is virtually no relation between the two subscales, substantiating his claim that Inglehart's index lumps two things together that are empirically unrelated: "nonmaterialists may . . . have either authoritarian or libertarian value preferences" (Flanagan 1982:435; cf. Flanagan 1987:1304–05). He also demonstrates that age has a strong negative relation with authoritarianism and almost no relation with materialism. Flanagan rightly concludes that in recent decades, advanced industrial societies have thus witnessed a shift from authoritarian to libertarian values rather than from materialist to postmaterialist ones (1982:429).

Inglehart (1982) rejects this criticism for two reasons. First, Flanagan's measurement of materialism/nonmaterialism is inadequate. The question Flanagan uses for this purpose pertains to what the respondent feels is the most important problem the Japanese government is facing, but Inglehart argues that this can hardly be considered a valid value measurement, especially since there is no ranking of political goals (see also Abramson and Inglehart 1996:451). Second, Inglehart dismisses the libertarianism of the Japanese younger generation and the authoritarianism of its older generation as being attributable to a "distinctively Japanese process" (1982:476), characterized as a "decline of the traditional sense of group obligation, rooted in preindustrial Japanese culture" (1982:460). Flanagan's results, to sum up Inglehart's position, have no implications for either cultural change in Western societies or for the tenability of his theory of value change.

Flanagan's criticism can be tested more convincingly by studying its validity for the Netherlands, obviously a more Western society than Japan, and by not decomposing the postmaterialism index into two separate subscales. This would counter the obvious objection that something different and consequently something invalid has been measured. This is why I first assess the validity of Flanagan's criticism by simply analyzing the strength of the relation between Inglehart's postmaterialism index and the short version of the F scale for authoritarianism used in Chapters 2 and 3. Thus the first hypothesis simply predicts a negative relation between the F scale for authoritarianism and Inglehart's postmaterialism index (Hypothesis 1).

Even if there is a negative relation of this kind, there is still no reason to conclude that Inglehart's index is little more than a measure of libertarian (postmaterialist) versus authoritarian (materialist) value orientations. If there is only a weak relation, it just confirms Inglehart's idea of a poor empirical fit. Regardless of whether the predicted negative relation does indeed exist, its strength is also important. But how weak is a weak relation and how strong is a strong one? To prevent an absolute dividing line from being arbitrarily selected, it would be better to judge the relative strength. This is feasible in view of the distinction between economic

conservatism/liberalism and authoritarianism/libertarianism. After all, as is noted in Chapter 1, they are two types of political values that are virtually independent among the public at large.

Economic liberalism and economic conservatism are equally “materialistic” in Inglehart’s sense; that is, they embody a preference for either state regulation of the economy and economic redistribution (economic liberalism) or laissez-faire capitalism and acceptance of its unequal distributive consequences (economic conservatism). The two types of economic values are thus related to the cultural dimension of the democratic class struggle in modern societies. Inglehart holds that they are basically unrelated to postmaterialism and that their salience has declined considerably in recent decades because of the spread of postmaterialist values (1997:252–66). In short, the postmaterialism index and the F scale are both expected to correlate with other cultural values, and barely if at all with economic ones (Hypothesis 2).

#### 4.3. PARENTAL AFFLUENCE AND POSTMATERIALISM

As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, there is often a tendency to explain authoritarianism by a weak economic position or limited work experience. Inglehart rejects this explanation for a reason much like the one formulated in this book. He notes that although the well educated exhibit postmaterialism, variables such as income and occupation fail to have similar effects. For Inglehart as well, this implies that in explaining postmaterialism, education does not simply indicate class or occupational status (1977: 72–89).

More specifically, Inglehart argues that education’s positive effect on postmaterialism derives from formative affluence, that is, the affluence in the parental home: “The respondent’s level of education almost certainly gives a more accurate indication of how well-off his family was *when he was growing up* . . . than . . . one’s *present* economic status. . . . There are strong grounds for believing that education should be a better indicator of ‘formative affluence’ than is one’s present occupation” (1977:73–74, his emphasis). However, there is something wrong with this reasoning. After all, the relevant question is not whether one’s educational level is a *better* indicator of the affluence of the parental home than one’s own income. The relevant question is whether it is a *good* indicator of the affluence of the parental home, and whether this economic background does indeed affect postmaterialism. Since Inglehart’s affirmative answer to both of these questions has definitely not gone unchallenged in the literature (Eckersley 1989; Duch and Taylor 1993; De Graaf and Evans 1996; Davis 1996), he tries to defend his position in two ways.

Drawing on French data, he demonstrates that education is strongly related to the respondent's father's occupational status (Abramson and Inglehart 1995:75–87; see also Abramson and Inglehart 1994; Inglehart and Abramson 1994). Although Abramson and Inglehart conclude from this that “the respondent's formal education is an excellent indirect indicator of the economic security the respondent experienced when he or she was growing up” (1996:453), this is unconvincing for two reasons. A strong relation between formative affluence and education does not suffice to demonstrate that education's effect on postmaterialism is generated by an effect of formative affluence. After all, Inglehart's interpretation of education's positive effect on postmaterialism assumes that this effect disappears if parental affluence is held constant in a multivariate analysis and is, moreover, replaced by a stronger positive effect of parental affluence (Duch and Taylor 1994:819; Davis 1996:328).

A second objection to this type of defense is that it is debatable whether the effect of one's father's occupational status on one's own education indicates an effect of formative affluence in the first place. As noted in Chapter 2, variables such as occupational status or class not only incorporate economic differences, they also incorporate cultural capital differences. Fathers with a high occupational status or class position are thus not only better off, they are also better educated—with education tapping cultural capital as well as economic position (Bourdieu 1973, 1984; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Kalmijn 1994; De Graaf and Kalmijn 2001). Indeed, studies from the Netherlands (Ganzeboom 1989) and the United States (DiMaggio 1982; DiMaggio and Mohr 1995; DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990) demonstrate that the well educated focus far more on art and culture than the poorly educated. They also show that educational level is more affected by cultural background (parental cultural capital) than economic family characteristics (parental affluence) (Bourdieu 1973; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Niehof 1997). These combined findings suggest that the respondent's education (in explaining postmaterialism) and the respondent's father's occupational status (in explaining the respondent's own education level) might tap cultural capital rather than parental affluence.

Inglehart also defends his position with what he regards as a more valid measure of parental affluence, combining a respondent's education, father's education, mother's education, and father's occupational status (Inglehart 1990:311–18; Abramson and Inglehart 1996). This is also unconvincing for two reasons. One is that this composite measure precludes the theoretically most meaningful empirical test, that is, whether the positive effect of the respondent's education on postmaterialism is replaced by a stronger positive effect of parental affluence in a multivariate analysis. The other is that with education currently considered an indicator of socioeconomic status as well as cultural capital, the respondent's father's education,

mother's education, and father's occupation may not be valid indicators of parental affluence in the first place.

Given that there is no and may never be any long-term panel data (Abramson and Inglehart 1996:455), there is only one way to study the role of parental affluence in generating postmaterialist values. Because variables such as parental education or occupation are ambiguous and make it difficult to separate economic background (parental affluence) and cultural background (parental cultural capital), the only viable option is to measure the two dimensions separately by means of recall data. So two steps must be taken to see whether postmaterialism can be explained by parental affluence, as Inglehart assumes. First the direct effects of parental affluence and parental cultural capital on postmaterialism must be assessed. Parental affluence is not expected to have a positive effect on postmaterialism (Hypothesis 3), and parental cultural capital is (Hypothesis 4). Then we need to assess whether this effect of parental cultural capital on postmaterialism is indeed indirect through the respondent's cultural capital (education and cultural participation) (Hypothesis 5) and through libertarianism (Hypothesis 6).

#### 4.4. MEASUREMENT

*Parental affluence* and *parental cultural capital* are measured by questions on the family circumstances when the respondents were about fourteen. For parental affluence, questions are posed on the type of home their parents lived in, whether they rented or owned it, and how many rooms it had.<sup>4</sup> The respondents are asked to estimate their parents' income at the time, with scores ranging from 1 for the lowest to 5 for the highest income. Data on how many cars the family had (none, one, more than one), how the family acquired the most expensive car (purchased new, provided by employer, or purchased secondhand), and the luxury level of the most expensive car are combined into a car ownership index. Questions on parental cultural capital ask whether either parent was a library member, how often the parents went to concerts, plays, shows, or the ballet, and how often they went to art exhibitions (e.g., at a museum), with the scores ranging from 0 for never or almost never to 3 for more than six times a year. The respondents are also asked how often their parents used to discuss art and culture at home, with the scores ranging from 0 for never or almost never to 3 for daily or almost daily.

Principal component analysis yields the expected cultural and economic factors, explaining about 50 percent of the variance (Table 4.1). Scores for both dimensions of the respondents' family are computed by adding up the standardized scores of the relevant indicators.<sup>5</sup> Reliability

Table 4.1 Factor loadings of ten parental affluence and parental cultural capital indicators

Parental affluence and parental cultural capital indicators	Factor 1	Factor 2
Type of home (1 = (semi-)detached house)		0.71
Home ownership (1 = yes)		0.78
Number of rooms		0.58
Estimated income category	0.43	0.58
Car ownership		0.53
Library membership (1 = yes)	0.55	
Frequency of going to concerts	0.75	
Frequency of going to plays, shows, or ballet	0.71	
Frequency of going to art exhibitions	0.75	
Frequency of discussing art and culture	0.73	
Eigenvalue	2.83	2.10
R <sup>2</sup>	0.28	0.21

Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation, factor loadings < 0.30 omitted, N = 1,459.

(Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) is 0.67 for parental affluence and 0.76 for parental cultural capital. The correlation between the two scales is 0.28.

*Postmaterialism* is measured by the widely used short version of Inglehart's index based on the ranking of the four political goals mentioned above. Although the ipsative nature of the responses formally excludes this (Van Deth 1983, Sacchi 1998), principal component analysis is nevertheless applied. This makes it possible to do justice to the ranking of all four separate goals. The first factor explains 44.2 percent of the variance, the lowest factor loading is 0.55, and the loadings of the materialist and postmaterialist goals are opposites. Factor scores are used in the analysis, with high scores indicating postmaterialism. Constructing the index exactly as Inglehart suggests does not yield substantially different findings.

Since F scale scores are known to be linked to a positive evaluation of traditional gender roles (Middendorp 1991) and to an emphasis on social adjustment rather than self-direction as the primary goal of socialization (Middendorp 1991; Kohn 1977 [1969]; Kohn and Schooler 1983; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990), scales measuring the evaluation of traditional gender roles and one's educational value orientation are added as measures of authoritarianism/libertarianism.

*Rejection of traditional gender roles* measures the respondents' acceptance or rejection of the traditional division of labor between men (breadwinners) and women (housewives and mothers). Principal component analysis of five Likert items yields a single factor explaining 44.1 percent of the



Table 4.2 Factor loadings of five rejection of traditional gender roles indicators

<i>Rejection of traditional gender roles indicators</i>	<i>% Agree (strongly)</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
It is natural for the mother to stay home if a child is ill, not the father.	38.7	0.77
Women are equal to men as regards having leadership qualities.	84.0	-0.49
Men are as suited as women to raising small children.	63.8	-0.63
It is best for young children if their mother does not work outside the home.	55.8	0.74
Not completing their education is more problematic for men than women.	39.7	0.66
Eigenvalue		2.20
$R^2$		0.44
Cronbach's $\alpha$		0.68

Principal component analysis,  $N = 1,734$ .

variance (Table 4.2). Reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) is 0.68, and scores are assigned to respondents with no more than one missing value. High scores indicate a rejection of the traditional division of labor between men and women.

*Educational value orientation* refers to the degree to which respondents prefer education to focus on cultural-intellectual (expressive) or economic-technological goals (instrumental). Principal component analysis of seven items yields a first factor explaining 39.8 percent of the variance (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.73$ , Table 4.3). Scores are assigned to respondents with no more than one missing value. High scores indicate an expressive educational value orientation.

## 4.5. RESULTS

### 4.5.1. Postmaterialism and Authoritarianism/Libertarianism

At -0.40, the correlation between postmaterialism and authoritarianism is far from insignificant and confirms Hypothesis 1. Although most authors would probably speak of a substantial correlation rather than a poor empirical fit, this remains essentially a matter of taste. This is why it is important to also consider some other findings.

The F scale items with the highest factor loadings exhibit the strongest relation with postmaterialism (Table 4.4). This means postmaterialism exhibits the strongest relation with precisely the items that best represent

Table 4.3 Factor loadings of seven educational value orientation indicators

<i>Educational value orientation indicators</i>	<i>% Agree (strongly)</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
If many students in a certain field are unemployed after graduation, the state should restrict the number of its first-year students.	71.0	0.71
It is a waste of public funds to give people an education that only gives them a slight chance of a job.	67.1	0.78
Studies related to art and culture are at least as important to society as technical studies.	50.2	-0.41
The state should spend less money on branches of learning that fail to yield applicable knowledge.	40.1	0.70
Young people should be free to pursue the education they are most interested in.	77.9	-0.31
Getting a well-paid job later is the primary reason for getting a degree.	64.8	0.64
The state should see to it that universities conduct research that is useful to the state or the business community.	66.5	0.70
Eigenvalue		2.79
$R^2$		0.40
Cronbach's $\alpha$		0.73

Principal component analysis,  $N = 1,676$ .

what the F scale measures, the emphasis on maintaining social order. The observed pattern is not coincidental. Pearson's correlation between the factor loadings and the absolute strength of the correlation with postmaterialism is no less than 0.84. Even with only nine cases, this correlation is amply significant ( $p = 0.002$ , one-sided test). So the better an F scale item indicates the value of maintaining social order, the stronger its negative relation with Inglehart's postmaterialism index. It would even be possible to add the reversed measure for postmaterialism to the F scale without damaging its reliability. In fact, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  would then increase slightly from 0.79 to 0.80.

Table 4.5 shows the results of a principal component analysis that makes it feasible to estimate the relative strength of the relation between postmaterialism and authoritarianism/libertarianism. The pattern is clear enough and confirms Hypothesis 2. Postmaterialism exhibits no relation with economic liberalism/conservatism, but it does exhibit a strong negative relation with the F scale and a strong positive one with expressive educational values and a rejection of traditional gender roles. Of course, the absence of a relation between postmaterialism and economic liberalism/conservatism is perfectly consistent with Inglehart's theory, which

Table 4.4 Factor loadings of nine (F Scale) authoritarianism/libertarianism indicators<sup>1</sup> and correlations with postmaterialism<sup>2</sup>

Authoritarianism/libertarianism indicators (F scale items)	Factor 1	r
More and more people have recently begun to interfere with matters that ought to be personal and private.	0.39	-0.09
Most people are disappointing when you get to know them better.	0.59	-0.19
Young people sometimes have rebellious ideas but as they grow older they ought to grow out of them and adjust to reality.	0.62	-0.27
Our social problems would be largely solved if we could only somehow remove criminal and antisocial elements from society.	0.70	-0.33
What we need are fewer laws and agencies and more courageous, tireless leaders who people can have faith in.	0.73	-0.27
People with bad manners, habits, and upbringing can hardly be expected to know how to associate with decent people.	0.59	-0.23
There are two kinds of people, strong ones and weak ones.	0.62	-0.17
Sexual offences such as raping and sexually assaulting children warrant more severe punishment than just prison sentences; criminals like these should be given corporal punishment in public.	0.61	-0.28
If people would talk less and work harder, everything would be better.	0.67	-0.31
F scale (linear combination of the nine items)		-0.40

Principal component analysis and zero-order correlations.

<sup>1</sup>Listwise deletion ( $N = 1,388$ ).

<sup>2</sup>Pairwise deletion (min.  $N = 1,530$ , max.  $N = 1,746$ ).

constructs materialism/postmaterialism as a new political axis, basically unrelated to the values linked to the democratic class struggle (cf. Lafferty and Knutsen 1985; Savage 1985). The strong relations between postmaterialism and the three different measures of authoritarianism/libertarianism nonetheless raise serious questions about the tenability of his theory.

Numerous studies based on data ranging back to at least the 1950s indicate that libertarianism/authoritarianism has *always* been unrelated to economic liberalism/conservatism among the population at large (Lipset 1959; Mitchell 1966; Kelly and Chambliss 1966; O'Kane 1970; Felling and Peters 1986; Fleishman 1988; Middendorp 1991; Scheepers et al. 1992; Olson and Carroll 1992; Evans et al. 1996). Consequently, the absence of a relation between postmaterialism and economic liberalism/conservatism does not simply support Inglehart's theory. Instead, it confirms that postmaterialism is not a new feature of the political landscape just introduced in Western societies in the 1960s or 1970s and taps authoritarianism/libertarianism, known to have been unrelated to economic liberalism/conservatism virtually since the start of large-scale survey research.<sup>6</sup>

*Table 4.5* Factor loadings of four composite authoritarianism/libertarianism measures and the composite economic liberalism/conservatism measure

<i>Composite measures</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>
Authoritarianism (F scale)	-0.83	0.16
Educational value orientation (high = expressive)	0.74	0.04
Postmaterialism	0.66	0.16
Rejection of traditional gender roles	0.70	0.06
Economic liberalism	0.04	0.99
Eigenvalue	2.17	1.03
$R^2$	0.43	0.21

Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation,  $N = 1,643$ .

The findings thus confirm Flanagan's criticism of Inglehart's postmaterialism index based on Japanese data. What Inglehart calls postmaterialism is nothing new at all; it simply taps the well-known libertarian opposite of authoritarianism.<sup>7</sup> Postmaterialism, suggesting an orientation toward values beyond materialism, is thus a misnomer. Does this mean postmaterialism cannot be explained from the experience of affluence during one's formative years? This is the question to be addressed below.

#### **4.5.2. Parental Affluence, Parental Cultural Capital, and Postmaterialism**

Does the positive effect of education on postmaterialism indeed indicate that growing up in a wealthy family generates postmaterialist values? Or does education mediate a positive effect of parental cultural capital, as suggested above? Two path models are constructed to answer those questions.

Figure 4.1 shows the effects of parental affluence and parental cultural capital on postmaterialism. The results leave little to the imagination. Parental affluence has no effect on postmaterialism whatsoever, and the opposite is true of growing up in a culturally rich family. This means Hypotheses 3 and 4 are confirmed. The absence of a relation between parental affluence and postmaterialism is not due to the use of parental cultural capital (correlated 0.27 with parental affluence) as a second independent variable in the model. As it happens, the zero-order correlation between parental affluence and postmaterialism is not significant either ( $r = 0.02, p > 0.15$ , one-tailed test). So one of the core hypotheses derived from Inglehart's theory of value change is refuted by the empirical evidence.

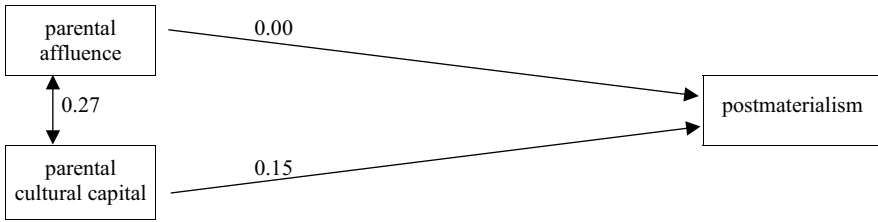


Figure 4.1 Simple model of postmaterialism explained by family background (all paths significant at  $p < 0.001$ , except that from parental affluence to postmaterialism ( $p > 0.05$ ),  $R^2$  postmaterialism = 0.02,  $N = 1,452$ ).

The positive effect of education on postmaterialism is not caused by the well educated having grown up in affluent families.

To gain greater insight into how parental cultural capital affects postmaterialism, I examine an extended version of this simple path model (Fig. 4.2). In this extended model, the respondent's education and cultural participation and a composite measure of authoritarianism/libertarianism (a linear combination of the F scale for authoritarianism, the scale for the rejection of traditional gender roles, and the scale for the educational value orientation) are added as mediating variables.

The respondent's education and cultural participation exhibit a strong positive relation. This is consistent with Bourdieu's work on cultural capital, where he views education as institutionalized cultural capital and an interest in art and culture as embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986; see also Böröcz and Southworth 1996). Both of the measures of the respondent's cultural capital are positively affected by parental cultural capital, and they both have a positive effect on postmaterialism. Although parental affluence also positively affects education, it does not affect postmaterialism. In short, Hypothesis 5 is confirmed because parental cultural capital indirectly affects postmaterialism through the respondent's own cultural capital. The extended model also confirms that Inglehart's postmaterialism index does not measure anything other than libertarianism. Parental cultural capital, education, and cultural participation all have no direct effect on postmaterialism. All of the effects are mediated by the composite measure of libertarianism, so Hypothesis 6 is also confirmed.

Two conclusions can be drawn regarding the positive effect of education on postmaterialism. It does not crudely indicate an effect of parental affluence, as Inglehart assumes. Instead, the respondent's education mediates an effect of parental cultural capital. Nor does the positive effect of education on postmaterialism differ from its well-known negative effect on authoritarianism demonstrated in so many empirical studies.

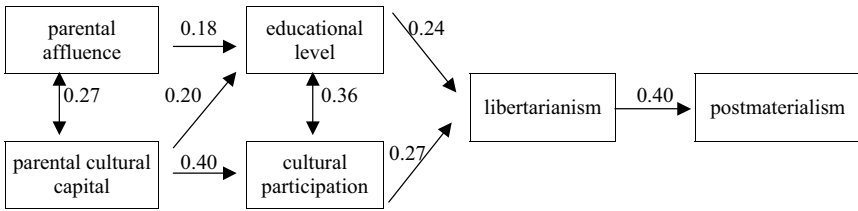


Figure 4.2 Extended model of postmaterialism explained by family background (all paths significant at  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2$  postmaterialism = 0.20,  $R^2$  libertarianism = 0.21,  $R^2$  cultural participation = 0.16,  $R^2$  educational level = 0.09,  $N = 1,452$ ).

#### 4.6. CONCLUSION

It has already been noted that the importance people attach to individual liberty cannot be explained by variables pertaining to their economic position such as income or class or by variables pertaining to occupational self-direction. Based on the analysis in this chapter, we can now add that parental affluence similarly has no significance in this connection. After all, the two points of criticism of Inglehart's theory whose tenability is examined in this chapter are both supported by the research findings.

Flanagan's criticism of Inglehart's index is confirmed for the Netherlands. It cannot be dismissed as based on an invalid measurement of postmaterialism or as erroneously defended by a typically Japanese process of cultural change. The futility of this argument is evident from the findings of many other studies demonstrating that in Western countries as well, values and attitudes related to libertarianism are typically observed among the young (e.g., Nunn et al. 1978:76–95; Woodrum 1988a, 1988b; Meloen and Middendorp 1991; Middendorp 1991:203–33). Flanagan correctly concludes that Inglehart's index taps libertarianism and that in recent decades there has been a shift from authoritarian to libertarian values rather than from materialist to postmaterialist ones. There is nothing typically Japanese about his findings.

To be sure, Inglehart has recently started to acknowledge that postmaterialism is related to libertarian values pertaining to gender roles, sexuality, child-rearing, and so forth. He still rejects the idea, however, that his index basically measures authoritarianism and its opposite (1997:47–48) and now holds that a shift from materialism to postmaterialism is somehow at the core (1997:47) of a more general process of cultural change—presumably because he still views this process as affluence-driven. The second important finding of this chapter, however, is that parental affluence does not

affect postmaterialism at all. This finding is equally important, since it means the key hypothesis derived from Inglehart's theory is rejected. Indeed, from a theoretical point of view this hypothesis is more fundamental than the one that the younger generation is more postmaterialist than the older one. Inglehart himself has never satisfactorily examined the relation he assumes to exist between parental affluence and postmaterialism. Moreover, this core hypothesis is not only rejected in this chapter. Even before the publication of *The Silent Revolution* (1977), it was rejected by Lafferty (1976) for Norway.<sup>8</sup> It has since been refuted by De Graaf and De Graaf (1988) for the Netherlands, Elchardus and Heyvaert (1991) for Flanders (Belgium), and Marks (1995) for Australia.

Oddly enough, Inglehart claims that the effect of parental affluence is difficult to observe in any way other than via the effect of education. He feels this is the case because "relevant data are scarce, partly because formative security is difficult to measure" (Abramson and Inglehart 1995:85). Regardless of the fact that researchers can collect this kind of data themselves, he overlooks the fact that without exception, the available analyses of the data have led to refutations of this hypothesis. Abramson and Inglehart consequently do not address the question of whether and, if so, why the various ways of operationalizing parental affluence that are used might be faulty.

It is evident from Inglehart's research and numerous other studies that in addition to being characteristic of the young and the well educated, postmaterialism is also a feature of the secular. This definitely does not do much to confirm Inglehart's materialist theory on how postmaterialism is generated. Since this cannot be satisfactorily interpreted in the context of his theory, one searches in vain in his work for a proper interpretation. In reality, this negative relation between postmaterialism and religiosity solely confirms that postmaterialism taps the political dichotomy between authoritarianism and libertarianism. It is after all common knowledge that values and attitudes emphasizing individual liberty and self-expression (libertarianism) tend to be accompanied by secularism (Davis and Robinson 1996; Middendorp 1991; Olson and Carroll 1992; Woodrum 1988a, 1988b).

Notwithstanding all this, as I see it the fact remains that the young are more apt than the old to hold libertarian values (or if one insists on using this misnomer: postmaterialist values). This is not only evident from Inglehart's own research, it is also clear from numerous other studies. The fact that parental affluence has no effect at all on postmaterialism indicates, however, that Inglehart's materialist interpretation of this difference between the young and the old is untenable. Although Inglehart does not hesitate to interpret it as evidence supporting his own theory, the postmaterialism of the young solely gives rise to the question of how it can be

explained (De Graaf 1988; De Graaf and Evans 1996). Can it be ascribed to their having grown up in a more affluent society? This remains to be seen. Besides their affluence, contemporary Western societies also differ in any number of other ways from pre-World War II societies. If people's cultural background—their cultural capital and religiosity—is decisive and neither their economic background nor their own economic position is of any significance, it is unlikely that the economic context would be decisive. It is much more plausible that in fact the cultural context they grow up in is of decisive importance. Based on an international comparison, whether this is indeed the case is the issue addressed in Chapter 5.

## NOTES

1. I do not discuss a third objection to Inglehart's theory in this chapter, that is, whether the postmaterialism of the young disappears as they get older. Of course this is not self-evident, since it is also possible for people's values to change as they take on adult roles, get jobs, have their own children, and so forth. Inglehart's theory assumes these life cycle effects to be only secondary and takes cohort effects to be far more important: successive cohorts have different values and maintain them throughout their lives. There is little reason to doubt the decisive role of cohort effects. The reader is referred to Inglehart (1981), the discussion between Bøltken and Jagodzinski (1985) and Inglehart (1985), as well as Abramson and Inglehart (1995).

2. This goal does not relate to the political dichotomy between economic liberalism and economic conservatism either, since it does not refer to a preference for a certain distributive strategy, but to a preoccupation with material matters in a more general sense. The two types of distributive preference are thus equally materialistic (cf. Lafferty and Knutsen 1985; Savage 1985).

3. In his 1979 article, Flanagan does not refer to the opposite of libertarianism as authoritarianism, but as traditionalism. His measure is comparable, however, to the one used in his two later articles (1982, 1987).

4. The question on their homes has the following five response categories: (1) apartment, (2) row house, (3) semidetached house, (4) detached house, (5) other type of home. The fifth category was chosen by 145 respondents. Coding their answers yielded ninety-three homes that are not "modest" (mainly farms and mansions) and forty-nine that are (mainly apartments above a shop or business). By mistake, unfortunately the two followup questions on home ownership and the number of rooms were not posed to these 145 respondents. This is why the assumption has to be made that mansions, farms, and combined residential and business premises are usually owned by the parents. They are coded as such (116 cases). If it is absolutely clear from the response that a home is rented, of course it is coded as such (nine cases). All of the remaining cases are coded as missing (twenty cases). These last twenty respondents are also assigned a missing value for the number of rooms in the parental home. For the remaining 125 respondents, the overall mean of five rooms is substituted.



5. Scale scores for parental cultural capital are assigned to all of the respondents with no more than one missing value on the five relevant indicators. Scale scores for parental affluence are assigned to those without any missing values and those with only a missing value on the indicator for parental income. As it happens, missing values are concentrated on this single indicator (9.1 percent as compared with only a few percent on the four remaining indicators).

6. A Dutch study by Middendorp (1991) shows that the same two ideological dimensions of authoritarianism/libertarianism and economic liberalism/conservatism underlie a few dozen scales in the years 1970, 1975, 1980, and 1985. Given this striking stability of the two-dimensional ideological structure, it is not very likely that postmaterialism was related differently to the two ideological dimensions before 1970.

7. However, it is not a particularly good indicator for political values of this kind. Its effects are much weaker and the explained variance is correspondingly lower (Evans et al. 1996).

8. Lafferty is responding to an early article by Inglehart (1971) outlining the core of his theory to be published six years later.

# 5

## Why Are There So Many Postmaterialists in Affluent Countries?

### *An International Comparison*

It seems likely that people in rich countries will experience a stronger sense of economic security than those in poor nations. . . . economic development should be conducive to a shift from Materialist to Postmaterialist values.

—Paul Abramson and Ronald Inglehart  
*Value Change in Global Perspective*

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The findings recounted in Chapter 4 contradict the theory formulated by Ronald Inglehart in *The Silent Revolution* (1977). The problem is not so much his finding that postmaterialism is mainly observed among the young, the highly educated, and the secular as the theoretical interpretation he attributes to it. As has been noted, Inglehart is of the opinion that growing up in affluence leads to more or less stable postmaterialist values. In reality, however, the prosperity of the families people grow up in does not appear to play the slightest role.

Contrary to what Inglehart holds, it is impossible to explain the postmaterialism of the well educated by their having grown up in more affluent families. In essence, it is their cultural background that is decisive. This is not only evident from the substantial influence of cultural capital; there is also the influence of religiosity or the lack of it. Try as we might, this cannot be interpreted as an empirical backing for his “materialistic” theory.

That people's cultural rather than their economic background is decisive evokes the important question of whether Inglehart's interpretation of the younger generation's postmaterialism is tenable. Can it indeed be explained simply by the fact that they grew up in a more affluent society than the older generation? This is not likely.

Inglehart's research results nonetheless demonstrate that there are far more "postmaterialists" in affluent Western countries than less prosperous non-Western ones (Abramson and Inglehart 1995:123–37). Can this be construed as a confirmation of his theory? That growing up in an affluent family does not lead to postmaterialism suggests that this is not the case. The same holds true of the finding by De Graaf and Evans (1996) that the gross national product in people's childhood does not influence their postmaterialism in any of the eight Western countries they studied. The question to be addressed would instead seem to be how to explain the high percentage of postmaterialists in rich Western countries when there is every indication that this prosperity itself does not play the slightest role. This then is the central question of this chapter.

On the basis of the alternative explanation for differences in postmaterialism (libertarianism) *within* countries as is expounded in the previous chapters, in Section 5.2 a different explanation is proposed for the differences Inglehart observes *between* countries. It is formulated in four hypotheses on differences in (the factors underlying) postmaterialism and, in a wider sense, libertarianism between countries. As noted in Section 1.5, they have been tested using the same data Inglehart uses: the *World Values Survey 1990–1993* (Abramson and Inglehart 1995; Inglehart 1997). After the hypotheses are tested in Section 5.4, in Section 5.5 I explain why the research results once again lead to the conclusion that Inglehart's theory is untenable.

## 5.2. HYPOTHESES

### 5.2.1. Postmaterialism and Age: Growing Prosperity or Detraditionalization?

If neither one's family's affluence nor one's own income plays a role in generating postmaterialist values, this raises doubt about Inglehart's interpretation of the age effect he emphasizes. If postmaterialism or, in a wider sense, libertarianism is explained by people's cultural rather than economic background, then it is plausible that the cultural rather than the economic context they grew up in is responsible for this difference between the generations. The young thus cannot be expected to attach more importance to individual liberty because they spent their youth in a

more affluent society, but because they grew up in a culturally more modern society.

After all, modernization is accompanied not only by a rise in prosperity, but also by a process of cultural change Heelas (1995) calls “detraditionalization”: an erosion of the belief in authorities legitimated by tradition and community and the consequently increased (acceptance of) individual liberty. This process consequently embodies the common core of three inter-related cultural changes sociologists say accompany the rise and development of modern society: (1) *individualization*, increasing (acceptance of) individuals’ liberty to choose; (2) *secularization*, reduced belief in the existence of divine authorities the individual should defer to; and (3) *cultural pluralization*, growing cultural diversity, enlarging the range of individual choices. Since this kind of detraditionalization process makes a society more modern in a *cultural* sense, in the rest of this chapter I refer to “cultural modernization” and “cultural modernity” (see also Section 7.5).

Under the influence of cultural modernization, individual conduct is determined less and less by tradition. “Traditional” action is increasingly replaced by “value-rational” action. Although both types have the common feature of being steered by cultural conceptions, the actors are only aware of this in the latter case because they act on the grounds of deliberately chosen values. It is precisely this “reflexive” moment at the level of the individual actor that makes this a form of rational action, which can and should be distinguished as such from traditional action (Weber 1978 [1921]:24–26).

If this kind of detraditionalization process has indeed taken place, the options for acting in liberty (in a value-rational way) have increased and youngsters have not only grown up in a more affluent society, they have grown up in one with more liberty. This is why one might wonder whether the emphasis the younger generation puts on the importance of individual liberty is indeed a result of increased prosperity, as Inglehart holds. It is more plausible that this altered cultural context is responsible for it.

### 5.2.2. Differences in Postmaterialism Between Countries

Inglehart holds that the fact that there are more “postmaterialists” in rich Western countries than in less prosperous non-Western ones confirms his theory. However, the assumption that a different and more modern cultural context instead of a different and more prosperous economic context is responsible for the postmaterialism (libertarianism) of the younger generation leads directly to an alternative explanation. It is likely that this should not be attributed to the fact that richer countries are involved, but to the circumstance that they are more modern countries in a cultural sense.

After all, it is precisely the affluent Western countries that are characterized by a culture where the acceptance of cultural differences and the protection of individual liberty are largely institutionalized. They are the cradle of modern democracy that goes back at least to the institutionalization of the first generation of human rights—the civil liberties, implying an acceptance of cultural differences—in the eighteenth century (cf. Berting 1995a). The first hypothesis is thus that the more modern a country is in a cultural sense, the higher the percentage of postmaterialists (Hypothesis 1). If this hypothesis is confirmed, it still does not in any way refute Inglehart's proposition that postmaterialism is generated by a country's prosperity. In addition to a confirmation of Hypothesis 1, it still remains to be demonstrated that though there might be a positive relation between prosperity and the percentage of postmaterialists, in essence the latter should be attributed to cultural modernity (Hypothesis 2).

As I note in Chapter 4, in essence Inglehart's index does not measure a value orientation "beyond materialism"; it taps authoritarianism/libertarianism. It has also been shown that people's position on this ideological continuum can be explained by their educational level as an indicator of their cultural capital. A quarter of a century ago, Simpson noted that the negative relation between education and authoritarianism observed in so many studies was certainly not universal. It did prove to be relatively strong in the United States and Finland, but it was considerably weaker in Costa Rica and completely nonexistent in Mexico. This finding, he rightly concluded, "provides strong evidence against the hypothesis that education-qua-education reduces authoritarianism" (1972:231). Simpson's analysis does not make it clear, however, what exactly the observed differences between these four countries should be attributed to.

Weil's analysis of data from the United States, West Germany, Austria and France sheds more light on this issue: "The impact of education on liberal values is weaker, nonexistent, or sometimes even reversed in nonliberal democracies or countries which did not have liberal-democratic regime forms in earlier decades, compared to countries which have been liberal democratic for a long time" (1985:470). This seems to be a satisfactory explanation for Simpson's research results. After all, it is quite plausible that Mexico and Costa Rica are not only less democratic societies than the United States and Finland today, but that this was also the case in the 1960s. Since cultural modernity stands more than anything else for guaranteeing civil liberties, the democratic level of a society and the existence of a democratic tradition are important indicators in this connection. Simpson and Weil's research results consequently suggest that the influence of education on authoritarianism also increases with the cultural modernity of a country.

Why this should be the case is relatively easy to see. The school system is after all the institution most responsible for conveying culture to the younger generation. This does not mean it transmits the same values in every culture. In culturally modern societies, the emphasis is on the importance of individual liberty, but this is less the case in more traditional countries. Consequently the authoritarianism/libertarianism of people with high and low educational levels is likely to differ much more in a culturally modern context than in a more traditional one. The more culturally modern a country is, the stronger the negative influence of education on authoritarianism can consequently be expected to be (Hypothesis 3).

The relation between religiosity and authoritarianism can similarly be expected to vary systematically between countries. After all, in the process of “detraditionalization,” traditional action is replaced by value-rational action. As the process advances, the individual acts or thinks less and less because “that is the normal way to act or think” or because “that is the way everyone acts or thinks.” Religious and political ideas come to be based more and more upon value-rational choices. Against this background, the notion that religiosity and authoritarianism both presume that lifestyles and cultural patterns could and should be tested against a moral foundation situated outside society—precisely what is rejected in the case of secularism and libertarianism—is of considerable importance (Chapter 4).

This is exactly why, under conditions of cultural modernity where people can and must make value-rational choices, authoritarianism goes hand in hand with religiosity, and libertarianism with secularism. This is unlikely to occur if these issues are not the topic of value-rational choices but are largely determined by tradition. The more culturally modern a country is, the stronger the relation between religiosity and authoritarianism can consequently be expected to be (Hypothesis 4).<sup>1</sup>

### 5.3. DATA AND MEASUREMENT

#### 5.3.1. Data: World Values Survey 1990–1993

The four hypotheses formulated above have been tested with data from the *World Values Survey 1990–1993*, which contains a range of political attitudes and values (see Section 1.5). For a listing of the countries in the analysis and the sample sizes in each country, see Table 5.2.<sup>2</sup> Of course the percentage of postmaterialists calculated on the basis of these data is considerably influenced by the type of sample taken in a specific country. This is why use has been made of the weights in the data file. This means a correction has been made for age and education and in the case of South

Africa for race as well (World Values Study Group 1994; see also Inglehart 1997:346–48).

### 5.3.2. Independent Variables: Education and Religiosity

Education and religiosity are the two independent variables at the individual level. With respect to their operationalization, neither of them poses problems. *Education* has been measured by the number of years a person attended school. This question was not posed in two countries—South Korea and Switzerland—which is why it was replaced for those countries with a question about the highest completed educational level.

With the exception of Latvia and once again South Korea, *religiosity* has been determined in all of the countries by asking whether an individual considers himself a religious person, a nonreligious person, or a convinced atheist. For South Korea, it was necessary to replace this question with one about the frequency of attending religious services and for Latvia with a question about which of the following four statements comes closest to the respondent's beliefs: (1) There is a personal God. (2) There is some sort of spirit or life force. (3) I don't really know what to think. (4) I don't really think there is any sort of spirit, God, or life force. Since there is a strong relation between the three indicators for religiosity in the countries they are all available for, it is not all too problematic to use indicators for Latvia and South Korea that are different from those for the other countries.<sup>3</sup>

### 5.3.3. Dependent Variable: Authoritarianism/Libertarianism

It is important to emphasize that the structure of Hypotheses 1 and 2 differs from that of Hypotheses 3 and 4. The first two explain the percentage of postmaterialists (libertarians) in a country, and the last two explain the strength of the relation between cultural background (education and religiosity) and libertarianism. The fact that the dependent variable is a percentage in the first two cases and a relation in the last two affects the requirements for the operationalization of libertarianism.

With respect to the first two hypotheses, an identical measure has to be used for each of the countries to see what percentage of the population is in the libertarian category. Inglehart's postmaterialism index is used for this purpose. Following his example in this type of analysis, it is not the percentage of postmaterialists in these countries that is compared, but the percentage of postmaterialists minus the percentage of materialists (Abramson and Inglehart 1995:123–37).<sup>4</sup> In testing the last two hypotheses, it is less important to use exactly the same measure for authoritarianism/libertarianism because the focus is not on explaining a percentage

but on explaining a relation, that is, between education (Hypothesis 3) and religiosity (Hypothesis 4) on the one hand and authoritarianism/libertarianism on the other. Here it is more important to have a valid and reliable measure for each of the countries than that this measure be exactly the same for all the countries.

This is why in testing the last two hypotheses, in keeping with the findings of the previous chapter, the postmaterialism index is viewed as one of the indicators for authoritarianism/libertarianism. It is combined here with three types of values known to belong to an authoritarian/libertarian political ideology (Middendorp 1991): (1) sexual permissiveness, (2) self-direction/conformity as a parental value orientation (cf. the discussion on Kohn's work in Chapter 3), and (3) rejection of traditional gender roles (cf. Chapter 4). It is not a serious problem that for some countries, fewer questions are available for some of these three supplementary measures than for others. The fact that only two of the three supplementary measures can be constructed for some countries is unfortunate but, once again, not insurmountable.

As noted in Chapter 4, Inglehart's measure for *postmaterialism* is based on the ranking of four political goals by the respondents. Two of them express postmaterialist values ("Giving the people more say in important government decisions" and "Protecting free speech") and two express materialist ones ("Maintaining order in the nation" and "Fighting rising prices"). In this case, respondents who consider the two postmaterialist goals the most important and second most important are categorized as "postmaterialist," and those who state that the two materialist goals are their first and second choices as "materialist." This yields a division into "materialists," a "mixed" type, and "postmaterialists," with higher scores standing for more postmaterialism.<sup>5</sup>

*Sexual permissiveness* is measured using judgments ranging from "never justified" (1) to "always justified" (10) pertaining to five sexuality-related activities: married men/women having an affair, sex under the legal age of consent, homosexuality, prostitution, and abortion. In four countries, only four of the five questions were posed. The reliability of the measure consisting of the four or five questions varies from 0.54 to 0.84 with an average of 0.73. The scores were calculated as the average standardized score on the four or five questions, with higher scores standing for more sexual permissiveness.<sup>6</sup>

To measure *self-direction/conformity as a parental value orientation*, a series of qualities was used that children can be encouraged to acquire at home. The respondents were asked to indicate a maximum of five qualities. First every respondent was given either a 0 ("not chosen") or a 1 ("chosen") for each quality, and then the qualities were subjected to a principal compo-



nent analysis for each country. For most countries this yields two clusters of qualities with high and opposed factor loadings: "determination/perseverance," "imagination" and "independence" ("self-direction") versus "obedience," "religious faith," and "good manners" ("conformity").

Wherever one or two of the six qualities exhibited a much lower factor loading (lower than 0.25), they were left out of consideration in the calculation of the index. For approximately two-thirds of the studied countries, this index is consequently based upon all six qualities; for thirteen countries it is based on five; and for three countries it is based on four. The scores were computed by assigning the respondents one point for each chosen quality indicative of self-direction and for each not chosen quality indicative of conformity.<sup>7</sup> In all of the countries, higher scores stand for a stronger emphasis on self-direction. Only in the case of Iceland is the number of missing values so high that this index could not be used.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth and final way of measuring authoritarianism/libertarianism is a scale for the *rejection of traditional gender roles*. This scale consists of seven items, mainly Likert-type statements with responses ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly."<sup>9</sup> The reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) varies considerably between countries. The highest is 0.74, but in certain cases there is no evidence at all of a reliable scale (the lowest reliability is only 0.16). This is why this measure is not used for the sixteen countries with a reliability lower than 0.50. The average reliability for the remaining countries is 0.62. Scale scores have been attributed as average standardized scores to all the respondents with a valid response to at least five of the seven questions.<sup>10</sup> High scores stand for a rejection of traditional gender roles and are indicative of libertarianism.

Last, there is the \$64,000 question: Can the four measures indeed be combined into a single composite measure for authoritarianism/libertarianism? To see whether this is the case, a principal component analysis has been conducted separately for each country. In the process, because of their insufficient reliability, the rejection of traditional gender roles was left out of the analysis for sixteen countries, and the parental values measure was left out of the analysis for Iceland. The explained variances indicate the extent to which the three or four measures can be represented by a single new variable: the higher the explained variance, the more feasible this is. The variance explained by the first factor is considerable; on the average, almost half (46.3 percent) of the information can be summarized in a new variable. The explained variance is below 40 percent for only eight countries, and with only one exception it is still above 37 percent.<sup>11</sup>

Only Hungary and Nigeria deviate from the general pattern of high positive factor loadings for all of the subscales.<sup>12</sup> The Hungarian factor loadings for the parental value orientation (0.62), rejection of traditional gender roles (0.75), and sexual permissiveness (0.55) are satisfactory, but

Table 5.1 Factor loadings of four composite authoritarianism/libertarianism measures for Dutch respondents

<i>Composite measures</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>
Postmaterialism	0.68
Sexual permissiveness	0.83
Parental value orientation (high = self-direction)	0.76
Rejection of traditional gender roles	0.82
Eigenvalue	2.38
$R^2$	0.60

Principal component analysis,  $N = 952$ .

the one for postmaterialism (0.23) is too low. This is why the postmaterialism index is not used for Hungary in constructing the composite measure for authoritarianism/libertarianism. Of the three factor loadings for Nigeria, one of the countries for which no reliable scale for the rejection of traditional gender roles is available, only the one for postmaterialism (0.75) and the one for the parental value orientation (also 0.75) are high and positive, whereas the one for sexual permissiveness is close to zero (0.01). This is why the Nigerian scores for authoritarianism/libertarianism are only computed on the grounds of the measures for postmaterialism and parental values.

The results of the principal component analyses are quite similar for the forty remaining countries. What was observed in Chapter 4 regarding the Netherlands was thus confirmed for these countries, that is, postmaterialist values go hand in hand with other indicators of libertarianism. In this case, the indicators are permissive thinking about sexuality, a rejection of traditional gender roles, and parental values. Although the factor loadings and consequently the explained variance are somewhat higher in the Netherlands than elsewhere, the observed pattern solely characterized by high positive factor loadings is also typical of the other countries (Table 5.1).

This is why the measures were combined by first standardizing the subscales for each country separately and then averaging them for all of the respondents with a valid score on at least two of the four. High scores indicate stronger authoritarianism for all of the countries, and only one country has no authoritarianism score for more than 5 percent of the respondents.<sup>13</sup> Although on theoretical grounds it is preferable to use this composite measure for authoritarianism/libertarianism in testing Hypotheses 3 and 4, analyses with postmaterialism as a dependent variable do not yield results that are substantially different (see Section 5.4).

#### 5.3.4. Country Features: Affluence and Cultural Modernity

In addition to the respondent features, two country features were operationalized to enable the testing of the hypotheses: *affluence* and *cultural modernity*. Affluence was simply operationalized as the gross national product per capita in 1990. The country scores have been taken from Inglehart (1997), who took them from World Bank publications (see Table 5.2).

*Cultural modernity* has been computed with the use of three indicators. The first and most obvious one is the *level of democracy*, that is, the degree to which civil and political liberties are guaranteed. Regardless of the level of democracy, it is important to consider the *length of the democratic tradition*, not only because the level of democracy probably increases with time, but even more importantly because the older the democracy, the greater the chance its institutions have become deeply rooted in its people's moral consciousness. Last, a more direct indicator of the degree to which individuals are free to live their lives as they wish has been added: *women's position in society*. The erosion of traditional gender roles (paid employment (man) versus childcare and housekeeping (woman) clearly implies that people are free to live their lives as they wish and is indicative of a relatively advanced process of detraditionalization (e.g., Beck 1992:103–26).

The country scores for the level of democracy and length of the democratic tradition have also been taken from Inglehart (1997), who in turn obtained this information from other sources. The level of democracy pertains to the recognition of multifarious political and civil liberties. Political liberties have to do with free and fair elections; the right to found political parties; freedom from dominance by political groups like military authorities, totalitarian parties, or the church; and the decentralization of political power. Civil liberties have to do with free and independent media, liberty in the fields of art and literature, freedom of association and demonstration, freedom of religion, legal security, and free trade unions. The length of the democratic tradition is measured as the number of successive years going back from 1995 to 1920 when there was a democratic political system. The maximum score is 75 (see Table 5.2).

Last, for women's position in society the Gender Empowerment Measure, developed under the auspices of the United Nations, has been used. This index is based on four factors: the percentage of female officials and managers, the percentage of seats in Parliament occupied by women, the percentage of women with a technical or academic-level profession, and the percentage of the national income earned by women (see Table 5.2).

There are sizable relations between the three indicators for the thirty-one countries with three valid scores; a principal component analysis yields one factor that explains more than 75 percent of the variance. The factor loadings are no less than 0.80 (Gender Empowerment Measure), 0.83 (level of

democracy), and 0.96 (length of the democratic tradition) (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.83$ ). Since one of the three scores is missing for eleven countries,<sup>14</sup> the scores were first standardized and the missing ones were replaced by the average of the other two. Last, the country scores were computed as the average of the three resulting scores; higher scores are indicative of greater cultural modernity.

## 5.4. RESULTS

### 5.4.1. Why Are There More Postmaterialists in Affluent Countries?

In Inglehart's opinion, the more affluent a country is, the more widespread postmaterialist values become; though quite a different explanation has been formulated above. According to this alternative explanation, the affluent countries are also the most modern in a cultural sense and can be expected to be strongly detraditionalized. It is not the economic but the cultural differences between countries that can be expected to play a decisive role in the degree to which postmaterialist values are held.

In the testing of Hypothesis 1, the relation between a country's cultural modernity and its percentage of postmaterialists is examined. The numbers in Figure 5.1 are the numbers of the forty-two countries listed in Table 5.2. Postmaterialist values are indeed most frequently observed in the countries that are most modern in a cultural sense, like the United States, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark. In countries like Romania, Russia, China, Estonia, and Nigeria, with a relatively low level of cultural modernity, these values are the least frequently observed. The relation between the two variables is quite strong at  $r = 0.71$  and significant ( $p < 0.001$ , one-sided test). It is clear that this result confirms Hypothesis 1.

This takes us to the second hypothesis. A confirmation of Hypothesis 1 might be a necessary condition for refuting Inglehart's explanation of the higher percentage of postmaterialists in affluent Western countries, but it is still not in any way a sufficient one; Hypothesis 2 still must be confirmed as well. This means four supplementary conditions still have to be met. Positive relations have to be demonstrated between (1) prosperity and the percentage of postmaterialists and between (2) prosperity and cultural modernity, as a result of which (3) the relation between prosperity and the percentage of postmaterialists disappears if we control for differences in cultural modernity, whereas (4) the relation between cultural modernity and the percentage of postmaterialists continues to exist. Have these four supplementary conditions for refuting Inglehart's statement been met?

At 0.70 ( $p < 0.001$ , one-sided test), the relation between prosperity and the percentage of postmaterialists is approximately as strong as the

Table 5.2 Sample size, affluence, cultural modernity indicators, percentage of postmaterialists, and effects of education and religiosity on authoritarianism/libertarianism for the forty-two countries in the analysis

<i>Number</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>GNP per capita</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>Level of democracy</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Democratic tradition</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Women's position</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>% Postmat</i> <sup>5</sup>	$\beta$ <i>education</i>	$\beta$ <i>religiosity</i>
1	France	1,002	19,590	13	37	0.437	4.1	-0.3198	0.2597
2	Britain	1,484	16,080	14	75	0.530	-0.3	-0.1968	0.1855
3	W. Germany	2,201	22,360	14	46	0.654 <sup>6</sup>	13.1	-0.2620	0.2394
4	Italy	2,010	16,882	14	49	0.593	6.5	-0.1783	0.3435
5	Netherlands	1,017	17,570	14	75	0.646	24.0	-0.3497	0.2773
6	Denmark	1,030	22,440	14	75	0.718	-0.4	-0.2840	0.2176
7	Belgium	2,792	17,580	14	75	0.580	1.7	-0.2722	0.2663
8	Spain	4,147	11,010	14	17	0.490	-5.3	-0.2061	0.3139
9	Ireland	1,000	10,370	14	75	0.504 <sup>7</sup>	-4.1	-0.2455	0.2005
10	N. Ireland	304	1,125	9	—	0.504 <sup>7</sup>	-6.6	-0.1938	0.1562
11	United States	1,839	21,810	14	75	0.645	6.1	-0.2585	0.2523
12	Canada	1,730	20,380	14	75	0.685	13.1	-0.2741	0.2927
13	Japan	1,011	25,840	14	49	0.445	-14.9	-0.0954	0.1141
14	Mexico	1,531	2,490	9	0	0.471	-11.5	-0.2489	0.2023
15	South Africa	2,736	2,530	5	1	0.523	-26.6	-0.1733	0.1166
16	Hungary	999	2,780	9	4	0.507	-41.0	-0.1668	0.2485
17	Norway	1,239	22,830	14	75	0.786	-18.6	-0.2779	0.1853
18	Sweden	1,047	23,780	14	75	0.779	8.3	-0.2914	0.2018
19	Iceland	702	22,090	14	75	—	-15.0	-0.3170	0.2010
20	Argentina	1,001	2,380	13	10	—	-5.8	-0.2823	0.3699
21	Finland	588	25,540	14	75	0.710	27.2	-0.1097	0.3177
22	S. Korea	1,251	5,450	11	3	0.282	-34.0	-0.0979	0.1554
23	Poland	938	1,690	9	4	0.431	-21.2	-0.1506	0.1574
24	Switzerland	1,400	32,250	14	75	0.594	8.3	-0.1871	0.2104
25	Brazil	1,782	2,920	12	9	0.383	-33.1	-0.3456	0.1129

26	Nigeria	939	290	5	0	0.198	-31.2	-0.0762	0.1477
27	Chile	1,500	1,950	9	4	0.380	-6.0	-0.2180	0.1082
28	Belarus	1,015	3,110	5	0	—	-25.9	-0.0508 n.s.	0.0258 n.s.
29	India	2,500	360	11	17	0.235	-30.3	-0.1078	0.1404
30	Czechoslovakia	1,396	3,190	4	4	—	-16.0	-0.1574	0.1572
31	E. Germany	1,336	12,000	4	4	0.654 <sup>6</sup>	10.8	-0.2317	0.2704
32	Slovenia	1,035	3,000	2	3	—	-21.6	-0.3003	0.2642
33	Bulgaria	1,034	1,840	2	3	0.486	-18.3	-0.2480	0.1050
34	Romania	1,103	1,620	2	0	—	-36.3	-0.2195	0.2116
35	China	1,000	370	2	0	0.478	-42.3	-0.2318	-0.0271 n.s.
36	Portugal	1,185	4,950	13	18	0.491	-30.2	-0.3706	0.2393
37	Austria	1,460	19,000	14	49	0.641	11.1	-0.1144	0.2315
38	Turkey	1,030	1,640	10	0	0.235	-4.9	-0.4202	0.3097
39	Lithuania	1,000	3,110	5	3	—	-13.7	-0.1204	0.2460
40	Latvia	903	3,590	5	3	—	-15.5	-0.0815	0.0440 n.s.
41	Estonia	1,008	4,170	5	3	—	-23.7	-0.1130	-0.0317 n.s.
42	Russia	1,961	3,430	5	0	—	-34.2	-0.1843	0.0226 n.s.

— No score available, n.s. not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

<sup>1</sup>Country scores (1990) taken from Inglehart (1997:357–60).

<sup>2</sup>Country scores (index) taken from Inglehart (1997:357–60).

<sup>3</sup>Number of years of uninterrupted democratic tradition going back from 1995 to 1920 taken from Inglehart (1997:357–60).

<sup>4</sup>Gender Empowerment Measure (index) taken from *United Nations Development Programme* (1996:141–43).

<sup>5</sup>Percentage of postmaterialists minus percentage of materialists.

<sup>6</sup>Since there are no scores available for the former East and West Germany on the Gender Empowerment Measure, the ones for united Germany have been used.

<sup>7</sup>Since there is no score available for Northern Ireland on the Gender Empowerment Measure, the one for Ireland has been used.

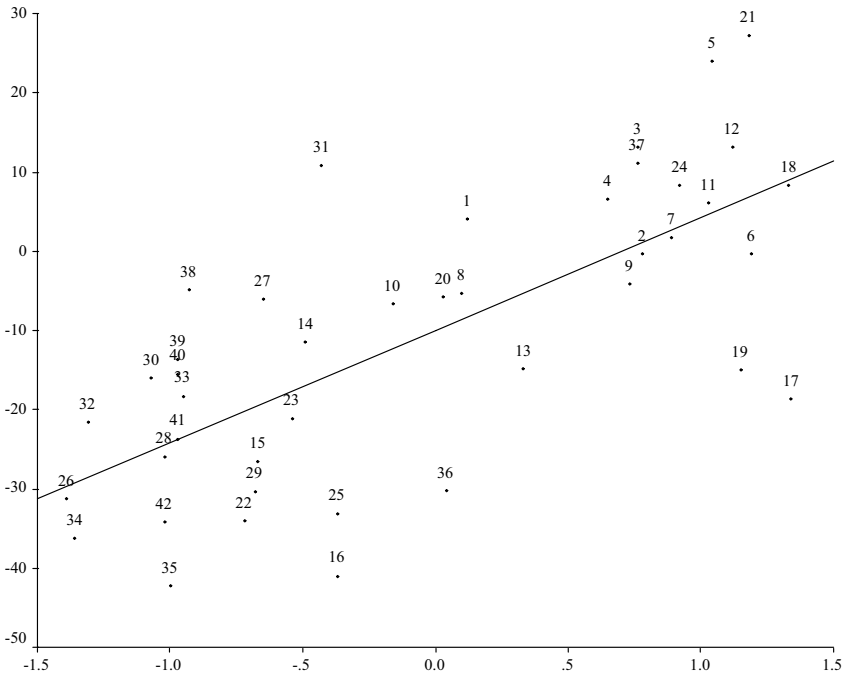


Figure 5.1 Percentage of postmaterialists minus percentage of materialists by cultural modernity ( $r = 0.71$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , one-sided test,  $N = 42$ ).

above-mentioned influence of cultural modernity (0.71). The second condition referred to above has also been met; the relation between the economic and cultural components of modernity is no less than 0.88 ( $p < 0.001$ , one-sided test). These relations between economic and cultural modernity and between both of them and the percentage of postmaterialists are so strong, however, that it is impossible to statistically disentangle the influences of the two independent variables. This result refutes Hypothesis 2; the strong relations between the three variables make it impossible to reject either of the competing explanations in favor of the other. Consequently, there is no way to demonstrate that in essence the relation between prosperity and postmaterialism ought to be attributed to the influence of cultural modernity. However, the reverse is equally true, and Inglehart's explanation for the differences between countries in the percentages of postmaterialists is similarly impossible to confirm by comparing countries.

Why can't we just conclude that the observed pattern confirms Inglehart's theory? Why can't we reason that prosperity apparently leads to cul-

tural modernity, which a high percentage of postmaterialists is simply a manifestation of? The problem is that Inglehart's theory cannot provide a satisfactory answer to the question of how this causal relation comes into being. According to him, after all, the relation between prosperity and postmaterialism at the country level is the resultant of the same relation at the individual level. He holds that the percentage of postmaterialists is consequently highest in the richest countries, where people are most likely to grow up under affluent conditions. "One wonders how 'national affluence' could possibly reshape individuals' values, except by virtue of the fact that, at another level of analysis, it is reflected in the presence of affluent individuals," as he notes (Inglehart 1982:471). However, as noted in Chapter 4, there is no such relation between prosperity and postmaterialism at the individual level. And if prosperity at the individual level does not lead to postmaterialism, then Inglehart's theory cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for the existence of a relation between prosperity and the percentage of postmaterialists at the country level.

#### 5.4.2. Context Dependence of the Education Effect

To see whether the cultural context is indeed decisive, it is essential to test the last two hypotheses. After all, they cannot be derived from Inglehart's theory, generated as they are by the assumption that it is the cultural and not the economic context that is decisive. If they are confirmed, the alternative interpretation of the differences between countries is supported.

In view of the testing of Hypotheses 3 and 4, first a regression analysis was conducted for each of the forty-two countries with the composite measure for authoritarianism/libertarianism as a dependent variable and education and religion as independent variables. Age and sex were used as controls. The resulting standardized regression coefficients  $\beta$  for education and religion (see Table 5.2) were used as dependent variables in testing Hypotheses 3 and 4.

Let us first examine the influence of education on authoritarianism. With the exception of Belarus, with no significant relation between the two variables, a negative effect can be observed in all of the countries. So, as expected, a high educational level goes hand in hand with libertarianism in almost all of them. It is clear, however, that the education effect varies greatly between countries. The average is  $-0.22$ , but in five countries such as Japan and South Korea it is weaker than  $-0.10$ , and in seven countries including France and the Netherlands it is between  $-0.30$  and  $-0.45$ . Hypothesis 3 postulates that these differences can be explained by cultural modernity differences between countries. To see whether this is indeed the case, Figure 5.2 shows cultural modernity on the horizontal axis and the education effect on the vertical axis.



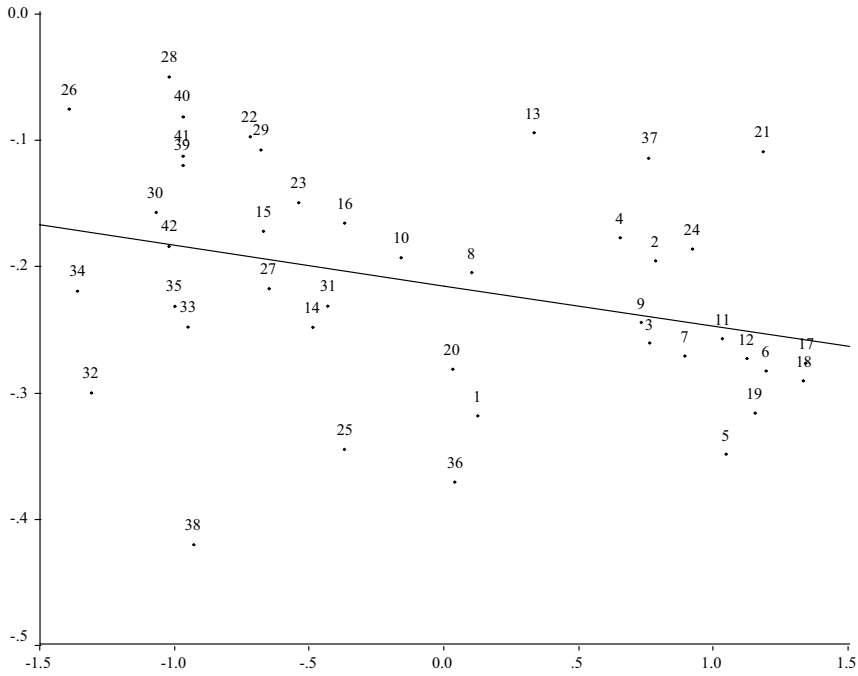


Figure 5.2 Effect of educational level on authoritarianism/libertarianism ( $\beta$ ) by cultural modernity ( $r = -0.32$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , one-sided test,  $N = 42$ ).

The strength of the education effect does indeed vary systematically with the degree of cultural modernity: the more culturally modern a country is, the stronger the negative effect of education on authoritarianism ( $r = -0.32$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , one-sided test). The analysis with the (reversed) post-materialism index as the sole indicator for authoritarianism leads to the same conclusion ( $r = -0.36$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , one-sided test). Hypothesis 3 has thus been confirmed.

### 5.4.3. Context Dependence of the Effect of Religiosity

Last, Hypothesis 4 pertains to a comparable context dependence of the relation between religiosity and authoritarianism/libertarianism. This kind of relation is absent in only five countries, all of which are either Communist or former Communist countries: Belarus, China, Latvia, Estonia, and Russia. As expected, it is positive in all of the other countries; religiosity goes hand in hand with authoritarianism. The average effect of

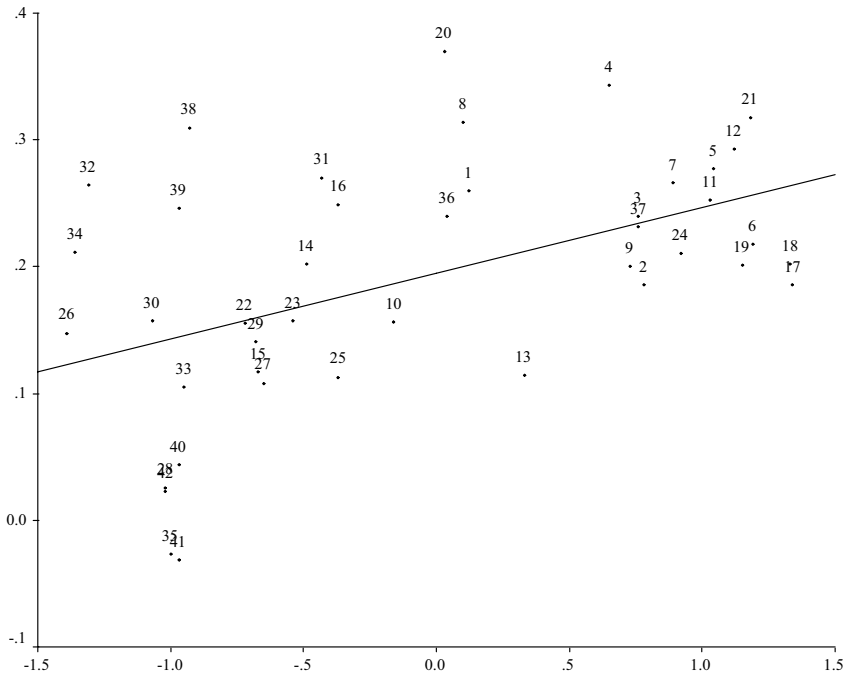


Figure 5.3 Effect of religiosity on authoritarianism/libertarianism ( $\beta$ ) by cultural modernity ( $r = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , one-sided test,  $N = 42$ ).

religiosity on authoritarianism is 0.19, but there are also sizable differences: in five countries it is weaker than 0.10, and in five it is stronger than 0.30.

Can these differences be explained by a country's degree of cultural modernity, as Hypothesis 4 postulates? To see whether this is the case, the horizontal axis once again shows the degree of cultural modernity, and the vertical axis now shows the effect of religion on authoritarianism/libertarianism (Fig. 5.3). The relation between religion and authoritarianism/libertarianism appears to be strongest in countries like the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, and Sweden, which are indeed characterized by a relatively high degree of cultural modernity ( $r = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , one-sided test). If the (reversed) postmaterialism index is used as the sole indicator for authoritarianism, the relation is weaker but nonetheless of the same nature ( $r = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , one-sided test). Hypothesis 4 has thus been confirmed by these results.

The confirmation of the last two hypotheses shows that the influence of cultural background (education and religion) on authoritarianism/

libertarianism does indeed vary systematically between countries. The more culturally modern countries are and the less affected they are by tradition, the greater the negative effect of education and the positive effect of religion on authoritarianism. These findings are in keeping with the interpretation formulated here, which explains the emergence of authoritarianism/libertarianism from cultural rather than economic factors.

## 5.5. CONCLUSION

Inglehart's theory about the Silent Revolution holds that since more and more people have grown up in affluent conditions, postmaterialist values have become increasingly widespread. However, he never actually attempted to determine whether growing up in an affluent family really leads to postmaterialist values, which is the crucial hypothesis generated by his theory. What is more, the researchers who did take the trouble to do so, as noted in Chapter 4, unanimously conclude that there is no such relation. In essence, people's cultural background is decisive. Like people who are secular, people with ample cultural capital (higher educational level and greater cultural participation) attach greater importance to individual liberty. The younger generation does the same compared with the older generation; this is probably because they grew up in a culturally more modern society, and not because they spent their youth in a richer country. These findings from studies *within* countries led me to examine differences in (the coming about of) postmaterialism *between* countries in this chapter.

The fact that postmaterialism is observed far more frequently in affluent Western countries than in less prosperous non-Western ones cannot simply be construed as a confirmation of Inglehart's theory. This evidence is unconvincing, because "modernization" denotes a complex of interrelated processes of economic, technological, political, and cultural change, which tend to go hand in hand, and, consequently, cannot be disentangled statistically in multivariate analyses at the aggregate level. We have seen, for instance, that at this aggregate level the effects of national affluence and national libertarianism cannot be statistically disentangled. For a similar reason, the inclusion of macro-level economic contextual variables as independents in an individual-level analysis of survey data (e.g., De Graaf 1988; De Graaf and Evans 1996; Duch and Taylor 1993) is unlikely to yield convincing evidence either. Although those contextual variables allegedly measure levels of affluence, they inevitably tap other aspects of modernity as well.

Given these shortcomings of the inclusion of macro-level contextual variables, Davis (2000) rightly argues that macro-level analysis is unlikely to yield convincing evidence for the processes Inglehart assumes to be operating at the individual level. Against this background, there are two

compelling reasons to reject his theory as untenable. First, Inglehart's "materialistic" theory considers the relation between prosperity and post-materialism at the country level as the resultant of a similar relation at the individual level. Whereas the latter relation does not even exist (Chapter 4), his theory also fails to provide an adequate explanation for the high numbers of postmaterialists in affluent countries. Second, the decisive influence of people's cultural background *within* countries has been expanded in this chapter into two hypotheses on differences in the coming about of postmaterialism *between* countries. Both hypotheses have been confirmed: the more culturally modern a country is, the stronger the influence of education and religion on postmaterialism (libertarianism). This underscores that the influence of education on authoritarianism should be viewed as a cultural process. Inglehart's "materialist" theoretical logic, which leads him to erroneously view education as an indicator of parental affluence, cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for this. We can consequently conclude that Inglehart's theory, which holds that the increased focus on individual liberty is caused by the rise in prosperity, is untenable.

## NOTES

1. I do not know of any earlier systematic testing of this hypothesis. Findings by Kelley and De Graaf (1997) seem to be important in this connection, however. According to these findings, the transfer of religion and secularism by parents to their children is strongest in the least religious countries. Since it is only logical that a country's level of secularization should be strongly linked to its degree of cultural modernity, perhaps this can be interpreted as a confirmation of the hypothesis formulated here.

2. As stated in Chapter 1, Note 13, the Moscow data were not used in the analysis. The analysis was thus conducted for forty-two and not forty-three countries, as in the Inglehart analyses (Abramson and Inglehart 1995; Inglehart 1997).

3. If separate principal component analyses are conducted for all thirty-five countries that all three of these indicators for religion are available for, it yields an average explained variance of 61 percent. The explained variance is below 50 percent for only four countries, with Nigeria scoring the lowest at 42 percent.

4. Although, for the sake of brevity, I refer to "the percentage of postmaterialists" in the rest of this chapter, I mean the percentage of postmaterialists minus the percentage of materialists.

5. The percentage of missing scores is above 10 percent for Mexico (12.9 percent), Latvia (11.7 percent), and Japan (22.5 percent).

6. This composite measure has more than 10 percent missing values for West Germany only (10.7 percent).

7. This index thus has different ranges in various countries; in three countries it varies from 0 to 4, in thirteen countries from 0 to 5, and in the remaining countries from 0 to 6.

8. This index yields more than 10 percent missing scores in only two countries, that is, 11.3 percent in the United States and no less than 74.5 percent in Iceland. This is why it was not used for Iceland in computing the final measure for authoritarianism/libertarianism.

9. Those statements relate to the following ideas: (1) When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women. (2) A woman has to have children to be fulfilled. (3) A single woman should have the right to have a child. (4) A working mother can establish just as warm a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work. (5) A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works. (6) What most women really want is a home and children. (7) Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.

10. Of the countries this scale was used for, Japan (with 16.5 percent) is the only one with more than 10 percent missing values.

11. The only explained variance that deviates sharply from the rest is 32.6 percent for Hungary.

12. The average factor loading for postmaterialism is 0.58. Those for the three other scales, 0.70 for both sexual permissiveness and parental value orientation and 0.73 for attitudes on gender roles, are even higher. The factor loadings for the parental value orientation and the rejection of traditional gender roles are higher than 0.55 for all of the countries except Iceland, which the parental values index was not used for. The factor loading for sexual permissiveness is below 0.50 for two countries, below 0.60 for five countries, and higher than 0.60 for thirty-seven countries. Nigeria is the only country for which there is a problem with this last scale; the factor loading is lower than 0.10. Hungary is the only country for which the factor loading for postmaterialism is lower than 0.30. For all of the other countries it is considerably higher: between 0.40 and 0.50 for five countries, between 0.50 and 0.60 for fourteen countries, and even higher for twenty-two countries, including four where it is even higher than 0.70.

13. Japan has no authoritarianism score for 14.0 percent of the respondents.

14. For ten of them the Gender Empowerment Measure is missing, and for one of them the length of the democratic tradition is missing.

# 6

## Who Votes for Whom? And Why Exactly?

### *Class, Cultural Capital, and Voting Behavior*

A relation between class position and voting behavior is a natural and expected association in the Western democracies for a number of reasons: the existence of class interests, the representation of these interests by political parties, and the regular association of certain parties with certain interests.

—Robert Alford “Class Voting in the  
Anglo-American Political Systems”

#### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

It should be clear by now that two key elements of Inglehart’s theory of the Silent Revolution are untenable. First, the term “postmaterialism” wrongly gives the impression that there is more and more of a focus on values beyond materialism. In fact, however, we are witnessing an increasing diffusion of libertarian political values at the expense of authoritarian ones. Second, there is no evidence that this cultural change has indeed been generated by growing affluence. So Inglehart may be right to assume that these political values cannot be explained by class, but he is wrong to view them as being caused by one’s economic background.

Although one might argue that these untenable ideas constitute the core of Inglehart’s theory and occupy a central position in his work, there is definitely more to this. I have already noted that he refers to a Silent Revolution because he expects the gradual spread of postmaterialist values to have far-reaching political consequences. He maintains that the nineteenth-

century distribution conflict between labor and capital, known as the “social question,” becomes less heated and is gradually replaced by a new politics increasingly focused on noneconomic issues. Classes, trade unions, and so forth are replaced herewith as the dominant political actors by new social movements (Inglehart 1990:371–92; cf. Kriesi 1989; Offe 1985) and new political parties such as D66 (Democrats 66) and GroenLinks (the Green Left) in the Netherlands, Les Verts (the Greens) in France, and Die Grünen (the Greens) in Germany (Inglehart 1990:281–83; cf. Hoffman-Martinot 1991).

One of Inglehart’s key hypotheses in this context is that as a result of the rise and spread of postmaterialist values, class becomes less and less relevant for voting behavior: “the relationship between [postmaterialist] values and party preference . . . could gradually neutralize (or even reverse) the traditional alignment of the working class with the Left, and the middle class with the Right. We hypothesize that such a process *has* been taking place during the past two or three decades. . . . If this proves to be the case, the polarization of populations along a Materialist/Postmaterialist axis should tend to reduce the incidence of social class voting. The industrial basis of political cleavage would gradually decline” (Inglehart 1977:184, his emphasis; cf. Inglehart 1990:248–88). This issue plays a key role in contemporary political sociology and political science. In this chapter I examine the implications of the findings arrived at in the previous chapters for this research problem. I demonstrate that studies of the relation between class and voting are theoretically unsatisfactory because they are based on a one-sided representation of how voting behavior comes about. As a consequence, they systematically underestimate the role of class in the coming about of voting behavior.

## 6.2. METHODOLOGICAL PROGRESS AND THEORETICAL STAGNATION

### 6.2.1. Methodological Advances as the Royal Road to Progress?

Within the research tradition discussed here, the strength of the relation between class and voting is referred to as the level of “class voting.” Ever since the 1960s the level of class voting has usually been measured by a simple index named after Robert Alford. It is computed “by subtracting the percentage of persons in non-manual occupations voting for ‘Left’ parties from the percentage of manual workers voting for such parties” (Alford 1967:80). The more frequently workers vote for leftist parties and the less frequently non-workers do so, the higher the Alford index, and the higher the level of class voting. If workers vote exactly as frequently for leftist parties as nonworkers, the Alford index is 0, there is no evidence of

class voting, and the class people belong to does not in any way affect how they vote. Although calculating the Alford index is simple enough, determining between-country and over-time variations does entail certain methodological complications. Small wonder, then, that the thesis published by Clark and Lipset (1991, 2001a) that class voting decreased from 1947 to 1986 in all of the countries they had data on (Sweden, Britain, West Germany, France, and the United States) (1991:403) was criticized by Hout et al. (1993, 2001) on precisely these grounds.

First, Hout and his colleagues criticize the complete absence of significance tests in the analysis by Clark and Lipset. Alford indices might well have decreased in these five countries, but does that necessarily mean that the relation between class and voting has become *significantly* weaker? Can't it just as well be indicative of random fluctuations? Second, Hout et al. doubt whether the contemporary class structure can be represented by a simple distinction like the one Clark and Lipset draw between manual and nonmanual workers. Since Hout et al. feel this procedure underestimates class voting, they advocate using more detailed class measures like the EGP class schema used in this book. Third, they note that using Alford indices to draw between-country and over-time comparisons of class voting is more problematic than Clark and Lipset realize. After all, the value of an Alford index is also influenced by the overall popularity of the various political parties. A rise or fall in an Alford index can thus indicate either a general increase or decrease in the overall popularity of leftist or rightist political parties or a stronger or weaker relation between class and voting, which is of course the relevant issue here. Replacement of the Alford index as a measure of *absolute* class voting with a measure of *relative* class voting, computed by means of log-linear analysis (log odds ratios), is advocated as the means to solve this last-mentioned problem.

Hout et al.'s heavy emphasis on issues of measurement and method is not exceptional in this research tradition but seems more like the general rule. In this field's most important empirical study, for instance, Nieuwbeerta (1995) constructs three generations of class voting studies since World War II, which overlap in time to a certain extent. The subsequent generations exhibit an increasing replacement of dichotomous by more detailed class schemas, an increase in the number of countries and periods compared, and a shift from simple cross tables and Alford indices to log-linear models and log odds ratios (1995:1–27). Although Nieuwbeerta considers those methodological advancements key aspects of a process of scientific progress (1995:15–16), he nevertheless studies whether the use of more detailed class categorizations and the application of more advanced statistical methods really produce substantially different findings. In addition to the conventional Alford indices (i.e., levels of absolute class voting), he thus also calculates levels of relative class voting by using the more



detailed EGP class schema and correcting for the overall popularity of leftist and rightist political parties by means of log odds ratios.

Nieuwebeerta's conclusion is that the decline in class voting as demonstrated by Clark and Lipset is not simply an artifact of an erroneous methodological approach, as Hout et al.'s criticism of their article suggests. The results of the two approaches he compares largely coincide: "The main finding is that the various measures of class voting [yield] the same conclusions with respect to the ranking of the countries according to their levels of class voting and according to the speed of declines in class voting" (1996:370; cf. Nieuwebeerta 1995). The new methodological instruments advocated by Hout et al. (1993, 2001) might thus well be better than the old ones, but they do not yield substantially different findings. Astonishing to the interested outsider, but nevertheless consistent with the methodological fix of this research tradition, this finding does not incite Nieuwebeerta to reexamine his earlier claim that those methodological advancements constitute a significant process of scientific progress. One might wonder, for instance, whether those methodological advances mean much more in practice than taking refuge in technical issues, thus covering up more fundamental and urgent theoretical problems. There is indeed ample evidence in the previous chapters to suggest that within this field theoretical stagnation might pose more of an obstacle to intellectual advancement than a failure to use state-of-the-art statistical methods.

### 6.2.2. Why Expect Class Voting in the First Place?

None of the three generations of studies of class voting distinguished by Nieuwebeerta on the grounds of methodological approach, quantitative scale, and degree of detail of the class measure used studies the motivation of the working class to vote for leftist parties and those of the middle class to vote for rightist ones in the first place. The conceptualization of class voting, typically applied in empirical research, is shown in Figure 6.1.

Of course this failure to study empirically *why* the working class typically votes for leftist parties does not mean that researchers in this field have no ideas about it. Their theoretical logic is similar to that used in Chapter 2 to understand the relation between class and economic liberalism: the logic of class analysis. Under the heading "Why Expect Class Voting?", for instance, Alford explained in the 1960s that the relation between class position and voting behavior is a "natural and expected" association: "Given the character of the stratification order and the way political parties act as representatives of different class interests, it would be remarkable if such a relation were not found" (1967:68–69). As Lipset et al. (1954:1136) also noted half a century ago: "The leftist parties represent themselves as instruments of social change in the direction of equality; the

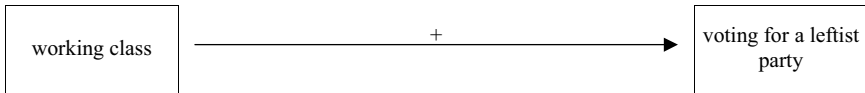


Figure 6.1 Conventional conceptualization of class voting.

lower-income groups will support them in order to become economically better off, while the higher-income groups will oppose them in order to maintain their economic advantages.”

Whereas economic liberalism is thus generally assumed to constitute the link between membership in the working class and voting for leftist parties, Clark (2001) rightly notes that it is quite problematic that this economic voting motivation is typically absent from empirical studies. It is simply wrong, he comments, to speak of class voting when, for instance, Italian workers vote for the Communists, because like themselves, this party is in favor of domestic waste recycling. Although this voting behavior has nothing to do with economic interests or the ideas on economic distribution they generate, the conventional conceptualization and measurement of class voting still lead researchers to count it as such. Although in Western societies, ideas on the desirability of domestic waste recycling, of course, do not really constitute a decisive voting motivation, Clark’s general point is convincing: workers and nonworkers alike have ideas on more issues than just desirable economic distribution strategies, and of course political parties also work toward other goals. This is why it is important for researchers not to simply *assume* that workers vote for leftist parties on economic grounds, but to actually *study* the extent to which this is indeed the case. The conventional conceptualization of class voting should thus be replaced by the one shown in Figure 6.2. Unlike the relation between class and voting, it does justice to the idea that class voting involves economic liberalism/conservatism as the decisive voting motivation.

### 6.2.3. Class Voting and Cultural Voting

As we have seen in Chapters 2 and 4, values concerning economic distribution (economic liberalism/conservatism), constituting the assumed link between class and voting, are virtually unrelated to values concerning the importance of individual liberty and maintenance of social order (authoritarianism/libertarianism) among the public at large. In spite of the divergent theoretical intentions underlying its development, Inglehart’s postmaterialism index *de facto* also taps this political dichotomy, although only relatively weakly, as we have seen.

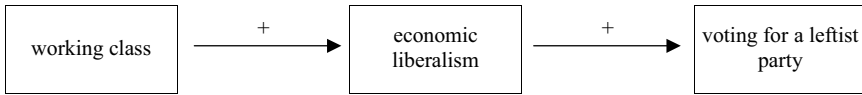


Figure 6.2 Extended conceptualization of class voting.

At this point we come up against a second shortcoming of the conventional conceptualization of class voting. As we have seen, the EGP class schema as a largely occupation-based class measure unintentionally mixes class and cultural capital, which have strikingly divergent effects on both types of political values (Chapter 2). This mixing of class and cultural capital causes serious theoretical problems, because the relation between class and voting conceals the fact that the weak economic position of the working class is likely to lead to economic liberalism and generate a preference for a leftist party, whereas the authoritarianism accompanying its limited cultural capital is likely to generate a preference for a rightist party. Studies using this conventional conceptualization of class voting (Fig. 6.1) thus neglect the fact that the combination of a weak economic position and limited cultural capital presents the working class with a dilemma. Its weak economic position gives rise to economic liberalism and a preference for leftist parties, whereas its limited cultural capital generates authoritarianism and a preference for rightist parties. Of course precisely the opposite holds true for the middle class, which tends toward rightist parties on economic grounds and leftist ones on cultural grounds.

The conventional conceptualization of class voting thus conceals the extent to which a relation observed by researchers between class and voting actually pertains to class voting (the effect of class via economic liberalism/conservatism) and opposing cultural voting (the influence of cultural capital via authoritarianism/libertarianism). It should therefore be modified even more drastically by distinguishing class voting systematically from cultural voting (Fig. 6.3).

Class voting can now be defined as voting for a leftist or rightist political party on the grounds of economically liberal or conservative political values generated by a weak or strong class position. From an empirical perspective, class voting is thus the product of paths 1 and 2 in Figure 6.3. Analogously, the product of paths 3 and 4 stands for cultural voting, that is, voting for a leftist or rightist political party on the grounds of libertarian or authoritarian political values generated by ample or limited cultural capital.

In the rest of this chapter, the conventional conceptualization of class voting and the reconceptualization proposed here are both applied to voting behavior in the Netherlands. This comparison demonstrates that,

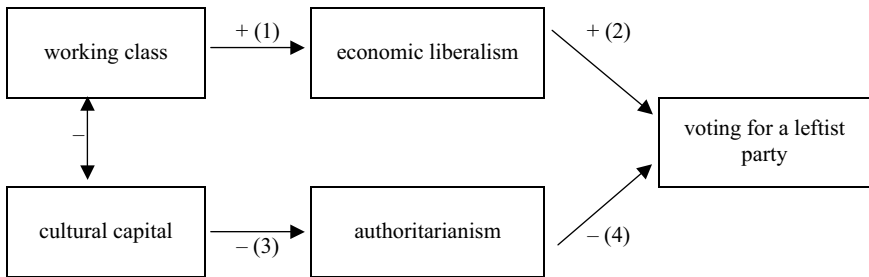


Figure 6.3 Class voting (path 1  $\times$  path 2) distinguished from cultural voting (path 3  $\times$  path 4).

unlike the application of state-of-the-art statistical methods, studying class voting in a theoretically more valid way does produce quite different substantial conclusions.

### 6.3. CLASS VOTING AND CULTURAL VOTING IN THE NETHERLANDS

#### 6.3.1. Measurement

The economic liberalism/conservatism scale introduced in Chapter 2 is used here to measure economic voting motivations. As for cultural voting motivations, a linear combination of authoritarianism, postmaterialism, educational values, and rejection of traditional gender roles is used. After all, as we have seen, their combination yields a reliable one-dimensional measure of authoritarianism/libertarianism (see Table 4.5 in Chapter 4).

The only operationalization not discussed earlier in this book pertains to voting behavior. As is common practice in studies on class voting, voting behavior is operationalized as political party preference (Nieuwbeerta 1996:353). Respondents have simply been asked which party they would vote for if there were parliamentary elections tomorrow. Not all of the responses to this question can be used. The respondents who say they would not vote (2.8 percent), would not fill in any party on the ballot (0.6 percent), or don't know yet which party they would vote for (18.6 percent) are left out.

Since a statistical analysis requires reasonably filled cells, several other response categories are also left out and a number of others are combined into a single category. The thirteen respondents (1.8 percent) who say they would vote for an extreme rightist splinter party (CD or CP '86), a senior

citizen's party (AOV or Unie 55+), or some other electorally relatively marginal party are excluded from the analysis. The small number of respondents who say they would vote for one of the three small Christian parties (SGP, GPV, and RPF) are combined into one category. The operationalization of voting behavior thus ultimately results in a variable with seven categories: Christian Democrats (CDA) 12.2 percent, Democrats 66 (D66) 16.1 percent, Labor Party (PvdA) 27.7 percent, Conservative Party (VVD) 27.3 percent, Green Left (GroenLinks) 8.1 percent, Socialist Party (SP) 4.2 percent, and small Christian parties (SGP, GPV, and RPF) 4.4 percent.

### 6.3.2. The Relation between Class and Voting in the Netherlands

How strong is the relation between class and voting in the Netherlands? Since no between-country and over-time variations are studied, there is no need to calculate the Alford index or determine the level of relative class voting on the basis of log odds ratios. As in the calculation of the Alford index, the relation between the two can be determined simply by dichotomizing into leftist (Labor Party, Green Left, Socialist Party) and not leftist parties (Conservative Party, Democrats 66, Christian Democrats, and the three small Christian parties). Unlike the case of computing the Alford index, the EGP class schema is not reduced to a division between working class (EGP classes VI and VII) and middle class (EGP classes I to V). Instead the seven EGP classes are compared (Table 6.1).

There proves to be no relation whatsoever between class and voting in the Netherlands at present. Only one of the seven EGP classes, the small self-employed businessmen of EGP class IV, exhibits much of a deviation from the rest. Whereas overall approximately 40 percent have a preference for leftist parties and 60 percent for nonleftist parties, in the case of those small self-employed businessmen those figures are about 20 percent and 80 percent. The voting behavior of the working class (EGP classes VI and VII) does not differ, however, from that of the four remaining classes. The result is that there is no relation between class and voting.

One might wonder of course whether dichotomizing class into working class and middle class would have yielded a different result. This is not the case at all, for in that case as well, class has no effect whatsoever on voting behavior (Cramer's  $V = 0.05, p > 0.20$ ). The same is true if this dichotomized class is examined in relation to the seven political parties (Cramer's  $V = 0.14, p > 0.05$ ) and if the relation is examined between the seven EGP classes and the seven political parties (Cramer's  $V = 0.13, p > 0.20$ ). The conclusion can thus be drawn that at present in the Netherlands, the working class is not any more apt to vote for leftist parties than are the other EGP classes.

Table 6.1 Voting behavior by EGP class

EGP class	Leftist parties (%)	Not leftist parties (%)	Total (%)
Class I	44.0	56.0	15.6
Class II	37.6	62.4	33.7
Class III	45.0	55.0	20.3
Class IV	18.2	81.8	6.1
Class V	39.0	61.0	7.6
Class VI	42.3	57.7	4.8
Class VII	47.6	52.4	11.7
Total	40.4	59.6	100.0

$N = 537$ .

Cramer's  $V = 0.14$  ( $p > 0.10$ ).

### 6.3.3. The Role of Economic and Cultural Voting Motivations

From a theoretical point of view it is now important to study what this absence of a relation between class and voting might mean. Although the conventional approach to class voting (Fig. 6.1) would lead us to conclude that class does not affect politics, the theoretical reconceptualization depicted in Figure 6.3 suggests another possibility. Might it not be that class voting *does* exist in the Netherlands today, but is simply made invisible by the application of the invalid conventional conceptualization of class voting? In other words: might class voting be obscured by equally strong cultural voting working in the opposite direction?

This can only be the case if authoritarianism/libertarianism, like economic liberalism/conservatism, substantially affects the vote. Table 6.2 shows the average economic liberalism and authoritarianism of the seven categories of party supporters. It is obvious that the conventional assumption that voting behavior is based upon economic motivations is as tenuous as it is one-sided. It is tenuous because the seven categories do indeed exhibit considerable differences regarding economic liberalism ( $\eta = 0.45$ ). It is one-sided because they exhibit equally strong differences regarding authoritarianism ( $\eta = 0.44$ ). It is thus wrong to assume that only economic liberalism/conservatism plays a role in the coming about of voting. In the contemporary Netherlands at least, the vote is equally strongly influenced by economic and cultural voting motivations (cf. Felling and Peters 1986; Middendorp 1991).

As is naturally to be expected, the strongest economic liberalism is observed among the supporters of the three leftist political parties in the Netherlands, the Socialist Party, the Green Left, and the Labor Party. They

Table 6.2 Economic liberalism/conservatism and authoritarianism/libertarianism by voting behavior

<i>Voting behavior</i>	<i>Economic liberalism</i>	<i>Authoritarianism</i>
Christian Democrats (CDA)	0.21	0.94
Democrats 66 (D66)	-0.18	-0.31
Labor Party (PVDA)	0.65	-0.71
Conservative Party (VVD)	-1.19	0.84
Green Left (GroenLinks)	1.28	-1.80
Socialist Party (SP)	1.65	0.08
Small Christian parties (SGP/GPV/RPF)	-0.49	0.92
Grand mean	4.82	4.96
$\eta$	0.45***	0.44***
$R^2$	0.20***	0.20***

Analyses of variance, deviations from grand mean,  $N = 537$ .

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

differ in this respect from Democrats 66, the three small Christian parties, and, even more so, the Conservative Party. Although Christian Democrat supporters occupy only an intermediate position with respect to economic liberalism, they are similar to the three small Christian parties and the Conservative Party in that they have the most authoritarian ideas. Libertarianism, on the other hand, is characteristic of the supporters of Democrats 66, the Labor Party, and, even more so, the Green Left.

The fact that the two rankings of the seven parties are definitely not identical can best be illustrated on the basis of the ideological profile of the supporters of the three leftist political parties in the Netherlands, the Labor Party, the Green Left, and the Socialist Party. All three groups are more liberal in an economic sense than the supporters of the other parties, though this is considerably less true of the Labor Party than either the Green Left or the Socialist Party, which are quite similar in this respect. The Green Left also has the most libertarian supporters in a cultural sense, whereas the Socialist Party supporters only occupy an inconspicuous position in the middle of the political road in this sense, being more conservative than the Democrats 66 or Labor Party supporters. If a distinction is drawn between the two progressive stances, economically liberal and libertarian, a sharper picture thus emerges of the differences between the supporters of the two small leftist parties in the Netherlands, the Green Left and the Socialist Party (cf. Inglehart 1977:240-43). This pattern coincides with the popular image of the Green Left as a party for the well-educated cultural elite and the Socialist Party as a more working-class party with populist features.

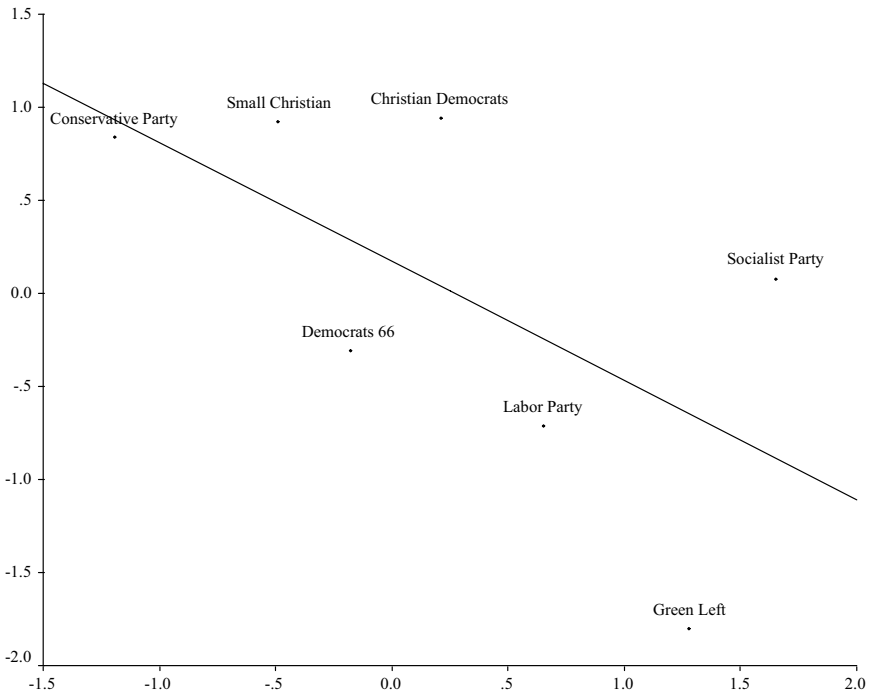


Figure 6.4 Average authoritarianism/libertarianism by average economic liberalism/conservatism of seven groups of political party supporters ( $r = -0.62$ ,  $p = 0.07$ ,  $N = 7$ ).

Although the economic liberalism ranking is certainly not identical to that for libertarianism, there is definitely a tendency for economically liberal party supporters to also be libertarian. This is demonstrated in Figure 6.4, where the average authoritarianism of the seven categories of party supporters is examined in relation to their average economic liberalism.

The Green Left supporters, combining economic liberalism and libertarianism, occupy an extreme position in both senses, with the Conservative Party at the other extreme. The correlation between the average economic liberalism and authoritarianism of the seven categories of party supporters might not be perfect, but at  $-0.62$  it is definitely considerable. If we are willing to use a significance level of 0.10, as is reasonable in an analysis with only seven cases, then this correlation is significant ( $p = 0.07$ , one-sided test). In short, the economically liberal supporters of the leftist parties are also more libertarian than the economically conservative supporters of the rightist parties. A vote for a leftist party can thus be inspired by either



economic liberalism or libertarianism, just as a vote for a rightist party can be inspired by either economic conservatism or authoritarianism.

#### 6.3.4. Class Voting and Cultural Voting in the Netherlands

The picture that emerges if class voting and cultural voting are systematically distinguished is studied in two steps. First, the ambiguous nature of EGP class is simply neglected by using it in the analysis as the black box it actually is (see Chapter 2). Second, EGP class is replaced by the more explicit indicators of class and cultural capital introduced in Chapter 2. To be able to bypass a needlessly complex statistical analysis, so that the findings can be presented in as simple and reader-friendly a fashion as possible, some brief comments are called for.

Since voting behavior is a nominal dependent variable with seven categories, it is converted into a quantitative dependent variable so that ordinary regression and path analysis can be used. On the grounds of the average economic liberalism of their supporters (Table 6.2), the seven political parties are placed on a continuum ranging from left (economically liberal) to right (economically conservative) (cf. Middendorp 1991:204). With 6.47 and 6.10, the Socialist Party and the Green Left score highest, and with only 3.63 the Conservative Party scores the lowest. Since the economically most liberal party supporters are on the average also the most libertarian, this ranking also inevitably implies a quantification of voting behavior by authoritarianism/libertarianism. Nevertheless, the decision to quantify by economic liberalism/conservatism means that the effect of authoritarianism on voting behavior is underestimated and the effect of economic liberalism is overestimated.<sup>1</sup> After all, the relation between the two rankings is not at all perfect; it is  $-0.62$  and not  $-1.00$ . Of course, this does not constitute a serious problem since we already know that in reality, the two effects are equally strong (Table 6.2). Nevertheless, in the following analysis not too much importance should be attached to the relative strengths of the effects of economic liberalism/conservatism and authoritarianism/libertarianism on voting behavior.<sup>2</sup>

In the first analysis mentioned above the total effect of EGP class will be estimated by means of a series of six dummy variables. Their combined effects on the two types of political values will be indicated by the multiple determination coefficient  $R$ . To be able to distinguish positive and negative effects, EGP class will be called "working class" rather than "EGP class" in Figure 6.5. If we keep the two types of political values constant, the direct effect of class on voting behavior is determined with a sheaf variable that summarizes the combined effects of the six dummy variables.<sup>3</sup>

In Figure 6.5 are shown the results of the analysis in which EGP class is simply used as the black box it is. It demonstrates how the economic lib-

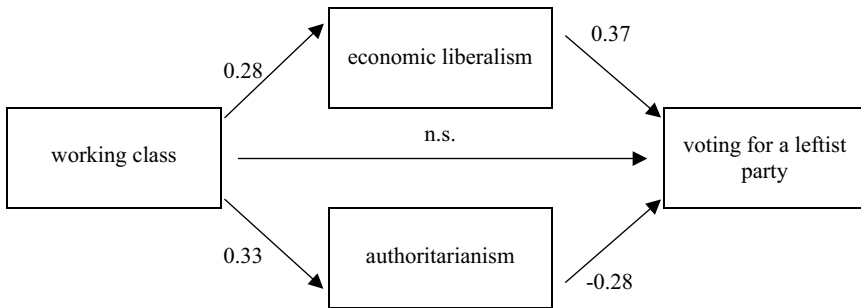


Figure 6.5 Voting for a leftist party explained by class, economic liberalism/conservatism, and authoritarianism/libertarianism (all paths significant at  $p < 0.001$  unless otherwise indicated ( $p > 0.05$ ),  $R^2$  economic liberalism/conservatism = 0.08,  $R^2$  authoritarianism/libertarianism = 0.11,  $R^2$  voting = 0.27,  $N = 527$ ).

eralism of the working class generates a preference for leftist political parties and how its authoritarianism generates a preference for rightist ones. We have already seen the result of these two opposing mechanisms of approximately equal strength: there is no relation in the Netherlands between class and voting. Even in the case of the voting behavior quantification used here, resulting in its underestimation, it is clear that the effect via authoritarianism is not overshadowed at all by the effect via economic liberalism. In fact the two barely exhibit much of a difference at all. If voting behavior were quantified by authoritarianism, the effect via authoritarianism would be even stronger than its economic counterpart.<sup>4</sup>

Opening up the black box of EGP class in Figure 6.6 demonstrates what is really going on. Working-class preferences for leftist parties do indeed indicate class voting. Its weak position on the labor market and the economic liberalism this entails lead the working class to a preference for leftist parties. Its simultaneous tendency to vote for rightist parties has nothing to do with class voting, but constitutes cultural voting. It thus stems from its limited amount of cultural capital and the authoritarianism connected with it. Perhaps needless to say, adding the EGP dummies as independent variables in a second step in a stepwise regression analysis reveals that they cannot explain any additional variance over and above the variance already explained by the variables included in Figure 6.6.

The conventional conceptualization of class voting thus yields wrong conclusions. It is simply not true that class voting does not exist in the Netherlands. It does exist, but it tends to be made invisible by sociologists to themselves when they conceptualize it invalidly. When class voting and

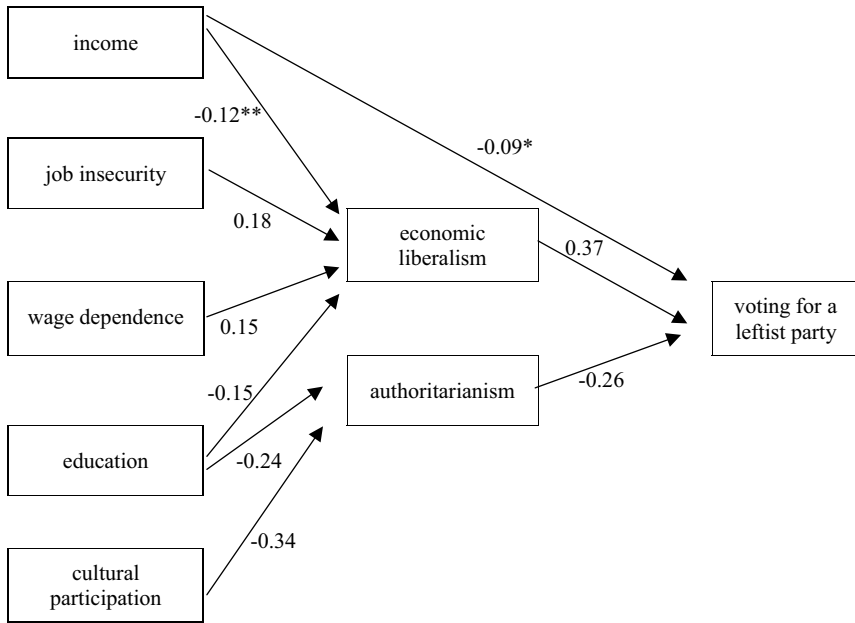


Figure 6.6 Voting for a leftist party explained (all paths significant at  $p < 0.001$  unless marked \* ( $p < 0.05$ ) or \*\* ( $p < 0.01$ ),  $R^2$  economic liberalism/conservatism = 0.10,  $R^2$  authoritarianism/libertarianism = 0.26,  $R^2$  voting = 0.28,  $N = 502$ ).

cultural voting are about equally strong, as in the Netherlands, neither the working class nor the middle class can be characterized simply as leftist or rightist. They are nevertheless not politically identical, because they vote for the same parties for different reasons. Middle-class votes for leftist parties are culturally motivated, whereas working-class votes for those parties are economically motivated. To state it the other way around, economic motivations lead the middle class to vote for rightist parties, whereas cultural motivations underlie working-class tendencies to do so. In short, Alford indices that are close to zero indicate neither that class voting has disappeared nor that the potential for political conflict has declined.

#### 6.4. HOW THEORETICAL COMPLACENCY CAN PRODUCE WRONG FINDINGS

##### 6.4.1. Has the Relation between Class and Voting Decreased?

Clark and Lipset affirmatively answer the question they pose in the title of their influential article “Are Social Classes Dying?” (1991, 2001a), but

their claim that class has become less relevant for the explanation of voting behavior has not remained uncontested. It proved instead the opening skirmish of the death of class debate, already briefly introduced in Chapter 1 (e.g., Evans 1999b; Clark and Lipset 2001b).

The central question in this debate is whether or not Western industrial societies have been witnessing a decline in the relation between class and voting since World War II. Since the appearance of Nieuwbeerta's study discussed above (1995), it is hardly possible to doubt that they have. His findings, published elsewhere as well (Nieuwbeerta and De Graaf 1999; Nieuwbeerta 1996, 2001), are based on an extremely large-scale study of between-country and over-time variations in class voting, covering twenty Western countries and the period from 1945 to 1990. Regarding between-country variations, the relation between class and voting proves strongest in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Britain and weakest in Canada and the United States. Ever since 1945, there proves to have been a demonstrable decrease in eleven of the twenty countries in the study, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, and the United States. Although there is usually something of a decrease in the nine other countries as well, this trend is not significant there, due perhaps in some cases to data being available for only a limited number of years. In the cases where data are available for a sufficient number of years, there seems to have been no decrease in the level of class voting in Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands since World War II. Nevertheless, this important study confirms the thesis formulated by Inglehart, Clark, and Lipset that a decline in the relation between class and voting is the typical pattern for Western countries since World War II.

#### 6.4.2. But Has Class Voting Declined Too?

The deep-seated class approach to voting in sociology cannot be salvaged simply by criticizing studies propagating the death or dying of class from a methodological point of view. With studies of class voting, including Nieuwbeerta's, typically relying on an invalid conceptualization, one might wonder whether it can be salvaged by studying it in a more valid way. After all, the relation between class and voting does not even measure the degree to which voting behavior is attributable to class, but mixes class voting and opposite cultural voting. As a consequence, a decline in the relation between class and voting does not necessarily mean that the relation between class, economic liberalism, and voting behavior has declined. It might also indicate that the relation between cultural capital, authoritarianism, and voting behavior has increased.

The conventional conceptualization of class voting, in short, neglects a complex cross-pressure mechanism, as defined by Lazarsfeld et al. in their study of the American elections of 1940, *The People's Choice* (1972 [1944]).<sup>5</sup>

Cross-pressures refer to “the conflicts and inconsistencies among the factors which influence vote decision. Some of these factors . . . may influence [the voter] toward the Republicans while others may operate in favor of the Democrats. In other words, cross-pressures upon the voter drive him in opposite directions” (1972 [1944]:53). Precisely such a cross-pressure mechanism causes us to observe no bivariate relation between class and voting in the Netherlands today, although class does affect voting.

Historical examples underscore its importance, too. The American presidential elections of 1972, for instance, were held during a turbulent period in American history marked by fervent protests against the war in Vietnam. The Democratic candidate George McGovern conducted a campaign centered around a relatively radical libertarian platform. This alienated part of the working class from the Democratic Party, and these disaffected voters switched to the Republican Party. The result—a dramatic election defeat for the Democrat McGovern and a victory for the Republican Nixon—is history (Clark et al. 1993:304, 2001:91; Clark 2001:281; Inglehart 1977:257–59). The rightist election victory of De Gaulle in France shortly after the vehement student unrest in Paris in May 1968 can be explained in much the same way. It was largely generated by working-class support for De Gaulle’s emphasis on restoring order, whereas many middle-class voters, especially young ones, expressed their support for the Left at the ballots (Inglehart 1977:267–84). In short, although neither the rightist votes of the working class nor the leftist votes of the middle class were inspired by economic motivations, the Alford index dropped to almost zero in the American case (Clark et al. 1993:304, 2001:91; Clark 2001:281).

#### 6.5. SO, ONCE AGAIN: HAS THERE BEEN A DECLINE IN CLASS VOTING?

In empirical studies, or so we can thus conclude, the invalid conventional conceptualization of class voting produces a systematic underestimation of the importance of class to voting behavior. The stronger cultural voting is, the more serious this underestimation becomes. As a result, it is not at all clear whether Nieuwbeerta’s study has demonstrated a decline in class voting, an increase in cultural voting, or both. This brings us back to the controversy that existed before the publication of his findings. Once again, the question to be answered is: Has there been a decline in class voting? Several research findings suggest that Western societies might have been witnessing an increase in cultural voting rather than a decline in class voting.

The first set of findings is from Nieuwbeerta’s own study. As it happens, it not only offers a description of between-country and over-time variations in class voting, but also attempts to explain those variations. Given

the blind spot for culture that is characteristic of this research tradition, it is not surprising that the hypotheses tested in this context should predominantly pertain to socioeconomic context variables. The size of income differences, the living standard, the percentage of intergenerational mobility, trade union density, and the number of manual workers as a percentage of the population are some typical examples. It is remarkable that virtually without exception, these hypotheses are refuted (Nieuwbeerta 1995:57–77). Nieuwbeerta's attempt to explain between-country and over-time variations in class voting has thus virtually been in vain, suggesting that we might perhaps be witnessing more of an increase in cultural voting than a decline in class voting.

Acknowledging that he deliberately "remained as close as possible within the class perspective," Nieuwbeerta is fair enough to raise the question of "whether this was a successful choice and whether future studies on this topic should also adopt this perspective" (1995:201). His answer is interesting and instructive. First, he argues, better results might be attainable in future research if even more detailed class schemas are used: "Only if these possibilities within the class perspective turn out to be ineffective at explaining variations in class voting, *should the class perspective be abandoned.*" Then, in the very next sentence, prescription suddenly gives way to description: "However, the . . . class perspective *is likely to remain important* . . . because of the lack of full-blooming alternative approaches for explaining variations in class voting" (1995:201, my emphasis). In other words: if the class perspective fails, it should be abandoned, but it cannot be abandoned, because then we no longer know what to do. Once again, this underscores that the combination of theoretical complacency and exaggerated faith in advanced methodology constitutes the key obstacle to scientific progress in this field.

Apart from Nieuwbeerta's conclusion that variations in class voting can hardly be explained from contextual variables derived from the logic of class analysis, other findings also suggest that western societies might have been witnessing an increase in cultural voting rather than a decline in class voting. First, with education's effect on libertarianism being stronger in more culturally modern societies (Chapter 5), it may have become stronger across time as well because of a process of modernization. Second, Inglehart has demonstrated that in the period from 1970 to 1985, postmaterialists more and more frequently voted for leftist parties (1987:1298).<sup>6</sup> Those findings point at the possibility that cultural voting, that is, the product of paths 3 and 4 in Figure 6.3, might have become stronger as a consequence of modernization.

We might, in short, have been witnessing an increase in cultural voting rather than a decline in class voting. The extent to which both processes have taken place is studied in detail for Britain in the next chapter. Britain

has been chosen, first, because the bivariate relation between class and voting has weakened in this country during the last few decades, as Nieuwbeerta's study demonstrates. Second, suitable data from a number of different years are available for this country. The final empirical question to be answered in this book is, thus, what has happened to British politics during the last few decades? Has there been a decline in class voting, an increase in cultural voting, or both?

## NOTES

1. A quantification of the dependent variable by the average authoritarianism of the seven categories of party supporters would thus yield a weaker effect of economic liberalism/conservatism and a stronger effect of authoritarianism/libertarianism on voting behavior (see Note 4, this chapter).

2. If this quantified dependent variable is used to study the effect of EGP class on voting, of course this yields the same substantial results as the analysis conducted earlier with a cross table. Small self-employed businessmen (EGP class IV) are the most rightist, but the weak effect of class is not significant. Such an analysis thus also leads to the conclusion that a relation between class and voting is out of the question in the Netherlands.

3. A sheaf variable for a nominal variable with  $n$  categories is constructed by assigning the deviation from the mean score of the reference category  $n$  (the category that is not included as dummy variable) on the dependent variable to each of the categories 1 to  $(n - 1)$ . In practice this is done by multiplying each of the  $(n - 1)$  dummy variables ( $D$ ) by their unstandardized regression coefficients ( $B$ ), which show the deviations from the mean score of the reference category, and then adding up the  $(n - 1)$  resulting products:  $(B_1 \times D_1) + (B_2 \times D_2) + \dots + (B_{(n-1)} \times D_{(n-1)})$ .

4. If the dependent variable were to be quantified by the average authoritarianism of the seven categories of political party supporters, the effect of authoritarianism would be stronger (rising from  $-0.26$  to  $0.38$ ) and the effect of economic liberalism would be weaker (falling from  $0.37$  to  $-0.21$ ) (both effects significant at  $p < 0.001$ ).

5. I thank Jan Berting for drawing my attention to this study.

6. This analysis by Inglehart is based on a compilation of data from Britain, France, Italy, West Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

# 7

## Has There Really Been a Decline in Class Voting?

### *Class Voting and Cultural Voting in Britain, 1974–1997*

WITH PETER ACHTERBERG

The notion that social class polarization may be declining tends to be received by orthodox Marxists with all the enthusiasm that a fundamentalist Christian would have for reports that the millennium will not come.

—Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution*

#### 7.1. INTRODUCTION

We have seen that the relation between class and voting underestimates the degree of class voting. As it actually captures the net balance of class voting and its opposite, cultural voting, it is even uncertain whether a decline in class voting has indeed taken place at all. Although a decline may have occurred, it is also possible that cultural voting has increased instead.

This chapter addresses this possibility for Britain, one of the countries where Nieuwbeerta, using this invalid operationalization, reports a decline in class voting in 1964–1990 (1995:50–51). Data from the *British Election Studies*, covering almost 25 years of British political history (1974–1997), are analyzed for this purpose. What happened to British politics during this period? Was there a decline in class voting, an increase in cultural voting, or both?



There is no need for further theoretical elaboration, since all that is done in this chapter is to apply the distinction developed in Chapter 6 to developments in Britain in 1974–1997. Although of course the data of the *British Election Studies* were not collected for this purpose and thus force us to make certain concessions, we feel they allow for the construction of sufficiently valid and reliable operationalizations of all our key concepts for all six available election years (1974, 1979, 1983, 1987, 1992, and 1997). In Section 7.3 we study the development of the relation between class and voting, and go on to address the development of actual class voting and cultural voting in Section 7.4. In Section 7.5 we discuss the implications of our findings for Inglehart's theory that the spread of postmaterialist values has served to corrode traditional working-class support for the left and middle-class support for the right. We finish in Section 7.6 with a discussion of the ironies of the Marxist lite tendency to rely on a one-sided class framework in the study of voting behavior.

## 7.2. OPERATIONALIZATION

### 7.2.1. Class, Cultural Capital, and Voting Behavior

*Class.* We use the EGP class schema to measure class, restricting our analysis to employed male respondents.<sup>1</sup> EGP class classifications, comparable across all six election years, have been constructed using the recoding procedures published by Prandy (1997; see also 1992).<sup>2</sup>

*Cultural capital.* Since the *British Election Studies* questionnaires do not contain any suitable questions about cultural participation, we have chosen the second best option. We combine educational level with two variables used in today's international literature as cultural capital indicators, that is, the distinction between people with a social or a cultural occupation and those with some other type of occupation, and cultural occupational status.

*Educational level* is measured as the number of years respondents have attended school full time, measured as the age when they stopped attending school full time and started to engage in other main activities.

*Social/cultural specialists.* Social scientists, specialists in art and culture, architects, teachers, welfare workers, librarians, journalists, writers, and other people with similar occupations are in the category of social and cultural specialists. Lamont (1986:1502), criticizing an article by Brint (1984), rightly notes that social and cultural specialists constitute the most politically liberal occupational category in his analysis and rightly attributes this to the ample cultural capital typical of this category. Having a social or cultural occupation is used here as a second cultural capital indicator by

constructing a dummy variable with the respondents with social or cultural occupations scoring 1 and all others scoring 0.<sup>3</sup>

*Cultural occupational status.* Kalmijn (1994) and De Graaf and Kalmijn (2001) use a decomposition of Duncan's (1961) well-known socioeconomic index of occupations to distinguish between economic and cultural occupational status. Whereas Duncan's index assigns scores to occupational categories on the basis of their average incomes and levels of education, in this procedure average income levels are used to indicate economic occupational status, and average levels of education are used to indicate cultural occupational status.<sup>4</sup> We construct an index for cultural occupational status that we use as a third cultural capital indicator.

Following the procedure of Kalmijn (1994:429–30) and De Graaf and Kalmijn (2001:57), we use the 1979, 1986, and 1993 *British Labour Force Surveys* to construct it. In all three data files respondents with valid scores for occupational title and educational level who work for at least twenty hours a week have been selected, producing a total of 225,551 respondents. Using recode routines developed by Ganzeboom,<sup>5</sup> occupational titles have been recoded into ISCO88 codes to make the three data sets comparable. All of the ISCO88-coded occupations have been classified into one of ninety-eight occupational categories. For each of those categories the average educational level has been calculated, measured as the number of years the respondent attended school. These occupational averages have been standardized into z scores. The correlations between the scales based on the three different data files are 0.96 or higher, indicating that it is safe to merge the files and construct a scale containing information about all three years. Scale scores have been assigned to the individual respondents in the *British Election Studies*, again making use of ISCO88 codes.

The three cultural capital indicators—educational level, having a social/cultural occupation, and cultural occupational status—have been standardized and combined into a reliable scale with Cronbach's (ranging from 0.72 (in 1997) to 0.76 (in 1987 and 1992)).<sup>6</sup>

*Voting behavior.* In all six election years, respondents have been asked whether or not they voted in the recent election. Those who did were then asked which party they recently voted for. The Conservative Party, Labour Party and Liberal Party collectively account for 95 percent or more of the British votes in all six election years. Like most studies on voting in Britain, we exclude the people who voted for other, smaller parties and the non-voters from the analysis (e.g., Weakliem and Heath 1994; Heath et al. 2001; Goldthorpe 1999; Evans et al. 1999). In the end, only the Liberal Party poses some nasty theoretical problems.

In the 1983 and 1987 elections, the Liberals joined forces with the Social

Democratic Party (SDP), a left-of-center party composed of disgruntled Labour MPs, to form the Alliance, and after the 1987 elections a majority of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) merged with the Liberals to form the Liberal Democratic Party. It is not easy to pinpoint this party's ideological profile in a straightforward way. Weakliem and Heath (1994) and Heath et al. (2001) regard the Liberals as a center party. A manifesto analysis by Budge (1999) demonstrates that this holds true for the earliest part of the period studied here (1974–1979). The party had an ideological profile during this period that was somewhere between those of the Conservative Party (right) and the Labour Party (left). However, we might consider the Liberal Party left after it joined forces with the leftist SDP in the 1983 and 1987 elections. Budge's (1999) manifesto analysis indeed demonstrates that during the 1997 elections the Liberal Party's ideological profile was more leftist than that of the Labour Party. The Liberal Party thus seems to have evolved from a center party to a center-leftist one in the period studied here. Because of this ambiguity and our theoretical ambitions in this chapter, we consider it well advised to exclude the Liberal Party altogether and restrict our analysis to the two British parties with clear and uncontested ideological profiles, the Labour Party (left) and the Conservative Party (right).<sup>7</sup>

### **7.2.2. Economic Liberalism/Conservatism and Authoritarianism/Libertarianism**

The questionnaire used in the *British Election Studies* is not identical for all six years, so it was not possible to construct identical scales for the two types of political values across the years. As in Chapter 5, where the data from the *World Values Survey 1990–1993* posed the same problem, we solve it by constructing scales that are substantially similar, but not identical across the years. Of course we have used as many identical questions as possible, complementing them with other questions to produce scales of sufficient length. To measure economic liberalism/conservatism, questions pertaining to opinions on issues such as redistribution of wealth and income, privatization or nationalization, government spending to combat poverty, unemployment, and so forth have been used. Questions on issues such as law and order, nudity and pornography, homosexuality, traditional values, and so forth have been used to measure authoritarianism/libertarianism.

*Economic liberalism/conservatism.* Table 7.1 presents the results of a principal component analysis of the questions used to measure economic liberalism/conservatism. All six scales consist of five, six, or seven questions, four of which are identical across the years—that is, those about a preference for either nationalization or privatization, about the desirability of

Table 7.1 Factor loadings of economic liberalism/conservatism indicators

<i>Economic liberalism/ conservatism indicators</i>	1974	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997
Support for nationalization rather than privatization	0.65	0.69	0.65	0.60	0.57	0.51
Support for government giving workers more say in running workplace	0.65	0.61	0.46	0.42	0.73	0.58
Support for government spending more money to get rid of poverty	0.55	0.53	0.48	0.65	0.68	0.66
Support for government redistributing income and wealth in favor of ordinary working people	0.78	0.74	0.68	0.69	0.73	0.70
Support for keeping up government service rather than reducing taxes		0.54		0.56		0.60
Support for government spending more money to create jobs			0.70	0.77	0.75	
Support for fighting unemployment rather than inflation			0.66	0.70		
Support for increasing the availability of welfare benefits	0.61	0.62				
Support for government putting more money in NHS						0.63
Rejection of voluntary wage agreement between government and trade unions as the most effective way to keep wage increases within reasonable and fair limits	0.52					
Support for efforts to equalize incomes						0.51
Eigenvalue	2.39	2.35	2.26	2.84	2.40	2.55
R <sup>2</sup>	0.40	0.39	0.38	0.45	0.48	0.36
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.69	0.68	0.66	0.75	0.73	0.71
N	826	610	1,178	1,166	785	798

Principal component analysis.

workers having a say in running the workplace, about government spending to combat poverty, and about redistribution of wealth and income.<sup>8</sup> Although the scale for 1983 is somewhat less reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.66$ ) than the other five, all of the scales are sufficiently reliable. High scores indicate economic liberalism.

*Authoritarianism/libertarianism.* Constructing a valid and reliable scale for authoritarianism/libertarianism proved more difficult, especially since the early editions of the *British Election Studies* only contain a very limited number of questions on opinions on cultural issues. It nevertheless

Table 7.2 Factor loadings of authoritarianism/libertarianism indicators

<i>Authoritarianism/libertarianism indicators</i>	1974	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997
Support for stiffer sentences for lawbreakers	0.53	0.71	0.52	0.75	0.73	0.67
Support for bringing back death penalty		0.60	0.56	0.73	0.70	0.68
Feeling that the right to show nudity and sex in films and magazines has gone too far	0.71	0.48	0.33	0.31	0.40	
Feeling that people showing less respect for authority/traditional values has gone too far	0.66	0.55		0.65	0.63	0.57
Feeling that the right to have protest marches and demonstrate has gone too far			0.60	0.53		
Feeling that equal opportunities for homosexuals have gone too far					0.63	0.66
Denial of right revolutionaries to hold meetings			0.64	0.57		
Support for tougher government measures to prevent communist influence in Britain	0.55	0.53				
Feeling that gay sexual relations are always wrong						0.66
Feeling that the police should be given more power			0.58			
Support for stopping immigration rather than solving problem of jobs and housing to improve race relations		0.51				
Feeling that government should not allow revolutionaries to teach in school			0.59			
Feeling that availability of abortion through National Health Service has gone too far	0.57					
Eigenvalue	1.83	1.93	2.14	2.21	1.96	2.28
$R^2$	0.37	0.32	0.31	0.37	0.39	0.46
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.56	0.57	0.61	0.64	0.61	0.70
$N$	818	605	1,188	1,027	728	1,631

Principal component analysis.

proved possible to construct scales for all six years using five, six, or seven questions (see Table 7.2).

A question about the desirability of stiffer sentences for criminals has been used in all of the scales, and three other questions have been used in five. They are questions about the desirability of reintroducing the death

penalty, the right to show nudity or pornography in films and magazines, and the desirability of respect for traditional values.<sup>9</sup> Although all six scales are valid at face value, they are somewhat less reliable than those for economic liberalism/conservatism. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranges from 0.57 in 1979 to 0.70 in 1997, and high scores indicate authoritarianism.

### 7.3. HAS THE RELATION BETWEEN CLASS AND VOTING DECREASED?

We apply the same three indices as Nieuwbeerta (1996) to measure the strength of the relation between class and voting in Britain for the period 1974–1997. The simplest and traditionally most widely used is the Alford index, computed by subtracting the percentage of people in nonmanual occupations (EGP classes I, II, III, and IV) who vote for left-wing parties from the percentage of manual workers (EGP classes V, VI, and VII) who vote for them. Then there are log odds ratios to correct for overall changes in the popularity of left-wing or right-wing parties that affect the values of Alford indices. We follow Nieuwbeerta (1995:41) in calling them *Thomsen indices*. The Thomsen index is the natural logarithm of the outcome of the division of the odds of manual workers voting for a left-wing party rather than a right-wing one by the odds of nonmanual workers doing so. Last, there is the *kappa index*, the standard deviation of the six log odds ratios produced by the application of the nondichotomized sevenfold EGP class schema. The kappa index thus quantifies the magnitude of the differences in voting behavior between the seven EGP classes.

Figures 7.1 and 7.2 confirm that the Alford and Thomsen indices, both based on the distinction between manual and nonmanual classes, produce substantially identical findings. They both point out that the relation between class and voting declined between 1974 and 1987, sharply increased suddenly in 1992, and then started to decline again.

The kappa index produces a somewhat different pattern, however (Fig. 7.3). It declined between 1974 and 1983 and then hardly changed after that. Although it also suggests an overall decline in class voting as it is conventionally and invalidly measured, the trend produced by the kappa index is clearly weaker. It is consequently substantially less supportive of the claim that the relation between class and voting has declined. It is important to stop and think for a moment about this.

What causes this difference? Which of the two trends indicates the “real” change in the relation between class and voting? Goldthorpe associates the manual-nonmanual distinction that underlies the Alford and Thomsen indices with outdated Marxist class theory and considers criticizing the latter on the basis of a decline in the former “flogging a very dead horse” (2001:111). He instead advocates “[attending] to the analytical

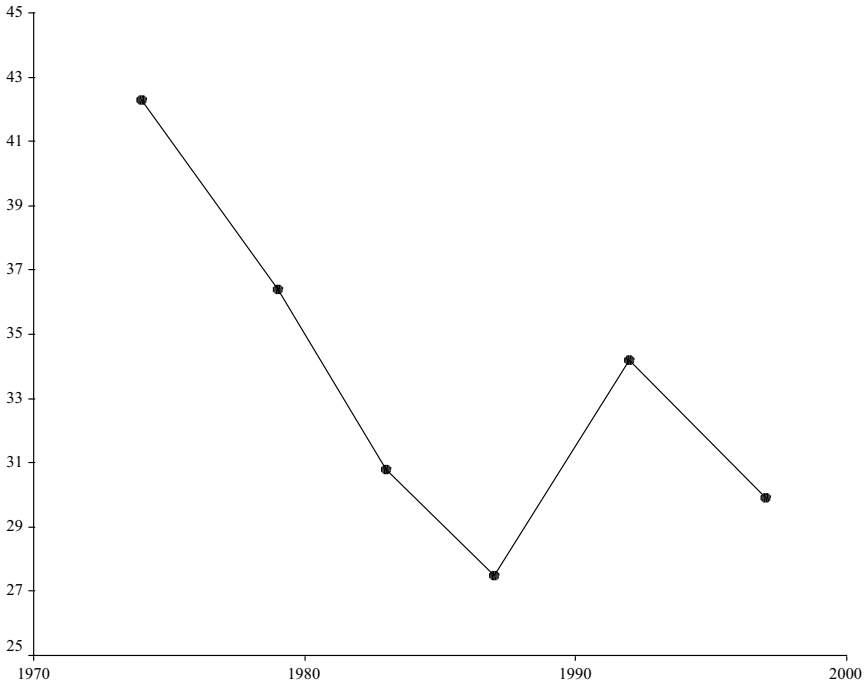


Figure 7.1 Change in the Alford index in Britain (1974–1997).

developments that are required if the relationships that actually do prevail . . . are to be more profitably examined” (2001:111–12), that is, constructing a latter-day class theory based upon bivariate relations between a more detailed class schema and voting behavior. This theoretical strategy seems insufficiently critical, however, because cultural voting of higher middle-class professionals for leftist parties and of the working class for rightist parties is then easily misinterpreted as a new pattern of “class” voting.

We feel that trends produced by the kappa index—easily tending toward “trendless fluctuation” rather than a decline in class voting—need not be taken very seriously, because radically different voting patterns may produce the same kappa index value. Let us say we compare class voting in two years separated by half a century, and let us say the kappa index has an identical value for these two years. This might mean almost anything. It might indeed mean the relation between class and voting has not changed at all in fifty years. But it might also mean the manual classes were far more likely to vote for left-wing parties in the first year, whereas

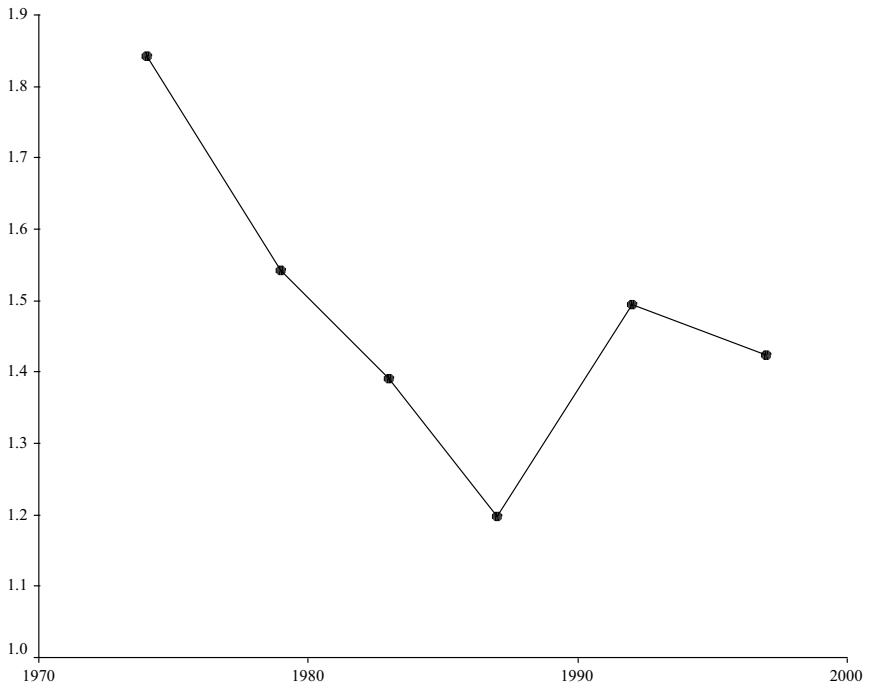


Figure 7.2 Change in the Thomsen index in Britain (1974–1997).

half a century later this pattern is radically reversed, with manual classes voting for right-wing parties and nonmanual classes voting for left-wing parties. Or indeed, any other change might have occurred, as long as the magnitude of the differences between the seven EGP classes remains unchanged so that the same standard deviation is found. In short, the kappa index overlooks the nature or direction of the voting differences between the seven EGP classes (see also Clark 2001).

Thus it might well be statistically sophisticated, but the kappa index is embarrassingly naive from a theoretical point of view. It is another example of how statistical sophistication is pursued at the expense of theoretical significance. It obscures the very distinction the whole debate is about, that between left-voting manual classes and right-voting nonmanual ones. We should thus reject the kappa index as another monstrosity produced by the belief that using more advanced statistical methods in itself yields more valid research findings and base our conclusions on the changes in the Alford and Thomsen indices instead. They both demonstrate that the preliminary question addressed in this section can be frankly answered in



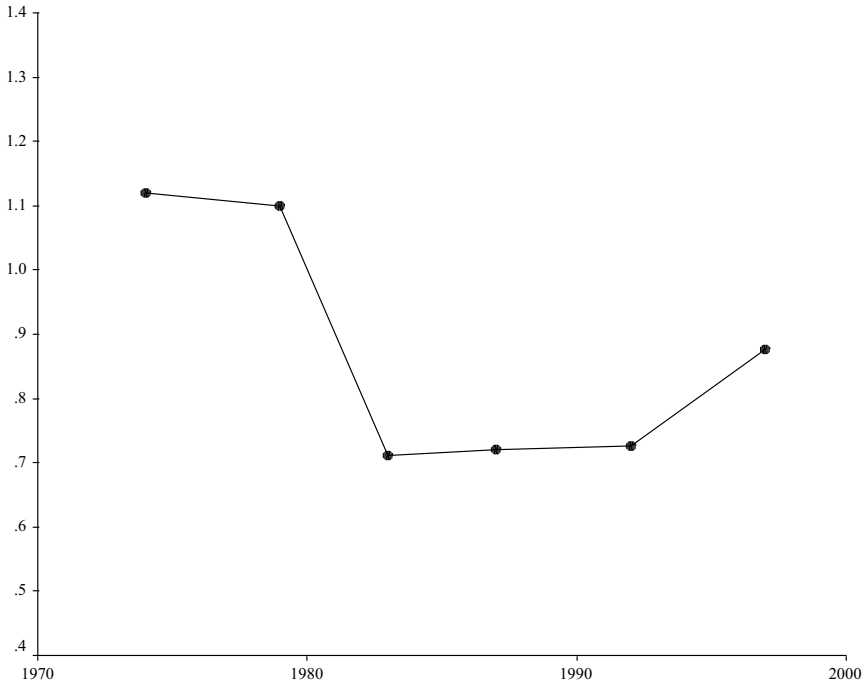


Figure 7.3 Change in the kappa index in Britain (1974–1997).

the affirmative: yes, the overall pattern is of a declining relation between class and voting, although this decline has not proceeded smoothly, as its sharp increase in 1992 illustrates.

#### 7.4. BUT HAS CLASS VOTING DECLINED TOO?

##### 7.4.1. Introduction

Now what does this overall declining trend mean? Does it really signify a decline in class voting? Or does it indicate an increase in cultural voting? Or did the two processes occur at the same time? And what should we make of the sudden rise in the relation between class and voting in 1992? To what extent does it indicate an increase in class voting or a breakdown of cultural voting? These questions can only be answered by applying the theoretical distinction between class voting and cultural voting as it is developed in Chapter 6.

Table 7.3 Authoritarianism/libertarianism explained by EGP class and cultural capital

EGP class	1974	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997
Class I	0.17**	0.01	0.05	0.03	-0.02	-0.11
Class II	0.10	0.03	0.03	0.06	-0.07	-0.02
Class III	0.11*	0.10	0.03	-0.09	-0.02	-0.05
Class IV	0.13**	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.04
Class V	0.01	-0.04	-0.02	-0.06	0.06	0.03
Class VI	-0.04	-0.05	0.02	-0.08	-0.01	0.02
Class VII	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
Cultural capital	-0.25***	-0.34***	-0.26***	-0.39***	-0.30***	-0.25***
$R^2$	0.06	0.11	0.06	0.14	0.12	0.12
$N$	592	484	757	756	549	487

Regression analyses,  $\beta$ s.

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$

Ref. = reference category (not included in the analysis).

#### 7.4.2. Working-Class Authoritarianism?

We first attempt to determine whether alleged working-class authoritarianism is produced by limited cultural capital rather than a weak economic position in Britain as well. This issue has been addressed with simple OLS regressions for all six years, with authoritarianism as the dependent variable and the cultural capital scale and six EGP class dummies as the independent ones (Table 7.3).

Cultural capital strongly and consistently increases libertarianism in all six years. With the exception of the first year, none of the six class dummies have any effect on authoritarianism if cultural capital is held constant. Moreover, the class effects in 1974 indicate that, keeping cultural capital constant, the nonmanual classes I, II, III, and IV are *more* rather than *less* authoritarian than the manual classes V, VI, and VII. As this is a reversal of the customary pattern of an authoritarian working class and a libertarian middle class, these class effects do not keep us from concluding that in Britain as well, working-class authoritarianism is not class-induced, but results from limited cultural capital (cf. Chapter 2).

#### 7.4.3. Statistical Method

Now that we know working-class authoritarianism is a misnomer for authoritarianism accompanying limited cultural capital in Britain as well, our further analysis can be significantly simplified. After all, to the extent

Table 7.4 Economic liberalism/conservatism explained by EGP class

EGP class	1974	1979	1983	1987	1992	1997
Class I	-0.93***	-0.71***	-1.00***	-1.14***	-1.02***	-0.51***
Class II	-0.52**	-0.74***	-0.69***	-0.61***	-0.70***	-0.45***
Class III	-0.56***	0.33	-0.71***	-0.34*	-0.82***	-0.23
Class IV	-1.17***	-1.12***	-1.02***	-0.76***	-0.88***	-0.43***
Class V	-0.52**	-0.29	-0.43**	-0.11	-0.16	-0.07
Class VI	0.10	0.05	-0.07	0.02	-0.21	0.07
Class VII	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
R <sup>2</sup>	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.16	0.13	0.12
N	599	486	757	758	461	497

Regression analyses, unstandardized regression coefficients.

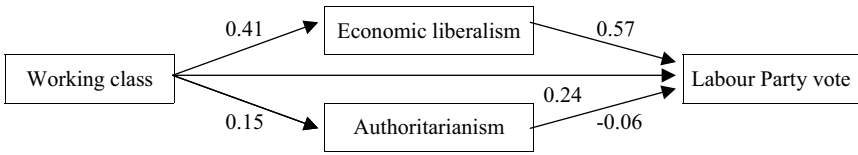
\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Ref. = reference category (not included in the analysis).

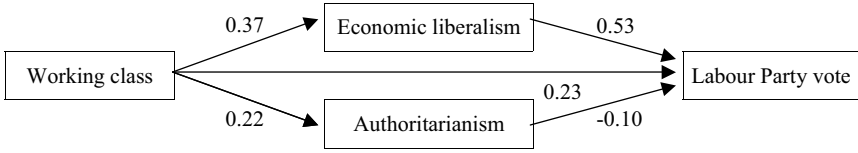
that it contaminates conventionally conceptualized class voting, cultural voting can now simply be operationalized as the total indirect effect via authoritarianism of six EGP class dummies on voting behavior, and class voting can be operationalized as the sum of their total direct effect on the vote and their total indirect effect via economic liberalism/conservatism.<sup>10</sup>

Avoiding the pitfalls of the kappa index mentioned above means defending two assumptions that underlie this operationalization of class voting. The first is that the manual classes are more rather than less inclined to vote for the Labour Party than the nonmanual classes, as has already been confirmed above (Figs. 7.1 and 7.2). The second is that the manual classes are more rather than less economically liberal than the nonmanual classes, which is not problematic either. Its validity is borne out by six preparatory regression analyses used to construct sheaf coefficients that enable us to introduce class as a single variable in our analyses (see Table 7.4).<sup>11</sup>

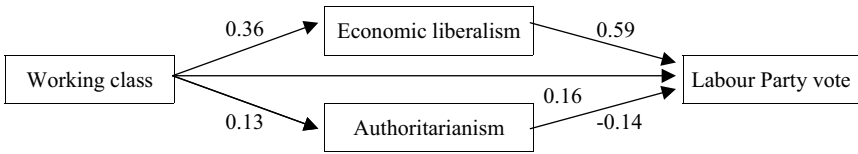
Although it is not really permissible to use OLS regression if the dependent variable is dichotomous, we do so nonetheless because there are no straightforward alternatives enabling us to present our findings in a reader-friendly fashion. With logistic regression, the preferred method with this type of dependent variable, path models cannot be produced in any straightforward way, and we certainly do not want to bother the reader with a complex method such as LISREL, with its (Generally) Weighted Least-Squares algorithm (cf. Houtman and Mascini 2002). We have checked to see if alternative statistical methods produce substantially different findings, but they do not.



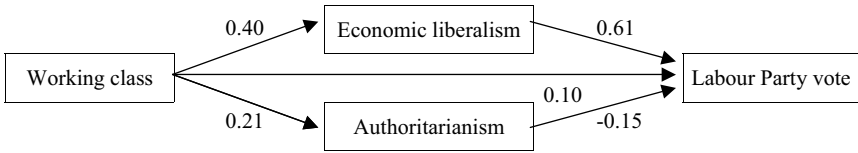
Class voting and cultural voting in 1974 ( $R^2 = 0.51$ ).



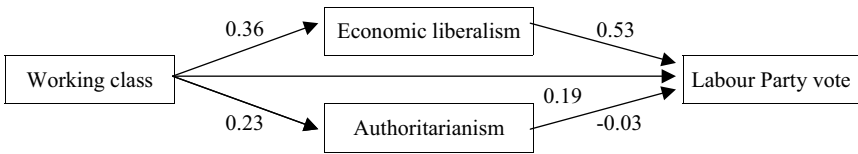
Class voting and cultural voting in 1979 ( $R^2 = 0.44$ ).



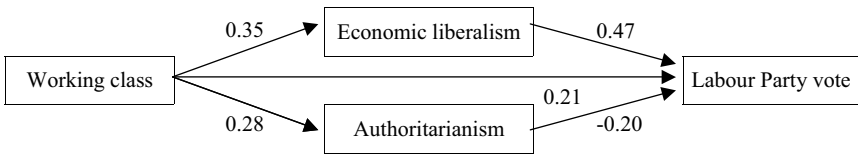
Class voting and cultural voting in 1983 ( $R^2 = 0.48$ ).



Class voting and cultural voting in 1987 ( $R^2 = 0.47$ ).



Class voting and cultural voting in 1992 ( $R^2 = 0.38$ ).



Class voting and cultural voting in 1997 ( $R^2 = 0.35$ ).

Figure 7.4 Class voting and cultural voting in Britain (1974–1997).

#### 7.4.4. Decomposing the Relation between Class and Voting: Class Voting and Cultural Voting

The path models in Figure 7.4 provide us with the raw material needed to study the degree to which the declining relation between class and voting underestimates the real decline in class voting because of the unacknowledged increase in cultural voting built into it.

Table 7.5 contains the same information as Figure 7.4, in a condensed and theoretically more easily interpretable fashion. It presents the changes in the relation between class and voting and its two opposite constituent parts that determine the strength of the relation between class and voting as their net balance. Table 7.5 thus enables us to assess the degree to which the decomposition of the relation between class and voting into actual class voting and cultural voting produces substantially different findings on the development of class voting.

As for the relation between class and voting, the pattern is of course similar to that observed by means of the Alford and Thomsen indices, although it is now measured as the multiple determination coefficient  $R$  as produced by a regression analysis with voting behavior explained on the basis of six EGP class dummies. A similar pattern of decline is found for class voting proper, whereas levels of cultural voting have increased.

What substantial conclusions do these patterns suggest? It is evident that the findings based on our valid conceptualization of class voting are not dramatically different from those produced by the relation between class and voting. We can thus conclude that in 1974–1997, class voting did indeed decline in Britain. It would nevertheless be erroneous to conclude that it does not make any difference whether the relation between class and voting or the more valid conceptualization proposed here is applied. There are three reasons why this is the case.

First, as already noted in Chapter 6, the relation between class and voting underestimates levels of class voting. Class voting is stronger for all six years than the relation between class and voting suggests.

Second, and more important, this underestimation increases over the years as an inevitable byproduct of increasing levels of cultural voting. In 1974–1997 class voting declined less than the decline in the relation between class and voting suggests. It declined by about 20 percent from 0.48 in 1974 to 0.38 in 1997 as compared with more than 30 percent from 0.47 in 1974 to 0.32 in 1997. Although the valid and invalid operationalizations of class voting both lead to the correct conclusion that levels of class voting declined, the latter gives an overly dramatic picture of this process.

Third, the 1992 findings are a good example of the theoretical shortcomings of the relation between class and voting as an operationalization

Table 7.5 Changes in "class" voting as conventionally measured, actual class voting, and cultural voting

Year	"Class" voting <sup>1</sup>	Class voting <sup>2</sup>	Cultural voting <sup>3</sup>
1974	0.47	0.48	-0.01
1979	0.41	0.43	-0.02
1983	0.36	0.38	-0.02
1987	0.31	0.34	-0.03
1992	0.37	0.38	-0.01
1997	0.32	0.38	-0.06

<sup>1</sup>Direct effect of EGP class on voting (i.e. class voting as conventionally and invalidly conceptualized).

<sup>2</sup>Direct effect of EGP class plus indirect effect via economic liberalism/conservatism on voting.

<sup>3</sup>Indirect effect of EGP class (in fact: cultural capital) via authoritarianism/libertarianism on voting.

of class voting. They suggest a peak in class voting in this year, but in fact the actual level of class voting is identical to that in 1997 (i.e., 0.38). What is different, however, is that cultural voting was almost nonexistent in 1992 and relatively strong in 1997. The interesting case of the British election year 1992 is thus a good example of how the traditional reliance on the bivariate relation between class and voting to measure levels of class voting yields invalid conclusions. Compared with the election year 1997, it is not a high level of class voting that characterizes the election year 1992, as would conventionally be concluded, but an almost complete breakdown of cultural voting (Table 7.5).

How and why did this happen? What seems decisive is that it was the first post-Thatcher election. Mrs. Thatcher's government had successfully reduced the public sector, subjected numerous institutional sectors to the lash of the free market, and significantly curtailed trade union power. But by 1992 the economy had plunged into a serious recession, with levels of unemployment rising again toward the same high levels as existed when Mrs. Thatcher had come to power ten years earlier. No wonder Butler and Kavanagh rightly observe that the "key issue of the 1992 election was Margaret Thatcher's heritage, consisting of mainly economic issues" (1992:267).

It seems undeniable that these exceptional economic circumstances account for the sharp rise in the relation between class and voting in 1992. It does not seem to have been caused by a striking salience of economic issues, however, but by a limited salience of cultural issues, yielding a complete breakdown of cultural voting rather than an increase in class

voting. In this sense the 1992 elections in Britain seem to mirror the French and American elections of the late 1960s and early 1970s discussed in Chapter 6. Whereas the latter were characterized by cultural voting caused by the salience of cultural issues, a complete absence of cultural voting and the limited salience of cultural issues typify the former.

### 7.5. THE DECLINE IN CLASS VOTING AND THE SILENT REVOLUTION

How do our findings relate to Inglehart's claim that the spread of postmaterialist values increasingly undermines the traditional pattern of a working class voting for left-wing parties and a middle class voting for right-wing parties? We feel the changing voting motivations we have found across the period 1974–1997 generally dovetail well with his ideas. The decline in the ratio of economic to cultural voting motivations is a useful illustration. It has simply been calculated by dividing the beta for economic liberalism/conservatism by the one for authoritarianism/libertarianism for all six years (Fig. 7.4). This ratio thus indicates the extent to which voting is economically or materialistically rather than culturally or postmaterialistically driven. Figure 7.5 demonstrates that across the period studied here, voting became far less economically and more culturally motivated in Britain—with 1992 as the major exception to this trend, of course. Inasmuch as this is precisely the pattern of change predicted by Inglehart, it is evident that our findings confirm his ideas. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that Inglehart's position does not exhibit any serious theoretical shortcomings. As we see it, there are three of them.

First, and we feel this is more than mere hairsplitting, Inglehart's claim that "Western politics is coming to polarize according to social class less and less, and according to values more and more" (1987:1298) introduces a false distinction between class voting and voting according to values. After all, class voting is largely also voting according to values—be they values of a type fundamentally different type from those emphasized by Inglehart: economic liberalism/conservatism rather than authoritarianism/libertarianism (or, if one insists, materialism/postmaterialism). The idea that class-bound values pertaining to a fair distribution of society's wealth (i.e., economic liberalism/conservatism) drive voting behavior is the most fundamental assumption of the class approach to politics. Class voting is also voting according to values, or so we can conclude, and one can only wonder what else it could possibly be.<sup>12</sup>

Second, Inglehart's concoction of issue salience and authoritarianism/libertarianism in his index for materialism/postmaterialism is theoretically

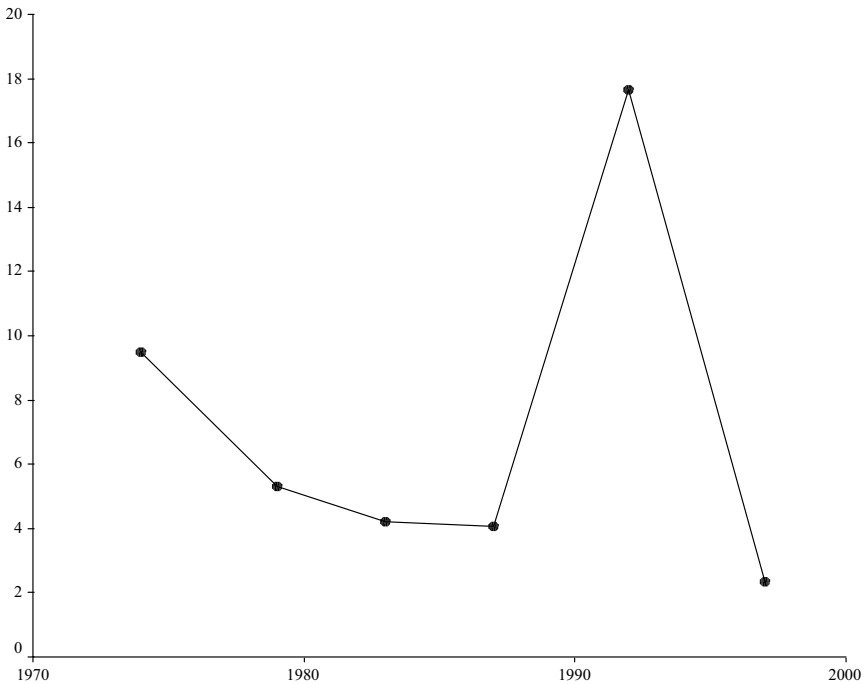


Figure 7.5 Change in the ratio of economic and cultural voting motivations (1974–1997).

unsatisfactory and obscures what is actually going on. Increasing levels of libertarianism among the public at large—the core of his thesis of the Silent Revolution—do not even have to occur for the traditional relation between class and voting to be undermined by voting according to authoritarianism/libertarianism. Not even a stronger increase in libertarianism among the middle class as compared with the working class is required for this to happen. A general increase in authoritarianism, affecting the working class more than the middle class, might also produce a decline in the relation between class and voting. Whether such a decline actually occurs depends, however, on whether cultural issues become more salient than economic issues. This complex interplay of changing values and altering patterns of issue salience is obscured and cannot be studied as long as authoritarianism/libertarianism and materialism/nonmaterialism remain mixed up in Inglehart's index of alleged postmaterialism.

Third, Inglehart fails to theorize the empirical relation between class and authoritarianism/libertarianism in a satisfactory way. This produces



an ambiguity that is directly relevant for the theoretical bearings of empirical research. Although Inglehart denies that class determines those values, he nevertheless holds that their spread in the middle class undermines class voting. A decline in the relation between class and voting can only be interpreted as such, however, if authoritarianism/libertarianism, like economic liberalism/conservatism, can actually be explained by class. If middle-class libertarianism is merely a coincidental byproduct of a nonclass factor related to class, such as formative affluence (Inglehart) or cultural capital (this study), this decline merely denotes an increase in a nonclass type of voting that should be statistically controlled for to validly measure the change in class voting.<sup>13</sup> In short, Inglehart's correct claim that postmaterialism is not caused by class cannot be reconciled in a theoretically satisfactory way with his false claim that rising middle-class levels of postmaterialism undermine class voting.

Although our findings confirm Inglehart's theory that cultural issues have come to play a more important role in voting behavior and that this has been at the expense of economic issues, this does not necessarily mean his theory has no shortcomings. To increase theoretical clarity, it seems advisable to focus in future research on comparing a few strategically selected elections and studying them in depth rather than putting too much faith in accumulating survey data from as many different years and countries as we can get our hands on. By means of in-depth case studies, contextual data from a variety of sources should be combined with survey data that allow for a decomposition of Inglehart's postmaterialism index into issue salience (materialism/nonmaterialism) and authoritarianism/libertarianism. Addressing issue salience simultaneously at the levels of the general political climate and individual voters, studies of this type do not simply treat atypical elections as statistical outliers, in other words, as deviant cases that only weaken the observed general pattern, but as interesting cases in themselves that might significantly enhance our theoretical understanding.<sup>14</sup>

## 7.6. THE IRONIES OF "MARXISM LITE"

We would like to close this final empirical chapter by going back to the beginning of Chapter 2, which opens with an observation by Scott that sociologists are often criticized for reducing everything to class. The fact that he feels there is some truth to this (1996:1) can undoubtedly be explained in part by Scott's experiences in British sociology. Class analysis plays a far more important role there than anywhere else, partly because Britain has always been and still is more of a class society than other Western countries. The contrast is especially sharp with the United States,

about which Werner Sombart formulated his classic question almost a century ago: *Warum gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten keinen Sozialismus?* (1906). The preface to Erik Wright's book *Classes* (1985) underscores the enormous difference between the two countries. It describes the alienation of a young American neo-Marxist sociologist who finds himself a rising academic star in a society with no socialist tradition or workers' movement to speak of.

The idea that, in principle, values and modes of behavior can all be explained on the basis of class is nonetheless not exclusively British. It is in fact a widely accepted assumption in modern sociology's neopositivist mainstream. This is illustrated by the fact that there is hardly any agreed upon definition of class in sociology, and, more often than not, it is consequently used in empirical studies without any coherent theoretical meaning or context. Let us clarify these points in the remainder of this final empirical chapter.

The utter vagueness of the concept of class in everyday sociological language and empirical studies is evident from the fact that educational categories or categories that result from splitting up an occupational status scale are also referred to as if they were classes. There are examples of this in Chapters 2 and 3 on the theory pertaining to the authoritarianism of the working class. In research practice, class is thus frequently treated as interchangeable with socioeconomic status, occupational status, or occupational prestige.<sup>15</sup>

Now this is not a new complaint. Fifteen years ago, Kelley and McAllister heaved the following sigh: "Class is . . . indiscriminately applied to concepts with diverse meanings, varied intellectual origins, and different empirical referents" (1985:384). In their view, whether a theoretical distinction should be drawn between occupational status and class is a question ordinarily overlooked in sociological research practice: "Occupational status is central to the status conception of class, but its theoretical meaning is uncertain—not so much a matter of debate as of somewhat embarrassed silence. We know it when we see it, we have a fair idea of how to measure it, but precisely what it is we are not quite sure. It has to do with prestige, income, education, and the socioeconomic success of one's children; that much is agreed" (Kelley and McAllister 1985:390). And thirty years ago, after inspecting dozens of British studies, Weinberg and Lyons drew the same conclusion: "The variety of criteria used for class definition defy all attempts to achieve any degree of comparability between the research findings. Of the eighteen studies which define status, nine employed the same criteria elsewhere utilized in the definition of class and another three studies associated status directly with class" (1972:56).

If sociologists include something in their statistical analysis that they call "class," it is only rarely something that is carefully conceptualized and operationalized within a coherent theoretical context. The two class

concepts developed by Erik Wright (1979, 1985) in an effort to counter the familiar reproach that contemporary societies cannot be put onto the procrustean bed of the classic Marxist two-class model are the only exceptions we are aware of. They have both been constructed within the context of a strikingly clear and systematic reconstruction of Marx's classic ideas. Wright's main ambition was and still is to demonstrate the explanatory power of a Marxist theoretical framework for contemporary social issues. The neopositivist methodology he uses for this, sometimes mockingly referred to as "multivariate Marxism" (Wright 1989:73), makes him a bizarre but nonetheless influential member of the Marxist tribe.

It is tempting to assume that the high quality of his work results in part from the context in which it is conducted. After all, if one wants to convince a society without a socialist tradition of the explanatory power of Marxist social theory, or so we might assume, one cannot make do with intuitive assumptions and tenuous operationalizations. Analogously, the virtual absence of any careful conceptualization in the case of the EGP class schema might well be attributable to its British genesis.<sup>16</sup> To the British, the idea that class analysis is indispensable to a proper understanding of social life is perhaps so evident and acceptable that it threatens the quality of scientific research on this topic.

The tendency to isolate class variables from their theoretical context underscores the dominance of the idea that class can ultimately explain all sorts of values and modes of behavior. More or less tenuous operationalizations of class are indiscriminately linked to whatever happens to be at hand. This boils down to the use of what is referred to above as a black box with some of its contents influencing some values or types of behavior and other contents influencing others. The question of whether all of these statistical black-box effects can actually be interpreted as real class effects is typically not even posed at all.

The criticism expressed by Middendorp and Meloen (1990) of an analysis by Dekker and Ester (1987) is a good example (cf. Chapter 2). Dekker and Ester demonstrate that class can not explain authoritarianism if a carefully conceptualized and operationalized class concept is used. Middendorp and Meloen refute this conclusion because in their opinion neither of the class concepts used is valid. And why aren't they valid? Because they are both relatively weakly and not linearly related to "traditional class indicators such as educational level" (Middendorp and Meloen 1990:258). Working from the conviction that class can explain authoritarianism, Middendorp and Meloen stick to the idea that education can be nothing but a class indicator. It is odd, however, that they should fail to devote any attention at all to the fact that income—the second traditional class indicator they mention—has no effect on authoritarianism whatsoever. Or is it? In fact it is not odd at all, because seriously exploring the theoretical conse-

quences of the latter finding would make working-class authoritarianism quickly melt into thin air, as we have seen in Chapter 2. Their refusal to consider this possibility thus once again demonstrates how automatically the idea is taken for granted that in principle everything can be explained by class. In reality, the very fact that, like income but unlike education, Wright's two class concepts—because they are what is criticized by Middendorp and Meloen—barely affect authoritarianism proves their validity rather than undermining it.

In short, the willingness on the part of so many sociologists to include a black box of "class" in their statistical analyses serves to prove the deeply rooted conviction in modern sociology that all sorts of values and modes of behavior can ultimately be explained by class. But does this willingness lead to the desired result of an optimal explanatory power for everything? This ambition is mercilessly thwarted by research into class voting, or so we can conclude. It has the reverse outcome, since it yields a systematic and increasing underestimation of the relevance of class to voting behavior. In quite an ironic way, it is the very tendency to reduce everything to class that is responsible for today's overly dramatic and exaggerated claims of the death of class.

Those who want to demonstrate the relevance of class analysis to an understanding of contemporary politics need to pay the price and recognize that no theory—not even class theory—can explain everything by itself. Although this price is probably too high for orthodox Marxists, who Inglehart compares to fundamentalist Christians in the quote introducing this chapter, it should be paid by sociology's neopositivist mainstream. If a simultaneous decline in class voting and increase in cultural voting join to corrode the traditional relation between class and voting, it is not a good idea to surrender to class theory or to any cultural type of theory. Doing so makes half of what is going on in contemporary politics invisible.

## NOTES

1. In restricting our analysis to male respondents we are following Nieuwbeerta (1995), who rightly points out that including women requires a far more complex operationalization of class. These complexities would depart too openly from this chapter's theoretical purposes (e.g., De Graaf and Heath 1992; Sørensen 1994).

2. Recoding occupational titles entails defining a key variable consisting of occupational title and employment status and linking this key variable to the conversion tables Prandy (1992, 1997) has published on the internet.

3. The following occupations have been classified as social or cultural: architects, town and traffic planners, life science and health professionals, nursing and midwifery professionals, teaching professionals, education methods specialists, school inspectors, legal professionals, librarians and information professionals,

social science and humanities professionals, social work professionals, writers, journalists, creative or performing artists, and entertainment and sports professionals.

4. Although the two types of occupational status are obviously strongly correlated, they are definitely not identical. Kalmijn reports a correlation of 0.74 for the United States (1994:430), and De Graaf and Kalmijn find a correlation of 0.71 for the Netherlands (2001:57). One can thus explain only about half the variance of the other.

5. Harry Ganzeboom, personal communication, March 6, 2002.

6. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the six years is 0.73 (1974), 0.75 (1979), 0.73 (1983), 0.76 (1987), 0.76 (1992), and 0.72 (1997).

7. With the Liberal votes including those for the SDP in the 1983 and 1987 elections and those for the Liberal Democrats in 1992 and 1997, they account for 18.0 percent (1974), 13.8 percent (1979), 24.8 percent (1983), 23.5 percent (1987), 17.1 percent (1992), and 17.3 percent (1997) of the British votes.

8. Although there are minor changes in the wording of the questions as well as the number of response categories across the years, we feel this is unlikely to substantially affect our findings. "Don't know" are included as a middle value and "not answered" is excluded.

9. See Note 8.

10. This operationalization of class voting is similar to the one used by Weakliem and Heath (1994), although they do not control for cultural voting. Note that, keeping cultural voting constant, this operationalization yields an overestimation rather than an underestimation of class voting. It assumes that any remaining direct class effect is due to logic compatible with class analysis and is based on economic motivations or interests other than economic liberalism/conservatism, whatever they might be (cf. Note 12, this chapter). On the other hand, the operationalization of cultural voting used here taps only part of it. It does not refer to the total effect of cultural capital on voting via authoritarianism/libertarianism, but only to the part also captured by the relation between class and voting.

11. See Chapter 6, Note 3, for a brief explanation on sheaf coefficients.

12. It is misguided for the same reason to assume that class voting has been increasingly replaced by issue voting. The distribution of wealth and income that economic liberalism/conservatism refers to is, of course, also a political issue. Although direct class effects on voting and indirect effects via economic liberalism/conservatism can be classified as class voting (e.g., Weakliem and Heath 1994), it is attractive to systematically distinguish these two types of effects. The indirect class effects are value driven, whereas direct class effects in all likelihood reflect traditional class identities. Following Max Weber's classical terminology, we might thus introduce a distinction between value-rational class voting and traditional class voting (1978 [1921]:24–26). Consistent with contemporary theories of detraditionalization (Heelas 1995) and reflexive modernization (Beck 1992, Beck et al. 1994), traditional class voting seems to have been increasingly replaced by value-rational class voting. The reader is referred to Franklin (1985:128–52) and especially to Middendorp's ideas and findings on what he calls "the ideologization of the vote" (1991:203–33).

13. This is, of course, exactly what we have done in Chapter 6 and the present chapter.

14. The elections held in the Netherlands in May 2002 seem to be a very interesting case. They yielded a landslide victory for the Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF), a party founded only a few months earlier by populist and antiestablishment politician Pim Fortuyn, who was assassinated shortly before the elections. Given the LPF's enormous support among the working class and the party's authoritarian emphasis on issues such as law and order and the restriction of immigration, they might indeed have been the first national elections in the Netherlands where the working class voted less leftist than the middle class.

15. This is undoubtedly largely because they are strongly related. Although it doesn't mean very much, since they treat EGP class as the nominal variable it allegedly is, Scheepers et al. demonstrate that the relation ( $\eta$ ) between EGP class and occupational prestige according to Sixma and Ultee (1983) is no less than 0.85 (1989:340). It is evident from the information provided by Goldthorpe (1980:39–42), however, that collapsing the EGP class schema into a manual-non-manual distinction, as we have done in this chapter, yields a very strong relation with the Hope-Goldthorpe Scale (Goldthorpe and Hope 1974) that ranks them according to their "general desirability." Notwithstanding its roots in the radically different theoretical tradition of conflict sociology, the class concept thus strongly overlaps with functionalist concepts such as occupational prestige, occupational status, or socioeconomic status in empirical research.

16. There are no satisfactory theoretical arguments underlying the EGP class schema. This alleged "neo-Weberian" classification views classes as "occupational categories whose members would appear . . . to be typically comparable, on the one hand, in terms of their sources and levels of income, their degree of economic security and chances of economic advancement, and on the other, in their location within systems of authority and control governing the process of production in which they are engaged, and hence their degree of autonomy in performing their work-tasks and roles" (Goldthorpe 1980:39; Erikson et al. 1979, 1982, 1983). Occupational categories are thus grouped together here if they are characterized by the same kind of market and work situation. The latter distinction is taken from Lockwood's *The Blackcoated Worker* (1989 [1958]).

This is unsatisfactory because Lockwood's book does not justify in any way the idea that occupational categories that are similar in these two senses can be grouped together as a class. Not only does Lockwood conceive of the work situation in a very different way than Goldthorpe et al. (1989 [1958]:71–96); his study does not even justify basing a Weberian class schema on differences among occupations according to their market and work situation in the first place. After all, Weber draws class distinctions on the grounds of market situation differences and not on the grounds of work situation differences (Weber 1982 [1921]). In addition, Lockwood repeatedly contradicts himself when he links the distinction between market situation, work situation, and status situation to Weber's ideas on the distinction between classes and status groups. He first holds that in grouping work situation and market situation together as class, he is following Marx rather than Weber: "'Market situation' and 'work situation' comprise what Marx essentially

understood as 'class position'" (1989 [1958]:16). He then suggests quite the opposite in a footnote: "The distinction between 'class' ('market' and 'work situation') and 'status' ('status situation') is made by Max Weber" (1989 [1958]:16). In addition, he says in the "Introduction" to his book that he views class as consisting not of two but of three factors: market situation, work situation and status situation (!) (1989 [1958]:15), whereas in the "Conclusion" he sticks to the distinction between market situation and work situation, "the basic elements of the traditional concept of 'class'" on the one hand and, making a reference to Weber, the status situation on the other (1989 [1958]:201–02).

In short, a systematic theoretical treatment is conspicuously absent from Lockwood's work. He answers neither the question why, in addition to the market situation, the work situation should be considered a feature of class, nor why it is wise to partly rely on occupational titles in the operationalization. In short, conceiving of classes as occupational categories with "typically comparable" market and work situations cannot be justified by referring to Lockwood's *The Blackcoated Worker* and causes theoretical and methodological problems (see Section 7.4.4). The course of affairs in the operationalization—assigning occupational categories to classes—is equally unsatisfactory. It is unclear how Goldthorpe et al. have determined the market and work situations of the occupational categories. All the information available is that thirty-six occupational categories, taken from the Hope-Goldthorpe Scale, which ranks them according to their "general desirability" (Goldthorpe and Hope 1974), are classified into classes distinguished according to market situation and work situation on the grounds of "available evidence" (Goldthorpe 1980:39).

In short, there is good reason to wonder why it is that the EGP class schema, based for no apparent reason and without any theoretical context to speak of on unknown British data from three decades ago, is currently praised as being useful for international comparative studies. Is it because we are dealing here with a good operationalization of class? Or might it be because the EGP class schema can be relatively simply constructed when researchers work with older data files, since information on occupation and a few basic additional variables are almost always available, and because by effectively mixing class and cultural capital it can "explain" a wide range of values and modes of behavior? We think the reader can guess what our answer would be.

## 8

# Conclusion: “Marxism Lite” and Its Blind Spot for Culture

The concept of “culture” was not coined until the eighteenth century. There was nothing before in the learned language . . . which even remotely resembled the complex world-view which the word “culture” attempts to capture.

—Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters*

### 8.1. INTRODUCTION

Can authoritarianism/libertarianism be explained by class or economic background, as the theories formulated by Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart suggest? This is the question this book started with. It should be clear to the reader by now that the answer cannot be affirmative. And has voting behavior indeed become less and less dependent on class in recent years? This second question addressed in this book can be answered affirmatively, although the decline in class voting has been less dramatic than typically assumed.

So what remains to be done in this closing chapter? First, the most important findings still remain to be summarized and the common shortcomings of the three refuted theories revealed (Section 8.2). The second chore for this final chapter is to demonstrate the problematic nature of the widely accepted theoretical assumptions that these three theories are based upon. It is, after all, to the credit of Thomas Kuhn (1970 [1962]) and Alvin Gouldner (1970) that they note that the acceptance or rejection of scientific theories cannot simply be comprehended from the extent to which they are confirmed by research findings. If research findings contradict what we believe, think, or feel we know, that is, our deeply rooted ideas on what the world is all about, something quite different often occurs. Then it is not so much our theories that are rejected, but the research findings themselves.<sup>1</sup>



Although the findings reported in this book largely coincide with those of other studies on this issue, and indeed those of Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart themselves, the different theoretical implications I draw from them will nonetheless not be accepted without further ado, since there are three assumptions deeply engrained in sociology that counter any such thing. It is thus important to demonstrate in a more extensive and direct fashion than was feasible in the previous chapters why these assumptions are problematic and constitute the major causes of the observed theoretical problems. What conclusions can be drawn at a more general theoretical level from the refutation of these theories? I think there are three.

The first is that the fixation on the role of education in the distribution of life chances has made sociologists blind to its cultural significance (Section 8.3). The second is that to make progress in this field of research, it is necessary to sever the relation with class and social stratification (Section 8.4). The third is that the image of modernity as industrialism is overly simplistic and has put research on authoritarianism/libertarianism on the wrong track (Section 5). I think it is only right to conclude with some general comments on the direction research into authoritarianism/libertarianism would have to take to eliminate the shortcomings that have been demonstrated (Section 8.6).

## 8.2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 8.2.1. Martin Lipset and Working-Class Authoritarianism

The empirical analyses in this book start in Chapter 2 by testing Lipset's theory on working-class authoritarianism; differences of opinion on its tenability are the point of departure. The central question is what the exact meaning is of the strong negative effect of education on authoritarianism. According to some, it confirms Lipset's theory because education is an indicator of class. Others feel, however, that it contradicts this theory because education is "something else." But it remains unclear what that "something else" might be.

First I attempt to determine whether the working class is indeed more authoritarian than the other EGP classes. The resulting pattern is in keeping with Lipset's theory: more than the other EGP classes, the working class is characterized by intolerance and by a willingness to sacrifice individual liberty to maintain social order. I then demonstrate that this pattern does not justify the conclusion that authoritarianism can be explained by class. This is clear from three things.

First, like a low educational level, limited cultural participation also generates authoritarianism. Second, class indicators such as income and job insecurity do not exert any influence at all in this connection. Third,

there is precisely the opposite pattern with respect to the explanation of economic liberalism: a weak economic position leads to a preference for economic redistribution, and interest in art and culture does not play any role at all. This means authoritarianism/libertarianism can be explained by cultural capital and not by class.

The first conclusion is thus that Lipset's critics are right. Authoritarianism/libertarianism cannot be explained by class, and education is indeed indicative of "something else" here, that is, cultural capital. So there is no doubt the working class is more apt than other classes to hold authoritarian values. But this is not an explanation; it is merely a description of differences in authoritarianism/libertarianism between occupational categories that should be explained on the basis of cultural capital.

The second conclusion is that occupational categories should not be confused with class. After all, occupational categories capture class as well as cultural capital, thus obscuring the fact that they influence different types of political values by way of different mechanisms. For a valid analysis of what political values are founded on, Lipset's important distinction between economic liberalism/conservatism and authoritarianism/libertarianism thus must be supplemented by a second distinction between class and cultural capital.

### **8.2.2. Working-Class Authoritarianism According to Melvin Kohn**

The two conclusions cited above are the point of departure for the discussion on Kohn's theory on working-class authoritarianism in Chapter 3. The first question there is whether the working-class authoritarianism he observes does indeed also primarily entail an authoritarianism of the poorly educated. The second question is whether this educational effect can indeed be attributed, as Kohn claims, to limited occupational self-direction.

Even a critical inspection of Kohn's own research findings already justifies an affirmative answer to the first and a negative answer to the second question. The class effect Kohn observes is also mainly an influence of education. People with a lower educational level, or so his own study also demonstrates, are far more apt to hold authoritarian values than people with a higher level. What is more, this cannot be attributed to their limited occupational self-direction. It does play a role, but its influence is negligible compared with that of education. Because of disputable analysis decisions, however, this remains largely invisible in many of Kohn's publications. Education tends to be combined beforehand with variables such as income and occupational status, thus concealing the fact that only education exerts a decisive influence.

In the empirical analysis, I then attempt to determine whether the modest supplementary influence of occupational self-direction can be

attributed to cultural participation, which, in addition to education, is the second indicator of cultural capital. This indeed proves to be the case. If I consider the fact that limited occupational self-direction goes hand in hand with limited cultural capital, the former no longer leads to authoritarianism but the latter does. The conclusion is that Kohn's theory is untenable. Authoritarianism/libertarianism is not generated by factors at the workplace—occupational self-direction—but by a cultural factor from outside the world of work, that is, cultural capital.

### 8.2.3. Ronald Inglehart and the Silent Revolution

Based on these research findings, Inglehart's theory on the Silent Revolution is critically discussed and tested in Chapter 4. This shows how unsatisfying it is that in the past, research on postmaterialism remained isolated from research on authoritarianism. Inglehart's postmaterialism index proves to measure something completely different from what he assumes: not a value orientation "beyond materialism," but simply the libertarian opposite of authoritarianism. Why can we go on from here to conclude that Inglehart's theory that growing up in prosperity leads to an emphasis on individual liberty and self-expression is untenable?

The first striking point is that after thirty years, half a dozen books, and many more articles, Inglehart has still never tested the crucial hypothesis to be derived from his theory, that postmaterialism is mainly prevalent among people who have grown up in well-to-do families. As soon as this hypothesis is tested, as done in this chapter, it proves untenable. The postmaterialism of the well educated is not generated by the fact that they were brought up in relatively well-to-do families, as Inglehart holds. It is caused by cultural capital. What other empirical arguments does Inglehart have for the tenability of his theory? All things considered, there are only two. One is that postmaterialism is more prevalent among younger age cohorts that have grown up in a more affluent society than older ones. The other is that postmaterialism is far more prevalent in affluent Western societies than in less well-to-do, non-Western ones. However, neither of these arguments can be easily construed as confirming his theory. After all, growing up in affluence does *not* lead to postmaterialism, since people from well-to-do families do not differ in this sense from people who grow up in poor families.

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the differences between older and younger age cohorts and between affluent and poor countries should be interpreted in quite a different fashion. First, the percentage of postmaterialists in a country can be attributed to the extent to which individual liberty is protected and accepted there (cultural modernity). Since cultural

modernity is closely linked to affluence, it is easy to get the impression that affluence is the decisive variable. For two reasons, however, this is not the case. Of course, one reason is that *within* countries, there is no relation at all between affluence and postmaterialism. The other is that particularly in culturally modern societies, a high educational level is apt to be accompanied by postmaterialism (libertarianism), but this link is far weaker in more traditional societies. This is understandable because the transference of culture to new generations is a core function of education. This is why education conveys different values in different cultures, resulting in this difference between countries. This emphasizes that the influence of education on postmaterialism (libertarianism) should be interpreted in cultural terms and can not be explained on the basis of Inglehart's "materialist" theoretical logic. So his theory is also untenable.

#### 8.2.4. Implications for the Death of Class Debate

Chapters 6 and 7 examine the implications of the research findings for the death of class debate that has been going on since the early 1990s. The central question in this debate is whether the role of class in voting behavior has decreased. The findings discussed in Chapters 2 to 5 reveal that class voting is conceptualized and operationalized in an invalid way in this debate. This is why this conventional conceptualization has been replaced by one that is theoretically less naïve. It does justice to the fact that voting behavior is the resultant of at least two opposing forces. On the one hand, a weak class position leads to a preference for left-wing parties via economic liberalism (class voting). On the other, limited cultural capital leads to a preference for right-wing parties via authoritarianism (cultural voting). Voting conduct thus emerges under the influence of a cross-pressure mechanism: the working class is steered by economic liberalism generated by its weak labor market position in the direction of left-wing political parties, but at the same time its limited cultural capital steers it via authoritarianism toward right-wing parties. Precisely the opposite holds true for the middle class.

Class voting and cultural voting are currently approximately equally strong in the Netherlands, resulting in a situation where the voting behavior of the working class does not differ from that of other classes. This does not warrant, however, the conclusion that class does not affect voting behavior, as the conventional conception of class voting would suggest. In fact, class voting does occur. It is simply made invisible by its conventional operationalization. If one measures the influence of class on voting behavior in the ordinary way, it is thus underestimated because it is unintentionally combined with its opposite cultural voting, that is, the tendency

of working-class voters to vote for right-wing instead of left-wing political parties because of their limited cultural capital and the authoritarianism that accompanies it.

Whereas in the Netherlands the relation between class and voting has never been strong, Chapter 7 attempts to determine whether a decline in class voting has really occurred in a country where such a connection has been strong, such as Britain. A study of the period from 1974 to 1997 leads to the conclusion that authors who note a decline in class voting are basically correct, although their reliance on its invalid operationalization produces an exaggerated image of the process. This is caused by an increase in cultural voting that has increasingly suppressed the strength of the relation between class and voting.

### 8.2.5. Three Debatable Assumptions

Because of three logically linked assumptions the theories of Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart are untenable. The most fundamental one is that modern society is an industrial society where cultural change is *caused* by technological and economic changes accompanying industrial development, whether this entails growing prosperity (Inglehart) or a changing occupational structure (Lipset and Kohn).

Another assumption, a logical outcome of this conception of modernity, is that people's position in industrial society—their parents' wealth or class (Inglehart) or their own class (Lipset and Kohn)—shapes their values. Whatever people's parents had when they were young, whatever they themselves earn or have, or whatever role they play in socioeconomic life is thus assumed to shape what they think. "The job does mold the man," as Kohn concisely remarks (1977 [1969]:190).

This notion that class or economic background exerts a decisive influence on values underlies the third assumption, which is that education is an indicator of this. After all, again and again the fact that well-educated people attach greater importance to individual liberty and self-expression than people with a lower educational level is demonstrably erroneously interpreted as an influence of class (Lipset, Kohn) or economic background (Inglehart).

Neither Lipset nor Kohn pause at all to consider the tenability of this third assumption. Without the slightest theoretical reflection, both of them view educational level as an indicator of class or social stratification. It is to Inglehart's credit that he was one of the first to reject this practice. His simple and effective line of reasoning in this connection is similar to the one used in Chapter 2: a high educational level might well lead to libertarianism, but the fact that a high income does not simply go to show that education is not merely an indicator of class. Inglehart's observation

that the working class has become increasingly right wing in its voting behavior and the middle class increasingly left wing is equally important. The fact that he himself views education as an indicator of something economic and that the influence of class on voting behavior has decreased less than he thinks does not detract in any way from the importance of these two ideas.

Lipset also made a decisive contribution to this field of research. We should not underestimate the importance of the distinction he introduced at the end of the 1950s between two types of political values linked in different ways to class. The fact that in the end, authoritarianism/libertarianism cannot be explained by class but is a result of the cultural capital so closely linked to it, does not detract from the importance of this idea either. It merely necessitates the introduction of a supplementary distinction between class and cultural capital in political sociology.

Last, Kohn is the one who took the initiative to break open the black box of class. He refused to be satisfied with Lipset's observation that the working class holds authoritarian values. Instead he systematically examined the extent to which this could be attributed to the limited occupational self-direction of that class. Although he did not break open the class concept as far as he could have, because he never stopped seeing income and education as two aspects of the same thing, his work is still extremely significant.

All things considered, my study has done no more than systematically explore the territory scouted by Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart. Their above-mentioned ideas have been adopted, linked to each other, and then taken a decisive step further. Because income and education have been separated at the theoretical level, the concept of class has been broken open further than Kohn did, Lipset's distinction between two types of political values has been supplemented with a distinction between class and cultural capital, and education is no longer solely an indicator of economic position or background, as is still the case in Inglehart's work.

Although ample use has been made of their above-mentioned ideas in this study, systematically elaborating upon them nevertheless leads to the conclusion that their theories on the underlying causes of authoritarianism/libertarianism are untenable. Since they are widely accepted by sociologists, it is important that the three problematic assumptions that are to blame for this be critiqued at greater length in this final chapter than was feasible before. Let me start with the one that can be most easily pinpointed and empirically refuted, the idea held by Lipset and Kohn that education is solely an indicator of class or social stratification (Section 8.3). I then further clarify why the idea that authoritarianism/libertarianism is shaped by class or occupation is untenable (Section 8.4). Last, I explain why the image of modernity as industrialism should be rejected as overly simplistic (Section 8.5).

### 8.3. EDUCATION, SOCIAL INEQUALITY, AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

#### 8.3.1. Introduction

It is common practice among sociologists to conceive of education as an indicator of class or socioeconomic status. The deeply rooted image in modern sociology of modern society as an industrial society is largely responsible for this (Section 8.3.2). But that is not all. Even though the resulting technological functionalist assumptions are widely accepted, they are also sharply criticized, especially by conflict sociologists. This does not mean, however, that conflict sociologists have an essentially different conception of education (Section 8.3.2). Last, I demonstrate that this also holds true of Bourdieu's theory on the reproduction of social inequality, where the notion of cultural capital used in this study plays such an important role (Section 8.3.4).

#### 8.3.2. Education and Social Inequality in a Technological Functionalist Perspective

In the image of modern society as industrial society, technological development is assumed to lead to ever-growing job complexity and consequently to a mounting need for highly qualified workers. According to this theory of industrial society as an achievement society, as Berting (1991) calls it, the influence of education on the achieved position in society becomes ever greater and the influence of the family of birth ever smaller. So society is held to become more and more open as a result of technological advances.

This model of development definitely has not left the field of sociology unaffected. This is especially evident from the important place of two related research problems in its neopositivist mainstream. The first pertains to patterns of intergenerational social mobility (e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967), and the second to the relation between family background and school success (e.g., De Graaf 1986). The popularity of these research problems results partly from two political ideas that are similarly inherent to the model of development referred to above. One is that people ought to earn their position in society themselves, mainly by getting an education (the shift from ascription to achievement). The other is that everyone ought to have an equal opportunity to qualify for the labor market by getting an education. Social justice and economic efficiency go hand in hand from this perspective, since a society that meets both requirements is not only just,<sup>2</sup> it is also efficient.

The conceptualization of education in this type of technological functionalist approach logically results from the image of modernity as indus-

trialism. Education is narrowed down to a resource for achieving an attractive position in society, that is, a cluster of knowledge and skills that can be converted into a good job on the labor market. Of course, the issue is not whether it is empirically erroneous to view education as decisive for life chances. The point is that this is a theoretically one-sided picture, since education is also the principal institution that transfers culture to the next generation. Under the influence of the image of modernity as industrialism, however, this has been displaced to the margin of sociological consciousness. The effects of this have been demonstrated in Chapters 2 (Lipset) and 3 (Kohn). Since no need seems to be felt for any theoretical reflection or empirical check, education is consistently taken as an indicator of class or social stratification. The dominance of the image of modernity as industrialism has thus led to a blind spot for the cultural significance of education.

### **8.3.3. Education and Social Inequality in a Conflict Sociological Perspective**

Conflict sociologists refute the suggestion that well-educated people really are more useful or capable than anyone else. They view this as an ideological mystification. In reality, they hold, diplomas are no more and no less than appropriate instruments for acquiring and maintaining privileged positions in a subtle, inconspicuous and seemingly legitimate manner and passing them on to one's offspring (e.g., Collins 1979). Conflict sociologists thus do not view the allocation of privileged positions on the basis of diplomas as a just and efficient way to meet with industrial society's need for competent workers. Instead they consider it a process of social closure by dominant groups (cf. Murphy 1988; Parkin 1979).

The technological functionalist and conflict sociological conceptions of the school system and of education consequently differ in three important senses. The technological functionalist conception assumes that (1) the educational system is responsible for transferring the knowledge and skills that (2) are needed by industrial society so that (3) in principle, it is legitimate that well-educated people should hold privileged positions. The conflict sociological conception assumes that (1) the educational system is responsible for the intergenerational transference of privileged positions, which (2) there is a need for on the part of dominant groups so that (3) well-educated people holding privileged positions is not necessarily legitimate.

These differences are not important in the context of this study. What is important, however, is that conflict sociologists also place the relation between education and social inequality at the core of sociological theorizing and empirical research, because they too view education as the



principal vehicle for acquiring an attractive position in society. This is no less true simply because they interpret and evaluate this relation in a way that is quite different from what is customary in technological functionalism. So we can conclude that conflict sociology has not corrected the blind spot for the cultural significance of education, it has merely reinforced it.

### 8.3.4. Pierre Bourdieu on Cultural Capital and the Reproduction of Social Inequality

The notion of cultural capital used in this study also comes from conflict sociology. It is used there to explain the intergenerational transmission of social inequality, and, under the influence of Bourdieu, it has come to play an increasingly significant role in research on social mobility and educational attainment (e.g., Bourdieu 1973; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; De Graaf 1986; DiMaggio 1982; DiMaggio and Mohr 1985; Niehof 1997). This research demonstrates that parents with ample cultural capital provide their children with the cultural resources that enable them to successfully complete a higher education and acquire comfortable jobs as a result.

The core of Bourdieu's theory is in keeping with what is noted above on conflict sociological approaches to education. The link between social inequality and culture is not drawn here via a *causal* logic (culture is a derivative of economic inequality—e.g., Marx) as much as via an essentially *functionalist* one (culture preserves inequality and passes it on from one generation to the next). So Bourdieu views culture as an independent resource for preserving economic inequality between society's classes and transferring it to the next generation (Brubaker 1985; Swartz 1997), rather than from a Marxist angle, where it is merely a minor and relatively harmless part of society's superstructure.

Bourdieu's theory contains at least three assumptions. First, parents pass on privileged economic positions to their children by transferring refined cultural taste (interest in elite culture and an affinity with it, i.e., cultural capital). Second, education, particularly higher education, assumes this affinity, so people who have it are more successful as students. And third, this higher educational level is then converted into economically attractive positions. Via education, or so this theory can be summarized, cultural capital or affinity with the elite culture is converted into economic capital. This is why this theory calls affinity with elite culture *embodied* cultural capital and the diplomas it facilitates *institutionalized* cultural capital, two terms I borrow in this study.

However, this study is not about explaining social mobility or social reproduction; it is about explaining authoritarianism/libertarianism. What does this mean for the relation between this study and the above-mentioned research tradition? I make it clear that (1) the notion of cultural

capital has a more limited meaning in this study than in research on social mobility or social reproduction, (2) the findings of this study do not contradict those of this research tradition, but (3) they nonetheless justify some doubt about the tenability of Bourdieu's theory on social reproduction.

The term *cultural capital* is used in this book in a way that is somewhat different from the way in which it is used in research on social mobility or social reproduction. There it refers to the ability to recognize expressions of culture and comprehend their meaning as well as the resources for upward social mobility this implies. In this study, however, it only refers to the former. My findings nonetheless do not contradict the three above-mentioned assumptions from Bourdieu's theory. The ability to recognize expressions of culture and comprehend their meaning would seem to have a great deal in common with an open, intrinsically interested, and non-dogmatic basic intellectual attitude that can be assumed to contribute to success in education, particularly higher education. Bourdieu's theory, however, also contains a fourth assumption, which my findings do contradict, that cultural capital is *intended* to reproduce social inequality. Though it is not exactly clear how this works, logically speaking there are only two possibilities.

The first possibility is that this intention does not exist in the consciousness of the participants in social life, though the sociologist is able to detect it. This is a debatable position, since it is unclear how this kind of intention could be empirically demonstrated. Of course, it does not suffice here to demonstrate that having cultural capital increases one's life chances. After all, no logical conclusions about its aims or motivations can be drawn from the effects of social action, since in addition to intended consequences it can also have unintended ones—a distinction that obviously should not be confused with that between desirable and undesirable consequences (cf. Gouldner 1955). It is precisely the analysis of the unintended consequences of rational action that constitutes one of the pillars Max Weber's sociology is founded upon (see Turner 1996 in this connection). Of course, the best known example is Weber's analysis of how Protestants contributed to the rise and spread of capitalism; even though this was not their intention in the least, it was definitely the consequence (Weber 1978 [1904/05]).<sup>3</sup>

Of course, the second possibility is that participants in social life deliberately deploy cultural capital in the framework of a social reproduction strategy. In this case, the intentions are situated in the consciousness of the participants in social life, so that the relevant scientific questions can be relatively easily answered via research. Is it true, for example, as Bourdieu holds, that people only began using a cultural reproduction strategy when, under the influence of various developments, material resources no longer sufficed? In his compact study *Resources and Social Reproduction*, Niehof concludes that there is no evidence of this: "The expected historical trends

in the effects of material and cultural resources are not found in the Netherlands" (1997:126). He rightly wonders what the refutation of this core hypothesis means and notes the possibility that even though parents want to transfer their privileged positions to their children, they might not always succeed in doing so (Niehof 1997:126). Of course, this might well be the case. But the second possibility, which he does not even consider, seems more plausible to me. It is that parents do provide their children with cultural capital, but do not do so with the aim of conveying their own privileged social positions to them.

It is obvious that parents interested in art and culture will stimulate their children to have similar interests, to specialize in cultural fields and so forth. If we accept the plausible assumption that, in addition to unconscious and unintentional influences, there are also conscious and intentional parental influences at play here, there is still the question of why parents do this. Do they really view this as a means to a higher end, that is, passing on their privileged social position? Is there really evidence here of a deliberate strategy of social reproduction? And is it really the aim of their children to subsequently convert this cultural capital into economic capital? There is no evidence that this is the case.

I have noted in Chapter 4 that in the value orientations of people with ample cultural capital, there is a central emphasis on individual liberty and self-expression, as expressed, for example, in their rejection of an instrumental educational value orientation. This means it is precisely the parents with *limited* cultural capital who view education as a means to an attractive economic position. Parents with ample cultural capital might wish to pass on their interest in art and culture to their children, but not with the aim of passing on their own privileged economic position to them. De Graaf's (1988) research findings are in keeping with this finding: postmaterialism, closely linked to an intrinsic educational value orientation, is more apt to lead children to select cultural occupations than economically attractive ones.

It is thus undisputed that parents pass on cultural capital to their children, or want to, just as it is undisputed that cultural capital contributes to educational attainment. However, there is some doubt as to whether there is any evidence of an intention to reproduce social inequality. In reality, there is solely evidence of a transfer of culture from parents to their children. Overlooking the distinction between intended and unintended consequences, that is, *social* and *cultural* reproduction, thus results in a blind spot for culture similar to the one for the cultural significance of education (see above). After all, as noted earlier in connection with education, culture is then reduced to a mere resource for attaining an attractive social position.

Just as Protestantism was not intended to contribute to the rise of capitalism but did so nonetheless, it is plausible that transferring cultural cap-

ital is not meant to reproduce social inequality but does so nonetheless. Thus the relevant research question is not whether cultural capital leads to educational attainment, since the truth of this is now widely accepted, but precisely how this process should be interpreted.

## 8.4. SEVERING THE LINK WITH CLASS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

### 8.4.1. Introduction

If we are to elevate sociological theorizing on authoritarianism/libertarianism to a higher plane, the link with class and social stratification should be severed. The idea that authoritarianism/libertarianism can be explained by occupation or class is, after all, untenable—it has nothing to do with them. That is the second conclusion of this study.

First I would like to elaborate once again why education and income cannot be viewed simply as two different indicators of class or social stratification in studies on authoritarianism/libertarianism. I would then like to discuss two proposals for solving the problem of the often disappointingly limited explanatory power of class and social stratification for lifestyles and values. In neither case does this lead to a reconsideration of the idea that, in principle, all values and modes of conduct should be explainable on the basis of class or social stratification. It is instead assumed that this *must be* the case. This is why the question is posed, whether this explanatory power might not perhaps be enlarged by categorizing or ranking occupations in some fashion other than the customary ones.

Both proposals essentially boil down to incorporating cultural capital more systematically in class schemas or conceptions of social stratification. The proposals therefore diametrically oppose the conclusion of my study, because they amount to mixing class or social stratification and cultural capital even more than was already the case in the past, rather than drawing a more systematic distinction between them. Of course, I do not claim that new occupational classifications of this kind could not be useful in the study of social stratification and mobility. I merely argue that they cannot eliminate the shortcomings of research on authoritarianism/libertarianism observed in my study. They can in fact only magnify them by preserving the illusion that, in principle, all values and modes of conduct—including authoritarianism/libertarianism—can be explained on the basis of people's class or occupation.

### 8.4.2. Education and Income: Two Aspects of the Same Thing?

The line of reasoning that education and income can be viewed as two aspects of the same thing is found in its purest form in the work of

Table 8.1 Correlations (1) and partial correlations controlling for the third variable (2) between cultural participation, educational level, and income

Variables	1	2
Cultural participation and income	0.22***	0.08
Educational level and cultural participation	0.41***	0.36***
Educational level and income	0.38***	0.32***

$N = 664$ .

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$  (two-sided testing)

American sociologist Otis Dudley Duncan. Four decades ago, he made the following comment: "We have . . . the following sequence: a man qualifies himself for occupational life by obtaining an education; as a consequence of pursuing his occupation, he obtains income. Occupation, therefore, is the intervening activity linking income to education" (1961:116–17). Education, occupation, and income are thus logical extensions of each other, so they can indeed be viewed as aspects of the same thing.<sup>4</sup> Duncan uses this causal temporal sequence, the validity of which has been demonstrated in any number of studies, to justify his well-known *socioeconomic index*, a linear combination of the average levels of education and average income levels of a number of occupational categories. It is important to underline that Goldthorpe (1980) and Wright (1985) view the educational level that is needed to do certain kinds of work as a class indicator for essentially identical reasons.<sup>5</sup>

What more can I say? As long as class concepts or conceptions of social stratification that emerge from the combination of income and education are used to study social stratification, of course I cannot say anything at all. This is precisely what Duncan's index is all about, a way to rank people on a social ladder in mobility studies (e.g., Blau and Duncan 1967). Even if we believed a strong correlation between the two variables was sufficient reason to view them as two aspects of the same thing, it still would not lead in any way to the conclusion that education and income "belong together." In fact the relation between cultural participation and education is just as strong as that between education and income. Income and cultural participation, however, are absolutely unrelated to each other, except that they are both related to education. This is illustrated in Table 8.1, the last table in this book.

There is thus no way to determine on empirical grounds whether education should be combined with cultural participation into cultural capital, or with income into class, social stratification, or whatever other terms might come to mind. Not that this would be a problem. The problem is the

suggestion that we should opt for either of the two possibilities: that education and income or education and cultural participation are unfailingly two aspects of the same thing and consequently should always be taken together at the theoretical level.

This is a misconception. On the one hand, education exerts a strong negative influence on authoritarianism, whereas income differences exert no influence at all in this respect. On the other hand, a low educational level and a low income are both indicators of a weak labor market position, so that both of them lead to economic liberalism (Chapter 2). In the first case, the two variables clearly are *not* two aspects of the same thing and need to be separated at the theoretical level. They *are* two aspects of the same thing in the second case, however, and definitely should not be separated. Consequently the strong correlation between education and income that emerges via a person's occupation does not justify also viewing them as two aspects of the same thing in studies on authoritarianism/libertarianism. So there is no proper answer to the question of what education "really" is or is not and how we should deal with it at the theoretical level without taking the theoretical context, that is, the research problem and its elaboration, into consideration.

#### 8.4.3. Class and Cultural Capital: Causality and Elective Affinity

We say people are fortunate if they *succeed in achieving* a good economic position and unfortunate if they *fall on hard times*. This indicates that class is something that "happens" to people in the sense that they are only likely to voluntarily change their class position if there is a *better* one there to be had. All other things being equal,<sup>6</sup> no one in their right mind would voluntarily opt for a weaker class position. Only the reverse is plausible. In other words, it is plausible that all other things being equal, everyone would prefer a higher income to a lower income, and job security to a lack of it. Of course, this is precisely why the class concept refers to a position in a system of social inequality.

Of course, cultural capital does also "happen" to people in the sense that they pick it up at home. But this should not conceal a crucial difference between cultural capital and class. Although everyone can reasonably be assumed to prefer a stronger to a weaker class position, not everyone can reasonably be assumed to prefer having an interest in art and culture to not having an interest in art and culture. In fact it is quite disputable whether people who have little or no interest in art or culture would even want to change places with people with an avid interest in them (cf. Lamont and Lareau 1988:158).<sup>7</sup>

As a result of this difference between class and cultural capital, class positions can be ranked in terms of *stronger* or *weaker*,<sup>8</sup> but this does not

hold true for cultural capital.<sup>9</sup> In the theoretical context used in this study, differences in cultural capital are viewed in terms of *more open* and *more closed* rather than stronger and weaker or higher and lower. So people with more cultural capital do not occupy a higher, better, or more favorable cultural position but a less closed one, which makes them more open to non-conformists and unconventional lifestyles. And, vice versa, people with limited cultural capital occupy a more closed position, which is accompanied by intolerance and a rejection of anyone who is culturally different.

This is more than a word game because it has several important theoretical and methodological consequences, especially regarding the possibility of assuming people's values to be one-sidedly "caused" by their position. It is plausible that a weak labor market position would *lead to* economic liberalism because it is not plausible that economic liberalism would lead someone to pursue a weak position in the labor market. It is far less plausible, however, that cultural capital would *lead to* libertarianism, because the reverse is also so conceivable, that people who attach more importance to individual liberty and self-expression are consequently more apt to be interested in art and culture. Thus the assumption that class *leads to* economic liberalism is not problematic, but the assumption that cultural capital *leads to* libertarianism is. What does this mean for the decision in this study to view cultural capital as *causing* libertarianism and for the central conclusion that authoritarianism/libertarianism is not affected by class?

I certainly do not believe that cultural capital can be one-sidedly viewed as causing authoritarianism/libertarianism; in fact I hold that the reverse is equally plausible. So in this study, the assumption that cultural capital causes authoritarianism/libertarianism is only used for practical reasons. In fact variables that influence each other cannot be included in a statistical analysis without creating complex problems.<sup>10</sup> It is evident from the fact that in research practice, researchers use various causal orders that it is plausible that in reality education, cultural participation, and libertarianism influence each other. In keeping with Bourdieu's theory, DiMaggio (1982) explains the educational attainment of high school and college students on the basis of their own cultural participation (cf. DiMaggio and Mohr 1985). Ganzeboom (1989) and DiMaggio and Ostrower (1990) reverse this and explain cultural participation on the basis of education. De Graaf and De Graaf (1988) view cultural participation as an effect of postmaterialism, and this in turn is reversed in this study, where cultural participation is viewed as causing libertarianism.

Of course the relevant question is not which of these causal orders is the right one, since they are equally defensible, but for precisely this reason they are also all problematic. In a one-shot survey on the relations between variables such as these, *every* one-sided causal structure that is imposed on

the data is wrong, since a panel study will undoubtedly make it clear that they influence each other. So there are no one-sided cause-and-effect relations here, and rather than causality there is the mutual influence Max Weber refers to as *Wahlverwandtschaft*, which is usually called "elective affinity" in English.<sup>11</sup>

What does the statistical assumption that cultural capital leads to libertarianism mean for the central conclusion of my study? Can the conclusion still be drawn that authoritarianism/libertarianism is not determined by class? Of course it can. Whether this relation exists does not, after all, depend on the strength of the influence education, cultural participation, and libertarianism exert on each other. The hypothesis that authoritarianism/libertarianism is determined by class has been refuted because valid class indicators do not exert any influence on it at all. Only an invalid operationalization of class that mixes class with cultural capital can explain variance in authoritarianism/libertarianism.

The categorization of occupations into classes, as is done in the case of the EGP class schema, should be rejected for another reason as well. As the concept of class refers to a position in a system of social inequality and class is thus something that just happens to people, it is incorrect to operationalize class mainly on the grounds of occupation. Although occupation is of course strongly related to class, it should not be confused with it at a theoretical level (cf. Wright 1979; Wright et al. 1982). As it happens, people's occupations reveal a great deal more than their class positions because they also entail the kind of work they do, in other words, whether they mainly work with ideas or symbols, with people, or with things, and precisely the type of ideas, people, or things that are involved. Since occupations are not something that simply happens to people, they are doubtful indicators of class. More than anything else, people deliberately choose their occupations on the basis of their value orientations if they have an opportunity to do so (e.g., Rosenberg 1957).<sup>12</sup>

Operationalizing class on the basis of occupation thus leads to a tricky methodological problem. Just as we cannot simply assume that cultural capital leads to libertarianism, we cannot assume that occupation does either. Differences in the value orientations of various occupational categories therefore cannot be interpreted simply as class effects, because an unknown part of these differences is the result of self-selection on the grounds of value orientations. Kohn has demonstrated, for example, that just like people characterized by cultural and intellectual leisure time activities, people who attach great importance to self-direction are apt to choose jobs that grant them a great deal of occupational self-direction (Kohn and Schooler 1983:217–41; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990:152–70).

In a review of Kohn's research program and findings, Spenner rightly concludes that "it is no longer acceptable to cast the work-self relationship



as *either* one of the socialization effects of work on personality, *or* as the effects of personality in selecting workers into certain types of jobs" (1998:176, his emphasis). In short, the idea that certain types of occupations lead to authoritarianism or libertarianism is just as problematic as the assumption used in the statistical analysis that cultural capital leads to libertarianism. This underlines the importance of using a systematic theoretical distinction between class and cultural capital and makes it clear that there are considerable theoretical and methodological objections to operationalizing class on the grounds of occupation.<sup>13</sup>

There are consequently four conclusions to be drawn at this point: (1) Authoritarianism/libertarianism cannot be explained on the basis of class. (2) A systematic theoretical distinction must be drawn between cultural capital and class. (3) It is incorrect to assume that someone's occupation or cultural capital only "leads to" authoritarianism/libertarianism. (4) Operationalizing class on the basis of occupation involves considerable theoretical problems (validity) and methodological objections (causal order).

Proposals to increase the explanatory power of class or social stratification for lifestyles and values by categorizing or ranking occupations in new ways are then quite problematic. Rather than drawing a more systematic theoretical distinction between class or social stratification and cultural capital, the idea is proposed of mixing them even more radically than was customary in the past.

#### 8.4.4. A "New Class" of Social and Cultural Specialists?

The "New Class Theory" was developed in the 1970s to explain middle-class left-wing tendencies, especially among "social and cultural specialists" (e.g., Bruce-Briggs 1979; Kellner and Heuberger 1992; Kriesi 1989; McAdams 1987). This theory attributes these tendencies to their class interests. Since these occupational categories are typically dependent on the state for their employment and career opportunities, or so this theory argues, they have a special class interest in expanding state interference and curbing market forces. Middle-class progressivism is thus considered something that requires a separate explanation based on the logic of class analysis.

Like Bell, who considers the idea of a "New Class" "a linguistic and sociological muddle" (1980:145), and Brint (1984), who demonstrates that much of New-Class progressivism can be attributed to its high educational level, I consider this theory an institutionalized misunderstanding. The fact that it is particularly social and cultural specialists who stand out as politically progressive seems to simply underline the decisive influence of cultural capital, as Lamont (1986) rightly notes in a comment on Brint's article (cf. Lamont 1992). Like alleged "working-class" authoritarianism,

“New-Class” progressivism also seems to be driven by cultural capital rather than economic class interests.

In fact the development of New Class Theory underlines how deeply engrained the logic of class analysis is in sociology. The finding that occupational categories that, according to conventional class theory, should be politically conservative are not has not encouraged sociologists to reconsider the validity of a one-sided class approach to politics. Instead it has encouraged them to broaden it in such a way as to incorporate the deviant case. A New Class with its own alleged economic class interests has been invented to maintain the established theoretical order (e.g., De Graaf and Steijn 1997).

The one-sided class approach to politics, however, is unlikely to be salvageable in this way, because these class interests exist by definitional fiat only. “Objectively given” by social structure as they are held to be, they are conspicuously absent from empirical studies—and it is not easy to see how this could be otherwise. Assigning social and cultural specialists to a separate New Class thus essentially boils down to mixing up class and cultural capital operationally even more than has conventionally been the case. It does not do away with the black box that is often used in statistical analyses, but fills it up even more.

#### **8.4.5. An Economic Stratification and a Cultural Stratification?**

It is subsequently important to consider a second proposal for revising the present conceptions of social stratification. In this case it is about occupational status rather than class. Inspired by Bourdieu’s distinction between economic and cultural capital, some sociologists are in favor of replacing the idea of occupational status ranked along a single dimension with a systematic distinction between economic and cultural occupational status (e.g., Ganzeboom et al. 1987; Blee-Booij 1994; Kalmijn 1994; De Graaf and Kalmijn 2001). For two reasons, this type of two-dimensional conception of occupational status does not provide a satisfactory solution to the problem demonstrated in this study.

First, even in the case of high school and college students who do not work and do not have an occupation yet, cultural capital accompanies libertarianism (e.g., Feldman and Newcomb 1973:71–105; Schulz and Weiss 1993). Since authoritarianism/libertarianism thus has nothing to do with occupations and all the more to do with cultural capital, there is no theoretical argument in favor of classifying *occupations* according to cultural capital. It is wise to bear in mind here what the idea of using occupation as the central social position indicator is based upon. Occupation serves as the connecting link between education and income, as Duncan’s arguments in Section 8.4.2 demonstrate. And as noted in Section 8.3, the links

between education, occupation, and income are a focus of attention for technological functionalists and conflict sociologists alike. Now if we no longer wish to simply view income and education as two aspects of the same thing and want instead to separate them as central indicators for class and cultural capital, there is no reason to fall back on a ranking of *occupations*.

Second, there is the objection that this proposal once again conceives of cultural capital—as in Bourdieu's theory—in terms of social inequality or social status. This is misleading and redundant in this context—misleading because it unjustifiably holds that culture cannot be studied without studying inequality, and redundant because, with a view to explaining authoritarianism/libertarianism, cultural capital does not have to be conceived of in terms of *higher* or *lower* or *more status* or *less status*, implying *more positive* or *less positive* ramifications with regard to life chances. People with ample interest in art and culture are not more tolerant because this interest gives them a higher status, positively affects their educational attainment, or is in some other way *higher*. Such people are more tolerant because they are better equipped to recognize less conventional lifestyles and behavioral patterns as culture.<sup>14</sup>

## 8.5. CULTURE, INDUSTRIALISM, AND MODERNITY

### 8.5.1. Modernity as Industrialism

In *Prophecy and Progress* (1978), Krishan Kumar also maintains that the mainstream of classical sociology, and in its footsteps modern sociology, is deeply influenced by the idea that modern society is first and foremost an industrial society. This idea not only plays a central role in the classical sociology of Saint-Simon (Manuel 1965); partly as a result of his influence it is also very much in evidence in the sociology of Marx and Durkheim. The strong orientation toward developments in socioeconomic life as the engine driving cultural developments is borrowed in the neopositivist mainstream of modern sociology. The central issues there include the causal relations between (1) technological and economic changes, (2) changes in how labor is organized and in the quality of work, and (3) changing patterns of social stratification and mobility. Cultural changes are viewed in this framework as being generated by this causal chain and consequently are not assigned an independent explanatory role (Berting 1995b).

The ample attention modern sociology devotes to these issues is confirmed by the dominant places of the sociologies of organization and of work and industry, as well as the sociological research on social stratification and mobility. It is also evident from the more concrete subjects and

research problems most of the research attention in those fields is focused on. Sociologists of organization study work organizations far more frequently than they do charity agencies, student organizations, or athletic clubs, and it is surely no coincidence that sociologists of education mainly focus on issues at the interface between education and the labor market in general and relations between family background, school success, and social mobility in particular. The strong orientation on the part of sociologists toward the socioeconomic domain is also illustrated by the fact that this is precisely where the best-known and most influential theories on the underlying causes of authoritarianism/libertarianism, the ones formulated by Lipset, Kohn, and Inglehart, seek the explanatory variables.

Without, of course, any pretense of thus presenting a complete picture of classical or modern sociology, I think I can safely defend the notion that the neopositivist mainstream of contemporary sociology has inherited an industrialist bias from its classical predecessors. This distortion is quite easy to discern in many of the textbooks in our field. In *Sociology: A Global Introduction*, for instance, Macionis and Plummer define modernity as “social patterns linked to industrialisation” (1997:673), thus suggesting that industrialism is the major constituent feature of modernity and the other features are its more or less logical and inevitable products. Their definition of modernization as “the process of social change initiated by industrialisation” (1997:673) only serves to confirm this.

It is precisely this idea, as I note, that underlies the three theories on the causes of authoritarianism/libertarianism that have been tested in my study and have without exception been found to be foiled by the facts. Why haven't research findings that contradict these theories, especially the absence of a strong negative relation between income and authoritarianism, led to their refutation a long time ago? The fact that these theories have been taken seriously for such a long time and are still so widely accepted only confirms the dominance of the image of modernity as industrialism. It would seem to be high time then to reject this image as being overly simplistic. So what more is modernity in addition to industrialism?

### 8.5.2. Modernity as Post-Traditionalism

It is not difficult to extract a conceptualization of modernity that is theoretically more constructive from ideas that have long been available. To demonstrate this, I use two concepts that are perhaps the most feared rivals of class for the status of most problematic and controversial concept in the vocabulary of sociology, *modern* and *premodern*.

Analytical concepts are solely instruments constructed by the researcher to be able to study social reality. This is why concepts containing assumptions about what is going to be observed, as would seem to be

the case with *modern* and *premodern*, are essentially inappropriate. They seem to presume a historical change that they are expected to help ascertain, at any rate to the extent that it has actually taken place at all. So although there is good reason to replace these concepts with ones less contaminated with empirical connotations, I don't think it would make matters any clearer. This is why it is only with some hesitation and a few words of caution to the reader that I will overlook this objection and opt for the terminology commonly used in sociology.

When I use these two terms, I do so without any empirical implication about contemporary Western society. That the Middle Ages might have been more modern than the contemporary West is a possibility that cannot be ruled out in advance. Whether this is the case and the degree to which it is the case can only be determined by way of empirical research. Nor do I want to imply any association of *modern* with *good* or *superior* and of *premodern* with *bad* or *inferior*. What I present below is merely a proposal for the construction of two ideal types that can be used in research to observe changes in an ever chaotic reality without lapsing into the shortcomings of existing studies on cultural change and libertarianism.

How have sociologists usually conceptualized modernity and premodernity? Here we come up against an odd phenomenon. Given the dominance of the image of modernity as industrialism, we would expect sociologists to mainly conceive of premodernity as preindustrialism. But this is not the case. They only rarely conceive of premodernity in terms of the technology used, for example, driven by manpower, water, or wind rather than steam, electricity, or nuclear energy. Instead, they usually conceptualize it in terms of a culture that is experienced by its participants as *self-evident* and *natural*.

The nature of this kind of culture can be clarified by comparing how its participants see it with how outsiders do. From an outsider's standpoint, members of this kind of society do what they do because they *think* it is ordinary, normal, or right. But from their own perspective, they do what they do because it *is* ordinary, normal, or right (cf. Camic 1986). We are dealing here with a type of society where social action is *traditional* rather than *value rational*. People do not act on the grounds of consciously and deliberately chosen values, so there is no such thing as a reflexive moment at the level of the individual actor (Weber 1978 [1921]:24–26).

The absence of any awareness that how people live their lives is relatively arbitrary and could just as well have been very different is consequently characteristic of premodernity. If we derive a conceptualization of modernity from this, the result is once again something that goes against the sociological convention. We do not get the customary image of modernity as industrialism. Instead we get a conception of modernity as characterized by a culture where tradition no longer prevails (cf. Lemert 1974).

So what does modernization entail if we view it as a cultural process? It is the erosion of a generally binding and accepted cultural system that is nurtured and legitimized by a comprehensive and generally accepted religious worldview that is linked to it. In a cultural sense, modernization thus means the erosion of a natural, self-evident, or metasocial order that provides infallible and unquestioned guidelines for moral and social behavior (Touraine 1981). Heelas, who is cited in Chapter 5, refers in this connection to a process of detraditionalization: “. . . detraditionalization involves a shift of authority from ‘without’ to ‘within.’ It entails the decline of the belief in a pre-given or natural orders of things. Individual subjects are themselves called upon to exercise authority in the face of the disorder and contingency which is thereby generated” (1995:2). The sociological vocabulary has any number of ways to refer to this type of process of cultural change: a disappearance of mechanical solidarity (Durkheim 1964 [1893]) and *Gemeinschaft* (Tönnies 1963 [1887]), a termination of the theological stage (Comte 1974 [1851–1854]), a shift from traditional to value rational action (Weber 1978 [1921]), a collapse of the sacred canopy (Berger 1967), a disappearance of the tradition-directed personality (Riesman 1950), reflexive modernization (Beck 1992; Beck et al. 1994), and so on and so forth.

In short, the problem in the sociological analysis of cultural change and libertarianism is not that anyone denies modernization is more than industrial development, growing affluence, and a changing occupational structure. Instead the problem is that it is so often assumed, even by some of the sociologists cited above, that cultural change is generated by these technological and socioeconomic changes in any direct way. The theories refuted in this study are three different results of this assumption. This deficiency can, in short, be corrected in a relatively simple way by conceptualizing the cultural and industrial aspects of modernity and modernization independently of each other. Then it is not assumed in advance that industrial development causes an increase in libertarianism. The issue of how the two are related becomes a question that can only be answered via empirical research.

### 8.5.3. Industrial Development and Cultural Change

What indications are there that in addition to a process of industrialization, there has also been a process of cultural modernization or detraditionalization in Western societies? I am neither willing nor able to address this question in detail here. That is why I confine myself to some of the research findings discussed in this study and several historical observations that help illustrate that this process of cultural change cannot be reduced to industrial development in a direct way.

Of course the traditionalism of the older generation as compared with the younger one that has been observed in so many studies has a special significance. The empirical studies conducted and inspired by Inglehart ever since the 1970s are particularly important in this context. A meaningful observation made by Zygmunt Bauman, taking us further back in time, is also important. In *Legislators and Interpreters* he states that the notion of culture did not exist prior to the eighteenth century (1987:81–95). Since this notion implies an awareness of the possibility of living life in a different way, this serves to show that before the eighteenth century, the Western world was still largely dominated by tradition and still barely modern.

It is evident from the fact that cultural diversity and individual liberty have morally and politically divided modern society from the start (apparently more in France than anywhere else) that the power of what is simply self-evident has since been increasingly challenged. Liberals, humanists, and atheists have long propagated an acceptance of cultural differences and the liberty of individuals to behave in value rational fashions. They view conduct based on custom or convention as an objectionable leftover of obsolete ignorance that has no place in modern society. Conservatives and supporters of the religious tradition are far more apt to view cultural pluralism and growing individual liberty as a problem. This is why they tend to reject cultural differences as unacceptable and favor the construction or reconstruction of a national community that connects people to a generally accepted moral order.

It is evident from the fact that economic liberalism/conservatism and authoritarianism/libertarianism are virtually unrelated among the public at large that industrialism and post-traditionalism do not bear much of a connection. The same thing is evident from the fact that both types of political values are embraced by strikingly different social groups and categories. The political conflict modernity gives rise to is comparable to a war on two fronts (cf. Kriesi 1990:168; Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

As parties in the democratic class struggle, economic liberals and conservatives clash on how the wealth accompanying industrialization should be fairly distributed. Political parties representing the working class have traditionally combated its exclusion and fought for its right to a fair share of society's wealth. So it is not surprising that these parties and the income policies they favor are supported by the economically less privileged. Nor is it surprising that these policies have traditionally mainly been opposed by people who are economically more privileged.

The second major political conflict within modernity, however, does not coincide in any way with this economic conflict between labor and capital or between rich and poor (cf. Woodrum 1988a:568). The controversies between libertarians and authoritarians on the acceptability of cultural differences are not clashes between labor and capital or between rich and

poor. What is involved here is a line that divides young secular people and people with ample cultural capital who are most interested in individual liberty on the one hand and older Christians and people with limited cultural capital who are interested in conformity to cultural traditions passed down from one generation to the next on the other.

The fact that two largely unrelated historical events were such important turning points in the process of modernization (Nisbet 1966:21–44) serves to illustrate that industrialism and post-traditionalism have less to do with each other than is frequently assumed. The first event was the Industrial Revolution. It led to polarization between labor and capital and, by way of the “social question” of a century ago, to the democratic class struggle still being waged today. The second event was the French Revolution. By way of the first democratic constitutions in the eighteenth century, it led to the institutionalization of the first generation of human rights, that is, individual liberties (Berting 1995a). There has since been a great increase in the acceptance of cultural differences as it is expressed in these rights. But even today the primacy of individual liberty is not undisputed, and there is no good reason to assume this increase will go on forever.

## 8.6. NEW ANSWERS TO OLD QUESTIONS

Authoritarianism/libertarianism cannot be explained by class or economic background. This is the central conclusion of this study. So the old ways of explaining values of this type do not suffice. Research on authoritarianism/libertarianism has been led astray by the strong link with class and social stratification. This is why the shortcomings of the conventional studies on authoritarianism/libertarianism can only be eliminated by breaking this link. New theoretical ideas on class or social stratification, such as New Class Theory and the distinction between an economic and a cultural stratification, are unlikely to eliminate the theoretical shortcomings demonstrated in this study. In fact they can only reinforce them.

Modernization has led to a disjunction of the techno-economic and cultural realms (Bell 1976), and it seems futile to continue to try and link values such as authoritarianism/libertarianism to class or economic background. Because of this increasing disjunction of realms, this type of link can only be upheld in increasingly artificial and far-fetched ways. It seems wiser to simply admit it is people’s embedding in the cultural realm, that is, their education and cultural participation, that underlies values such as authoritarianism/libertarianism and not their position in the techno-economic domain. Of course the new answers to the old questions require further theoretical elaboration and subsequent empirical testing. In particular,



comparative studies on the elective affinities of various types of cultural participation, education, and values such as authoritarianism/libertarianism in contexts strategically selected to vary with respect to modernity and traditionalism seem theoretically fruitful. This type of research will undoubtedly reveal a need for refining or even radically revising the theory outlined in this book. But then again, this is what empirical research is all about: replacing bad theories with good ones and good ones with even better ones.

## NOTES

1. The scientific ideal of knowledge accumulation would seem to share some of the blame. After all, knowledge can most easily be accumulated by institutionalizing a fatal combination of intellectual conformity and uncritical professionalism. This is more or less what Fuchs and Turner (1986) recommend, even though they do of course use a terminology that sheds a positive light on these matters. Elaborating uncritically upon existing ideas to gain scientific esteem and career prospects is hard to combine with a serious test of the tenability of existing ideas: "a certain philistinism has grown within universities . . . . To the extent that cultural production is remade into the means of accumulating a kind of academic-professional capital, cultural producers are encouraged to accept commonplace understandings of the world. To challenge these too deeply would be to court detachment from those whose 'purchase' of their products enables them to accumulate capital. The point, thus, is that . . . in the spirit of professionalism [intellectuals] betray the calling truly and openly to explore the world" (Calhoun 1995:1-2). The scientific ideal of knowledge accumulation and the professionalism accompanying it can thus quite easily lead to more or less problematic theoretical assumptions being safely locked away in black boxes, that are not supposed to ever be opened again (Latour 1987).

2. See, however, *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (1958) by Michael Young for a probing critique of this assumption.

3. It is not feasible to make scientific statements about the *needs* or *intentions* of institutions, societies, or systems on the grounds of empirical research that overlooks the aims, needs, and motivations of the participants in social life. There is a simple reason for this. Only *people* have empirically researchable intentions and needs. Institutions, societies, and systems only have causes and effects and are, in addition, the subject of multifarious moral and political assessments. If these assessments are confused with their needs or intentions, this results in scientifically indefensible statements about what the world "really" or "essentially" is (cf. Dreyfus and Rabinow 1993; LiPuma 1993).

4. Since "Factors . . . such as income, occupation [and] education . . . are underlying the pattern of industrial class conflict," Inglehart also refers to them as industrial variables (1977:181).

5. This once again illustrates that functionalist conceptions of social stratification and conflict sociological class models differ less from each other than is frequently assumed.

6. In other words, with the job contents, work atmosphere, number of days off, colleagues, immediate superior, distance between home and the workplace, and so forth all being constant.

7. Whatever the case might be, this assumption is not necessary for an understanding of the relation between cultural capital and authoritarianism that has been discussed in this study.

8. Of course this does not mean operationalizations of class necessarily contain hierarchically ordered classes. Nor is this the case in the EGP class schema (Goldthorpe 1980) or Wright's class models (1979, 1985).

9. Of course this does not hold true for Bourdieu's conception of cultural capital, since it also contains implied life chances (cf. Section 8.3.4).

10. The reader will have noticed that at some points in this study, cultural capital is said to *lead to* libertarianism, whereas at other points it is said to *accompany* it. The first notion is based on the above-mentioned assumption in the statistical analysis and the second on what is undoubtedly more realistic from an empirical point of view, that cultural capital and authoritarianism influence each other.

11. Further research on whether the influence education, cultural participation, and authoritarianism have on each other under the condition of cultural modernity is greater than that under the strong cohesive power of tradition, as demonstrated for education and authoritarianism in Chapter 5, would seem to be of considerable significance. Another important issue is whether the distinction between traditional elite culture, avant-garde elite culture, and popular culture becomes more important under the influence of the cultural modernization process and whether it is mainly an affinity with the avant-garde elite culture that increasingly goes hand in hand with libertarianism.

12. In constructing the EGP class schema, the researchers used the ranking of thirty-six occupational categories according to "general desirability." It is problematic that general desirability is stipulated in part on the grounds of the nature of the work situation. Because of differences in value orientations on the part of working people, it is harder to rank the desirability of work situations than that of market situations (see Chapter 7, Note 16).

13. Perhaps there would be less of an objection to operationalizing on the grounds of occupation if a class variable were used in research on social stratification and mobility.

14. If we refer to this as *higher*, we assume that having an interest in art and culture and libertarianism are *better* than not having an interest in art and culture and authoritarianism. However, this is a value judgment that does not contribute to our scientific insight into these problems.

# Appendix

## *Secondary Data Sources*

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The original data creators or those who carried out the original collection of the data, the depositors, and the funders of the data collections, bear no responsibility for the analysis or interpretation of those data in this book.

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