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THE SOCIOLOGY OF WORK AND OCCUPATIONS

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Abstract

I review recent studies of work and occupations. Most of this work proceeds at the individual level, studying individual characteristics of workers, qualities of the work experience, and, to a lesser extent, stages of the work experience. Structural analysis is less common and often treats structural phenomena as aggregates rather than emergents, except in the area of labor relations. A substantial literature—probably a third of the total—examines particular occupations. In general the literature is divided into two "sides"—one focused on gender, inequality, and career/life cycle issues, the other on unions, and industrial and labor relations. Between these are smaller foci on theoretical issues and on general structures of work. I conclude that with the possible exceptions of Marxism and the study of professions, subfields of work and occupations lack the synthetic theory that would enable synthesis of empirical results. I also consider the twofold role of politicization in the area: the positive role of driving empirical investigation of new areas, the negative one of taking its own politics as unproblematic.

INTRODUCTION

An Annual Review author must cheat either breadth or depth. I cheat depth. To limit my topic to occupations alone is absurd. Changes in occupations cannot be construed without the work system that enfolds them. That normal sociology isolates social facts from their contexts—as status attainment separated achievement from structural change—only underscores the point, for what has stunted sociological knowledge if not this isolation? I therefore begin by situating the work and occupations (WO) literature historically and

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disciplinarily. An exploratory quantitative analysis of the field then leads into reviews of selected areas within it.

THE LOCATION OF THE WORK AND OCCUPATIONS LITERATURE

The modern sociological literature on WO has two ancestries. The first includes Everett Hughes and his students. Hughesian studies of work rested on field study, Chicago-style ecological institutionalism, and a social psychological focus inherited from W. I. Thomas and Robert Park. The ecological institutionalism combined with field study in the literature's long-familiar emphasis on professions, while the social psychological concern ultimately bore fruit in its emphasis on job satisfaction.

The Hughes tradition relates ambiguously to the other line of sociological inquiry into work—what is loosely called industrial sociology. [This is the tradition that is seen by Simpson (1989) as the core of WO.] Industrial sociology comprises diverse work institutionally derived from the human relations school of management; it takes formal shape in the field of industrial relations (IR). Methods differ between the IR and the Hughesian traditions; mutual citation is low and theoretical integration unusual. Few topics have drawn sustained attention from both literatures.

The split is easily understood. The Hughesians saw industrial sociology as "applied sociology," an orientation from which they had begun withdrawing by the 1950s (Smigel 1954). Industrial sociology was also closer to the organizations and bureaucracy literatures, always somewhat prescriptive and gradually moving into applied settings (i.e. business schools) throughout the postwar period. Writings on workplace participation well illustrate these differences. Driven by applied concerns and tied to formal theories of organization, this work has been ignored in the sociological literature on WO, although it is central to the IR literature.

In the years immediately after World War II, professions were the central focus of the WO literature. (For histories, see Cohen 1983, Smigel 1954, Roth et al 1973, Hall 1983.) There was little on blue collar work. The shift towards psychological concerns—job satisfaction, alienation, and so on—took place in the 1950s. Like the parallel rise of the new statistics, this shift was part of the gradual move away from institutional or structural accounts (of work as of most other things) toward individualistic ones. Simpson (1989) writes that 1950s research often portrayed workers as controlled by larger structural forces rather than as independently acting, the latter image being characteristic of earlier, observation-based research. She infers that the 1950s therefore inaugurated a period of serious structural analysis. Quite the contrary. The abstractions of Parsons simply screened the refocusing of studies

of work on the individual level. Structural analysis now meant studying individual flows within a constant (controlling) structure (changes in employment levels, mobility in socioeconomic hierarchies, etc.) This change—from conceiving structures as constructed, active, and contingent to conceiving them as dead but constraining—was driven largely by the methodological paradigm, as I have argued elsewhere (Abbott 1992). The 1950s' new interest in careers also grew from this individualism in structuralist disguise.

These changes were consecrated in the 1960s by the rise of status attainment and the publication of *The American Occupational Structure* (Blau & Duncan 1967). By assuming well-defined, constant occupations with well-defined statuses (artifactually shown to be "constant" by Hodge et al 1963—on which see Burrage & Corry 1981 and Coxon & Davies 1986), these new analyses of stratification negated en passant the ecological, processual approach to occupations, and indeed to work in general, allowing only for demographic movement within fixed structure. The status attainment tradition also firmly established occupational status mobility as a, or the, central substantive topic of the sociology of WO, encircling it with a set of individual determinants, above all gender, which became one of the two central topics of WO research by the late 1970s (Hall 1983).

By the 1980s, the evolving WO tradition had come to look much as it does today. The only institutional subfield of real strength was the study of professions. To be sure, Braverman (1974) had resuscitated structural analysis in his justly celebrated book. But the DOT's scales so transcendentalized "skill" that the ensuing research ignored changing structure altogether. In such an environment, individual-level topics like mobility, status, satisfaction, commitment, aspirations, and choice elicited most of the research. The most visible subareas of WO research were mobility and gender, the latter understood basically in status attainment terms even after Hochschild's brilliant book (1983). There were structural-level conceptions, to be sure, like labor markets. But labor markets were defined in terms of individual properties—mobility chances between areas—rather than conceptualized as emergent structures (as markets were more generally by structuralists like Harrison White 1981).

The WO literature has generally been isolated from research on work in other disciplines. Thus, the enormous (1000 articles per year) economic literature is seen as excessively abstract, although eventually the human capital approach it pioneered became a competitor of status attainment. Similarly, although a few social histories beguiled sociologists—Hareven's *Family Time and Industrial Time* (1982) and Tilly & Scott's *Women, Work, and Family* (1978), for example—the majority were ignored. For example, uncited in the WO literature in sociology (in the *1990 Social Science Citation Index*) were Montgomery's *The Fall of the House of Labor* (1987), Graebner's *History of*

Retirement (1980), Keyssar's *Out of Work* (1986), Licht's *Working for the Railroad* (1983), and Stearns's *Paths to Authority* (1978). Similarly ignored were historical studies of family and external divisions of labor such as Pahl's *Divisions of Labour* (1984), Hall et al's *Like a Family* (1987), and Lowe's *Women in the Administrative Revolution* (1987). Helmbold & Schofield (1989) and Rose (1986) give a sense of the size and richness of this unknown literature.

The ignorance of both gender and labor history in WO stems from longstanding anti-structural bias. Union-membership, like gender, was easily treated as a variable, metamorphosed from a social or cultural construct into an attribute of an individual. Only the institutionalist students of professions made serious use of the new historical work (as in Larson 1977 or Abbott 1988). Indeed, most sociologists of work who did use the historical literatures were historical sociologists, identified with the relatively theoretical, structural, and somewhat leftist cast of that field.

In short, the sociology of WO has for the last 20 years pursued a fairly narrow range of topics. It has focused on individual behavior and its immediate contexts, looking at psychological, personal, and social antecedents and consequences of work behavior. It has largely ignored other bodies of inquiry into work. There have been few attempts at general theoretical analysis outside Marxist writings and perhaps the sociology of professions. It is a sad fact that much or most of the exciting study of work today happens outside sociology's provenance and even its interest.

THE TOPOLOGY OF THE WORK AND OCCUPATIONS LITERATURE

Nonetheless, sociology does produce an awesome amount on work. *Sociological Abstracts* (SA) lists about 500 articles and 70 dissertations per year on WO broadly defined, either under "sociology of occupations and professions" or under "jobs, work organization, workplaces, and unions." I had a research assistant code these articles for the entire years 1990 and 1991. For each article, I have its general character (theoretical or empirical), country of major concern (if empirical), methods (if given), number of cases (if given) and a set of major keywords covering the central topics. Since I believe in internationalism, I did not rule out foreign language articles. Unless otherwise noted, descriptive remarks following are based on this data.

Slightly more than half the articles abstracted in SA appear in sociology journals. Another 9% appear in psychology journals, 7% in economics journals, 6% in business journals (where I counted the labor relations journals), and 2–4% each in health, law, education, and anthropological

journals. Another 14% appear in a variety of other areas—mostly interdisciplinary journals like *Annales ESC*.

About two thirds of these articles are empirical. The proportion of theoretical work is highest among the economics articles (45% theoretical), then sociology (40% theoretical), but much lower in business (25%) and psychology (10%). The typical empirical sample is largest in business studies ($n = 450$), then sociology (350), economics (250), and psychology, education, and anthropology (150). Sociology produces most of the really large studies, perhaps because I have included demography in sociology. But the modal study in all fields examines 100 or 200 doctors or teachers or some other type of worker.

Fields use diverse data. Economists rely more on published information (45%) than on surveys and questionnaires (25%) or interviews (20%). By contrast, sociologists rely first on surveys and questionnaires (45%), then on published information (30%), then on interviews (15%). Business and psychology both rely mainly on surveys and questionnaires (65%), with the rest mostly from published information in business and from interviews in psychology. Hughesian-style field study has nearly disappeared. Psychology leads with about 10% observation studies, while sociology, economics, and business all hover around 5%. It is in the other, minor literatures that observation survives; about 25% of empirical articles on work in anthropological or educational journals involve observation.

Most empirical studies consider one country. There are 40 comparative studies (out of 663 empirical studies), 25 of them two-country. But the literature is cosmopolitan (partly because I regard the overseas literature as relevant, of course). Of 523 studies with identifiably national datasets, only 40% (205) primarily concern the United States. Another 12% (64) concern the United Kingdom, followed by Canada (6%, 31), Germany (4%, 23), the former USSR (4%, 19), Australia and Finland (3%, 14), the Netherlands (3%, 13), and other countries. Language barriers cause the surprising absence of Japan as a principal country of analysis (a total of 4 articles in these 1100).

I now turn to topics studied. That the importance of topics varies somewhat across these literatures tells us much about how *Sociological Abstracts* selects articles for inclusion, a selection that I think reflects the tastes of the WO literature. (The reader should recall that an article can have several topics. Also, I used general headings for unspecified or "mixed" topics; these are not included in the lists immediately following.) In sociology, the most important single topic is gender, which is considered by about 20% of the sociology articles, much as in Hall's (1983) figures for the early 1980s. The next most important substantive topics are individual status mobility, unions, and income (7% each), labor and social control of work (6% each), work organizations

and labor markets (5% each), and race, inequality in work experience, unemployment, technology, and manufacturing employment (4% each).

In other fields concentration is much greater, reflecting selection. Nearly half (42%) of the economics articles are on unions, another quarter (22%) concern IR, and about 10% each concern unemployment and collective bargaining. (The overall economic literature on work is distributed quite differently.) The business literature is ransacked for the same topics, unions (22% of business articles), wages and management (each 13%), and collective bargaining (11%). In psychology, gender is again the top topic (16% of psychology articles), followed closely by stress (15%), then by job satisfaction (11%), psychological consequences of work (9%), individual status mobility, doctors, and unemployment (7% each). Since the chosen collateral literatures reflect sociology's own major concerns in the study of work, I shall henceforth discuss the overall SA sample as a coherent whole.

I begin with a discussion of the comparative importance of topics. There are four general areas: general issues, individual level topics, structural level topics, and particular occupations or areas of employment.

Theory is the most important general issue, although a relatively small fraction (about 16%) of the literature concerns theoretical issues. (In what follows the percentages are always percentages of all articles, n = 1100.) Most of these articles are actually theoretical analyses of more specific areas; articles about theory alone are unusual. There is also a small literature (5% of the total) dealing with cultural images of work, often closely tied to theoretical analyses. The cultural literature is very diffuse, spread over many areas of substantive concern, rather than concentrated into "a literature" on the symbolic structure of work.

The second general area is research at the individual level. The first major subcategory here is study of individual characteristics of workers, in which most effort (22%) is concentrated on ascribed characteristics (like gender, race, age) rather than achieved ones (education, skill, and sexual orientation—3%.) Education appears often as a control variable, but it is seldom more than that. Age (2%), too, is a control variable rather than a central focus in most cases.

Among articles on (individual) qualities of the work experience, the major interests are psychological (including stress, motivation, and job satisfaction—10%) and economic (wages and fringe benefits—6%). There are also concerns for general qualities of work (working conditions and inequality in general—5%, mostly on inequality) and for health consequences of work (5%). A smaller fraction (3%) concerns social qualities of work (e.g. lifestyle).

Relatively less attention is paid to stages of the individual work experience. Here the major topic is unemployment (5% = 51 articles), followed distantly

by careers (29), career choice (20), and employment opportunities (14). Surprisingly, there is little about layoffs or retirement.

A third general area is structural analysis. A substantial part of the literature considers some general structure (e.g. labor, management, occupations, bureaucracy, markets—17%), general process (e.g. individual mobility, migration, labor movement—10%), or general indicator (e.g. productivity, industrial dominance—5%) of the work system. The important structures are labor, management, and (individualistically conceived) labor markets. The important process is individual status mobility. The important indicator is productivity. The shadow of *The American Occupational Structure* falls even on this "structural" level.

Only about 10% of the literature concerns the division of labor. Most of this work is about technology (40 articles) on the one hand or about the twin divisions of labor of home and work (26 articles) on the other. A slightly larger fraction of the literature (14%) studies the social control of work, much of it covering several issues at once (64 articles), although there are specific foci on ethics (40) and professionalism (18). Surprisingly, there is little or no focus on the temporal structure of work (1%), including such topics as flex-time, part-time work, moonlighting, and job-sharing. There is much speculation about the role of temporal structure, particularly in relation to the gender wage gap, but little research.

Finally, in this structural area, about one fifth (18%) of the literature deals with topics in what is usually called industrial and labor relations. Unions figure in one tenth (113) of the articles (second only to gender), but there are also many articles on IR generally (52), and not a few on collective bargaining (21) and strikes (20).

The gap between structure and individual characteristics is bridged in part by my fourth general area, writing that considers a particular occupation, occupation type, or sector of employment. About a third of articles concern a limited group of workers. Some 10% concern a general category like white or blue collar or professionals. Fully a quarter concern a particular type of occupation. Of these the most common are doctors (54 articles), lawyers (27), nurses (25), teachers (22), university faculty (22), engineers (16), social workers (13), miners (12), scientists (9), and journalists (6). The literature's love of professions, indeed of itself (academics tie for fourth), is untarnished by time.

It is much less common (15%) to focus on a specific area of employment. Of these the most common is manufacturing (56 articles), with academia (24) second, and government (20) third. Home work (9 articles) nearly disappears, as does agriculture (There is, of course, a separate SA heading for rural sociology.)

To uncover the geography of the WO literature, one must move beyond marginals to cooccurrence. To do this, I have analyzed PAIRS of topics. For example, the most common pairing of topics in this data set, not surprisingly, is gender and wages, a combination considered in 25 articles. (Other topics can of course be considered in these articles as well.) Eighteen articles consider gender and inequality in general, while 17 consider both general inequality and wages in particular. I have considered all pairings of topics that appear in more than five articles, an arbitrary but useful cutoff. There are 52 such pairings.

That the network of topics includes 39 topics for these 52 connections tells us that the literature is not organized as a small group of central topics considered again and again in varying combinations. Quite the contrary, the pattern is of three or four principal topic areas largely disconnected from each other, each with its own hinterland of specialty topics.

As we have seen above, the two principal topic areas are gender and unions/IR. Astonishingly, fewer than six articles consider gender in the context of unions or industrial relations. Yet the relation of gender and work was centrally structured by unions, as a brilliant historical literature on the "family wage" has shown. Our ahistorical, individualistic research has forgotten that gender is more than being female in a regression equation.

Six topics are directly connected to gender and to nothing else. (I give in parentheses the number of joint appearances in articles.) They are: careers (8), career choice (9), family roles (14), stereotypes (6), sexual discrimination (10), and lawyers (7). It is surprising that there aren't more internal connections, since, with the exception of lawyers, these topics seem all of a piece. In addition, three topics are connected to gender and to one or more other topics that have no further connections: job satisfaction (8 to gender, 6 to nursing), academic employment (6 to gender, 9 to university faculty), and unemployment (6 to gender, 8 to age, 6 to labor markets). It is clear from this pattern that sociologists treat the issue of "stages of work experience" basically as a gender issue, not as a general one. With the legal retirement limit rising, actual retirement age falling, and sweeping layoffs occasioned by the recession and international restructuring, one would expect a more general interest in career contingencies than merely in the problem of family and work (Doeringer 1990).

As I have already noted, gender is the biggest member of a loose clique of topics—gender, wages, general inequality, race, and individual status mobility—that dominates this "side" of the literature. Off to one side of this clique is a less important core topic, general theory, connected to gender by nine common appearances and via the topic of professions, which has six joint appearances with each. Theory has four topics connected only to itself: capitalism (8 ties), professionalism (6 ties), intellectuals (6 ties), and cultural

images (7 ties). In this second cluster, then, are the principal theoretical literatures on work, the Marxist literature with its focus on capitalism, the professions literature, and the newer, somewhat chaotic literature on cultural images and work.

The other principal nexus of topics concerns industrial and labor relations. The topic of unions is connected to IR by 14 direct ties, as well as via manufacturing employment (8 ties to unions, 6 ties to IR) and via collective bargaining (11 ties to unions, 6 ties to IR). This is a more clique-like structure; many articles consider several of these topics together. The identity of the union literature with manufacturing is curious, since unionization in that sector has plunged in the United States, to be replaced by public sector unionism (AFSCME and NEA) that is relatively more female. Again the lack of a gender connection is surprising.

The union topic area lacks the "hinterland topics" that gender has. It has only one such tie, to social control of work (6 common appearances). However, social control of work in turn relates to worker health (6 ties) and to doctors (9 ties), which in turn has 6 ties to ethics. The control theme thus has two faces: one involved with labor/management relations, the other with work practices in particular occupations. (For want of space, I do not review this control literature below.)

Between unions/IR and gender lie a number of broker topics. That is, articles appear about unions and these topics, as about gender and these topics, but not about all three together. One set of brokers are general work structures; labor (8 ties to gender, 7 ties to unions) and management (6 ties to gender, 6 ties to unions, 6 ties to IR). The two are tied to each other 7 times, and labor is not surprisingly tied to unions via the topic of organization, which has 6 ties with each. Again, the principal conclusion here is a negative one. One literature sees an important articulation between gender and labor and management while another studies the obvious connection between labor and management and the formal structuring of IR and unions. But the two literatures don't communicate.

The other principal bridge between the gender topic area and the unions/IR one is brokered by race and by the "other" category of specific occupations. Again, this means that gender is often considered within the context of a single occupation (11 ties), as is unionism (7 ties), but the two are not considered simultaneously. Similarly, race and gender (14 ties) are considered together, as are unions and race (8 ties). Further, race is connected via its 10 ties with general inequality to the tight little grouping of gender, wages, and general inequality that is the heart of the gender literature on work. There is also a separate tie between race and gender via individual status mobility (7 ties to race, 11 ties to gender).

In addition to showing the major holes in the literature, this network

structure identifies the major discrete areas that require survey here. I review the literature's actual findings under these headings, using merely exemplary titles. There is not space for everything relevant.

SPECIAL TOPICS

Gender and Career Contingencies

Gender's influence on job satisfaction seems peculiar. Women are more satisfied than "objective" criteria suggest they ought to be, but several studies show that this does not reflect use of different job-rating criteria. The difference seems to lie in choice of reference groups, women often comparing themselves only to other women (Loscocco 1990, Loscocco & Spitze 1991, Hodson 1989).

The gender and career/career-choice literature focuses mainly on the sex-segregation of occupations and on the behavior of women in traditionally male occupations. Reskin & Roos (1990) attribute segregation to the intersection of employer ratings of potential employees with worker ratings of prospective jobs. This is actually a general theory of labor markets treated only in its gender connection, a limitation some writers have also noted in the comparable worth literature. Bradley (1989) also covers this area, as does a special issue of *Work and Occupations* (18:4, 1992). The literature on women in traditionally male occupations focuses on the (to the authors) surprising similarity of these and other working women, particularly in reasons for occupational choice, working, etc. Authors are also surprised at the persistent strength of SES effects and economic need on occupational aspirations and choice (Timmins & Hainesworth 1989, Poole et al 1990, Padavic 1991).

Another small literature considers work discrimination and harrassment at work. Considering the political importance of the topic, the lack of research is surprising. There are a few ethnographies of harrassment at work (Yount 1991, Gruber 1989), and a nice history of overt discrimination in compensation programs (Kim 1989). A number of historical works (like Lowe 1987 and the Reskin & Roos 1990 case studies) consider the mechanics of deliberate feminization of occupations.

A justly large literature considers the relation of family and work. A variety of articles consider usual topics like the need of complex compromises, the employer preference for single women (Peterson 1989), and the role of reconceptions in shaping perceptions of working mothers (Etaugh & Nekolny 1990). Several books emphasize the importance of complex contingencies in shaping the articulation of family and work (Stichter & Parpart 1990, Beach 1989, Selby et al 1990). Many also emphasize the enormous influence of

differing cultural traditions on this mediation (Stichter & Parpart 1990, Standing 1991, Ramu 1989). Several of these (e.g. Ramu 1989) show the enormous persistence of traditional attitudes in women undertaking modern work. Overall, this literature shows that analyses based on the half-century transformation of American mothers into wage workers cannot produce a general model for the relation of family and extra-family divisions of labor. Not only are there many other ways of working this relation out, but those other ways point out things earlier analysts missed in the American experience. One cannot discuss this issue without a full analysis of work and family culture, of complexes of structural forces that impinge on the local work world, and of the creative response of family members—men and women alike—to them. Serious readers of Tilly & Scott will recognize this as an old lesson. But parts of the literature continue as if they hadn't learned it.

Gender and Specific Occupations/Areas of Employment

Articles about gender and particular occupations are of two kinds. One kind compares men and women, generally finding the expected differences—in rewards (persisting after controls) and attitudes. Ott (1989) finds differences in the rewards of men and women under different kinds of gender mixes. Martin (1990) finds differences in the attitudes of men and women judges. Roach (1990) notes differences in achievement by men and women in law. Yoder et al (1989) note differences in academic hiring consequent on departmental gender mix. The second kind of article compares women to other women and finds extensive variety among them. Gray (1989) finds differences in nurses' organizational commitment reflecting feminist ideology and presence of children. Rosenberg et al (1990) distinguish several types of women lawyers, while Briscoe (1989) notes varying attitudes of women lawyers toward entering politics. Henry (1990) is worried by the antifeminist scripts of senior women academics. In the dozens of articles here sampled, these two strategies are never conducted concurrently, so that varieties of women are compared to varieties of men. This is clearly a major problem.

In books on individual occupations, many of these themes recur. Kingsolver (1989), Kesselman (1990), and Fine (1990) all testify to the complex responses of women in particular occupational settings. Most important, all three testify to the centrality of forming a consciousness (both personal and corporate), making a set of symbols, and coming to an appraisal of the situation. Here, too, we find diversity of women's responses (as in Abir-Am & Outram 1987 on women scientists).

The antinomy between the simple male/female opposition and the diversity of women when considered alone is the basic conundrum of this literature, indeed, of the gender and work literature as a whole. The notion of women's oppression is so central to most writers in these literatures that they are

bewildered or angered when their subjects reject it (as in the elitism of some of Abir-Am & Outram's scientists or the acceptance of clerical subordination in Fine). Yet at the same time writers see enormous variety in the responses of women to situations, a variety that probably—few have studied this question sympathetically—occurs similarly among men. A reminder that other solidarities can supersede gender comes from Hine's (1989) book on black nurses. Like the literature on gender and career, then, the literature on gender and occupations is vibrant and exciting, if occasionally one-sided. The best of it shows conclusively how the structures of culture, tradition, economy, class, and social organization create frameworks within which women (and sometimes men) transform their world of work, indeed their whole lives, and, ultimately, those structures themselves. This literature proves that the static approach of the individualist statistical studies can tell us little or nothing about why the relation of gender and career, family and work, looks the way that it does.

Gender, Race, Wages, Inequality, and Status Mobility

One subtopic commands a substantial portion of this literature: comparable worth (CW). Many of the writers on CW are not sociologists; CW is an applied topic most often researched in business schools, by professors of organizational behavior and psychology (only one author in the 1989 special issue of *Journal of Social Issues* on CW is a sociologist). Most articles on CW are frankly prescriptive. Their politics is well analyzed by Hegtvedt (1989), who also locates the CW literature within the theoretical literature on fairness. Some of the empirical work notes, again, the disturbing toleration of wage gaps by women (Major 1989), while others have noted that evidence for direct bias in job evaluation is fairly rare (Mount & Ellis 1989) although historical factors (Kim 1989) and knowledge of existing wage differences (Mount & Ellis 1989) provide avenues for indirect bias. By far the best studies of CW are the three book length case-studies (Acker 1989, Blum 1991, and Evans & Nelson 1989), which provide cautionary tales about the complexities of actual politics, the difficulties between elite feminist reformers and workaday women, the complex cross-cutting of gender and class interests, and (here at last) the intricate relations between CW advocates and the unions. These books are all thought-provoking analyses.

Beyond the literature on CW, the articles on gender, race, and various forms of inequality are a cacaphony. Their time frames run from 50 years to 20 years to 5 years to none. Their spatial units run from countries to industries to states to firms to jobs within firms. We can draw no general conclusions from combining these articles because we have no theory saying how these different levels and periods of social reality relate to one another. Fillmore's (1990) 50-year study of Canadian census documents may support a reserve

army theory of women's labor force participation, but how do we reconcile that with Rosenfeld & Kalleberg's (1990) equally interesting cross-sectional finding that countries with more occupational sex-segregation can have more equal income distributions (Sweden)? We have state-level census data showing that unionization lowers wage inequality, panel survey data showing that gender gaps have worsened, firm-level data showing blacks and women do badly, occupational data showing that although selection bias lowers the effect, women in female-dominated occupations still make 6 to 15% less than equivalent women in other occupations, and so on and so on. The only common theme of these results is that women always do somewhat worse than men. Politically, such findings are useful; intellectually, they are old news. Without a theory linking large-scale change to local structures and local structures to individuals, we cannot synthesize such findings. There is obvious concern that classical Marxism, which used to provide a general theory for some people, just doesn't work.

Gender and Labor/Management

There is a very small literature on gender and management, mostly on women managers. Thus, Chusmir & Mills (1989) note differences in conflict resolution styles but feel that job level makes more difference than gender. Wiley & Eskilson (1990) show the influence prospective images are likely to have on gender management styles. There is also a literature on management careers and gender, which has much the shape suggested above. There are also a few books on gender and labor. Gabin's (1990) excellent history of women and the United Auto Workers gives a detailed, practical portrait of women's successes and failures on the inside, as do Kingsolver's (1989) wonderful book on women in a mining strike and a number of the books on CW. This area of the relation of women to the principal corporate structures of the work world is understudied in WO, although there is some writing on it in the management literature proper.

Unemployment vis à vis Gender, Age, and Labor Markets Generally

The literature on unemployment (UE) is extensive and cosmopolitan, the latter fact reflecting the larger size and greater political importance of UE in Europe. The literature is chiefly focused on age and labor market policies. There is some question whether increased female labor force participation has increased UE generally, with mixed evidence (McCarthy 1988, Furaker et al 1990). DeBoer & Seeborg (1989) attribute the sharp convergence of male and female UE rates partly to changing labor force attachment and partly to the interaction of occupational sex segregation with sectoral differences in UE.

A large literature considers UE and age, focusing on the beginning and

ending of the work life course. There is increasing attention to the fuzziness of entry into and departure from the labor force. Hartley (1989) considers the impact of youth wage rates on labor force entry; Singell & Lillydahl (1989) consider various definitions for youth UE; Sullivan (1989) considers the interaction of crime and work in youth; and Weis (1990) examines a high school's responses to deindustrialization. An even larger literature considers retirement, now recognized to proceed by fits and starts. (Weiller 1989 gives a historical background.) Some consider the response of older workers to career displacements (Rife & First 1989), while others work at disentangling early retirement from UE (Casey & Laczko 1989), itself complicated by older workers' interpretation of their segregation into special labor markets (House 1989). Schulz et al (1991) and Szeman (1989) study the complex interactions of policy in this area, the latter being an elegant study of the emergence of UE in a pensioners' labor market.

Labor market policy provides the other major theme in this area. A number of writers emphasize the wide diversity of policies (Evers & Wintersberger 1990, Grahl & Teague 1989) while noting that different policies may yet produce similar UE rates. A surprising number of works refer, directly or indirectly, to the cultural construction of unemployment, by workers and policy makers. This construction can be analyzed at the national level (Janoski 1990), within a particular policy (Miller 1991), or among individual workers (Pappas 1989, Mandler 1990. See also Salais et al 1986). Work on UE is beginning to be complemented by sophisticated work on structures of employment itself. Korver (1990) and Jacoby (1991) provide general histories of forms of American employment, while DiPrete (1989) gives a detailed analysis of the Federal civil service.

Unions and Labor Relations

The literatures clustered around the union and IR topics are much more international than the literatures around gender. This reflects not only the currently declining fortunes of American unions, but also the greater institutionalization and political importance of both organized labor and labor policies in other advanced countries.

There are many case studies. Bracho (1990) examines the demise of a Mexican cadre union at the hands of peasant and worker confederations. Berger (1990) studies gender conflicts in a South African canning union, noting the interaction of anti-apartheid politics and union politics. Barber (1990) studies a fish processing plant union, emphasizing that labor action is possible only when larger structural circumstances interact with local cultural values to provide opportunities for locally meaningful action. The emphasis on interaction of micro and macro reaches its peak in Cornfield's (1990)

massive study of the furniture workers' union, where status conflicts generated by external pressures drive union change.

A number of studies consider broader issues like the emergence of overall styles of IR. Patmore (1988) tells how arbitration procedures in Australian railroading created openings for union activity, while Kelly (1988) considers the much later emergence of tripartite structures in Australian IR. Hertle & Kadtler (1990) see the move of German paper and ceramics unions toward industry-wide policy as key to union success. Teage (1989) considers attitudes of European workers toward transnational unions possible under the EC (attitudes are mixed.) Here too, the theme of culture makes an appearance. Cohen (1990) attributes much of the peculiarity of American labor relations to the influx of British workers into a labor system that had had no phase of large-scale domestic production, although Haydu (1989) finds that effects of changes in production patterns swamp those of cultural differences in his study of open shops early in the twentieth century.

The literature on collective bargaining proper is another of those relatively complex literatures whose chief implication is that complex conjunctures are central. Miller & Canak's (1991) case study of public sector collective bargaining in Florida provides a good example, explaining why local conditions undermined the "normally expected" effects of the "usual variables." Public sector collective bargaining groups are equally a focus for Troy (1990), who wants to explain their strength, and Gagnon (1990), who wants to explain their divisions. There are the usual attempts to explain the dominance of bread and butter issues for American unions (e.g. Taplin 1990) when contrasted with broader, neocorporatist bargaining in Europe.

More general work continues the same themes. Clark's (1989) study of American union decline in the 1980s again focuses on a conjunction, in this case of internal tensions, economic restructuring, and conscious anti-union policy. Baglioni & Crouch's (1990) review of European IR sees less convergence of forces and consequently more various outcomes, although noting the general shift in industrial relations toward management initiative and dominance.

Also repeated in this broader literature is the emphasis on the culture, the symbolic and subjective representation of work. Sometimes, this involves direct study of worker attitudes to work itself, as in Lincoln & Kalleberg's (1990) quantitative attempt to distinguish Japanese & American attitudes toward work. In a different style, Vallas (1991) opposes standard hegemony theories of worker attitudes toward management, while Bodnar (1989) turns to detailed oral histories to reconstruct collective constructions of life in an automobile plant. A variety of work considers political attitudes of workers and managers, the adversarial attitude often being singled out (particularly in applied literatures) as "problematic." [See Peck & Hollub (1989) for an

empirical study of this situation, and Lambelet & Hainard (1989) for a theoretical one.] Survey studies of workers document precisely that Michelsian view of union leaders (Golden 1990) whose error Cornfield (1990) was at pains to show in his book.

Study continues of worker participation; essays in Sirianni (1987) provide a useful cross-section of these. Grootings et al (1989) also review the area. A more analytical attempt is by Tsiganou (1991), who places all the new participative schemes in a common and explicit comparative framework. A few writers (e.g. Wever 1989) have begun to examine the specific conditions for participation schemes with standard methods. Results seem to suggest as crucial the conjunction of union security, union economic leverage, and some common vision between labor and management. The absence of these may explain the concern, here and there in the literature, that the current wave of worker participation schemes is over.

Unions and Race

The exciting and angry literature on unions and race is largely within the discipline of history. It is today making a transition that the historical literature on labor and gender made more than a decade ago: a transition in which the "good guys" of the new labor historians are recognized to have partaken not only of the best but also of the worst of their cultures. Asher & Stephenson (1990) provide a collection looking on the positive side of race relations within the labor movement. Hirsch's (1990) immensely detailed study of Chicago labor focuses on culturally rooted ideologies and gives a more complex, and on balance more negative, picture. There has been frank debate about racism in the unions, particularly in the UAW, sparked by the work of Hill (1987, 1989). Responses to Hill's analysis range from mild apologetics through agonized fence-sitting to angry denial. The reader may choose his or her own version. (See various writers in *New Politics* 1:3, 1987, and *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 2:3, 1989.)

Work and Culture

The area of work and culture has several parts. The first concerns ethnicity. Most study of ethnicity and work is done in books, perhaps because what we often take as a simple variable breaks down, on serious examination, into a diverse bundle of phenomena. Studies here include Jesuadson's (1989) examination of the interaction of state, ethnic groups, and external forces in Malaysia, Bourgois's (1989) study of the diversity of ethnic groups on a banana plantation, and Peled's (1989) analysis of class and ethnicity among Jewish workers of the Russian Pale. As is usual in books, there is emphasis on complexity and contingency, although all three take environing economic

forces as exogenous and all emphasize (especially Peled) the construction of ethnicity in the face of work interactions. A somewhat related literature takes up the impact of national level cultures on transnational phenomena like capitalism, a topic reviewed by Clegg & Redding (1990). (See also Gullick 1990 on expatriate managers.) There is much writing, now more now less applied, on "organizational culture" (e.g. Paules 1990, D'Amico-Samuels 1990).

By far the most exciting study of culture and work concerns the imagining of work itself. Some of this study has concerned occupations (e.g. Symonds 1991, Whalley 1987). But the most exciting work concerns occupational statistics. A handful of people—Margo Anderson (Conk 1980), Simon Szreter (1984, 1992), and others—have definitively shown that we cannot take census occupational categories as immediately meaningful, either synchronically, as in the DOT, or diachronically, as in the quixotic effort of the Minneapolis 1880 Census Project to render "comparable" all US occupational classifications back to 1880. In France, official statisticians themselves lead the way in this reanalysis of occupational categories; Alain Desrosières of INSEE invented the 1982 occupational classification, and he himself (Desrosières & Thévenot 1988) has written the analysis deconstructing it. Robert Salais and others (1986) have written an equally brilliant book on the concept of unemployment. [Work on this area has appeared in such diverse places as Finland (Kinnunen 1988) and Portugal (Ravara 1988), work I am sadly unable to read.] A central driving force in this reappraisal of occupational categories has been recognition of their facile occlusion of women's work, a subject investigated at length by Higgs (1987), Folbre & Abel (1989), and others. Beechey (1989) has recently reopened the topic with a focus on its implications for cross-national comparisons of womens' work. It is absolutely certain that analysis of the culture of work will be one of WO's major future topics.

Professions

Professions continue to be the most effectively theorized of occupations. To be sure, a few individual level studies are found (Johnson 1990 and Jolly et al 1990), particularly on gender matters. And the steady flow of case studies continues (Crawford 1989, Curry 1990, Galanter & Palay 1991, Landon 1990, Stebbins 1990), as does comparative study, at least of lawyers (see the three volumes of Abel & Lewis 1989). But theorizing dominates. After nearly two decades under the "professional dominance" paradigm, sociologists of medicine finally recognized that medicine's precarious position demanded more complex theories (see the special issue of *Milbank Quarterly* 66:Supplement 2, 1988). A special issue of *Sociologie et Sociétés* (20:2, 1988) shows far

more bravura. Catherine Paradeise (1988) construes professions in terms of labor markets, while Magali Sarfatti Larson (1988) turns to Foucauldian fields of discourse and Elliott Krause (1988) to relations between state and profession. Of these three lines of attack, Krause's appears to be most prominent today, partly because of policy debates on professionals within the EC. (See also essays in Torstendahl & Burrage 1990 and Burrage & Torstendahl 1990). We can also expect more studies of gender and professions, although the mechanics of women's exclusion and of the relations between male and female professions are pretty well-studied. As yet unstudied in any real detail is the gendering of the concept of expert itself in the nineteenth century.

Abbott (1988) attempted to recast the area with three basic arguments: that professions could not be studied individually but only within an interacting system, that a theory of professions had to embrace not only culture and social structure but also intra-, inter-, and transprofessional forces, and that the development of professions would necessarily be a matter of complex conjunctures. None of these arguments has had much impact. The jurisdictional studies Abbott called for have not appeared; linear studies of individual professions continue to dominate (e.g. Wenocur & Reisch 1989, Junqueira Botelho 1990, Brain 1991). Moreover, recent studies have emphasized either the cultural (Brain & Larson) or the social structural (like most work on relations with the state), and none systematically pursues multilevel analysis. Finally, although ridiculed by Abbott, the search for "determining variables" continues (e.g. Raelin 1989).

Theory

Capital is surely the archetypical examination of work: a study ranging from micro to macro, from social structure to (once in a while) culture, systematically drawing together a theory of economy, of work, of organization, and of association and placing the whole within a formal conception of the historical process. It is therefore not surprising that most synthetic studies of work are Marxist in lineage if not in fact. Yet much of what seems general theoretical work is simply macro rather than synthetic. Thus we have literatures on macro topics like classes (Zeitlin 1989, Swenson 1989, Laba 1991), organizations (Fligstein 1990, Chandler 1990), and technology (Wright et al 1987, Ling 1990, Nash 1989, Morgan & Sayer 1988). There are also various critiques of economic reasoning (Block 1990, Friedl & Robertson 1990). But true multilevel work is mainly within case studies, rather than in the theoretical literature itself. In particular, the problem of transnational capitalism's impact on individual localities has drawn some interesting multilevel work.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical problem of reconciling the micro and the macro is general in sociology and crucial in WO, as Kalleberg (1989) recognizes. But our official theorists do little more than relabel the problem with new words like structuration. A serious theory of micro to macro can emerge only from an empirical area. In WO, it will emerge from people working with multilevel data on work: data that brings together exact career information (micro), network structure among careers and jobs (meso), and occupational/organization level information (macro) on occupations and work structures in conflict and process. At present, only historians and historical sociologists have taken the time to gather such datasets, and usually only on professions or skilled laborers. In the meantime, lack of theory covering multiple levels in both space and time makes most pieces of quantitative research on work mutually irreconcilable and hence meaningless. It remains true that for all our modern insights, there is only one truly general theory of work, that of Marx.

Yet all the formal attractions of Marx's work cannot hide its present problems—its assumptions about the nature of work (see Seidman 1991) as much as its magnificent failures as a guide for policy. And ironically, although the formal beauty of Marx's theories means little to the individualist literature on work, in the hands of many current mainstream workers the spiritual values of his theory—the union of theory and practice and the hatred of oppression—have become that literature's chief cornerstone. For the last decade or more, the best study of work has without question come from researchers whose passion to right wrongs spoke in every sentence. In my view, that commitment is beginning to obscure our understanding. That studies attend to diversity among women only when men are completely off-stage is one indicator, as is the common treatment of men as a unified, homogenous, oppressive group. Another is the insistence that "there is no sorrow like my sorrow," for example, the peculiar focus on comparable worth across gender to the exclusion of other differences (q.v. Mount & Ellis 1989, Hine 1989.) Still another is the common anger at research subjects, both past and present, who refuse to recognize what we now "know" to be their oppression. More fools they.

The move of historical studies of gender and work toward explicit recognition of the complex, contingent responses of men and women to changes in their world is a move in the right direction. Like Marxist study of work before it, feminist history of work has been led by its focus on lived experience to recognize the complex contradictions of life that ideologies often ignore. But there is a long way to go. At the deepest level, those focused on oppression have to confront anti-hierarchicalism for the culture-bound, Western ideology that it is, perhaps by frankly confronting what kinds of

hierarchy they might consider just. This problem may be under discussion off-stage, in theoretical writing I don't know. But here in the area of WO, our day-to-day experience is that most of the really exciting work—the work with new data, new questions, and new solutions—has a consistently politicized tone, while most of the apolitical work is intellectually sterile. We die between.

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