An Empirical Test of the Embourgeoisement Thesis:

The Australian Case

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at the Australian National University.

December, 1974
I certify that this thesis is my own composition, and that all sources have been acknowledged.

T. Kriegler
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER

1 Introduction 1

2 Conceptual and Theoretical Issues 10

3 The Research Design 31

4 The Market Situation 37

5 The Normative Aspects of Embourgeoisement 55

6 Conclusions and Implications of the Study 93

BIBLIOGRAPHY 110
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Tables</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Distribution of occupational categories in the sample</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The occupational distribution of male Australian workers, 1911-1966</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Median income of full-year, full-time male workers: Australia, 1968-69</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Median annual household income: Australia, 1966-68</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Home ownership arrangements in Australia, 1967</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Career mobility in Australia</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Median annual incomes for occupations by age: full-time male workers in Australia, 1967</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Superannuation rates amongst male wage and salary earners: Victoria, 1968</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Career aspirations - desire for alternative occupation</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Career aspirations in Australia</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Career aspirations - controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Self-identification of social class in Australia</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Class identification by occupation</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Club membership in Australia</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Magazine and periodical reading by occupation</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables - Contd</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Political identification in Australia</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Voting Patterns in Australia</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Trade Union membership in Australia</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Trade Union ties with the Australian Labor Party</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Trade Union power in Australia</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Big Business power in Australia</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION:

Australian sociological literature is characterized by a distinct lack of research in the field of social stratification. Indeed, there have been no substantial attempts (apart from the nation-wide Australian National University study carried out by Broom, Jones and Zubrzycki in 1965) to delineate the Australian system of stratification. Likewise, the embourgeoisement thesis, which has aroused considerable research interest in Britain, Europe, and the United States has, with the exception of a small study in Melbourne, received little empirical attention from Australian social scientists. By means of an empirical test, this study aims to assess the validity of the embourgeoisement thesis within the socio-economic and socio-cultural context of Australia.

It has been continually asserted by proponents of the embourgeoisement thesis that with the increase in Gross National Product and the resultant rise in living standards of all groups in advanced industrial society, the traditional working-class has (contrary to Marx's expectations), become diversified in respect to skill levels, rewards, attitudes,


values, and life-styles, and that its most affluent sector has become economically, socially, and culturally integrated into the middle-class.  

Dahrendorf maintains that an analysis of present-day industrial conditions in America and Western Europe suggests that the labour force can be broken down into at least three skill (economically distinct) groups, the most skilled of which can be placed on an economic parity with the white-collar workers. Recognizing this, Mayer concluded that these 'shifts in income distribution and occupational structure ... represent merely the first, but indispensable, steps on the road to full-fledged middle-class status'. Elsewhere Mayer asserts that the traditional distinctions between white-collar and manual occupations are becoming less visible, and that affluent manual workers have come to adopt a 'white-collar style of life' and have come to accept middle-class values and beliefs. 'In many respects', writes Mayer, 'the line which sets off the "aristocracy of skilled labor" from the bulk of semi-skilled and unskilled manual labourers is more significant sociologically than the dividing line between skilled

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4. R. Dahrendorf, op. cit., p.50

5. K. Mayer, op. cit., p.75

craftsmen and lower middle class white collar workers which has become increasingly blurred in recent years'.

Therefore it seems clear that these writers were concerned not only with the traditional study of occupational and social mobility (which is basically concerned with the movement of individuals and their families through a taken-for-granted, objectively-given, class hierarchy), but also with the movement of entire classes in relation to each other. 'It is perfectly obvious', says Mayer, 'that changes in the class structure itself must have a major import upon the opportunities of individuals to move between the various levels of the class pyramid'.

The embourgeoisement thesis stems from a general belief that the widespread economic inequalities experienced in the early phases of industrial society are diminishing and thereby losing their former significance. Consequently it is held that radical dissent, class consciousness, and extreme class differences have been substantially reduced. These inequalities have been reduced, it is claimed, by the continuous redistribution of wealth, by the diffusion of power in 'post-capitalist', 'post-marxist' society, by the increasing mechanization of industry (thus engendering upward

7. ibid.

8. K. Mayer, 'Recent Changes in the Class Structure of the United States', op. cit., p.67


social mobility and growth in number and importance of middle-class occupations) and also by a progressive narrowing of the inequalities of opportunity for individual advancement in the welfare state. The embourgeoisement thesis thus reflects, for its proponents, a generally accepted, all-embracing approach to the whole issue of social stratification.

More specifically, however, the embourgeoisement thesis asserts that blue-collar prosperity, in conjunction with the breakdown of income differentials between blue and white-collar workers, has enabled large numbers of manual workers to assume patterns of consumption and life-styles formerly the exclusive preserve of lower white-collar workers and has consequently led to their social, normative and political integration with middle-class society. This process can be broken down, following Goldthorpe and Lockwood's guidelines, into three distinct assumptions. First, it is argued that many manual workers can be placed on an economic parity with white-collar workers. However, Hamilton showed how official United States figures have been used to manipulate the validation of the embourgeoisement thesis. According to him, when factors such as women's earnings, career patterns and the class position of foremen are taken


into account, the difference in annual income between the skilled manual workers and non-manual workers was reduced to 88 dollars in favour of the non-manual workers.

Mackenzie, on the other hand, keeping foremen within the manual worker category, found that in respect to the working male 'all differentials separating the blue and white collar groups have disappeared'.

Second, it is assumed that close social links are being established between the affluent worker and the middle-class outside the work situation, that is, the establishment of everyday relationships between individuals and their families, of two previously quite distinct (if not hostile) worlds, on the basis of social equality. This assumption, although unquestionably tied to the embourgeoisement thesis, has received almost no research attention from its proponents. At best, writers have argued that various traditional social barriers have been broken down, thus making social interaction between the working-class and the middle-class more feasible. Mills, on the other hand, although recognizing the mergence of manual and non-manual workers declares, as does Lockwood, that the


white-collar workers will strive to maintain status differences between themselves and their blue-collar brothers by excluding blue-collar workers from their clubs and social organizations.

Third, it is maintained that affluent manual workers have adopted middle-class life styles, values, aspirations, norms, and social and political orientations. In short, it is argued that they have lost their working-class consciousness and have adopted a middle-class Weltanschauung. However, Hamilton, in an attempt to assess the 'cultural distance' between pairs of occupational categories, found that his results failed to substantiate the claim that the traditional cultural gap between skilled manual and lower non-manual workers is closing. This result was reinforced by Glenn and Alston, who conclude that 'skilled manual workers ... considered as a whole, are more appropriately considered as a part of the working class than of the middle class'.

Australia, by virtue of its unique historical background and purportedly strong, all-pervasive ideology of


equality and classlessness,\textsuperscript{22} provides an excellent social setting for the validation of the original \textit{embourgeoisement} thesis, and thus enables the researcher to give the thesis its most rigorous test yet. In 1969 Parsler attempted the only empirical test of the thesis in Australia. He found that 'both on percentage rates of income and on median career incomes the blue collar workers are considerably worse off than the white collar workers',\textsuperscript{23} and concluded that 'income alone has little to do with some aspects of the life styles of the groups and that the \textit{embourgeoisement} thesis fails to explain this Australian situation'.\textsuperscript{24}

Parsler's study fails to adequately explore important normative aspects of the \textit{embourgeoisement} thesis. For example, worker attitudes towards trade unionism and worker voting patterns. Parsler's findings are based on a sample of 900 heads of households drawn from the 'southern suburbs' of Melbourne and thus it seems important, in view of his interesting (and somewhat unexpected) findings, to re-test the thesis using a nation-wide sample. The present study will seek therefore to provide an examination of the economic aspect of the thesis, for it is on this that the more tenuous normative and relational assertions of the thesis are founded. Thus, in order to compare manual workers with lower white-collar

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Parsler, 'Some Economic Aspects of \textit{Embourgeoisement} in Australia', \textit{op. cit.}, p.174.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Parsler, 'Some Social Aspects of \textit{Embourgeoisement} in Australia', \textit{op. cit.}, p.110
\end{itemize}
workers, information must be sought on three aspects of income:

1. income from main occupation of head of household;
2. income from a second job, or any other source;
3. income from wife's occupation.

Also, further information pertaining to the economic situation of the two occupational categories must, wherever possible, be sought. For instance, home ownership, job security, employment hours, and fringe benefits.

Ideally, the social aspect of the thesis (the most difficult to study empirically), demands that an attempt be made to assess the extent to which long-standing community, neighbourhood and family ties between manual workers have been broken down, and have been replaced by new social ties with members of the middle-class.²⁵ Information of this kind was not available for analysis in the present study and thus a test of the Goldthorpe and Lockwood claim (that there remains a 'marked degree of status segregation [between affluent manual workers and lower white-collar workers] in housing, in informal neighbourhood relations, in friendship groups, in the membership of local clubs, societies and organizations')²⁶ could not be attempted.

Finally, the present study will test whether or not there exists a cultural and normative disparity between affluent manual and lower non-manual workers. This will be

²⁶. ibid.
done in reference to career aspirations, class identification, membership of organizations, voting patterns, attitudes to trade unionism and others.

Social philosophers and other precursors of sociology have for centuries preoccupied themselves with solving the so-called Iberian problem of social order. As Robert Althus pointed out, the ideas of the European sociologists are best understood as a response to the problem of social order in the 19th century. These early writers were somewhat alarmed by the collapse of the old feudal order, characterized by kinship, land, social class, religion, feudal community and monarchy, under "the blood of industrialism and revolutionary democracy". The two solutions (or interpretations of social reality) to the problem which these posed and which have been of major importance to sociology are the consensus and conflict interpretations of social reality. They generate quite different expectations regarding the nature of man and society and, in short, rest on diametrically opposed moral positions.

Ideally, cherishing their love for example, Durkheim, Parsons, Saint-Simon, Comte and Marx, to mention a few, in true sociological tradition, subscribe to each one of us unthinkingly to the notion of 'moral' in its meaning the basic nature of men and consequently, propose the need for maintaining restraining institutions to ensure men's anti-social nature. Society, on the other hand, is conceived to be inherently good and stable. All the parts in an idealized society perform functional duties for the system as a whole and all

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ISSUES:

Social philosophers and other precursors of sociology have for centuries preoccupied themselves with solving the so-called Hobbesian problem of social order. As Robert Nisbet pointed out, the ideas of the European sociologists are best understood as a response to the problem of social order in the 19th century. These early writers were somewhat alarmed by the collapse of the old feudal order (characterized by kinship, land, social class, religion, local community and monarchy), under 'the blows of industrialism and revolutionary democracy'.

The two solutions (viz, interpretations of social reality) to the problem which Hobbes posed and which have been of major importance to sociology, are the consensus and conflict interpretations of social reality. They rest on quite different assumptions regarding the nature of man and society and, in short, rest on diametrically opposed ethical positions.

Ideally, consensus theorists (for example, Durkheim, Parsons, Saint-Simon, Comte and Merton, to mention only a few) in true Machiavellian tradition, subscribe (in some cases unwittingly) to the notion of 'original sin' by distrusting the basic nature of man and, consequently, propose the need for maintaining restraining institutions to douse man's anti-social nature. Society, on the other hand, is conceived to be inherently good and stable, all its parts in equilibrium, each part performing functions for the system as a whole and all

integrated through common values and norms. It is usually implicit in consensus theories that survival of the social system in its present form is paramount, and this is contingent upon the needs of the system being fulfilled by the elements of that system.

The conflict theorists, on the other hand, (Marx, Dahrendorf, and Rex), influenced by the 'negative' philosophies of German Romanticism, dispute the need for maintaining 'restraining institutions' in society, and paint a far more optimistic picture of the nature of man. Thus Marx, according to at least one interpretation,² views man as inherently good and rational, and regards the State and the major institutions in society as 'organs of the dominant class', organized for the exploitation and suppression of the rest of society. Conflict theorists maintain that conflict and change are ongoing and unavoidable features of society; indeed, society is viewed as a setting within which basic struggles (not necessarily only class struggles) between two or more conflicting groups occur. Social order is based, for the conflict theorists, on the capacity of a powerful group to will, through whatever means available, the co-operation of the less powerful groups.

It is clear that both perspectives are founded on undisguisable ethical premises and are based on diametrically opposed conceptions of morality. The consensus position is strongly influenced by an absolutist conception of morality. This conception seems to have dominated western thought. According to Mandelbaum's phenomenological analysis of

morals, morality is viewed by people in western society as something external to themselves, something given to them rather than created by them, something given by God, or nature. Parsons' emphasis on socialization implicitly regards man as a value-transmitting and value-receiving creature, rather than a value-creating creature.4 Deeply entrenched in this position is the ethical assumption that society (or the nation-state), the law, and morality, are one. The conflict theorists, on the other hand, are more inclined to subscribe to the view that morality is essentially autonomous - man, being a value-creating creature, morally precedes society, God, or nature. The antecedents of this position lie in the ethical writings of Kant, the young Hegel, and the early Existential thinkers.

The embourgeoisement thesis, as already indicated, represents a fairly recent critique of Marx's notions of social class, alienation, class consciousness, class conflict and revolution. In particular, the thesis questions the applicational validity these notions have to advanced industrial societies. According to Marx, social classes evolved with the first historical expansion of productive forces beyond the subsistence level, through the extension of the division of labour outside the family, the accumulation of surplus wealth, and the emergence of private ownership of the means of production.5 For Marx, therefore, the conflict

between classes originated right at the beginning of human society, and he moreover considered this conflict to be the driving force behind the evolution of human society. Marx maintained that, through the dialectic process, new contradictions arose out of the elimination of existing contradictions. History thus proceeds by a series of conflicts and their resolutions. As he put it in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Marx saw all these oppositions as culminating in one major opposition: namely, the opposition of capital and labour - of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Marx's conceptualization of class is based on the view that members occupy a common relationship to the means of production - they either own or are excluded from ownership of the property which is used for the production of goods and services in the satisfaction of man's basic needs. Thus the inexorable clash of economic interest, inherent within such an economic structure, provides the major source of conflict in society. According, at least, to the Manifesto of the Communist Party, the "intermediary classes" were to disappear, leaving only the capitalists and the proletariat in their inevitable and irreconcilable opposition to each other. Capitalist society (particularly in its more advanced form) would become more and more polarized. And with the

7. ibid.
8. This issue will be examined in more detail later.
9. ibid, pp. 31, 40 and 44.
development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. Thus Marx drew attention to class consciousness and the process whereby a class 'in sich' becomes a class 'für sich', when the members of a group, sharing a common relationship to the means of production, become conscious of their common class interests - a process which involves both objective and subjective factors. Marx further notes that the proletariat will become more and more homogeneous as the capitalist society draws to its self-induced end. "The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat", says Marx, 'are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level'.

According to many sociologists, the embourgeoisement thesis represents a strong challenge to Marxist theory, for rather than viewing classes in advanced capitalist society as becoming more polarized, the thesis depicts a merging of class interests and predicts an economic, social and normative integration of the social classes. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the embourgeoisement thesis has been received far more favourably by the consensus theorists than by the conflict theorists.

The conceptual and ethical antecedents of the consensus tradition lie in the positivistic writings of Saint-Simon and Comte, via Emile Durkheim and the British Anthropologists. Like the early positivists, the structural-functionalists were

10. ibid., p.41
11. ibid., pp. 41-42.
particularly concerned with discrediting the critical and "destructive" principles of "negative" philosophy of the Kantian and Hegelian tradition and replacing it with "affirmative" and "constructive" principles for the re-establishment of social order, social stability, and moral consensus. Hence Parsons maintains that 'it is a condition of the stability of social systems that there should be an integration of the value-standards of the component units to constitute a "common value system"', and that 'stratification in its valuational aspect ... is the ranking of units in a social system in accordance with the standards of the common value system'.

Also, the proponents of the consensus model have hastened to point out, as already indicated, that the substantial inequalities and class conflicts of early capitalism are diminishing, that class differences have given way primarily to status differences. Warner and his associates put forward their 'index of status characteristics' and the method of 'evaluated participation' which, they concluded, produced social groups 'more real' than Marx's classes. This was so, it was argued, because the status groups so uncovered were subjectively meaningful to the participants and formed the basis of the entire social scheme upon which they acted and lived.

On the other hand, it was class distinctions (rather than status distinctions) in society that were, for Marx, of major sociological and historical significance, and class could be

studied as a 'real' entity, independently of the subjective accounts of the people within that class. More recently, Rex, drawing heavily on Marx's notions of class, historical materialism and ideology, re-affirms the tenuous position given to the study of status by Marx. In his conflict model, Rex argues that the 'ruling group' will make substantial ideological efforts to justify its position of dominance.\textsuperscript{14} This is done, he suggests, in the all-pervasive, Anglo-American cultural tradition of disseminating the strata scheme of a status hierarchy.\textsuperscript{15} So that in order to draw peoples' attention away from the fundamental economic conflicts inherent in the economic system, the ruling class seeks to justify its position by declaring that status characteristics such as occupational status, income or education (with which they themselves are so well endowed) are the result of individual aptitude, application, and merit. Thus, for the conflict theorists, class is real whilst status merely provides normative support.

But as Prandy points out, 'that stratification by both class and status is found in modern societies cannot be doubted. Unfortunately sociologists have tended to emphasize only one or the other, often trying to prove that only one of them is real, and that the other is a sociological imposition on the facts.'\textsuperscript{16} This is certainly true of Robert Nisbet's over-zealous

\begin{enumerate}
\item ibid., p.148.
\end{enumerate}
depiction of 'The Decline and Fall of Social Class' but less true of Sjoberg and also Bendix and Lipset's belief that industrial advances in the past half century have 'caused such a redistribution of highly valued prestige symbols that the distinctions between social classes are much less immediately visible than they were in 19th century America, or are in contemporary Europe'. Similar assertions have been


20. These claims have come under strong attack from several quarters including, of course, the conflict theorists. Conflict writers claim that the trend towards redistribution of income, wealth, and property has been greatly exaggerated by conservatives in politics, the press, in government administrations, as well as amongst some preeminent (but misguided) economists and social scientists. Thus Bottomore, after a review of current literature, points out that 'most students of the problem however, have concluded that from 1900 to 1939 there was little or no redistribution of income in favour of wage-earners, and that at the end of the period some 10 per cent of the population received almost half the national income while the other 90 per cent of the population received the other half; that between 1939 and 1949 redistribution may have transferred some 10 per cent of the national income from property owners to wage earners; but that since 1949 there has again been growing inequality' (Bottomore, 1965, p.35). He also points out that these calculations are primarily based on income tax returns and therefore do not take into account untaxed real income as a result of tax evasion techniques, which Westergaard (1965) Tittmuss (1962) and he all maintain, benefit mainly the rich. According to Westergaard (1965, pp.82-3), the distribution of private property remains a direct source of inequality. In 1955, two-fifths of all private property in Britain were in the hands of only one per cent of the adult population, whilst four-fifths were in the hands of only 10 per cent of that population. Moreover, legal ownership of private corporate business remained exceedingly high - far too high to support a claim that wealth and property inequality has greatly decreased. Four-fifths of all share capital in Britain, declares Westergaard, is held by only one per cent of the adult population, and nearly all the rest by another 9 or 10 per cent. Similar findings have been reported in the USA (Bottomore,1965; Kolko,1962) and in Australia (Mayer,1964).
made in regard to the British class structure.

It seems clear, then, that a well-worn impasse exists between the conflict and consensus traditions. Consensus theorists remain assured in their belief in the existence of a common value system in highly industrialized societies whilst denying the presence of structurally generated conflicts. There have been a number of endeavours at a synthesis of the two opposing views: writers such as Rex, Van Den Berghe, Ossowski, Lenski and Dahrendorf have argued that there is truth in both approaches to social reality, for just as there is conflict in all societies, so too is there a considerable amount of consensus. Societies are far more complex than either theoretical system has ever acknowledged, and both have presented only partial views of social reality. But it seems that despite their good intentions, this attempted rapprochement has not been very successful. The debate continues between those who argue that the stratification system in advanced industrial societies is becoming less rigid and polarized, and those who argue that social classes have remained economically, socially, and


normatively differentiated. Moreover, consensus writers strongly assert that rigid class divisions and class antagonisms are no longer a relevant characteristic of the 'post-capitalist' society, and consequently the working-classes have betrayed the revolutionary role ascribed to them by Marx. Far from seeking to destroy the relations of production, they have accepted these relations. Marcuse, supporting the latter part of this argument, explains that the working-class has lost its revolutionary potential, not because structural contradictions have abated, but because the bewildered alienated masses have become tied to the consumer society. He writes: 'The people recognize themselves in their commodities. They find their souls in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, and kitchen equipment'. For the Marxist sociologists this embourgeoisement of the working-class is but a temporary and insignificant development because the fundamental economic contradictions, in the face of affluence and compulsive consumerism, are still an inescapable part of the capitalist mode of production. And although the working-class is currently riding the crest of the capitalist wave, a spontaneous return to a class struggle is likely in the event of any sudden reduction in their accustomed living standards.


The Notion of Middle-Class:

The Embourgeoisement thesis rests on the assumption that an actual social class exists somewhere between the working-class and the upper-class. It is a class which, from the point of view of the thesis, has distinct and discernible economic, social, and normative standards. But in order to adequately determine, for example, whether or not traditional working-class attitudes, values, orientations, and life-styles have succumbed to those of the middle-class, a number of questions must be answered. Firstly, does the notion of middle-class necessarily negate Marx's theory of social stratification? Secondly, is the middle-class a real social class? Thirdly, which occupational groups are most likely to fall into the middle-class?

It is argued by many writers (the anti-Marxists as well as some Marxists) that contrary to Marx's expectations, the 'intermediate strata' have not disappeared, but grown in number, and that this has resulted in the depolarization of capitalist society. Marx did indeed claim, in the Manifesto of the Communist Party that 'our epoch, the epoch of bourgeoisie possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into

25. Although the notion of middle-class is an important part of the conceptual scheme of consensus theorists, its position in Marxian theory is not quite so clear. Indeed, it is often spuriously held that the rise of the middle-class in itself negates Marx's theory of social stratification.

two great classes directly facing each other - bourgeoisie and proletariat'. But according to Hodges' bold study, Marx's emphasis on a dualism in capitalist society is confined to those works that were originally designed for mass consumption and propaganda: The Manifesto of the Communist Party; Wage-Labour and Capital; Value, Price and Profit; and Socialism: Utopia and Scientific. In their more theoretical works, claims Hodges, Marx and Engels placed greater emphasis on the growth and decline of the various 'intermediate strata' in society.

It is clear that Marx, for the purpose of clarity and simplicity, centred his attention on those basic conflict situations which arise because of the differential relations which groups of people have to the means of production. And thus his interest was centred on the two major conflicting groups. There is little doubt that Marx was well aware of the growth of certain sections of the middle-class, whilst also aware of the fairly rapid decline of other sections of the middle-class. Thus when he referred to 'intermediate classes' he was not only writing about small producers, craftsmen, artisans, small farmers, and self-employed professional men (the petite-bourgeoisie) who have in fact been declining in number, but also - suggests Hodges - to a group of people who have a distinctive and unique relationship to the means of production. This is hinted at in the Manifesto of the Communist Party.

29. ibid.
where he categorizes the petite-bourgeoisie as the declining 'lower middle-class'. Moreover, Marx criticizes Ricardo, in his Theorien über den Mehrwert for failing to mention 'the continual increase in numbers of the middle classes'.

Marx also recognized the growth of government bureaucracies as well as independent bureaucracies within capitalist corporations. According to Avineri, Marx, rather than having overlooked the 'managerial revolution' and 'stock companies' (which ostensibly undermined his theory of class), anticipated it.

Whereas Marx was interested in a specific conflict situation dictated by differential access to the means of production, Max Weber's conception of classes is somewhat broader. 'We may speak of class', writes Weber 'when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances insofar as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interest in the possession of goods and opportunities for income'. A Class is understood by Weber as a group of people with similar 'life chances', and as Rex points out, Weber argued that peoples' class situations differ according to the 'meaning that they can and do give to the utilization of their property'.

30. K. Marx and F. Engels, op.cit., p.44.
Therefore the question to be answered becomes: are the so-called middle-class really an independent, authentic class insofar as they have distinctive life chances (Weber) and/or insofar as they have a distinctive relationship to the means of production (Marx), or is their belief that this is the case merely a typical case of 'false consciousness'?

According to John Rex, the upper-level bureaucrat validly believes that his employment represents a career for life, whereas the proletarian validly believes that he may be discharged at very short notice. Thus, argues Rex, these two groups of individuals have valid expectations of their life chances, and therefore 'there appears to be good reason for holding ... that there is a considerable number of managers and bureaucrats in any advanced industrial society who, although they would appear only as deluded proletarians according to rigid Marxist definitions, do actually have a distinctive class situation'. Lockwood, in The Blackcoated Worker, points to further economic distinctions between clerks and manual workers.

The problem of whether or not the 'new middle-class' has a distinctive relationship to the means of production is very complex and confusing, and certainly could not be resolved in

35. ibid., p.143.
36. Lower-level bureaucrats and clerks are given a marginal position by both Rex and Lockwood. Thus, according to these writers these workers are in a 'continual dilemma' as a result of being exposed to the seductive ideological arguments of both the ruling-class and the proletariat.
37. J. Rex, op.cit., p.143.
38. D. Lockwood, op.cit., p.68.
this paper. In his article Hodges argues that a distinctive middle-class has been in existence since the time of Marx, and that Marx was well aware of this. He points out that white-collar workers are differently related to the means of production insofar as, firstly, their labour is 'the labor of realizing surplus value (as distinct from the labor of producing it), which is an indispensable part of the labor of exploitation'. Thus Marx argued that although these workers are also exploited, they 'rest with all their weight upon the working-class and at the same time increase the social security and power of the upper-class'. Secondly, Hodges declares that white-collar workers and commercial wage earners are 'exploited in a different manner from productive workers'.

Dahrendorf, in accordance with his own principle (conflict theory cannot incorporate the notion of middle-class) is

42. The problem with this point seems to lie in its lack of flexibility to cover some aspects of modern capitalism, with its massive commercial organizations which are concerned not with the production of goods, but are exclusively service oriented. In these enterprises the Marxian notions of surplus value, alienation and exploitation (as applied to industrial enterprises) remain pertinent, and here it is difficult to follow Hodges' argument. This is not to deny that his thesis does provide a useful extension to the Marxian analysis. The division in large industries between 'staff' and 'works' (that is, between white and blue-collar), seems to verify his thesis - the labour of 'staff', rather than producing goods, is primarily concerned with selling the goods and servicing, managing and controlling the workers in the 'works', and are therefore employed to realize surplus value.

43. Dahrendorf, op.cit., p.52.
thereby forced to divide the middle-class into two groups. Arguing that because 'bureaucrats' (such as post office clerks), accountants and executives participate in the exercise of authority they cannot form part of the working-class, and thus must belong to the ruling class. On the other hand, employees in tertiary industries, shops, restaurants, cinemas, and commercial firms and highly skilled workers and foremen, 'from the point of view of class conflict, closely resemble ... industrial workers.' But Dahrendorf in his efforts to maintain a simplistic, two-class conflict model has failed to consider firstly, that middle-class people might have valid expectations of their life chances; secondly, that the authority of 'bureaucrats' might be significantly (if not considerably) less than the authority of the ruling class proper. There can be little doubt that to place a post office clerk in the same class as a first and second division bureaucrat or a managing director of a large corporation - simply on the grounds that they both have authority - obviates the need for a more meaningful classificatory system. Finally, Dahrendorf has failed to consider that the 'new middle-class' might have a distinctive relationship to the means of production and thus deserve the conceptual status of class. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that there is no logical reason why a conflict model must necessarily have only two competing elements.

44. Dahrendorf as interpreted by J. Lopreato and L. Hazelrigg, Class, Conflict and Mobility, Chandler Publishing Coy., Calif., 1972, p.65.
45. R. Dahrendorf, op.cit., p.56.
46. ibid., p.55.
And there is no reason why (especially within a complex social system), all elements must be actively engaged in a basic economic or power struggle. Thus the middle-class could be a class (even in the Marxist sense) without playing an active or crucial part in the basic struggle between the ruling class and the proletariat.

On the other hand, if the 'ruling class' can be defined as a cohesive group of people who own and/or control the means of production (and therefore usually have access to the major sources of power in society), and the proletariat defined by their discernible lack of ownership or control of the means of production (and therefore characterized by their relative powerlessness in society), then there seems to be a need to define a third class (a middle-class) who neither own nor control the means of production, but who do have power within the context of their immediate work situation in the realization of surplus value. This model is based on (or rather, inspired by) Hodges' treatment of the notion of middle-class, and is perhaps over-enthusiastic in its conception. It also creates several problems, one of which lies in the accurate division of occupational categories into these three classes. It would seem reasonable - according to the above structure - to place everything above and including the foreman

47. The social scientist should never assume that class inequalities necessarily match inequalities of power (that those members of society who have economic power also have political and normative power). This issue is in itself an empirical question.

48. Marx, although obviously aware of the power of the 'ruling class', also seemed to be aware of the growing power amongst white-collar workers. In Capital, Vol.III, he remarks on the structure of the East India Company: 'Who, then, govern in fact under the name of the Direction? A large staff of irresponsible secretaries, examiners, and clerks at India House' (Avineri, 1968, p.51).
level 49 and everything below the high-level bureaucrats and company directors of large corporations within the middle-class. Even the lowest clerk seems to be part of the middle-class, for as Lockwood points out, the lack of communication and identification between the blackcoated workers and factory workers 'is a result of the structure of industrial organization and especially of the relations of authority in the enterprise. In other spheres, too, in labour exchanges, in local government and so on, the clerk is the man on the other side of the desk who is somehow associated with authority'. 50 The clerk is 'associated with the employers by being associated with that part of the productive process where authority is exercised and decisions taken' 51

Furthermore, there is little doubt that the weakest aspect of this model lies in its assertion that the middle-class has a unique relationship to the means of production, accompanied by a distinctive set of economic interests different from those of the proletariat. It is clear that although the model could be incorporated within both the Marxian and Weberian stratification schemes, its relationship to classical Marxian theory is not a comfortable one. For example, if it can be shown that the middle-class is indeed an authentic class with a

49. Due to the fact that the proponents of the embourgeoisement thesis specifically place the 'foreman' category in the skilled manual worker group, the structure outlined here (which precludes foremen from the working-class) will not be suitable for an empirical test of the thesis. Thus for the purposes of this study the traditional distinction between manual and non-manual workers will be maintained.


unique relationship to the means of production, then the Marxian notion of false consciousness cannot be applied to members of that class except when it refers to an ideological deviation from middle-class economic interests.52

But whilst being aware that white-collar employees do have a distinctive style of life, work situation, consciousness, and social status, most Marxist sociologists are resolute in their conviction that both white and blue-collar workers belong to the same class. Marx conceived of class in terms of the relationship people have to the means of production and the clash of economic interests derived from this relationship. Marx was not the first to describe this phenomenon; more conservative writers like Adam Smith, Ricardo, Madison and Ferguson were also aware that the particular property relation inherent in capitalist economies had divided society into factions or classes in unavoidable competition, each pursuing its own class interests. But unlike the Social Darwinists and Laissez-faire economists, Marx and Engels emphasized the contradictory and self-destructive nature of these relations of production. And although Marx recognized several types of relationship to the means of production (owners of capital, landlords, and the owners of labour-power with profits, rents and wages as their respective sources of income), he believed

52. Disturbed by the view that clerks share the same economic interests as the manual worker and thus should be conscious of this common interest, Lockwood proceeds to show in his study of blackcoated workers, how this narrow conception of class and class consciousness obscures the 'actual variations in the situation and experience of those who share the common position of propertyless labour' (Lockwood, 1966, p.15). In this excellent study Lockwood shows how situational and experiential factors have moulded the consciousness of the clerk.
that the economic interests of both blue and white-collar workers are identical - their relationship to the means of production being identical. Neither group own the means of production and therefore their livelihood is assured only by selling their labour power or professional expertise to an employer. Notwithstanding the obvious symbiotic character of the relationship between employers and employees, the economic interests of these parties remain mutually exclusive. The employees' interests are defined in terms of the maximization of income, whilst those of the employer are defined in terms of the maximization of profits. For the employer, wages (being costs) must be kept at a minimum. His economic viability is contingent upon this.

It is therefore clear that Marx's analysis of class is not concerned with the cultural makeup of various groups of people in society, but with the relationship between classes. (The way people spend their leisure time, or the way they bring up their children has very little to do with Marx's conception of class.) These are indices of socio-economic status, not class. Therefore the embourgeoisement thesis, by redefining the 'working-class' as 'manual workers', rather than being a challenge to Marx's conception of class and class conflict, seems to miss the point. Affluence amongst employees may indeed mitigate class antagonisms, but it cannot remove the source of these antagonisms. Thus I contend that the embourgeoisement thesis is primarily concerned with the collapse of the traditional social, cultural, and normative

barriers between white and blue-collar workers and has little
to do with the collapse of the class structure. To argue
otherwise would require either a redefinition of the concept of
class, or a view that white-collar employees are an authentic
class insofar as they have a distinctive relationship to the
means of production.

This of course does not deny the value of the
embourgeoisement theory. The changing social and cultural
patterns of blue-collar workers in industrial society remains
an important issue for sociological enquiry, and it is this
phenomenon that we seek to explore in the forthcoming chapters.
CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH DESIGN:

Goldthorpe and Lockwood\(^1\) have criticized the proponents of the *embourgeoisement* thesis for seeking confirmation of their hypotheses amongst workers employed by 'progressive firms in generally prosperous and expanding industries ... in new estates or satellite towns'. Accordingly, these conditions favourable to the *embourgeoisement* process were deliberately chosen by Goldthorpe and his colleagues\(^2\) in order to more convincingly refute that thesis. Nevertheless, as Westergaard\(^3\) points out, it is precisely these conditions that also prove favourable to the 'privatisation' thesis which Goldthorpe and his colleagues have put in place of *embourgeoisement*. Therefore they too are guilty of selecting a sample more likely to confirm their own theories. The present study is based on data derived from a secondary analysis of a nationwide survey of the Australian electorate, and thus avoids this problem.

The survey was conducted in 1967 by the Department of Political Science of the Research School of Social Sciences at

the Australian National University, under the guidance of Michael Kahan and Don Aitkin. 4 Describing their universe as 'Australian voters', Kahan and Aitkin designed the survey to yield a sample of 2,000 completed interviews from the electoral rolls of 80 federal divisions, 5 according to efficiency constraints 6 and precedents set in Britain and the United States. 7 To overcome the disadvantages of not sampling in all federal divisions, they employed a fairly sophisticated method of stratification, 8 which provided 'the widest possible range of types of division' and 'a large enough sample within divisions to permit some analysis by division'. Thus in order to achieve a representative sample of the Australian electorate, the states were designated primary strata, and electorates in each state were sorted into substrata according to known characteristics of the population. These included voting patterns, religious affiliation, nationality, and other demographic characteristics.

Once the sampling design had been established the researchers were ready to select the respondents. They had


5. Kahan and Aitkin use the terms 'Division' and 'Electorate' interchangeably.

6. ibid., p.2.


decided in advance that the Commonwealth Electoral Roll would provide the most accurate source from which to sample all adult Australian voters.\(^9\) Selection of the sample proved to be quite difficult, as the researchers were required to take account of changes in the electoral rolls caused by new enrolments, deaths, occupational changes, and changes in address. Rolls also varied in age from three to eighteen months, and the researchers were obliged to consider the main and supplementary rolls as conceptually separate lists in order to ensure that recently registered electors were properly represented in the sample. The researchers were also required to control for the problem of unequal electoral population sizes, and the different response rates in urban and rural divisions.\(^10\) The guiding principles of the operation were that 'Australian voters in the six states must as far as possible have an equal chance of selection in the sample; and (in consequence), the chance of any division or subdivision being selected must be in proportion to the size of its electoral population'.\(^11\)

The survey consisted of a structured interview of over one hundred questions covering a wide variety of topics, ranging from occupation, income, class identification, club membership, voting behaviour, as well as attitudes towards trade unionism, censorship, and big business. Although the survey's main

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9. The rationale for using the electoral roll as a sampling frame is presented in Kahan and Aitkin, \textit{op.cit.}, Section IV.

10. The particular methods used to overcome these problems are fully discussed in Section V of Kahan and Aitkin paper.

objectives were to describe and analyse the Australian electorate and its relationship to its representatives in parliament, many of the questions asked provided valuable information pertaining to the *embourgeoisement* process.\(^{12}\)

On completion of the interviews the schedules were coded and the data stored on magnetic disc. The three and four way contingency tables which appear in the present study were generated from the survey data with the aid of the Australian National University's Survey Analysis Program. Testing the *embourgeoisement* hypotheses required the sample to be limited to male heads of households who were employed on a full-time basis in occupations other than farming, mining, or the armed services. Women responding on behalf of their husbands were also excluded. The close relationship between the *embourgeoisement* process and the respondent's work situation made this necessary. Furthermore, Hamilton notes that women are subjected to the prevailing practice of economic discrimination, and since women are overwhelmingly concentrated in non-manual occupations, this would provide an artificially low median income figure for that group, 'while no comparable biasing factor appears in the manual group'.\(^{13}\) Graziers, farmers, and farm workers were precluded from the sample because the *embourgeoisement* process relates specifically to

\(^{12}\) All questions which were used in the present study are outlined in Chapter 5.

changes in the characteristics of the workforce within highly industrialized areas. Miners and armed servicemen were omitted because the survey data did not reveal the level of skill or rank of these respondents, and therefore they could not be accurately placed in the occupational categories. Consequently the sample size was reduced from a total of 1,986 interviews to 670 interviews, which in turn was divided into five occupational categories. These were: 'upper middle-class', consisting of professional, managerial and administrative workers; 'lower white-collar', consisting of sales and clerical workers; 'skilled', consisting of craftsmen and foremen; 'semi-skilled', consisting of operatives, drivers, and service workers; and 'unskilled', consisting of non-rural labourers. These occupational categories are based on the Australian National University's occupational code and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of occupational categories in the sample:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle-Class</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower White-Collar</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Skilled</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine the market situation of the blue and white-collar workers in Australia it was decided that an eclectic approach would best serve the objectives of the present study. Thus, by using data from a wide variety of sources such as Commonwealth Government publications, studies by F. Lancaster Broom, F. Lancaster Jones and J. Zubrzycki, 'An Occupational Classification of the Australian Workforce', Supplement to Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, Vol.1, No.2, 1965.
Jones and Podder,\textsuperscript{15} as well as data from the Kahan and Aitkin survey, a fairly revealing economic profile of these categories of workers was constructed.

\textsuperscript{15} M. Podder, 'Distribution of Household Income in Australia', \textit{The Economic Record}, June, 1972.
CHAPTER 4

THE MARKET SITUATION:

Karl Marx argued that 'with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level'. 1 Several social scientists have argued that this process has not taken place. Dahrendorf, for instance, in his analysis of present-day industrial conditions in Britain, Europe and the United States, describes 2 the rise of the 'new middle-class' and outlines the process whereby the formerly homogeneous working-class has become increasingly differentiated in respect to skill, affluence, life-style, attitudes, and values. In particular he depicts 3 three distinct groups: a 'growing stratum of highly skilled workers who increasingly merge with both engineers and white-collar employees, a relatively stable stratum of semi-skilled workers with a high degree of diffuse as well as specific industrial experience, and a dwindling stratum of totally unskilled labourers'. Dahrendorf does not state exactly what he has in mind by this merging process, but it is quite clear that within

3. ibid., pp. 50-51.
the manual occupations, three skill groups are being discerned - the most skilled of which is growing quantitatively in proportion to the least skilled.

However, Marx's critics are not simply drawing attention to the increasing proportion of workers employed as craftsmen and foremen. They are also pointing out that because skilled and some semi-skilled workers have received substantial increases in wage rates since World War II, a greater proportion of blue-collar workers have found themselves able to secure incomes comparable to those of lower white-collar workers, thus financially enabling them to enjoy a lifestyle that was formerly the preserve of the middle-class. It seems then that affluence is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for embourgeoisement. And therefore the first task of any empirical examination of the thesis requires at least a cursory appraisal of the market situation of workers in Australia.

In Table 2 which follows it will be seen that the occupational distribution of male workers in Australia is similar to the basic pattern described by Dahrendorf. It also conforms fairly closely to that experienced in the United States. A flow of workers from primary production into other sectors of the economy, a drop in the proportion of unskilled manual workers (miners, farm workers, and labourers), and a corresponding rise in the proportion of skilled and semi-skilled manual workers is evident. Australia has also seen a distinct growth in the professional, managerial and clerical sectors of the economy - the expansion of the clerical occupations is greatly increased when figures depicting the occupational distribution of both sexes are examined. From a mere 4.1 per
The total Australian workforce in 1911, clerical workers have increased to 17 per cent in 1966.

TABLE 2

The Occupational Distribution of Male Australian Workers, 1911 to 1966

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Professional</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graziers</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Professional</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop Proprietors</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Workers</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Services</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop Assistants</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operatives</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Workers</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Workers</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 100.1 100.1 100.1 99.9 100.0 100.1

This rapid rise is partly explained by the rising percentage of females in the workforce and partly by the increasing demand in government and business administration for clerical functions to be fulfilled. However, the fact that in 1966, 35 per cent of male workers in manual occupations were craftsmen and foremen, and 38 per cent were semi-skilled, is of central

5. Source: P. Lancaster Jones, op. cit.
6. Shop proprietors included with shop assistants.
concern to this study because it is within these two occupational categories that affluence purportedly resides. If the predictions of the proponents of the embourgeoisement thesis are correct, then we can expect to find that a substantial proportion of these manual workers have become, or are in process of becoming, bourgeois.

The question of affluence amongst blue-collar workers - or any workers for that matter - is an immensely complex one, for in an estimate of this kind there exists a considerable number of factors which should be taken into account. In order to draw a composite economic profile of an occupational group consideration must be given to income, consumption patterns, and employee fringe benefits - all of which form part of the general issue of affluence.

Using the 1968/69 unpublished Income Distribution Survey data of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, median incomes were calculated for full-year, full-time male workers within each of the five occupational categories defined in Chapter 3. The data presented in Table 3 differs from official data published by the Bureau, insofar as all relevant occupations (not just those with an estimated total membership of more than 8,000 workers) were included. These medians were determined on the basis of the amount of income each male aged 15 years and over in the year 1968/69 received from the following sources:

net wages or salary, net income from own business, trade or profession, net income from share in partnership, government social service benefits, annuity, interest, dividends, rent, and other sources such as will, and alimony. The data are based on a sample of approximately 20,000 people, using a ratio estimate procedure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Category</th>
<th>Median Income $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle-Class</td>
<td>5,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower White-Collar</td>
<td>3,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled - Foremen</td>
<td>4,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Craftsmen</td>
<td>3,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>3,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>2,830</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 3 indicates, the professional and managerial group (the 'upper middle-class') receive higher incomes than any other occupational category. Their median income is 1,560 dollars greater (44.4 per cent greater) than that of lower white-collar workers. Foremen, who are essentially manual workers (or rather sub-managerial manual workers), were found to have a median income of 810 dollars in excess of the median lower white-collar income, and only 760 dollars less than the high income upper middle-class group. This relatively small though quite affluent group is, in terms of the logic of the embourgeoisement thesis, the most likely of all manual workers to be subject to embourgeoisement, not only in respect to their life-styles, but also in respect to their attitudes towards their work situation.

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8. These would have to be benefits supplementing a full-year full-time worker. For instance, child endowment, armed services or repatriation pension.

9. This procedure ensures that the survey estimates used conform to the independently estimated distribution of the population by age and sex rather than the age and sex distribution within the sample itself. See Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, op.cit., p.24.
class schemes, political affiliations, and so on.

Table 3 also suggests some income overlap between lower white-collar workers and craftsmen. Indeed, the smallest income differential of all occurs between these two groups, namely, 130 dollars per annum. The median income differential between craftsmen and semi-skilled workers is 360 dollars, and is 190 dollars between semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Moreover, the difference between lower white-collar workers and craftsmen is further reduced to a mere 90 dollars per annum if, as is customarily done, foremen are combined with craftsmen to make up the skilled manual occupational category. There remains little doubt that for Australia, highly skilled workers in manual occupations can be placed in an income bracket only slightly below that of clerical and sales workers. And although this finding does not come as a great surprise in view of overseas studies, it provides a sharp contrast with

10. Median incomes are used because the median (unlike the mean) is less influenced by extreme values.


the findings of Parsler.

Parsler's 1968 study revealed a difference of 588 dollars in median income between 'blue-collar' and lower white-collar workers. But even if it is taken into account that his 'blue-collar' category is made up of both skilled and semi-skilled workers, a difference of this size must be treated with suspicion. It is certainly out of line with these Australia-wide data, suggesting that Parsler's small stratified sample of householders living in one or two middle-class suburbs of Melbourne is not representative of the rest of Australia.

As already suggested, it is often assumed that the income earned by the head of household is the sole determinant of that household's market situation. Although this might well be valid for the majority of households, it should be noted that some household heads work overtime at their jobs, hold down part-time jobs, have working wives who in many cases earn quite sizable incomes, or there may be other workers in the household. Furthermore, household income might be supplemented by income from rents, or shares owned by one of the family members, or from benefits such as alimony or other transfer payments. All of these factors have some impact on the degree of affluence and therefore the consumption patterns of the family unit. Taking these factors into account, Table 4, based on the data gathered in the Australian Survey of Consumer Expenditures and Finances, 1966-68,13 shows median

household income by occupation of the head of household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Category</th>
<th>Median Income</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle-Class</td>
<td>$5,321</td>
<td>895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower White-Collar</td>
<td>$4,031</td>
<td>765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>$3,937</td>
<td>1,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>$3,623</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>$3,243</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here, as in Table 3, the upper middle-class lead the field by a considerable margin; their median household income is $1,290 dollars greater than that of the lower white-collar workers.\textsuperscript{14} The difference between skilled and semi-skilled manual workers is $314 dollars, and between semi-skilled and unskilled workers $380 dollars. It is only $94 dollars between skilled and lower white-collar workers, in the latter's favour. Once again it seems evident that the economic gap between the most skilled manual workers and the least skilled and lowest paid white-collar workers, is very small indeed.

However, as a number of writers have suggested, these figures taken in isolation tend to over-emphasize the degree of economic parity between manual and non-manual workers. The market situation of a household is not completely determined by its total household income - hours worked to earn that income...\textsuperscript{14} It should be noted that the upper middle-class group is by no means economically homogeneous; indeed, quite large differences in household income are evident. Executive and managerial employees record a median household income of $5,741 dollars, whilst upper professionals record $5,463 dollars and lower professionals only $4,563 dollars. On the other hand, clerical and sales workers (the lower white-collar group) are separated by a mere 31 dollars.
income, opportunities for promotion and career patterns, general conditions of employment, security of tenure and pension schemes and other fringe benefits, must also be considered. It was this that led Goldthorpe and Lockwood in 1963 to conclude that the evidence for the economic integration of skilled manual workers and white-collar workers is 'unconvincing because it is incomplete'. According to a recent survey in Australia, lower white-collar workers tend to work shorter hours (excluding overtime) than skilled manual workers. 30 per cent of lower white-collar workers in the sample worked less than 40 hours per week at their jobs, whereas only 8 per cent of skilled workers worked less than 40 hours per week. 43 per cent of lower white-collar workers worked exactly 40 hours per week in contrast to 68 per cent of skilled workers. Similar findings have been reported in England and the United States.


TABLE 5

Home Ownership Arrangements in Australia, 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Rent-Ing</th>
<th>Owned</th>
<th>Buy-Ing</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle-Class</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower White-Collar</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home ownership is one of the main long-term items of investment expenditure, and is therefore an important aspect for consideration. However, in view of the well established tradition in Australia of high rates of home ownership,¹⁹ it should come as no great surprise to find that differences in home ownership arrangements in this country between occupational groups are small. Indeed, according to Table 5, exactly the same proportion (71.5 per cent) of skilled workers as lower white-collar workers owned, or were in the process of buying homes, although a slightly greater proportion (3.6 per cent) of skilled manual workers were still paying off their homes.

Table 5 was generated from the Kahan and Aitkin Survey data, but unfortunately the data did not include information concerning the estimated market values of respondents' homes.

¹⁹. Anne Stevenson and her associates pointed out that the Housing Commission flat dwellers in North Melbourne had their 'hearts set on the suburban way of life that the community apparently enjoys and sets before them as a standard. Within the Australian setting there is an overwhelming emphasis on home ownership and the suburban villa as a measure of success and status', A. Stevenson and J. O'Neill, High Living: A Study of Family Life in Flats, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967, pp. 136-44. This position is supported by Kurt Mayer in his brief look at 'Social Stratification in Two Equalitarian Societies: Australia and the United States', Social Research, Vol. 31, 1964, p. 454.
Additional information of this kind would have enabled a more thorough examination of home ownership as a primary long-term item of investment expenditure. It can be safely assumed, for instance, that the houses owned or being purchased or built by the upper middle-class are generally larger, more substantially built, and established on more expensive land than those of most unskilled manual workers. Also, in cases where occupants are tenants, it could be reasonably assumed that the former remit higher rentals than the latter. That such differences exist is clearly shown in the results of ecological studies of residential differentiation in Australian cities.  

Goldthorpe and Lockwood have argued that manual workers are not very likely to be promoted above the supervisory level; manual work, they write, is 'becoming more than ever before a life sentence.' Lower white-collar workers, it is further suggested, have greater opportunities for promotion into higher white-collar positions. Since it is true that upward occupational mobility is usually accompanied by increased earnings, differential mobility opportunities available to manual and non-manual workers must be regarded as an integral aspect of their economic circumstances. 


TABLE 6

Career Mobility in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Job</th>
<th>Present Job</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>Other 24</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Upper Middle-Class</td>
<td></td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Lower White-Collar 25</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Manual Work 26</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 presents summary statistics of career mobility in Australia. Predictably the professional and managerial

23. Table 6 was generated from the Kahan and Aitkin Survey data. It should be noted that in order to avoid having to restate this source in forthcoming Tables, I will adopt the rule that, unless otherwise indicated, all Tables derive from the Kahan and Aitkin Survey data.

24. This group consists of graziers, farmers, and members of the armed services and the police force.

25. Shop assistants were included in the manual category of this Table because their occupation, from the point of view of occupation mobility studies generally, is predominantly an 'entry occupation' and therefore a sizable proportion of these workers would be expected to move into other (often semi-skilled manual) occupations. Thus, rather than spuriously representing this flow of workers as downwardly mobile lower white-collar workers, it was decided to represent those shop assistants who move into clerical or other white-collar occupations as upwardly mobile manual workers. This decision was based on the findings of Oeser and Hammond (Eds.), Social Structure and Personality in a City, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1954, p. 280, and L. Broom and F. Lancaster Jones, 'Career Mobility in Three Societies: Australia, Italy, and the United States', op.cit.

26. The Manual category includes craftsmen, foremen, operatives, drivers, service workers, and all labourers and miners.
group is the most stable, and lower white-collar workers are the most mobile group. It seems that one in every three persons who started off in lower white-collar occupations ended up in professional or managerial employment, although 26 per cent moved into manual occupations. On the other hand, only one in every four persons who started off in manual occupations moved into non-manual positions. It seems quite evident from this Table that mobility across the manual/non-manual line is low; the immobility rates being 83 per cent for non-manual workers, and 70 per cent for manual workers. Thus it seems clear that career stability is more prevalent than mobility, and occupational movement is inclined to take place largely within, rather than between, manual and non-manual occupational lines. This barrier is characteristic of many industrial societies. It should be noted, however, that according to Mills, the opportunities for promotion traditionally inherent in clerical occupations in the United States have declined considerably during this century, and will continue to do so. He suggests that the increasing need for technical expertise and formal qualifications on the one hand, and the 'concentration of white-collar jobs into larger and larger units' on the other, are the primary reasons for

27. Lower clerical occupations are also a popular 'entry occupation', but to a lesser degree than shop assistants.

28. Needless to say, mobility rates between the manual occupations are high.

Furthermore, Goldthorpe and Lockwood\(^\text{31}\) contend that non-manual workers' incomes tend to rise steadily throughout their working careers, whereas manual workers can expect their incomes to rise very little once they have reached 'adulthood'. This point is echoed in Hamilton's comparison\(^\text{32}\) of lower white-collar workers and craftsmen in the United States, and is supported by Parsler\(^\text{33}\) in Australia. The median annual incomes of the five occupational categories by age are shown in Table 7.

**TABLE 7**

Median Annual Incomes for Occupations by Age: Full-time Male Workers in Australia, 1967.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>15-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>54+</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle-Class</td>
<td>3750</td>
<td>4341</td>
<td>4750</td>
<td>5036</td>
<td>4167</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower White-Collar</td>
<td>2750</td>
<td>3519</td>
<td>3542</td>
<td>3679</td>
<td>3150</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>3125</td>
<td>3221</td>
<td>3603</td>
<td>3350</td>
<td>2821</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>3050</td>
<td>2886</td>
<td>3013</td>
<td>2691</td>
<td>2697</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>2083</td>
<td>2583</td>
<td>2750</td>
<td>2200</td>
<td>2107</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A cursory examination of this Table suggests that the career incomes of lower white-collar and skilled workers follow a fairly similar pattern. In both cases incomes increase with


33. R. Parsler, *op.cit.*
age, reaching a peak somewhere in middle age, and then decrease with advancing years. However, three anomalous features must be emphasized. First, lower white-collar workers between the ages of 15-24 years in the sample earn less than skilled manual workers of the same age group (375 dollars). Second, lower white-collar incomes peak in the 45-54 age range, whereas skilled workers reach their maximum earnings between 35-44. Third, although incomes for both groups fall with advancing years, the decline in skilled worker wages is greater, and begins earlier in life. Skilled workers in the 55 years and over group are by far the lowest paid of all skilled workers, whilst the youngest lower white-collar workers remain the lowest paid in their occupation. After the age of 45 lower white-collar workers can expect to be more than 300 dollars per annum better off than skilled workers, and just under 1,000 dollars better off than semi-skilled workers. Thus it seems evident that skilled manual workers (normally considered to be the most affluent group in the manual occupations) can expect to receive high incomes for only a relatively short period of their working careers - that is, between the ages of 35-44 years. A lower white-collar worker, on the other hand, can expect to earn a high income for most of his working career, between the ages of 25-54 years. However, it should be noted that these data pertain only to the 1967 income structure, and could well be unrepresentative of current trends.

If the expenditure and investment patterns in Australia follow those of the United States and Britain, then we can expect to find a low rate of stock and share ownership amongst
manual workers, accompanied by very high rates of hire purchase commitments and other instalment debts. A 1968 survey estimates that only 9.5 per cent of skilled workers in Australia had ever owned shares of any kind, whilst 20 per cent of lower white-collar workers and 37 per cent of the upper middle-class had owned shares. But once again the real differences are obscured by the lack of information concerning the total value and proportion of shares owned by these occupational groups.

Finally, as can be seen in Table 8, a clear distinction between manual and non-manual workers in respect to superannuation and pension schemes (contributory and non-contributory) exists. Non-manual workers in Victoria seem far better provided for in this respect by their employers than are manual workers.

| TABLE 8 |

Superannuation Rates amongst Male Wage and Salary Earners: Victoria, 1968:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Manual Workers</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Workers</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34. As far as hire purchase commitments by occupation are concerned, no official statistics are available for Australia although the Financial Institutions Subsection of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics will be launching their Household Income and Expenditure Survey sometime in 1975.


These data, although slender in places, provide a rough sketch of the economic profile of workers in the Australian occupational structure. Generally it seems that the market situation of manual workers and lower white-collar workers in Australia is similar to that experienced by British and American workers. It is clear that in terms of both individual and household income figures, income differentials between many manual workers and lower white-collar workers are small. The evidence suggests the existence of extensive income overlap between highly paid manual workers (predominantly skilled and some semi-skilled workers) and lower white-collar workers. However, these data also suggest that in order to attain parity in earnings with lower white-collar workers, manual workers must work longer hours. Furthermore, the white-collar worker remains better off than the manual worker in respect to opportunities for career advancement, stock and share ownership, superannuation and pension schemes. Also, if overseas figures are indicative of the Australian situation, manual workers - in contrast to white-collar workers - have less security of tenure. They

37. Goldthorpe and Lockwood found that their shop-floor men had to work as much as 25 per cent longer than lower white-collar workers to gain income parity. See J.H. Goldthorpe and D. Lockwood, The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure, op.cit., p.61.

38. Significantly enough, retrenchment and dismissal rates (the two crucial measures of security of tenure) for Australia are not available for non-manual workers.

are more likely to lose their jobs, and having done so, older workers find that re-employment possibilities are bleak.

Nevertheless, the data provides sufficient support for the first **bourgeoisification** proposition (that many manual workers can be placed on an economic parity with white-collar workers) to warrant an examination of whether or not affluence amongst the manual workers in the sample of male Australian workers has been accompanied by substantial normative changes.
CHAPTER 5

THE NORMATIVE ASPECTS OF EMBOURGEOISEMENT:

One of the weakest aspects of the embourgeoisement thesis lies in an almost total neglect by its proponents to explain precisely how the presence of affluence among blue-collar employees has led to the substantial normative and attitudinal changes necessary for them to become indistinguishable from the middle-class. Furthermore, very little evidence has been provided to support the assertion that the normative gap between these manual workers and lower white-collar workers has all but closed. At best, writers seem content to point to data depicting the much improved economic position and thus consumption patterns, of manual workers, but fail to pay more than speculative lip service to the accompanying cultural, social, and political changes.

Writers were quick to jump on the embourgeoisement band-waggon, fervently proposing that the embourgeoisement of the working-class is closely related to blue-collar prosperity. Accordingly, Mayer states that 'the time-honored invidious distinctions between the style of life of middle class employees and manual workers have become blurred to a considerable extent. The rising standard of living has made many elements of a middle class style of life, such as home ownership, suburban living, paid vacations, and highly valued consumer goods, available not only to white collar employees..."
but also to large numbers of manual wage earners'.\(^1\) Similarly, Lenski draws attention not only to the substantial reduction of the 'great cultural chasm' between manual workers and the middle-class, but to the manual worker's 'greatly reduced antagonisms towards existing political institutions, bringing the average worker's thinking more in line with that of the middle class'.\(^2\) He attributes these changes partly to 'improvements in the economic situation of workers'\(^3\) and the 'mass production of consumer goods'. Thus we see the emergence of an implicit non-Marxian economic determinism in which a direct causal link is depicted between affluence on the one hand, and patterns of life-style, social attitudes, values and ideology on the other. The unsystematic treatment of the many and varied issues involved in a complex theory of this kind has resulted in three major omissions on the part of the proponents.\(^4\)

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4. Although these omissions, taken together, provide further support for the charge that the embourgeoisement thesis in its present form represents little more than a pastiche of unsubstantiated assertions, this does not mean that the thesis lacks validity, but merely that it lacks validation.
Firstly, the proponents of the thesis have omitted to indicate precisely which values and attitudes are representative of the 'middle-class', and in what way they differ from those of the working-class. Indeed, the working-class life-style from which the affluent manual worker is supposed to have turned is given little more than a cursory outline.

Goldthorpe and Lockwood, using information from a wide variety of sources, have endeavoured to amend this situation by outlining what they believe to be the fundamental elements of working-class culture, and showing how these differ from those of the middle-class. Accordingly, whereas members of the working-class are inclined to subscribe to a dichotomous conception of society, the middle-class - suggest the authors - are more inclined to subscribe to a hierarchical model in which 'society is divided into a series of levels or strata differentiated in terms of the life-styles and associated prestige of their members'. Members of the working-class characteristically divide society into two unbridgeable groups, and thus view their position in society as relatively immutable, resulting in low aspiration levels and expectations. Members of the middle-class, on the other hand, see themselves as living in a fairly open society, and place a high premium on individual advancement within the occupational structure, the 'progressive improvement in consumption standards and, correspondingly, a steady ascent


6. These include studies from the United States, Western Europe, and Britain.
in terms of prestige and the quality of life-style. The major economic concern of the working-class is 'with being able to maintain a certain standard of living and style of living', which accounts for the traditional working-class emphasis on collective solutions to economic problems - seeking to maintain their standards of living collectively by the formation of trade unions.

Clearly, then, Goldthorpe and Lockwood consider the transition from working to middle-class to be a process involving considerably more than the mere change in consumption patterns, as the purchase of a home, refrigerator, and other consumer durables suggest. Rather, the change implied in the embourgeoisement thesis includes life-styles, social attitudes and values, levels of aspiration, social orientations, friendship and kinship patterns, voting patterns, and class schemes.

Secondly, the proponents of the thesis have failed to consider seriously the existence of a heterogeneous (and possibly diversified) middle-class. If affluence amongst manual workers is purportedly the major causal factor in their transition from working to middle-class life-styles, then the proponents have neglected to examine the effect variations in affluence might have on lower white-collar life-styles, thereby assuming that which is essentially problematic. It

7. J.H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, et.al., op.cit., p.120.

8. In view of the limitations in the Kahan and Aitkin Survey data the present study was unable to examine all of these aspects - a difficulty that most researchers engaged in secondary analysis must anticipate and endure.
should not be taken for granted that lower white-collar workers are a socially and culturally static and homogeneous group, and thus used to gauge the movements of other classes in society. Indeed, it would not be too difficult to demonstrate that certain cultural traits which have been traditionally associated with the middle-class are no longer a significant aspect of middle-class life. For instance, it is frequently claimed that talented working-class children do not attend colleges and universities because they lack the ability to 'defer gratification' - an ability the talented middle-class youth readily display. But the question posed by Miller and Riessman\(^9\) is how true is it that today's middle-class youth are actually deferring gratification when they attend college or university? The authors suggest that these youths are more likely to look upon attendance at these institutions as coming closest to the realization of gratification. It is shifts of this kind within the middle-class that 'make it especially difficult and dubious to use it as a yardstick for elucidating (and frequently evaluating) working-class life'.\(^{10}\)

Finally, there exists a methodological problem in comparative studies of working and middle-class subcultures.

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10. *ibid.*
Goldthorpe and Lockwood,11 echoing Miller and Riessman,12 have pointed out that 'facile comparisons' between these two subcultures could be avoided if researchers used 'genotypical' analyses rather than 'phenotypical' analyses. A 'genotypical' analysis, as Miller explains, requires that the social scientist go beyond the search for deepseated psychological factors (such as money-mindedness, status-seeking, or ambitiousness), and to gain some understanding of how behavioural patterns are structurally related to, and take their meaning from, life-histories, work experiences, and the total logic of the socio-economic environment in which groups of people find themselves.13

The reason for this additional methodological procedure in the comparative study of subcultures lies in the realization by many sociologists that the same behavioural patterns in two separate (socially, culturally and ideologically distinct) groups could have vastly differing meanings and significance.14 Thus, although an affluent sector of the manual workers might have adopted behaviour patterns which are traditionally associated with a middle-class way of life, this per se does not mean that they have joined, or are seeking to


12. S.M. Miller and F. Riessman, op.cit., p.89.

13. ibid.

14. Here, it seems, we are echoing observations that were understood by anthropologists decades ago.
join, that way of life.\textsuperscript{15} Whereas for the middle-class buying a second car, a new house or a colour television set is inclined to represent a 'validation of status',\textsuperscript{16} for the working-class these purchases are viewed differently. Mackenzie found that when asked why they preferred to own their own homes rather than rent them, the large majority of craftsmen explained their preference for home ownership solely in terms of the fact that this gave them 'increased freedom from the subjection to the rule of the landlord'. "Few bothered", writes Mackenzie, 'to mention the economic benefits that come with home ownership. And it is their neglect of this advantage of home ownership that sets the blue collar workers off from the clerks and more especially, from the managers'.\textsuperscript{17} As Miller and Riessman have pointed out, 'the desire to improve one's economic position does not necessarily involve subscribing to middle-class ideals nor to the American mania of perpetual upward mobility'.\textsuperscript{18} It is not so much the consumer goods that are in themselves significant, but

15. This point has been made by several sociologists. For example, S.M. Miller and F. Riessman, \textit{op.cit.}; G. Handel and L. Rainwater, 'Persistence and Change in Working Class Life Style' in Shostack and Gomberg (Eds.), \textit{Blue Collar World}, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1964. Also, see 'usurpation theory' in F. Parkin, \textit{Class Inequality and Political Order}, Paladin, London, 1971, p.33.


17. G. Mackenzie, \textit{ibid.}

the symbols of status attached to them.

One final point; as already seen, Mayer has declared that 'a large part of the working class shares a "white collar" style of life and accepts middle class values and beliefs. This is especially true of craftsmen, foremen, and skilled mechanics, whose high wages nowadays exceed the salaries of many lower middle class, white collar employees and even of small businessmen'.\(^{19}\) He regards the line which separates the affluent manual workers from the bulk of the semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers as being 'more significant sociologically' than the traditional dividing line between manual workers and lower white-collar workers'.\(^{20}\) In this chapter we seek to discover precisely where this 'normative line' lies in the Australian occupational structure.

**Aspirations and Social Perspectives:**

As we have seen, many writers suggest that the working-class in western society traditionally displays low aspiration and expectation levels in respect to their careers. But proponents of the *bourgeoisement* thesis suggest that these traditional working-class patterns are breaking down and being replaced by the middle-class pattern of career aspirations. According to Mayer, 'The American tradition of striving for success and upward mobility, so strongly embodied in the lower middle-class way of life, extends its sway over many manual workers who share traditional middle-class values. The style


\(^{20}\) *ibid.*
of life of many skilled and better-paid semiskilled workers resembles that of the lower middle-class much more closely than that of the poorer semiskilled and unskilled manual labourers'.

Goldthorpe and Lockwood reveal that 87 per cent of the white-collar workers in their sample said that they liked the idea of promotion 'very much', or 'quite a lot', but only 20 per cent of their skilled and 15 per cent of their semiskilled workers were attracted to the idea of promotion and had given this serious consideration. They conclude that 'instead of aspiring in white-collar fashion to make a "good career" within their firms, these men hoped rather to gain a "good living" from their firms ...'. Likewise Richard Centers, in his study of The Psychology of Social Classes, found that manual workers were more inclined to place an emphasis on maintaining a 'decent and steady job and standard of living' than on 'good opportunities for each person to get ahead on his own'. Business, professional and white-collar groups rated opportunities for advancement much higher.

These findings are supported by those of Sykes, Walker and Dale in Britain, and by Chinoy in America. The pattern has also

been noted in Australia. In a study of skilled and white-collar workers in Perth, Dufty found that 90 per cent of clerks and male shop assistants stated that they would like a promotion\textsuperscript{25} whilst only slightly more than half of the skilled workers in the sample expressed a desire for promotion.\textsuperscript{26} Similar findings by Miller and Riessman led them to conclude that the desire for career advancement 'does not play as crucial a role in working-class life as it does in the middle-class.'\textsuperscript{27}

Table 9 shows how respondents in the present study reacted to the question of whether or not they would like to occupy a job different from their present one. Here the present study seeks to discover whether affluent manual workers have the high career aspirations characteristic of lower white-collar workers, or whether their career aspirations are sufficiently low to make them indistinguishable from non-affluent manual workers. Generally, with the exception of semi-skilled workers, the more affluent the workers were, the less likely they were to desire an alternative occupation. The lower white-collar group have the highest expressed desire to change their occupations next to the non-affluent unskilled group, 66 per cent of whom stated that they would like to change their occupations. Skilled manual workers in the sample

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} N.F. Dufty, 'White Collar Contrast', \textit{International Journal of Comparative Sociology}, Vol.4, 1963, p.69.
\item \textsuperscript{26} N.F. Dufty, 'Blue Collar Contrast', \textit{International Journal of Comparative Sociology}, Vol.8, 1967, p.213.
\item \textsuperscript{27} S.M. Miller and F. Riessman, 'Are Workers Middle Class?' \textit{op.cit.}, p.510.
\end{itemize}
were the least likely to want a change in employment.

**TABLE 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>D.K.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.29</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Don't know.
** Frequencies too small

Indeed, it seems that affluent skilled workers (the group of workers who, according to the embourgeoisement thesis are most likely to yearn for upward mobility) was in fact the group that expressed the greatest amount of contentment in their present

28. All tables in this chapter were generated from the Kahan and Aitkin Survey data.

29. Using the income distribution of respondents in the sample, it was decided to regard incomes of 3,251 dollars and above as affluent. Although this figure appears to be low compared with current rates of income, this amount of money was sufficient to permit a small family to participate in a lower middle-class life-style at the time of the interview.

30. Dividing the sample into affluent and non-affluent categories reduced the sample size, as some respondents refused to provide the interviewer with income figures.
Comparing skilled manual with lower white-collar workers, 51 per cent of the skilled workers in the sample did not desire a change in occupation, whilst only 37 per cent of the lower white-collar group expressed this type of contentment in their present jobs. This difference is significant ($\chi^2=4.92, d.f.=1$) and is even greater when affluent skilled workers are compared with the lower white-collar group.

However, if we examine which occupations respondents preferred in place of their current jobs, certain interesting trends emerge. In Table 10 a distinction is made between those respondents who chose an occupation of a higher status category than their present job category (and thus had high career aspirations), and those who chose an occupation involving no increment in occupational status (with low career aspirations). Accordingly, manual workers - whether skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled - would have to express a desire to enter a non-manual occupation to count as aspiring for upward mobility, and lower white-collar workers would need to express a desire to enter an

31. Although the data indicates low levels of career aspiration among skilled workers, this implication could well be misleading. It should be noted that Table 9 does not provide information on the extent to which skilled workers aspire to self-employment within their trade, or whether they want to become foremen. It seems clear that, because mobility is patterned differently for different occupations, the hierarchical analysis needs to be supplemented by a Situs Analysis. The data, however, are not suitable for this kind of treatment.

32. All chi-square calculations in this study were based on sample frequencies, not percentages.
upper middle-class occupation. In order to count as having low aspirations, a respondent would need to have chosen his preferred occupation from within the same category as his present job, or nominate a job of lower occupational status.

TABLE 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>High Aspns</th>
<th>Low Aspns</th>
<th>No Ch.</th>
<th>D.R.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Frequencies too small.

33. Some respondents chose occupations which had not previously been classified within the 5 occupational categories. These were farmers, graziers, armed servicemen, miners and farm workers. Therefore, farmers and graziers (for the purpose of this Table) were placed in the upper middle-class, whilst armed servicemen were placed in the lower white-collar category and farm workers and miners in the unskilled group. It was necessary to fit these occupations into the existing scheme in order to decide whether or not, for example, a lower white-collar worker wishing to become a grazier had high career aspirations. Otherwise they would have been lost from the sample.

34. It is important to note that one of the reasons why blue-collar workers do not appear to aspire as high as lower white-collar workers is because they are placed lower on the occupational scale and therefore to aspire as high as lower white-collar, would require greater effort. Hence mobility studies should be concerned with the relative distance and not merely the ultimate goal. However, if the present study were to use relative distance as a measure of career aspirations, embourgeoisement of both affluent and non-affluent manual workers would appear to have occurred. Using the 'ultimate goal' technique as the basis of analysis (where manual workers need to aspire at least to lower white-collar or higher occupations, thereby making it more difficult for manual workers to register high aspirations), we provide a more sensitive and rigorous test of the thesis.

35. The 'Don't Know' category in this Table has greater proportions than its counterpart in Table 9 because some respondents wanted to change their occupations but failed to suggest an alternative.
Obviously Table 10 provides a better test of this portion of the *embourgeoisement* thesis because it isolates those workers who specifically desire upward occupational mobility. For instance, although the unskilled workers in the sample were the least inclined of all the occupational categories to be satisfied with their present jobs, they were in fact the least likely to have high career aspirations. Two out of every three non-affluent unskilled workers who wanted to change jobs preferred another *manual* job, and were not seeking to become white-collar workers.

Furthermore, in contrast to the indications of Table 9, no longer do the affluent workers in each occupational category have lower career aspirations than their less affluent peers. For example, 39 per cent of affluent lower white-collar workers were shown to have high career aspirations, whilst only 25 per cent of non-affluent lower white-collar workers in the sample had high career aspirations, thus making them the group with the second lowest career aspiration level. 57 per cent of non-affluent lower white-collar workers who expressed a desire to change their occupations chose jobs of equal or lower occupational status than their present jobs - 14 per cent wanted to remain in lower white-collar jobs, the rest (43 per cent) wished to join the ranks of the manual workers (25 per cent preferred skilled occupations and 18 per cent preferred semi-skilled work). The difference between affluent and non-affluent lower white-collar workers, however, is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 2.34, \text{d.f.} = 1$). Finally, the significant difference between skilled manual and lower white-collar workers (noted in Table 9) no longer exists. Instead, Table 10 reveals...
the distinct presence of high career aspirations (a traditionally middle-class trait) amongst affluent manual workers, thereby confirming the expectations of Mayer and other embourgeoisement proponents.

These writers, however, have failed to consider the possible confounding effects of downwardly mobile non-manual workers. According to Miller,36 most industrial societies have high rates of downward mobility. Broom and Jones, in their comparative study of father-to-son mobility rates in Australia, Italy and the United States, conclude that in 'all three countries, between one-quarter and one-third of sons of non-manual fathers were downwardly mobile into manual occupations'.37 Most writers agree downwardly mobile non-manual workers (sometimes referred to as 'skidders') do not readily relinquish their middle-class Weltanschauung, and do not change their political allegiances to correspond to those of the traditional working-class.38 And therefore there appears to be a need, in any empirical test of the embourgeoisement thesis, to control for the downwardly mobile non-manual worker.39 Failure to do this would invite the charge that the researcher is no longer

39. The influence of upwardly mobile manual workers on the middle-class will be discussed in a later Chapter.
examining the *embourgeoisement* thesis (with its specific emphasis on affluence amongst manual workers), but rather with the political and normative patterns of the downwardly mobile.⁴⁰ Accordingly, Table 11 eliminates the confounding effects of downward mobility by excluding all manual workers born into white-collar families (that is, whose fathers were non-manual workers), as well as those manual workers who once held a white-collar job, but no longer do so.

**TABLE 11**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>High Aspns</th>
<th>Low Aspns</th>
<th>No Ch.</th>
<th>D.K.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequency too small.

To test the validity of the *embourgeoisement* propositions it was decided to utilize an approach similar to the one used by Hamilton,⁴¹ in which the number of percentage points between affluent manual workers and lower white-collar workers are compared with the number of percentage points between affluent manual workers and non-affluent manual workers. The aim here is to determine whether affluent manual

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⁴⁰ However, this is not to deny that these two phenomena could well be closely linked to each other, or that the *embourgeoisement* process has several contributory causal factors.

⁴¹ R.F. Hamilton, 'The Behaviour and Values of Skilled Workers' in A.B. Shostack and W. Gomberg (Eds.), _op.cit._
workers are more like lower white-collar workers in their
normative and social characteristics than they are like their
less affluent peers. This method applied to Table 11 shows
that affluent manual workers have higher career aspirations
than lower white-collar workers (and only one percentage point
below affluent lower white-collar workers), whilst being 16
percentage points above non-affluent manual workers. This
difference in respect to career aspirations between affluent
and non-affluent manual workers is statistically significant
($\chi^2 = 7.73, \text{d.f.}=2$).

According to a number of studies carried out in
recent years, and covering relatively large numbers of manual
workers, some sizeable proportion of the latter - ranging from
10 to over 40 per cent - have in each instance claimed to
belong to the middle class. In some of the studies, though
by no means in all, it has then also been shown how this
claim in some degree correlates with other expressions of
"middle classness" - for example, voting conservative. On
this basis the argument has been advanced [by the proponents
of the embourgeoisement thesis], that working class
consciousness is weakening and that many manual workers are
now no longer willing to identify themselves with others in

42. See F.M. Martin, 'Some Subjective Aspects of Social
Stratification' in D.V. Glass (Ed.), Social Mobility in
Britain, Routledge, London, 1954; P. Willmott and
M. Young, Family and Class in a London Suburb, Routledge
Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry, Heinemann,
Princeton, 1949; and M. Kahan, D. Butler and D. Stokes,
'On the Analytical Division of Social Class', British
basically the same objective class position, but see themselves, rather, as forming part of a higher social stratum along with white-collar workers'. The present study seeks to explore the extent to which affluent manual workers in Australia identify with the 'middle-class'.

The questions pertaining to class identification were as follows:

51(a) Some people say that there are social classes in this country. Others disagree. Do you think there are, or are not social classes in Australia?

51(b) Why do you think this?

51(c) (If R says there are social classes) To which class would you belong?

51(d) (If middle or working class) Would you say that you were about average (chosen class), lower (chosen class) or that you were upper (chosen class)?

51(e) (If R says there are not social classes) Here (show card D) are the names some people use for social classes. If you had to say which of those social classes you belong to, which would you choose?

**TABLE 12**

Self identification of social class in Australia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Class (open and closed question)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.K.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N (100%) = 1,668 *

Most respondents maintained that there are social classes in Australia. Only 14 per cent claimed that there are


* The total sample in the Kahan and Aitkin study.
no social classes in Australia, this figure dropped to below 7 per cent when respondents were asked the closed question - 51(e). Also, most respondents chose to be 'average' members of their chosen class: 82 per cent of those identifying with the middle-class and 87 per cent of those identifying with the working-class said they were about average in their class. Compared with figures from Britain and the United States, the proportion of middle-class identifiers in Australia is high: one in every two respondents, according to Table 12. Kahan, Butler and Stokes, in their study on the analytical division of social class in Britain, found that one in every three respondents identified with the middle-class, whilst the 1964 election study conducted by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan found the proportion to be two out of every five. 44

**TABLE 13**

Class identification by occupation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>U.</th>
<th>M.</th>
<th>W.</th>
<th>D.K.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collar</td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small.

Table 13 summarises data generated from the responses to both the open and closed class identification questions. A particularly interesting trend can be discerned: affluence seems closely related to class identification. The non-affluent workers in each occupational category identified more frequently with the 'working-class'. This trend is particularly strong for lower white-collar workers: 56 per cent of the non-affluent lower white-collar workers in the sample regarded themselves as 'working-class', compared with only 24 per cent of affluent lower white-collar workers. This difference is statistically significant (\(\chi^2 = 12.36, d.f. = 1\)). Furthermore, affluent manual workers are 20 percentage points away from non-affluent manual workers in the per cent of workers identifying with the 'working-class', but only 7 percentage points away from lower white-collar workers. The difference between affluent and non-affluent manual workers is significant (\(\chi^2 = 17.42, d.f. = 1\)).

Finally, it should be considered whether this difference in class identification between affluent and non-affluent manual workers persists when downwardly mobile non-manual workers are precluded from the sample. Researchers in the United States and Great Britain have found that downwardly mobile men are more likely to think of themselves as being middle-class than manual workers born in the working-class. However, controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers in the present study failed to eliminate the observed significant difference between

---


affluent and non-affluent manual workers \( (\chi^2 = 7.79, d.f. = 1) \) – indicating a distinct *embourgeoisement* tendency of the former.

Studies throughout Great Britain and the United States have drawn attention to the close link between occupational status and membership in voluntary organizations – those in high status occupations being more likely to join clubs and societies.47 Thus if affluent skilled and affluent semi-skilled manual workers have adopted middle-class values and social patterns, we would expect to find that these workers have joined voluntary organizations.

Goldthorpe and Lockwood concluded that, in respect to club membership the manual/non-manual distinction remains a valid and sociologically significant one.48 Mackenzie found a similar trend in the United States. Half of the skilled


48. J.H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, et.al., The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure, op.cit., p.94.
craftsmen in his sample did not belong to a single organization, whilst two-thirds of the clerks and four-fifths of the managers belonged to at least one formal organization. Australia evidently has not followed this trend. Bryson found that club membership is not significantly related to occupation. This was also the case in respect to sporting and recreation groups. Parsler found that although there is a tendency in Australia for more white-collar workers to join clubs than blue-collar workers, the difference is not a significant one.

According to Table 14, affluence bears a distinct relation to club membership. In all occupational categories in which a distinction has been made between affluent and non-affluent members, the former were more likely to belong to clubs than were the latter. Moreover, this relationship between club membership and affluence is a strong one. For instance,

49. G. Mackenzie, 'Skilled Workers and White-Collar Workers: Changes in the American Class Structure', _op. cit._, p.5.

50. It is very difficult to generalise about Australia as a whole when discussing club membership, because clubs and club activities vary from one state to another. Clubs in New South Wales, for instance, allow gambling and therefore cater for a different type of patron than Victorian clubs.


52. _ibid._, p.204.

significantly more affluent lower white-collar workers belong to clubs than do non-affluent lower white-collar workers \( (\text{chi}^2=6.83, \text{d.f.}=2) \). 46 per cent of non-affluent lower white-collar workers belong to at least one club, compared with 67 per cent of affluent lower white-collar workers. Indeed, it seems clear from this Table that non-affluent lower white-collar workers are almost indistinguishable from non-affluent manual workers in their frequency of club membership.

**TABLE 14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>Number of Clubs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>One 2+</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>20.6 51.9 100.0</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>45.2 25.8 100.0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>22.8 26.6 100.0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>54.2 10.4 100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>50.0 27.1 100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>57.1 11.4 99.9</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>36.5 23.1 100.0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>60.4 15.3 100.0</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>* * *</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>56.0 12.0 100.0</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small.

On the other hand, affluent manual workers are more like affluent lower white-collar workers than like non-affluent manual workers. Affluent manual workers are 15 percentage points away from non-affluent manual workers in the per cent belonging to clubs, whilst being only 11 percentage points away

54. Trade Unions were not counted as clubs.
from affluent lower white-collar workers. This difference between affluent and non-affluent manual workers is statistically significant \( \chi^2 = 7.89, \text{d.f.} = 2 \), and remains significant when controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers \( \chi^2 = 6.14, \text{d.f.} = 2 \).

A number of writers have suggested that the rapid growth and wide acceptance of the mass media has been responsible for the dissemination of middle-class attitudes, values and life-styles, and thus led to a levelling of class differences. Lenski maintains that 'not only has the middle-class been increasing in size relative to the working-class but its social standards are permeating the working-class more and more with each passing year, thanks to the growing influence of the mass media. As a result an ever increasing number of people who are objectively manual workers think and act like the middle-class. This is especially true of the upper stratum of the working-class.'

An almost identical argument was put forward by Wilensky in 1964, whose research in the United States led him to conclude that America is moving towards a relatively undifferentiated 'mass society'. Other American studies, however, seem to dispute these cultural standardization assertions, drawing attention instead to a strong blue-collar resistance to the pressures of the mass media.


Hamilton notes that the hypothesis of cultural standardization is based almost exclusively on the effects of radio and television, and pays little attention to printed media. His examination of the frequency of book and magazine reading in the United States and Europe fails to support the hypothesis. He found that manual workers (whether affluent or not) have significantly lower frequencies of book and magazine reading than lower white-collar workers, and that the traditional gap between manual and white-collar workers has remained large. In the present study we seek to explore whether or not affluent manual workers more closely resemble lower white-collar workers in the frequency of magazine and periodical reading than non-affluent manual workers.

Table 15 provides information on the number of magazines or periodicals which respondents in the sample


58. R.F. Hamilton, 'The Behavior and Values of Skilled Workers' in A.B. Shostak and W. Gomberg (Eds.), op.cit., p. 49.

The first thing that can be discerned from this Table is that the affluent members of each occupational group were more inclined to subscribe to (or regularly read) magazines and periodicals than were the non-affluent members. In all occupational categories this difference seems to be large. The difference between affluent and non-affluent lower white-collar workers, for instance, is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 6.17, d.f. = 2$). Furthermore, affluent manual workers are closer to the lower white-collar workers than to other manual workers, and are significantly different from the latter ($\chi^2 = 6.24, d.f. = 2$). This difference becomes even greater when controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers ($\chi^2 = 7.91, d.f. = 2$).

**TABLE 15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>No. regularly Read</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small.

60. Subscriptions to periodicals specifically associated with certain white-collar professions were precluded from the periodical list. For example, The Australian Nurses Journal.
Affluence and Political Attitudes:

The embourgeoisement thesis also has a political component stemming from the argument that, as manual workers become more affluent, enabling their consumption patterns to take on a middle-class character, traditional working-class solidarity, class consciousness and political radicalism are appeased.

Butler and Rose concluded that the English Labour Party was defeated at the 1959 general election because the 'traditional working class attitudes had become eroded by the steady growth of prosperity'. This claim was fully endorsed by Crosland in his book, Can Labour Win?, and by Geiger who wrote:

'Within the working-class itself, a cooling of proletarian class consciousness has taken place. There is a cooling as considerable parts of this class have risen in their income level to lower middle-class conditions. Their social attitudes and thinking follow much more their changing income status than their relations to the means of production. They have become, as one says, bourgeois.'

Several other writers have made similar observations. They include Lenski, Sjoberg, and Dahrendorf, who further

observes that the discovery of 'the embourgeoisement of the working-class, of the industrial workers no longer conforming to the radical expectations of the intellectual socialists of the 1920s and 1930s comes as something of a shock to social scientists around the world'. 66

However, it seems evident that this assumed connection between affluence and manual worker conservatism has received little factual support. On the other hand, abundant evidence to the contrary can be cited. In a recent study of the voting behaviour of Detroit members of the United Automobile Workers, Kornhauser, Sheppard and Mayer (A. Mayer), carefully examined the political attitudes of affluent skilled workers. They found that 'of all union members, this privileged segment is the most pro-union, the most likely to participate actively in the union, the most likely to vote Democratic, and the most likely to think in liberal terms. If one were to develop a scale of class-consciousness, this group would be the closest to the fully class-conscious pole'. 67 Hamilton, in an empirical study of 'The Behavior and Values of Skilled Workers' in the United States, compared the normative and political behaviour of skilled workers with clerical and sales workers, on the one hand, and with operatives on the other. He found that skilled workers 'are four percentage points away from the semiskilled workers and are 15 from the white-collar workers in the per cent


identifying as Democrats'. Moreover, continues Hamilton, 'the skilled are like the semiskilled in eight of 19 comparisons on questions having to do with foreign affairs. In eight other comparisons, there are no differences between the three groups, and in only three comparisons are the skilled closer to the white-collar workers'. Finally, he examined affluence and its influence on political attitudes. Once again he found the *embourgeoisement* thesis unfulfilled. Indeed affluence, rather than creating political conservatism 'appeared to have the opposite effect'.

Similar observations have also been made in European countries. According to Allardt's report on Scandinavian countries: 'All evidence indicates that social class explains more of the variation in voting and particularly more of the working class voting than some decades ago. This has occurred simultaneously with the disappearance of traditional class barriers. As equality has increased, the working class voters have been more apt to vote for the workers own parties than before'. Hamilton, also having conducted extensive research in West Germany and France, concluded that in both

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69. *ibid.*, p.51; also noted by G. Mackenzie, *op.cit.*, p.5.

70. *ibid.*, p.55.


72. R.F. Hamilton, 'Affluence and the Worker: The West German Case', *op.cit.*, p.151

these countries the achievement amongst manual workers of a middle-class income level has not led to political conservatism. These findings concur with those of British sociologists. 74 However, it should be noted that the results of these researchers are still far from conclusive. The persuasive examination by Sartori 75 of current research in the field of class conflict and voting behaviour has cast some doubt on the validity of these studies.

To my knowledge no studies in Australia have explored the differences in political attitudes between affluent and non-affluent manual workers. Using this framework, the present study seeks to test six hypotheses relating to political attitudes. The first of these examines whether or not the political identifications of affluent manual workers more closely resemble lower white-collar workers than non-affluent manual workers, who identify with 'working-class' parties. Following this, the voting intentions of affluent manual workers are compared with the voting intentions of lower white-collar and non-affluent manual workers. The remaining 4 indices relate to trade union membership, the political involvement of


trade unions, trade union power, and the power of big business in Australia. In each of these hypotheses we wish to determine whether affluent manual workers are significantly more conservative than non-affluent manual workers.

Table 16 presents the political identification of respondents in the sample. Each respondent was asked: 'generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Liberal, Labor, Country Party, or DLP?' Although a wide range of replies was coded, for the purposes of this analysis attention centres on the proportion of workers identifying with the Australian Labor Party.

**TABLE 16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>LCP</th>
<th>ALP</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>DK</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small.

76. The only other party associated with left-wing politics at the time of the interviews was the Communist Party of Australia (The Australia Party was convened in 1968/69). However, in view of the very low number of respondents identifying with the Communist Party, Communist Party identifiers were coded irretreivably into the 'Other' category. Consequently the ALP remains the most suitable category for analysis.

77. Respondents who did not identify with any political party.
According to this Table, affluent workers in each occupational category were without exception more conservative, in respect to their political identification, than their less affluent peers. This trend is particularly marked for lower white-collar workers in the sample: 46 per cent of non-affluent lower white-collar workers thought of themselves as Labor supporters, compared with 25 per cent of affluent lower white-collar workers - a statistically significant variation ($\chi^2 = 5.42, \text{d.f.} = 1$). Furthermore, affluent manual workers are 8 percentage points away from lower white-collar workers whilst being almost 20 percentage points away from non-affluent manual workers. This latter difference is highly significant ($\chi^2 = 24.2, \text{d.f.} = 1$) and remains so when controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers ($\chi^2 = 15.31, \text{d.f.} = 1$).

In order to reveal voting patterns, each respondent was asked to indicate which Party he would vote for if a federal election were held tomorrow. The responses are presented in Table 17 and here, as in Table 16, the affluent sector of each occupational category was politically more conservative than the less affluent sector. The largest difference occurs in the upper middle-class group, where 55 per cent of the non-affluent upper middle-class stated that they would vote Labor - making them the strongest Labor-supporting white-collar group. This of course is not totally unexpected, as certain lower professional groups in Australia ascribe to a platform of radicalism. A good example is school teachers.
TABLE 17
Voting patterns in Australia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>LCP</th>
<th>ALP</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>DK</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small

The difference in voting intentions between affluent and non-affluent lower white-collar workers is fairly small and, in contrast to political identification (Table 16), not statistically significant. On the other hand, affluent manual workers are more like lower white-collar workers in voting intentions than they are to other manual workers. Affluent manual workers are 9 percentage points away from lower white-collar workers in the percentage intending to vote for the ALP, but 19 percentage points away from non-affluent manual workers. Once again the difference between affluent and non-affluent manual workers is highly significant ($\chi^2=15.07, \text{d.f.}=1$), and remains significant when controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers ($\chi^2=9.97, \text{d.f.}=1$). It should be further noted that in both Tables 16 and 17 the most conservative section of the manual workers is the affluent skilled workers. This observation is in direct contrast to the afore-cited findings of researchers in the United States, Great Britain, and Europe.
Trade unionism in Australia is traditionally associated with the working-class struggle against the owners and controllers of the means of production. Despite the fact that trade unions, with the aid of compulsory conciliation and arbitration, have largely institutionalized this struggle, public attitudes towards trade unions are still characterized by antipathy and antagonism. This of course is not to deny the spread of trade unionism into the ranks of the white-collar and professional workforce.

Table 18 gives some indication of the distribution of unionism in the Australian workforce:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>Unionists</th>
<th>Non-Unionists</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small.

Here, as above, affluent manual workers are more like lower white-collar workers than like their less affluent blue-collar brothers. They are 11 percentage points away from lower white-collar workers in the per cent belonging to a trade union, but 19 percentage points away from non-affluent manual workers. And once again the difference is statistically significant.
(\chi^2 = 13.3, \text{d.f.} = 1). This trend, however, does not appear when controlling for the downwardly mobile.

**TABLE 19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluent</th>
<th>Should have ties</th>
<th>Should not have ties</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>D.K.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff. 22.9</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Aff.  *</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff. 16.7</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Aff. 26.1</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff. 20.0</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Aff. 20.9</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff. 18.5</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Aff. 36.4</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff. 30.6</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small.

In addition, all trade unionists (both blue and white-collar) were asked: 'Do you think trade unions should have close ties to the Labor Party, or do you think trade unions should stay out of politics?' Table 19 shows the responses to this question. Although variations across the occupational categories are not very great,\(^78\) the same trend observed above can be discerned. The affluent trade unionists in each occupational category were more conservative than their non-affluent colleagues. That is, they were more likely to want

\(^78\) This is a curious finding in view of the two nation-wide strikes which occurred just prior to the survey interviews. Australia saw a national postal strike as well as a petrol tanker driver strike, both of which were widely reported in the Press and inconvenienced a high proportion of people around the country.
trade unions to stay out of politics by not having close ties with the ALP. Although this trend persists even when controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers, the disparity between affluent and non-affluent manual (and lower white-collar) workers is no longer statistically significant.

### Table 20

**Trade Union power in Australia:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>Too much power</th>
<th>Not too much power</th>
<th>D.K.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small

The final question pertaining to trade unions in Australia was directed to all respondents—unionists and non-unionists alike. The question asks: 'Do you think that trade unions in Australia have too much power?' The replies are presented in Table 20. A comparison of affluent with non-

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79. No distinction was made, in the interview, between white and blue-collar unions, which might account for the high proportion of white-collar workers stating that trade unions do not have too much power.
affluent manual workers reveals a significant trend towards
the _bourgeoisement_ of the former \( \chi^2 = 5.65, \text{d.f.} = 1 \). That
is, affluent manual workers are closer to lower white-collar
workers in their estimation of the extent of trade union power
in Australia than they are to other blue-collar workers. This
trend is identical when controlling for downwardly mobile non-
manual workers, but because frequencies are smaller when the
downwardly mobile are removed from the table, the difference
between affluent and non-affluent manual workers is no longer
significant \( \chi^2 = 3.36, \text{d.f.} = 1 \).

### TABLE 21

**Big Business power in Australia:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Affluence</th>
<th>Too much power</th>
<th>Not too much power</th>
<th>D.K.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper M-Class</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower W-Collar</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
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<td>29.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Aff.</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-skilled</td>
<td>Aff.</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Aff.</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* frequencies too small.

Finally, respondents were asked whether they thought
that big business in Australia has too much power. Table 21
reproduces the same pattern observed throughout. First, the
affluent workers in each occupational category seem to be more
conservative than the non-affluent. Second, a comparison among
the three groups - lower white-collar, affluent manual and non-
affluent manual - reveals a trend towards the embourgeoisement of affluent manual workers, who are 13 percentage points away from non-affluent manual workers in the per cent of workers maintaining that big business in Australia is not too powerful, whilst being 4 percentage points beyond lower white-collar workers. Affluent manual workers are significantly more conservative than non-affluent manual workers (\( \chi^2 = 5.48, \text{d.f.} = 1 \)).

Third, this pattern is even more pronounced when controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers; however, the drop in frequencies is accompanied by a drop in the significance level (\( \chi^2 = 1.62, \text{d.f.} = 1 \)).

In each of the 10 hypotheses tested in this chapter, a close link between blue-collar affluence and worker embourgeoisement was discerned. The responses of affluent manual workers in the sample more closely resemble those of lower white-collar workers than those of non-affluent manual workers, thereby providing support for the embourgeoisement thesis. The issues relating to these findings will be further discussed in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Many social scientists have alleged that the severe economic inequalities which characterized 19th century capitalist societies have diminished and that the political, economic and social structures of these countries have fundamentally altered over the decades. Through the continuous redistribution and diffusion of economic wealth and political power, the massive growth of the middle-class and the increased availability of mobility opportunities, blue-collar workers have been able to secure high living standards and adopt life-styles similar to those of lower white-collar workers. Moreover it is alleged that blue-collar prosperity and the breakdown of income differentials between blue and white-collar workers has mitigated the rigid class divisions and class antagonisms that Marx and his followers were so concerned to foster. Thus instead of becoming more divisive, the "post-capitalist" society is experiencing the economic, social, political, and normative integration of the working and middle-classes. It is asserted that affluent manual workers have adopted middle-class life-styles, values, aspirations, norms and social and political orientations. As blue-collar workers become more prosperous (enabling their consumption patterns to take on a middle-class character) traditional working-class solidarity, class consciousness and political radicalism are ostensibly appeased. In short, it is asserted that the
working-class (or rather its more affluent sector) is becoming bourgeois.

In order to examine this theory, the present study sought to explore the relative characteristics of the affluent manual worker in the Australian class structure, thereby providing a re-examination of Parsler's findings. Parsler's research into the economic aspect of the embourgeoisement thesis led him to conclude that the incomes of blue-collar workers in Australia are significantly lower than those of lower white-collar workers - a finding, he asserts, which 'contrasts strongly' with the American and British experience. However, by failing to distinguish between the skilled and semi-skilled workers in his sample, Parsler puts himself in a poor position to compare his study with overseas findings. All the recognized studies in America and Britain (even those cited by Parsler) divide manual workers into at least two categories, thereby treating skilled workers (normally the highest paid of all manual workers) independently. Moreover, by defining his occupational categories broadly, thus producing large and significant differences of income between these categories, Parsler's conclusions strongly imply that no discernible blue-collar occupational category can be placed on an economic parity with lower white-collar workers. Furthermore, without wishing to be overly critical or pedantic, it should be

pointed out that Parsler's conclusions are in some instances based on quite inappropriate statistical procedures.²

Because **embourgeoisement** of the working-class is regarded by many writers as a direct result of blue-collar prosperity, it was the aim of the present study to determine the extent of this prosperity in the Australian occupational structure. Accordingly the present study, by availing itself of a variety of data sources, fails to support Parsler's conclusions, and finds little to deny the relative affluence enjoyed by skilled and many semi-skilled workers in Australia.

The figures presented and discussed in chapter 4 indicate a considerable degree of income overlap between highly paid manual workers (predominantly skilled and some semi-skilled workers) and lower white-collar workers. It is clear that in terms of both individual and household income figures, income differentials between many manual workers and lower white-collar workers are quite small. Thus it seems clear that the relative market situation of manual and lower white-collar workers in Australia is similar to that found in other industrialized countries. And in accordance with overseas findings, the evidence suggests that in respect to secondary aspects of the market situation (such as hours worked, opportunities for upward mobility, security of tenure and worker fringe benefits) lower white-collar workers in Australia remain better off than manual workers.

². For example, he uses chi square tests on scores rather than frequencies in Table 7 and 9 in 'Some economic Aspects of Embourgeoisement in Australia' op.cit.
In chapter 5, I discussed the issues surrounding the normative aspect of the embourgeoisement thesis and sought to test several hypotheses pertaining to that aspect. However, because the data used in this chapter is exclusively derived from secondary analysis, it has been impossible to make all the controls and explore all the alternative hypotheses which appear to be relevant to the study. And therefore it is clear that only preliminary and tentative conclusions can be drawn. Nevertheless the hypotheses which have been tested, were generated from similar studies in Great Britain, the United States and Western Europe and are usually taken to illustrate distinctions between blue-collar and lower white-collar workers. These hypotheses are:

1. That manual workers have low career aspirations in contrast to lower white-collar workers who strive for occupational success and upward mobility.

2. That manual workers identify with the working-class whereas lower white-collar workers identify with the middle-class.

3. That manual workers join fewer clubs and voluntary associations than lower white-collar workers.

4. That manual workers subscribe to and read fewer magazines and periodicals than lower white-collar workers.

5. That manual workers identify with those political parties who purport to represent the interests of the working-class whilst lower white-collar workers identify with more conservative political parties.
6. That manual workers are more likely to vote for the Australian Labor Party than lower white-collar workers.

7. That manual workers are more likely to be members of a trade union than lower white-collar workers.

8. That manual workers believe that trade unions should be political bodies whereas lower white-collar workers believe that trade unions should stay out of politics.

9. That manual workers believe that trade unions should be powerful bodies whereas lower white-collar workers believe that trade unions have too much power.

10. That manual workers believe that big business organizations have too much power whereas lower white-collar workers believe that business organizations should be powerful bodies.

Proponents of the embourgeoisement thesis suggest that as affluence spreads down the ranks of the manual occupations, these traditional working-class patterns are breaking down and being systematically replaced by the respective middle-class patterns. In order to gauge the extent to which this process has occurred manual workers in the sample were divided into two groups (affluent and non-affluent workers). If the above hypotheses can be accepted as valid indices for testing the embourgeoisement thesis, support for the thesis would be confirmed by a trend in the responses of affluent manual workers to more closely
resemble the responses of lower white-collar workers than those of non-affluent manual workers. And indeed on every one of the hypotheses tested, affluence in the ranks of manual workers was found to be closely linked with worker embourgeoisement. That is, on every index, the affluent manual workers in the sample were closer in their responses to lower white-collar workers than to their less affluent peers. Moreover this difference between affluent and non-affluent manual workers was, in all but one case, statistically significant.

Social scientists have observed that most industrial societies have relatively high rates of downward mobility. Downwardly mobile non-manual workers, we are told, do not readily relinquish their middle-class patterns and submit to those of the working-class. An important consequence therefore of this process of downward occupational mobility, is the shift of middle-class social and normative patterns into the working-class. Thus it is held that the embourgeoisement process is not so much a conversion process (with its origin in worker prosperity) but rather a transplantation of bourgeois values as white-collar workers descend into the blue-collar world. Downwardly mobile workers, thus 'may account for a considerable part of the middle-class values found within the manual occupations.'


4. Ibid.
In order to find out whether the embourgeoisement of the blue-collar worker in Australia is more influenced by conversion than by transplantation processes, it was decided to introduce a control for downwardly mobile non-manual workers in the sample. Thus whilst limiting the sample of manual workers to include only those respondents who were born into a blue-collar family, each of the ten hypotheses was retested. By this method, we are able to assess the possible influence of transplantation factors on the strong embourgeoisement trend already observed amongst affluent manual workers in the sample. However, it seems that despite a fairly high rate of downward mobility in the Australian occupation structure (which is reflected in the sharp fall in sample size when controlling for downwardly mobile non-manual workers) the absence of downwardly mobile workers from the sample, is not accompanied by a discernible weakening of this embourgeoisement trend. That is, downwardly mobile non-manual workers appear to be no more conservative or middle-class than blue-collar workers born into blue-collar families. This is clearly evident from the data when controlling for the downwardly mobile. In all but one of the 10 hypotheses tested, affluence remains closely linked to worker embourgeoisement. The responses of affluent manual workers still closely resemble those of lower white-collar workers and are, in all but three cases, significantly more middle-class than non-affluent manual workers. The drop in sample size, which accompanied the control, was responsible for the fall of significance levels in these three tests - the embourgeoisement trend was just as strong (and in one case, stronger) on these three indices. Therefore the present
study provides little support for the claim that the presence of middle-class values in the ranks of manual workers in Australia is a result of a transplantation of these values from the middle-class by means of downward occupational mobility. These data thus, provide additional support for the embourgeoisement theorists and their conviction that worker affluence and embourgeoisement are undeniably linked. Unfortunately, the precise nature of this observed link cannot be determined from the data and the statistical analyses used in this study. Therefore support for the total embourgeoisement thesis (which asserts that worker affluence causes embourgeoisement) will not be sought.

It is clear that the proponents of the embourgeoisement thesis were convinced that affluence is the decisive factor in the "breakdown of the working-class", however several other factors should be accounted for. One of these is the influence of suburban living. Some writers argue that it is not affluence per se that is facilitating the breakdown of class differences, but that affluence acts as a catalyst in that it enables many working-class families to purchase homes and thus move out of the traditional working-class community into modern housing estates in which the middle and working-class live side by side, send their children to the same schools and worship in the same churches. Being continually exposed to the middle-class style of life, the blue-collar worker, it is argued, might seek to join that

way of life. Secondly it is maintained by many social
scientists that how a worker thinks and acts is largely
determined by his occupational experiences. Lockwood, a
proponent of this view, describes the situational and
experiential differences between manual workers and
white-collar workers. 6 Whereas the industrial worker is
faced with a highly mechanized and rationalized production
system, accompanied by the harsh, impersonal and instrumental
color of the authority structure, the work experiences
of the clerical worker are not characterized by this type
of impersonal discipline. Clerical work, says Lockwood,
cannot usually be subjected to the same rationalization
found on the factory floor. 'Office relations form a social
system in which work has traditionally been maximized by
personal, rather than by impersonal, command.' 7 The work
experiences of factory workers, concludes Lockwood, create
an environment which is highly conducive to the emergence
of a cohesive, hostile and class conscious working class,
whilst the clerical worker's close ties with management,
provide him with little incentive to join radical trade unions
or identify with the economic interests of blue-collar workers.
Following the logic of this argument, then, we might expect
to find a less antagonistic, hostile and class conscious
worker, as enlightened managers in industry improve the
working environment of blue-collar workers and break down the
institutionalized barriers between "staff" and "works".

6. D. Lockwood, The Blackcoated Worker, Unwin University

7. ibid., p.79.
Although very few industries have made sweeping reforms of this nature, researchers should be aware of the contributory potential these changes might engender for the embourgeoisement process.

A thorough and rigorous empirical examination of the embourgeoisement thesis would need to take account of these variables and, with the aid of regression equations or a path analysis, their relationship to one another. Furthermore, a thorough examination of the relational aspect of the embourgeoisement process would be required. Embourgeoisement of the blue-collar worker cannot be assumed to have occurred until it can be shown that close social links are being established between affluent manual workers and lower white-collar workers outside the work environment. Here the researcher must demonstrate firstly, that workers are both sufficiently motivated and able to adopt middle-class life-styles; secondly, that long-standing community, neighbourhood and family social ties between manual workers have been broken down, and are being replaced by new ties with members of the middle-class; and thirdly, that workers are being socially accepted as status equals by members of the middle-class. 8 Even if it is assumed that the affluent manual worker wants to join the middle-class, his capacity to do so remains in question. This would pertain not simply to his economic capacity but also to his psychological capacity to adjust to a new life-style. In order to achieve

this effectively, it would seem essential for there to be some minimal degree of social interaction between the ascending worker and members of the middle-class. Thus there appears to be a need for a socialization process to occur. It is here that the worker is most likely to find his efforts thwarted. After reviewing a number of British studies on this issue, Goldthorpe and Lockwood concluded that there remains a 'marked degree of status segregation in housing areas, in the informal neighbourhood relations, in friendship groups, in the membership of local clubs, societies and organizations...and in all cases the division between manual and non-manual workers and their families has proved to be one of the most salient.'

There are several ways to determine the extent and nature of affluent manual workers' relations with non-manual workers and their families. The British affluent worker study by Goldthorpe and his colleagues made use of some of these. The researcher should also take account of the close friendship pattern of affluent workers. This can be done by asking each respondent to name (first names only) his closest friends and then describe them, giving details of their occupations and so on. It could well be the case, for instance, that although the affluent manual worker has adopted some middle-class patterns, his close friends are still drawn from the ranks of the manual occupations.

9. ibid.
As we have seen the data used in the present study was not entirely suitable for a complete examination of the embourgeoisement thesis and therefore only superficial conclusions can be drawn. In addition to the hypotheses already tested, several supplementary avenues could be explored. For example, blue-collar workers traditionally display lower educational aspirations for their children than do lower white-collar workers. Also an extensive examination of each respondent's class schemes would have proved fruitful. The study of self-identified class schemes has become a well acknowledged tool in the study of social stratification; but although a good heuristic device, it is not without peculiar difficulties. There is a tendency for researchers using this method of investigation to group together nominally similar responses without bearing in mind the distinct possibility that identical verbal responses might have vastly different underlying meanings. For instance, it cannot be assumed that a dichotomous conception of society necessarily implies an acceptance of the conflict model, nor does a trichotomous conception necessarily imply a consensus model of society. Therefore the terms 'worker-top' could, for some respondents conceivably denote differences of consumption patterns or snobbery, rather than an awareness of a basic economic or political struggle.

On the other hand there is no logical reason why a conflict model must have only two competing elements. And there is certainly no reason why (especially within a complex social system) all elements must be continuously engaged in an economic or power struggle. Thus a respondent's conception of middle-class need not, for example, have to play a central role in a struggle he might clearly envisage between the ruling and the working-class. Therefore it is important to find out not simply how many strata each respondent uses to depict the system of stratification, or in which stratum he places himself, but also to find out the meaning imputed in each stratum identified, the types of people making up each stratum and, most importantly, the intra and inter-group relationships inferred.

The proponents of the embourgeoisement thesis, in their enthusiasm and zeal to vindicate their belief in (and, in some cases, ideological commitment to) the decomposition of the traditional working-class, have fallen victim to their own arguments. Whilst focusing their full attention on the happy, prosperous, depoliticized blue-collar worker (mesmerized by the gadgets and the comforts of the consumer society) these writers have created and fostered a spurious conception of the white-collar worker in modern society. Not only are they inclined to assume that the middle-class is a static and homogeneous stratum in society, but also that the so-called middle-class is characterized by a specific set of social, normative and political attributes. If worker prosperity has
purportedly been responsible for the disintegration of a formerly homogeneous\(^{11}\) group of manual workers, then given that variations of affluence also occur within the middle-class\(^{12}\), we might well ask why white-collar workers

11. It is constantly asserted that embourgeoisement is a process whereby the industrial working-class changes from a highly cohesive, class-conscious group into a differentiated and divisive cluster of occupational categories. 'This is especially true of craftsmen, foremen and skilled mechanics, whose high wages nowadays exceed the salaries of many lower middle class white-collar employees... In many respects, therefore, the line which sets off the "aristocracy of skilled labor" from the bulk of semi-skilled and unskilled manual laborers is more significant sociologically than the dividing line between skilled craftsmen and lower middle class white-collar workers which has become increasingly blurred in recent years' (Mayer, 1955, pp. 41-2). The questions which must be asked are, how true is it that all blue-collar workers once constituted an economically, socially and normatively cohesive stratum? Is it not true that as far back as the early 19th Century, skilled craftsmen were a stratum apart from ordinary labourers? Were the workers, despite their poverty, disease, overcrowding, overwork and unemployment, a cohesive, class-conscious group when Marx was formulating his ideas? I have found no evidence to support this claim. According to Cole, 'side by side with this increase in the proportions of black-coated and professional workers has gone a change in the structure of the manual working class. A century ago, the social gulf between skilled craftsmen and labourers was considerably wider than it is to-day. It was greater in incomes, and greater in ways of living and in standards of education and culture... Educationally, the gulf between craftsmen and labourers was wide: many labourers had hardly been to school at all, whereas most skilled workers had received some form of formal education' (Cole, 1955, pp. 51-2). Furthermore, Lockwood notes that the conditions of the 19th Century counting houses were such that many clerks found themselves with incomes barely exceeding those of artisans and 'whose prospects for advancement were exceedingly small' (Lockwood, 1966, pp. 27-8).

are so resistant to these variations. Also we have discussed how the beliefs and actions of manual workers are seemingly affected by the area they live in, variations in their work situation and by mobility, but little about the ways in which these factors might influence lower white-collar workers.

Several critics\textsuperscript{13} of the \textit{embourgeoisement} thesis have drawn attention to social and normative differences within the ranks of lower white-collar workers. Some\textsuperscript{14} have argued that a large section of this group has become proletarianized whilst still others\textsuperscript{15} have drawn attention to a 'normative convergence' of lower level white-collar workers and affluent blue-collar workers. Goldthorpe and his colleagues concluded that whilst \textit{embourgeoisement} of the blue-collar worker has not occurred in England, significant portions of the manual and non-manual workforce have converged, especially in respect to aspirations and normative orientations.


\textsuperscript{14} For instance, R. F. Hamilton, "The Marginal Middle Class: A Reconsideration", \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{15} J. H. Goldthorp, \textit{et. al.}, \textit{op.cit.}
Seeking to throw some light on this issue, the present study also distinguished between affluent and non-affluent lower white-collar workers and observed (in chapter 5) the way in which the workers in these two groups responded to each of the ten hypotheses. In respect to their career aspirations and social perspectives, non-affluent lower white-collar workers, on every index, more closely resembled non-affluent manual workers than affluent lower white-collar workers. Perhaps the most interesting finding here was that 4 out of every 7 non-affluent lower white-collar workers, identified with the 'working-class' compared with only 1 in every 4 affluent lower white-collar workers. The same trend was also observed in respect to political attitudes. In all but one of these hypotheses tested, affluent lower white-collar workers were more politically conservative than non-affluent lower white-collar workers.

These findings suggest a similar pattern to that observed by Goldthorpe and his colleagues, although other possible conclusions could be drawn. For instance, some writers suggest that as upwardly mobile manual workers move into lower white-collar occupations (often poorly paid lower white-collar positions) they are accompanied by the social and political values with which they were endowed when blue-collar workers. Here, as above, we see the re-emergence of the debate between the 'transplantation'···


and the 'conversion' argument. However this issue, not being central to the embourgeoisement thesis, has not been resolved within the present study.17

In the preceding chapters we have considered some of the more pressing theoretical and empirical implications of the embourgeoisement thesis, and have sought to discover whether this thesis is applicable to the Australian workforce. Examination of the data revealed not only that a significant proportion of blue-collar workers in Australia earn incomes comparable with those of many lower white-collar workers, but that relative prosperity has enabled blue-collar workers to adopt many of the characteristics of middle-class suburban living. Moreover, this affluent sector of blue-collar employees was found to possess career aspirations, social perspectives and political attitudes remarkably similar to those of lower white-collar employees, thereby providing positive confirmation for most of the embourgeoisement propositions. However, in view of the difficulties encountered and the obvious limitations of this study, confirmation of the embourgeoisement thesis in its entirety remains unsubstantiated, for much of the thesis rests on the assumption that affluent manual workers and their families have been accepted into the social organizations and friendship networks of the middle-class. Naturally, it is this aspect of embourgeoisement that requires additional attention by Australian researchers.

17. This could however be done simply by introducing a control for upwardly mobile manual workers.
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