

WORKING-CLASS FORMATION IN EUROPE:
IN SEARCH OF A SYNTHESIS

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Introduction: two heuristic models

During the last twenty years ‘new social history’ and ‘new working class history’ have considerably widened our knowledge about social micro and macro processes including social movements. A culmination was reached with the publication *Working-Class Formation*, edited by Ira Katznelson and Aristide R. Zolberg.¹ In his methodologically important introduction, Katznelson emphasizes the significance of proletarianization and of class for understanding ties between economies, social and political structures.² Katznelson acknowledges his debt to the classical Marxist ‘Klasse an sich – Klasse für sich’ model but sets forward to improve on this in essence base-superstructure metaphor: ‘With the specification of different levels it becomes possible to construct the various cases of class formation in their own terms and to explore the competing capacities of various macrohypotheses about linkages between the levels’.³

Katznelson distinguishes between four levels that together constitute class in capitalist societies: the first level is the structure of capitalist economic structures and development; the second level is ‘determined in part by the structure of capitalist development’ and refers to ‘the social organization of society lived by actual people in real social formations’; at the third level ‘classes are formed groups, sharing dispositions’ that are formed by the manner in which people interact with each other; in other words dispositions constitute social meaning and cultural configurations within which people act. However, there is no direct connection between individuals disposition to behave and collective action that constitute the fourth level. Collective action refers to ‘classes that are organized and that act through movements and organizations to affect society and the position of the class within it’. No doubt, this heuristic framework represents a step forward compared to many versions of the basis-superstructure model. The specification of the four levels of class reflects a multifaceted causal hierarchy without strong deterministic relations, on the other hand, it does not unfold a tight analytical model that guides the movement from one level to the next. What we get is a rich sophisticated checklist that loosely specifies the necessary analytical conditions for moving from economic structure, way of life to disposition, and collective action; or stated differently, Katznelson’s model softens the traditional ‘Klasse an sich – Klasse für sich’ relationship by introducing social and cultural variables between necessary economic conditions and political strategies such as movements, interest organizations, political parties, and state structures.

In trying to construct a synthesis on the formation of working-classes in Europe I will build on this insight. But because I find the model to be too complicated for comparative macrohistorical analysis, and since the model does not allow for the reverse relationship that goes from superstructure to basis, I intend to define class formation pleading four concepts: interests, social organization, interaction, arena. The interest argument locates the vital sources of a group in the economic structure, and applied to dependent populations

1. Ira Katznelson, Aristide R. Zolberg, eds., *Working-Class Formation. Nineteenth Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1986).
2. Katznelson, ‘Working-Class Formation: Constructing Cases and Comparisons’, in Katznelson and Zolberg *opus cit.*, pp. 3-41.
3. *Ibidem* p. 14, 14-20.

in a capitalist economy this means the allocation of resources (skill, information, social network) in the labour market.⁴ But to perceive and to act on those interests the individual must be part of a social network, small or large, informal or formal. However, social organizations, whether migration networks or trade unions, do not act in isolation they are constantly being confronted with other groups, organizations and larger structures. Thus it appears that the interests and the issues the parties stand up for cannot be derived directly from the organization of production but have been constructed as a result of the interaction between competing organizations. Important for the argument is, too, that moving from the conceptual and partly timeless level of analysis to medium- and short run theories, we find that the timing and location of collective action and social movements are more closely related to political opportunities than to underlying social and economic structures.⁵ Interest articulation and organizational interplay, however, require an arena and very often an authority that frames and defines the more fundamental rules of the game. Therefore modern capitalism and the rise of the working class cannot be understood without including the consolidation of the modern national state.

Having inserted a more dialectic relationship between basis and superstructure I will go on to outline a historic device that accentuates fundamental changes in the structure of solidarity. It is based on two master variables: proletarianization and dimensions of conflict. The 'process of proletarianization' indicates the creation of a class of people who do not control the means of production, and who survive by selling their labour. Thus, proletarianization refers to (a) the separation of workers from control of the means of production (expropriation), and (b) increasing dependence of workers on the sale of their labour power (wagework).⁶ Proletarianization points indirectly to an array of changes beginning in the agrarian system of production and agrarian ownership of property, capital flow, and new social and demographic structures, along with a characteristic concentration of capital, which includes industrial production as well as its spatial distribution. The historical version of this process addresses a proletarianization that crystallized between the 16th century and the middle of the 19th century in European rural areas, and that, during the 19th to 20th centuries, would be concentrated in the cities.

The 'dimensions of conflict' is closely related to (a) forms and shapes of collective action, (b) types of solidarity and organization, and (c) political state-structures. In broad outline, we can observe a movement going from small local disturbances to large scale national conflicts. Scholars have distinguished between pre-industrial and industrial crowds, between primitive archaic and modern protest, or between parochial/bifurcate and national/autonomous forms of contention.⁷ They all reflect fundamental changes in the European economic, social and political structure from community based actions in the 17th and 18th

4. Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production* (London, New Left Books 1985), pp. 26-29; Arthur Stinchcombe, *Economic Sociology* (London, Academic Press 1981).

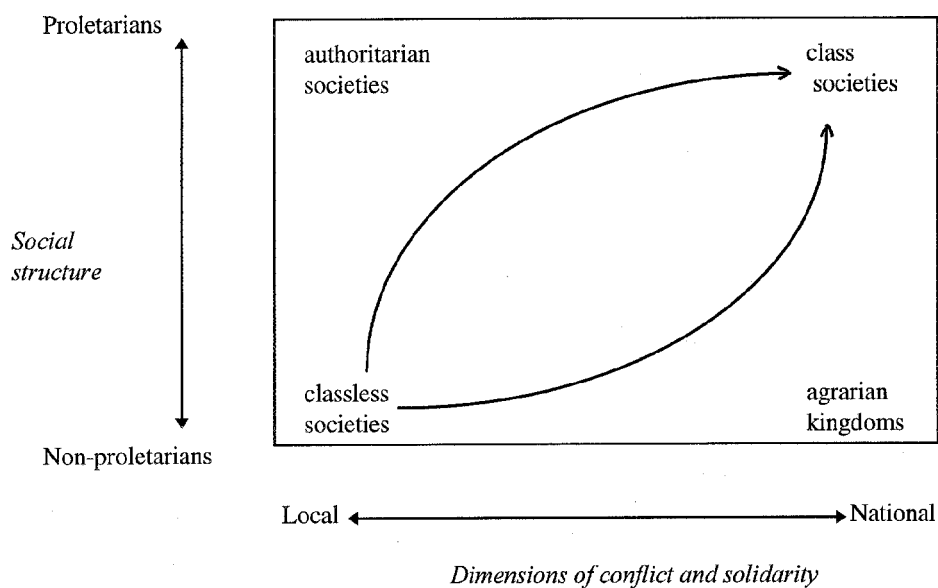
5. Charles Tilly, Louise Tilly, and Richard Tilly, *The Rebellious Century, 1830-1930* (Cambridge Mass., Harvard Uni. Press 1975), p. 268; Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement* (Cambridge Mass., Cambridge Uni. Press 1994), chapt. 5.

6. Tilly, 'States, Taxes, and Proletarianization', in Tilly, *As Sociology Meets History* (New York, Academic Press 1981), p. 195; See also Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, (University of California Press 1982), p. 77.

7. George Rude, 'The Pre-industrial Crowd', in Rude, *Paris and London in the 18th Century* (London, Fontana/Collins 1974); Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels. Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester 1959); Charles Tilly, 'Collective Violence in European Perspective', in Ted R. Gurr ed., *Violence in America* (3. ed., California, Sage 1989).

centuries to nationwide mass conflicts in the 19th and 20th centuries. During the last two hundred years, collective action has become larger in scale as their organizational basis has changed. 18th century communal and corporate bonds were geographical and social limited compared to 19th century national social movements, political parties and interest groups whose mobilization capacities were much more extensive, and often levelled at the national state that had gained in power. Having sketched the two master processes and related sociopolitical formations, one can set up the following diagram.

Figure 1. Connections between social structure and dimensions of conflict



It says that when the rate of proletarianization increases and when conflicts approach a national scale we are approximating a society based on class division, and vice versa. The diagram also states that proletarianization and lines of conflict can move in different and even in opposite directions. A condition with a completed proletarianization but without national conflicts can be found in authoritarian societies such as fascist or communist regimes where people in general are controlled and deprived of the possibilities of building autonomous organizations at the national level. A situation with a society dominated by national power struggles based on a non-proletarian population is hard to find in a modern capitalist society. On the other hand it was quite common with dynastic revolutionary situations and kingdomwide civil wars against monarchies based on noble and aristocratic leadership and involving the entire society.⁸ In chiefly agrarian societies the mobilization of common people, apart from brute force, is taken place through patron-client ties that function as a mutual social security system between landlords and subjects.⁹ When a class

8. Perez Zagorin, *Rebels and Rulers* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1982) vol. 1, pp. 28-47.

9. See Bodemann, 'Relations of Production and Class Rule: The Hidden Basis of Patron-Clientage', in Barry Wellman and S.D. Berkowitz, eds., *Social Structure: A Network Approach* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1988).

society is defined in terms of proletarianization, degree of solidarity and state structure, it follows that class formation refers to the processes by which a group sharing relations of production increases its capacity for collective action that has a visible affect on other classes within an integrated society. In this model cultural phenomena as symbols, identities and views of reality are not treated as an autonomous or intervening variable but are organizational and institutional grounded.¹⁰

The following discussion of class formation and forms of integration will emphasize the degree to which the lower classes were being incorporated into the expanding capitalist economy, and how they responded by constructing (or failed to construct) mutual bonds in the market and in the national political arena. I mainly intend to focus on the area inside the arrows that is how changing social structures and dimensions of conflict and solidarity merged to form a class society and as such a working class, too.

Origin of a european proletariat

A society based on class presupposes a break with previous economic and social structures. The most thorough change in the conditions of life of the European population can be summarized under the notion proletarianization. In a bold attempt to calculate the long run growth of the European population with special reference to the difference between proletarians and nonproletarians, Charles Tilly has arranged the following table.

Table 1. Demographic change and proletarianization of the European population

Population in millions	1500	1800	1900
Total population	56	150	285
Nonproletarians	39	50	85
Proletarians in cities	1	10	75
Rural proletarians	16	90	125

Source, Charles Tilly: 'Demographic Origin of the European Proletariat', in David Levine, ed., *Proletarianization and Family History* (New York 1984), p. 36.

What needs to be explained here is first of all the many-fold increase in the number of rural proletarians compared to proletarians in cities, and next to nonproletarians. In principal, a given population can increase its size by means of (a) net migration, (b) social mobility, (c) natural increase. To begin with, it can be stated that the outward movement of thousands of people most of them proletarians, from Europe first to Africa and Asia, then to the Americas, and later to Oceania far exceeded the number of immigrant from c. 1500 until 1945, thereafter (Western) Europe became net receivers of migrants.¹¹ In other words, migration patterns cannot contribute to the number of proletarians or nonproletarians. Unfortunately it is much more difficult to estimate the effect of social mobility into and out of the proletariat.

10. Rueschemeyer, Evelyne H. Stephens & John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Cambridge, Polity Press 1992), p. 51.

11. L. Potts, *The World Labour Market: A History of Migration* (London, Zed Books 1990).

We can point to numerous examples of artisans, peasants and other independent producers or their children who moved into the proletariat, and earned their living as landless farm labourers. Smallholder (subsistence farming) and artisans subjected to severe competition from cheaper production processes were at risk of moving into the proletariat.¹² Sale of labour power and exploitation of resources not utilized by the farmers or other rural entrepreneurs became the last possibility for the landless, the smaller crofters and the poor artisans to make a living. During the 18th century the process of downward social mobility may have been intensified due to 'the great demographic upsurge' and second, because agriculture and industrial capitalists were expanding their control over land and other means of production.

Social mobility did contribute to the proletarianization of the European population but, according to Tilly, natural increase have played the major role in the growth of the European proletariat since 1500, and especially since 1800.¹³ In short it is argued that it was not so much the decline of mortality that caused the number of proletarians to rise but the spread of rural manufactures that encouraged early marriage and higher fertility of the proletariat. Many agrarian regions in Europe were populated with households and cottage industry bustled with the making of yarn, cloth, stockings, raw silk, linen, leather goods, nails, tinplates, and wood implements, indeed common items in the shops and households in Europe. So, in the 18th century, the growth of industrial output was primarily caused by the expansion of small scale, labour-intensive manufacture in a capitalist environment, a mode of production named protoindustrialization.¹⁴ This notion offered a new perspective on the links between economic, social, and demographic change:¹⁵ new economic opportunities allowed wageworkers to marry earlier and to bring more children into the world, where nonproletarians tend to adjust their family size to the limited availability of land and capital. In the long run, this difference in fertility patterns gave rise to a growing proletariat on behalf of nonproletarians. But no matter if one sticks to social mobility or natural increase as the best predictor, it is beyond doubt that the origin of the proletariat must be traced back to the European countryside in the 18th century, for in the late 19th century, to be concentrated in urban areas.

The 16th and 17th centuries were not dominated by a proletarian social structure just as proletarians only occupied a minority in collective action. Large scale uprisings and more seldom revolutions occurred from time to time. International warfare and fiscal crises strongly contributed to the breakdown of central royal authority followed by political, economic, social or religious cleavages. Those rebellions were often unleashed by the nobility and even by the magistrates or local gentlemen, whereas the chock troops consisted

12. Jerome Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1978), pp. 104-109; Charles Tilly, 'Demographic Origin of the European Proletariat', in David Levine, ed., *Proletarianization and Family History* (New York, Academic Press 1984), pp. 37-38.
13. Tilly, 1984 *opus cit.*, pp. 38-44, 47-53.
14. The literature on protoindustrialization is manifold but see Franklin Mendels, 'Proto-industrialization: Theory and Reality', in *Eight International Economic History Congress* (Budapest 1982); Jean H. Quataert, 'A New view of Industrialization: Protoindustry or the Role of Small-Scale, Labor-Intensive Manufacture in the Capitalist Environment', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no 33, 1988; C. Lis and H. Soly, *Poverty and Capitalism in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Bristol, The Harvester Press 1979), pp. 144-153; Sidney Pollard, *Peaceful Conquest. The Industrialization of Europe 1760-1970* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 1982), pp. 63-83.
15. Hans Medick, 'The Proto-Industrial Family Economy', *Social History*, no 3, 1976. See also the collection of papers in Charles Tilly, ed., *Historical Studies of Changing Fertility* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 1978).

of peasants, craftsmen, artisans and townsmen. Seen from the ordinary people these regional and national power struggles were exceptions. Far more frequent do we come across intervillage battles, rivalry between assemblies of corporate groups such as guilds and religious congregations. Fights between students, youngsters, soldiers and sailors. Market days and public celebrations provided public occasions out of which communal groups and associations engaged in violent confrontation over local territories, rights, and ideals.¹⁶ Resistance to tax collectors, anticonscription disturbances, and marauding soldiers usually happened in times of war, whereas food riots, attacks on machines, and forcible occupations of fields and forests by smallholder and the landless spread as a reaction to the penetration of commercial and capitalist practices into the countryside and the increasing demands of the national state, during the 18th century.

The transition to class society

The notion ‘agrarian revolution’ reflects a general process of commercialization, new marketing systems, elimination of fallow land, introduction and extension of new crops and farm implements.¹⁷ It not only meant increase of productivity but had likewise a profound impact on the social structure and the living of a notable part of the agrarian population in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. Agrarian improvement often went hand in hand with concentration and consolidation of capitalist farms, and the accumulation of cultivated land in the hands of landlords. In some regions a growing number of smallholder were charged with increasing seigniorial dues and taxes, whereas in others they were given the choice of becoming rural labourers or abandoning agriculture.¹⁸

Faced with exploitation and poverty rural labourers and to a lesser extent marginal smallholders took to the road to seek work.¹⁹ Temporary and seasonal labour migration proliferated throughout rural Europe as changes in agricultural production and concentration of landownership increased the need for short-lived periods of work such as hay harvesters, vine trimmers, flower cutters, sugar beets workers, and potato diggers. At the same time the hiring of agricultural servants by the year became less needful for the farmers by which young people lost housing and sustenance. Employment opportunities in rural areas were also reduced as handicraft production and cottage industry were exposed to severe competition from the growing industrial activity in cities.²⁰ So in the long run, the agricultural revolution and deindustrialization created a population surplus in the European countryside that had to find jobs in the expanding urban labour markets or in rural industry, if they did not choose to migrate to the Americas.²¹

16. Zagorin 1982 *opus cit.*, pp. 182-186, 228-237; Georg Rude, *The Crowd in History 1730-1848* (London, Lawrence & Wishart 1981), part two.

17. Paul Bairoch; ‘Agriculture and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1914’, in Carlo M. Cipolla, ed., *The Fontana Economic History of Europe: The Industrial Revolution* (Collins/Fontana 1973), pp. 455-466.

18. Lis & Soly, 1979 *opus cit.*, pp. 130-144.

19. Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans. Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington, Indianapolis, Indiana Uni. Press 1992), pp. 111-115.

20. *Ibidem* pp. 115-120, and Norman J.G. Pounds, *An historical geography of Europe 1800-1914* (Cambridge, Cambridge Uni. Press 1985), pp. 352-353.

21. See Andre Armengaud: ‘Population in Europe 1700-1914’, in Carlo M. Cipolla 1973 *opus cit.*

It was mainly proletarians (rural industrial workers, agricultural waged workers, tenants and sharecroppers) who entered an urban world that was becoming more and more proletarianized. Between c. 1800 and 1910 the urban population of Europe grew about sixfold, and by 1900 most industrial nations were at least 50% urbanized, and even the predominantly agrarian nations showed a strong tendency to urbanization. England led the way followed by the Low Countries, the northern part of Germany, the northeastern half of France, and Northern Italy. In general we may say that urban development was closely related to that of economic development.²² 19th century cities and towns differed in size and function and the local economy shaped the class structure. Case studies tell us that commercial and service towns had a fairly large middle class consisting of professionals, merchants, renters, shopkeepers, small employers, but especially a large proportion of artisans. The industrial town, on the other hand was first of all populated by wage labourers i.e. unskilled, semiskilled and to a lesser extent craft workers. Towards the turn of the century, white collar salaries also began to take up space due to an increasing number of service jobs and administrative tasks.²³

During the 19th century many rural people entered urban employment, and thereby contributed to the proletarianization of towns and cities. This process went fastest in regions dominated by heavy industry. It is also likely that dependent workers had relatively high fertility compared to artisans and the middle classes,²⁴ and though industrialization opened up new opportunities and also permitted upward mobility for some workers,²⁵ many artisans and journeymen moved into wage labour or became subcontractors concurrently with capitalist practices that slowly eroded the corporative mode of production.

Workers and labour markets

Nineteenth century proletarians were engaged in extensive social and spatial networks with the purpose of utilizing the economic opportunities in search of social security. A research strategy to sort out this multiplicity is to split up the labour force in labour markets. At the cost of oversimplification the figure below is an attempt to classify labour markets according to capital formation i.e. scale of producing units and population density: different combinations produce different labour processes, social hierarchies, systems of control, employment statuses, recruitment and supply networks, and conditions of living.

22. Paul M. Hohenberg & Lynn H. Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe 1000-1950* (Cambridge, Harvard Uni. Press 1985), pp. 217-226; Pounds 1985 *opus cit.*, pp. 127-135.
23. Hohenberg & Lees 1985 *opus cit.*, pp. 267-271, besides David Crew, *Bochum. Sozialgeschichte einer Industriestadt 1860-1914* (Frankfurt M., Ullstein 1980) Louise A. Tilly, *Politics and Class in Milan 1881-1901* (New York, Oxford Uni. Press 1992); John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution. Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolsen 1974); Richard Dennis, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century* (London, Cambridge Uni. Press 1984).
24. Hohenberg & Lees 1985 *opus cit.*, p. 272.
25. *Ibidem*, pp. 272-274; Lenard R. Berlanstein, *The Working People of Paris 1871-1914* (Baltimore, The John Hopkins Uni. Press 1984), p. 32; David Crew, *Bochum. Sozialgeschichte einer Industriestadt 1860-1914* (Frankfurt/M, Ullstein 1980), pp. 93-99; see also Michael Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (Cambridge, Cambridge Uni. Press 1971).

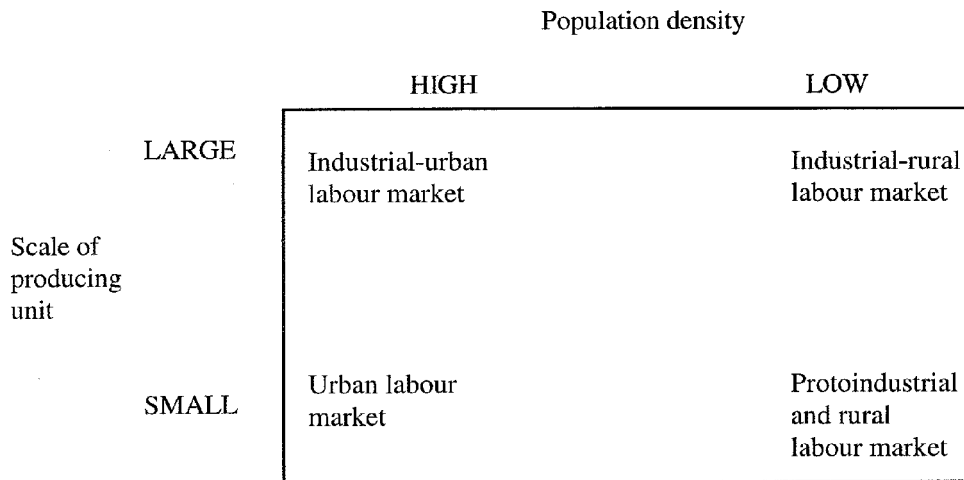


Figure 2. A historical typology of labour markets

Labour markets are not isolated entities, people were constantly moving from one sub-market to the other, but in the long run workers left the protoindustrial and rural labour market to seek jobs in urban districts or in the industrial-rural labour market. The urban labour market can be divided into several more or less well-defined segments, here I mainly try to distinguish between a domestic, a casual unskilled labour market and an artisanal skilled labour market. Simultaneous with the decline of rural cottage industry home work retained greater vitality with quickly developing markets in larger cities (especially in France) of the late 19th century.²⁶ Woodwork, toymaking, shoemaking, leatherwork, and clothing occupied a good many women and some children. The domestic workers were dependent on a putting-out merchant but worked by themselves without direct control of an employer. Often they worked at home or at little shops, and for a very small reward. Usually the family served as the unit of production and owned the tools. This mode of production was adapted to a diversified urban economy, it gave the household freedom and flexibility to keep all members occupied. We have to do with a shrinking labour market, especially in England and Germany after the turn of the century, but the domestic labour market never fully disappeared. It survived in branches where new technology as the sewing machine made home work profitable.

Studies of rural-urban migration have shown that in-migrants had to compete for the better jobs with the urban settled, and they were often send into the heterogeneous, unstable and sweated casual labour market, where the males found jobs in building trades, in transport, or as day labourers, whereas the females were crowded into domestic service, petty commerce, garment making or textiles.²⁷ The unskilled labour market consisted of many under-employed workers and parttime jobs and personal contact was very importance in

26. Peter N. Stearns, *Lives of Labor* (London, Croom Helm 1975), pp. 33-38; Jürgen Kocka, *Arbeitsverhältnisse und Arbeiterexistenzen* (Bonn, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz 1990), pp. 263-64, 268-69.

27. Berlanstein 1984 *opus cit.*, pp. 36-37; Louise A. Tilly 1992 *opus cit.*, pp. 60-77.

obtaining work.²⁸ Both males and females were in constant look-out for information about employment opportunities elsewhere. They drifted constantly from city to city or back and forth from the countryside as need and opportunity arose. Although recent migrants from the surrounding rural areas dominated among the urban poor, unskilled, day labourers, and domestic servants, this was much less true among the journeymen. Although some rural artisans, farmers, and cottagers settled down as independent small artisans or as craftsmen, most journeymen came from urban backgrounds and a strong minority were sons of masters themselves.²⁹

The work environment of journeymen was institutionalized and regulated. Corporate privileges and, when they were removed, traditions, skill, and organizations provided the journeymen with the ability to control and regulate the local labour market, sometimes in opposition to the master artisan.³⁰ Contrary to unskilled trades in which the central work processes were familiar to a large number of persons outside the trade, the possession of skill enabled groups of workers to restrict entry into trades and thereby practising selective recruitment. Limiting the pool of recruits to family members, kinsfolk or compatriots allowed workers to exercise power over the labour process, wages, technology, and the transmission of skill. To differentiate these trades from others, the notion of 'labour aristocracy' has been used by historians,³¹ whereas sociologists have preferred to distinguish between open and exclusive trades.³²

In the scientific literature, the formation of the modern working class has been connected with the rise of factories in and around cities. This fact, however, ignores the huge number of workers occupied in industries located in rural areas – the so-called industrial-rural labour market and clearly separated from the rural and the protoindustrial labour market. The size of the industrial-rural labour market varied from region to region and from country to country. Both Sweden, Norway, and Finland had an extensive industry situated in rural districts.³³ In Sweden the absolute number of workers employed in rural areas rose from 17.309 in 1870 to 223.000 in 1930, corresponding to 38% and 49% respectively, of the total industrial labour force. Many were employed in the expanding mining, wood, and lumber industries, which produced chiefly for the export market, and therefore were located near the large waterways and the coast. In the mill towns (paper and glass industries, sawmill industry, and mining), the large factories had attached to themselves old traditions in the rural village. Their somewhat isolated situation and hierarchical composition changed as

28. Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (London, Penguin Books 1971), chapt. 4.

29. Berlanstein 1984 *opus cit.*, pp. 75-76; William Sewell: 'The Working Class of Marseille', in Peter N. Stearns & Daniel J. Walkowitz, eds., *Workers in the Industrial Revolution* (New Brunswick, N.J. Transaction Books 1974), pp. 82-86.

30. Ronald Aminzade, *Class, Politics, and Early Industrial Capitalism. A Study of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Toulouse, France* (New York, State University of New York Press 1981), pp. 2-5, 29-31; Michael Hanagan, *The Logic of Solidarity. Artisans and Industrial Workers in Three French Towns, 1871-1914* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press 1980), pp. 3-20.

31. See Eric Hobsbawm: 'The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth-century Britain', in Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1968); John Breuilly: 'The Labour Aristocracy in Britain and Germany 1850-1914: A Review Article', *Historische Zeitschrift*, Sonderheft 15, 1986 (Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung im Vergleich, Hg. Klaus Tenfelde), pp. 179-226.

32. Sewell 1974 *opus cit.*, pp. 86-87; Trevor Lummis, *The Labour Aristocracy 1851-1914* (Scolar Press, 1994); Frank Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory* (London 1979).

33. Flemming Mikkelsen: 'Workers and Industrialization in Scandinavia, 1750-1940', in Michael Hanagan & Charles Stephenson, eds., *Proletarians and Protest. The Roots of Class Formation in an Industrializing World* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 29-31.

new technology was introduced and the workforce expanded.

Moving from the industrial periphery to the core, in this case Germany, we come across a slightly different but likewise significant industrial-rural labour market.

Table 2. Localization of people employed in industry and handicraft in Germany, 1882 and 1907

Industry and handicraft	Number engaged in active employment	In the countryside <2000	Towns between 2000-100.000	Cities >100.000
1882	16.058.080	40,1%	50,1%	9,8%
1907	26.386.537	26,4%	50,5%	23,1%

Source: Gerhard A. Ritter und Klaus Tenfelde, *Arbeiter im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871 bis 1914* (Bonn 1992) p. 437.

Behind these figures we find many small independent masters, but it cannot obliterate the impression of a considerable industrial-rural labour market in defiance of a growing industrial-urban sector:

‘Im Jahre 1907 (lebten) auf dem Lande noch fast eine Million Menschen mehr von Industrie und Handwerk als in den Grossstädten. Selbst wenn man den Anteil von Kleinbetrieben und Selbständigen auf dem Lande, wie das naheliegt, sehr hoch einschatzt, wird doch erkennbar, dass ein sehr erheblicher Teil der Handwerksge­ sellen und sehr viele Industriearbeiter noch in den letzten Jahren vor 1914 stark in landlichen Verhaltnissen verwurzelt waren’.³⁴

Rural industry was not reduced to mining, forestry, quarrying and turf production but included metals and engineering, textiles, paper, woodwork, food, clothing and construction as well. The organization of production in rural industry embraced both small scale handicraft shops and cottage industry run by a single masterartisan assisted by a few apprentices, journeymen or family members, and large building sites, minefields and factory production. The construction of canals, roadways, and especially railroads attracted thousands of inland and foreign seasonal and migrant workers in Central and Western European countries in the second half of the 19th century. It was landless workers from the countryside and daylabourers from towns and cities including needy craftsmen who populated the sites. They worked as pieceworkers in decentralized gangs. Work discipline was insured by fellow workers and ‘das liebe Geld’.³⁵ The division of labour and the ranking of workers in the fast growing mining sector was much more pronounced. Miners were increasingly recruited from rural areas and many worked for a few weeks or months, before they left for another job. The more stable workers could look back on a rich tradition of collective organization, which provided benefits and social security.³⁶ And in spite of the tremendous expansion of coal and iron production and of increasing liberalism and extended hierarchical control systems towards the turn of the century, the miners were able

34. Gerhard A. Ritter & Klaus Tenfelde, *Arbeiter im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871 bis 1914* (Bonn, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz), p. 438.

35. Jurgen Kocka 1990 *opus cit.*, pp. 362-366.

36. *Ibidem*, pp. 393-412; Klaus Tenfelde: ‘Der bergmannische Arbeitsplatz wahrend der Hochindustrialisierung (1890 bis 1914)’, in Werner Conze und Ulrich Engelhardt, hg., *Arbeiter im Industrialisierungsprozess* (Stuttgart, Clett-Cotta 1979), pp. 283-335.

to control recruitment networks, jobtraining and advancement within a system of production based on small face-to-face work groups. The process of ranking and sorting individuals had been further intensified in the iron- and steelworks that were built close to the coal-fields.³⁷ Rapid growth of the ironindustries and heavy investments in new technology, especially after 1880, contributed to the concentration of capital, elaborated internal labour markets, and long hierarchies.

Another rural industry with protoindustrial traditions was the sawmill industry. Examples from Sweden and Norway show a principal difference between enterprises with a long local tradition and more recent ones that came into existence and expanded strongly after 1850. The former were able to draw on a core of 'natives' who were born and grew up in the area and who, at the outset, were familiar with the factory. Typically, one member of the family had worked at the mill, and often the son followed the father. The fast-growing sawmill industry used internal recruitment, too, but in addition had to supplement local labour with seasonal workers and with immigrants. The seasonal workers came from poor and overpopulated districts and from villages with little adjoining land. However, after 1900, the decline of the wood industry and the increase of alternative employment opportunities elsewhere strongly reduced the significance of labour migration.³⁸

Many industries gave rise to larger rural communities, mill villages, and later regular urban settlements but, from the second half of the 19th century on, industrialization intervened decisively in the process of urbanization, transformed the cities' trade and occupational structures as well as their social and demographic patterns. Historical accounts makes it likely that industry's demand for labour (the industrial-urban labour market) was met by: (1) proletarianized artisans and journeymen, (2) the many casual labourers and servants in the city, (3) people previously occupied in agriculture, (4) workers from rural industry, and (5) second-generation industrial workers.³⁹ So by and large we can dismiss a persisted myth saying that the urban worker population was formed by agricultural recruitment and such constituted 'an uprooted mass' exposed to 'loss of status'. Generally work in urban factories was attractive and in demand; jobs were more regular and, compared to the casual labour market, salaries were higher. But of course contrasts were marked.

On the one side were the industrial craftsmen – ironsmiths, iron fitters, founders, and welltrained mechanics – occupied in the mechanical workshop industry.⁴⁰ These workers were of high expertise and were among the best paid. By virtue of their skill and their central position in the production process they could not easily be dismissed, and were in

37. Pounds 1985 *opus cit.*, pp. 340-345.

38. Edvard Bull, *Arbeidermiljø under det industrielle gjennombrudd* (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget 1958); Bo Gustavsson, *Den Norrländska sagverksindustrins arbetare 1890-1913* (Uppsala 1965); Björn Rendahl, *Emigration, folkomflytning och säsonarbete i ett sagverksdistrikt i Södra Hälsingland 1867-1910* (Uppsala 1972).

39. Mikkelsen 1986 *opus cit.*, pp. 31-34; Heilwig Schomerus, 'Soziale Differentierung und Nivellierung der Fabrikarbeiterschaft Esslingens 1846-1914', in Hans Pohl, Hg., *Forschung zur Lage der Arbeiter im Industrialisierungsprozess* (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 1978), pp. 39-41; Peter Borscheid, *Textilarbeiterschaft in der Industrialisierung* (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 1978), pp. 307-332; Yves Lequin, *Les ouvriers de la région lyonnaise (1848-1914) vol. 1: la formation de la classe ouvrière régionale* (Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon 1977).

40. For example see the following case studies by Rudolf Vetterli, *Industriearbeit, Arbeiterbewusstsein und gewerkschaftliche Organisation* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1978) and Knut Kjeldstadli, *Jerntid. Fabrikssystem og arbeidere ved Christiania Spigerverk og Kværner Brug fra om lag 1890-1940* (Oslo, Pax forlag 1989).

possession of a high degree of autonomy. Hierarchies remained relatively short and the role of supervisors were to coordinate the work of craft specialists. On the other side we find textile and garment industry, tobacco industry and paper making. Categories with large numbers of unskilled labourers, female workers and for some child labour, too. They all belonged to the bottom of the wage scale and were under close supervision, according to an organized time schedule. Between these two extremes there are many industries (ex. glass, chemicals, food, paper, machine construction, automobile industry) with a mixture of high skilled workers, female unskilled and especially a large semiskilled labour force. These workers were trained on the job, manned general machine tools and performed simple operations after extensive instruction from the foreman. They worked in a continuous hierarchy of skill levels, were controlled by higher ranking workers and overseers, and close time-discipline.

Labour markets and wage-work in transition

The path towards a proletarian labour force, as it has been argued above, breaks decisively with the assumption that the industrial-urban revolution in the form of new technology and a factory system should have been the prime mover. It also takes exception to the protoindustrial argument according to which rural proletarians were to be concentrated in urban areas during the later part of the 19th century, concurrently with deindustrialization of the countryside and accumulation of capital in the cities, i.e. the urbanization of industry. Instead the evidence point at the spread of major industrial centers in the countryside, both in the core of industrial Europe but especially in the periphery. Thus it portrays an industrial working population, around the turn of the century, that was heavily located in rural areas was occupied as journeymen or day labourers in towns and cities, whereas the number of 'true' urban factory employees remained a minority. But how proletarianized was this dependent labour force? Looking at levels of skill and scale of units of production, or in other words the difference between power resources of workers and employers, respectively, might be helpful.

		Qualification	
		SKILLED	UNSKILLED
Scale of producing units	LARGE	Employers: strong Workers : strong	Employers: strong Workers: weak
	SMALL	Employers: weak Workers: strong (<i>journeymen</i>)	Employers: weak Workers : weak (<i>the casual labour market</i>)

(semiskilled)
(the industrial labour market)

Figure 3. Combination of workers' qualifications and scale of production unit

The accumulation and concentration of capital in urban and rural areas including the national and international intensification of market forces put strong pressure on both small employers and journeymen.⁴¹ The autonomy and existence of journeymen (and masters) were seriously threaten both in rapidly declining crafts, and those in expanding trades (most building trades, printers, carpenters). Some journeymen used their organizational power to resist attack on their privileges or to force through wage compensation for the loss of control; but in the long run they had to choose between moving from the craft sector to the industrial labour market, tantamount to subsume to the capitalist market system, or to stay in a shrinking craft sector with low wages; quite a few made a living as self-employed artisans or sank into the ranks of unskilled day labourers or operators.

Skilled, semiskilled and unskilled labour in the industrial sector were confronted with powerful employers who tried to control their workers by a mixture of means of loyalty and coercion. Branches with large firms (or plants) and monopolistic markets were capable of resistance to organizational efforts and strikes.⁴² However, skilled craftworkers were in a much better bargaining position compared to their less skilled fellows. Where labour is nonroutine, hard to supervise, and not easily substitutable, employers have no alternative to surrendering production into the hands of the workers. Unskilled labour did not have the strength to resist management, and was subjected to the divide and rule of capitalism. Workers in the casual labour market were in a less subservient position. Their limited autonomy, however, was paid for by low wages and often high unemployment. Therefore they were constantly on the look-out for the slightest improvements in their living, for which reason job turnover for unskilled workers in Germany was significantly higher than for the industrial labour force as a whole.⁴³

During the second half of the 19th century wage work was in progress but far from absolute: 'Overall, working for wages characterized a growing share of the labour-force, but regular cash wages for fixed hours remained the exception'.⁴⁴ In the case of Germany, Jürgen Kocka has made clear that the emergence of wage work was much more prevalent and definite among urban workers especially journeymen than in the case of domestic workers, servants and agricultural workers.⁴⁵ Capitalists strive to maximise profit depended on their ability to direct and distribute work which implied that they could replace traditionally 'just' wages and reciprocal obligations and responsibilities with a free market system, individual labour contracts and the implementation of a wage system regulated by effort and not custom.⁴⁶

The break with traditional non-market practices and the development of a wage work – employer relationship seem to have been most rampant in the industrial-labour market and

41. See the discussion in Friedrich-Wilhelm Henning, 'Humanisierung und Technisierung der Arbeitswelt', in Jürgen Reulecke und Wolfhard Weber, Hg., *Fabrik – Familie – Feierabend* (Wuppertal, Hammer Verlag 1978).

42. See Ilse Costas, *Auswirkungen der Konzentration des Kapitals auf die Arbeiterklasse in Deutschland 1880-1914* (Frankfurt, Campus Verlag 1981).

43. Mary Nolan, 'Economic Crisis, State Policy, and Working-Class Formation in Germany, 1870-1990', in Katznelson & Zolberg 1986 *opus cit.*, p. 369.

44. Hohenberg & Lees 1985 *opus cit.*, p. 212. Further discussion of the prevalence of wagework and job choice see R.E. Pahl, *Division of Labour* (New York, Basil Blackwell 1984), part one.

45. Kocka, 'Problems of Working-Class Formation in Germany: The Early Years, 1800-1875', in Katznelson & Zolberg 1986 *opus cit.*, p. 287, 301, 308.

46. E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past & Present*, no. 50, 1970, see also Hobsbawm, 'Custom, Wages and Work-load in Nineteenth-century Industry', in Hobsbawm 1968 *opus cit.*

especially among unskilled and semiskilled factory workers who were totally dependent of wage work and deprived of any control over the means of production, whereas skilled industrial wagedworkers managed to maintain craft traditions far into the 20th century. Thus, compensation for loss of autonomy and self-determination was higher wages and higher standard of living; the less proletarianized were reduced to low paid manual day-labourers or deprived journeymen living on the edge of social marginalization. In that way capitalism had created a core of well integrated workers at the expense of a large minority in the periphery of society. Employment patterns also had a significant effect on workers' need for social security through organization. Workers integrated in the capitalist industrial-urban system depended very much on trade unions, whereas workers in the margin of the industrial system had adopted other survival strategies involving family connections, shifts, migration, access to resources of the countryside, seasonal and transient employment and informal economic activity. What sort of labour market strategies prevailed, in a specific period and area, depended in the main on the concentration and location of industry, the social bonds between rural and urban communities, and the labour process.⁴⁷

Was this transition to a more proletarianized labour force a smooth continuous process or an abrupt discontinuous transaction? Both arguments seem to draw support in the literature. Richard Price, for example, does not relate the process of proletarianization to the introduction of technological innovations but to the smooth process of market forces, 'an ongoing process which almost intensified during the industrial revolution', in England from c. 1800-1814 until 1850.⁴⁸ Others, like Eric Hobsbawm⁴⁹ and Michelle Perrot,⁵⁰ have emphasized the importance of the great economic depression and especially the later part: during the 1880s old modes of production were 'washed away', and encouraged the substitution of 'intensive' for 'extensive' labour utilization. In late industrialized countries like Scandinavia there is evidence that big lockouts and strikes all had to do with employers prerogatives. Thus the lost strike of 1909 in Sweden prepared the way for new systems of production and increasing dependence upon those who dominated the market relations of buying and selling labour force.⁵¹

Changing repertoire of collective action

When landlords and wealthy peasants extended their control over common and waste, when industrialists heavily invested in new spinning and carding machines or when merchants transported grain out of the area in times of shortage, and when state-officials or tax-farmers collected taxes from the people, in short when capitalism and royal powerholders penetrated the countryside and the towns, poor peasants, smallholders, artisans, and dependent workers occupied forbidden fields and forests, destroyed machines, hold back grain wagons and ships, attacked meathouses, mills and invaded market places. These and other forms of

47. See Krishan Kumar, 'From Work to Employment and Unemployment: The English Experience', in R. E. Pahl, ed., *On Work. Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1988) and Michael Hanagan, *Nascent Proletarians. Class Formation in Post-Revolutionary France* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell).

48. Richard Price, *Labour in British Society* (London, Croom Helm 1986), pp. 20-27.

49. Hobsbawm, 'Custom, Wages' *opus cit.*, p. 356.

50. Perrot, 'On the Formation of the French Working Class', in Katznelson & Zolberg 1986 *opus cit.*, p. 101.

51. Flemming Mikkelsen, *Arbejdskonflikter i Skandinavien, 1848-1980* (Odense, Odense Universitetsforlag 1992), pp. 144-153.

collective action vanished during the 19th century in favor of demonstrations, strikes, petition marches, public meetings, planned insurrections, electoral campaigns, and social movements.⁵²

The shift in power struggle from the local and regional level to the national arena as a result of the building of national states during the first half of the 19th century, and especially the European revolutions in 1848, strongly contributed to the construction of a new repertoire.⁵³ It was more national in scope, more characterized by proletarians and its actions were autonomous: ordinary peoples' demands and manifestation of solidarity were released from the direct control of local powerholders, and their statements of grievances were put forward on behalf of people from many localities and directed towards powerholders at the national centre. The new repertoire reflects changing social relations between workers and employers, as well. Food riots and machine-breaking were no longer a workable strategy in a situation where wage-work and a national market dominated social relations, and where the bourgeoisie no longer tolerated the use of collective violence. In stead we see how the strike – and to begin with also 'collective bargaining by riot' – spread throughout urban and, with some time lag, industrial-rural labour markets in Western Europe from the 1830s and onwards.

The bourgeois' commitment to civil liberties, to rights of assembly, association, expression, and opposition strongly encouraged the introduction and early expansion of electoral politics and with that the development of the demonstration, the protest meeting, and the rally. Out of these contentious gatherings that sometimes developed into a sustained challenge to existing authorities, the national social movement crystallized in the 19th century.⁵⁴ The trade union movement not only belonged to the social movement sector but constituted by virtue of its organic relationship to the production, one of the most powerful and lasting movements. However, the labour movement was not solely a product of changing mode of production and a side-effect of the middle-class' contending for power, but could draw on experiences with former and contemporary popular movements and artisan traditions.

Early labour disputes and organizational activities among workers

Early strike activity did not emerge among fully proletarianized factory workers or among unskilled day labourers in the rural or urban labour market; in stead we see printers, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, masons, plumbers, weavers, and other skilled professions that sought to defend their corporate rights and their social and economic status.⁵⁵ These classic artisanal groups were soon accompanied by highly skilled factory workers, and

52. Tilly 1986 *opus cit.*, chapter 12; John Stevenson, *Popular Disturbances in England, 1700-1870* (London, Longman 1979); Heinrich Volkman & Jürgen Bergmann, Hg., *Sozialer Protest* (Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag 1984).

53. Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (New York, Cambridge University Press 1994), chapt. 4.

54. Tilly, 'Social Movements and National Politics', in Charles Bright and Susan Harding, eds., *Statemaking and Social Movements* (Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press 1984).

55. See the discussion in Ronald Aminzade, 'Capitalist Industrialization and Patterns of Industrial Protest', *American Sociological Review*, 1984 vol. 49; Friedrich Lenger, 'Beyond Exceptionalism. Notes on the Artisanal Phase of the Labour Movement in France, England, Germany and the United States', *International Review of Social History*, vol. XXXVI (1991-1), and Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly, "'An Irresistible Phalanx': Journeymen Associations in Western Europe 1300-1800', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 39 (1994) Supplement 2.

unskilled labourers from some of the large building sites. The mass of unskilled factory workers and groups in the casual labour market first joined the strike movement in most European countries, after the turn of the century.⁵⁶ This chronology of early strike mobilization can be traced back to (a) the dominance of the artisanal sector in most countries, (b) to the resistance of those workers who lost status and control of work as a result of proletarianization, and (c) the existence of strong group cohesion among workers. There are elements of continuity and discontinuity in this model: capitalism and market forces broke decisively with the corporate mode of production and caused a split between masters and journeymen, whereas strong group solidarity is rooted in guild traditions, the 'tramping system', mutual aid societies and more specific in craft clubs and lodge houses. Customs, rules and norms associated with this system of (inter)national 'brotherhood' formed the backbone of protest and union. Thus Michael Hanagan says that 'focusing particularly on works written in the last five or ten years, one finds that craft unionism has been presented as a vital building block in the larger labour movement in Western Europe and the United States'.⁵⁷ From this it also follows that early strike activity and organization only with difficulty can be separated. Several studies suggest that organization was not so much a necessary prerequisite for workers' collective action as an essential component of that action itself.⁵⁸ How far in time this state lasted is hard to say, but as craft unions matured and were stabilized they began to plan, to control and sanction strike activity. They also went into coalitions with the unskilled and with the middle classes. A strategy that was facilitated by the large urban centers where social classes were living in close proximity to each other.⁵⁹

A meaningful comparison of collective actions in Europe must take the region as the point of reference. Strikes and organizations clustered in regions and can only indirectly be seen as a specific national phenomenon. Nevertheless it seems fair to say that 'modern' strike activity on a larger scale began in Britain after the Napoleonic wars followed by Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, and other countries in the European (semi)periphery. Organizational development followed much the same pattern with Britain in a leading position. It was skilled workers in a particular occupation who amalgamated in order to defend apprenticeship, to restrict entry into specific labour markets, and to regulate the organization of production on the shop floor. This strategy of closure combined with strong market power could be found in cotton-spinning, some crafts in the building industry, and typographers.⁶⁰ It was a rather tiny segment of the skilled labour force, whereas most craft trades were confronted with technical change or a restructuring of the market that undermined their autonomy or whole existence. Technological innovations, new skills, the competition from garret masters, and the expansion of piece work represented a serious threat to many engineers, printers, and workers in clothing and the boot and shoe industry. Equally decisive was the intrusion of new managerial hierarchies alongside with further division of labour. The demise of craft privileges often resulted in

56. Dick Geary, *European Labour Protest 1848-1939* (London, Croom Helm 1981), pp. 38-40.

57. Hanagan, 'Solidary Logics. Introduction', *Theory and Society* 17, 1988, p. 310.

58. James Cronin, 'Strikes and Power in Britain, 1870-1920', in Leopold Haimson & Charles Tilly, eds., *Strikes, Wars, and Revolutions in an International Perspective* (Cambridge, Cambridge Uni. Press 1989), p. 98.

59. Frank Munger, 'Contentious Gatherings in Lancashire, England, 1750-1830', in Louise A. Tilly & Charles Tilly, eds., *Class Conflict and Collective Action* (London, Sage 1981), pp. 99-100.

60. Price 1986 *opus cit.*, pp. 78-81.

violent labour disputes, and especially the ‘lower’ and exposed trades, such as tailors, shoemakers, and carpenters turned to demonstrations, petitions, radical ideology, and even attempted to organize (un)skilled fellows in closely related occupations for mutual support, ‘thus, there was a close connection between changing relations of production and altering political perspectives’, in the late 19th century Britain.⁶¹

The vast majority of unskilled and semiskilled workers were not affiliated to any organization, and they mainly sought to improve on their conditions by frequent job shifts and to derive advantage from economic booms and general labour unrest. Strike waves in the early 1870s, 1889-90, and 1911-13 started among skilled core groups but spread into the mass of semi- and unskilled: dockers, quarrymen, boot- and shoemakers, gas stokers, women workers in textiles, building labourers, and even agricultural workers and some white-collar occupations. Union membership jumped likewise but as the recession set in many mass workers left the organization.⁶² Favourable economic conjunctures and a tight labour market increased the market value of open mass unions, in ‘normal’ times, however, these unions could not rely on their bargaining power and instead they turned to the political arena for state regulation of salaries, hours and conditions.⁶³

Journeyman, skilled workers, mutual aid societies, and craft unions constituted the basic building block of the trade union movement and the strike movement in other western and eastern countries, too. But in order to explain the foundation and power of trade unions and socialist political institutions across the European continent, I have chosen to look at the disparity in (a) industrial capitalism (b) urbanization and (c) state repression. Recent works in labour history and urban history suggest that the size and industrial organization of towns and cities affect workers’ capacity to mobilize. Shorter and Tilly assert that ‘the big city appears a place of militancy and solidarity. It is certain that the sheer intensity of conflict in the big city was higher than in smaller communities’.⁶⁴ Hohenberg and Lees, however, have revised this argument by combining scale and class structure:⁶⁵ small market towns with weak class lines display low collective activity, whereas larger cities as regional capitals lower the cost of social communication, weaken the control of authorities and thereby facilitate the ability to organize; but because large cities have a complex division of labour with many small master artisans, white collar jobs and lower middle-class positions, these cities also tend to soften class lines, to introduce mediators and such lower open conflicts. Factory towns, on the other hand display strong class divisions but weak horizontal solidarity due to paternalist styles of social relations. Cities of manufacturing and heavy industry often produced a strong working class and clear cut class distinction: large enterprises, common identification of problems, and the consciousness of being subject to the same exploitative conditions and the same authority, brought workers together, even with different skills, and increased labour militancy.

61. Richard Price, ‘Britain’, in Marcel van der Linden & Jürgen Rojahn, eds., *The Formation of Labour Movements 1870-1914. An International Perspective* (Leiden, E.J. Brill 1990), pp. 13-14.

62. Price 1986 *opus cit.*, pp. 114-127; James Cronin 1989 *opus cit.*, pp. 93-97.

63. Gary Marks, *Unions in Politics. Britain, Germany, and the United States in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton Uni. Press 1989), pp. 9-12; Price 1990 *opus cit.*, p. 15.

64. Edward Shorter & Charles Tilly, *Strikes in France, 1830-1968* (New York, Cambridge Uni. Press 1974), p. 275.

65. Hohenberg & Lees 1985 *opus cit.*, pp. 285-289; see also Lynn H. Lees, ‘Strikes and the Urban Hierarchy in English Industrial Towns, 1842-1901’, in James E. Cronin & Jonathan Schneer, eds., *Social Conflict and Political Order in Modern Britain* (London, Croom Helm 1982).

On a comparative European scale this urban typology might be useful but also difficult to handle empirically at this level of aggregation. Therefore I intend to see the combined effect of urbanization and industrialization as one of the most important factors that shaped the European working classes and labour movements. The other major variable is state repression. Strategies of workers and labour organizations are affected by repression and support, respectively.⁶⁶ Persistent and especially violent repression makes populations demobilize and to take refuge in individual forms of resistance, whereas less but still perceptible repression direct the claim of workers towards the political system, and thereby subjugate the resources of unions to political activities or political organizations. If repression is weak union activities tend to focus on interest representation and negotiation in the economy and the union will take up an autonomous position to the

66. Marks 1989 *opus cit.*, chapter 2; Geary 1981 *opus cit.*, p. 69; Charles Tilly, Louise Tilly, Richard Tilly 1975 *opus cit.*, p. 285.

Figure 4. Determinants and dimensions of organizational power and strategies of the European working-classes, around the turn of the century
North/West

Characteristics	Britain	Belgium	Netherland	France	Germany	Denmark	Sweden	Norway
I. Determinant								
Urbanization	very strong	very strong	very strong	moderate	strong moderate	moderate	low	low
Industrialization	very strong slow	very strong	moderate late slow	moderate slow	moderate/ fast	moderate late slow	moderate late fast	weak late
Rural-urban split	moderate	moderate (?)	signific.	signific. (?)	moderate /significant	moderate	very signific.	very signific.
II. Interaction								
Repression	mild	moderate	moderate/mild	moderate	(severe 1878/90) moderate	mild	mild/ moderate	mild
Dominant class	bourge./landlords	bourge./church	bourge.	bourge./ state bureauc-racy	landlords & bourge.	bourge./ peasants	bourge./-peasants/state bureauc-racy	bourgeo-isie
Strike activity	very high (non-political)	moderate (many strike waves)	high/ moderate	high/ moderate (often political)	moderate/ high	high	moderate	low
Collective bargaining	extensive	few	few ?	few	extensive	extensive	some	few
III. External characteristics								
Ethnic	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no
Linguistic	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no
Religious	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no

Characteristics	Britain	Belgium	Netherland	France	Germany	Denmark	Sweden	Norway
s								
IV. Internal characteristics								
Forms of org. around 1900	craft and early mass org.	craft	craft	craft	craft and mass org.	craft and early mass org.	craft	craft
Membership c. 1900 (density in %)	1.576.000 ('92) (12.5%)	Christian 11.000 Socialist 54.000 (3,3%)	27.944	614.000 ('02) (3.0%)	848.832 (3.4%)	96.295 (8.8%)	40.000 (2.5%)	20.000 (2.3%)
Membership c. 1913 (density in %)	4.135.000 (23%)	Christian 50.000 Socialist 70.000 (total 8.3%)	268.300 (16.9%)	283.000 ('21) (7.5%)	3.964.400 (21.5%)	152.200 (23.1%)	149.300 (9.4%)	63.800 ('20) (20.3%)
Year of establi. of pol. party	1893	1885	1894	1879	1875	1878	1889	1887
Competing pol. party	liberal party	liberal and catholic party	liberal and religious parties	republ. and radical parties		conservati-ve party	liberal party	liberal party
Year of represent. in parliament	1906	1894	1897			1884	1896	1903
V. Strategy								
Union vs. party dominance	union	party	party	union-party (weak ties)	party (-1890); union-party	union-party	union (-1910); union-party	party (-1910); party-union

South/East

Characteristics	Finland	Italy	Spain	Austria	Hungary	Russia	Rumania	Bulgaria
I. Determinant								
Urbanization	low	high	very low	moderate/ low	low	low	low	low
Industrialization	late moderate	late moderate/late slow	low late slow	moderate late slow	low late slow	moderate/late fast	low late slow	low late slow
Rural-urban split	significant	? signific. ?	signific. ?	significant	? ?	very signifi.	? ?	? ?
II. Interaction								
Repression	mild	moderate	severe/ moderate	severe/ moderate	severe	severe	severe/ moderate	moderate
Dominant class	bourge. /peasants	bourge./ landlords	landlords/- bourgeoisie	landlords/bourge.	landlords	landlords/ emperor	landlords/bourge./ king	? ?
Strike activity	low	moderate/high	moderate/low	high/ moderate	? ?	moderate	? ?	? ?
Collective bargaining	few	not yet established	not yet established	not yet established	absent	absent	absent	absent
III. External characteristics								
Ethnic	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no
Linguistic	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no
Religious	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no

Characteristics	Finland	Italy	Spain	Austria	Hungary	Russia	Rumania	Bulgaria
IV. Internal characteristics								
Forms of orga. around 1900		craft		craft				
Memberships c. 1900 (density in %)	13.499 ('06) (3.1%)	150.000	26.088	119.000 (1.0%)	?	?	4.500 ('07)	2688 ('04)
Memberships c. 1913 (density in %)	28.031	541.000 (14.3%)	147.729	415.256 ('09) (15%)	112.000	?	9.700	9731 (5%)
Year of establi. poli. party	1899	1892	1888	1889	1880	1898	1895	1892
Competing pol. party	no serious comp. party	liberals	republic.	?	?	?	?	?
Year of represen. in parliament								1894
V. Strategy								
Union vs. party dominance	party			union	union		party	

political forms of working class representation. It is, however, necessary to include the consequences of employers' strength in the market and the existence of competing political organizations in order to determine union and party strategies. As was the case with urbanization and industrialization, repression disperses over the European territory along an axis going from north-west to south-east, equal to the extent of labour-repressive systems, the power position of landlords and a weak bourgeoisie.⁶⁷ In figure 4, I have listed these dimensions together with other important variables.

Capital, repression, and working-class strategies in Europe

An initial attempt to identify European countries on an industrialization/urbanization and repression scale comes out with the following result: the first group (Britain, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, France) is composed of countries with high to moderate industrialization and urbanization. State repression was mild or moderate, and the labour movement had obtained a recognized position in society around the turn of the century. The bourgeoisie played a dominant or at least a very significant role in the state. The next group (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland) is situated in the Nordic periphery with low to moderate industrialization and urbanization, and characterized by nonrepressive governments balancing between the urban bourgeoisie and landed interests without a dominant agrarian elite. Therefore the organization of the working class could advance slowly in stable political surroundings without major interference from the authorities. In the third group (Austria, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Russia, Rumania) a strong landed upper class dominated the state that from time to time intervened violently in working-class collective activities that also seems to be weak due to low level of urbanization and industrialization. It is possible to single out both Austria and Italy partly because repression was less severe and partly because both countries had a high concentration of skilled workers in a few major regions that became strongholds of the early labour movement. During the first third of the 20th century this taxonomy will undergo substantial changes, but before turning to this subject I intend to compare the organizational and political mobilization capabilities of the working class within (and between) the major groups.

Workers' professional and political performances unfolded within the quadrangle of employers, unions, political parties and the state. In Britain the smooth but penetrating growth of market capitalism and industrialization indicated that skilled workers managed to keep intact their occupational communities and to form strong and stable craft unions that were able to resist local employers and authorities. Higher union density and strike activity and especially a higher rate of strike success compared to Germany and France, seem to support this argument.⁶⁸ Therefore local power struggles between workers and employers were not carried over into the political arena, as was the case in France and Belgium, and when they did it often seems possible to establish progressive alliances with

67. Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (London, Penguin Book 1967); Robert J. Goldstein, *Political Repression in 19th Century Europe* (London, Croom Helm), pp. 255-330; Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne H. Stephens & John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Cambridge, Polity Press 1992), pp. 140-154.

68. Friedhelm Boll, 'Streikwellen im europäischen Vergleich', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen & Hans-Gerhard Husung, Hg., *Auf dem Wege zur Massengewerkschaft* (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta 1984), and Boll, *Arbeitskämpfe und Gewerkschaften in Deutschland, England und Frankreich* (Bonn, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz 1992), pp. 111-118.

the Liberals who dominated the political apparatus in many working class districts. Add to this the open and limited character of the nonrepressive British state and its sensitivity to individual and social rights of the workers.⁶⁹ The slow but progressive extension of franchise was part of this openness, but the failure of the Chartist movement in 1848 might be taken into consideration, too. Thus a strong market and bargaining position, strong unions, a well integrated lib-lab alliance, and bad experiences with former political movements, gave the trade unions a decisive role in labour politics.

The rapid and thorough industrialization of Belgium and the concentration of workers in large enterprises fostered an early labour movement, whereas the movement in the Netherlands was braked by late and limited industrial growth and by the location of many enterprises in the countryside.⁷⁰ Besides both countries were troubled by ethnic, linguistic, and religious contrasts and disputes. A divided Belgian trade union movement that furthermore was confronted with powerful employers, especially in the large export sector, chose to direct its grievances towards the state, and in doing so formed a national labour party in 1885 with the specific aim of political agitation. The party organization administered the central strike funds and decided on the sanction of strikes.⁷¹ These endeavours for the accomplishment of social and labour legislation bore fruit and major strike waves and demonstrations were launched for the introduction of universal suffrage and the abolition of plural voting in 1893, 1902, and again in 1913.

To achieve some progress in the area of wage increase and social legislation the early (1870s) Dutch craft unions established narrow connections with the Liberal Party. The ideological, political and clerical opposition to the early socialist labour movement were pronounced and only in alliance with progressive liberal currents, the use of massive strikes, and by uniting behind the party-like organization 'The League', trade unions managed to survive.⁷² The League strove to organize and to mobilize workers for the extension of franchise and social security laws but with limited or no success at all. Internal factions and weak organizational structures contributed to the formation of an independent Labour Party in 1894. Favoured by economic expansion from 1895, it resulted in electoral gains and organizational growth, and an increase in the number of collective agreements from 1 in 1904 to 178 in 1913; however, it also evoked antisocialist sentiments among catholic and protestant trade unions.

Gradual economic growth, an industrial structure characterized by small units of production (handicraft, home work, cottage-industry), and sometimes a blurred distinction between masters and workers, besides rudimentary craft unions did not prevent French workers from taking to the streets in hugh numbers in 1848 and again in 1871. Prior to 1875 about 50% of all strikes were organized by temporary forms of association and unions only played a minor role. After 1875 and especially from 1880 the strike was becoming more and more unionized.⁷³ The 'great mobilization of the working classes' in

69. Price 1990 *opus cit.* pp. 6-11, and the discussion in John Breuilly, *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Manchester, Manchester Uni. Press 1992), chapt. 5.

70. Daisy E. Devreese, 'Belgium', in Van der Linden & Rojahn 1990 *opus cit.*, p. 57.

71. *Ibidem*, p. 28, 33.

72. This section on the Dutch labour movement is based on Henny Buiting, 'The Netherlands', in Van der Linden & Rojahn 1990 *opus cit.*

73. Michelle Perrot, *Workers on Strike. France 1871-1891* (New Haven 1984), pp. 26-32.

France was accomplished in the years 1880-1910.⁷⁴ The yearly number of strikes and strikers rose, and in 1891 9.1% of the industrial labour force were unionized; formal organizations were constituted across the country and local craft unions became linked to national networks. Simultaneous, major outbursts of strike activity span the nation involving still more proletarian workers in 1870, 1880, 1893, 1899/1900 and in 1906.⁷⁵ In spite of these strike waves craft unions remained weak, decentralized, and were seldom able to enter into formally binding contracts with the employers. Therefore French strikers directed their grievances towards a state that was differentiated from the ruling classes, and could be expected to intervene in labour disputes with the intention of reaching a compromise that would be considered a partial success.⁷⁶

The heterogeneity, localism and instability of workers' organization also complicated an independent political representation in spite of early universal and equal male suffrage.⁷⁷ The Republicans were in possession of an enlarged network of local political entrepreneurs and skill. They defended the rights of small property holders, understood to utilize anticapitalist slogans and the symbols of the Revolution; several socialists appeared on the local electoral registers of the Republican. However, major strikes and the Great Depression 1882-90, separated the interest of workers and many small landowners and artisans from the Republicans.⁷⁸ The strike movement, the election of 1906, and the arrival of a strong Socialist party brought industrial workers into the national political arena for real.

The relative frequency of strikes and strike volume seem to be the same or even higher in France compared to Germany, where the German 'Sonderweg' did make a difference concerns the fast and centrally constructed labour movement and the predominant position of the party.⁷⁹ Rapid economic growth and urbanization restructured the German work force: it narrowed the rural-urban gap, furthered the decline of self-employment and meant thoroughgoing commercialization of social relationships. In the longer run it may have enforced the formation of occupational communities, and the recruitment of labour organizations. The Anti-Socialist laws in 1878, did not erase the movement from the political map, and shortly after the abolition of the laws in 1890, the trade unions and the Social Democratic Party experienced a veritable boom in membership and in voters. It has been argued that the hierarchical structure of the labour movement and the party-political dominance can be traced back to the 1848 revolution and the gathering of the Frankfurt National Assembly as a reaction to the fragmented state ('Kleinstaaterei'). Besides, Friedhelm Boll has pleaded that the strike wave of 1871/72, with its cross regional contacts and especially the tramping system strongly contributed to the nationalization.⁸⁰ Compared with the French and English labour market internal mass migration (and job turnover) was significant and combined with wandering journeymen, contributed to the

74. Shorter & Tilly 1974 *opus cit.*, pp. 47-51, 74-75.

75. *Ibidem*, chapt. 5.

76. Geary 1981 *opus cit.*, p. 55; Boll 1992 *opus cit.*, pp. 223-229; Shorter & Tilly 1974 *opus cit.*, p.70; Pierre Birnbaum, *States and Collective Action. The European Experience* (New York, Cambridge Uni. Press 1988), p. 72.

77. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, 'Frankreich. Langsame Industrialisierung und republikanische Tradition', in Jürgen Kocka, Hg., *Europäische Arbeiterbewegungen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1983), p. 62.

78. Michael Hanagan 1989 *opus cit.*, chapt. 6.

79. See Klaus Tenfelde, 'Germany', in Van Der Linden & Rojahn 1990 *opus cit.*

80. Boll 1992 *opus cit.*, pp. 231-232.

early foundation of trade unions, and much strike activity, too, but also to the central regulation and control of the regional labour market by the early craft unions.⁸¹ Prior to 1878, unions were subordinated the political wing of the movement, but with the outlawing of the SPD, Nolan says, ‘the ties between the party and the unions were greatly strengthened, for unions became the major organizations in and through which Social Democrats agitated, educated, and organized’.⁸² The return to legality and the rapid growth of both organizations raised the ticklish question of the relationship between economic and political interests. Thus Dieter Groh claims that the increase in membership and cash balance (kassenbestände) removed the unions from the party and depoliticized the unions and later the SPD, too.⁸³ Choosing an economic strategy the free trade unions moved towards centralization and bureaucratization and the principle of industrial unionism. They became heavily involved in the making of collective agreements, which in the mid-1905 numbered 1577 affecting between 370. – 470.000 workers, and with a positive trend.⁸⁴ The success of the trade unions did not leave much room for competing organizations. Together the liberal and catholic unions amounted to 19.8% of total membership in 1900, and were declining.⁸⁵

The ‘victory march’ of the German labour movement was transmitted to other countries to the Low Countries, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Denmark and Finland. It was the ‘Vaterlandslosen Gesellen’ from Germany and Denmark who gave an impetus to the first craft unions in Copenhagen from where they spread to urban areas in Sweden and Norway.⁸⁶ In Denmark late and smooth industrial development in urban surroundings did not cause a break with former craftsmanlike mode of production, the unit of production remained small or medium size. After 1848 when equal but restricted suffrage was introduced and their prevailed a parliamentary balance between the urban bourgeoisie, landlords, and peasant interests, the craft unions and the Labour Party, founded in 1871, could expand without much interference from the authorities. In consequence of this progress the economic and political wing of the labour movement developed independently of each other although in close collaboration. In Sweden, Norway and Finland heavy investments in rural industry made it harder to organize the workers, to begin with. After 1895 when Swedish workers joined the unions in great numbers and strengthen their position in society, the unions took over the responsibility to mobilize the workers against the Conservatives, the temperance and the free church movements, and for an extension of manhood suffrage, symbolized in the big political strike of 1902. In Norway weak unions but a more powerful political wing made the party intervene in labour relations on behalf of the unions. The great leap forward for the Social Democratic parties in Scandinavia came when they had liberated themselves and their potentially voters from the Conservative and Liberal parties. It happened in Denmark during the last decennium of the 19th century, and for Sweden and Norway ten years later, as a consequence of the

81. *Ibidem*, pp. 252-270.

82. Nolan 1986 *opus cit.*, p. 385.

83. Dieter Groh, *Negative Integration und revolutionärer Attentismus. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges* (Frankfurt/Main, Ullstein 1973), pp. 71-72.

84. Ilse Costas, 1981 *opus cit.*, pp. 230-240.

85. Tenfelde, ‘Germany’ 1990 *opus cit.*, p. 257.

86. John Logue, ‘Svendevandringer og internationalisme i fagbevægelsens barndom’, *Arbejderhistorie* 20, 1983; Mikkelsen 1986 *opus cit.*, p. 42.

construction of modern mass parties with membership, the extension of male suffrage, and further industrial development.⁸⁷

The Finnish trade unions only grew slowly whereas the party, founded in 1899, already numbered 85.027 party members in 1906, and won 40% of the seats in parliament in 1907 the first election under universal and equal suffrage.⁸⁸ The declining influence of religious and bourgeoisie institutions among lower class people, and the penetration of industrial capitalism into the countryside might have disposed rural proletarians and smallholders to back the Social Democratic Party in a situation where urban craft unions were ill suited to organize the constantly shifting rural workers. Add to this that the political movement encountered little opposition and repression from above and thus was in a position to provide leadership and organization.

In the southern European semi-periphery we find Italy and Austria. After the unification of Italy workers' associations gradually began to voice political demands, but first at the beginning of the 1890s, durable autonomous trade based organizations, widespread strike activity, and political representation emerged as a new contender for power at the national level. Industrial development and growth of capitalist agriculture ran fastest in the northern Italian provinces that also witnessed a significant rallying round the (village) peasant movement, the labour unions, strikes and political activities. In many respects the northern Italian working population moved closer to the European centre shortly after the turn of the century. But recurrent cases of repression, most serious the eruption in Milan April-May 1898, caused a temporarily halt to the socialist labour movement that suffered even more from the extraordinarily restricted suffrage.⁸⁹

Economic backwardness and the presence of a political and institutional system hostile to the lower classes also determined the organizational structure of the Austrian labour movement. The concentration of workers in a few geographical locations with the 'industrial village' as the dominant type of industrial settlement, made it difficult to organize a labour force that further more was marked by ethnic and linguistic dividing lines.⁹⁰ The breakthrough of the union movement came shortly after 1903, before then the centre of gravity of the trade unions lay in Vienna and Bohemia, areas with small scale industry, self-employed artisans and many journeymen.⁹¹ In the beginning of the 1890s unions took the initiative to centralize the divers trade and branch societies, to plan and sanction strikes, and in 1896 organized skilled workers concluded the first labour contract with the employers. Unions encouraged their members to support the Social Democratic Party, a party that strictly speaking was powerless until universal male suffrage in 1907. This reform was very much a result of disagreements between the land aristocracy the monarch and the national bourgeoisie. It facilitated an electoral reform campaign backed by strikes and violent mass demonstrations in 1905-06.⁹² Government harassment of

87. Mikkelsen 1992 *opus cit.*, pp. 70-73.

88. David Kirkby, 'Finland', in Van Der Linden & Rojahn 1990 *opus cit.*, and Risto Alapuro, *State and Revolution in Finland* (Berkeley, University of California Press 1988).

89. Lorenzo Bordogna, G.P. Cella, G. Provasi, 'Labor Conflicts in Italy Before the Rise of Fascism, 1881-1923', in Haimson & Tilly 1989 *opus cit.*, pp. 218-226.

90. Siegfried Mattl, 'Austria', in Van Der Linden & Rojahn 1990 *opus cit.*, pp. 298-299.

91. See Josef Ehmer, 'Rote Fahnen – Blauer Montag', in D. Puls, Hg., *Wahrnehmungsform und Protestverhalten* (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp Verlag 1979).

92. Mattl 1990 *opus cit.*, p. 295, pp. 304-305, 314-315.

socialist and trade union leaders delayed the origin of a modern labour movement in Hungary, too. Because a party by law was forbidden to have members or to collect dues it depended on trade unions members to join the party political organization, 'it was these workers who participated in party congresses and turned out for demonstrations'.⁹³ Trade unions were much concerned about economic issues where the socialist political leaders had their interests fixed on political goals especially the repressive aspects of government and not without reason, for if we move further out in the European periphery to Russia, Rumania and Spain repression gets more violent, the working-class communities weaker and the state apparatus more dominated by large aristocratic landowners.

In Russia the industrialization process that started during the 1890s, was controlled by government authorities to maintain social stability. Around the turn of the century more than half of the industrial work force was situated in the countryside, whereas strikes and political activity were concentrated in urban areas with St. Petersburg as the epicentre.⁹⁴ Artisanal guilds in Russia were placed under direct government supervision, otherwise workers' efforts to organize collectively took the form of illegal trade unions or in government sponsored associations also called Zubatov groups. They were avoided by the workers, and it was first with the revolution of 1905 that autonomous mass-based worker organizations appeared.⁹⁵ Henceforth factory committees, trade unions, soviets and the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party became mighty actors on the industrial and political scene. Russian socialist intellectuals and political events in Russia influenced the embryonic workers' organizations in both Rumania and Bulgaria, but due to the lack of industrial capitalism, low level of urbanization and repressive regimes (Bulgaria the 'peasant state' being an exception) it is in vain to speak of any labour movement before the turn of the century. In the western periphery Spain displayed many of the same characteristics:⁹⁶ belated modernization and an aristocratic-bourgeoisie regime that, in the last decades of the 19th century, with one hand introduced universal suffrage and freedom of association, and with the other crushed down on any kind of organized workers movement.

In trying to sum up the question of the primacy of union or party I have arranged the following tentative table:

<i>Union</i>	<i>Union – Party</i>	<i>Party</i>
Britain	Denmark	Belgium
Sweden->	France	Netherlands
Austria	Germany (1890-)	Germany (-1890)
Hungary		<- Norway
Rumania		Finland

Outside this disposition we find Italy, Russia, Spain and Bulgaria all countries with low concentration of industrial capital and repressive governments. A combination that did not

93. Keith Hitchens, 'Hungary', in Van der Linden & Rojahn 1990 *opus cit.*, pp. 358-359.

94. Leopold Haimson & Ronald Petruska, 'Two Strike Waves in Imperial Russia, 1905-1907, 1912-1914', in Haimson & Tilly, *opus cit.*, pp. 113-115, and note 6.

95. Victoria Bonnell, 'Russia', in Van der Linden & Rojahn 1990 *opus cit.*, pp. 458-462.

96. See Santiago Castillo, 'Spain', in Van der Linden & Rojahn 1990 *opus cit.*

leave much room for either unions or political parties. Focusing on countries where unions took up a leading position or played an autonomous role it becomes naturally to distinguish between Austria-(Hungary), and Rumania where the state crushed heavily down on any political opposition but at the same time allowed for (craft)unions to perform in the market. In Britain and in Sweden unions were in the ascendant owing to a strong market position while autonomous political representation was hindered due to competition from the liberal movements.

Moving to the party-dominated labour movements it becomes easier to point out those aspects that weakened the unions instead of strengthen the parties: ethnic and linguistic splits, confessional orientation, strong employers, governmental persecution, and a rural-urban dispersal of the labour force limited union activity in Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, and Finland and shifted the interest of workers over to the political front that was in a better position to force through social and economic improvements. Following the expiration of the anti-socialist law in 1890 in Germany and the jump in union membership placed more power in the hands of the unions that began to free themselves from the party. Twenty years later the same happened in Norway when also Sweden managed to establish a greater balance between union and party after suffrage has been extended to the lower classes. After some initial economic and political obstacles the Danish labour movement managed to create a well-balanced and very successful cooperation between party and union, whereas in France the labour movement was much more local and divided, and with no bonds between party and trade union.

Political and social integration of the working classes

On the eve of the 1. World War, the working classes in Northern, Western and Central Europe were consolidating their social and political position: in general, union membership and strike activity were increasing, collective agreements spread to several industrial sectors, and workers were advancing their political rights and political representation.⁹⁷ Behind this progress we see faintly the long boom of the pre-1914 European economy that generated sufficient growth to provide for improvements in real living standards but also contributed to the ongoing process of proletarianization. Still more rural workers were being absorbed into the urban wage economy, women and children were increasingly occupying jobs in urban industry while the engagement in petty commodity production as self-employed worker as well as other alternative employment opportunities were shrinking. These changes meant that the capacity for self-reliance for a wider number of workers were narrowing whereas the higher standard of living and more stable social networks increased their ability to form unions, political parties, and to strike.

The World War saw a sharp retrogression in the system of free market competition and an increasing involvement of the state in the regulation of the economy including industrial relations, and the absorption of established working-class organizations into the

97. Geary 1981 *opus cit.* chapt. 3; Colin Crouch, *Industrial Relations and European State Traditions* (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1994), pp. 101-124.

polity. The war economy also generated high inflation, full employment, labour shortage, an increase in union membership, and worker militancy.⁹⁸ When the war came to an end, the working classes in Western and Southern Europe used their newly won organizational power to demand further political, social and economic rights. In central and eastern Europe, where the working classes had been living under autocratic regimes or foreign rule, the disintegrating of state hegemony and the debilitation of the dominant classes caused new nation states, an extension of democracy and successful or abortive revolutions. In many countries the emancipation of the working-classes soon came to a halt. Different combinations of political forces and market forces decided how the working-classes were being incorporated into the national community. Two extremes can be distinguished: authoritarian integration and class integration. The former gives priority to forced economic integration but refuses the entry of the lower classes into the state, whereas class integration allows for a hostile mass movement to exist, and if the working class secures access to the centre of power we may talk about political or national integration.⁹⁹

Revolution and authoritarian integration in Eastern and Southern Europe

In pre-war Eastern Europe the vast majority of the population lived under autocratic or foreign rule. The collapse of the Russian and Habsburg empires prepared the way for national and ethnic independence, extended social and political rights and originated revolutionary uprisings. Revolutionary situations based on worker actions sprang up in Russia (1917), Estonia (1917), Latvia (1917), Finland (1918), and Hungary (1919). What mattered most, says Risto Alapuro, was 'simply the existence of well-organized working-class movements'.¹⁰⁰ Strikes in Russia remained modest and local, but since the massacre on workers in 1905, the number of both political and economic strikes swelled and militant class organizations emerged in the major urban industrial centers.¹⁰¹ The strike movement in 1917 affected the greater part of the industrial urban work force that gained organizational experience in form of trade unions, factory and strike committees. Together with rebellious peasants and mutinous soldiers urban and rural industrial workers made up the popular base of the revolution.¹⁰² In Estonia and Latvia the mass movement in 1917 was an offshoot of the October revolution itself. Rapidly the indigenous Bolsheviks were able to capture the support of industrial workers, the unorganized poor and landless peasants before they turned against the bourgeois and the wealthy landowners.¹⁰³ With massive rural support the Social Democratic Party of Finland established itself as a strong

98. Crouch 1994 *opus cit.*, p. 125.

99. On the discussion of social integration see Guenther Roth, *The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany. A Study in Working-Class Isolation and National Integration* (New Jersey, The Bedminster Press 1963), pp. 3-8; Otto Kirchheimer, 'The Transformation of the Western European Party System', in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton Uni. Press 1969), pp. 177-182; Marcel van der Linden, 'The National Integration of European Working Classes (1871-1914)', *International Review of Social History*, XXXIII (1988).

100. Risto Alapuro 1989 *opus cit.*, p. 250.

101. Haimson & Petruska 1989, *opus cit.* pp. 106-111; Tim McDaniel, *Autocracy, Capitalism and Revolution in Russia* (Berkeley, Uni. of California Press 1988), pp. 245-246.

102. Diane Koenker & Will. Rosenberg, 'Strikers in Revolution: Russia, 1917', in Haimson & Tilly *opus cit.*

103. Alapuro 1989 *opus cit.*, pp. 231-243.

contender for power. Cultural and organizational ties linked town and countryside and made possible a radical urban-rural alliance between industrial urban workers, industrial-rural workers, crofters, and agrarian landless labourers. So when imperial Russia dissolved and the Finnish polity was left without control of the means of coercion, Finland was approaching a revolutionary situation.¹⁰⁴ In Hungary the only acting political movements, the Social Democrats and the Communists, assumed state control because the bourgeois government was pressed into the defensive as external problems added to internal ones.¹⁰⁵

With the exception of Russia the leftist workers revolution in Eastern Europe did not last long. Within a year they were replaced by repressive right-wing governments (supported by either the landed gentry, the industrial capitalists, part of the middle class or the peasant population, government bureaucracy or the military) that sometimes would suppress any worker opposition and at other times would allow for organizational rights as long as they did not challenge the industrial and political order. In Poland and Czechoslovakia social unrest merged with strong nationalist sentiments whereas in Austria the Social Democrats together with the Christian Socialists (a middle class party) managed both to arrest the reactionary right-wing composed of landowners, military officers and state bureaucrats, and to encapsulate the most radical workers and hinder the attempted coups by the Communists.¹⁰⁶ So, where Poland, together with agrarian Rumania and Bulgaria, under the influence of national, social, and political instability, drifted towards an authoritarian rule during the 1920s, the working classes in Finland, Czechoslovakia and (for a time) Austria were on the route towards class integration.¹⁰⁷

The small industrial working class in Rumania and Bulgaria was weak and subjected to the interests of peasants and authoritarian state bureaucracies. In Italy the war economy had required an expansion of the industrial workforce especially in the North and when state regulations were mitigated in 1919, unionization and strike activity displayed a sharp upsurge at the same time as the Socialist and Catholic parties won a considerable victory at the polls.¹⁰⁸ This massmobilization threatened the upper classes' and the middle peasants' control of labour and strongly motivated the employers and the Po Valley landlords to support the Fascists on a massive scale. Backed by the state security forces, and the economic crisis of 1921, the Fascist movement attacked and smashed peasant organizations, trade unions, and other local and national socialist institutions for finally to install an authoritarian regime.¹⁰⁹

Class conflict in Spain reached a climax in the aftermath of the war, and 'for the first time the country was forced to give major attention to labour problems and the role of organized labour', probably because the Socialist union UGT and the anarcho-sindicalist

104. *Ibidem*, pp. 116-121.

105. B. Schmitt & H. Vedeler, *The World in the Crucible, 1914-1919* (New York, Harper & Row 1984), pp. 427-433.

106. *Ibidem*, pp. 416-427.

107. John Coutouvidis, et al: 'Poland' in Stephen Salter and John Stevenson, eds. *The Working Class and Politics in Europe and America, 1929-1945* (London, Longman 1990), pp. 172-182.

108. Lorenzo Bodogna, et al: 'Labor Conflicts in Italy before the Rise of Fascism, 1881-1923', in Haimson and Tilly *opus cit.*, pp. 220, 225-229.

109. Rueschemeyer, Stephens & Stephens 1992 *opus cit.*, pp. 104-105; Poul Corner: 'Italy', in Salter and Stevenson 1990 *opus cit.*

CNT had begun to enrol landless rural labourers in large numbers.¹¹⁰ Faced with industrialists and landlords who were extremely hostile to workers' demands and organizations, 'labour and management became locked in deadly combat' that ceased with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, 1923-30.¹¹¹ The fall of de Rivera permitted an upheaval in working class organization and activism, and between April 1931 and September 1933 Spain was governed by alliances of middle-class Republican and Socialists, after PSOE had emerged as the largest party. Reforms were introduced that threatened the power base of the rural upper class and that put additional (economic) burdens on the employers. They tried to evade, and when the left-of-centre government had to give over to a more rightist cabinet, the employers launched a counter-offensive.¹¹² Working class organizations and the rank and file responded with insurrectionary strikes and rebellions just to be met by intensive repression. A renewed wave of working class radicalization and organizational recover followed the formation of the Popular Front and the victory at the election of 1936, but it also brought Spain closer to civil war and dictatorship.

Class integration and failed class integration

To illuminate the changing societal position of labour over time and between countries that can be classified as class societies, I have correlated market power and political power, respectively in fig.5. The former refers to union density whereas the latter applies to percentage of voters by working-class parties.¹¹³ Comparing the two periods it turns out that labour in most Western countries has moved away from political dependence and weak often regional based unions towards national integration.

110. Benjamin Martin, *The Agony of Modernization. Labor and Industrialization in Spain* (New York, Cornell University 1990), pp. 202-204, 211.

111. *Ibidem*, pp. 228-231.

112. Martin Blinkhorn: 'Spain', in Salter and Stevenson 1990 *opus cit.*, pp. 203-211.

113. Figures on union membership and density are taken from Jelle Visser, *European Trade Unions in Figures* (Deventer, Kluwer 1989); Anders Kjellberg, *Facklig organisering i tolv länder* (Lund, Arkiv 1983); Crouch, 1994 *opus cit.*. Data on votes by parties are from Peter Flora, *State, Economy, and Society in Western Europe 1815-1975* (Frankfurt, Campus 1983), vol. I.

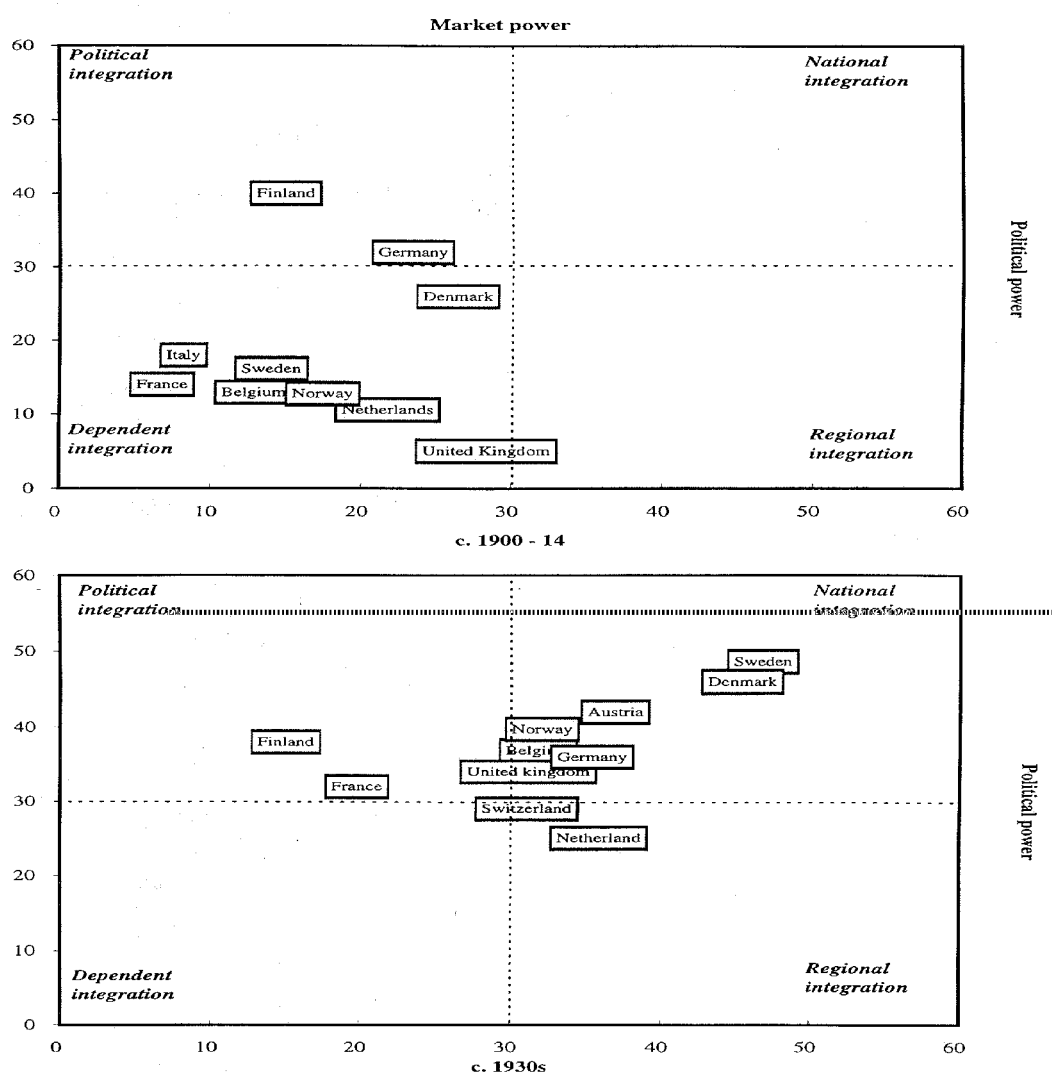


Figure 5. Forms of class integration c. 1900s – 1930s

Heightened political power was chiefly connected with the ability of the labour movement to attract strata outside the rank of skilled manual workers such as unskilled casual labourers, industrial rural workers, rural workers, white collar workers, artisans, shopkeepers and public employees.¹¹⁴ Regional integration captures a condition where a political weak labour movement was able to exert extensive control over a labour market or a welfare system within regional boundaries by virtue of social networks of solidarity that is skilled work. In some cases these regions would cross national borders. Only unique combinations of variables will be able to map the trend towards national integration; therefore I have elaborated a concrete causal model (fig. 6) that combines structural components with class specific actors.

114. See the discussion in Adam Przeworski & John Sprague, *Paper Stones. A History of Electoral Socialism* (Chicago, The Uni. of Chicago Press 1986), especially chapt. 2.

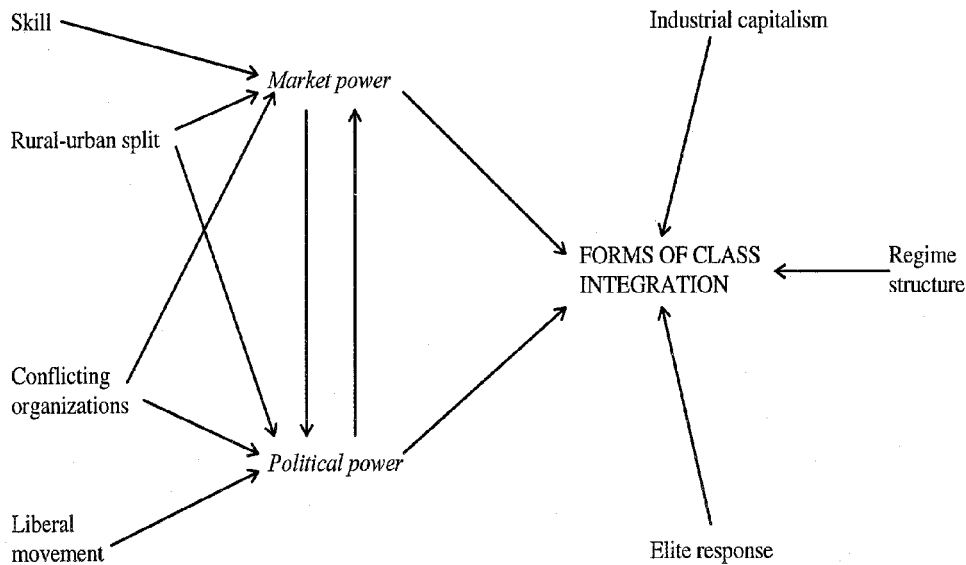


Figure 6. Causal account of forms of class integration

The argument is that skilled labour markets, extensive urbanization or organizational links across rural and urban areas strongly increased the market power of workers whereas distinct ethnic, linguistic or religious cleavages weakened the labour movement. Liberal political hegemony, and the temporary presence of lib-lab coalitions on the one hand forestalled the formation of an autonomous labour movement, and on the other brought working class leaders into the national governing circles and raised social reforms.¹¹⁵ I also argue that political power has a significant effect on the market position of labour and vice versa, and that exogenous variables as industrial capitalism, elite response and regime structure could be decisive for the inclusion of the working-classes. For each country or region these indicators may appear with different weights and even change sign over time.

In the Eastern and Southern countries a significant rural-urban split and a less developed sector of skilled workers undermined the market power of labour. The state and mighty elite groups, first of all landlords, curbed the political activities of labour except for a brief period after the war when organized labour took advantage of the power vacuum. But they did not do it all by themselves. Only the ability to align with rural proletarians, small agricultural proprietors and part of the middle class tilted the scale to the advantage of labour. The coalition of urban and rural interest occurred in Italy, Spain and to a lesser extent in Germany.¹¹⁶ It threatened the interest of landlords and middle peasants who, together with big business, became the main challengers to class specific integration of the

115. Gregory M. Luebbert, *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy. Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe* (New York, Oxford Uni.Press 1991), p. 53, and James Fulcher, *Labour Movements, Employers and the State. Conflict and Co-operation in Britain and Sweden* (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1991), p. 313.

116. Luebbert, 'Social Foundation of Political Order in Interwar Europe', *World Politics*, vol. XXXIX, Oct. 1987, pp. 469-475.

working-classes.

Societies undergoing class integration, during the 1920s and the 1930s, differed from authoritarian nations in the comparative strength of liberal parties. The dominant liberal communities in France, United Kingdom, Switzerland – in Belgium and the Netherlands complemented with religious organizations – received many working-class votes and by and large controlled the agrarian proletariat. In the late industrialized Nordic countries the liberals were less active. After the war the liberals lost ground among workers but were capable of keeping agrarian labourers and small peasants out of the reach of the socialists.¹¹⁷ The liberals were less successful in mobilizing workers in the market, and in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland many workers were placed under cross-pressure between socialist, religious and ethnic unions that might have restricted their overall organizational power.¹¹⁸

After the turn of the century the socialist labour movement in the Nordic countries stood forward as the only serious mobilizer of the urban working class. It did not meet much opposition from the employers who seem to have acquired well organized and centralized opponents and bargaining partners.¹¹⁹ In Sweden and Norway it took much longer to organize the large number of industrial-rural workers whereas the socio-spatial map was complete different in Denmark and Austria. What these two countries had in common and where they deviated from all other European countries concerns the fact that 23% and 29% , respectively, of the native population lived in the capital, around 1920.¹²⁰ Copenhagen and Vienna became major mobilization centers for the labour movement, and the mixed socio-economic feature of the two cities made it possible to attract strata beyond skilled urban workers.¹²¹

Industrial structure likewise explains much of the comparative ‘exceptionalism’ of the French working-class: small units of production, a low concentration of workers in firms and cities, and a blurred distinction between small employers, and dependent wage earners who often owned houses and allotments.¹²² Plant size were not only smaller in France compared to Britain but also enlargement of markets, specialization, mergers, and inter firm competition. Narrow markets made it possible for even small firms to act monopolistically in a limited area. On the other hand it also restrained the influence of employers over public policy, and they remained less articulated as a distinct interest group. These structural features harmonized with the fact that French employers were disorganized but also exercised their traditional prerogatives to determine unilaterally the terms of payment and the organization of work. Industrialists also set up paternalistic insurance schemes to keep the workers away from the unions and with considerable success. Therefore union membership was not only risky but it did not bring any advantages either. Workers had to seek power lobbying and bargaining with the state in order to

117. *Ibidem*, pp. 464-469.

118. John D. Stephens, *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, Humanities Press 1980), p. 111.

119. Mikkelsen 1992 *opus cit.*, pp. 375-377.

120. Flora 1983 *opus cit.*, vol. II.

121. Tim Kirk: ‘Austria’, in Salter and Stevenson 1990 *opus cit.*, p. 12.

122. Charles Kindleberger, *Economic Growth in France and Britain: 1851-1950* (New York, Simon & Schuster 1964), pp. 172-179; Theodor Zeldin, *France 1848-1945: Ambition and Love* (Oxford, Oxford Uni.Press 1979), pp. 212, 262, 265-266. Luebbert 1991 *opus cit.*, pp. 39-40.

challenge the employers. The more permanent increase in unionization from 1936 was achieved in the public sector or in related industries whereas union membership in the traditional private industry stayed very low.¹²³

In Britain early and smooth industrialization and urbanization had surmounted the rural-urban split and preserved a large stratum of skilled workers affiliated to a trade union. By 1920 union membership stood at its highest with 8,4 m whereafter it continued to fall until 1933. The decline was a general European phenomenon that, however, stopped in 1924/25. Prolongation of the economic recession, the disastrous General Strike of 1926, and the following fortifying of the employers' bargaining position offer a plausible explanation of further demobilization. Until 1918 a significant proportion of male manual workers were excluded from political citizenship, but in the wave of pre- and post war radicalism the Liberal Party lost its grasp of the workers whereas the Labour Party emerged from a loose local structure into a national organization.¹²⁴ In 1924 Labour formed its first minority government on the basis of a 30% share of the vote.

The disruption of post-war economic order and the onset of the Depression was followed by a violent counter-offensive by employers in most countries: unemployment rose, wages were forced down and union membership declined. Only in Scandinavia, where labour parties achieved considerable political and parliamentary representation, unions were nearly unhurt by the Depression. Besides, strong socialist parties in Norway and especially in Sweden helped to bridge the rural-urban gap and facilitated the diffusion of collective action from the urban areas into the countryside.¹²⁵ Add to this that union density first began to increase in France after 1936, and in Britain after 1934 when The Popular Front and the Labour Party closed in on the political centre. After the war the Socialist party in Belgium approached the Catholic party and the Liberals, and widely state regulation of industrial relations in the form of bipartite institutions marked increasing willingness by the employers and the state to deal with labour.¹²⁶ These scattered evidences seem to confirm the argument by Salter and Stevenson who characterize the interwar period as one where 'workers achieved significant gain only in co-operation with the state, not in opposition to it'.¹²⁷ Countries with weak socialist parties in the interwar period or a regime hostile to organized labour scored low on union density.

Models, theories, and realities of the formation of the european working classes

Capitalism and statemaking did not merely shape the economic, demographic, and social composition of the European population, they also determined the principle forms of organization and interaction. By destroying old modes of production and social networks

123. Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe. Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton New Jersey, Princeton Uni. Press 1975), p. 85; Crouch 1994 *opus cit.*, pp. 141-143; Zeldin 1979 *opus cit.*, pp. 275-278.

124. Price 1986 *opus cit.*, p. 162.

125. Mikkelsen 1992 *opus cit.*, pp. 95-104, 186-190.

126. Crouch 1994 *opus cit.*, p. 136, 157.

127. Salter & Stevenson, 'Introduction', in Salter and Stevenson 1990 *opus cit.*, p. 8

capitalists and holders of state power, often jointly, prepared the way for a new economic order a change in the spatial distribution of material and human resources, and laid the foundation of new forms of interest representation.

In Western Europe rural and urban capitalists were the driving forces behind this development. But outside the countries of advanced capitalism the state played a more active role in the process of proletarianization and industrialization. In East-Central Europe the accumulation and investment of existing capital were insufficient, and the building of industrial infrastructure required active intervention by the state.¹²⁸ It happened in Russia, Bulgaria, the eastern provinces of the Austria-Hungarian Monarchy and Hungary – and more indirectly in Germany and North Italy – where a growing industrial working class was faced with an absolutist state and powerful landlords.¹²⁹ These workers lacked guild and craft traditions, were often situated in rural areas and subjected to paternalistic control. In Western and part of Central Europe a mighty class of capitalists emerged as a counterweight to the landed aristocracy. Capitalists were in a position to negotiate considerable economic and civic rights to obtain representative institutions confronting a state that always was in need of capital and allies.¹³⁰ And though rural capitalism created a landless proletariat it also fostered a class of independent small and middle-sized proprietors who sometimes allied with workers against rural and urban upper-classes. In other words, state and class structure in Western Europe was sufficiently heterogeneous and dominated by a drive towards economic and political modernization that did not only eased repression but also enabled workers to challenge the societal order. How well labour succeeded depended on (a) presence and strength of other competing organizations political, religious, ethnic and others (b) presence or absence of influential allies (c) craft traditions (d) industrial structures, and (e) urbanization. The previous pages have demonstrated the usefulness of the first three aspects whereas the rest need further comments.

The proportion of the labour force in industry, and its capital intensiveness, as suggested by Zolberg,¹³¹ might give a hint to the characteristics of the class formation process in Eastern, Central and Western Europe, and even enter a model of integration-promoting factors. The marginal and dependent position of French labour in a less industrial and less industrialized country may be a case in point. However, the character and timing of industrialization might be of even greater importance. Early and smooth industrialization formed a working class which had to struggle for its rights within a political and social structure dominated by diverse local parties and governments, and long before the arrival of organized socialist parties. Workers in late industrialized countries could find their bearings in a strong international socialist movement, an integrated national political system, and a state highly engaged in promoting industrialization. In these countries working class organizations became centralized and disciplined as the state itself. And

128. For an early discussion of this problem see A. Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge 1962), and the modifying arguments in Ivan Berend & György Ranki, *Economic Development in East-Central Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York, Columbia Uni. Press 1974), chapt. 4; Barry Supple: 'The State and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1914', in Carlo Cipolla, ed. 1973 *opus cit.*, pp. 340-353.

129. Aristide Zolberg: 'How Many Exceptionalisms?', in Katznelson & Zolberg, eds. 1986 *opus cit.*, p. 450.

130. B. Moore 1967 *opus cit.*, p 418. See also Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990* (Cambridge Mass., Basil Blackwell 1990), chapt. 1.

131. Zolberg 1986 *opus cit.*, pp. 438-439.

according to the composition of the dominant state coalition the government would pursue repressive or emancipative policies.

In the long run, urbanization and especially the fusion of industry with city from the beginning of the 20th century created a social landscape favourable to collective action. At first, urbanization involved a break with paternalism by opening up new employment opportunities, fostering higher geographical mobility and more flexible labour markets. Next, cities lowered the cost of social communication, and cities had several openings for the establishment of new organizations, working class and otherwise. Third, cities became the focal point for (national) political institutions, power, and control; and finally, urban centers served as the basis for the organizational and political mobilization of the rural population. In that way urbanization and urbanism, in interplay with industrialization, had the solution to the rural-urban split: it carried people into towns and cities, and pushed organizations out into rural areas creating the urban-rural coalition. But before constructing various indicators and indices showing the degree of industrialness and urbanization across European countries, I will suggest some qualifying ideas and a change in the frame of comparison.

Unfortunately much economic history compiles information and aggregates data in a way that blurs important socio-economic and spatial factors. Where central political institutions may span a whole nation homogeneous structures of production, social class, political behaviour, labour markets and migrant networks become intelligible only at the regional level.¹³² Standard of living, working conditions, forms of occupational communities and organizations, and collective action often display greater intra-national than international differences. To unravel this problem large-scale comparisons for particular cases may be a necessary procedure. This again raises the question of the proper unit of analysis.¹³³ When the goal is to explain and to interpret macrosocial variations in class formation the selection of vital cases, such as social class, industrialization, and collective action, should be done at the organizational and interactive level. Sectoral and regional comparison often combine economic, social and political aspects to which I will add location and time. According to Eric Wolf the 'distribution of capitals and labour markets, and the resulting differentiation of the labour force locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, are never fixed and stable'.¹³⁴ Workers and working classes are 'made' of social links within constantly moving boundaries, in other words socio-spatial networks.¹³⁵ Therefore social classes should be put into landscapes where people move, interact, communicate, and where resources, knowledge and ideas move over distances to be transformed into new forms of organization and collective action. Socio-spatial networks of innovation, diffusion and interdependence will bring us closer to those forces and processes that shaped the European working classes.

132. Jeffery Paige, *Agrarian Revolutions* (New York, The Free Press 1975), p. 73; John Breuilly, *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Essays in Comparative History* (Manchester, Manchester Uni. Press 1992), pp. 9-24.

133. Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method. Moving beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley, Uni. of California Press 1987), pp. 5-9.

134. Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, p. 357.

135. For a wider discussion of this topic see the contributions to Derek Gregory and John Urry, eds., *Social Relations and Spatial Structures* (London, Macmillan 1985).