John Porter’s influence on Canadian sociology and on the social sciences in general was tremendous. His name, particularly in association with *The Vertical Mosaic (TVM)*, is one of the few in the social sciences known internationally. His death was a great loss, especially for those who knew him personally.

I have found writing this paper a difficult task in several ways. On the one hand I want to accurately portray the essential elements of his intellectual contribution, but his writings were many and do not readily lend themselves to condensation. On the other hand my intellectual (as opposed to personal) relationship with Porter was often one of contention. We frequently disagreed in our modes of analysis or interpretation. My problem will be to portray his positions on the topics he considered essential yet keep my editorializing to a minimum. I will not pretend to be detached from the subjects discussed here or even from my personal relationship to Porter but I will attempt to outline objectively his enormous contribution.

John Porter was born in Vancouver, British Columbia on the 12th of November 1921 and left Canada in 1937, remaining abroad for what he called “twelve formative years.” As a teenager he worked at odd jobs and eventually as a reporter for the *Daily Sketch*, a Kemsley (now Thompson) Newspaper, in London. He joined the Canadian Army in 1941 as a private, rising by his release in 1946 to captain, having spent the war in the Canadian Intelligence Corps in Italy, North Africa, and North-West Europe. His class origins had prevented him from receiving much formal education; his father “did some clerical work but had no inclination to do anything very much,” and John never graduated from high school. The war, however, gave him the chance to enter university through a veterans’ program. He entered the London School of Economics and Political Science, graduating with a B.Sc. in 1949. Returning to Canada on a Department of Veterans Affairs trip, he stopped in Ottawa to look up an army friend. Paul Fox invited him to become a teacher of Political Science at Carleton, where he remained, aside from a brief sojourn at the University of Toronto in 1968-69, until his death on the 15th of June, 1979.
Particularly during his later years, he again spent considerable time outside the country. He was a Canadian Fellow to the International Institute for Labour Studies in Geneva in 1966–67; he held the Canadian Chair at Harvard in 1974–75, and took his 1975–76 sabbatical in Paris. These periods abroad he found to be intellectually stimulating, giving him a distinct vantage point from which to view Canada and the opportunity to be exposed to outside influences. By this point he had achieved a large international reputation, having received the prestigious MacIver Award of the American Sociological Association in 1966 for TVM, the same year he finally received a D.Sc. from the London School of Economics (having submitted TVM as his thesis).

Many young social scholars must find it confusing that John Porter could have had such an overwhelming presence in Canadian scholarship. What was it that made TVM so prominent? My interpretation is that this work was a statement of the times. Not only was it enormous in its scope, rich in detail and suggestive in its analysis, it also encapsulated many of the important issues of the day. For the first time there existed a statement of where we were socially. It continues to be a baseline from which many contemporary researchers begin. Since TVM, of course, many other statements have appeared, but TVM was the opening volley.

Because he did so much in TVM, contemporary reviewers seem to want him to have done everything. They seem to forget the paucity of existing literature and data, particularly the fact that most of the material used was analysed for the first time. Since its publication, Canadian social science has blossomed, in no small measure due to TVM. Even ten years after its publication critical reviews were being written, often without sufficient regard to the historical conditions of its writing. When first published in 1965, TVM was welcomed by the Canadian left (broadly defined) and during the student movement of the late sixties was often used as the basis for radical analysis. Into the 1970s, as a more theoretically sophisticated (but less activist) left developed and became reacquainted with Marxism, Porter was subject to much criticism. Much of this criticism he reacted to as mere “carping” rather than “constructive” empirical research designed to expose or eradicate inequalities in Canada. Toward the end of his life Porter adopted some of the criticisms of his work but only after its shortcomings had been demonstrated empirically to his satisfaction. At that point he incorporated some of the insights of the left into his analysis.

Although TVM opens with the disclaimer that “no one volume can present a total picture of a modern society,” it may safely be said that Porter did, to the extent possible, present a thorough overview of contemporary Canada. There are, of course, significant gaps — the study is weak historically; it does not adequately situate Canada internationally; the analysis of Quebec and other regions is limited; real (as opposed to statistical)
classes are dismissed.* Its strengths, particularly for its time, compensate for these shortcomings. The analysis of power in its various expressions is likely the most comprehensive done anywhere; its treatment of education, ethnicity, migration and income and particularly the inequalities associated with them — were the *tour de force* of Canadian social science. Those engaged in empirical research tend to appreciate Porter's work more than those who work primarily at the theoretical level (or do little research at all). The methodological problems, sources of data, and access to information were all formidable barriers to solid research, to the application of theory. He marshalled amazing empirical detail and did so in a way informed by theory if not in a way that “tested” or “generated” theory. His work was drawn together thematically — the master theme being inequality. It is around this theme that I will address Porter's contribution.

II

What was the most consistent in Porter's work was his concern with issues of vital concern to the whole of Canadian society. Central was a focus on inequality and on the need for equality. Particularly during his later years he spent a great deal of time thinking about concepts like “justice” — what it meant, how it could be achieved, etc. These were his concerns, his value premises, which he never hesitated to put forward. Porter's philosophical roots were in the British social democratic tradition of Harold Laski, R.H. Tawney and T.H. Marshall but his values, as will be argued later, were often those flaunted as “American” ideals.

*TVM* was essentially an exercise in sophisticated description — and in prescription. Porter attempted to identify what is in order to evaluate what could be. Rather than develop a theory of class he chose to bring to light inequalities characteristic of the contemporary class structure. It was his judgement that the priority was empirical rather than theoretical. He envisioned himself as establishing a base from which he and others could work. It was never intended, as he never tired of reiterating, as “the last word” — although he was not too modest to claim it as “the first” comprehensive statement.

He outlined in some detail the intellectual forces integral to his early research in a “Research Biography.” There he reflected on his consciously “eclectic” use of theory, an eclecticism which continued throughout his career.

*Porter often discussed reissuing *TVM* with a new introduction to deal with “recent” issues in Canadian society, including foreign investment, Quebecon nationalism, regionalism and the women's movement. These issues he regarded as the most significant ones to emerge since the drafting of *TVM* in 1963.
The strongest and most concise statement of the value concerns and theoretical dilemmas informing his democratic socialism was articulated in "Power and Freedom." His final pronouncement on the values of social scientists appears in his Prologue to *The Measure of Canadian Society*, and in his previously unpublished paper on "Education, Equality, and the Just Society" in that collection. Together these papers consolidate the essential concerns of his work. As he said in his Introduction to the "Research Biography": "My research and social action interests since [TVM] was published have all been extensions of it, particularly those parts which are most relevant to social change in Canada as it is at present on the threshold of post-industrialism: the search for highly-qualified manpower, social mobility, educational opportunity, and the planning of post-secondary education." In his final collection of essays, it will be argued, he amended his position on post-industrialism and the centrality of educational reform.

The Preface to *TVM* clearly states Porter's value position regarding equality and specifies the type of equality he means. It is equality of opportunity — the removal of barriers which prevent the "most able" from attaining "top positions." This promotion of "meritocracy" is desirable, he argues, "on both ethical and practical grounds." He sees the "creative role of politics" as the means to achieve this goal and the educational system as the principal mechanism. At times he wandered into the territory of inequality of condition by identifying structural sources of inequality but basically opportunity was his focus, at least until his final years when he returned to the structural features of society.

Porter's is what may be referred to as a "meritocratic critique" of inequality in contrast to an "egalitarian critique." Never, however, does he shy away from the issue of values. In a little known piece called the "Limits of Sociology," written in 1973, he addressed some of these issues and it is worth reproducing his conclusion at length:

> Important as measurement is to the clarification of ethical problems, measurement alone is not enough, for it leads to the free-floating findings which, lacking an anchor in a clear philosophical position, can be used to support contrary points of view. Perhaps that is a limitation of sociology, but in the search for equality it is difficult to avoid ethical considerations because equality is a moral problem. This difficulty is aggravated by the very legitimate need to measure, without which social sciences cannot make their contribution, but measurement reduces important ethical ideas to very mechanical procedures and limited scopes. It is all the more
important, therefore, to capture findings within a clearly defined ethical framework; otherwise someone will come along and seize them for his own ideological purposes.  

The author of this statement is a man aware of "ideological warfare," of the ethics and morality of research. It is also the statement of a humanitarian who sees the need to develop human qualities and develop a more equitable society.

The particular form of equality which Porter strove for was that often used to characterize "American" values in which the ideals of altruism and equality of opportunity dominate. Shortly after the publication of *TVM* he was quoted as saying, "In my optimistic moments ... I think the best thing for Canada would be greater Americanization — the more American values we get the more we can become genuinely North American."  

It may be argued that the egalitarianism produced by these values is *égalité de droit* (formal or legal equality) but not *égalité de fait* (practical or economic equality). Equality before the law and equality of opportunity, particularly through access to education and mobility through the occupational structure, were the forms of equality Porter sought throughout most of his career and thought were possible to achieve. Canadians, unlike "Americans," he thought, were impeded to their development because they lacked values appropriate to advanced industrial societies. He opposed all "ascriptive" inequality — particularly ethnicity and intergenerational advantages transferred through education and occupational mobility.

Capitalism, as a way of organizing a society's productive capacities, was viewed by Porter as a source of grave inequalities. He argued that "Individual property rights meant that those who owned the instruments of production controlled their use and access to them. In many respects the new urban proletariat of the industrial revolution was less free than the feudal serf who had at least some legally defined claims against his master." At times he denounced capitalism and its "lack of conscience" which "can only be explained in terms of habitation to the capitalist ethos and the complex attitudes which legitimates predatory behaviour....The exploitive, predatory and restrictive character of capitalist institutions rests on a morality defined by those at the apex of our institutional hierarchies." The irony of these statements is that he simultaneously called for Canadians to become more like the "Americans" who lived in the most advanced capitalist society of all! Thus capitalism is a progressive system, yet it severely limits human potential and its barriers must be transcended.

For Porter, socialism was not free from many of the problems plaguing capitalism. A common problem was that of bureaucracy:
Bureaucracy provides socialist theory with a built-in contradiction. Socialism, which seeks to release men from productive drudgery, envisages larger productive units, more intricate co-ordination between these units, and more extensive planning of the total social effort, none of which can be achieved without a very great increase in administrative machinery.\(^1\)

It is this problem which made elites so important to Porter’s analysis. In his view there would always be elites of some kind. You cannot “do away with power.” The point was one of “transforming it in some fashion to serve justice and equality.”\(^{11}\) The only way was to somehow inject more humanitarian values into those at the top. He concentrated on “opening up” or making accessible power positions within existing institutions. This problem became a preoccupation for the rest of his life.

From this stage in Porter’s argument it is necessary to make a rather large leap. It is a leap from “industrial” to “post-industrial” societies. These changes were brought about by the new demands of science and technology which required freeing people from the bonds of an earlier stage of capitalism through a demand for talent. “Post-industrial” societies would require a new kind of labour force, new sets of values appropriate to the times, and would provide the productive capacity required to meet the society’s material demands. The problem of power retreats into the background for Porter as the imperatives of science and technology take hold and re-shape the society. A new problematic emerges:

> With the great expansion in the number of occupations as well as the emergence of new occupations that come with the post-industrial culture of science and technology, it is necessary for all societies at this stage of development to solve their recruiting problems.\(^{12}\)

The first statement of this new problematic appeared in Porter’s 1966 Maclver Award Lecture where he began to address the problem of the “recruitment of highly qualified professional workers” because of the new “culture based on science and technology.” With this change there is “unfilled room at the top of our emerging occupational structures.”\(^{13}\) This would be handled through greater social planning, particularly planning associated with the educational system where training would take place and new values instilled. Porter’s contention was that industrial societies were moving in the direction of greater potential for the “good society” whereby greater parts of the society could share more equally in the benefits. His goal was to eradicate barriers — specifically mobility barriers — which prevented people from
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sharing in the newly created “good life” and which, for the society, wasted the talents of its people. The measurement of egalitarianism is not clear. The focus, however, is on barriers to individuals with particular ascriptive characteristics. While there is an analysis of inequality, there is not one of exploitation, of the structural relations between classes. There is a sense that we have to move by the imperatives of science and technology, which are creating new possibilities. The problem is one of barriers which simultaneously prevent people from equally sharing in the possibility of benefits and wastes the potential talents at the society’s disposal. It is, in a word, the classic problem of “meritocracy,” a word Porter chose to use.

III

For Porter the problem of barriers superseded the problem of power, although they were related to the extent that elites upheld self-serving values. Exclusion practices meant a waste of talent. If recruitment were widened society’s institutions would become more innovative and hence more productive. This position was evident in TVM but became the dominant problematic of his later work. In TVM, as in his later work, Porter argued that industrialization was a means for overcoming some forms of inequality but at the same time the overcoming of these inequalities was necessary for the full benefits of industrialization to be realized:

The egalitarian ideology holds that individuals should be able to move through this hierarchy of skill classes according to their inclinations and abilities. Such an ideology reinforces the needs of an industrial economic system. A society with rigid class structure of occupational inheritance could not become heavily industrialized. On the other hand the industrial society which has the greatest flexibility is the one in which the egalitarian ideology has affected the educational system to the extent that education is available equally to all, and careers are truly open to the talented.

At some point in social development industrialization with its attendant egalitarian ideology comes into conflict with the structure of class.14

Thus Porter contended that “the correct values for the mobility needs of the industrialized society are those of achievement and universalism.”15 Barriers to these values are offered by “subcultural values and norms — of class, ethnicity and religion” which are not “appropriate” for post-industrialism.”16
These barriers inhibit the development of society and are, at the same time, a major source of unjust inequality. If societies were to adopt a “universalism-achievement orientation” then their institutions would be more creative because talent would be more effectively used and the principles of meritocracy would be achieved. Thus the lack of “mobility values” creates “dysfunctions” for societal development. He argued, “If one were to locate within industrial social structures the areas where these dysfunctions can be best elucidated they would be class systems, particularly working-class culture, the family as a socializing agency, and education systems.” This explains his concentrated research in the areas of intergenerational mobility, ethnicity, and education, each mediated by the family, in the years following TVM.

Porter’s first major undertaking after TVM was on occupational prestige classifications, but it ran into serious technical problems. Eventually it led into an even larger scale national project on occupational mobility, entitled “Occupational and Educational Change in a Generation: Canada,” involving five co-researchers. This remains unfinished, the final study having been written only in draft form before Porter’s death.* It is not possible to evaluate the results of this unpublished work now, but it can be said of his earlier work on occupations that even though it provided a useful critique of census categories there is little of substantive value that resulted. It told little about Canada — its features and occupational anomalies — concentrating primarily on methodological problems. More, of course, can be expected from the unpublished study.

Education

Porter was opposed to any form of inequality which limited the development of a society’s talent, whether it be class, gender or ethnicity. The core institution for overcoming inequality was the educational system. This required, in his view, changes in access to education and in the content of education itself. In his own case, only the Second World War provided the necessary conditions for access to a university education; likely the fact that his own formal educational career was in large part an historical accident was a factor in his deliberations.

The major area of public policy upon which Porter pronounced was education. He undertook a massive study of this subject and published, along

*Porter’s two papers for this study were completed before his death. They include “Ethnic Origin and Occupational Attainment” (co-authored with Peter C. Pineo) and “Canada: The Societal Context of Occupational Allocation.”
with Marion Porter and Bernard Blishen, a policy report entitled *Does Money Matter? Prospects for Higher Education*, which contributed to the debate on educational reform. A longer, scholarly analysis of this data is entitled *Stations and Callings: Making It Through Ontario's Schools*. The major finding of this research was that "educational and occupational horizons of Ontario high school students are bounded by the class structure of the society in which they live; that, associated with that class structure, there is a wastage of bright young people from the educational process; and that girls, particularly lower class girls, see themselves destined for the labour force and excluded from the learning force."19 The report evaluates student assistance plans and the effects of family resources on students' educational prospects.

The study does not limit itself to the educational system *per se* but locates it within a broader social context. The authors say, "We are not so naive as to think . . . that educational reform alone is going to make for a society of equality."20 This introduces the "what comes first" problem. Education is itself part of a larger structure of inequality but, in Porter's view, is the key institution for overcoming many inequalities. This was a problem of which he was acutely aware, arguing "equality in education cannot be truly achieved without moving toward a more equal society, and that could come about . . . through greatly reduced income differentials or a much more progressive tax system."21 As far as education itself was concerned, the major reforms recommended were the abolition of tuition fees and the provision of maintenance grants to students, but these would only be effective in the context of broader social reforms. This was a longstanding problem for Porter, as he wrote in 1961:

> the fact remains that educational systems reflect the values of the dominant institutions within the society, and their influence in bringing about the desired psychological changes is thereby reduced. To achieve some measure of social change it may be necessary to find ways of changing the institutional structure before changing modes of thought.22

Porter offered no simple solutions for what he regarded as a complex subject. More than most researchers he was acutely aware of the relationship between institutions and the way institutions such as education were biased by the interests of the powerful. He found it difficult, however, to abandon the possibility of educational reform because it was integral to his vision of positive social change. In his critical essay on "Education, Equality and the Just Society," written near the end of his life, he began to have serious reservations about the centrality of education to accomplishing these changes:
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The crucial point is that education has failed to equalize. Perhaps it was naïve to think that it might have or that educational reform alone was sufficient to deal with the basic structure of inequality, which in its consequence is much more pervasive and deep rooted than we think.23

Ethnicity

Paralleling the attention Porter devoted to education was his concern with ethnicity. As he made clear in *TVM*, ethnicity acted as a major barrier within Canada. Consistent with his general search for equality was his analysis of ethnicity. While he weighed the pros and cons of ethnic sub-cultures he concluded that they were serious impediments in Canada’s development. His statements were strong, as the following indicates:

“What price culture?” As cultures converge through science and technology, cultural differentiation, in the sense in which we have usually meant it, will end. In fact, we may have reached the point where culture has become a myth, in the sense of a belief in a non-existent world which might become a reality. The more culture becomes a myth, the less can it become a working concept of social science . . . . In the contemporary society of change, culture can act as an impediment to social development, because it emphasizes yesterday’s, rather than tomorrow’s, ways of life.24

Thus he argued that, “considering as alternatives the ethnic stratification that results from the reduction of ethnicity as a salient feature of modern society I have chosen an assimilationist position.”25 This was an unpopular position, given the revival of ethnicity being experienced in Canada from the late 1960s onwards and the official state policy of multiculturalism. Regardless of its controversial qualities, he clearly articulated the reasons for his position, noting that ethnicity “emphasizes descent group identification and endogamy . . . [thus] it runs the risk of believed-in biological differences becoming the basis of invidious judgements about groups of people . . . . Moreover, where ethnicity is salient there is often an association between ethnic differences and social class and inequality.”26 Not only does ethnicity interfere with the search for equality, Porter argued, “it has also served as a form of class control of the major power structures by charter ethnic groups who remain over-represented in the elite structures.”27
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Ethnicity, in the way Porter analysed it, was a barrier to the mobility of individuals within the class structure. The problem, as he argued, was that ethnicity was often an impediment to mobility because the values it promoted were contrary to those required for achievement within the dominant culture. Thus, if the salience of ethnic values were reduced and substituted with other values, there would be a freeing of the talent required by "post-industrial" societies. As it was, ethnicity was an instrument of social control by the powerful and a barrier to mobility.

Although Porter had less to say on the subject than others, he did not regard the Quebeccois as he did "other ethnics." In 1961 he argued that the "French desire for cultural separation can be justified both psychologically and socially." Later he argued that French culture could not withstand the onslaught of "modernization" but felt "there need not be a loss of language. If bilingualism can increase, and that requires a great effort on the part of the English, this distinctive dualism of Canada will remain." His own actions were in this direction. At almost fifty years of age, Porter sought to improve his French and spent a great deal of time working at it. He valued the retention of the French language. He also recognized the two-nation reality of Canadian society. As he wrote me in 1976 concerning my study of class,

What are you going to do about French? It seems to me we have now reached the point in Canada where Fr and Eng Canada can be treated as two separate societies and one or the other left out. The Fr always leave the Eng out since they consider Quebec unto itself. Now they no longer mind if Quebec is left out of macroanalysis of "Canada" which they see almost as another country. That becomes increasingly the reality of course.

I certainly would have welcomed more of his views on Quebec in more developed form. I am not aware of any specific writings on the subject but expect it would have been addressed in his proposed macro-sociology of Canada (to be discussed later). His general position, however, was that Canada was entering a "post-industrial" stage of development where science and technology would dominate, leaving little room for particularistic cultures to survive; within this development he did not feel that there was room for bilingualism and for Quebec to have greater independence.

In advocating this position, however, Porter continued to support stronger central powers, if not vis-a-vis Quebec, then at least for the rest of Canada. He contended that "lessening of federal power particularly in a wide range of social policy can be seen as a loss of the ability to establish national goals." He wished to see, for example, a greater federal presence in the
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educational system as a means of standardizing and upgrading this institution.

He had little favour for regional analyses, contending that the differences within Canada were less geographically based than class based. He argued, "It is difficult to know how, other than in the statistical sense, provinces can be 'poor'. People are poor, and some of their poverty could be caused by protected privilege and regressive policies within provinces which in no way change through equalization transfers. To equalize provincial averages in some resource need not affect within-province distributions."  

He also maintained:

If one attempts to define communities by transaction flows, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver are probably more closely linked and provide mutual identities than do these metropolises with their respective hinterlands. Hardrock and coal miners and pulp workers moving through Canada's single industry towns might have a regional identity which geographically spans the country.  

I suspect that his opinion of regionalism was much like that of ethnicity. It spawned values inappropriate to the needs of "post-industrial" society by emphasizing particularistic rather than universalistic values, thus acting as possible barriers to mobility and, in this case, to national goals. Toward the end of his life he was prepared to re-evaluate his views on regionalism and toward this end was preparing to apply for a Killam Award to live in various regions of the country.

Class

In his analysis of class, Porter was more intent on demarcating ranks and strata than on analysing relationships between classes. Inequalities based on class are real in his studies but they are grouped or ordered by artificial lines drawn by application of various criteria, not by "legally recognized" relationships as was the case for estates or castes. In Part I of TVM on "The Structure of Class," there is no class resistance or struggle, no agents of change in the working class since, he argued, we are now in a "post-Marxian industrial world." Porter contended that "in the nineteenth century it may have been the case that two groups classified by the criterion of owning or not owning property were sociological groups, but in the present day such classes are statistical categories and nothing more." For him class is a ranking of occupations, income, and education; it is a "spectrum" of socio-economic
status led by a wealthy and powerful elite. This conception of class was very much a product of the dominant social sciences in the 1960s.

The fundamental reason for the shift from conflicting to statistical classes, Porter contends, is the advance of industrialization. There has been a proliferation of occupations and a reduction in overt exploitation. "For the proletariat, the work world has not been one of increasing drudgery, nor one requiring an increasingly low level of skill, making workers a vast class of 'proles.' The skills that modern industry requires have become more and more varied and complex so that unskilled occupations have formed a much larger proportion." Generally, throughout this work, he underestimates the amount of class conflict in society, arguing for example in 1965 that "the idea of the general strike has almost completely disappeared from union ideology." He also had a low expectation at that time of unionization or resistance from "the white-collar group," expecting them to grow dramatically within the occupational structure but offering little possibility for unionization or resistance. His stress was on the weakness and fragmentation of labour and the relatively low and stagnating rates of unionization. There were some obvious truths to his observations but for the most part he underestimated the struggles that would emerge from the new middle class, particularly among state workers, for union recognition and wages. The upgrading of skills assumed with application of science and technology did not turn out to have the projected effects, as will be illustrated shortly.

Much of what Porter wrote in TVM can be read as informing analyses of class cleavages, but most is not analysed by him in this way. The chapter on "Class, Mobility and Migration," for example, can be read as the making of a working class through detachment from the land and particular immigration policies, but primarily it is an analysis of imported education and skills creating a "mobility trap" for native-born Canadians and an ethnically stratified society. Instead of class, Porter uses the concept of elite as a substitute saying, "What we have instead of a class of capitalists is a smaller and probably more cohesive group — an elite within the private sector of the economy." This leaves an obvious analytical gap for all those outside the elite, particularly the working class and petit bourgeoisie but also smaller capitalists. The "class" quality of the elite does not, however, resolve the explanations of forces of change. This requires an analysis of class transformations. Porter did not ignore classes but he did deny them as real forces in contemporary society.

As has emerged as a consistent theme throughout his work, Porter's contention was that a fundamental change was taking place in industrial societies. The problems of capitalist societies would not hold in post-industrial ones:
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The radical-conservative polarity based on class may have been appropriate in the development of a modern industrial society. It led to welfare policies of redistribution and hence legitimated capitalist systems. It also led to policies to maintain levels of demand for the output of the economy. But high evaluation of working-class culture as something of benefit to be preserved becomes increasingly less appropriate to the society based on science and technology.40

His analysis was based on a fundamental belief that progressive changes were taking place which would represent a movement beyond classes in the classical sense.

There is some evidence, however, that late in his life he began to re-evaluate some of the premises of this belief. It is worthwhile establishing some of these assumptions, as evident in TVM, and compare them with his more recent remarks. He argued that “It would be fairly safe to generalize that as industrialization proceeds the shape of the class structure changes from triangular to diamond or beehive . . . [using] the criterion of occupational skill.”41 Further, he said, “it can reasonably be assumed that the increasing proportion of blue collar workers in manufacturing had higher levels of skills at the end of the sixty years [1901-1961] than at the beginning.”42 Porter’s analysis of post-industrialism places great stake in the decline of unskilled and the rise of semi-skilled and skilled workers. The “upgrading” of skills was accepted by Porter, as by most observers, as a matter of faith, concomitant with industrialization. They equated the decline of backbreaking labour with greater skill but failed to examine the content of the rising “semi-skilled” category and the changes among the “skilled.”

In light of these assumptions, Porter’s comments on Harry Braverman’s influential Labor and Monopoly Capital, which makes the opposite points Porter had made earlier about class, are informative. Porter was particularly impressed by Braverman’s critique of census and occupational classifications, saying “his analysis of the methodology of the prevailing official [classifications], more than any other part of the book calls into question the notion of an upgraded labour force. All of these things add up to a tremendously powerful critique of how we have looked at work.”43 Additional evidence of a change in Porter’s position near the end of his life comes from his introductory commentary on his “Power and Freedom” article contained in his collection on The Measure of Canadian Society, where he remarks, “I would probably want also to modify my views about how the changing occupational structure which has come with industrialism really provides upward mobility.”44

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John Porter’s search for equality was a never-ending one. At the end of his life there was still a vibrance to his work, a feeling that he still had another great book in mind. He wrote in 1970, in the Introduction to his “Research Biography,” that “Much more material is now available than formerly to undertake another macroanalysis of Canada in transition or to revisit the “mosaic.” That would be an attractive possibility if time and energies allow.” In 1974 he wrote to me from Harvard that “course preparation I have found irksome and heavy, but I hope what I am doing will ultimately develop into a macrosociology — although the pay off is far ahead.” Again in 1976 he wrote, saying “When I can get out from under my present grant obligations I have every intention of doing another macro-book on Canada.” It is my impression that John was dissatisfied — or perhaps more accurately impatient — with his later studies of education and intergenerational mobility. They were massive research projects involving enormous grants and much complex collaboration. As I saw them, they were for John a means to an end, the necessary homework for a more important project, but they took much more time and energy than he had planned. They were only coming to a conclusion at the time of his death. There are, however, a few clues about what he intended to accomplish.

Porter’s macrosociology after TVM contained a strong comparative focus, arguing the desirability of understanding “types” of societies. Although he was hopeful about the promise of such studies he was aware of their pitfalls and critical of the rigor they had exhibited to date. One of the general concepts he continually returned to in later life was that of “citizenship rights”:

What distinguishes a modern industrial society from earlier types is that, because of greater productive capacity, it can implement all the rights of citizenship according to the principles of justice . . . . John Rawls’ *Theory of Justice* which is perhaps the best contemporary attempt to develop a socialist ethic, suggests that, while liberty has primacy in modern industrial society, it could well not have it in an underdeveloped one where the development of economic resources must have primacy. Modern industrial societies, then, are a type with their own capacity to achieve social welfare, to implement citizenship and achieve equality and justice in the here and now.
Porter was working with the concept of justice and how it could be translated not only into legal and political rights but social rights as well. Thus he considered the best way to develop a "socialist ethic" would be through the concrete application of specific enforceable rights available to each individual. These rights, which he felt advanced industrial societies capable of fulfilling, were for such things as a decent standard of living for all, equal access to education and equal access to all occupations. It is evident that the macrosociology he had in mind would not be a mere description. As he said, macrosociology should be capable of both explanation and evaluation, that is we should be able, on the one hand to understand how a society in its totality works and how it got to be where it is, and on the other hand we should be able to judge whether or not it is moving in a desirable direction, that is in the direction of maximizing human welfare... If we are not concerned with questions of value then sociology will return to that condition of aimless empiricism and labourious webs of theory spinning towards which recent criticism has been directed, or it will return to that condition where its hidden major premises are those of the status quo.  

This will not be the final word on John Porter's work, nor should it be. We can expect the appearance of the major book reporting on his education study and a collection reporting on the massive mobility study in which he was engaged. We can also have a collection of his essays, The Measure of Canadian Society, which he worked on over the past few years and completed shortly before his death. Beyond these works there will be reinterpretations, elaborations and debates about his contribution. This is as it should be. As a great thinker he raised more questions, posed more problems and suggested more projects than could possibly be resolved in a lifetime. In the annals of Canadian sociology it will be recorded that John Porter was a great egalitarian, a committed scholar and a profound teacher for an entire discipline.
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Notes

* I would like to thank Dennis Olsen and Marion Porter for detailed comments on an earlier draft of this paper.


5. See ibid., p. 7.


10. Ibid., p. 42.


17. Porter, “Future of Upward Mobility,” p. 11.


20. Ibid., p. xiii.


27. Ibid., p. 294.


30. John Porter, personal correspondence, 28 October 1976, Carleton University, Ottawa.


34. See Porter, Vertical Mosaic, pp. 7–8.

35. Ibid., p. 20.

36. Ibid.


38. See ibid., pp. 309–310.

39. Ibid., p. 23.


42. Ibid., p. 150.


50. Ibid., p. 2.
After languishing for nearly a decade, the sociology of work has come into its own again. Recent works in this area offer a radical change from the "conventional" sociology of work which preceded them. Beginning in 1974 with the publication of Harry Braverman's *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, sociologists concerned with the social organization of the workplace and the labour process have been presented with an array of works. In the United States, William Form's *Blue-Collar Stratification* has revived interest in the relationship between the social and technical organization of work, and Nathan Rosenberg's *Perspectives on Technology* has brought a much needed sense of historical perspective to our understanding of technology and its effects. In Canada, James Rinehart's *The Tyranny of Work* has attempted a critical understanding of the historical and political sociology of work. In the United Kingdom, Nichols's and Beynon's *Living With Capitalism* has reopened debate on the impact of automation on the social organization and personal experience of work in the modern factory. In addition, English-speaking sociologists have been treated to the long overdue translation of crucial works by Serge Mallet.¹

The fate of conventional approaches to the sociology of work is illustrated eloquently by Robert Blauner's *Alienation and Freedom*, an analysis which is both emblematic of sociological orthodoxy and a manifestation of the limitations of that perspective.² The success of Blauner's work was self-defeating. The thesis of *Alienation and Freedom* purported to show that although the erstwhile direction of technological change — from craft to machine to assembly-line forms of production — had fostered increasing fragmentation of manual labour and therewith generated an increasing sense of work alienation on the part of the worker, this trend would now undergo something of a reversal as a result of automation. Whereas the increasing mechanization of production, transfer and assembly technologies had given rise to the subdivi-
sion of labour into highly repetitive, unskilled tasks, it was held that automation would reintegrate all these functions into the continuous process machine, transforming the worker's role from manual operation to technical supervision. Automation would engender embourgeoisement, and all its attributes — social association, and so on. Affluence would dissolve the immiseration thesis; automation would overcome alienation.

The very success of Blauner's analysis in the context of conservative, celebrationist sociology did him out of a problem and a subject matter. After Blauner, mainstream sociologists assumed the working class was either embourgeoisé or part of the cultural crowd of the "middle-mass," where classification ceded to social significations. Even for Marxist theorists of labour, the working class was dismissed as a revolutionary subject: it was seen to be incorporated into the dominant ideological order of industrialism and integrated into the consumerist ethic — the "soft-machine" of social control.

Developments in Canadian sociology confirm this trend. Influenced, in part, by the social thought of Harold Innis, Canadian sociology emerged as a viable discipline during the nineteen sixties: an emergence symbolized by the publication of John Porter's *The Vertical Mosaic* in 1965. In *The Vertical Mosaic* Porter documented certain dimensions of social inequality in the Canadian political economy. In doing so he offered an essentially egalitarian critique of what was presumed to be the middle-class Canadian self-image.

The nature of Porter's critique set the tone which prevailed in Canadian sociology for the next decade. In essence, this meant a concern for the study of institutional "elites," for the study of ethnic pluralism and stratification, and for macro political economy. Theoretically, it meant a concern with the perspective of stratification and the analysis of inequality. This was, however, conceived in a *distributive* sense, so that attention focused chiefly upon the allocation of wealth and power rather than upon their production. The hegemony of this essentially Weberian view of inequality precluded analysis of the social organization of work, of the workplace, of the labour process, and so on, as inherent features of the stratification system.

II

Set in this context the publication of a work such as Harry Braverman's *Labour and Monopoly Capital* is an event worthy of note and reflection. Clearly, it serves as a cue to go back to work, to return to the study of the workplace as a central part of our attempt to understand modern society. Equally clearly, the work is something much more than this; the analysis contained in its pages offers a radical break with the kind of sociology of work which preceded it. In this latter respect, the function of *Labour and Monopoly Capital* is not only substantive, it is reflective; it provides us with the motive
and the means to begin to reflect critically upon the kind of assumptions we
have traditionally made about the work world, and where those assumptions
have and have not taken us.

Braverman restores to a central position the analysis of the alienation of the
worker from his labour, an analysis which points to the centrality of alienated
labour in the critique of political economy and the class structure of capitalism.
This contribution points to a more widespread weakness in the methodology
of academic sociology. If we translate Braverman's analysis into more
orthodox sociological terms, one of its fundamental assumptions and
messages, is that the structure of the workplace and the labour process is an
inherent feature of the class structure of modern capitalism. This, in turn,
confronts us with the limitations and inadequacies of the reductionist,
empiricist models of class and class structure which have predominated,
particularly in North American sociology, from the early community studies
of the thirties and forties through the "socio-economic status" theories today.

The declining interest in and concern with the structure and process of
work activity which occurred during the sixties and early seventies was rooted
in the general assumption prevalent at that time, though itself rooted in the
basic structure of post-war reconstruction, that traditional problems
associated with the social and technological organizations of production were
solved or disappearing. The production of high standards of material life was
taken for granted as an unproblematic, institutionalized feature of the so-
called "mixed economy." What mattered, rather, was distribution and
consumption — who had access, and how much access, to structural
affluence, and what they did with it. The shift in perspective on the economic
order from production to distribution and consumption is clearly evidenced in
the creation and manipulation by the state, the corporate sector and the mass
media of a new economic entity — the "consumer" — who became simulta-
nously both the chief beneficiary and main victim of the economic system.

The assumption underlying this shift of focus — that the organization of
production was unproblematic — was accepted, paradoxically, even by many
of those who assumed a critical perspective and were concerned to reveal and
examine the situation of those who continued to be denied access to the
mainstream of the post-war economic order. The underlying characteristic of
these groups was that they were marginal to the productive system, and there-
with to the dominant market mode of allocation. They were groups whose
economic situation was derived from their roles as clients of the state welfare
system. And as these groups were marginal to the whole productive system (at
least from the point of view of active participation as producers/ workers/
productive labour), it followed logically that their interests and conflicts were
seen to be framed and articulated as those of consumers located in the political
distribution of goods and services rather than as those of producers located in the divisions of property and labour.

This interpretation was clearly congruent with the general view prevalent in academic sociology that the study of class structure, or more correctly of "social stratification," concerned itself with the distribution of social rewards, which could, in turn, be treated empirically as well as analytically as quite distinct from their production. This view was derived from the differentiation and reification of production, distribution and consumption as separate economic functions whose operation gave rise to the formation of quite autonomous clusters of social relations. The conception of classes (or "socio-economic" strata) as distributive phenomena therefore departed radically from the Marxian assumption that these three "functions" are merely separate "moments" in the same historical process of production and reproduction which could not be grasped intellectually, or intelligibly, apart from their interrelationships in the emergent totality. By accepting the assumptions of an essentially uncritical academic sociology, those who concerned themselves with the poor and the deprived tended to restrict the scope of their analyses. They focused on the mechanisms which countervailed the distributive interests of these groups, and did not extend their analysis to the manner in which the political economy initially necessitates, to a degree, the exclusion of these groups from the productive/reproductive process as a whole. Just as the assumptions adopted by Fabian politics imposed limitations on its advocates' ability to call for and effect radical social transformations and therewith predisposed them to reformism, so too the assumptions of Fabian sociology constrained its ability to carry analysis further and therewith predisposed it to a reformist critique of distributive inequalities.

The theoretical implications of the distributive view of class not only precluded analysis of the workplace as a dimension of the class structure, but also resulted in an emasculated view of the role of property in the "stratification" system. Property came to be viewed, not as a basis upon which the whole productive process of industrial capitalism rested, but rather as just another means, alongside income and salaries earned from employment, for appropriating personal and familial wealth. Academic sociology lost sight of the fact that property predominates over labour both productively and distributively to the extent that under the capitalist mode of production it is the uses to which those who own and control productive property put it which calls forth the demand for particular types of labour, and duly shapes the division of labour (the occupational structure), and the market allocation of rewards. Indeed, it became fashionable to regard property as increasingly less important than and increasingly subordinate to labour on the grounds that the proportion of national wealth accruing to property in forms such as rents, interest and dividends was seen to be decreasing in relation to the proportion
accruing to labour in the form of income and salaries. The failure to consider
the productive process as a whole helped obscure the nature of the relation-
ship between property and labour. Classes, moreover, were not only reduced
to the status of distributive phenomena, but were also redefined as “artificially
constructed” groups or aggregates by (and presumably for) the professional
observer. In this way classes were viewed as aggregates sharing common
resources and opportunities (“life-chances”), a view which enabled some
sociologists to diversify the bases of class formation and thereby equate
classes with racial and ethnic groups, gender groups, age groups, educational
groups and so on. What all this conceptual manoeuvering amounted to was
an essentially empiricist reconstruction of class in which the theory of class
was replaced by its measurement.

Just as the bases of class formation became diversified by this reduction of
class to a purely distributive category, so too class conflict became at first
reinterpreted and relocated, and subsequently “déclassé” altogether. The
traditional (and not exclusively Marxist) conception that class conflict resided
in the conflict between capital and labour, management and worker, over the
conditions and product of the labour process, was relocated in the conflict
between service agency and consuming client over the allocation of the state
budget. As this occurred, the forms and dimensions of “class” conflict
multiplied, thereby facilitating its eventual “déclassement.” Even class conflict
in the workplace was not immune; it became redefined as “industrial conflict”
and was seen firstly to be institutionally differentiated and separated from all
the other (equally differentiated and separated) conflicts on the campuses, in
the prisons, in the welfare agencies, and secondly to be withering away in
proportion and intensity owing to the successful institutionalization of
conflict-expression and resolution through such procedures as collective
bargaining.

In this context, then, Labour and Monopoly Capital shows that the
separation of industrial and occupational sociology from the study of “social
stratification,” now embedded in the bureaucratic division of intellectual
labour in professional sociology, is in many ways a distorting one. By
elaborating on the relationships among capital, technology, skill levels and
the labour process, Braverman has clearly demonstrated that these two “sub-
disciplines” are not separate areas of study, that the study of work
organization is tied intrinsically to the analysis of class structure and political
economy, that the distribution of work alienation is precisely one aspect of the
whole structure of class inequalities, in short that the analysis of the
marketplace is incomplete without a complementary analysis of the
workplace.

This is particularly important in the North American context where this
separation is most evident. In the European tradition industrial and stratifi-
cation sociology have been more closely bound together, and the analysis of work organization has been more strongly influenced by the perspective of class theory. The works of Touraine, Mallet, Goldthorpe, Lockwood and Mann provide examples of research which have used models of class which take account of the social relations of the workplace as a salient feature of the class system. In North American sociology, on the other hand, these theoretical and conceptual linkages have been rare; and those works which have endeavoured to recognize and address them — works such as Sennett's and Cobb's *The Hidden Injuries of Class* or Andrew Levison's *The Working-Class Majority* — have tended to be overwhelmed by the flood of more empiricist-statistical researches or else have been confined in their influence to a smaller constituency of readers.

There is a second and twofold methodological significance to *Labour and Monopoly Capital*. The book not only speaks to the deficiencies of conventional sociology, it also exposes the principal weakness in Braverman's own line of argument. As such it reveals a contradiction in the Marxist analysis of the labour process in particular and of capitalism in general.

By adopting a methodology which is both critical and historical Braverman has been able to depict the workplace and the labour process of modern capitalism in a way which sharply conflicts with the image that has filtered through from the early social psychological studies. Braverman's Marxism has caused him to focus upon the degrading, fragmenting consequences for human labour wrought by the various forms of capitalist rationalization — the mechanization, "manualization," "scientific" management and subdivision of labour — and therewith has thrown into sharp relief the conservative implications of conventional workplace sociology. By seeming to show that workers typically find the ways to accommodate themselves to the routinization and alienation of their work, by implying that the aggregate level of psychological alienation is relatively constant over time and thus an "inherent" feature of the human condition, and by attributing causal determinacy to reified abstractions such as technological development and bureaucratic complexity, the latter has served, wittingly or not, to legitimate the structure of capitalist work, and to displace its problematic features onto the ability of the individual worker to cope with life in a world that is assumed to be beyond his material and intellectual control.

In a manner which is reminiscent of Marx's critique of classical political economy for universalizing actions and sentiments which were properly thought of as historically specific, Braverman's analysis contains a critique of conventional workplace sociology for having taken for granted the very feature of the workplace and the labour process it should have sought to isolate and explain. By focusing its "analytic" largely upon the subjective experience of work the latter has created the impression that the structural
determination of work is a "natural" and by implication necessary and inevitable part of the autonomous logic of modernization. In contrast Braverman, tying the organization of the workplace and the labour process to the encompassing political economy and particularly to the forms and contradictions of corporate capital accumulation, has re-emphasized the social and historical contingency of both the structure and the experience of work.

III

It does not follow from this that the earlier sociologies of work are fully invalid. Rather, what it points to is the fact that as these studies interpreted their findings and established their conclusions without much concern for historical perspective, they were subject to interpretive bias and distortion. Nor does this assessment of Braverman's work invalidate the social psychology of work as a useful, in fact necessary, form of enquiry. What it does suggest is that the purpose of this should be to examine and explore the perennially problematic relationship between actors and structures, between our subjective experience of the world and the effects upon it of the objective constraints created by living amidst other people.

Yet on this score, Labour and Monopoly Capital itself begins to fall short. Regardless of the author's intentions, the principal weakness of the analysis is the absence of any systematic attempt to look into the ways in which the structure of the workplace and the labour process is reproduced in the subjective consciousness and experience of working on the part of the worker. This is ironic in that Braverman fails to adopt a sufficiently dialectical view of the worker-in-the-workplace or to examine the ways in which the structure of work may be negated in the individual's understanding of it and himself.

The reading of the history of the labour process contained in Labour and Monopoly Capital is essentially linear. The structure of work under capitalism is seen, more or less, as a continuous process in which labour is progressively degraded. The process of degradation, in turn, is one aspect of the general evolution of the capitalism of production and of the incessant "need" to accumulate capital. And the process of capital accumulation takes a linear form, viz., increasing centralization, increasing concentration and monopolization and increasing imbalance between capital and wage labour. In this way, the process of the degradation of labour is one facet of the process of capital accumulation in which power becomes increasingly concentrated in the hands of the propertied.

This means, however, that Braverman reduces major changes in the workplace and the labour process to so many forms of the central process of degradation. Thus, for example, when discussing the role of technology on the labour process, particularly in the case of the impact of automation,
Braverman argues that it serves eventually to increase the subdivision of labour, to facilitate managerial control of the worker, and generally to render the job more routine for the worker. Similarly, when dealing with the growth of technical, professional, service and white-collar workers, Braverman maintains that the changes are largely cosmetic since these “new” workers are simply new forms of wage labour.

While there is truth to much of Braverman’s critique on these and other matters, his analysis at times becomes forced, as he tailors fact to fit theory. On the matter of automation, for example, Braverman relies chiefly for support upon the empirical work of James Bright (a rather surprising source of documentation given his institutional and research association with the Harvard School of Business). Yet Bright’s work is only one of a host of studies concerning the structural and experiential implications of automation. Similarly in the matter of changes in the composition of the labour force, Braverman underestimates the importance of the growth of technical and “new” professional forms of labour; these cannot be dismissed casually as new forms of wage labour, at least insofar as the self-image of these workers is concerned.

The root of the central problem of which these examples are only symptoms resides in Braverman’s failure to develop a social psychology of the workplace and the labour process which will complement the structural perspective he adopts. This critique is not merely addressed to the sophistry of conventional “bourgeois” sociology; the social psychology of the workplace must form an integral, necessary part of the Marxist analysis of modern capitalism. By not connecting his analysis of the objective alienation of the worker from his labour to a theory of the subjective alienation of the worker under modern capitalism, Braverman may provide us with an indictment of modern capitalism, but he offers no moment of transcendence. We are left with the immiseration thesis and with the orthodox assumption that this will lead to an emancipatory ideology.

This weakness can be usefully illuminated by comparing Braverman’s analysis to that of Serge Mallet. In his Essays on the New Working-Class, particularly in the essay entitled “Industrial Labour,” Mallet gives us a theory of the labour process under capitalism that consists of three stages of development. Each of these stages is defined in terms of the relationship among the division of labour, the prevailing mode of technology and the typical form of collective labour organization as manifested in the historically predominant type of union structure and ideology. Mallet regards the relationship among these three elements in a more reciprocal and interactive way than does Braverman.

The methodological contrast between the two approaches is clearly illustrated in Mallet’s discussion of the third, and most recent, stage of develop-
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ment in which the worker is undergoing the transition from machine operative to monitor-technician. This transition is more than cosmetic; automation is seen to have a restructuring effect upon the division of labour, and therewith upon the experience of work and upon the predominant form of unionism. For Mallet, the semi-skilled worker of the machine age gave rise to "industrial unionism" and an economistic ideology; the technician-monitor of the automated age will give rise increasingly to "enterprise unionism" and the replacement of economism with an ideology focusing upon the need and right of the worker to exercise control over the various levels of the production process.

Mallet envisages a workplace torn by contradiction; as technician, the worker is invested with responsibility; as proletarian, the worker remains trapped within the call of wage labour. The coexistence of these two contradictory processes — the creation of "educated" proletarians — will render the opaque nature of the wage form more socially transparent in the political consciousness of the "new" working class. The contradiction of the capitalist labour process thus resides in the partial enrichment of the worker's labour!

Unlike Braverman, Mallet connects the evolution of the structure of work to its reproduction in the consciousness of the worker. And equally, the success of Mallet's interrogation in clarifying the radical implications of new modes of alienation points up the historical regression of Braverman's analysis — its repetition of categories of nineteenth-century industrial sociology.

Braverman makes it quite clear in the opening pages of Labour and Monopoly Capital that the ensuing discussion is not designed to explore the subjective dimensions of the labour process: "This is a book about the working class as a class in itself, not as a class for itself."13 Disclaimers such as this, however, are only acceptable insofar as they do not contravene the assumptions and premises of the theory one adopts, and in Braverman's case the disclaimer does contravene the theory. While he recognizes that his focus entails a "self-imposed limitation," the point is that it is a limitation of greater consequence than he seems to suppose. It not only "compromises" the analysis for "those who float in the conventional stream of social science," it also, and indeed more importantly, compromises those whose theorizing is ostensibly directed towards effecting social change. As such, the distinction between the working class as a "class in itself" and as a "class for itself" is a problematical assertion. Is not, after all, the former a point of departure from which the latter arises?

Nonetheless, the debt to Braverman remains. The absence of a social psychology of the labour process and its relationship to the dialectic of capitalism indicates the inadequacy of those models that posit the relationship between structures and actors in mechanistic and deterministic fashion. With
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Braverman, we can acknowledge that while men do indeed make their own history, some make it more clearly and more fully than others. We can recognize that the "tradition of all the dead generations" does indeed weigh "like a nightmare" upon some of the living more than on others. To emphasize the need for a social psychology of the capitalist labour process in no way precludes our analysis of its structure in terms of a political sociology and political economy.

Conclusion

The emphasis devoted in the preceding discussion to Alienation and Freedom and to Labour and Monopoly Capital should not be misconstrued. It would be convenient to attribute the declining interest in work to the former and the renewed interest in work to the latter. It would also be quite misleading. Both works are more properly viewed as symptomatic of developments in the organization of social thought and changes in the wider social order. To regard a work of analysis as symptomatic of wider developments is not however, to belittle its importance. Alienation and Freedom represents the apogee of a social psychology of work that assured us that disenchantment was destined to wither away with the advance of new technology.

Set against this background, any revival of interest in the social organization of work would not only have to abandon the assumptions of the earlier social psychologies, but do so by confronting critically their shortcomings and limitations. The importance of Labour and Monopoly Capital is precisely that it gives us the cue, and to some extent the means, to begin to carry out this task. At the same time, it is a work whose problematic features may lead to self-exhaustion of the analysis it attempts to establish. By failing to come to grips with the social psychology of the labour process Braverman comes close to abandoning the radical distinctiveness of a theoretically informed praxis.

Intellectual history may thus be poised to repeat itself. For Blauner an exhaustion of topic derived from an "optimism of the intelligence"; for Braverman it may well come from a "pessimism of the will."

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   The conclusion we reach is not that production, distribution, exchange, and consumption are identical, but that they all form members of a totality, distinctions within a unity. Production predominates not only over itself . . . but over the other moments as well . . . . A definite production thus determines a definite consumption, distribution and exchange as well as definite relations between these different moments. . . . Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments. This is the case with every organic whole. (Pp. 99-100, original emphases)


13. Braverman, p. 27.