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2 Economic and ideological power relations

It became conventional in the eighteenth century – and it has remained so ever since – to distinguish between two fundamental spheres of social activity – “civil society” (or just “society”) and “the state.” The titles of this chapter and the next would seem to conform to that convention. Though Smith, other political economists, and Marx meant by “civil society” only economic institutions, others – notably, Ferguson, Paine, Hegel, and Tocqueville – believed it comprised the two spheres discussed in this chapter. For them, civil society meant (1) decentered economic markets resting on private property and (2) “forms of civil association . . . scientific and literary circles, schools, publishers, inns, . . . religious organizations, municipal associations and independent households” (Keane 1988: 61). These two spheres carried vital decentered and diffused freedoms that they wished secured against the authoritative powers of states.

Yet, such a clear division between society and state carries dangers. It is, paradoxically, highly political, locating freedom and morality in society, not the state (obviously Hegel differed in this respect). This was so among the eighteenth-century writers resisting what they saw as despotism, and it has recently been so again as Soviet, East European, and Chinese dissidents sought to mobilize decentralized civil society forces against state repression. Yet states are not as distinct from the rest of social life as these ideologies suggest. Volume I showed that civil societies had first risen entwined with modern states. This volume shows that through the long nineteenth century, civil society became more substantially, though far from entirely, the province of the nation-state. This had implications for both economic and ideological power relations, and this is the central theme of this chapter. Thus the actual text of this chapter and Chapter 3 often refutes the separation implied by their titles.

Economic power: capitalism and classes

By 1760, Western economic power relations were becoming dominated by capitalism. Following Marx, I define capitalism in the following terms:

1. *Commodity production*. Every factor of production, including labor, is treated as a means, not an end in itself, is given exchange value,

and is exchangeable against every other factor. Thus capitalism is a diffuse form of economic power, except that it requires authoritative guarantee of:

2. *Private exclusive ownership of the means of production.* The means of production, including labor power, belong exclusively to a private class of capitalists.
3. *Labor is "free" but separated from the means of production.* Laborers are free to sell their labor and withdraw it as they see fit, without authoritative prohibitions; they receive a freely negotiated wage but have no direct claims of ownership over the surplus.

* this formula = collective power
 this is where power

Marx correctly argued that capitalism revolutionized society's "productive forces" – collective economic power. That was the most obvious claim to "ultimate primacy" that this particular mode of economic production possessed in modern times. But Marx also argued that capitalism's "relations of production" – distributive economic power – was also revolutionizing society. Now the surplus could be extracted by "purely economic means" through production and markets themselves, without the need for assistance from independent ideological, military, and political power organizations. His contrast between capitalism and previous modes of production has been endorsed by many (Poulantzas 1975: 19; Anderson 1979: 403; Giddens 1985: 181; Brenner 1987: 227, 231, 299). I will disagree. Marx also argued that commodity production diffuses the *same* relations over the whole terrain of capitalism. Thus economic class struggle could become "pure," extensive and political, transnational, and eventually symmetrical and dialectical, as it had been but rarely before (though Marx did not quite admit this last point). He saw class conflict as the motor of modern development, generating its own ideologies, politics, and military struggles. Their forms would be determined "in the last instance" by the class dialectic of the capitalist mode of production. This would end, Marx hoped, and sometimes predicted, in the overthrow of capitalism by a revolutionary proletariat, instituting socialism and communism.

Obviously, Marx went wrong somewhere. He overestimated the revolutionary tendencies of the proletariat – and before it, of the bourgeoisie. Even where revolutions came close to success, they did so for reasons other than just class conflict. He exaggerated the economic contradictions of capitalism and he neglected ideological, military, political, and geopolitical power relations. All this is well known. But a conventional demolition job on Marx clouds our understanding of where *exactly* he went wrong and of how we might improve on him. Even if history is not the "history of class struggle," classes do exist,

competing with other power actors over human souls. In these days of Marxian retreat and postmodern nihilism, some historians seem to abandon class altogether (e.g., Joyce 1991). Yet this is to throw out the baby with the bathwater. It is better to make more precise our conceptions of classes and of their power rivals.]*

Marx was most explicit about class when describing the French peasantry:

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these smallholding peasants and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond, and no political organization amongst them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interests in their own name. [1968, 170–1]

Chapter 19 shows that Marx was wrong about the "smallholding peasants" – they were actually prolific in their organization. But this passage is of more general interest. Historians and sociologists have often quoted it in connection with two other distinctions Marx made. The smallholding peasantry, they say, constituted a class "in itself" but not "for itself," with a common relationship to the means of production but incapable of collective class action. Marx was indeed saying this. But the commentators proceed to a second distinction: The peasantry were "objectively" but not "subjectively" a class. We must analyze, they say, two dimensions of class, objective economic conditions and subjective class consciousness, both necessary for class formation. Hunt, a historian of the French Revolution, says: "For Marx, class formation depended on both economic condition and culture, social category and consciousness" (1984: 177). The sociologists Westergaard and Resler announce that their major analysis of twentieth-century class structure starts from the question of "how objective cleavages of power, wealth, security and opportunity give rise to groups whose members are conscious of a common identity. [Is] 'class in itself' translated into an active consciousness of 'class for itself'?" (1975: 2–3).

It is appropriate that Marx should be misinterpreted, for his own polemic against idealism helped establish the dualism of objective economic reality versus subjective consciousness that underlies these commentaries. But Marx is not arguing this in the passage quoted. He explicitly included the "culture" of the peasantry in the supposedly objective aspect of class. Conversely, the "merely local interconnection" of the peasants, which prevented them acting (supposedly sub-

jectively) as a class, is actually economic. Marx said nothing about economic versus ideological aspects of class. Instead, he distinguished two predominantly economic preconditions of class: "similarity," which peasants possessed, and "collective interdependence," which he says they did not. Peasants' economic similarity gave them a sense of their class interests plus a broader cultural identity. But their ability to organize, equally economic in origin, was partial and locally confined. For Marx, classes were economic power organizations, and as such were defined by two criteria, the economic and the organizational.

Marx's broad economic criterion was "effective possession" of economic resources. In capitalism, the model generates two main antagonistic classes, capitalist owners and nonowning proletarians. He also identified an intermediary class of petits bourgeois owning its own means of production but not controlling the labor of others; and he left guidelines for coping with the emergence of the middle class(es) (see Chapter 16). Such classes might be considered "objective," but we might choose to define classes by other "objective" criteria. So-called industrial society theorists distinguish classes according to their specialized role in the division of labor, which method yields numerous occupational classes. Weberians identify classes according to market capacities, producing many classes based on ownership of property, scarce job skills, professional powers, and educational levels. How do we choose among these equally "objective" schemes?

In the extended passage quoted earlier, Marx gave us a second criterion: Classes possess organizational ability. The economic without the organizational criterion gives only what I term a "latent class" – corresponding roughly to the term "objective class" or "class in itself." Such a latent class is of little sociological interest. Theorists may develop what analytic categories they like, as ideal types, but only some of these help explain the real world. If classes are significant power actors in the real world they must be organized, extensively or politically. Throughout this volume I dissect the organizational capacities of class and other movements. What are their logistics? How and over what geographic and social terrain can they communicate messages, exchange personnel, and organize petitions, strikes, riots, revolutions?

Marx thought modern classes were involved in a head-on *dialectical* struggle with one another. The emergence of the capitalist mode of production gave bourgeoisie and workers organizational capacities rooted in production but totalized throughout society and throughout their life experience. He was partly correct. Such class organizations did emerge, capable of changing history. True, his view of the working

class was absurdly utopian – how unlikely that an exploited class would confound all of previous history and rise up to destroy all stratification. Nonetheless, Marx had discovered an essential truth: Capitalism had created potentially extensive, political and (occasionally) symmetrical and dialectical classes. Rare in earlier societies, such classes have been ubiquitous ever since.

Thus class consciousness is also a perennial feature of modern societies, though it is never pure or complete. Most dominant classes show ambivalent consciousness. They share a cohesive community and a keen defense of their own interests. What social group could be more class conscious than, say, the eighteenth-century English gentry or the nineteenth-century Prussian Junker landlords? Yet they usually deny that society is divided into opposing classes, claiming that segmental and local-regional organizations (perhaps underpinned by normative consensus) are more significant. Indeed, subordinate classes are usually embedded in such organizations, but Marx believed they could attain class consciousness. His model of rising class consciousness implicitly contained the four components I identified in an earlier book on the working class (1973: 13):

1. *Identity*. The definition of self as working class, as playing a distinctive role in common with other workers in the economy.¹ This self-conception need not be associated with class conflict.
2. *Opposition*. The perception that capitalists and their managers constitute the workers' enduring opponent. Identity plus opposition will generate conflict, but this may not be extensive. It may be limited to workplace, trade, or local community, not generalized to whole classes, legitimating sectional, not class, conflict.
3. *Totality*. The acceptance of the first two elements as the defining characteristics of (1) the workers' total social situation and (2) the whole society. The addition of (1) adds intensity to consciousness of sectional conflict, and (2) converts sectional consciousness to extensive class conflict.
4. *Alternative*. Conceiving of an alternative form of power relations to existing capitalism. This will reinforce extensive and political class conflict and legitimate revolutionary struggle.

I shall analyze the extent to which rising classes exhibit these components of class consciousness. Most people probably sense more of the first than of the second and of the first and second more than of

¹ In 1973, I wrote "in the productive process," a phrase I now replace with a more diffuse term, *economy*, in line with one of the general arguments of this volume.

the third and fourth. But it is rare that they single-mindedly drive anyone. We are also members of families, of cross-class communities and workplaces, of churches, of other voluntary associations, of nations, and so forth. Most of these identities confuse, some oppose, a clear-cut sense of class. Societies are confusing battlegrounds on which multiple power networks fight over our souls. In modern societies, class is just one of the more important forms of self-identity. But people in similar economic circumstances will also be influenced by other identities. Only a few will experience their lives as dominated by a class – or by a religious, national, or any other single – identity. When describing classes “acting” in later chapters, I am not conjuring up images of masses of people resolutely acting as if in heroic Soviet proletarian paintings. I am usually describing a few militants who really are so motivated, able to move large numbers by persuading them that their class sentiments are a more significant part of themselves than they had previously believed. Even then, most such persons may dearly wish they could continue being loyal producers, Catholics, citizens, and so forth.

I identify six main class actors: the *old regime* and the *petite bourgeoisie*, emerging through conflicts between old and new modes of production and political regimes in the first part of the period; the *capitalist class* and the *working class*, the two great extensive groups emerging in the second half of the period; the *middle class*, emerging throughout the nineteenth century; and the *peasantry*, of considerable significance throughout the period. I define these classes near the beginning of three chapters: the peasantry in Chapter 19, the working class in Chapter 15, and the other classes in Chapter 4.

These classes may seem familiar enough, especially within the Marxian tradition. But, unlike Marxists, I do not see classes as pure, defined only in terms of relations to the means of production. Whole, pure classes never organize major social change. Social movements we recognize as classlike can be distinguished at two levels. Where whole class movements emerge, they are impure, their force contributed by noneconomic as well as economic power networks. Considered as purely economic organizations, they are heterogeneous, incapable of much collective action (although fractions among them may possess their own particular organization). Four economic fault lines persistently weaken the solidarity of whole classes:

1. Economic sector fragments classes. Fractions of both capital and labor persistently organize differently, sometimes in conflict with one another. Agriculture usually generates its own subculture. Farm laborers rarely conceive of themselves as “proletarians,” alongside industrial workers; peasant proprietors and smallholders generate

their own distinct movements. (See Chapter 19.) Interindustry differences and the rise of the public and service sectors add their own heterogeneity.

2. The direct relations of economic production may generate much smaller collectivities than a whole class – defined by a single enterprise, industry, or occupation. This may strengthen segmental, not class, organization. Solidarity may be highly developed within these boundaries but have few organizational connections with those supposedly in the same class. At the most they will constitute a militant sectional union movement; at the least they may form a segmental alliance with their employer, against other workers and employers.

3. Strata and fractions divide classes. The late eighteenth-century petite bourgeoisie actually comprised a varied collection of professionals, merchants, factors, shopkeepers, artisan masters, artisan men, and many others. Later, the “middle class” contained an elongated occupational hierarchy and three distinct fractions (professionals, careerists, and petite bourgeoisie). The working class contained groups with different labor-market powers, especially separating skilled from unskilled workers, and workers entrenched in internal labor markets from newcomer workers – often reinforced by ethnicity and gender. Such differences lead to distinct organizations – to the profession, the career, the craft union – separating them from other members of “their class.” Internal labor markets, managerial careers, and other forms of hierarchical dependence have generated segmental organizations, reducing the prospects for class organization.

4. The nation-state crosscuts classes, forming national segments. There has never been one great transnational bourgeoisie or proletariat, although transnational class tendencies do exist (perhaps nowhere stronger than among the contemporary capitalist class). Normally the largest class actors have been nationally limited, thus the “British working class,” the “French bourgeoisie,” and the like. The national fragmentation of class has actually been rather complex, as we shall see later.

For these four reasons, relations of production do not merely generate whole classes. They too are a confused battleground on which our identities are fought over. Purely economic actors have been normally smaller, more specific, and more fragmented by internal sectionalism and crosscutting segmentalism than Marx’s great classes. Nonetheless, his classes have played important historical roles. Why? Not because the “law of value” or some other economic law polarized all these economic particularities into great class camps. Instead, *non-economic* organizations have welded solidarities among these economically heterogeneous fractions, strata, and segments. Class conflict

arose in societies with ideological, military, and political power relations and was also molded by them. This point is usually made to explain why classes *lack* solidarity – for example, because they are split by religion. Yet noneconomic networks may also generate class solidarity. Marx's neglect of ideological, military, and political power is not merely of phenomena external to capitalism and class. Their organizations helped metamorphose disparate economic actors, often with opposing conceptions of identities and interests, into relatively cohesive classes. All my classes were created by the entwined development of the sources of social power. The "purity" of modern classes, though in historical terms rather developed, has been only partial.

We shall see that states, especially the developing nation-states, played a very substantial structuring role in the development of civil society and its classes. Not even revolutionary politics flow simply from the conflict between classes already "out there" in civil society. The class actors aroused during the French Revolution barely existed before the Revolution. They were created by its power processes – partly because militant ideologists worked hard to mobilize class sentiments, but mostly because they were unintentionally fostered by political power relations. States are also impure, being economic as well as political. They own property, they spend, and they tax. In the eighteenth century, rights to office, monopolies, and tax privileges provided economic rewards and generated factional, segmental politics. "In" parties were pitted against "outs," "court" against "country" parties. "In" parties were from landowning families, commercial oligarchies, or professions allied to the crown, whereas "out" parties began to consist of discontented factions of the same groups leading the petite bourgeoisie. Thus factional politics became entwined with class and sectional struggles generated by the transition from commercial-landed to manufacturing capitalism. "Ins," landed gentry, and commercial oligarchs solidified into an old regime class, and "outs" and diverse fractions and strata solidified into a broadly petit bourgeois movement. This was not merely a class struggle; it also derived, in some cases predominantly, from the state's political economy. "Class" only became extensive and political as economic and political power struggles became entwined. Where factional political struggles were weaker, as in Germany (or Japan), there was no revolution, class politics were feebler, and feudalism changed into capitalism with little class struggle.

Parallel, if lesser, points can be made concerning ideological and military power relations. Marx believed that classes create their own ideology, articulating their own practical activity and interests. They might be aided by intellectuals like himself, but these are only arti-

culating an ideology already immanent in an already constituted class. This view poses two problems: First, as in other "instrumental" theories of action (e.g., neoclassical economics, exchange theory, rational choice theory), it is not clear that interests alone can drive forward the kind of action Marx was envisaging. Is it ever in the interests of the individual worker to expose himself or herself to employer and state power by starting a union, still less by erecting barricades or attacking/cossacks? Classes do exist, but they have shared norms and passions, inspiring them to recklessness, sacrifice, and cruelty. These help them overcome their diverse economic membership to generate passionate collective behavior. Ideology may be immanent and transcendent among classes. Second, if ideology matters, so do ideologists. Eighteenth-century ideologists, secular and religious, found messages and communication media that transcended the diverse grievances of petite bourgeois segments, class fractions, taxpayers, those deprived of lucrative office, and so forth. Journalists, coffeehouse keepers, teachers, and others mobilized class consciousness. A century later, middle-class dependence on state education helped transform its own class and national consciousness (see Chapter 16).

Similarly, Engels believed that some types of military power aided class consciousness: Mass conscription in the Prussian army could train revolutionaries. I believe the reverse: In this period militaries tended to provide effective segmental discipline over subordinate classes, aiding the survival of regimes and dominant classes. Nonetheless, other military power organizations – guerrilla warfare and defeated armies – have assisted class formation, as we will see.

Thus classes were imperfectly, haltingly formed as multiple economic identities were welded together by the political, ideological, and military power networks with which economic struggles were always entwined. *

This also renders problematic the culminating quality of class struggle for Marx: its symmetrical, *dialectical* nature. If class A is organized in relation to different power networks to class B, they may not meet head-on over the same terrain. Marx took the arena of conflict for granted, and so have most others. Capitalism is invariably defined transnationally, penetrating state frontiers sociospatially wherever there are commodities to exchange and profits to be won. But capitalism actually emerged within and between the territories of states. It became sociospatially structured by their domestic and geopolitical relations. Its classes could have three sociospatial forms, as could segments and, indeed, all power actors:

1. *Transnational.* Organization and struggle proceed right across state boundaries, without significant reference to them. Classes occupy

the global reach of capitalism. States and nations are irrelevant to class struggle, their power weakened by its global reach. With the use of a distinction explained later, interests are defined more by market than by territory. An example of a predominantly transnational class was the medieval nobility, linked by kin relations stretching across Europe, conducting its own class diplomacy and many wars. More pacifically this was how most classic theorists – from Smith to Marx to Durkheim – saw the future of capitalism. Modern classes would be transnational.

2. *Nationalist*.² All or some of the inhabitants of one state become a quasi-class whose economic interests conflict with those of inhabitants of other states. “Nations,” or the more restricted “class-nations,” compete with and exploit one another, each with its own distinctive praxis in the international division of labor. Nationalist classes encourage what I term “territorial” definitions of interest (to be discussed shortly) and aggressive geo-economic and geopolitical rivalry. An emphasis on the nationalist organizations supposedly dominant in their own times suffused the work of turn-of-the-century writers like Gumpłowicz (1899) and Oppenheimer (1922), formalized by Rüstow (1981) into the notion of “superstratification,” domination by one nation over another. The same historical tendencies informed Lenin’s theory of imperialism and then more recent Marxian theory like Wallerstein’s and Chase-Dunn’s theories of the “world system” and contemporary theories of Third World dependency.

3. *National*. Class organization and struggle are territorially confined within each state, without significant reference to class relations in other states. Here class praxis is not “anchored” in international space. Classes might get caught up in domestic struggles over the identity of the nation, but their sense of nationhood is inward-looking – divorced from, and incompetent in, international affairs. They have no serious geopolitical or geo-economic interests in relation to either markets or territory and no considered predisposition toward war or peace. No major school of theory conceptualizes this model of class organization, but I emphasize its importance throughout this period.

These are ideal types. Real classes (and other power actors) normally embody elements of all three organizations. A class may contain

² In previous work, I used the label “inter-national” for this type of organization. For readers to understand such a label required them to pay close attention to its hyphen. The word “international,” without a hyphen, is conventionally used to denote something close to my transnational organization (as in “liberal internationalism”). As “nationalist” conventionally conveys the rough sense of what I mean in this second type, it is to be preferred.

distinct fractions, one relatively transnational, another nationalist. Or class actors may feel the tug of two or three organizational forms simultaneously, reducing class coherence. Or one class may be far more nationally confined than another, as labor is when compared with capital today. Thus classes are less likely to meet dialectically head-on than Marx expected.

The structuring role of nation-states means that their geopolitics are also entwined with classes. It has been common to analyze the impact of class struggle on geopolitics (e.g., in the theory of social imperialism, discussed in Chapter 21). It is less common, but as necessary, to reverse the causality (as Skocpol 1979 and Maier 1981 have done). Capitalism and industrial capitalism were “made in Britain.” British near hegemony, and the resistance it provoked in France, Germany, and elsewhere, reshaped the nature of class struggle. So has the more recent American hegemony. We cannot tell either story, of class struggle and geopolitics, without the other. Here I make the immodest claim that this was never attempted on such a broad scale before this volume.

Not only classes but the very conceptions of economic “interest” and “profit” are affected by geopolitics. We can distinguish two ideal-typical conceptions of economic profit and interest, here termed “market” and “territorial” (cf. Krasner 1985: 5; Rosecrance 1986; Gilpin 1987: 8–24). A market conception sees interest as privately held and furthered by possession of resources on markets, without regard to state territories, war, or aggressive diplomacy. It is transnationally and peacefully oriented. Capitalists will pursue profit wherever there are markets, regardless of state boundaries. Geopolitics do not here define “interest.” Yet a territorial conception of economic interest sees profit secured by authoritative control of territory by the state, often by aggressive diplomacy and, in extremis, by war. The tension between market and territory, capitalism and geopolitics, is a theme of this volume.

Again, these ideal types do not exist in the real world. Capitalism and states cohabit the world, influencing each other. Six main strategies may be distinguished:

1. *Laissez-faire*. The state merely endorses (or is unable to change) existing market terms, and does not try to change them authoritatively.

2. *National protectionism*. The state interferes authoritatively but pragmatically and peacefully with existing market terms to protect its own economy (when dealing with nineteenth-century Germany, I subdivide protectionism into “selective” and “general coordinated” protection).

3. *Mercantilist domination*. The state attempts to dominate international markets, authoritatively controlling such resources as it can, moving toward diplomatic sanctions (perhaps in concert with allied states), even shows of force, but short of war and territorial expansion. The old mercantilist formula was that “power and plenty” were conjoined.

Most international political economy regimes combine these three strategies in varying degrees. Although they embody conflict, they do not usually spark off war (as in the conflict of “The Third World Against Global Liberalism” analyzed by Krasner 1985), but three other political economies imply further aggression:

4. *Economic imperialism*. The state conquers territory for direct motives of economic profit.

5. *Social imperialism*. Conquest is aimed primarily at controlling existing more than new territories and populations. It seeks to distract attention from conflict between classes or other groups within existing state territories. Lenin and Marxists have emphasized class distraction; Weber saw social imperialism as employable by whoever controls the state against whoever are the enemies. Regime motives primarily concern domestic politics, *Innenpolitik*; geopolitics, *Aussenpolitik*, are their by-product.

6. *Geopolitical imperialism*. The state attempts to conquer territory as an end in itself.

These six strategies reveal that “power and plenty,” geopolitics and capitalism, territory and market, have been usually entwined. Even the two extremes are not entirely “pure.” The British were largely attached to *laissez-faire* in the nineteenth century because the more warlike strategies (3 and 4) had helped form the British Empire and the Royal Navy, which now ensured that the international terms of trade were mostly *its* terms. At the other extreme Hitler adopted geopolitical imperialism, obsessed by world power and paying little attention to economics. Yet, even he thought this would bring profit to Germany. International political economy – for example, *laissez-faire* or protectionism – does not result from a “pure” calculation of economic interest. Real-life definitions of interest are affected by territory, by senses of national identity, and by geopolitics, just as geopolitics is affected by economic interest. Both are also affected by ideologies. No strategy was self-evidently economically superior to its principal rivals. Choosing or drifting into it normally resulted from the entwining of *Innen-* and *Aussenpolitik* and of ideological, economic, military, political, and geopolitical power networks. Thus later chapters will interweave the stories of emerging extensive, political, yet still “impure” classes and nation-states.

Ideological power relations

As I indicated in Chapter 1, I believe that ideological power declined somewhat in significance during this period. This does not render it insignificant, however. Chapters 4–7 treat ideological power as an essential and autonomous part of the rise of bourgeois classes and nations, especially influential in shaping their passions. Chapters 16 and 20 then continue this argument through the nineteenth century, describing the importance of state educational institutions for the rise of the middle class and discussing nationalism as an ideology. Chapter 15 distinguishes the main forms of socialist ideology found among working-class and peasant movements of the long nineteenth century; and Chapters 17–19 trace their development. I do not fully explore the potential autonomy of these later ideologies in this volume. That task is reserved for my third volume, which will treat socialist and nationalist ideologies together over the terrain of the twentieth century. The discussion that now follows concentrates on earlier periods.

I make two general points about ideological power in 1760. First, just like the other principal aspect of civil society, the capitalist economy and its classes, ideological power networks were split between transnational and national terrains. On the one hand, Europe – increasingly the “West” – was a normative community, its ideologies diffusing interstitially, “transcendentally” across states. On the other hand, states erected barriers to the free flow of messages – more effective if linguistic communities coincided with state boundaries. Then, throughout the period, the national tended to strengthen at the expense of the transnational, though the latter always survived. Second, the media of discursive communication were undergoing revolutionary expansion during the eighteenth century, enabling ideological power to play a somewhat autonomous role.

Europe had been an ideological community for a millennium. Values, norms, rituals, and aesthetics diffused across the continent. It had been a single Christian *ecumene*, then split into Catholic and Protestant halves. We see churches losing power within states but remaining entrenched within the family and at the local-regional level, especially in the countryside. The historic power and then partial decline of Christendom left an important legacy: Communication media were interstitial, not controlled by any single power organization. Because much literacy was church-sponsored, the media were not fully controlled by state or capitalism, hard though both were to try. Europeans had also diffused their ideologies through their settler colonies, modifying “Christian” to “white” and “Europe” to the “West.” Ideological messages diffused throughout the West, relatively

unconfined by national boundaries. In comparative terms such autonomy of ideological power was unusual; neither Japan nor China possessed it to a comparable degree in early modern times. To be a Westerner was to participate in a partly transcendent ideological power organization, interstitial to the reach of other power organizations. This also means that the international arena was far from normless, as realists tend to argue.

Theorists emphasizing the rapid diffusion of ideologies throughout this period often claim it indicates "the autonomy of ideas" in society (e.g., Bendix 1978). That is not quite my own position. But I do not counterpose to such "idealism" a "materialism" that reduces ideas to their social base. My position is one of "organizational materialism": Ideologies are attempts to grapple with real social problems, but they are diffused through specific media of communication and their characteristics may transform ideological messages, so conferring ideological power autonomy. Thus the particularities of ideological power organization should be our object of study.

This means we must focus around 1760 on an ongoing revolution in "discursive literacy" – the ability to read and write texts that are not mere formulas or lists but presuppose literate mastery of conversation and argument. This volume charts various discursive ideologies across the long nineteenth century. Some were religious: Puritanism influenced early American history; moral Protestantism affected Britain; the Protestant-Catholic divide had an enduring role in Germany. Others were secular, usually disputing with religions: the Enlightenment, utilitarianism, liberalism, and the two greatest modern ideologies, of nation and class. All these ideologies were shared across extensive territories linked by the communication of discursive literacy.

Benedict Anderson (1983) famously observed that the nation is an "imagined community" in time and space. People who have never met, who have no direct connection – even the living, the dead, and the yet-to-be-born – supposedly become linked together in a "nation." As a secretary at UCLA explained to me about the American Thanksgiving holiday: "It's when we remember our ancestors who came over on the *Mayflower*." Her imagination was impressive since she is black. I add what Anderson, a Marxist, does not: If the nation was an imagined community, its class rival might seem even more metaphorical, a veritable "*imaginary* community." Nations were reinforced by enduring historical traditions, state boundaries (past or present), or linguistic or religious communities. How were classes, with little prior history (apart from ruling classes), which always live among and cooperate with other classes, to be conceived and created as communities? We shall observe the two imagined communities arising together as

discursive literacy diffused across societies beyond the particularistic old regime networks to which it had been hitherto confined.

Most ideological infrastructures were now provided, as Anderson says, by "print culture," though not simply by his "print capitalism." Texts were duplicated and circulated into the thousands. The usual measure of literacy is minimal: the ability to sign one's name in the marriage register. Throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this more than doubled in most countries, resulting in about 90 percent male and 67 percent female signing literacy in Sweden and New England, 60 percent and 45 percent in Britain, and 50 percent male literacy in France and Germany (Lockridge 1974; Schofield 1981; Furet and Ozouf 1982; West 1985). The male rise preceded the female, but by 1800, females were catching up. Signing does not measure discursive literacy – many signers could do little other writing and no reading – but it situates it amid a rapidly growing basic literacy. Discursive literacy was carried by nine principal media:

1. *Churches*. From the sixteenth century on, Protestant and then Catholic churches encouraged Bible reading and the reading and writing of simple catechisms. This was the basic cause of the surge of signing literacy. Church schools were responsible for most early growth in discursive literacy and dominated elementary education in most countries until the end of the nineteenth century. In 1800, devotional works still comprised most literary best-sellers.

2. *The military*. The "military revolution" of 1540–1660 centralized and bureaucratized armies and navies. Drills and logistical support became standardized; technology developed artillery and navies; the division between staff and line institutionalized written orders and map reading. Drill and naval signaling manuals became common among officers and noncommissioned officers, quartermasters and artillery and naval officers needed full literacy and numeracy, and higher officers increasingly "studied" in the modern sense. Increasing military manpower, reaching 5 percent of the total population at the end of the eighteenth century (Chapter 11), made this a significant medium of discursive literacy.

3. *State administration*. Before the mass expansion of the lower bureaucracy in the late nineteenth century (see Chapter 11), there was only a modest increase, concentrated in fiscal departments supplying armed forces. But the literacy of higher administrators became secularized as universities replaced churches and upper-class family life in educating administrators.

4. *Commerce*. Its massive seventeenth- and eighteenth-century expansion spread discursive literacy through contracts, accounts, and marketing methods. Literacy was greater in commercial areas and

occupations than among agriculture or manufacturing industry. Commerce also involved women, though less so as the workplace became separated from the household with industrialization.

5. *The profession of law.* Law occupied the ideological interface between church, state, and commerce. It doubled in size in most eighteenth-century countries, and its education broadened in scope.

6. *Universities.* Controlled by either church or state and supplying young adults for them and the law profession, universities rapidly expanded in the eighteenth century to become the principal trainer of higher level discursive literacy.

7. *The literary media.* The writing, printing, circulation, and reading of literary products rapidly expanded from the late seventeenth century on, transformed by capitalist production and market methods. It diffused down through middle-class households. Although its producers were mostly men, its consumers may have become mostly women (Watt 1963).

8. *Periodical media.* Newspapers, periodicals, and secular pamphlets virtually began at the end of the seventeenth century and expanded exponentially through the eighteenth.

9. *Discursive discussion centers.* Academies, clubs, libraries, salons, taverns, and coffeehouses all rapidly expanded as public discussion centers of printed discursive materials. Even barbers and wig makers stocked newspapers and pamphlets and served as discussion centers. All but salons were male-dominated.

Such diverse and only sporadically quantifiable rates of increase cannot be summed up into an overall index of discursive expansion. Nonetheless, throughout the eighteenth century, discursive literacy probably expanded much faster than basic literacy. A mass communications network was emerging. Who participated in it, and who controlled it?

Primary demand came first from churches, then from states, especially their militaries, and commercial capitalism. This marked out two broad alternative tracks. I take Britain as the prototype of a diffused "commercial capitalist" (similar to Anderson's "print capitalist") track, Austria and Prussia as the prototype of an authoritative "military-statist" route, with old regime France combining both. Both received a large moral-religious input from churches. In Britain commercial expansion generated a mass literate petite bourgeoisie, lawyers, universities, schools, and entrepreneurial mass-market techniques for the literary media. In Austria and Prussia army and administrative expansion linked lawyers, universities, schools, and the literary media more closely to the state. France, commercial and statist, experienced both expansions. Both routes linked the new to the old. "New" power

networks – of petite bourgeoisie and of professional officers and civil servants – were also linked with merchant and noble classes and with clerics. The result was different ideological fermentations, none entirely harmonious, in all three cases.

By 1760, states and capitalist classes were probably ideologists' main clients. Yet demand did not lead simply to effective control. Britain did not lack a state or churches, nor did Austria lack capitalism and churches. In each country churches, state, and classes had distinct, sometimes conflicting, demands and were themselves factionalized over modernization strategies. The result was interstitial space within which ideologists could operate.

But factionalism also split the ideologists. This was especially evident in the religion-science, capitalist-statist, and market-territory dilemmas implicit in the Enlightenment (Cassirer 1951; Gay 1964, 1967; Payne 1976). The philosophes privileged human reason. Reason was conceived, firstly, as a scientific "formal rationality" – they called it the *esprit systematique*, the systematic application of methodical calculation, a relentless questioning of all social arrangements to see whether they brought human happiness. But reason was also conceived of as "substantive," moral, and strongly influenced by religion. Reason could tell us what happiness and the good society actually were. Not everyone possessed full reason, but the stupidity of the populace, the naïveté of the savage, and the often defective reason of women were improvable by culture and education. Thus argued Kant's famous pamphlet "What Is Enlightenment?" Although most of the prominent philosophes were antireligious, their moralism was clearly derived from European religiosity and was paralleled by considerable moral ferment within the churches themselves. Ideology, like morality and passion, as well as science, was flourishing.

When applied to society, reason also contained a contradiction. On the one hand, formal rationality was decentered, fostered especially by the "invisible hand" of commercial capitalism. In the Anglo-American heartland of capitalism this encouraged a predominantly liberal regime strategy: laissez-faire political economy, individual civil citizenship, developing political citizenship for property owners, moral (often Protestant) individualism, and the duty to spread enlightenment and morality through private charity and voluntary work. These ideas also resonated in other countries because the philosophes were transnational, advocating programs regardless of state boundaries and communicating easily via their linguistic skills and incessant traveling. Yet, in absolutist Europe, the potential for substantive reason was identified more with modernizing states. While almost all philosophes respected the "freedom" and material progress of capitalism and of private

associations, most also saw that enlightened social responsibility invited legislative action. Kant embodied this ambivalence, believing both in enlightened absolutism and in the transnational diffusion of the Enlightenment to bring "perpetual peace" to the world. Philosophes using a "civil society versus the state" model could not sustain its fundamental dualism.

Ambivalence passed onto a new plane when capitalism's "hand" later became "visible." Though its ideologists presented laissez-faire as a natural law, it presupposed a class society in which some owned the means of production and others owned only their labor. Thus the "hand" embodied, while concealing, class power. It also embodied the geopolitical power of "national" capitalists, able to set the terms of trade over lesser capitalist nations. Free trade was then seen as British-dominated trade. Nineteenth-century ideologists of both rising classes and states contested the rule of the "hand" by advocating greater authoritative, territorial state power.

The entwining of classes and nation-states produced emergent dilemmas for power actors to which clear solutions did not exist. Indeed, as we saw with regard to classes, the very identity of classes and nations was still fluid, influenced by ideologists. Interstitial space existed for ideologists to propose their solutions and influence social identities. The Western ideological community explored developing, transcendent contradictions. Economic theory was riven between the market theory of Adam Smith and two more authoritative ideologies, the "national territorial" alternative of Friedrich List and the class alternative of Karl Marx. Their three-way disagreements soon resonated globally amid the struggles of Powers and classes.

Here is Ito Hirobumi, the principal author of Japan's Meiji constitution of 1889:

We were just then in an age of transition. The opinions prevailing in the country were extremely heterogeneous, and often diametrically opposed to each other. We had survivors of former generations who were still full of theocratic ideas, and who believed that any attempt to restrict an imperial prerogative amounted to something like high treason. On the other hand there was a large and powerful body of the younger generation educated at the time when the Manchester theory [i.e., laissez-faire] was in vogue, and who in consequence were ultra-radical in their ideas of freedom. Members of the bureaucracy were prone to lend willing ears to the German doctrinaires of the reactionary period, while, on the other hand, the educated politicians among the people having not yet tasted the bitter significance of administrative responsibility, were liable to be more influenced by the dazzling words and lucid theories of Montesquieu, Rousseau and similar French writers. . . . It was in these circumstances that the first draft of the Constitution was made and submitted to His Majesty. [quoted in Bendix 1978: 485]

Was there ideological *autonomy* in this? Alternatively, were the philosophes – Hirobumi's Manchester theorists and German doctrinaires – mere aides, "organic intellectuals" in Gramsci's sense, to the Meiji and their Western equivalents? Did they merely offer intellectual schemes that dominant regimes were free to accept, reject, or amend? The ideological media were, after all, fulfilling specialized technical functions. They were expanding the ability to read catechisms, drill manuals, and commercial contracts. Perhaps ideologists were offering mere *immanent* morale to already formed classes and political regimes.

Yet ideologists also had two creative powers. First, classes and state factions were not already constituted but interstitially emergent. Ideologists helped create their "imagined communities," especially in the American and French revolutions (see Chapters 5 and 6), but also more generally. Second, discursive media also had emergent properties, partially freeing them from control. Most were not segregated, merely communicating technical knowledge for specialized clients. They were also jointly diffusing debates about general meanings, norms, rituals, and aesthetics. Modernizing ideologies – cameralism, the Enlightenment, the evangelical movement, social contract theory, political and "economical" reform, "improvement," political economy – diffused throughout the media. Their claims were universal, applying to both morality and science, influencing ideologies of nation and class. The three-way debates among the schools of Smith, List, and Marx did not merely concern the economic interests of classes and states. Much social experience was interstitial to class and state; Europe quested for modernization and the "holy grail" of progress. These writers were not mere economic pragmatists. They saw ideological conflict as moral and philosophical, concerning cosmological truth and morality as well as economics. All three were anchored in the Enlightenment: The world was improvable if reason was placed at the head of a social movement. As potentially *transcendent* ideologists, they might have more formidable resonance.

Thus the principal personnel of discursive media developed a sense of their own community. An ideological power elite – the intelligentsia, the intellectuals – appeared as a collective actor, just as the clerical, priestly caste had done in earlier ages. True, intellectuals were not united or "pure"; many remained loyal to their clients, and their clients battled to control them with rewards and punishments, licensing, and censorship. Nonetheless, the battle was recognized by the protagonists as real and novel: a struggle over enlarged powers of ideological mobilization. Entwined classes, nations, states, churches, and others were struggling for power. Solutions were proffered by a transcendent, revolutionized Western ideological community. I assess its

precise degree of autonomy and power in my narrative chapters. They were generally greater early in the period than later, when regimes had developed coping strategies, centered on confining most ideological power networks within state institutions.

Conclusion

Capitalism and discursive literacy media were the dual faces of a civil society diffusing throughout eighteenth-century European civilization. They were not reducible to each other, although they were entwined, especially in the more capitalistic westerly countries. Nor were they more than partly caged by dominant classes, churches, military elites, and states, although they were variably encouraged and structured by them. Thus, they were partly transnational and interstitial to other power organizations – only partly, however, and later chapters will chart a decline in both qualities. Civil societies were always entwined with states – and they became more so during the long nineteenth century.

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