What is Switzerland's stratification like: classes, prestige gradation, professional categories?

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Abstract:

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1. Does stratification still matter?

In a recent contribution to this review, Clark & Lipset (1991) asked the near rhetorical question 'Are social classes dying?'. Their answer is yes, but. Empirically, class relations are said to become evanescent (especially as measured by class voting or the relationship between fiscal and social liberalism of French and American mayors of different age groups). Theoretically, they should not be forgotten, but their salience may be tied to basic conditions that are not always fulfilled, especially not in modern, post-industrial societies. The main conditions these authors identify are (overall) hierarchical differentiation and the coincidence of hierarchical differentiations in different situses or vertical dimensions of a society. Affluence is seen as one of the main

processes that undermine class-related value priorities and political issues. With their article, Clark & Lipset echo a much wider strand in recent sociology (Beck 1992, Müller 1992); their merit is to formulate the thesis explicitly and to couch it in theoretical reasoning.

This paper takes up their theme and sets out to assess its relevance for Switzerland. Like the United States, Switzerland is one of the most well-to-do countries of the world; like the United States, this fact has not basically changed the domestic distributional inequalities. More specifically, it has not prevented the emergence of a so-called 'new poverty', but it has been associated with a structural change of the economy and of the school system. As very few studies about the Swiss stratification system exist, the mere description of some of its features may also be of interest. We shall do this by way of a systematic comparison of four different ways to conceptualise and operationalise the social structural position of individuals.

2. Recent trends in stratification analysis

2.1. Theoretical developments

Social stratification is with no doubt one of the most central of sociological concerns. The three most important macro-theoretical approaches of our discipline, Marxist, Weberian and functionalist, have made the exploration and analysis of enduring social inequalities one of their major themes. All of them have lead to empirical results through various ways, Marxist and Weberian approaches more recently and relying less heavily on survey analysis than the functionalist ones.

Recent refinements of the theoretical underpinnings of these approaches have produced some interesting conceptual convergences, especially concerning the acknowledgement of *multi-dimensionality*[1] and of *finer-than-dichotomous gradations* in institutionalised inequalities. However, typical divergences remain, for instance those concerning the *role of power* and the *ownership of the means of production*.

a) Multi-dimensionality of stratification is a classical Weberian postulate. This principle has been more or less generally adopted by functionalist analysts, including those in the status attainment tradition.[2] More recently, neo-marxist theorists have also developed class conceptions that include more than one dimension; their discussion of 'contradictory class locations' echoes the controversial concept of status inconsistency in mainstream sociology (especially Wright 1978, 1985).

b) Thinking in terms of homogeneous continua rather than categorical 'cleavages' has for a long time been preferred or even taken for granted in the functionalist tradition,

as opposed to Marxist analysis which has always insisted on the necessity of identifying categorical differences. Nevertheless, finding categorical breaking points concerning symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1980) or skill (Wright 1985) proves to be rather difficult, and for that matter, operationalising even the ownership of the means of production as a dichotomy or a trichotomy on the basis of factual information implies decisions that cannot be derived by any simple and non-arbitrary logic from the theoretical concept. (How many employed people can be admitted while still considering an owner to be a petty bourgeois?) The Weberian tradition has been less explicit in this respect. However, one can infer from Weber's three hierarchical orders that both kinds of inequalities find their place in his thinking, the question depending on their degree and form of institutionalisation.[3] As is often the case with Weber, what he does not specify can be as stimulating as what he specifies.

c) Since the pioneering works of Hunter, Dahl, the Lynds and others, there is a rich literature on power structures as such, especially on the level of local communities. However, in the functionalist analysis of stratification, power is rarely referred to explicitly and does not seem to occupy a central role. In Marxist analysis, it is a crucial underlying idea, but mainly restricted to the domination based on the ownership of the means of production; other bases of power are not systematically considered. In Weberian thinking (Dahrendorf 1959, Parkin 1972, Collins 1975), power or authority (i.e. legitimate power) is central. Nevertheless, it has rarely been included in empirical analyses of stratification, maybe because it tends to be difficult to measure (see Allen 1981 for exceptions).

d) It is obvious that the role of the ownership of the means of production is directly affected by the importance attributed to the existence of multiple hierarchies of stratification - where multidimensional stratification is assumed, this criterion can be of only partial importance. But even in this case, its importance is disputed; mainstream analyses scarcely include it.

2.2. Empirical challenges

In recent years, these three approaches to stratification have been challenged by two strong and stubborn empirical regularities:

1. *Sex* and *'race'* (which has to be replaced for most European countries by nationality) systematically range high among the factors conditioning inequalities in income and in the accessibility of other valued positions or social goods. Their explanatory power is often clearly higher than that of the indicators used to measure the core dimensions of the classical approaches.[4] While their empirical importance has no

longer to be demonstrated, it is obvious that sex and race - both classical supports of social ascription - have an extremely limited theoretical status in the three classical approaches.[5]

2. For a number of attitudinal or behavioural indicators (mostly political, such as class voting, post-materialism, party affiliation, labour union or social movement participation), the correlations with structural location have been diminishing in the past 10-20 years (Clark & Lipset 1991) or pointing to non-linear and multidimensional conditions. A series of interesting hypotheses have been offered (see the list established by these authors), including a change in post-industrial societies that fundamentally undermines the social (and hence sociological) relevance of work and work-related hierarchy (e.g. Offe 1984). Other factors may be structuring life styles and subjective priorities, such as subculture membership or exposure to risks (Beck 1986).

Thus we find conventional stratification analysis faced with a double, if partly inconsistent, challenge. Does stratification still matter? What relevance can be claimed for our main theories of stratification? Empirical arguments should be met with empirical analyses. We shall attack them through a systematic comparison of four classification schemes of hierarchical position, three of which are internationally used while the fourth has been developed specifically for the national context of Switzerland. We shall compare these schemes according to their capacity to differentiate a restricted number of (a) positional and (b) attitudinal variables that are supposed to be dependent on or correlated with stratificational location (for an analogous procedure with German data, see Holtmann 1990).

3. Four indicators of structural location

Our selection of classification schemes for structural location is pragmatic: we have chosen those that are actually most directly implied in comparative debates. We feel that these models can be related to the major theoretical currents we mentioned fairly well. We shall concentrate on four approaches: status attainment, Goldthorpe's class typology, Wright's class typology, and a classification of socio-professional categories recently developed for the Swiss Census Bureau.

3.1. Status attainment (ST.ATT)

Status attainment research may be considered to be the predominant mainstream 'model' in stratification and mobility analysis. Simplifying only slightly, it can be said that SES (ego's, father's, mother's) and education (ego's, father's, mother's) are -

among the status factors commonly used in this research tradition (Blau & Duncan 1967, Featherman & Hauser 1978) - the main factors supposed to determine ego's income. SES is most often conceived of - or at least measured - in terms of its prestige counterpart and not as structural location stricto sensu.[6] The theoretical choices of this orientation are not always formulated explicitly but rather embodied in practical decisions. Among these implicit choices are: a preference for cultural rather than structural variables (especially education and occupational prestige)[7] and the rejection of categorical divisions in hierarchies or inequalities; typically, status 'variables' are variables that are supposed to be homogeneous and continuous.

The central dimensions, education and occupation, are not used to construct a structural typology, but as simple status variables which enter into multiple regression or path analysis. This gives the approach considerable strength since its preferred techniques allow these variables to vary freely instead of imposing on them some form of polytomisation in order to obtain an intelligible typology.

However, as the other classifications we wish to examine are typologies, we are forced to introduce, somewhat artificially, a 'positional typology' to represent the theoretical tradition of status attainment research. In doing so, we may partially diminish its empirical efficacy. Considering that its implicit image of social structure is mainly composed of education and professional prestige, we trichotomise these two variables and combine them into a nine-fold typology that we compare to the other typologies. Since specific cut-off points are of no theoretical concern to this tradition, we cut the two variables at empirically convenient points.[8]

3.2. Goldthorpe (GOLD)

Goldthorpe (Goldthorpe & Hope 1974, Goldthorpe 1980) has developed a widely used 'synthetic' neo-weberian class typology. Although this author does not align himself explicitly with any one of the three theoretical traditions, his typology not only has an ideal-typical make-up, but it combines dimensions that seem to revolve intuitively around notions that can be assimilated to the Weberian themes of power and prestige (see the discussion in Marshall et al., 1988, especially p. 21 f., with respect to the importance Goldthorpe attaches to the 'market and work situation').

Goldthorpe's classification[9] cannot be easily defined by one or two clear dimensions of stratification. This is so for mainly two reasons. First, it reclassifies occupations taken from an official statistical list. The practical value of this procedure is obvious. However, it is notoriously difficult to identify the logic implicit in the lists of occupations produced by public administrations; they are more of a politically motivated

patchwork than a coherently built typology; by building on such a list, its implicit logic becomes a hidden heritage of the resulting classification. An additional problem comes from the origin of this classification (Goldthorpe & Hope 1974). It was a study of social (prestige) grading, based on the desirability of the occupations; the resulting classification with seven categories is a recodification ultimately based on this criterion.[10] The seven categories or 'classes' are, in 'descending' order: higher grade professional, lower grade professional and higher grade technician, routine non-manual, small proprietor, lower grade technician, skilled manual, semi- and non skilled manual.[11]

An interpretative reading of this classification suggests the presence of at least three dimensions, all of which affect an occupations social desirability. The first dimension is ownership of a company (at least for the small proprietors). Second, a particular place is reserved for the very Anglo-Saxon concept of professionals (Desrosières & Thévenot 1986) which may refer either to qualification or to a specific group of occupations. Qualification or skill level appears again in the distinction of skilled and semi- or non-skilled. Third, something like a prestige dimension can be found in the classic distinction between blue and white collar. None of these criteria is combined thoroughly with the others, they are 'telescoped', which may be justified by considerations of differential relevance referring to a conceptually prior distinction (like Wright's using different distinctions for owners and for non-owners). However, no explicit rationale of this kind is advanced. Thus, the seven categories are original and somewhat idiosyncratic combinations of non-explicit dimensions; therefore we should consider this classification an ideal-typical and not an analytical one. Let us note in passing that the technical occupations tend to be the most subtly treated in this schema, the middle categories being subdivided in smaller groups than the others.

3.3. Wright (WRIG)

The refined and complexified neo-marxist class typology based on three criteria of inequality developed by Wright (1978, 1985) which exists in two versions - one giving theoretical salience to domination, the other to exploitation - and has been used in some 12 national studies since 1980.

Wright (1978, 1985, Wright & Perrone 1977) has no doubt been the most influential promoter of a renewed, empirical use of Marxist concepts in stratification studies without ignoring insights produced by non-marxist analysis. After a first attempt at direct operationalisation of the classical classes attributed to the capitalist social formation, developed under the constraints of secondary analysis of data not designed

for this purpose, he elaborated more fully conceptualised classifications that integrated an approach to the problem of 'contradictory class locations'.[12] His initial typology of class structure (Wright 1985, especially p. 42 ff.) was mainly based on the concept of domination or control, defined in terms of two aspects: capacity to supervise the work of others and self-employment, i.e. the ownership of means of production, yielding four classes which he terms most classically capitalists (own and supervise), managers (supervise, do not own), petty bourgeois (own, do not supervise) and proletarians (neither own nor supervise).

This very general conceptualisation poses some problems, among others concerning the very broad category of 'managers'. For this and other reasons, Wright refined his typology by differentiating the notion of domination according to control exerted on others and autonomy in work; this yielded an eight-fold typology sometimes called 'Wright 1' (Wright 1985, p. 48), with three categories of owners and five categories of non-owners. For several reasons that we need not repeat here, Wright came to the conclusion that the class structure of post-capitalist society is not sufficiently well rendered by a model based exclusively on the concept of domination, neglecting the aspect of exploitation (1985, p. 96). Therefore he developed a new typology supposed to better incorporate both aspects ('Wright 2').

Like the former, this new typology is firstly based on a division between the owners of the means of production and the wage-earners. The owners are distinguished according to their 'importance' by help of substantively defined cut-off points (Table 1). The non-owners are classified by the combination of two kinds of 'assets': organisational (power) and symbolic (skill). Except for the logical priority given to ownership, there is no 'telescoping' of dimensions, their combination is fully developed, yielding 12 'classes' since all dimensions except the first one are trichotomised. This is the typology we shall use in our comparison.

Organisational and symbolic or cultural assets remind one of Bourdieu's opening up of Marxist class analysis in a Weberian direction (1980). Moreover, this vision of the class structure of actual capitalist societies signals a partial convergence with mainstream multidimensional stratification analysis, at least concerning the dimensions considered to be relevant. One of the practical problems involved in this approach is the need to define cut-off points in variables which are not intrinsically dichotomous or trichotomous, like skill or hierarchical position.[13]

Table 1 Typology of class locations according to Wright (1985: 88)

	Assets in the means of production	

Owns sufficient capital to ...	Owners of means of production	Non-owners (wage earners)			organisational assets
Hire workers and not work	1) Bourgeoisie	4) expert managers	7) Semi credentialled managers	10) uncredentialled managers	large organisation assets
Hire workers but must work	2) Small employers	5) expert supervisors	8) semi credentialled supervisors	11) uncredentialled supervisors	some organisation assets
Work for self but not to hire workers	3) Petty Bourgeoisie	6) expert non-managers	9) semi credentialled workers	12) proletarians	no organisation assets
		+	=	-	
		Skill/credential assets			

3.4. Swiss socio-professional categories (CSP-CH)

We finally include in our comparisons a classification scheme of socio-professional categories, developed recently for the Swiss census and for the Swiss Labour Force Survey (Joye 1991) in order to create a more appropriate and transparent codification instrument than the classifications used before. It combines Wrightian with other more pragmatically chosen aspects and may be called theoretically hybrid.[14] Like many others, the Swiss census contains few indicators capable of giving a detailed account of hierarchical position in the work structure. Given its purpose and the data available, such a classification must mainly be based on occupation, socio-economic status and education.

The theoretical rationale of this classification is the principle - borrowed from analysts like Bourdieu and Wright - that social position can be seen as a function of various kinds of resources, in particular the capacity to organise the work of others and the capacity to treat information. An attempt has been made to maintain a clear combination of explicit criteria without over-differentiating little occupied categories and without 'telescoping' dimensions in a logically unsystematic manner (as is the case of GOLD); instead, positions implying resources from the one or the other kind have been combined.[15] Thus, in the category of 'middle employees', there are technicians with a specialised education as well as foremen with a low level of education but some organisational control of the work of others. In the same way, people with managerial functions but without a long education are grouped together with the

category 'intellectuals and managers'; overall, eight categories are distinguished (table 2):

Table 2 Educational and organisational assets in the Swiss classification

education / position	university	technical and professional	apprenticeship	compulsory education at most
top executives	1) top executives			
self-employed	2) liberal professions	3) self-employed		
wage-earners	4) intellectuals and managers	5) middle employees	skilled: 6) non-manuals 7) manuals	8) unskilled

3.5. Comparison of class typologies

The four class typologies presented so far can be compared according to conceptual, technical and empirical criteria. Table 3 synthesises them:

Goldthorpe's class typology presents a particularity which explains our introducing 'technique of classification' as a criterion: individuals are attributed to its types by classifying the professional categories they belong to (such as those used by the official census, e.g. the Registrar General in Great Britain or the ILO list) and not on the basis of variables describing them individually. It is in fact a classification of occupational categories, not of individuals. The other three typologies are constructed by combining overall indicators of their constituent dimensions with the help of which individuals are classified directly (with a subtle nuance for CSP-CH which places it somewhere in between). The former procedure allows to consider supplementary information on the professional categories, e.g. concerning their mean skill level, social prestige etc. - provided such information exists. On the other hand, if the defining procedure is not entirely transparent, as seems to be the case with GOLD, its (good or bad) empirical success compared with other approaches is difficult to interpret since its ideal-typical construction may have been influenced by implicit, non-controlled considerations.

Table 3 Conceptual comparison of 'class typologies'

		Stat. Att.	**Goldthorpe**	**Wright**	**CSP-CH**

conceptual criteria	main theoretical reference	functionalist	weberian (market situation)	neo-marxist (domination)	mixed, pragmatic
	property considered	no	YES	YES	YES
	domination considered	no	no	YES	YES
	qualification considered	YES	YES	no	YES
	prestige considered	YES	(YES)	no	no
technical criteria	number of dimensions	2	seemingly 1, underlying 3	2	3
	number of categories	9	7	8	8
	classif. of individuals, not professional categories	YES	no	YES	(YES)

Concerning the technical and empirical criteria, we can obviously postulate that dependent variables should be better differentiated by positional classifications containing

1) a higher number of dimensions,
2) a higher number of types or categories,
3) more even distributions of cases, and
4) dimensions that are conceptually closer to them.

4. Social stratification in Switzerland

4.1. Data

Our data are based on a nation-wide quota-sample of 2000 adult inhabitants of Switzerland, interviewed between spring and summer 1991. In order to attain a sufficient coverage of the whole range of social stratification, we oversampled the top and bottom layers which are not only statistically slim, but tend usually to be underrepresented due to availability problems. The sample of the whole population concerns 1800 persons; it is complemented by a 100-person sample of top wage-earners and another 100-person sample of seasonal workers. As our purpose in the present analysis is not to represent the descriptive proportions of the population, but to analyse various aspects of stratification, we include the two supplementary samples, being aware that as a consequence, our sample's representativeness is more fuzzy on the upper and lower edges than on the intermediate ranges of the social ladder. The

questionnaire was developed in close connection with the model used in most of the national studies following the lead of Wright.

We shall present the data for that part of the sample which could be directly classified by help of the four typologies. As all of these build heavily on professional activity, this means neglecting those persons who are not gainfully employed at present (mainly housewives, people in full-time schooling, retired and unemployed people). However, parallel analyses of the data concerning only men show no relevant differences for the results we wish to present in this paper.[16]

4.2. Main features of positional inequalities in Switzerland

Figure 1 shows that the four typologies distribute the population quite differently. Let us start the inspection by a closer look at the distribution of ST.ATT. It shows first the strong and well-known positive correlation between education and occupational prestige, as the frequencies of the three educational levels are inversed as we move from the lower to the higher level of occupational prestige. This correlation is a first hint at the existence of status crystallisation since it shows a clear connection between the initial schooling level attained and the prestige of the occupation actually held.

ST.ATT also allows to observe some interesting details. The upper part of the distribution corresponds less perfectly to the correlation than the lower part (the high prestige group does not include clearly more high than medium schooled people, whereas the low prestige group show a regular increase from the high to the low school level), which hints at the fact that the highest professional levels may be attained due to other assets than general school credentials (among others by internal mobility).

Another interesting fact is that the inversion can be situated between the higher and intermediate prestige levels since the frequency distribution of educational levels has the same direction for low and intermediate prestige levels. This reflects probably the particularly hierarchical structure of the Swiss educational system.

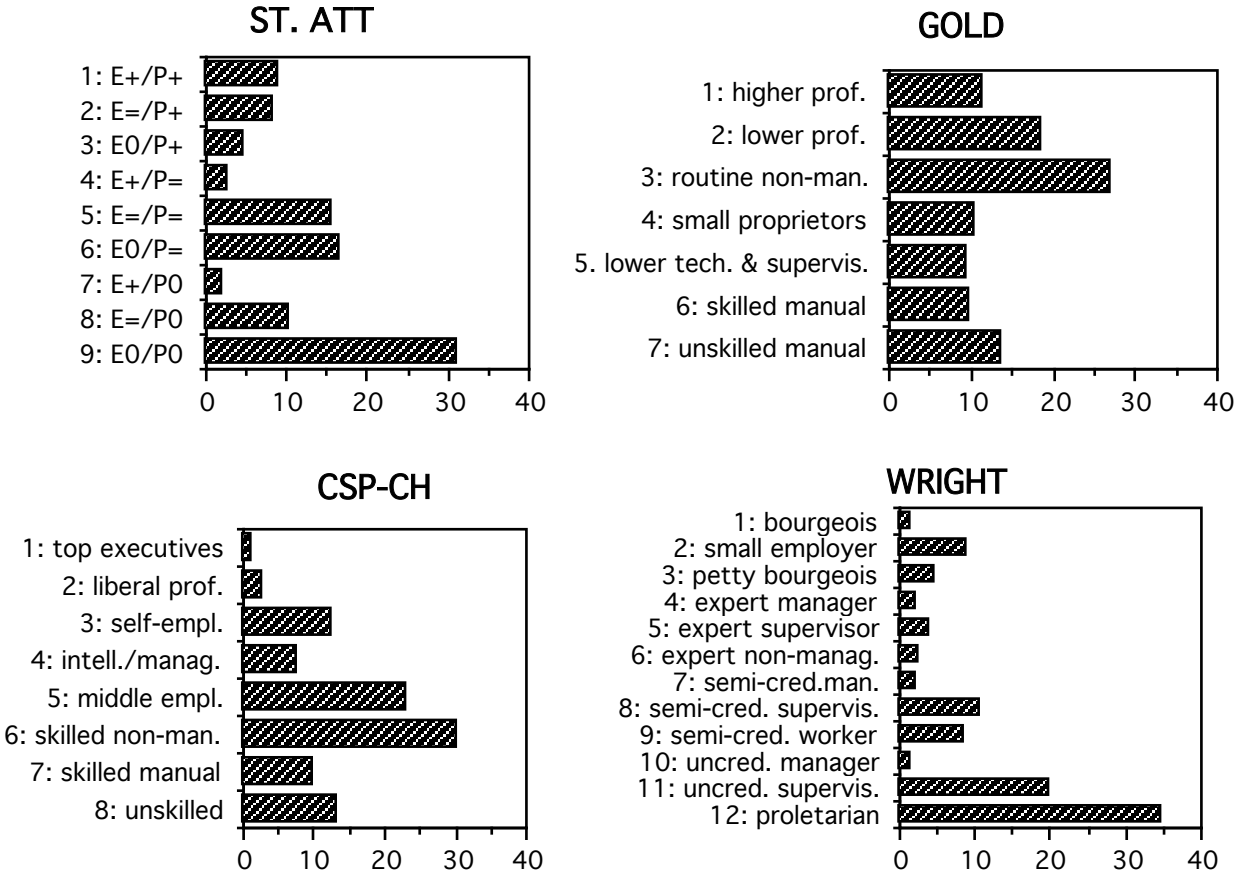

Figure 1 Distributions according to the four classifications[17]

In comparison, GOLD has the most even distribution, strongly differentiating the intermediate professional levels; WRIG produces the most uneven distribution, closely followed by ST.ATT. GOLD and ST.ATT use larger categories for the high ranks, their other categories are more specific and limitative. On the contrary, WRIG and ST.ATT tend to create broader lowest categories than the others; with its higher number of types, WRIG differentiates very finely among middle and higher professional situations. The distinction between more or less autonomous workers in WRIG appears as secondary relative to the other dimensions of that typology; it classes 36% as workers or 'proletarians'. Together with the 'uncredentialled supervisors', this typology places more than half of the gainfully employed population in two particularly low categories. Since it is based on detailed and rather precise indications of hierarchical position, the fact is interesting in itself and cannot be attributed to purely ideological assumptions.

ST.ATT works in a similar, although less extreme way. The Swiss socio-professional typology and Goldthorpe's classification are more selective among lower positions which is clearly due to their reliance, in that part of the distribution, on skill and manual/non-manual work rather than hierarchical position at work. There is only partial overlap between the WRIG 'proletarians' and these typologies' manual workers because many non-manuals also find themselves on the lowest hierarchical

ranks, and this group is especially important in present day Swiss economy. The country's economical structure is not based on heavy industry and has undergone since the 60ies a strong tertiarising transformation (decrease of employment in industry, increase in the services, and strong tertiarisation of work even within basically industrial firms). In the same period, simple production requiring little qualification has been largely transferred abroad. In parallel, the educational system has been expanded on intermediate levels in the sixties; among the generations born since World War II, the proportion of those having received only compulsory schooling (9 years) is clearly lower (around 25%) than among their elders. The Swiss CSP has important frequencies in the skilled non-manual and middle employment categories; similar frequencies are observed in Goldthorpe's typology in the routine non-manual and lower professional categories which do not have exactly the same meaning. The Wright typology tends to distribute (and thus 'hide') these people over its three semi-credentialled categories.

Coming back to the overall question of how (un-)even are the distributions, we can say that measured by the coefficient of informational redundancy, the differences prove to be quite substantial and confirm the visual impressions fairly well (extreme values: GOLD .04, i.e. very low random predictability of an individual's typological position, WRIG .20, i.e. intermediate redundancy; ST.ATT .12, CSP-CH .13).

Neither of the distributions seems a priori wrong or implausible. With respect to our first empirical question resulting from the synoptic table (Table 3), it is important to note that the four classifications are quite different as to their empirical distributions; according to our hypothesis, we should now expect GOLD to have the most discriminative power, WRIG the least. Before we go on to more substantial analyses, let us look at the empirical relationships between these typologies.

4.3. Coincidences and differences between the four classifications

Given the fact that any of the basic dimensions underlying the four typologies is present in more than one of them (see Table 3; prestige is present in two, domination in three, qualification and property in four), a certain degree of coincidence must be expected. However, these dimensions are rarely operationalised in the same way; as a consequence, the purely definitional overlap should not be very important. Figure 2 shows indeed considerable overlapping, but with some interesting differences (we use the standardised contingency coefficient as a simple measure for the non-ordinal relationships or overlaps between the four typologies[18]):

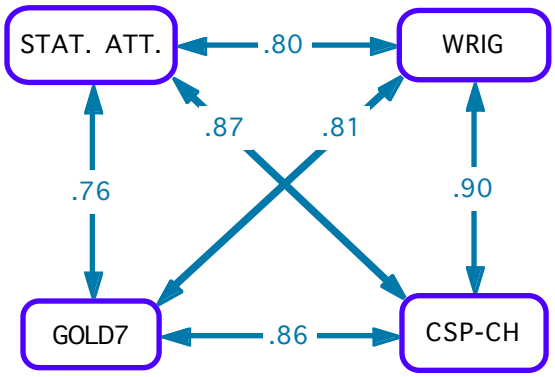

Figure 2 Overlap between the four typologies[19]

The highest coefficient is the one relating WRIG and the Swiss socio-professional classification. The lowest one relates WRIG with ST.ATT which are the only pair with no dimension in common; given this fact, the coefficient can be considered to be fairly high and to give a further hint at a substantial amount of status crystallisation. CSP-CH is most tightly related to the others, WRIG shows a similar pattern; they are conceptually the most integrative ones. This may seem astonishing at first sight, the one being considered as a neo-marxist typology, the second as a pragmatic solution, with theoretical considerations as a secondary concern. However, in the light of the classical theoretical traditions, WRIG can be considered almost as much Weberian as Marxian, and CSP-CH has been largely inspired by WRIG.

This is the only pair of typologies having 3 dimensions in common. More generally and not surprisingly, the more dimensions are in common and the more likely the common dimensions are treated equally (same operationalisation) by any two typologies, the higher is their overlap. Using the six possible pairs of classifications, a non-trivial relationship between the number of common dimensions and the CCC coefficients is obtained.[20] Although we have no satisfactory way of separating logical or even tautological components in the relationships from their empirical components, inspection of the cross-tabulations makes us feel that the very high general level of the coefficients expresses to a large extent empirical and not purely formal vicinity of the typologies.

On both conceptual and empirical grounds it is then well established that all the four typologies concern the same phenomenon in quite a similar manner, but they are not exactly interchangeable. The differences they may produce when applied to 'dependent' variables should have not only a 'technical' component; they can be interpreted to reflect specific affinities between the theoretical dimensions of the typologies and the criterion variables.

4.4. Typologies of social position and life at work

After having treated the typologies like black boxes, we proceed to have a closer look at their contents, using as criterion variables additional information about hierarchy at the work place (the relative importance of manual work, supervising others, and being supervised oneself), hierarchical placement of people in terms of meritocratic criteria (formal education) or particularistic, discriminative criteria (gender, nationality), social evaluation of position (Treiman's prestige scores), and 'material evaluation' (income). Table 4 summarises this list and the results.[21]

Let us first consider the general level of the coefficients; in this table, they can be said to express the discriminating capacity of the typologies concerning the 'dependent' variables (we ignore the figures in brackets). Comparing among the dependent variables (vertically), the levels of differentiation vary substantially between a high mean CCC of .66 (occupational prestige scores) and a low one of .37 (proportion of foreigners). Occupational prestige is the variable most strongly, but also most variably related to the typologies. Percent manuals, formal education and income have also quite considerable coefficients.

On the other hand, three variables have practically the same (relatively) low coefficients, among them the two particularistic, discrimination-prone criteria of gender and nationality. If we consider both the mean level and the differences between typologies together, being supervised is least systematically tied in with all the class typologies - although its coefficients have a quite respectable value.

To the exception of income and the frequency of being supervised, several dependent variables show a specific affinity to the classifications as shown by the maximal (horizontal) differences between their coefficients. The biggest differences (i.e. highest affinity) obtain for occupational prestige, %women, formal education and %foreigners.

Table 4 Class typologies and correlates of structural location (CCC)

		ST.ATT	GOLD	WRIG	CSP-CH	mean	range
hierarchy:	% manuals	.53	.58	.43	.51	.51	.15
	% supervise others	.41	.52	(.96)	.44	.46	.11
	% often supervised	.36	.41	.37	.38	.38	.05

'meritocracy':	formal education	(1.00)	.67	(.75)	(.88)	.67	-
particularism:	% women	.27	.51	.40	.40	.40	.24
	% foreigners	.33	.41	.28	.48	.38	.20
evaluation:	prestige (Treiman)	(1.00)	.78	.61	.74	.71	.27
	income	.59	.59	.61	.59	.60	.02
mean CCC		.42	.53	.45	.51		

Legend: As in Figure 2, the contingency coefficients (CCC) are standardised to limits of 0.00 and 1.00; those in (brackets) comprise a tautological element as the variable enters partially into the construction of the typology concerned. In the calculation of horizontal means and differences, they have not been taken into account, while for the calculation of vertical means, the values for supervising others and for education have been entirely neglected. % manuals is a trichotomous variable according to people's declaration of what percentage of their usual working time is occupied by manipulating physical objects; % supervise others is the yes/no answer about whether 'supervising others' work or telling them what to do' is an official part of one's work; % often supervised is trichotomised from a six-degree scale (between 'never' and 'more than once a day') of how often people's work is controlled by their superiors; formal education is a trichotomous scale of the level of schooling attained; % women is the gender distribution; % foreigners is the dichotomous distinction of Swiss vs. other nationality; prestige is a trichotomous recoding of Treiman's occupational prestige scores; income is a trichotomous scale of personal income brackets.

Turning to the differential working of the classifications, we see that the three structural aspects of the work hierarchy are best differentiated by GOLD; the three other classifications have always lower coefficients. GOLD has also the highest coefficients for the presence of women and education, while the relative presence of foreigners is best differentiated by CSP-CH. Overall, GOLD is the typology with the most general discriminative capacity. According to the mean coefficients, although not according to the maxima, CSP-CH comes close behind; ST.ATT fares least well: it has the lowest coefficients for three criterion variables and never the highest one.

Among the affinities between the classifications and the dependent variables, we can single out GOLD for education and %women, CSP-CH for %foreigners, and both equally for occupational prestige. Let us recall that they have in common the two dimensions of ownership and education (let us recall that these two classifications share the technical specificity of being defined for occupational groups rather than for individuals). We note three general results:

1. All of the four typologies discriminate quite substantially among our criterion variables; none of can be declared irrelevant.

2. There is some special affinity between dependent variables and classifications as specified above.

3. On the basis of these associations (mean contingency coefficient), we can rank the four classifications according to their discriminating capacity: GOLD > CSP-CH >

WRIG > ST.ATT. This ranking is clearly inconsistent with our hypothesis concerning evenness of distribution, there is no systematic relationship between discriminating capacity and evenness of distribution.

We can summarise by saying that GOLD and CSP-CH generally discriminate better than the Wright typology and status attainment. This is a somewhat intriguing finding: those of our typologies that are analytically more explicit and more systematic fare less well than the more 'pragmatic' ones. We shall come back to this in our concluding discussion.[22]

5. Typologies of social position and attitudes

After having examined some structural features of the categories defined by our four classifications, we go on to explore the impact of social position on three attitudinal variables. We have chosen the subjective evaluation of one's position in order to assess the degree to which subjectively perceived inequality (subjective social position) coincides with our typologies' objectivist classification. Second, as a corollary to the possible conflict implications of perceived social inequality, we include an indicator concerning attitudes about the potential conflict between labour and capital (pro-worker attitude). This variable should show special affinity to Wright's model as it is theoretically based on the concepts of domination and exploitation. Third, we include a simple version of Inglehart's indicator of value orientation in order to tap an attitudinal dimension that is supposed to be more distant from inequality issues and of more recent social relevance. Contrary to what might be expected, there are only very low correlations between these three variables (highest correlation coefficient, between subjective position and post-materialism: .20). What about their associations with the four typologies of social position? Table 5 shows the coefficients.

Table 5 Class typologies and attitudinal correlates

	ST.ATT	GOLD	WRIG	CSP-CH	mean	diff. max
subj. social position	.40	.44	.45	.44	.44	.05
post-materialism	.37	.29	.32	.34	.33	.08
pro-worker attitude	.21	.22	.22	.19	.21	.03
mean CCC	.33	.32	.33	.32		

Legend: As in Figure 2, the contingency coefficients (CCC) are standardised to limits of 0.00 and 1.00. Subj. social position: based on the question 'Imagine that the social ladder goes from 0, the least de-

sirable position, to 100, the best one, which is your position on this ladder today?'; the distribution suggests to distinguish between a lower 'class' that includes the values up to 50, the second 'class' has values from 51 to 69 (19.6 %), the upper 'class' from 70 to 100 (36.1 %). Class consciousness or pro-worker attitude: four Likert-type items. A respondent is considered to be pro-worker if he/she gave three or four times the 'totally agree' response or two times the 'partially agree' and one time the 'totally agree' response; the reverse holds for the 'pro-management' attitude. This recodification yields 37 % 'pro management', 52 % mixed and 11 % 'pro worker' answers. Post-materialist attitude: measured by four of Inglehart's items, people accepting only the two post-materialist items are 'post-materialists' (22%), those accepting only the two materialist ones, 'materialists' (23%), the others 'mixed' (55%).

Overall, the differences in table 5 are rather small. The coefficients of any one variable do not vary substantially between classifications, but they do between dependent variables. It makes intuitive sense that the most hierarchy-bound attitude, the subjective evaluation of one's social position, should be most strongly associated with class. This would suggest the expectation that with growing distance between hierarchical position itself and the object of an attitude, the association diminishes. However, the order of the two other variables' coefficients does not confirm this idea: the postmaterialist attitudes are conceptually less directly tied in with the work hierarchy than the pro-worker attitude.

a) Subjective social position. Our results confirm that people are rather well aware of the hierarchical component of the social order and of their personal position within it: their perception of their own position is systematically associated with their position in the four classifications, quite independently of the theoretical approach used. But closer scrutiny of the distributions adds some depth to this conclusion, especially if we do not allow the interpretation to be limited by the overall coefficients.[23]

In the status attainment model, clearly both dimensions are required to yield a good estimation of subjective position; however, the other three classifications are slightly better predictors. Interestingly, the managers place themselves at a higher level than the owners of companies. Manual workers place themselves on a lower level than the non-manual ones, even with the same amount of education. Overall, subjective positioning follows quite closely the hierarchical order undermining the various classifications.

b) 'Class consciousness'. Theorising about social inequalities is mostly motivated by an effort to understand the presence or absence social conflicts. Such conflicts clearly do not only imply subjective perception of inequalities, but also their judgement as unjust and maybe as resulting from antagonistic interests between social groups or classes. While Marxist and, for that matter, also non-marxist sociologists do not postulate any direct and mechanically causal relationship between class position and class consciousness, the actual distribution of consciousness should obviously 'reflect' class differences. Our operationalisation of class consciousness follows Wright's (1985) measurement proposition, but uses only 4 out of the original 8 items.

We should expect that Wright's classification, since it is based explicitly on domination or exploitation, should produce better results than other classifications. The distribution of answers shows that managers and owners do rate more often on the 'pro-management' side of the scale while the minimum is obtained for workers. Organisational assets play the most important role, while skill characteristics seem less important. According to visual inspection of the tables, the status attainment model is the worst predictor (although the coefficients show no significant differences). This may result from the absence of organisational assets from this model. The same reasoning could explain the intermediate result of the Swiss socio-professional classification. The differences between the extreme values of Goldthorpe's classification are less pronounced, but it differentiates clearly between higher grade professionals and small proprietors on the one hand, semi and non-skilled manual on the other.

Overall, the discrimination of the pro-worker or pro-management attitude by the four classifications is rather moderate and does not seem to be very specific (little differences between classifications), contrary to what might be expected according to classical hypotheses.

c) Post-materialism. In the last thirty years, the theses about the end of ideology and value change have become the subject of an important debate. This is in fact another aspect of the recent questioning of the practical and theoretical importance of stratification, complementary to the arguments put forward by Clark & Lipset (1991). Even though criticised by some researchers, particularly for problems with their underlying dimensions (Reimer 1989, Joye & Leresche 1991), Inglehart's (1971) indices of 'materialist vs. post-materialist value orientation' are the best-known indicators in this realm.

Comparing across our classifications, the best discriminating variable is education; it is present in the three typologies that discriminate best: the Swiss socio-professional classification, the status attainment model and, less prominently, Wright's typology. Goldthorpe's model is least satisfactory.

The detailed results show that, as expected and found by Inglehart, workers with no social resources have the strongest materialist tendencies. However, in opposition to the hypothesised relationship, managers and owners of means of production are no less post-materialist than intellectuals and intermediary professions.

The associations observed in this chapter are significant and do have non-negligible values, but they show that none of the four classifications can be considered to be the only determinant: the explained variance is far too weak for this to be the case. In the same vein, every classification shows to be more important than any single variable

(e.g. prestige or education). This means that we need a description that takes into account the categorical characteristics of the positioning process and the multiple nature of the underlying dimensions.

6. Discussion

All the classifications used in this paper present some interest for the analysis of social position. The analysis of the interrelationships among the classifications and their associations with supplementary information concerning various aspects of hierarchical positioning shows explicitly that each of them is a good operationalisation of social position, empirically speaking. However, the analysis of the theoretical dimensions involved shows that some of the conceptions are not as explicit as one might wish. We shall first come back to our hypotheses about formal properties of the classifications and secondly review the more descriptive and substantial results.

6.1. Formal properties of classifications

At the beginning of this article, we formulated four hypotheses about the influence some formal properties of the classifications should have on their associations with dependent variables. They are borne out by our results to quite varying extents.

1) *The more dimensions a classification contains, the better it should differentiate dependent variables.* Among the three typologies based on three dimensions, we find the two showing the strongest and most general discriminating capacity; this hypothesis is (weakly) confirmed.

2) *The more categories a classification contains, the better it should differentiate dependent variables.* There are clear associations between this aspect of the classifications and the differentiation of the dependent variables, but their signs vary.[24] For the time being, we consider that this hypothesis is not confirmed.

3) *The more even the cases are distributed across a classification, the better should dependent variables be differentiated.* What has been found for hypothesis 2) holds also for 3); we consider therefore that it is not confirmed.

4) *The closer the dimensions of a classification are to a dependent variable's meaning, the better should this variable be differentiated.* We have found and commented upon several cases that confirm this hypothesis. However, we did not examine this aspect systematically enough to support a general conclusion.

These rather technical hypotheses are not very convincingly borne out by our analyses, which is rather comforting. The contrary would have meant that substantive qualities of the various classifications are secondary to their empirical functioning. In this sense, our 'negative' findings concerning these hypotheses confirm that even beyond problems of tautology, the variations and specificities we have found cannot be explained away by formal properties of the classifications but need substantive interpretation.

6.2. Conceptual properties of classifications

In our data, those indicators that are best grounded theoretically do not systematically show the best empirical results, but they often allow for subtler observations. This raises an interesting question about the quality needed for an operationalisation: what should be maximised, the numerical value of a validating coefficient or the conceptual quality of the classification? In the cases discussed here, where the explanatory power of several classifications is of the same order, the clarity of the dimensions used should be given priority.

Another line of argument might on the contrary favour the more pragmatic, 'muddling through' classifications, even if we can only speculate about it. Both Goldthorpe's and the Swiss CSP classifications are working implicitly on a meso-social level. They classify professional categories; individuals are first attributed to these categories according to their professional indications and then given their category's 'class'. Insofar as the construction of these two classifications is based on more complex knowledge - even if largely implicit - about the social positioning and evaluation of professional categories, their 'classes' may be ideal-types that correspond better to the existing social configurations (e.g. in the sense of Weber's concept of life chances) than analytical combinations of single, individual information. Does this mean that the use of such typologies creates a somewhat artificial coherence, classifying individuals nearer to some mean situation than that which corresponds to their individual configuration, or does it mean that they allow us to capture their life situation in all its 'thickness'? For the time being, we have no strong argument that would allow us to decide which one of these opposing conclusions is closer to the truth.

6.3. What is Swiss stratification like?

While the descriptive analyses presented in this article remain extremely sketchy, they nevertheless allow to illustrate some basic feature of Swiss social structure. It is heavily marked by the long standing absence of large clusters of heavy industry and mass production, by strong trends towards tertiarisation and toward qualified pro-

duction structures. With respect to other Western countries, Switzerland's educational system has two peculiarities: it is dual, i.e. large scale professional education is an integrated part of it, and it remains strongly hierarchical, with a small percentage of students arriving (and succeeding) at the university level. Educational level remains a potent element in a person's social positioning, and there are indications supporting the view that there is (still?) an intermediate, but substantial degree of status crystallisation.

6.4. Does social stratification still matter?

The analysis of the relationships between the classifications, structural variables, and three attitudinal indicators (Tables 4 and 5) has produced fairly high, but also very different association coefficients. Generally, the associations are stronger between classifications and structural criteria that between classifications and attitudinal indicators. *First conclusion:* all of the four indicators of hierarchical location capture basically the same phenomenon of institutionalised inequality; none of them is irrelevant as such.

There are several indications of specific affinities between the classifications and the 'dependent' variables; they are weaker for the attitude variables, more pronounced for the hierarchical indicators. *Second conclusion:* there is no **one** best predictor among the four indicators of hierarchical location.

Nevertheless, two indicators appear to be good predictors for almost every variable considered here: the Swiss socio-professional classification and Goldthorpe's class typology. Both of these classifications are based on 'telescoped' combination of dimensions (i.e. they combine their constituent dimensions only partially, leaving out some of the logically possible combinations), and on 'collective' attribution of class position to the individuals; they both correspond less directly to a homogenous theoretical conception than the others. *Third conclusion:* theoretical transparency is no guarantee for optimal empirical relevance.

The results of the comparisons between composite typologies and single dimensions justify a *fourth conclusion:* problems of social positioning and their consequences in (post-)industrial society call for a multidimensional approach.

The associations between the classifications and dependent variables concerning social evaluation, political and cultural orientations are mostly weaker that those concerning aspects of (work) hierarchy itself. *Fifth conclusion:* there is actually considerable 'leeway' between the structural location of individuals and their subjective outlook.

Given the other results, including those that point at the persistence of status crystallisation, we think it is premature to attribute this fact to the dwindling relevance of social stratification, but it clearly merits serious consideration. It is not entirely clear what should be the sociological meaning of Clark & Lipset's (1991) 'decline' of social hierarchies. One way of probing into this question is to explore the possibility that our usual analysing strategies tend to jump the gap between micro-attitudes and macro-stratification without taking into account the fact that social inequalities and hierarchies are institutionalised on a meso-social level (especially through organisations), and that their 'harmless' neglect in stratification research (i.e. without serious loss of information and precision) may by possible only during very specific phases of the structural history of a society.

7. Literature

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[1] One of the most current criticisms of Marxist analysis is its endemic unidimensionality. One theoretical possibility of developing a multidimensional analysis inside the classical Marxist framework has hardly been explored: the coexistence of several modes of production in one society or social formation, each of which commanding its proper class polarity (Poulantzas, 1974, mentions this possibility, but does not elaborate it systematically). Recent neo-marxist revisions do not follow this path.

[2] However, this does not suffice to make them real heirs of Weber's since his insistence on power and legitimacy remains mostly absent from their analyses.

[3] Weber's thinking in terms of social closure (Parkin 1974, Murphy 1988) suggests an empirical tendency toward 'categorisation' of gradational inequalities in periods during which they become stabilized.

[4] Many studies could be cited as examples. We mention only Wright & Perrone's (1977) secondary analysis of US data since theirs is one of the very first attempts at empirically comparing functionalist and Marxist principles in the analysis of inequality. Their results show that sex and race, while not included in the main regression equation, prove to be the main factors in the organization of a substantial amount of income variance.

[5] Blau (1974, 1977) has proposed an integrative model that includes inequalities (gradational) and heterogeneities (categorical) as structural parameters of societies. His model, interesting as it is, presents itself rather as a heuristic formalism than as a substantial theory of social structure; for instance, it says next to nothing about the kind and number of those parameters.

[6] If we admit that social structure, even professional structure, tends to be multidimensional, the use of occupational prestige rather than 'objective' positional elements can also be seen as an implicit way to project the multiple (structural) dimensions onto a single (cultural) one.

[7] We use the term 'structural' to denote positions in organisations or more generally in organised hierarchies; this does not include the possession of symbolic assets such as education or skill.
[8] *Education* groups the compulsory and lower levels into the low category (53.6%), the university level into the high (12.8%) and the remaining levels, corresponding to the intermediate levels of professional or general education, into the intermediary category (33.6%); the initial question distinguishes 7 categories. *Professional prestige scores* are Treiman's (1977), attributed on the basis the individual professional codes. They could theoretically stretch from 0 to 100, but the distribution is very strongly concentrated somewhat below 50 (75.4% are contained in the middle third of 34-67 points). Cut-off points are at 44/45 and 55/56, yielding a distribution from low to high of 43.6%, 34.6% and 21.8%.
[9] Goldthorpe & Payne (1986) have proposed a new version of the initial classification with some adaptations; for comparative purposes, we prefer to use the initial one.
[10] More recently however, Goldthorpe & Payne (1986: 3) have somewhat revised their rationale: 'The objective of this version of the schema was exactly the same as the old one: to bring together, within the classes distinguished, combinations of occupations and employment statuses whose incumbents share in broadly similar market and work situations'.
[11] These seven categories constitute the most frequently used version of Goldthorpe's class typology. There exists a much finer classification with 36 categories; for practical reasons, we shall only use the 7-category version.
[12] The debate about the theoretical choices concerning domination and exploitation and also about the definition of contradictory class locations has been very lively among Marxists, and Wright's writings had an important role in stimulating it. We have no room here to go into this debate; see for instance the Symposium on Wright's 'Classes' in number 15(1) of Critical Sociology (1988), and Wright (1989).
[13] Let us note in passing that in this typology, contradictory locations are clearly identifiable. However, their meaning is open to interpretation and could be compared to the interpretations different versions of status inconsistency theory would give. We shall treat this question in another paper.
[14] There exist a few other proposals to construct 'class typologies' in Switzerland (especially Lalive d'Epinay, Bassand et al., 1982, and Bornschier, 1984). However, they have hardly ever been applied in analyses apart from the original ones (moreover, Bornschier's is a secondary analysis with partly problematic indicators) and have therefore remained of little influence.
[15] Goldthorpe's typology specifies seven 'classes'. If we try to spell out the dimensions implicit in their definition, we can identify three of them: ownership, skill, manual/non-manual. If all of them where only dichotomised, this would yield a typology with 8 types. The Swiss CSP classification also uses three dimensions, one of them tri-, one quadri- and the third dichotomous. Complete logical combination would yield 24 types, several of which would be empirically void; the classification actually contains 8 types.
[16] In principle, people's individual positions should be considered as the main elements of their structural location, the structural location of a family being one of the elements entering into consideration especially - but not exclusively - for housewives (and children for that matter).
[17] As explained before, the ST.ATT typology has been created by combining the trichotomized versions of formal education (E) and occupational prestige (P). The 9 resulting combinations are indicated by the corresponding letter and a sign for the high (+), middle (=) or low (-) category. Thus, E+/P= is the class combining high education with middle occupational prestige.
[18] The theoretical maximum of the simple contingency coefficient (CC) depends on the number of cells in the table. To assure an adequate comparison of tables with

different dimensions, we have standardized the coefficients (CCC) by dividing them by the cells' theoretical maxima.

[19] Two of these classifications, GOLD and CSP-CH, exist in finer graded versions (36 categories for Goldthorpe, 20 for CSP-CH). For different reasons, we do not include them into our discussion; our tests have shown that this would not produce any substantial differences.

[20] The linear regression produces an R^2=.56, the constant is a CCC of .64. This could be considered to be an estimate of the empirical contents of the overlaps short of what they share due to their common dimensions.

[21] The complete distributions for the four classifications may be obtained from the authors.

[22] A secondary finding concerns the dimensionality of Goldthorpe's typology. For several criterion variables, the distributions it creates show nonlinearities, whereas its usual presentation and wording (not its author's claims!) suggests it to be (linearly) hierarchical.

[23] Again, the distribution tables may be obtained from the authors.

[24] There tends to be a proportional relationship with the number of categories for variables expressing high position (%supervisors, income) and an inversely proportional one for variables indicating low position (%controlled, %foreigners). It is not yet clear how we are to interpret this finding.