

**Sociology 621. February 8, 2017. Lecture 7. Complexities of Class Structure
OUTLINE**

I. The problem of “complexity”

- *defining the locations within a structure (“empty places”)*
- *units of analysis that fill locations*
- *double temporality of class locations*
- *asset-ownership and job-structures*
- *emergence of new kinds of locations*

Overall these can really be thought of as two sorts of complexities:

- (1) Complexities in the ways *peoples’ lives are linked to locations* in the class structure.
- (2) Complexities in *the nature of the locations* to which people’s lives are linked.

II. The Middle Class

1. The Middle Class as a double problem: a. Level of abstraction; b. Micro-Macro levels of analysis

2. Problematic cases: engineers, actors, teachers, athletes, white collar employees, civil servants, etc.

3. Many solutions.

- *Simple polarization*
- *Segments of traditional classes*
- *The new class*
- *Contradictory class locations*

4. Methodological issues in constructing a solution: Conceptual Constraints + Empirical Constraints

5. General Character of my proposals:

- version 1: a given location can be simultaneously in more than one class → contradictory class locations.
- version 2: a given location can be simultaneously exploiter and exploited w.r.t. distinct exploitation mechanisms.

6. Attractiveness of these strategies

7. Problems of the strategies

- a) Neither conceptual strategy attains the level of coherence that I hope for
- b) Contradictory Locations
- c) Multiple Exploitations

8. My current “solution” to the middle class

- Return to the earlier contradictory locations idea for managers
- Skill exploitation as a “privilege” that constitutes the basis for *strata* within classes
- Capitalization of “skill rents” as a contradictory location
- The game/rules/moves triplet as a new way of defining friends/allies/enemies within domains of class conflict

III. Other complexities

1. *Mediated locations* and *Shadow class locations*

2. *Temporality* of class locations:

- *Careers* and intra-generational mobility
- temporally indeterminate/underdetermined class locations
- capitalization of job-rents

3. *Capital Ownership and the Class Character of Jobs*

4. *Unemployment/insecure employment/underemployment:* a dualistic structure of employment relations

- secure job becomes a kind of property right → a distinctive asset that divides non-capitalists; nature of the employment contract as a class division (Goldthorpe)
- Underclass vs working class as a class divide
- the *precariat*

5. *The State:* how should state employees be understood?

6. *Global Classes?* The North/South divide as a class divide