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Déclin et renouveau de l'analyse de classe dans la sociologie britannique, 1945-2016

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The fall and rise of class analysis in British sociology in comparative perspective, 1945-2016¹.

Mike Savage

There has been a dramatic revival of interest in the study of social class in the UK over the past two decades (e.g. Savage 2000; Crompton 2008; Atkinson 2015; Savage et al 2015). Class – often in intersection with other inequalities such as gender, race and ethnicity – has returned to being a major concern within contemporary British sociology. This is a remarkable turn-around. Having been marginalised as a tired and redundant concept in the 1990s, criticised by many of the key sociologists working in Britain, such as Zygmunt Bauman (1982), Ulrich Beck (1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), and Anthony Giddens (1991), the concept has returned with a vengeance in the past few years².

My paper discusses three distinctive generations of class analysis in British social science. The concept of class has different kinds of stakes in each of these, mobilises distinctive intellectual and political communities, and has varying scholarly and political implications. I will call the first of these the ‘heroic age’ of British class analysis from 1950 to the mid-1970s (see more generally Savage 2010). This was characterised by a strong Fabian socialist vision of British social science focused on the working class as harbinger of progressive social change.

Secondly, we can see a period of the decline of class analysis from the mid-1970s to the late 1990s. It was in this period that the supposed rise of post-modernism, post-industrialism and post-Fordism were deemed to have radically eroded ‘traditional’ working class culture. These shifts were often seen to undermine the project of class analysis itself since the working class no longer appeared to be a collective actor of any significance. This was the context for the growing prominence of John Goldthorpe’s approach to class analysis. Although this was sometimes aimed at rebutting those arguing for the end of class (see especially Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992), in fact, by defining the concept in largely technical terms this perspective also insulated class analysis from having wider appeal. Despite its many great achievements, it was therefore complicit in the sidelining of class analysis during this period.

¹ This paper is a revised and expanded version of the paper published by Tempo Social (Savage 2016)

² Bauman was a Polish émigré who worked at the University of Leeds from 1972-1990. Giddens was educated at the University of Hull, and the LSE, and became Professor of Sociology at Cambridge from 1987 to 1997 and Director of the London School of Economics from 1997 to 2003. Beck was based at Munich, but was a high profile Centennial (visiting) Professor at the LSE from 1998 to his death in 2015.

Thirdly, we can see the revival of interests in social class since 2000 as reflecting new intellectual collaborations and broadening academic interests in class. Bourdieu's sociology proved highly influential here. Rather than the fixation on the working class which was the hallmark of the golden age of British sociology, Bourdieu's sociology allowed a focus on how the more privileged and advantaged social classes were being re-made, and how this shaping British society in the early 21st century.

In elaborating my account, I want to show how these British debates are not parochial: they have always had a strong comparative focus. Thus, John Goldthorpe's influential 'class structural' approach to social mobility and stratification which responded to the increasingly hostile climate towards class analysis in the UK by orienting himself towards an international, and especially European, research community from the 1980s. The more recent revival of culturally inflected approaches to class analysis in Britain has depended on the development of strong global networks, especially affiliated to Bourdieu's supporters, in Europe and North America. The power of class analysis in Britain should therefore not be seen as a parochial throwback to an old fashioned 'nativist' paradigm, so much as a highly creative and highly international intervention which carefully situates current developments in both historical and international context. More particularly, it is the interaction between British and European sociologists which explain why this work is more exciting and innovative than that found within (most notably) American sociology which is less informed by these comparative concerns.

Mike Savage short autobiography

I have not been a neutral observer of the changing fortunes of class analysis, and have indeed endeavoured to lead the revival of class analysis in Britain over recent years.

I came from a solid middle class background in suburban London (my father was a journalist, who had not been to university), I attended a state comprehensive school and studied History as an undergraduate at the University of York in the later 1970s. I was therefore educated outside British elite educational institutions and my education in the North of England, where I saw at first hand both the historical vitality of working class communities, but also their rapid decline during these years. I moved into sociology as a doctoral student between 1981 and 1984 at the northern English university of Lancaster after I grew frustrated with the empiricism of much historical work. Politicised by the strength of Marxist theory during the 1970s, I was inspired by the classic debates on working class mobilisation and politics – especially those triggered off by E.P. Thompson's *The*

Making of the English Working Class – and conducting a detailed historical study on the northern English industrial town of Preston (Savage 1987). Yet although I took my inspiration from E.P. Thompson's concern with working class mobilisation I questioned 'heroic' interpretations of the rise of Labour. I questioned how far we should assume that the working classes were 'naturally' attracted to socialist parties. In also arguing that the patriarchal practices of male trade unionists played an important role in affecting the politics of the Labour movement, I also argued that class had to be placed in context with other kinds of inequalities, and hence that class had no a priori analytical pre-eminence. (Savage 1987)

In the mid-1980s, I moved to the English south, as a post-doctoral Fellow at the University of Sussex (and later as Temporary Lecturer at the University of Surrey). The world here looked very different from the bleak decaying industrial urban fabric of the north: new service and hi-tech industries seemed to offer a glimpse of a different kind of future. Reflecting on these experiences led me to think about how to understand the middle classes (Savage et al 1992; Butler and Savage 1995) and their distinctive hold on British society. So whereas other sociologists were detecting the end of class, I argued that we were seeing a reconfiguration of class, which demanded new analytical tools. I therefore found the posturing around the 'end of class' which Bauman, Giddens, and Beck had made popular, and which was eagerly taken up by politicians such as Tony Blair, to be completely at odds with my own observations.

My own sociological thinking changed substantially during the 1990s, during which time I worked at the University of Keele in northern England (1989-94), spent a year visiting the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and was then appointed Professor at the University of Manchester in 1995. In this period I changed my main sociological allegiance from Marx to Bourdieu. In fact, I still see the Marxian concern with class formation as fundamental, but I could not see how the labour theory of value provided an adequate conceptual foundation for class analysis (see Savage 2000). As I explain below I came to find Bourdieu's concept of capitals as more powerful, and from an initial focus on the nature of cultural capital I increasingly broadened my interests to explore systematically the cultural aspects of class formation.

In 2010 I moved to the University of York, and in 2012 to the London School of Economics, where in 2013 I was named as the Martin White Professor (the title traditionally awarded to the most 'senior' sociology professor at the LSE). I was Head of Sociology Department between 2013 and 2016, and from 2015 I have been co-Director of the International Inequalities Institute. This has proved a very exciting base to support my recent research, especially as it permits strong collaboration with economists, social policy researchers, anthropologists and geographers.

1: The “heroic” generation: the rise of class analysis in British social science 1945-1975

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the emergence of British social sciences in the years after 1945 depended on demonstrating the significance of social class in British society. Different kinds of ‘class analysis’ were used by emerging social scientists to demonstrate their expertise and authority. And, furthermore, these key studies proved to be foundational in the sense that they defined the canon against which later works defined themselves – sometimes critically – against.

Naissance de la sociologie britannique et études des classes sociales

In 1945 sociology barely existed as a specialist discipline in the UK (though a conception of sociology as an overarching concern bringing together history and the social sciences into a broad interpretation of social change was very strong - see Goldman 2004; Platt 2004). Only in the London School of Economics was Sociology taught in a significant way. During the 1960s, however, as Britain’s 1964-1970 Labour Government sought to challenge what they saw as the traditionalism and conservatism of British society, sociology was increasingly championed as a ‘modern’ discipline which would question traditional wisdom. Many of the new universities opened in the 1960s, such as Essex, Lancaster, Warwick and York developed ‘flagship’ sociology Departments which represented beacons of excellence.

In defining the parameters of this bold and brave new discipline, the study social class became pivotal. Whereas anthropology or economics skated around this topic, sociologists made the study of class central, and in this way demonstrate the wider value of their discipline. Furthermore, this also proved a way of showing how research could be done on British society itself using new ethnographic survey and interview components (see generally Savage 2010).

One of the first works which had established the distinctive intellectual profile of British sociology was T.H. Marshall’s *Citizenship and Social Class* (1951). Marshall was Martin White Professor at the LSE, and the most famous sociologist in Britain during the 1950s. Intellectually he was formed by the LSE’s commitment to a Fabian evolutionary perspective³, which led him to argue that the working class could only be true and full citizens if the meaning of citizenship was extended from legal and civil rights to include social welfare. This argument perfectly caught the mood of the times, with its strong embrace of the post-war Welfare State. Marshall’s LSE colleague, David Glass (1954)

³ The Fabian Society, formed in 1884, were a major intellectual force in the development of the Labour Party, and believed in the role of enlightened planning informed by social research to shape welfare reform and elaborate social justice.

pioneered the first ever study of social mobility in Britain using one of the first large scale national sample surveys, and thus demonstrated the power of new social scientific methods for unravelling class divisions.

This tradition associated originally with the London School of Economics thus pioneered new survey methods to study class, and sought to put the 'working class' under the spotlight. The key younger sociologists influenced by this tradition were John Goldthorpe⁴ and David Lockwood⁵ who had both studied at the LSE, though they found its conservatism stifling. Goldthorpe and Lockwood's *The Affluent worker* project in the early 1960s, based at the University of Cambridge, used survey methods to look inside the social relations of new assembly line industries. This led John Goldthorpe, who moved to Oxford in 1968, to champion the use of large scale sample surveys to analyse social mobility from a class structural perspective, with the Nuffield Mobility Study of 1970 becoming canonical (Goldthorpe et al 1980; Halsey et al 1980). This research originally conceptualised class as a form of 'social ranking' where, rather than being seen as defined by exploitation or domination, classes were seen as part of a status (sometimes here influenced by Weber), skill or economic hierarchy.

Whereas sociologists at the LSE and Oxford used surveys to analyse class, sociologists based elsewhere showed a greater eagerness to embrace ethnographic and qualitative methods and reacted against what were seen as the paternalist, even elitist, overtones of the LSE. Although A.H. Halsey (2004) sees the LSE as having a major influence on the development of British sociology as its graduates took up posts in new sociology Departments across the country, he overstates his case. Much of empirical and critical sociology which was championed in the new Sociology Departments saw itself as being critical of the LSE's evolutionary, non-empirical, even elitist version of the discipline, and after the 1970s the LSE lost its former leadership within British sociology.

Sociologists proved very effective at taking up qualitative work to explore class inequality from the 1950s. Because anthropologists generally extended their ethnographic eye overseas, sociologists were able to move into this vacuum and led a series of canonical ethnographic and qualitative studies to shed new light on class divisions in Britain. Important examples included the ethnography of a mining village in the brilliant *Coal is Our Life* (Dennis et al 1954), Willmott and Young's *Family*

⁴ John Goldthorpe, from a modest background in a Yorkshire coal mining community, was educated at University College London and the LSE, and worked at Leicester and Cambridge before moving to Nuffield College Oxford in 1969, where he is still active.

⁵ Lockwood came from a lower middle class background in Yorkshire. After his studies at the LSE, he worked at Cambridge before moving to become Professor of Sociology at the new University of Essex in 1969.

and Kinship in East London (1958)⁶, and the work of Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden *Educational Failure and the Working Class* (1961)⁷. In many of the newer British Sociology Departments, it was qualitative and case study methods which were taken up most actively, alongside theoretical interests in Marxism, and later feminism and post-colonial studies. These perspectives were much more likely to see classes as defined by relations of exploitation than in terms of 'social ranking'.

Marxismes et sociologie britannique

It is important to recognise the power of Marxism as an intellectual current during the 1960s and 1970s. This encouraged strong engagement between sociology and critical currents in social history and in English literature. The work of E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and Richard Hoggart had a great influence on these emerging currents within sociology, since they were also seeking to broaden the scope and range of their disciplines to allow popular voices to gain entry, in a way which sociologists found congenial to their own concerns. The key venue was to become Birmingham University's *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*, founded in 1964 by Richard Hoggart, and then directed by Stuart Hall⁸. This Centre saw Hoggart's form of popular literary criticism, most evident in *The Uses of Literacy*, being radicalised through the infusion of Marxist, and later feminist and anti-racist currents, which created a highly creative, though unstable, intellectual space. Anti-racist scholarship informed both by Marxist debates and also in critical reaction to the 'race relations' school which has been dominant in earlier research placed the intersection between class and race more centrally onto the agenda (e.g. Miles 1984; CCCS 1982). The result was to question that assumptions about working class progressivism which underlay the earlier heroic generation and to underscore how race and gender needed to be analysed more seriously. Paul Willis's famous *Learning to Labour* (1975), developed an approach to class offered a 'non-heroic' perspective, whereby white working class boys conspired in their own subordination by willingly rejecting the values of education and actively looking to go into manual work⁹.

⁶ Michael Young had studied at Cambridge and the LSE, and worked briefly at Oxford, but spent much of his career as a 'social innovator' working outside academia. He founded the Institute of Community Studies (now called the Young Foundation) which pioneered qualitative community studies, as well as the Open University. Willmott was a researcher also based at the Institute of Community Studies.

⁷ Jackson and Marsden had studied English literature at Cambridge, before turning to popular sociology. Jackson became an influential educational policy and charity activist, Marsden moved to the Sociology Department at the University of Essex.

⁸ Hoggart had worked in adult education at the University of Leeds before moving to Birmingham, and later became a leading cultural policy advisor and manager, working for UNESCO and becoming Warden of Goldsmiths College. Hall had migrated from Barbados to study English at Oxford, been active in the New Left, before moving to Birmingham, and finally becoming Professor of Sociology at the Open University from 1982 to his retirement in 1998.

⁹ Willis was a student at Birmingham, and later worked at the Universities of Wolverhampton and Keele before moving to Princeton in 2004.

Sociology was greatly influenced by the structuralist Marxism associated with Louis Althusser and Nicos Poulantzas, and many younger sociologists such as Rosemary Crompton, Scott Lash, John Westergaard and John Urry took up these currents¹⁰. Their work had a different tone and theoretical provenance to that associated with the sociologists such as Goldthorpe, Lockwood and Glass. The latter placed more emphasis on empirical research conducted using interview and survey methods, and resisted what they saw as the theoretical dogmatism of Marxism. Younger sociologists were attracted to the theoretical ambition of Althusser's followers and rejected what they saw as the conservatism of older sociologists. Nonetheless, there was a lively intellectual encounter between them (see e.g. Clarke et al 1979; Goldthorpe 1988), and both groups shared a common political concern with the political destiny of the working class

La centralité de la "working class" pour les sociologues

Let me pull out the paradigmatic significance of this remarkable generation of British sociologists who emerged during the 1950s and flowered during the 1960s. Firstly, they rejected the gentlemanly snobbishness of previous academic culture which patronised the working class. For TH Marshall (1951), it was only by extending citizenship to include social welfare that the working classes could be admitted into full membership of society. For Willmott and Young (1956), understanding the working class family was central to underscoring the power of community relations in modern Britain. For Goldthorpe and Lockwood (1968/69), their insistence that the working class remained a distinctive class even in the 1960s, set apart from 'bourgeois' or middle class values, meant that class was still fundamental even in new, mechanised sectors of employment.

These concerns fed also into Goldthorpe's class structural approach to social mobility which he introduced through his fundamental interventions in social mobility research during the 1970s. Here he decisively broke with the older social ranking tradition through using log linear models¹¹ to analyse class as a categorical (i.e. non-ranked) variable where classes were defined through

¹⁰ Crompton had worked with Goldthorpe and Lockwood on the Affluent Worker project, before working at the new Universities of East Anglia, Kent, Leicester, and City Universities. Lash and Urry were both leading sociologists at the University of Lancaster, which became one of the leading Departments in the UK from the later 1970s (Lash moved to Goldsmiths College London in 1990). Westergaard worked at the LSE before becoming Professor at Sheffield.

¹¹ Les modèles log-linéaires, qui utilisent les techniques de la statistique inférentielle (ou probabiliste), ont permis dans les années 1970 de distinguer entre la "mobilité absolue" ou "observée" – celle que l'on trouve dans une table de mobilité – et la "mobilité relative" qui permet d'identifier la "fluidité sociale" d'une société, à savoir la mobilité sociale des individus indépendamment de l'évolution des structures des professions des enfants et des parents.

employment relationships¹². This new approach was brought together in his pivotal *Class Structure and Social Mobility in Modern Britain*¹³ which was held up as marking a fundamental paradigm shift in the study of class and social mobility.

This generation was thus fixated on the prospects for the working class to bring about social change, and more particularly by the ambivalent position of the working class within British society, at the one moment being central to the first industrial society in the world, but at another moment remaining outside the 'gentlemanly', cosy world of the British establishment. The significance of the working class for this generation of sociologists was not incidental, since many of these sociologists were upwardly mobile, either working outside the elite universities (or in the case of Goldthorpe at Oxford were seeking to secure their authority within these). Sociology helped to unravel the significance of a key 'outsider' social group which lay outside of, or in a fraught relationship with, the established upper and middle classes, and which thereby lay outside the purview of more established disciplines – such as economics or anthropology.

This leads onto a second point. This sociology was implicitly or explicitly highly political, and all of the key figures had no doubts about the political significance of their work. The power of Marxism was central here, with sociologists attempting to challenge revolutionary formulations through elaborating more complex or subtle versions of their analysis of class than might be expected from a literal rendition of Marxist theory. This is nowhere more apparent than for Michael Young, who had written the Labour Party manifesto in 1945 and was a major figure in social democratic thinking. But it was also true in somewhat different ways for T.H. Marshall, who clearly articulated the Fabian LSE tradition to elaborate a conception of citizenship which sought to include the working classes. In short, there were direct political stakes in debates about class, with academic and political arguments cross fertilising each other.

¹² Au début des années 1970, le schéma de classe de Goldthorpe, Erikson et Portocarrero (1979) définit les positions de classe à partir d'une classification des professions selon deux caractéristiques : la situation sur le marché (*market situation*) et la situation de travail (*work situation*), déterminant elles-mêmes ce qu'ils appellent les *life chances* des individus. La définition et l'usage de cette nomenclature se veulent pragmatiques. Elle peut être déclinée en 10, 8, 7 voire 3 catégories selon les enquêtes. Dans les années 1980, alors que Goldthorpe cherche à l'exporter, notamment dans le cadre du Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations (CASMIN) comprenant 12 pays, il appuie ce schéma sur une armature théorique autour de la notion de relation d'emploi (*employment relationship*) qui oppose les salariés selon la nature de leurs relations contractuelles avec leur employeur, en distinguant les positions selon la plus ou moins grande autonomie et capacité de négociation des premiers avec les seconds (Erikson, Goldthorpe, 1992).

¹³ The only apparent exception to this focus on the working class might appear to be Lockwood's *Black Coated Worker*, which was ostensibly a study of clerical workers. Even here, by underscoring their key status and work differences which clerks had over manual workers, even this study implicitly had major implications for underscoring the importance of the working class.

Thirdly, these interventions also elaborated a raft of methodological repertoires which became canonical for sociology itself, as well as the social sciences more broadly. These methods were championed explicitly as devices which allowed those who had previously been outside the purview of social research to gain some kind of voice. The qualitative in-depth interview and the representative survey were central here. Both of these proved means of eliciting accounts and views of a wider range of people outside the educated middle classes, and hence providing a more balanced understanding of social divisions as a whole. The sample survey allowed new aggregate groups – such as social classes – to be identified and categorised in ways which ‘lifted social groups out of the landscape’ and created a vocabulary of social groups which came to have huge significance (Savage 2010).

Fourthly, this moment was rooted in British developments and not strongly informed by comparative analysis. It was a concern to re-work British traditional understandings of its history and development that led writers such as E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and T.H. Marshall, and Michael Young to insist on the need to admit popular – working class – voices. Indeed, the major intellectual rupture on the left was to pitch the highly internationalised Marxism of Perry Anderson against the more nativist version of Thompson¹⁴. Anderson, strongly influenced by French structuralism, notably Althusser, reacted against what he saw as the parochial ‘humanist’ English Marxism of Thompson. Thompson’s (1978) later work made it clear that he saw himself as defending a distinctly English (in some eyes, empiricist) mode of thinking about class as a cultural and historical process¹⁵.

This generation was therefore truly formative, not only in establishing a powerful form of scholarship, but also in forging a set of research tools which came to have much wider provenance within the social sciences. These tools allowed a new kind of social group – the working class - whose voices and identities had been obscured by the dominant genteel inflection of British culture, to be heard. These methods were part of a radical current during the 1960s which swept into British public life and which ‘made the working class visible’. The first major British soap opera, ‘Coronation Street’, set in northern working class Salford (adjacent to Manchester); the gritty realist novels of Shelagh Delaney, Alan Sillitoe, Stan Barstow, and Barry Hines (all set in poor Northern English locations); the BBC’s famous ‘Play for Today’ dramas, extending into the celebrated drama of Dennis

¹⁴ Anderson was long time editor of *New Left Review* which played a major role in translating continental Marxist theory into English from the 1960s, and helped promoted the work of Althusser and Poulantzas in academic debates. He moved to become professor of History at UCLA in 1984.

¹⁵ Un aspect central du conflit entre Thompson et Anderson concernait les rapports entre théorie et empirie : sans nier l’importance de la théorisation, Thompson affirme une approche ancrée dans l’analyse des dynamiques historiques concrètes et contextualisées, approche qui aura une longue postérité en sociologie.

Potter; the visibility of distinctly working class actors, notably Michael Caine; and perhaps above all the take-off of popular music, led by the Beatles, all defined this period as that in which the voices of the working class – as articulated by a new generation of cultural intermediaries – were mobilised as never before and found a certain place in British society.

This was, however, a very peculiar moment, shortly to be undercut by emerging social trends. The working class was very largely seen as ‘white’: the 1960s was the last decade when it was the white working class, rather than ethnic minorities, who were the prime ‘outsiders knocking to come in’. Although there was a substantial amount of research at this time on immigration and on race and ethnicity, and although there was some dialogue with Marxist debates regarding ethnic and class fractions, it rarely directly interacted with work of this ‘heroic tradition’¹⁶. It was therefore a somewhat parochial, insular, and British (sometimes English) white working class which was the focus of attention. It also focused on men. Although the situation was already changing dramatically as a result of feminist politics and changing labour market and personal relationships, the 1960s was the last decade when women could largely be left out of the picture – or, as with Willmott and Young - be predominantly identified as mothers. Thirdly, the working class ‘community’ was being deconstructed at the very moment that it finally was to have its place in British culture – with the radical programme of public housing renewal and the final phases of slum clearance, as well as the continue decline of manufacturing industry. The male white working class was thus being defined as the harbingers of progressive social and political change at the very same moment that their position in British society was being undercut.

In short, this “heroic” generation of sociology was also an elegiac and romantic one: it finally brought the white male working class fully into visibility at the very same time that this formation was being radically undermined. It was ultimately unsustainable. And this is nowhere better demonstrated in the last great work from this tradition, Paul Willis’s *Learning to Labour* (1975), which was already looking back, almost nostalgically, at a world which had been eclipsed. Here the world of working class boys is rendered as hopeless: rejecting academic culture, these boys embrace a world of manual labour which is being dismantled in front of them – so preparing them for long term unemployment during the bleak years of de-industrialised Britain from the mid-1970s.

2: The decline of class analysis 1970-2000

¹⁶. A partial exception was John Rex and Robert Moore (1967).

I have argued that the “heroic” tradition of class analysis established in Britain in the immediate post war decades was unsustainable. It was premised on a model of the white male industrial worker which could only be seen as nostalgic from the vantage point of late 20th century Britain.

Déstructuration de la “working class” et marginalisation de l’approche classiste

Underlying these problems was an overarching weakness of what I have called the ‘class formation’ paradigm (Savage 2001). In a Weberian spirit, the sociological models of the heroic generation explore the social cohesion and internal coherence of different social classes to consider how united these classes might be. This approach was identified by Giddens (1973) as ‘class structuration’ or Goldthorpe (1980) as ‘class formation’. The interest was in how individuals in the same class position might bond together to become aware of their shared position and unite to champion a form of progressive politics. The solidaristic and cohesive world of the male white working class, defined by common relationships to production and the workplace, was the template here for understanding why and how class mattered. This approach had a certain appeal when there was evidence of solidaristic class politics, whether through trade unions, community mobilisation, or mobilisation in political parties, but was unable to deal with the fragmentation of social relations embedded in the ‘neo-liberal’ shift towards a marketised economy from the later 1970s. And so it was inevitable that the dramatic de-industrialisation of Britain from the 1970s alongside economic deregulation and marketization of public services could only be interpreted as undermining class – as it had been historically understood in the “heroic” age.

We should recall the key political changes of the 1970s and 1980s. During the 1970s, it was still eminently possible to see the imprint of the working class in British politics. Several major industrial disputes in this period had demonstrated the power of trade unions, and indeed a successful coal miner’s strike in 1974 had brought down the Conservative government. Trade union membership reached an all-time peak in 1979 when half of the workforce was unionised. However, from the later 1970s, the manufacturing base of British economy began its final period of decline, with unemployment rising to levels not seen since the 1930s. Employment had been falling in many of the traditional industrial sectors – mining, shipbuilding, textiles, iron and steel – for several decades, but these trends accelerated when Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative Government was elected in 1979. The Conservative Party embarked on a programme of public spending cuts, privatisation and deregulation, and saw the expansion of the service sector as compensating for the structural weakness of manufacturing. The famous coal miner’s strike of 1984-85 was to prove the last major industrial conflict on the old model, and the defeat of the miners was to prove emblematic. This was a remarkable new world, most visible in the transformation of London, where the derelict Docklands

of the later 1970s were transformed in short order into the city's glitzy new financial hub during the 1980s.

Intellectually too, this period was one of dramatic change. It is difficult to overstate the vitality of Marxist debates during the 1970s, yet these increasingly took on a theoreticist tone which tended to insulate them from more empirical studies. As someone who was an undergraduate and doctoral student from 1977 to 1984, I witnessed both the creativity of this theoretical current, yet also its intellectual self-absorption and increasing failure to engage with empirical research on class and inequality. From the later 1970s the theoretical centre of attention within 'left sociology' and cultural studies moved from Marx and Gramsci towards Foucault, with the result that class became a much less central focus of interest¹⁷. Until the early 1980s, empirical researchers on class and stratification such as John Goldthorpe continued to engage – albeit critically - with 'left sociology', but these dialogues died away, and his major confrontation with feminist sociology, where he (in hindsight, perversely) defended the Nuffield Mobility study's decision to only sample men, was to have a profound effect in alienating him from feminist sociologists, in particular.

A particularly important intervention was Gordon Marshall's (1988) critique of Erik Olin Wright's work, which was highly effective in taking the wind away from the sails of the most high profile attempt to update Marxist class analysis empirically. Therefore, as Marxism seemed to lose direction, and as feminists and anti-racist scholars increasingly sought to distance themselves from class-centric perspectives, those arguing for the importance of class became increasingly defensive.

Réductionnisme statistique et instrumental du concept de classe

As a result of these tensions, John Goldthorpe's work developed a more international approach to class analysis strongly committed to comparative survey analysis. This was a powerful and in its own terms highly effective way of saving a certain kind of project for class analysis, given the challenges which it faced at this period. In his earlier writings in the 1960s and 1970s, Goldthorpe can be seen as extending the social ranking approach to social class which was embedded in the older LSE tradition, and which he took to Oxford. From the later 1970s, he subtly shifted his focus. In developing the Nuffield class schema for which he was to become famous, he detached it from a wider conceptual baggage of theories of exploitation or domination. Instead, in Rosemary

¹⁷ This current proved especially significant through the important interventions of Nikolas Rose who was Professor at Goldsmiths College from 1990 to 2001, and the LSE from 2001 to 2010, before moving to Kings College London. A further important figure was Tony Bennett, who had been strongly associated as a Gramscian Marxist with Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies before being increasingly influenced by Foucault from the early 1980s, and also becoming interested in Bourdieu's sociology from the 1990s.

Crompton's terms, he defined it as 'employment aggregates' where he differentiated between those occupations associated with a diffuse 'service relationship' (i.e. professionals and managers) and those associated with a 'labour contract'¹⁸.

This was a very powerful move, since Goldthorpe was therefore able to define class in operational ways which did not depend on any 'baggage' about class formation or solidaristic identities, nor on Marxist theories of class. Indeed, he increasingly championed a form of rational action theory which was based on the individualistic assumptions which his class schema embedded, as a means of distancing his approach from versions of the 'heroic' generation (see e.g. Goldthorpe 1979; Goldthorpe in Clark et al 1990; Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992). Goldthorpe strongly resisted culturalist arguments that the working class had different cultural values which accounted for their distinctive disadvantages, and saw rational choice theory as a means of recognising popular agency (see Goldthorpe 1988). It was for these reasons that he became one of Bourdieu's most unsympathetic commentators (Goldthorpe 2007)

Goldthorpe's account of class has numerous strengths. It was in no way called into question by de-industrialisation, or the decline of overt class politics, or changing forms of class cultures. Indeed, these became questions which could be analysed using this class schema (e.g. Heath 1985¹⁹). It was in this vein that Goldthorpe and Marshall (1992) recounted the 'promising future of class analysis', which challenged the 'declinist' view that class no longer mattered. However, this version of class analysis had little political appeal, and was not taken up outside academic circles. Indeed, the rethinking of the Labour Party under Tony Blair was much more influenced by Giddens's critique of class analysis, and the search for the 'third way'.

Goldthorpe's comparative class structural perspective was powerful. Previously, there was no one dominant way of classifying occupations into classes, with different nations having their own specific national approaches, such as the Blau-Duncan index in the US. Here, Goldthorpe's collaborations with European sociologists proved to be very important, leading notably to his important work with Robert Erikson published in *The Constant Flux* (1992). Here occupations were coded to the Goldthorpe class schema in 13 nations using identical procedures, setting a new benchmark for comparative research. Using this approach, Erikson and Goldthorpe resisted ideas of 'national

¹⁸ This approach to class is amply discussed by Goldthorpe 2000; Savage et al 1992; Butler and Savage 1995; Savage 2000). See Gordon Marshall et al (1988) for a good overview.

¹⁹ Heath had studied at Oxford and was strongly influenced by Goldthorpe, and has been a key figure for extending class structural approaches to explore questions of political identification, social change and ethnicity in the British context.

particularity' (such as the greater social mobility possible in the United States), and argued that there was 'trendless fluctuation' in the rates of mobility in all nations.

Goldthorpe's also developed collaborations with international researchers, especially through his formative role in Research Committee 28 of the International Sociological Association²⁰. He also was one of the supporters of the formation of the *European Sociological Review*²¹ and the *European Consortium of Sociological Research*²², and helped generate an interest in 'analytical sociology' which has come to command considerable attention. Goldthorpe's international prominence is in contrast to his reputation in British sociology, where he withdrew from the British Sociological Association, and made little effort to contribute to British debates after the later 1970s²³. His work has however been highly influential in official circles, though informing the official British National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification which was introduced in 2001 and operationalised Goldthorpe's class schema in official statistics (Penissat and Rowell 2012).

There is no doubt that Goldthorpe's move was very important in rescuing a specific form of class analysis in a period when the grounding on which older versions of class analysis was being cut away. It also proved highly prescient in lending itself to the increasing quantification of social mobility research and analyses of stratification, notably in his championing of log-linear modelling as permitting analysis of relative rates of social mobility. However, this perspective also came at a certain cost, which has become more apparent as the years moved on.

Firstly and most importantly, Goldthorpe's approach shunted the question of class into technical issues of measurement. This had the effect of sundering wider public interest and engagement. And, by defining class as a 'variable', its overarching significance for comprehending social and political dynamics became less clear. These problems have become increasingly evident in the past 20 years. Goldthorpe's class schema has not proved effective at highlighting the increasing income differences which economists such as Joe Stiglitz, Tony Atkinson, and Thomas Piketty have drawn attention to. (see Friedman et al 2015; Savage et al 2015). In this respect, by defining class in terms of occupation, spiralling levels of income and wealth inequality which have taken place in many nations in the

²⁰ Créée en 1950, ce réseau sur la stratification sociale et la mobilité sociale a constitué un lieu central d'internationalisation de la sociologie, spécifiquement de la sociologie quantitative, dominée par les techniques de régression. John Goldthorpe l'a présidée entre 1982 et 1986.

²¹ Principale revue européenne de sociologie fondée en 1984.

²² Cette fondation, créée en 1991, sert à la fois de structure de promotion de la sociologie auprès de la Commission Européenne, de structure de financement de thèses et de projets de recherche et de diffusion des méthodes statistiques et des outils développés par ces sociologues dans le cadre de *Summer Schools*.

²³ Goldthorpe had been editor of the British Sociological Association's journal *Sociology* in the early 1970s, yet he increasingly published mainly in the *British Journal of Sociology* from the early 1980s, as well as in international journals.

recent decades have not been registered within class analysis (see Savage et al 2015). In a similar way, Goldthorpe has been resistant to influential 'micro-class' approaches, notably that associated with the American sociologists David Grusky and Kim Weeden²⁴ (e.g. 2001) which argue that more exact analyses are possible by drilling down beyond Goldthorpe's broad class categories towards more specific occupational profiles.

Secondly, in seeking to render class as a discrete variable, and through his own personal responses to criticisms of his earlier work, Goldthorpe had the effect of distinguishing class from processes such as gender, ethnicity and age. In holding class apart from wider intersectionalities of inequality, the overall remit of the concept and appeal was actually substantially reduced. In the British case this was compounded by the way that Goldthorpe had proved resistant to feminist analysis, in particular. Despite the huge merits of Goldthorpe's approach came at the cost of reducing class to a specifically variable which lost its capacity to engage with the public and political questions of the day, as well as the arguments of other social scientists.

3: The revival of class analysis and the dynamics of European collaborations

Class analysis in Britain in 2000 was therefore in a strange position: on the one hand, great advances in measurement issues and in the championing of a high profile class schema which proved internationally important and offered a powerful tool to measure of class comparatively. On the other hand, this had come at the expense of limiting the range and scope of the concept of class, and ruling out many of the key social changes of the time as centrally involved in class. The revival of class analysis in the past twenty years has depended on re-opening the wider agenda of class analysis and demonstrating the losses of defining class as a discrete variable. Here, new kinds of comparative sociology, and the influence of Pierre Bourdieu, have been fundamental.

L'importation des concepts et des méthodes de Bourdieu dans le renouveau des enquêtes sur les classes sociales

Bourdieu's work was well known in British educational sociology from the 1960s, but it was not until the translation of *Distinction* in 1984 that the broader importance of his ideas were more widely recognised. Initially the arguments regarding cultural capital in *Distinction* informed debates about

²⁴ David Grusky (professeur de sociologie à l'Université de Stanford) et Kim Weeden (professeure de sociologie à l'Université de Cornell) développent une analyse des inégalités sociales en termes de « micro-classes », fondés sur des regroupements de professions (*occupational groups*), par opposition à une représentation des structures sociales autour de quelques « grandes » (*big*) classes sociales.

the changing culture of the middle classes in a consumer society (see Lash and Urry 1987; Featherstone 1987). I was one of the first to use Bourdieu's *Distinction* to inform debates about class in British sociology. In my own study *Property, Bureaucracy and Culture* (1992), I argued that the concept of cultural capital was essential for understanding the resilience of the professional middle classes, even amidst the economic restructuring of the 1980s. This work cross fertilised with new interests in the relationship between consumption and social class, led by Alan Warde's (1997) demonstration of the persistence of class differences in food consumption. It was also associated with new generations of feminists who saw the intersection between class and gender as central (notably Beverley Skeggs' (1997) *Formations of Class and Gender*²⁵). By the later 1990s Bourdieu has become a key reference point for cross fertilising debates between the sociology of class, cultural studies, and also feminism. This has come to be increasingly dominant in the past decade and now offers a strong competing position to that of Goldthorpe and his associates.

Bourdieu's work was important less because of his distinctively French profile, but because of his strong presence as a global thinker, including in the United States. During the later 1990s Bourdieu replaced Foucault as the most influential figure in Anglophone sociology. In the more positivist climate of American sociology, Bourdieu offered a way of dealing with culture and inequalities which were susceptible to quantitative measurement and hence generated great interest from cultural sociologists. The 'omnivore' debate, inspired by Richard Petersen, used Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital – identified as 'highbrow culture' – as its main analytical foil. The American influence was also important in the critique of positivist 'variable centred' models of explanation through the work of Andrew Abbott, John Levi-Martin and others. This current of work argues against the attribution of causal agency to 'variables' which takes place in standard quantitative methods, such as regression models, and insists on the need to unravel processes. Here Bourdieu's field analysis was highly germane.

In the UK, Bourdieu proved attractive to sociologists who were disenchanted with the excesses of the 'linguistic turn' inspired by post-structuralism and which had detracted from political and economic analyses. As British sociologists looked for a sociologist interested in culture, but also in political economy, Bourdieu's influence grew. Thus, Bourdieu offered a powerful riposte to those arguing that social capital could be a force for social cohesion, and also demonstrated how educational processes were bound up with forms of exclusion and inequity.

²⁵ Warde had studied at Cambridge and Leeds, and after working at the University of Lancaster he moved to the University of Manchester in 1999 where he has been active in developing research on the sociology of consumption. Skeggs had worked at Keele and Lancaster, and became Professor at Manchester between 1999 and 2005, before moving to Goldsmiths College where she still works.

Bourdieu, did not actually use the concept of class extensively, and instead focused more on the importance of capitals, but in the British context he offered a number of intellectual resources to the growing revival of class analysis. Most importantly he did not fixate on the working class as the key progressive social force in the way which had been typical of the “heroic” generation in Britain, but instead focused on the role of domination. Indeed, his presumption was rather that the working classes were disorganised and isolated as a result of their lack of capitals, and his emphasis that popular culture was characterised by the ‘culture of necessity’ insisted on the limited horizons of the worst off. Beverley Skeggs’ *Formations of Class and Gender* published in 1997 proved foundational here²⁶. She showed how young, marginalised working class women in the older industrial areas of the English midlands had lives stamped by the experience of class inequality, but that this led them to ‘disidentify from class’. My own qualitative research with 200 north British ‘middle class’ residents in the late 1990s made a related argument (see Savage et al 2003; 2005). Most of these respondents were not strongly class conscious, and often told a complicated story of straddling classes or being socially mobile. However, class clearly meant a great deal to them in terms of understanding social inequality. I called this ‘the paradox of class’ – that as social inequalities increased, so people’s subjective sense of belonging to a class seemed to decline. Class may not have been so significant in terms of its collective identities, or in terms of overt political mobilisation, but it was strongly experienced as part of an individual’s sense of self (see Savage 2000 for a full statement of this argument).

Here we can see how Bourdieu was also able to provide an alternative to the “heroic” generation’s emphasis on working class consciousness and identity, through his concept of ‘mis-recognition’, or what Skeggs was to term ‘dis-identification’. For Bourdieu, power operates through the ‘naturalisation’ of social relations. This argument thus provided a mechanism for explaining the lack of class consciousness, even in the Britain’s highly class divided society. For instance, insofar as inequalities are ‘naturalised’ as the product of differing amounts of motivation, skill, or natural ability, they might not be registered as class inequality. This focus on misrecognition thus resolved the ‘paradox of class’.

Bourdieu’s focus was on how the dominant classes came to be dominant, unravelling the economic, social and cultural capital which permitted them to acquire, reproduce, and convert their privileges. This approach was much more productive in shedding light on Britain in the early 21st century

²⁶ Pour une discussion sur les apports et limites de cette ouvrage, notamment dans son usage du concept de capital culturel, Marie Cartier, « Le caring, un capital culturel populaire ? À propos de *Formations of Class & Gender* de Beverley Skeggs», *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 2012, n° 191-192 , p. 106-113 ainsi que la postface de Marie-Pierre Pouly dans la version traduite en français de l’ouvrage (Skeggs, 2015).

because it could be used to focus on the upper and middle classes who had been the beneficiaries of economic and social change. It transformed what David Lockwood identified as the 'problematic of the proletariat' towards a perspective able to critically dissect the more privileged classes. This has proven increasingly important given the dramatic growth of inequality in Britain since the 1980s. In the mid-1970s, during the years of the Callaghan Labour Government, income inequality reached its low point. Tax rates were progressive, with high marginal taxes being imposed on large earners and property owners. From the early 1980s, and the relaxation of tax rates on high earners, and on non-domiciled wealth - this picture shifted rapidly, driven furthermore by London's role as centre for global finance. Burgeoning economic inequalities were thus rapidly taken up in the media and in public debate in a way which regenerated huge public interest once more in understanding how class was changing (see Atkinson 2015; Savage et al 2015; Piketty 2014; Wilkinson and Pickett 2010).

Une réflexion internationale autour du concept de capital culturel

This Bourdieusian current has gained strength by its increasingly strong comparative collaborations developed with a range of European researchers. Initially, Bourdieu's work in the UK had a particular stronghold at the University of Manchester in the early 2000s, where Fiona Devine, Beverley Skeggs, Alan Warde and myself all worked, and where the Department rapidly rose to become one of Britain's strongest Departments. In some quarters this became known as the 'Manchester school' which offered a distinctive alternative to the Nuffield approach to social class. A particularly important site for this work was the ESRC funded Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC), which was also a collaboration with the Open University where Tony Bennett and Elizabeth Silva worked. Researchers at Manchester (and to a lesser extent the OU) led what is sometimes called the 'cultural turn' in British class analysis (see Devine 2004; Devine et al 2005; Crompton 2008), which was especially strongly marked in pioneering studies of consumption, notably Alan Warde in his pioneering studies of food (1997). This 'cultural turn' was a partial reaction against the theoretical claims of post-structuralism, and sought to emphasise the intersections between cultural and social processes. CRESC was a key site for leading a number of initiatives to bring together researchers interested in the relationship between culture and stratification.

Of particular importance has been the collaborations between the large number of European sociologists brought together by the Danish funded SCUD²⁷ (Social and Cultural Differentiation) network led by Annick Prieur at Aalborg and British based sociologists at the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) at the University of Manchester/ Open University. These

collaborations were developed especially through the in Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion (CCSE) project which conducted a major analysis of cultural taste and practices in the UK between 2003-2005 to assess how far Bourdieu's model in *Distinction* applied in contemporary Britain (see Bennett et al 2009, as well as the wider European comparison in Prieur and Savage 2011; 2013). The research involved focus groups, a national sample survey, and qualitative interviews, and constituted the most rigorous replication of Bourdieu's work since his own. Here, we used multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and collaborated extensively with European researchers, notably Henri Rouanet, Brigitte Le Roux and Johs Hjellbrekke. This project was came to be strongly informed by the growing use of geometric data analysis outside the original French context, as practiced by Lennart Rosenlund on Stavanger, and by Frederic Lebaron. In championing the use of MCA and other kinds of survey data, this group contested the previous hegemony of survey data with the Goldthorpe group, and championed alternative models of quantitative analysis.

As a result of research undertaken in the CCSE project associated with CRESC there was growing interest in contesting the class schema so powerfully enshrined in the Goldthorpe class schema. One approach here was that space and urban identifications were increasingly important as markers of class. Influenced by European and international urban sociology, such as that associated with the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* as well as urban sociologists such as Roger Burrows, Patrick Le Gales, and Talja Blokland, this has generated a powerful current of research on how classes are defined through spatial representations and identities (see Savage et al 2005; 2010b).

Within cultural sociology, there began to be a growing interest in directly contesting the Nuffield paradigm. Le Roux et al (2008) showed that lower managers were more like the intermediate class in their cultural orientations than they were to the 'service class'. This opened the way for Bourdieusian perspectives to more directly engage and contest with Goldthorpe's models of class (see also Savage, Warde and Devine 2005), a current of work which became most evident in the Great British Class Survey.

Les classes à nouveau au coeur des débats publics et des controverses intellectuelles

The Great British Class Survey project²⁸ (Savage et al 2013; 2015a; 2015b) brought to a head new ways of conceptualising class influenced by Bourdieu in contestation with more traditional

The Great British Class Survey (GBCS) was designed as a ‘public science experiment’ by the BBC, who involved myself and Fiona Devine as consultants on a web survey they hosted on their website between 2011 and 2013. This gathered the remarkably high number of 325,000 respondents in total, but because of the intense sample skew towards the well-educated, it was also supported by a small nationally representative survey. Our initial paper (Savage et al 2013) used latent class analysis on measures of economic, cultural and social capital from the national survey to argue that seven classes could be defined, rather than the more conventional working, middle and upper class. We identified a distinctive ‘elite’ at the top of the social structure, a precariat at the bottom, and a fragmentation of classes between these two, with differing amounts of economic, cultural and social capital. When the BBC publicised these findings there was great public interest, with 9 million hits on the ‘class calculator’ and extensive discussion on the social media and in political forums (e.g. Martin 2013). Our later book deriving from this project, *Social class in the 21st Century* (Savage et al 2013) broadened out our interpretation from the ‘seven classes’ and used additional qualitative research to show how social and cultural capital were re-inforcing economic capital to generate an increasingly unequal social structure.

perspectives, not only Goldthorpe’s but also Marxist (Toscano 2015), culturalist (Skeggs 2015) and Weberian perspectives.

There have been numerous theoretical and methodological criticisms of the GBCS (e.g. Bradley 2014; Dorling 2014; Mills, 2014; Rollock 2014 and see the reply in Savage et al 2014; 2015). These are difficult to summarise and evaluate since they conflate different issues: the use of data from a web survey; the specific use of latent class analysis in the original 2013 paper (Savage et al 2013); and the value of Bourdieusian perspectives more generally. The intensity of these criticisms are also indicative of a major reconfiguration of the stakes of class analysis: prior to the GBCS, it was Goldthorpe’s approach to social class which defined itself as occupying the ‘high ground’ of quantitative, survey based analysis, with Bourdieusian approaches being sidelined as qualitative and idiographic. The GBCS however, showed how Bourdieusian inspired perspectives could effectively

²⁸ Le dispositif d’enquête est particulièrement original puisqu’il s’appuie en grande partie sur une enquête en ligne réalisée en partenariat avec la BBC. Menée en janvier 2011, il a permis de récolter plus de 160 000 questionnaires. Sur l’originalité et les apports de cette enquête, [Grégory Salle](#), « Le jeu des sept classes sociales britanniques », *Métropolitiques*, 25 mars 2016.

also use quantitative techniques – and command great public and academic interest through this move. Indeed the GBCS has more recently inspired powerful studies of social mobility using representative national samples which have also commanded major interest (Laurison and Friedman, 2016).

In short, the GBCS has allowed a more dynamic and politically engaged approach to class to command the high ground, both of sociological and wider public debates. By not treating classes as distinctive variables or social entities – as in the employment aggregate approach - it has taken class analysis out of a scholastic technocratic specialism and demonstrated its wider significance. This therefore returns class analysis to the animating vision of the “heroic” generation, where class was seen as the crystallisation of historical forces and processes, not as some abstracted variable. Interests in class can thus engage more effectively with political debates, which they have done especially through exposing the significance of the ‘elite’, where it chimes with the interventions of Owen Jones (2015) and Danny Dorling (2015).

The appeal of the GBCS was that it used a focus on class to explore the intersections between economic, cultural and social capital in a way which posed big intellectual and public questions. The resulting debates and controversies generate an energy which is rarely evident in the social sciences and was a remarkable opportunity for sociologists to demonstrate their leadership across the intellectual field. And indeed, even the natural sciences are taking an interest, as marked by a recent comment in the top science journal, *Nature* (Savage 2016). This body of work has the potential to recharge class analysis more generally, not only in the UK, but through its increasingly strong European and international collaborations. An important opportunity here is the strengthening of LSE Sociology, which identified a distinct research cluster on ‘social inequalities’ in 2015 and where a number of leading Bourdieu-influenced sociologists of class and inequality have been based (such as Sam Friedman, Daniel Laurison and Lisa McKenzie). Sociology at the LSE is now once more at the forefront of British debates on class and inequality, marking a return to its position in the immediate post war decades.

More widely, the formation of the International Inequalities Institute in 2015 at the LSE has been a formative moment. This is an important venture since - for the first time since the time of David Glass in the 1950s – sociologists of class and inequality work alongside economists, anthropologists, political scientists, social policy researchers and indeed most of the LSE’s disciplines. An immediate area of inquiry, arising both from the concern with economic capital in the Great British Class survey, and the work of economists of inequality such as Tony Atkinson and Thomas Piketty (who have both been involved with the III), is to develop a stronger engagement with questions of accumulation and

economic inequality to set alongside long standing research on inequalities in cultural capital. The success of the International Inequalities Institute in winning large scale funding offers great potential for it to lead research and teaching in the coming decades. In any event it is clear that British sociologists are now fully engaged with leading international research addressing key concerns with inequality in the 21st century across several different paradigms and perspectives.

We face major challenges in early 21st century society, especially concerned with escalating economic inequalities. I am pleased that sociologists are at the forefront of rising to the challenge of critically dissecting the gravity of these issues, especially concerning the cultural and social aspects of these inequalities. We are therefore at a similar point to the scholars of the heroic generation in the middle decades of the 20th century: we need to make the critical analysis of class inequality a central feature of our diagnoses of contemporary society.

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