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Title: The concept of class in Modern Greek Sociology

### Introduction

My main interest is in the role of education as a factor of inter- and intra- generational social mobility in Greece.

More specifically, my interest lies in the exploration of the impact of educational attainment in the lifachances and social positioning of people. This is connected with the issue of openness or otherwise of the Greek education system over the last seven to eight decades and the distribution of educational opportunities amongst all students. It also aims to investigate the ‘social fluidity’ and the structures that enable or permit movements of individuals and collectivities across the social hierarchy.

It should be noted that although educational provision has predominantly been provided by the state and in this sense it has been uniform, my unit of analysis is not Greece as a country but a small provincial town North West of Greece.

This particular focus is justified in three ways: in line with a common view within Greek sociology (Lambiri-Dimaki, 1983; Mouzelis, 1986; Mouzelis and Attalides, 1971 etc) that Greek society (and its social structure) can be more effectively conceptualised in a way that captures the significant qualitative variations between rural and urban areas, different approaches have to be adopted for each one of these settings.

Secondly, the specific locale (of where I will conduct my research) appears to have some added complexity. In more detail, it is comprised of a diverse community consisted of Roma people, Vlachs and the ‘majority’ group with their own variations

and particularities, as well as with Albanian immigrants and Albanian citizens of Greek origin, the ‘Vorioepiotes’. Moreover, the specific area has gone through major economic, social and political transformations over the last three generations which have shaped considerably all aspects of its modern life.

Thirdly, crucial data for a nation-wide study, such as occupational turnover, income, educational attainment, sex segregation etc have never been systematically collected and therefore cannot be comparable.

Before I proceed, a caveat is necessary: the title of this presentation is somehow deceptive in relation to the actual endeavour that I undertook. That is to say, it promises to deal with the relevance of the concept of class in modern Greek sociology but as it will be made clear this is only one amongst many consideration of this paper. Indeed, when I set off to write this paper I intended to deal with the ways in which the concept of class has been utilised and approached in modern sociological writings in and on Greece, as I was aiming to demonstrate its relevance and utility in a social mobility study similar to which I will undertake. In the following lines, although the importance of a social class analysis will be still maintained, I will illustrate that the complexity of the issues involved may also call for an opening of the scope of the theoretical devices available. Some of these issues will be demonstrated through extracts of interviews that I conducted with residents of the locale while some others through the relevant literature.

Turning now to my main focus, the need for such an investigation was triggered by the existence of numerous Greek studies in sociology and especially in sociology of education, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, that deal with the description and

explanation of social reproduction and social inequalities within and through education (Gotovos, 2004) and less so with their analysis and exegesis. The ways in which these inequalities were produced in the first place and reproduced and the reasons for their emergence seems to have attracted less attention. By the same token, it is noteworthy and rather surprising that only a limited number of studies have appeared in Greek sociology that deal with issues of class structure and especially of social mobility. The reasons are manifold and here I will list a few if only indicative and with no intention to provide an elaborate account:

1. First reason to be identified is that the Greek society did not have an interrupted development in the post Second World War period. Soon after the termination of the War, a Civil War erupted which only ended in 1949 and left Greece a wreck, in economic, political and social terms. Moreover, the seven-year dictatorship, between 1967 and 1974, ceased any academic activity that was not complying with the regime's suppressive and authoritarian ideology. First prey to fall was freedom of thought and expression and academic activity was heavily censored and circumscribed.

2. Associated with the previous reason is the fact that many Greek intellectuals and academics flew abroad during this seven-year period in order to avoid censorship, persecution and, in many cases, incarceration. At the same time, Western European countries were shaken by the events of May 1968 in France which did not leave indifferent many progressive intellectuals.

3. A third reason has to do with the relatively recent establishment of sociology as a distinctive discipline in Greek universities (cf. Lambiri-Dimaki, 1983), that dates only as back as to the mid seventies. With such a short history in mainstream academia, the

major struggle for Greek sociology was to establish itself as a respectable and autonomous discipline rather than to develop all its fields of enquiry.

4. Linked with the development of Greek sociology is the fact that the other collaborating disciplines, such as psychology, political philosophy, economics, statistics etc, were also at an embryonic stage and could not support the development of branches of sociology which are closely linked to and, to an extent, dependent upon them, such as mobility studies.

Since for the study of the latter longitudinal, intergenerational data are required that span the life cycle of at least two adjacent generations, these data could not be collected in real time nor could they be provided in retrospect. Therefore, there is no tradition in Greek sociology dealing with issues of social mobility but only small-scale, case-studies which examined aspects of it (cf. Lambiri-Dimaki, 1983).

5. However, the aforementioned historical, social and political reasons may not be adequate *per se* to provide a full explanation of the lack of social structure and mobility studies in Greece. A fifth reason may also exist which refers to endogenous issues within Modern Greek sociology. It is postulated that the different approaches that have been developed in relation to social class analysis (Marxist, functionalist, Weberian), although they have enriched our sociological understanding and increased significantly our knowledge, with their limited and somehow eclectic scope, may have also deflected attention from ethnic, cultural, religious and gender considerations which shape a complex and somewhat unexplored reality.

For all the reasons stated above, the exigency for the investigation of such a politically loaded topic, such as the movements within social class and status

hierarchy of individuals and groups of people and their social mobility, is an audacious however challenging topic.

In the following section I will briefly present how some influential studies have dealt with the issue of social stratification in Greece and then I will try to sketch out some of their strengths and limitations in relevance to studies that deal with complex issues such as the social movement of heterogeneous groups of people.

#### Some issues relevant to the social stratification approach from functionalist approach

Lambiri- Dimaki (1983) in an impressive analytic manner, set off to deal with the equality of opportunity in Greek society which stemmed from her belief

*‘in the need to further this ideal by uncovering, at the level of empirically rooted detail, the existing inequalities in Greek society resulting from differential stratum and class membership’(p. 2).*

Her interest was also motivated by a broader commitment to comparative sociology, through enriching the existing sociological knowledge on Greece which would allow for comparisons with other western countries. She held that, by uncovering features of social stratification in Greece *‘which reflect in turn peculiarities of Greek tradition, modes of economic development, culture and structure’* (ibid., 3), stratification patterns in Greek society and their effects on life chances and lifestyles would become manifest and the differences of the Greek society with other European ones would be made evident. For her, one of these differences rests on the limited *‘statutes’* that appear in the Greek context as opposed to other European countries

where a larger amount of 'statuses' are in play. To justify her point she argues that the Greek stratification system is less complex than the English, French and German one, due to the racial ethnic and religious homogeneity that was evident in that period (early 1908s) in Greece and due to the lack of an indigenous Greek aristocracy. This is a rather provoking point to which I shall return in the last part of this section.

Homogeneity and traditionalism is also observed by Lambiri- Dimaki within occupational '*statuses*', due to the low technological specialisation of the Greek working and the middle classes.

The second reason that differentiates Greece from its European counterparts, according to the author, is the means of status acquisition; in Greece status is achieved usually by achievement rather than by ascription which is a characteristic of European societies. The explanation lies again on the lack of racial, ethnic, religious and aristocratic status which would reward some people and therefore promote their class or stratum position. Instead, the type of status that is in play in the Greek society is '*status by maturation*'.

Lambiri-Dimaki also recognises the existence of a '*dual stratification system*' between rural and urban Greece which is of particular importance in the context of my study and to which I will also return in what follows.

The author also comments on the status of woman in Greece and her complex set of roles within a changing social structure, in which traditional values define her inferior position.

Finally, she points to the fact that although access to University education became more democratised (by the late seventies) and more open, this democratisation and openness does not correspond with '*a similar democratisation of access to higher occupational positions on meritocratic selection*' (ibid., 5).

Lambiri- Dimaki's contribution is valuable in that it takes into account the complexity of the Greek society and tries to explain its social formation through some of its most significant characteristics: status acquisition, educational achievement, regional differentiation, gender segregation and class position (usually based on occupational position).

Moreover, the empirical exploration of the dual stratification system, prevalent in Greece at least until the 1960s, adds to our understanding of economic and cultural inequalities between regions and families and their significantly different lifechances. Another strength of Lambiri- Dimaki's work is the fact that she gives considerable importance to the investigation of gender differences in relation to educational access and opportunities and that she stresses the role of occupational selection and differentiation in the lifechances of people of different gender, geographical origin, class and status group. Her exploration is revealing and it encompasses many aspects that had not been, thus far, empirically explored.

However, her analysis is based upon the unexplored assumption that Greece of this period is a racially, ethnically and religiously homogenous society. It is possible that this homogeneity reflects the methods with which this conclusion is reached rather than the variations and diversity of the Greek population.

Given that some minority groups were well established within Greece by that time, such as Pomacs, Muslims, Jews, Roma and refugees, it can be postulated that the low percentage quoted by Lambiri- Dimaki, only 3% of people of Jewish or Muslim religion, may not be an accurate representation.

In the same way, a widespread belief in the homogeneity of a society may have repercussions in the way people ascribe themselves into certain groups for research purposes which may not be in a position *per se* to say a lot about their actual group membership. That is to say, power relationships may exert significant influence on the shaping of group affiliation which can reinforce a ‘false consciousness’ or even a token membership. The latter can be based on issues that are out of the researcher’s control such as ‘need’ for belonging to the majority group, concealment of identity etc, especially when the majority one, Greek in our case, comes with a set of privileges in relation to other, ‘quasi’ or ‘inferior’ Greek groups (for an extensive account on the ‘hierarchy of Greekness’ and concomitant issues related to group membership, such as privileges, legal rights and more, see Triandafyllidou and Veikou, 2002).

This was evident in a small scale research that I conducted in the aforementioned provincial town (North West of Greece) where people from the majority Greek society co-exist with other, minority groups, such as the Roma, the Vlachs and, since relatively recently, with Albanians and Albanian citizens of Greek origin (‘Vorioepiotes’).

Here I will only focus on the Roma group as they remain the main ‘other’ in the eyes of the majority group (and for most of the other groups) and due to the fact that they are found in larger numbers and they also have a very long historical presence in the area.

From the interviews that I conducted, it was typical for members of the majority group to locate the Roma people in the group of the ‘others’, often with derogatory connotation:

*'They had what we had [in terms of land]. These are two separate issues [the fact that they are Roma and that they had land] .....They would only marry amongst themselves. No young man from us would marry a Gypsy girl. It's only a recent thing that they got mixed [with non-Roma people] Not in our days, that would be a problem.....They [the Roma] would mainly become musicians; none, no young person would want to become a musician. These were hard times; people did not have enough to get by; they would do all sorts of jobs in order to survive; musicians and other jobs'* (Non-Roma, male interviewee, Y.).

Another respondent, in an informal discussion we had just before the interview, commented:

*'I've just been around to some friends of mine. They are Gypsies from here, although pretty descent people. Oh, they are so funny, you know! They've got their own habits and customs but they are ok [narrates a wedding between two Roma people that he attended a few days ago and refers to the Roma habits that struck him]'* (Non-Roma interviewee, K.).

However, 'otherness' was viewed from a completely different angle by a Roma respondent:

*At the moment no [I am not working]. Because of [bad] the weather [conditions] but also to take a bit of a rest. I have applied for unemployment benefits and we remain unemployed. There used to be jobs but what I can see is that they reached their limit. Now what it is to blame... it can be many things to blame but most of the blame rests with the foreigners; in the end,*

*they will cause us damage. Because, what I see at least, is that they came unskilled from over there and with the love that we showed them and the support that we gave them, we taught them how to work and they will reach [the level] where we are and we will reach where they are. We will be working for them!* (Roma, male interviewee, M. ).

In the account of the Roma interviewee it is manifested that the ‘other’ does not refer to a member of the majority group but to an ‘inferior’ other, the ‘foreigners’ as he calls them (referring mainly to the Albanians whose arrival in the early 1990s was heavily contested across Greece, in the media and in lay discourse, and was seen as a threat to the prosperity and cohesion of the country as well as the main reason for job losses). For him, the threat to the cohesion of society was the arrival of the ‘foreigners’. His identity is inseparable from that of the majority group and his structural location is seen from within this wider group as opposed to the group of the newcomers, the foreigners.

According to the criteria established in conventional methods of data collection, such as the census or large-scale surveys even within social stratification studies, whole groups of people like the Roma person that I interviewed would be normally categorised under a generic, all-encompassing category: Greek Orthodox or in case of a social stratification survey agrarian, working class and the like.

The experiences of the people themselves would either be ‘objectified’ and form the categories of the classificatory models while, in a similar manner, the structural location(s) of the same people would become invisible given that their experiences would be prioritised. That is, their social position is not only determined merely by

their economic position (usually based upon their current occupation) but dimensions that cut across all aspects of a complex reality interplay.

The hazard I am pointing to here is one emanating from the social stratification approach which can have a limited explanatory scope. For example, with such an approach we could view all members of this area who belong in the same social class as having the same access to (material and other) resources, the same opportunities for access to education, upward social mobility etc since it will appear that they share all other identities, be they religious, ethnic, national and cultural. Perhaps different status membership could explain a bit more of the variation in opportunities, access, rewards and mainly outcomes but this would suggest that membership, for instance in a cultural or ethnic group, is another form of status membership. In other words, the fact that the Roma people of this area were the only ones to work as musicians, a job nobody else would accept to do under the specific conditions, was because they belong to a group with inferior status in relation to the majority one. Valid as this may be, it does not explain the reasons for the emergence of such a difference in 'statuses' nor does it tell us anything about the ways in which it has been created.

As Mouzelis argued (1986), this sort of approach does not tell us

*'to what extent the characteristics which all members in a social stratum have in common are or could be the basis of what Giddens calls 'class structuration' or 'boundedness': the development of various degrees of class-consciousness and of organisational links between them' (p., 58).*

It is suggested that for the type of research that I aim to conduct, with all the complexities that it has, such as those highlighted above, these limitations have to be borne into mind.

### The dual system of social stratification in Greece from a Marxist standpoint

In the relevant literature on Greece, it has been suggested that a dual system of social stratification exists which corresponds to the urban-rural dichotomy (cf. Mouzelis and Attalides, 1971; Lambiri-Dimaki, 1983).

According to Mouzelis and Attalides (1971) the main criteria upon which this dichotomy is based are education and property but a further differentiation based on power and prestige also operates.

In the '*larger village*' they identify three main strata: The upper stratum is represented by the most prosperous peasants, large storekeepers or merchants and professionals, like doctors, teachers, governmental officials etc.

In the middle stratum, there is to be found the bulk of farm owners, small storekeepers and a limited number of skilled workers who may also live in the village.

Finally, the lower stratum consists of the propertyless farm labourers and the 'outcasts' of the village (p. 183).

Even if the dual stratification system was kept in a Marxist analysis of the Greek social structure the aforementioned social strata would rather be dismissed. For it is not rare for Marxist authors to overemphasise the actions of social classes and present collective actors as the motivators of history. Their actions, choices and strategies would be in the centre of analysis which need not of any other explanations. For instance, in the case of the growth and development of rural Greece, a typical way of analysis would consist of the explanation of the role of the dominant class and the conflict emergent with the subordinate class. This conflict would be then explained in terms of the contrasting interests of the different groups (classes) and the incommensurate (and unjust) concentration of material resources to the few and powerful that generated such a conflict. Education would be consequently seen as

another dimension of privilege, which is in the hands of the dominant class, and prestige would most probably be underplayed or dismissed.

Milonas for example (1999), adopts the differentiation between rural and urban regions and maintains that the social, economic and cultural situation of the peasants has not been improved in the years after the War for Independence in 1821 and up to the end of the twentieth century. Moreover, he argues that the differences (and inequalities) between these two geographical areas (rural and urban) have been augmented rather than reduced (ibid., 261). According to him

*'these populations [of rural areas] are the victims of an economy, which until recently was not a capitalist one (due to the lack of accumulated capital that would be invested in industry) nor a feudal one (agricultural reforms-continuous appropriation of large proportions of land), but rather a pseudo-bourgeois or rather a mechanistic one'.* (ibid., 261)

The explanation lies, according to the author, in the 'exploitation' of the peasants especially in 'crucial' moments, the latter being defined as the moments when the peasants appear to have an increased demand for education. This increased demand, Milonas claims (ibid.) has been obstructed due to the 'obstacles' that the peasants encounter in their way. This obstruction, is a 'rational' one: there are some people who act collectively since they happen to be organised in a social class, the members of which is expected to share the same interests and who raise these barriers in order to deny access to the underprivileged and subordinate peasants. In such a manner the dominant class, is presented as the 'key holder' not only to the social ascent of its members but also to the subordinate class, the peasants.

There are two kinds of problems with this type of analysis: Firstly, in a rather simplified way the geographical regions of Greece seem to correspond to two broad classes: the rural areas to the peasants and the urban regions to the bourgeoisie. Internal differentiations within these two areas seem to be of secondary importance. Group membership is exclusively based on regional criteria and we are left to assume that everyone who lives in a village has the same (limited) power, opportunities and resources available with everybody else. Likewise internal differentiations within the urban regions are not taken into consideration. Especially in big urban centres, such as Athens and Salonica, it is doubtful whether all students have the same opportunities for access to higher education and whether the lifechances of all residents are positively affected by the fact that they live in such an area.

To demonstrate this point it is worthwhile quoting an extract from an interview conducted with a female resident of a the locale I referred to above, who has herself been through vocational education:

*'...The problem in my days was for women not for men. We, the girls, had huge problem in going to university because that was perceived as, hm, not suitable! Yeah, parents would be sceptical with a girl wanting to go to study in Athens for instance...my parents were[like that] and imagine, I'm one of the few in my generation to graduate from high school and go to do a course for another two years. Although I was keen in going to University, that was out of the question...I even had to fight for this two-year course [of vocational education]. But it was not the same with my brother: although younger and quite bright, my parents, especially my dad, were begging him to go to University, at any cost. He didn't want to but...'* (female interviewee, A.).

It is evident that there was a considerable gender dimension in relation to the value of education. This respondent was not the only one to convey the appreciation for education, at least within her family, but only of the few to point to the significant gender factor that ultimately constrained her choices. Of course, the issue of access to higher education is more complicated and depends on many factors that go beyond the mere desire of students and their families to achieve it. Structural, cultural, institutional and other explanations must also be considered. In support of this, it is useful to refer to some of the findings of two repeated studies that Lambiri-Dimaki conducted in the 1960s. The first of these findings, although based on a small case study of the number of students that entered the (most prestigious according to the author) University of Athens according to their place of birth, shows that only 39% of all students were born in any of the two big urban centres, Athens and Salonica<sup>1</sup>, with the rest 61% coming from villages and small towns. And this is at the time when higher education was not free. Similarly, we learn that only 10 per cent of urban workers' sons attend university, in the same period, compared to 14 per cent of peasants' sons who register for university courses. Moreover, this finding is not at odds with the 'sex inequality' which is '*more pronounced in the agricultural class as compared with all other classes*' (Lambiri-Dimaki, 1983; 87).

A similar conclusion is drawn by Mouzelis and Attalides (1971) who argue that the

*'values emphasizing the advantages of a large family as a source of a household labour gradually to give way to a preference for fewer children with the sons being educated to highest possible level'* (ibid, 188).

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of Lambiri-Dimaki's study, the population of both Athens and Salonica was more than one third of the population size of the country.

The fact that higher education became free after 1964 does not mitigate against the above findings; on the contrary, it gives good reasons to believe that one of the biggest hardships for children from peasant families, their financial ability to support their studies, is after 1964 removed<sup>2</sup>.

The second shortcoming of those approaches that advance a parlance of dominant versus subordinate classes is the way in which such a representation is crafted. According to Mouzelis (1986), such approaches present the dominant classes as *'anthropomorphic deities controlling everybody and manipulating everything on the social science'* (p., 62).

For him, this kind of analysis *'leads to the reification of the concept of class'* and *'disregards conscientious research in favour of ready-made formulas and prefabricated answers to all problems of development'* (ibid.).

This is mainly due to the fact the all relations are reduced to exploitative and alienating ones. Even though it is hard to argue against the analytical strength of such a position, it is potentially risky to ignore the complexity of power relations by running into the pitfall of reifying them into a set of antagonistic and conflicting exploitative, class relationships.

Indeed, if one follows such an approach, runs the risk of equating the rural populations with a specific class, by virtue of some shared characteristics of a spatial nature which predefine the traits and associations of people within such groupings. The diversity that can exist within such heterogeneous groups disappears in favour of predetermined, *ad hoc*, classifications that group all member in the same social class position. Such a complexity was observed by another interview, when he was talking

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<sup>2</sup> Recent data on the effect of the free higher education attendance on students from all regions will be added to this section, at a later stage of my research.

about relationships in the ‘large village’ in North-West Greece mentioned in the previous sections:

*‘...well, we are friends with everyone here. We know them all. I go to everyone’s house; be them a Gypsy, a Greek or whatever else.....but as it happens, I tend to see people with which I work with, er, you know, have things in common. There is a group of people who live in the outskirts of our village, you can see their houses. These are of a different..., you know, how can I put it? They are nice and we know them but they don’t associate much. They have progressed in life. Most of them are educated: doctors, lawyers, teachers...they have their own life..... but you can see that even Gypsies now have become doctors, teachers and they marry with us these days. Well, some have their own companies, lots of money, workers working for them.... He, and we...we’re still getting paid day in, day out...It doesn’t matter...’ (male interviewee, F.)*

If we tried to apply the concept of ‘sameness’, according to which everyone enjoys the same privileges and shares a common group identity according to their class membership (as defined in relation to the dominant = urban class), it is evident from this account that this would be futile and unjustified. Internal divisions operate between the inferior ‘others’ and the dominant ‘us’; the former being members of ‘low status’ groups, such as the Roma, and the latter comprised of the members of the majority group. However, not even these groups are homogeneous: the Roma group has also its own ‘capitalists’ who stand above working class members of the majority group. Similarly, the majority group has its own relations of domination and a further

internal differentiation since not all of them are peasants or workers. There is the local 'intelligentsia', the stratum of the educated persons, who form a big part of the middle class and it is anticipated that there is also a group of people who own (some of) the means of production. Since there is labour to be sold, it cannot be assumed that it is exclusively 'exported' to the urban centres but the 'quasi-capitalist' centres, to use Milonas' terminology, have their own modes and relations of production.

### The social stratification approach and beyond

Thus far I have attempted to demonstrate how two alternative but not contradictory approaches to social stratification may conceal some of the complexities that I encountered in a small-scale research that aimed to explore some aspects of the social structure and social organisation of an area that used to be based predominantly on agriculture. What is missing from this preliminary analysis is an historical account of the political, social and economic transformation of the region that dates as back as the origins of the formation of the specific groupings, classes and strata, that are found in this locale. This will enable me to understand the development of the social formation of the place and will shed light in all the concomitant dimensions. Most importantly it will enable me to investigate the ways in which the different social groups act and interact within their societal and institutional context. That is, apart from the formation of these groups and the their relationship to the modes of production, market capacity etc, the autonomy of the actors and the groups they form can be examined. These institutional contexts include the cultural, the religious, the political, the ideological sphere and are considered of great important in a any serious attempt to construct a valuable account.

In line with Mouzelis and Attalides' argument (1971) this can also help because

*'some of the main features of the Greek class structure, which are constant throughout history, can only be understood by analysing their formation and persistence, i.e. by examining class struggles and developments during the Ottoman rule and the Greek War of Independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century'* (p., 162).

Moreover, when multiple modes of social organisation and differentiation operate the preponderance of any of the approaches outlined here may not be in position to explain alone all the variation and diversity that exists within dynamic societies that constantly change. This change ought to be seen not merely as imposed on people as they also have the power to change society. Their actions and choices shape as much as they are shaped by societal norms, rules, responsibilities, constraints etc and it this dual process that needs to be recognised and elaborated. When for example we utilise a dual system of stratification in order to capture the regional variation between rural and urban areas, as it has been shown, we cannot demonstrate accurately the internal intricacies and complexities by the use of this concept on its own. If on the other hand, we try to explore this merely through an approach that prioritises a particular aspect of multiple and interrelated identities that people maintain, such as cultural or ethnic identity, then we run the risk of reifying and/or underestimating the importance of other concepts such as that of class.

In line with E.O. Wright's (2004) argument I would like to argue that the concept of class is still of relevance and usage in advancing our understanding of modern, dynamic and complex, societies. Such a usage of class analysis, though, cannot ignore

the fact that it operates in a politically and ideologically loaded area which calls the researcher to be clear about her agenda at least thus far as her epistemological (and ontological) position is concerned. In this light, it is interesting to return to the argument that E.O. Wright (2001) put forward 'in defence' of his commitment to class analysis:

*'The commitment to class analysis, therefore, is also grounded in a scientific belief: the belief that class inequality constitutes the most important socially structured axis of inequality that a radical egalitarian project confronts. This is a very tricky claim, as are all social scientific claims that something is the "most important" (or even, simply, more important than something else). "Most important" here does not mean "most important for every question one might ask". What it means is that class inequality and the institutions which reproduce that inequality are deeply implicated in all other forms of inequality and that, as a result, whatever else one must do as part of a radical egalitarian political project, one must understand how class works' (2001).*

The crucial point here is that class analysis is useful not for every question one might ask although there are some questions that are addressed in the most effective way by the deployment of the specific type of analysis. It is evident that Wright does not aim to offer it as panacea for every kind of question that relates to the social organisation and differentiation of people. In a similar fashion, I want to argue that class analysis cannot but have a central position in studies like mine that deal with all dimensions of social inequalities: from their production to structures and institutions that reproduce them. And from these institutions and structures to the actors, collective or individual ones, who produce and reproduce them and they get also affected by their existence.

Moreover, my position is that, in respect to my research, other concepts and theories, such as theories of ethnicity and racism or theories of power relations, have also to be carefully considered and applied where they help us reach a deeper and broader understanding. There is no reason why one type of analysis should exclude another, as there is no reason why a researcher should have to measure the exact 'dosage' of each theory she used in her analysis. The claim is rather for clarity in the ways different concepts and theories are utilised and applied and readiness on behalf of the researchers to accept that any social research project operates in a dynamic and fast changing social reality.

It must have become evident by now that this paper is far from complete. In this space I have only dealt with some relevant to this stage of my enquiry concepts and gave some reflections about them. A lot more is to be done. The 'complexities' for example of the area of my research, to which I frequently referred to in the above lines, need to be 'unpacked' in a manner that takes into account the historicity of the place, the interrelated institutions and the people who inhabit it. Furthermore, these complementary theories to class analysis, the need of which I mentioned in the last part of this paper, have to be presented in order for this account to reach a higher level of rigour and analysis. Finally, it is anticipated that the empirical data that will be collected in the future will enable me to reach a better understanding of the processes pertinent to my investigation.

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