



Atkinson, W. J. (2021). *The Class Structure of Capitalist Societies, Volume 2: Social Space and Symbolic Domination in Three Nations*. (1st ed.) Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003129615>

Peer reviewed version

License (if available):
CC BY-NC-ND

Link to published version (if available):
[10.4324/9781003129615](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003129615)

[Link to publication record on the Bristol Research Portal](#)
PDF-document

This is the accepted author manuscript (AAM). The final published version (Version of Record) can be found on the publisher's website. The copyright of any third-party content, such as images, remains with the copyright holder.

University of Bristol – Bristol Research Portal

General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available:
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/pure/user-guides/brp-terms/>

Chapter 6

The US Social Space

Will Atkinson 0000-0002-1032-1241

Abstract

The US is the final case to be explored. This chapter outlines the appearance and distribution of economic and cultural capital in pre-Revolutionary America, the unification of the social space through the 19th Century and its transformation over the course of the 20th Century. While containing many distinctive features, especially relating to the legacy of slavery and ethno-racial/national domination, the US shares many familiar elements of its history with Germany and Sweden. The contemporary class structure of the US is then modelled using multiple correspondence analysis. Again, there are unique features rooted in heritages from the past, but the basic structure of the space is the same as that seen in Sweden and Germany.

Whether and how the patterns of class and culture prevailing across Europe apply to the US has been an intellectual fixation since Tocqueville traversed its interior two centuries ago. As we know from Chapter 2, plenty contend that the contemporary landscape of taste and symbolic domination in the US is in some way different from that observed in France and, by extension, Sweden or Germany – more tolerant or democratic, oriented around cosmopolitan omnivorousness or materialism rather than the ‘highbrow’ tastes rooted in an aristocratic past, and so on. Often embedded in those claims, and the research on which it is based, are broader, older assumptions in US sociology about the very nature of class and social division in the country – notions that class is less rigid than elsewhere because of high social mobility, that it matters less than race for structuring life chances or lifestyles, that money trumps culture in defining worth and so on. Echoing through the methods, measures and arguments of US sociology, in short, is the notorious idea spawned by Tocqueville and defended by some to this day that America is, by dint of its unique past and liberal spirit, *exceptional*.

Any notion that the American class structure, or social space, is in any major way divergent from those seen across the globe, however, was dashed in Volume 1, where capital composition emerged alongside capital volume as a major principle of differentiation in the US model. That such multidimensionality has been built into the US social space for much of the 20th Century, moreover, is suggested by the old train of research, later steamrolled by quests to assemble composite socio-economic scales or class schemes for regression analysis, recognising the divergence of economic and education/prestige scales and its possible effects. Limited as they were by a narrow conception of resources and a tendency – persisting in contemporary research where the orientation survives – to treat measures of economic and educational standing as ‘independent’ variables, thus obscuring their relational configuration, scholars like Gerhard Lenski (1954) and Seymour Martin Lipset (1960) did at least acknowledge that money and education/esteem are not only irreducible sources of worth or power but, in many ways, *opposed* to one another. It is, in any case, as close as American sociology has ever come to taking capital composition seriously given that, despite Bourdieu’s unmissable influence on educational and cultural sociology in the country and his profound impact on class analysis across the globe, the geometric rendering of class proffered in *Distinction* has been almost completely ignored in US academe.

The two sets of questions before us now, then, are the same as those animating our anatomisations of Sweden and Germany. First, will the multidimensional structure of class in the US suggested in Volume 1 hold when a more refined array of indicators is available for analysis? If so, what are the correspondences and intersections with age, gender, occupation and so on? Do these resemble observed tendencies in European (and other) nations or do they evince a unique – exceptional – configuration? And what of the relationship with *race* as a principle of vision and division given its long and politicised entanglement with domination in America? This intimates the second cluster of questions: what of the genesis and historical transformations of the US social space? Given its late start as a recognised ‘nation’, its peculiar trajectory in the space of states and its slave-dependent past, what are the principles of national unification and centralisation, of the origins and evolution of economic and cultural capital, of the relationship between capital and race and the development of

‘class’ as a category of perception and mobilisation? We will, as before, begin with the second set of questions in order to lay out the context for our answers to the first set. As with the German case, moreover, we must avoid the trap of trying to explain everything in order to explain only what is relevant, namely, the beginnings of and structural relation between core principles of misrecognition in the US.¹

The Structures and Struggles of the Thirteen Colonies

We start with America on the eve of Revolution because, like the Holy Roman Empire, the Thirteen Colonies perched on the Eastern seaboard, joined by sparsely populated Western/Southern lands acquired from France and Spain in 1763, formed not a unified space of recognition and struggle but a loose constellation of structural relations conditioned by chains of symbolic power – embodied in royal governors and representatives of the crown – emanating from an imperial centre, in this case the English (later British) dynastic/bureaucratic field. Residents of cities, towns, rural hinterlands and frontier zones would probably have been knitted into colony-level spaces of mutual objective influence and subjective awareness by the late 18th Century, perhaps with some localised rural sub-spaces having a fairly high degree of autonomy. Circumscriptions of political authority, legal regulation, currency value and transport/communications, however, likely precluded an integrated pan-colony space of struggle, though shared language and reference to the metropole certainly facilitated circulation of individuals, goods and ideas, and mutual orientation of elites, heightened during the French and Indian War, may even have generated a cross-territory field of power.

From the point of view of agents within the English/British bureaucratic field, establishing and regulating the colonies was a strategy for benefiting (i.e. financing) the expanding state, in the context of competition with rival states in Europe, via import/export and tariffs – it was, in short, a strategy for accumulating economic capital. This mercantilist tactic, however, often jarred with the motives of settlers themselves, who had originally been driven by a quest for land given its shortage in the motherland or, in some cases, by religious domination (Richter, 2011). Although most colonists were

thought of, and thought of themselves, as English, the circuits of symbolic power were relatively fragile and open to contestation because of their spatiotemporal extension: the king and most of his forces could not – like the Holy Roman Emperor – be personally present or sufficiently near to control and enforce his authority.² Hence the colonies were accustomed to a high degree of autonomy, establishing legislative assemblies with power over local regulation, albeit limited by the royal governor's veto, defying the crown to trade with the Dutch and eventually coming to enjoy 'salutary neglect', i.e. elective non-enforcement of parliamentary laws (especially regarding trade).³

Economic capital was a principle of differentiation in the colonies from the start. This is because they were established at a time when land was already undergoing commodification in England, that is, subjection to the principle of individual ownership, open to purchasing and selling and valued in cash terms (see Atkinson, 2020b: 212-15). True enough, land was generally allocated to begin with (whether directly by the king or via crown-appointed joint stock companies, which themselves often operated on the 'head right' system of distributing acreage to families by household size), many landholders sought self-sufficiency rather than economic profit, and exchange of services was initially done in kind in rural communities. Yet land was still considered an individual freehold possession which could be bought and sold – and sometimes had to be bought from speculators – and, moreover, mercantilism necessitated the flow of money in urban areas and a section of the population – merchants and artisans – thriving off its circulation.

Cultural capital, on the other hand, took some time to get a foothold. Educational qualifications were of little value initially, and most schooling was provided within families or community schools and aimed toward literacy and religious instruction.⁴ As the population grew and the division of labour diversified, however, colleges were established to train officials, professionals and, at first and predominantly, clergy. This was done on the initiative not of the English state, since it trained its own bureaucrats and clergy at home, but of local religious communities and benefactors, yet the *model* for higher education, and thus institutionalised cultural capital, was nevertheless taken from England. Schools proliferated too, but were often oriented toward utilitarian, commercial training in step with the mercantile ethos rather than preparation for higher education, particularly in the North.

Northern and Southern colonies were characterised by contrasting divisions of labour. The North was disproportionately settled by smallholding families seeking self-sufficiency, though some produced to provision towns and seaports – Boston, Philadelphia, New York – or for export. This, in turn, necessitated artisans to work the produce (millers, bakers, etc.) and provide necessary services (e.g. smiths, toolmakers), as well as merchants – first European, then American-born – to arrange the circulation of goods (and who also required artisans, from shipwrights and carpenters to tailors). Lawyers also proliferated and prospered because of a widespread tendency for litigation in defence of property rights in an undefined legal environment (Chroust, 1965). Women on smallholding family farms would later engage in cottage industry or wage work in small textile manufactories as a market for consumer goods steadily grew.

The South was settled by individuals facing different farming conditions – survival and prosperity in many parts depended on large-scale production of tobacco, rice and indigo for export, using waterways to navigate produce direct to seaports. Large and favourable landholdings – plantations – were typically acquired by second sons of English aristocracy or gentry (and later fleeing Royalists), or others with advantageous connections to England, who perpetuated their dominance via inheritance and marriage alliances (see Fischer, 1989). The crops yielded by these capital-converting and inheriting ‘planters’ (who also invested in land for speculation or rent) were labour intensive, however, and labour was scarce and expensive because free land was so abundant. An initial solution was the importation of indentured servants (this occurred in the North too, and was often a tactic to acquire more land as local governments allotted acreage for every servant imported), but this was superseded by the large-scale importation of African slaves. One result of this move was a reduced need for white artisans or labourers in urban centres, keeping the number and size of towns in the South relatively small.

The occupational structures and distribution of capital in late-18th Century America, North and South, have been mapped in detail by Jackson Turner Main (1965). What his analysis makes clear is that the vertical hierarchisation of property, education and prestige, while powerful, was crosscut to some degree, at least in urban areas (and thus the North more than the South), by objective and perceived

differences in capital *composition*. Merchants, planters and certain professions (especially lawyers), may well have been richest in economic capital, set above both a large body of labourers, servants, slaves and ‘poor white’ subsistence farmers and a middling class typically composed of yeomen farmers and artisans. Yet not only were professionals typically richer in cultural capital and its symbols (credentials, ‘social background’, books, ‘prestige’) than merchants; even *within* the professions the wealthy doctors and lawyers were set against the poor yet well-educated clergy and schoolteachers/professors.

Main also underscores that a key component of Southern planters’ economic capital was slave labour: human beings suffered the extreme symbolic violence of being perceived and treated as commodities to be bought and sold. This does *not* mean, however, that slaves had no agency, a notion easily disproved by frequent efforts to rebel, run away or educate themselves (or tactics for winning favour). Instead, slaves – human beings with desires for purpose and recognition – were agents pursuing practical strategies at the same time as they were *treated* as capital and barred entirely from *holding* economic capital. Slaveholders were defined in part by the economic value of their slaves, but more fundamentally the relational spaces of the South were structured by the opposition, which is a basic relationship of misrecognition, of master/slave. Slaves did exist in the North, it should be added, but since the need for labour was much lower, they were far fewer in number and were more likely to be freed. The master/slave opposition was an organising principle of judgement and domination, but not of the same magnitude.

Although the master/slave opposition as a principle of vision and division was highly homologous with the perceptual white/black opposition, ethno-racial domination in the colonies was not reducible to that binary or, therefore, fully collapsible into the structure of economic and cultural capital. For one thing there was the native population, from whom lands had been acquired by force or deceit, who fought against and with colonial populations (and against and with rival native groups) and who engaged in relations of exchange with frontier settlers and traders. Although interactively present primarily at the frontier, their existence structured the consciousness of white European settlers generally, who typically perceived them via the classificatory opposition not of master/slave (not for

lack of trying) but, for all their diversity, of civilised/savage. From the other side, natives had their own localised structures of misrecognition, premised on exchange relations, honour and shame, and contact with Europeans would have been perceived through an entirely different optic (outsiders, invaders, etc.). There was, then, a broad system of ethno-racial struggle and domination, relatively autonomous from economic and cultural relations among colonists, with its own vocabulary and classificatory schemes premised on specific symbols – including skin tone – for perceiving, describing, judging and ultimately acting toward others.⁵

Returning to Main's (1965) investigation of the social structure of Revolutionary America, it also bears the virtue of documenting consumption patterns and lifestyles – the *symbols* of class position, that is. First there was the distribution of luxury goods, which followed economic capital: fine wines and foods, tailored clothes (including silk stockings and lace ruffles), gold and silver items (jewellery and tableware), carriages, artworks and so on. Then there were the entertainments: theatre, classical concerts and associated musical instruments. In this respect, merchants, planters and other wealthy individuals, according to Main, sought to emulate European aristocracy, particularly English aristocracy, in the same way that parts of the rising bourgeoisie in England itself did (see also Richter, 2011). The backdrop here is the evolution of English court culture from the Tudors to the Stuarts, as Charles I and his son – oriented toward and importing influences from the courts of France, Spain and Italy, and notwithstanding the interregnum – deepened the transformation of the royal entourage from warrior nobility to overt appreciators and patrons of theatre, poetry, classical music and fine art (Smuts, 1999). Just as the first colonialists imported emerging notions of property rights (i.e. recognition of economic capital) and established models of education (i.e. institutionalised cultural capital) from England, so too wealthier inhabitants imported and adapted symbols of distance from necessity and 'good taste' from the metropole, itself inspired by the French court that set the tone for much of Europe.

Finally, there was the literary and 'intellectual' culture famously derided by Tocqueville (2003) for its utilitarianism, acquisitiveness, religiosity and superficiality. Literacy was high even in the early years of the American colonies, with most people apparently owning the Bible and perhaps a few works of

classical literature, but books were otherwise scarce and expensive through the 18th Century. They were the preserve primarily of universities, and higher education, rare as it still was, was geared more toward religious, professional or business training than philosophical or scientific inquiry. The more wealth one had, the more books one could afford, though Main (1965) noted that professionals tended to own more than merchants. Greater accessibility to literature was spearheaded by Benjamin Franklin, who formed a circle of autodidactic tradesmen and merchants in Philadelphia (the 'Junto') to debate the science and philosophy of the day (see Isaacson, 2003). Frustrated by their lack of access to books, they established the Library Company of Philadelphia, which set the template for subscription libraries across the colonies (and eventually morphed into a museum too). Again, the tomes or newspapers gathered, imported and printed were European – and especially English – in provenance, though the initial slant was toward science, politics, philosophy and history, and even trade and husbandry, rather than classic literature or novels (see Edmunds, 1906). In other words, importation of European intellectual or literary culture was highly selective and geared toward the rationalist, practical dispositions of the Junto members (this was also true of the American Philosophical Association founded by Franklin). Still, noted Main (1965), forerunning contemporary themes, even as books became more accessible and sheer possession became less distinctive, symbolic differences remained in what was read: the Bible, religious works, self-help manuals and newspapers among the poor; scientific and philosophical works, classic literature and specialist magazines among the wealthy and educated.

Autonomy, Unification, Industrialisation

The American Revolution was spawned by reaction against unfavourable taxes, customs controls, settlement proscriptions and currency regulations imposed unilaterally by the British state, the enforcement of which was facilitated by the maintenance of ships and troops in the colonies following the French and Indian War and the revocation of authority from the colonial assemblies after the Boston Tea Party. This strategy was in part the result of a shift within England toward manufacturing, and import/export regulations favourable to it, but it represented an attack on the traditional economic

and political autonomy of the colonies. In other words, the regulations were a strategy toward heightened centralisation and accumulation of economic capital by and to the benefit of the British state backed by physical/military capital rather than political integration in the form of recognition of colonial representatives (whether in the assemblies or in parliament). It was a misfire: although the colonial field of power was splintered into loyalist and patriotic factions, colonial leaders enjoyed sufficient support and the Continental army and militias sufficient training and leadership (with aid from France) to contest the monopoly on not only military capital but *symbolic* capital, i.e. the Crown's (or rather parliament's) capital of perceived legitimacy, eventually winning independence. The US secured autonomy, in other words, and became an effective player in the global space of states in its own right.

Revolution and Independence had two consequences. The first of these was the move toward political unification. First the Continental Congress, established during the Revolutionary years, then the post-Independence Congress of the Confederation brought together representatives of the constituent states and established a unicameral body to handle foreign affairs, and thus a *trans-state political field* (structured in part by the opposition and struggles between state politicians and federal politicians). With the move toward the Constitutional Congress, moreover, which established a federal government with tax raising powers and control over a standing army, a *trans-state bureaucratic field*, beginning a process of capital concentration and centralisation, came into being in the US. Its genesis was, however, subject to considerable contestation, and, again, the main fault lines have been mapped clearly and rigorously by Main (1961). Those in favour of a strong federal government – the Nationalists or Federalists – typically represented the interests of wealthy merchants, urban professionals and commercial farmers, who desired political stability and regulation to maintain their profits or incomes, while those against federal government – the Antifederalists – typically represented small farmers who resented taxes, feared the emergence of a new governing aristocracy and maintained a local mindset, plus some wealthy Southern planters who preferred the status quo and feared subjugation to the commercial interests of the North. Main's analysis suggests the Federalists prevailed not because of preponderance but because they controlled the press and were able to

mobilise their substantial economic and cultural capital to propagandise (and denigrate opposing views in the process).

Formation of trans-state political and bureaucratic fields, paralleling developments in Europe and elsewhere, was accompanied by struggles to construct and impose a national self-image in line with the interests and ethos of the founding fathers, most of whom were wealthy merchants, planters or lawyers – a self-image revolving around liberty, self-advancement, individual (property) rights, democracy and ‘the people’ (as opposed to absolute monarchy) in the style of English Whiggism (Lipset, 1979; Ward, 2004). These struggles extended to the proposition for a secular national university to counteract regionalism or religious sectarianism, instil ‘American values’ and educate people for democratic participation (Thomas, 2014). Federal government did not, however, automatically generate a unified economic field or national social space. States retained substantial juridical, political and economic/financial autonomy, and the existence of slavery became a major principle of difference between Northern and Southern states. All the Northern states had abolished slavery by 1804, yet it continued in the South. The capital of slaves, and the master/slave opposition, still structured Southern social spaces, in other words, but it *was not recognised* – it did not function as symbolic capital – in the North, though the white/black opposition and its historical homology with the master/slave duality certainly continued to structure perception and evaluation.

The second consequence of Revolution was industrialisation and, with it, the thoroughgoing commodification of labour. During the Revolutionary years, the loss of trade with Britain necessitated production of import substitutes, the infrastructure for which was most facilitative in the Northern colonies, but only on a small scale and temporarily. After the Revolution, however, the US political/bureaucratic fields hosted a struggle between two factions, evolving out of the Federalist/antifederalist opposition, with rival visions: the pro-manufacturing/industrialisation perspective of Alexander Hamilton, grounded in mercantilist strategy (and orientation toward the space of states), and the populist preference for self-sufficient small farmers associated with Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. The Jefferson/Madison vision prevailed, and morphed, in opposition to the emergent pro-industry Whigs, into Jacksonian democracy, buoyed by the shifting stakes of the

political field as the extension of white male suffrage changed the balance of the electorate and, therefore, the sway of different class ethos. The Louisiana purchase and Westward expansion, with the government granting or selling land to individuals (including immigrants) at the expense of native Americans, were aimed at fulfilling the idealisation of yeoman farming.

The vision was undermined over the course of the 19th Century. An embargo in 1807 targeted at Britain and an export boom during the Napoleonic Wars again stimulated Northern industry, but industrialisation began in earnest from 1820, mechanised from 1840 and became large-scale during and after the Civil War. A number of factors were involved, among which are rapid population growth, the expansion of a domestic consumer market and the changing circuits of interdependence between regions (Moore, 1966). With the invention of the cotton gin, Southern planters switched to cotton as their prime crop. They came to depend on Northern manufacturing and commercial services to work and ship the produce, while Northern manufacturing, though initially dependent on cotton, diversified to meet growing demand for consumer goods. Farmers working the fertile new Western lands, meanwhile, produced abundant surpluses not only for export (prompting protectionism in Imperial Germany) but to provision the South and then, as the urban population grew, the North – a productivity spurred further by mechanisation of agriculture to cope with continued labour scarcity in the West. Many farmers in the North, with their poorer lands, could not compete and migrated to the cities to take up wage labour. At the same time, many landless immigrants from Northern and Western Europe (especially Ireland) arrived in the industrialising Northern cities and swelled the ranks of wage labour. Economic inequality mushroomed, and though there was much upward mobility into both landholding in the West and expanding white-collar jobs in the cities, especially for non-migrant white men, very high and very low wealth were tied to family background (Pope, 2000).

Industrialisation was not actively pursued by the federal government, but its open-door immigration policy, protectionist tariffs and currency standardisation certainly facilitated it. So too did its encouragement of regional interconnection through transport and communications infrastructure – the postal service, the telegraph, steamships and railways – which, by enabling long-distance transport at low cost, eventually had the effect of *unifying the US economic field* and the market of goods. Rail

companies in particular were substantial beneficiaries of government land allocations and subsidies, thanks to the desire to link the oceans, and their boom in turn – as in Germany – spurred the lumber, steel and toolmaking industries and finance sector while setting the trend for company bureaucratisation and mergers into giant trusts and cartels, headed by the Robber Barons, as tactics for capital accumulation in the economic field (Weaver, 2016: 94ff).

As for the Civil War, the major pertinent outcome, other than stimulating arms and foods industries and strengthening the federal government, was abolition of slavery in the South. A form of capital structuring Southern social relations for so long was formally proscribed, and while some former slaves became tenant sharecroppers, others became independent farmers or wage labourers, i.e. possessors of economic capital. This was merely an evolution of the white/black axis of domination, however, as the black population in the South was eventually stripped of many legal and civic rights, forced into segregated institutions and subjected to physical violence while Northern elites, not wanting to upset economic relations, acquiesced (Wacquant, 2002). Ethno-racial/national domination more generally diversified through the 19th Century with acquisition of lands from Mexico (intensifying the struggle between white ‘Anglos’ and Hispanics), the substantial Catholic Irish population, Chinese and Japanese immigration (especially to the West coast) and a later influx of labourers from Southern and Eastern Europe. Violence, riots and discrimination were common, and the emergence of the populist anti-immigration Know Nothing movement or American Party and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 represented the impact of ethno-national (and religious) difference and domination on the political field. Relations with native Americans continued to structure perception and practice too, but the native population was so decimated and subjugated by this point that it became a less prominent feature of the ethno-racial/national space.

Another significant development after the Civil War was the expansion and standardisation of the US education system, and institutionalized cultural capital, under centralised oversight. A federal educational bureau was established, schooling was eventually made compulsory and the tax-funded high school model was established to train not only manual and white-collar workers but those entering university, with internal streaming and channelling developing around the turn of the 20th

Century to prepare children for different roles in the division of labour. Higher education also expanded beyond the traditional liberal arts college, including in the form of agricultural or scientific colleges fostered by federal land grants under the Morrill Acts and in the guise of German-style research universities oriented toward applied sciences.⁶

If regional interconnection, abolition and educational standardisation unified the market of commodities and recognised capitals, concurrent developments through the 19th Century operated to unify the market of *symbolic* goods and, in particular, the nationwide consecration of specific ‘highbrow’ artforms as legitimate culture. Classical concerts, visual art and theatre in the mould of the European aristocracy were already, as we know, associated with high volumes of capital in Revolutionary America, but as rising affluence and growing numbers of educated professionals and managers to serve the evolving economy widened access, moves were made to distinguish ‘quality’ art from lowbrow or middlebrow ‘entertainment’. Rather than aristocrats or state actors, however, it was wealthy urban elites with aristocratic pretensions who were the main driving force (Levine, 1988; Peterson, 1997; Lena, 2019). Beginning with the activities of the Boston Brahmins in the 1820s, non-profit organisations and institutions were established, typically enjoying government support, with the overt remit of ‘educating’ people, that is, defining ‘good’ art and taste in opposition to popular commercial forms of amusement. Intensifying regional interconnection eventually enabled this strategy to filter out from Boston, provide a template for elites elsewhere and erode geographical differences in definitions of legitimate culture.

Another partial parallel with Sweden and Germany was the development through the 19th Century of a literary construction of a specifically ‘American’ culture. American-born writers advocating an explicitly nationalist American literature – John Neal most famously – did so by opposing and seeking to break with the aristocratic English/British literature that had prevailed until then (see contributions to Watts and Carlson, 2012).⁷ American literature was also, as on the Old Continent, Romantic, folkish and Gothic in style, in opposition to Franklin-style Enlightenment rationalism, and emphasised American diction, idioms and regionalism while celebrating mythologised visions of frontier or colonial small-town life and rugged (white male) individualism and independence. In other words, the

American/British opposition served a similar function to the *Kultur/Zivilization* opposition in Germany, and even *Bildung* was reimagined on new soil and given philosophical expression in Transcendentalism. Unlike Germany, however, where Romanticism peaked earlier, widespread literacy and rising disposable incomes in the US at the time, particularly but not exclusively among urban white-collar workers and professionals, generated a broad market for literature and thus the conditions for writing to be a viable professional career oriented toward commercial appeal (Bell, 1995; Brodhead, 2005; Gilmore, 2010). Romanticist writers were thus more firmly inserted within a *literary field* structured by the polarisation of mass/restricted appeal (Bourdieu, 1993), competing against domestic and sentimentalist novels, than their European counterparts (who were typically ensconced in universities or the civil service). Some Romanticist authors pursued and found popular appeal – Neal, for instance, but also Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper – while others with a more philosophical or aesthetic disposition – Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville and Edgar Allen Poe, for example – were less commercially successful in the US but canonised later.

Classification Struggles and Subversive/Conservative Strategies in the 19th and 20th Centuries: the Rise and Fall of ‘Class’

Before industrialisation, local differences of capital were, according to Main (1965) perceived and articulated in terms of ‘rank’, ‘rich and poor’, ‘middling sort’, the ‘wealthy’ and so on, but never – despite some pretensions to aristocratic manners and modes of reproduction among Southern planters – in terms of the specifically European discourse of ‘estates’. As the 19th Century progressed, however, and as wage labour proliferated, differences came to be perceived and articulated in terms of ‘class’ or, more specifically, ‘capital and labor’. These terms began to *mobilise* people, moreover, and induce *organisation*, and because transport had unified the market of goods and facilitated labour mobility it came to do so on a *national* scale (Ulman, 1966) – a sign that a US-wide social space had now cohered into a field of mutual orientation and struggle. As in Sweden, the discourse and its associated activity originated from Germany, but it was imported not by a single returning individual but by waves of radical German immigrants following the failed 1848 revolution and Bismarck’s

repression strategy (Lipset and Marks, 2000). The subsequent trajectory of organised labour in the US is often flagged as an example of American ‘exceptionalism’, but in fact many of its elements are, in the long run, familiar from the Swedish and German cases with just a few deviations.⁸

First, the labour movement developed much as it did in Europe around the same time: industrial workers began to agitate collectively from around the 1820s, especially for the eight-hour day, and from the 1870s the Knights of Labor (KoL) union sought to mobilise and speak for workers of varying skill levels and racial/migrant status (though not the Chinese) under the label of ‘class’ and to do so on a cross-regional and even national level. As in Sweden, employers – backed by state and federal government – reacted to strikes and collective action with severe repression. The difference, however, was that extreme violence was more readily deployed: employers called in state police and militias, sometimes federal troops, and hired special security forces – the Pinkerton agents – or goon squads to protect strikebreakers and brutally crush collective action. Strikes and walkouts, such as the Great Southwest railroad strike of 1886 or the Louisiana sugar strikes of 1887, became battles or massacres, and demonstrations, such as the Haymarket rally of 1886, descended into fatal riots. Importantly, employer-initiated violence was either ‘legitimate’, in the sense that it mobilised the physical/military capital of the state, or at least was not proscribed by the state, whereas reactive violence of workers, which came to be associated in common perception with the KoL, was cast by the press and politicians as illegitimate and subject to public criminal proceedings and punishment.

Around the same time, the KoL faced competition from the newly formed American Federation of Labor (AFL). The AFL continued the nascent pre-KoL tradition of craft unionism, which meant its members were skilled workers with an ethos reflecting their relatively advantaged position and trajectories, namely, a desire for individual advancement and a somewhat pro-business mindset. AFL leaders were likely to be conciliatory with employers and to negotiate for member benefits and advantages at the local or section level rather than resort to strikes (though they sometimes did), militating against identification with a nationwide ‘class’ and affiliation with a separate socialist or labour party. It was, therefore, favoured by employers and politicians, and craft workers deserted the

KoL (associated with violence, illegitimacy, failure) for the AFL (associated with legitimacy and success), the KoL subsequently collapsing before the 19th Century was out.

Members and leaders of the AFL were generally anti-immigrant in outlook, fearing wage depression and labour market competition, and excluded black workers not least because they were effectively barred from skilled work. One significant consequence of this was the consolidation of ethno-racial difference as a *competing scheme of vision, division and mobilisation* to ‘class’ at the local and the national level. A sense of ‘them’ and ‘us’ mostly – not universally – revolved around US-born whites versus ‘my’ or ‘our’ ethno-racial group (as well as the opposition to *other* non-white ethno-racial groups); a sense based on a close homology between the ethno-racial space and the social space, for sure, and inscribed in physical space by the incipient tendency for ghettoization, but with symbols and schemata of perception from the former (revolving around skin tone, language, accent, names, cuisine and so on) becoming means of making sense of differences and interests in the latter. Most important for the classificatory struggle in the US was the founding of organisations and movements – such as the National Negro Business League or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – designed principally to defend and advance the rights and opportunities of the black American population, sharply bounded off symbolically from white Americans by the concept of ‘the color line’, regardless of position in social space and within the orthodox conception of success (accumulation of wealth and education).

This is not the end of the story for union-led subversion strategies under the label of ‘class’, however. The far-left Industrial Workers of the World (the ‘Wobblies’) tried to recapture the spirit of the KoL and rekindle the discourse of ‘class’ in the early 20th Century, only to be met once more with direct repression while the AFL got an easier ride (especially from the Democrats). This repression took the form of state-backed violence again, but also, echoing Bismarck’s initial strategy in Germany, arrests, raids, deportations and restrictions on immigration sanctioned by the federal government. This is because a process of bureaucratisation, internal differentiation and concentration of powers (including taxation of incomes) had augmented the capacities and personnel of the federal government, i.e. its chains of symbolic power.

Despite the decline of the Wobblies, however, labour agitation intensified during the Great Depression, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) broke from the AFL to try and mobilise a broad base of support and pursue a radical agenda. Police and military violence ceased to be effective, due to the sheer scale of unrest, and eventually the federal response was to pursue the second Bismarckian conservation strategy of co-optation and domestication. The Democratic Party under Franklin D. Roosevelt forged tactical alliances with unions and radicals so as to quell their threat, and the New Deal – a raft of policies extending welfare services, regulating employment conditions and institutionalising labour relations and collective bargaining – undermined their more subversive demands (see Lipset and Marks, 2000: Chapter 6). Fantasia and Voss (2004) contend that the point of final co-optation of the labour leadership was World War Two, when a no-strike pact was struck in the name of patriotism, and then the Cold War, when the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 restricted legal union activity and forced a purge of communist sentiment. Radicalism declined, the AFL and CIO soon re-merged into a conservative bloc and the language of ‘class’, argue Fantasia and Voss, became almost unspeakable among unions, their membership and the population generally and swamped by the individualising discourse of ‘consumers’ and ‘workers’, even as worker unrest continued. The Civil Rights movement, moreover, which sought broad support and legitimacy within the political field by explicitly eschewing association with communists (its student wing excepted: Carson, 1995), later amplified the primacy of ‘race’ as principle of vision and division for making sense of not just ethno-racial difference but positions and (im)possibilities in the social space too.

Structural Change in the Twentieth Century and Beyond

Meanwhile, the division of labour and the distribution of capital, and thus the structure of the social space, were undergoing transformation. In the first half of the 20th Century the main trends were as follows. First, continued growth and bureaucratization of corporations and the public sector increased the numbers of managers, professionals and white-collar/clerical workers (Mills, 1951). This, in turn, went hand-in-hand with ongoing expansion and differentiation of the public education system, including via the emergence of local junior/community colleges overtly intended to provide a

postsecondary pathway to higher education – the Associate’s degree – for those with few resources, though for many it was the terminus of their education rather than a conduit (Brint and Karabel, 1989). Second, the US came to specialise in automated mass production. The so-called ‘American system’ of production, in which emphasis was put on mechanisation and the practical and efficient interchangeability of component parts, had developed in the 19th Century in adaptation to peculiarities of the US social space, namely, the continued relative scarcity of wage labour given the abundance of land and the high demand for middle-range consumer goods given – compared to other countries – high disposable incomes and low economic inequality (Engerman and Sokoloff, 2000: 378-9). Fordism was merely its extension and elaboration in the motor industry, and while initially adjusted to the national social space, the American system put the US in an advantageous position in export markets once disposable incomes began to rise elsewhere, spurring economic growth and, with that, capital accumulation in the space of states. It also redoubled the nexus between the economic field and higher education via the premium on science and technology (or what Bourdieu [2005] would call ‘technological capital’). The same income structure underlying the American system of production, meanwhile, translated into growth of personal services, retail and entertainment, with many enterprises following the same trajectory of mergers, acquisitions and bureaucratisation as in manufacturing to form department stores, national chains and large studios.

These trends, prefiguring what would later occur elsewhere, continued after the Second World War, from which the US emerged as the dominant player in the space of states. The growth of services, the focus on technology (including in relation to arms development in the context of the Cold War) and concomitant expansion of higher education, along with a growing public sector and communications/advertising industry, prompted famous theorisations on the right and the left of ‘post-industrial society’, ‘upskilling’, the rise of ‘experts’ as a new class, the internal differentiation of the middle classes, status inconsistency, the stratification and strains of the burgeoning education system, school-mediated social reproduction and the new symbolic functions of credentials (e.g. Mills, 1951; Lenski, 1954; Lipset, 1960; Blau and Duncan, 1967; Coleman et al, 1966; Bell, 1973; Trow, 1973; Bowles and Gintis, 1976/2011; Collins 1979; Gouldner, 1979) – all of which, it could be argued, were

symptoms of the growing importance of institutionalised cultural capital and its opposition to economic capital in structuring the American class system. Another symptom was the invention, in the 1950s, of ‘human capital theory’ within the Chicago School of neoclassical economics – a theory and an economic tradition that would soon take centre stage in the US and beyond.

The period up to the 1970s was one of relative affluence, welfare provision and economic equality in the US (Piketty, 2014, 2020). It was also one of mass consumerism and entrenchment of the production of popular entertainment within the field of power (Hollywood movies, rock and roll music, etc.), which Lena (2019), building on a wide range of research, claims led to renewed efforts among the capital-rich to bound off and consecrate certain *types* of popular culture or ways of *appreciating* it (i.e. modes of consumption) as legitimate and others as vulgar – the intellectual, challenging or experimental movie/record versus the entertaining, conformist and familiar, for example (cf. Gans, 1999). Things began to change, however, with the confluence of three factors. First, the progressive ‘New Deal Coalition’ that dominated the political field collapsed, partly because of internal struggles ignited by the Civil Rights movement, opposition to the Vietnam War and, as in Germany, a broader anti-materialist countercultural current among the growing number of students, the major prophets for whom were Herbert Marcuse, C. Wright Mills and other figures of the New Left (see Fraser and Gerstle, 1989). Second, the dominance exercised by the US in the space of states came under pressure as other nations – Japan, Germany and the UK above all – recovered from the devastation of the Second World War and began to produce competitive goods. This was exacerbated by the energy crises of the early and late 1970s, which brought stagflation, high unemployment and discontent in the US. Third, a revolution was taking place in the field of economics, as neoclassical – or neoliberal – thought, by virtue of several tactics for capital accumulation (see Atkinson et al, 2012), came to global prominence. With the old orthodoxy of the political field dissolved, the economic field in crisis and the place of the US in the space of states under perceived challenge, politicians and advisors began to trial and then embrace neoliberal principles: flexibilisation (i.e. precarisation) of employment, deregulation of markets, union-busting, tax cuts and welfare retrenchment coupled with tough law-and-order policies falling disproportionately on impoverished black neighbourhoods

(Harvey, 2005; Wacquant, 2008, 2009, 2012; Peck, 2010; Kalleberg, 2011). What was started under Jimmy Carter and zealously pursued by Ronald Reagan was continued by George Bush Sr, Bill Clinton, George Bush Jr and Barack Obama. The result of this conservation strategy, and conservative revolution, was soaring economic inequality, whether that be measured in terms of income or wealth held by the top percentiles (Piketty, 2014, 2020), wage polarisation (Harrison and Bluestone, 1990), rates and spatial/racial concentration of poverty and joblessness (Wacquant, 2008) or general figures like the Gini coefficient (which rose from 0.35 to 0.41 between 1979 and 2016).⁹

There were constants, however. These include the mounting dominance of the service sector – retail, finance, real estate, entertainment, public services – relative to manufacturing, in terms of both GDP share and workforce participation, as a result of automated production, population growth, mass consumerism and, according to Bluestone and Harrison (1982), relocation of plants abroad as a corporate tactic to counteract the losses and challenges of the 1970s; the associated proliferation of professional, managerial, clerical and sales positions relative to manual labour; feminisation of the workforce (particularly clerical, sales and other service jobs commodifying feminine dispositions); and – guided by the logic of increasing human capital relative to competitor nations – the expansion and differentiation of post-secondary education.¹⁰ The last of these involved not the deepening of specialised technical training, as in Germany, since the US now focussed on production for mass consumption and entertainment (and mass middle-range rather than high quality capital goods), but the proliferation of community colleges and Associate's degrees and their downgrading from supposed pathways to university to inculcators and symbols of broad, lower-value vocational skills in a variety of fields (Brint and Karabel, 1989). By 2016, 38 percent of all Associate's degrees were in liberal arts/general studies, followed by health studies (19 percent) and business studies (13 percent).¹¹

At the Bachelor's level, growth of the student body has been led overwhelmingly by business studies, which increased its share of conferred degrees from 14 percent to 19 percent between 1970 and 2016, moving from the third most common course to the most popular choice by a wide margin.¹² This suggests the increasing need for institutionalised cultural capital to participate in the economic field (cf. Bourdieu, 1996), and thus the differentiation of credentials beyond the traditional

professional/liberal model, but also the importance of business services and management to the US economic field relative to engineering, technology and physical sciences (which account for around eight percent of students in both 1970 and 2016) (cf. Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Thus we arrive at the image of the US sketched in Chapter 3: a social order oriented toward mass consumption and related services rather than hi-tech manufacturing, populated by many graduates of generalist college or university courses rather than skilled workers and engineers and marked by pronounced economic inequality. The path by which it got there differs from the trajectories of Sweden and Germany insofar as its relative autonomy was won against a colonial centre, from which its major principles of misrecognition were imported, industrialisation was a largely *unintended* consequence of state practice and ‘race’ as a principle of vision and division competed with and, in many ways, overshadowed the discourse of ‘class’. Yet many of the twists and turns in the US’s development parallel – or even foreshadowed – those experienced by its European counterparts. These include the struggles to define and impose a vision of national culture, state-sanctioned strategies to subjugate and then domesticate subversive labour movements, the rise of services and expanded higher education and the turn toward (neo)liberal principles of economic management in the political field as a response to internal crises and conservation of position in the space of states.

The US Social Space Today

The question now is whether the fundamental structure of the current US social space is characterised more by its similarity to or its difference from those of Sweden and Germany. Analysis of correspondences suggests the former prospect is more probable. The prime dimension of difference is, once again, capital volume (Figure 6.1). Those with the highest incomes, ample savings, considerable share ownership, expensive homes and multiple valuable contacts, but also those with professional degrees (medicine, law, etc.) and who had highly educated parents and numerous books in the family home, are opposed to those with no savings or shares, with little social capital, who do not own their homes, who are in the lowest income bracket, whose parents did not graduate high school or own

many books and who themselves have graduated high school or attained an Associate's degree. The progression from low to high capital up the axis is largely linear, the most notable exception relating to parental education: having parents who graduated high school is situated higher than having parents holding Associate's degrees and only a little lower than having degree-educated parents. In fact, having degree-educated parents, given its preponderance, is seemingly indicative of more intermediate capital stocks – parental possession of postgraduate qualifications and 200 or more books in the childhood home are the real source of differentiation when it comes to inherited cultural capital. University graduates, meanwhile, are unevenly distributed along the capital volume dimension according to the subject of study. While those with professional qualifications sit at the top, graduates from business-oriented/other programmes or natural/social science courses are situated a little lower on the axis and those with arts and humanities degrees are lower still, though still in the upper portion of the space.¹³ Those having graduated from a liberal arts college are, by association, situated lower in the space than those having attended a university, but substantially higher than those having gone through community college, who are typically situated in the intermediate zone. Industry of employment, meanwhile, displays little polarisation by capital volume: those working in infrastructure tend to be placed lower than those working in education/arts/health, but those working in professional services or manufacturing, extractive industries and finance are centrally located, on average.

<FIGURE 6.1>

Figure 6.1 The US social space

Notes: Active (upper case) and supplementary (lower case) points. SC = social capital; F = father; M = mother; P = partner; Fam=family.

Box 6.1: Technical details of the US space

The first dimension of difference in the US space yields a corrected inertia rate of 71, making it somewhat more substantial than its equivalents in either the German or the Swedish space. Indicators of economic capital contribute the most to the inertia of the axis (62 percent altogether), while indicators of cultural capital contribute 35 percent. Income is the most important variable (ctr. 25 percent), followed by home value (ctr. 21 percent), respondent education (ctr. 17 percent) and savings

(ctr. 16 percent). Measures of inherited capital play a slightly smaller role, and field effects, in the form of industry of employment, contribute little to the axis. Of the 16 explicative modalities on the axis, eleven denote high capital (ctr. 58 percent) and five denote low capital (ctr. 30 percent), and nine denote economic capital (ctr. 59 percent) while seven denote cultural capital (ctr. 29 percent), but it is worth stressing that modalities proxying high and low possession of *all* forms of capital are explicative on the axis. The highest category of home value is the single largest contributor (11 percent), and the next six highest contributors are indicators of economic capital. Of the indicators of cultural capital, having a professional degree and having graduated high school are the highest contributors (both ctr. 5 percent), followed by having had 500 or more books in the family home (ctr. 4 percent).

The second axis has a corrected inertia rate of 14 percent, rendering it a little more modest than its counterparts in Germany and Sweden – though the different number and relative frequencies of active modalities preclude assigning this to structural differences between the target populations. Indicators of cultural capital outweigh economic capital this time, the former having a combined contribution to the axis of 58 percent compared to the latter's 28 percent. Father's education is very weighty on the axis (ctr. 31 percent), followed by respondent education (ctr. 19 percent) and home ownership (ctr. 17 percent), and this time industry of employment is more prominent (ctr. 15 percent). Income (ctr. 4 percent), savings (ctr. 6 percent) and parental book ownership (ctr. 8 percent) play lesser roles.

Among the 13 explicative modalities, eight denote cultural capital (ctr. 51 percent) and just three denote economic capital (ctr. 17 percent). Five denote high capital (ctr. 32 percent) and an equal number denote lower capital (ctr. 29 percent), indicating parity of contribution to horizontal differentiation at the top and the bottom of the capital volume axis. The single largest contributing modality is possessing an arts/humanities degree (ctr. 11 percent),¹⁴ followed by having a father with no qualifications (ctr. 9 percent), working in extractive/manufacturing/finance industries (9 percent), having a degree-educated father (ctr. 8 percent) and not owning a home (ctr. 8 percent). The only variable with no explicative categories is household income. All in all, while the axis can certainly be

characterised as one of capital composition, it transpires that inherited capital in the form of parental education, subject of study and field of employment are particularly defining features.

The total modified inertia for the two principal axes is greater than 80, so interpretation of additional axes is, strictly speaking, unnecessary. There is a third axis, however, with a corrected inertia rate of 6 percent. Like its German cousin, it takes the form of a parabolic curve defined by an opposition between high/low and middling modalities of capital. A fourth axis, with a modified inertia rate of just 3 percent, is a variant of the capital composition principle that functions to distinguish wealthy business graduates whose fathers had an Associate's degree (i.e. they had a modicum of inherited cultural capital), and who work in the professional sector, from the professionally qualified and arts/humanities graduates with high inherited cultural capital in the education/health/arts sectors. While it is not exactly the same in form as Swedish and German equivalents, it appears to operate yet again to distinguish *non-modal trajectories* in the space. All in all, therefore, whatever minor deviations there may be, the overriding conclusion must be that the US social space is akin in its general structure to the European spaces.

The second dimension of difference, as in Sweden and Germany, is capital composition. At the top of the space, therefore, those richest in economic capital stand opposed to those richest in cultural capital, the most salient points of differentiation relating to *wealth* (in the form of savings and shares) and *inherited cultural capital*, though an opposition between those with business/other degrees and natural/social science degrees is also prominent. Toward the bottom of the volume axis, those with the lowest cultural capital, on the same side of the space as those with highest economic capital, are opposed to those with lower economic capital. Having parents with no qualifications stands opposed to having parents with Associate's degrees; having graduated high school stands opposed to holding an Associate's degree of one's own; having had fewer than 50 books in the family is distinguished from having had between 50 and a hundred; and not owning a home or having savings is associated with the cultural pole. Systematically related to these horizontal polarisations, however, are broader structuring factors and oppositions insofar as the categories they denote are populous and/or, on closer

investigation, highly dispersed internally yet relatively centrally located along the capital volume axis. These include polarisations related to inherited cultural capital (fathers with degrees versus fathers with high school education) and sector of employment (professional services versus extractive/manufacturing/finance industries), but also, most notably, the positioning of arts and humanities graduates toward the cultural pole.¹⁵

Horizontal polarisation nuances the patterning of inherited capital in the space by suggesting that having a parent with an Associate's degree is lower in the space than having a parent who graduated high school because it corresponds with lower economic capital. The correspondence with age (see below) indicates this may be a function of trajectory effects, i.e. the proliferation of Associate's degrees filtering their holders into low-pay service sector work while older people with high-school-graduate parents were more likely to become skilled workers, managers or technicians – positions securing higher incomes and possibilities for accumulating economic capital over time.

Homologies and Intersections

The homology between the social space and the occupational division of labour is similar to that seen in Sweden and Germany but with some modulations. Capital volume is associated with an opposition between manual workers, personal services workers and skilled workers, at the lower end of the space, and managers, large employers and professionals – especially health and legal professionals – at the upper end, with clerks, technicians and socio-medical workers in between. Manual workers, skilled workers, technicians and lower managers typically possess a greater weight of economic to cultural capital, socio-medical workers typically have the opposite balance, and those working in personal services have more balanced stocks of low capital, as in the German space.¹⁶ Higher regions of the space – where occupational groups begin to function as proxies for membership of specific fields within the field of power – evince a clear separation between managers, business related professions and employers, on the one hand, and social scientists, teachers and cultural producers on the other. There is, in other words, an opposition between players and functionaries of the economic

field, or at least those geared toward management of economic capital, and players and mediators of the field of cultural production (including the intellectual field). That said, the separation is due to social scientists, teachers and cultural producers being strongly associated with cultural capital more than anything else, since business professionals and senior managers, like engineers, are centrally located on the horizontal axis – only the employers and lower managers are significantly associated, statistically speaking, with a greater weight of economic capital. This is, in many ways, the opposite of what was observed in Sweden (though the *gap* is still present) and akin to what was seen in Germany, and both cases offer precedents for making sense of the patterns. On the one hand, as in Germany, those working in finance, if taken separately, are clearly positioned within the upper right quadrant. On the other hand, as in the Swedish case (and Volume 1), the nexus between occupations and capital possession can be usefully taken in conjunction with age.

Age categories in general follow a similar distribution in the US space as in Germany, with the youngest age category placed toward the bottom, those aged between 25 and 44 located higher and more toward the cultural pole, those aged 45 to 64 being situated higher still and more centrally on the second axis and those aged 55 to 64 more toward the economic pole. Breaking some of the occupational categories down into two age groups – those aged 44 and under and those 45 and over – thus reveals the tendency for older members to be positioned northeast of their younger counterparts, sometimes by a large margin, and to ‘fill in’ the upper right quadrant a little. Coordinates for older senior managers, lower managers and business professionals on axes 1 and 2 are, respectively: 0.76, -0.34; 0.47, -0.43; and 0.85, -0.41. Differential probabilities by age of possessing degrees and degree-educated parents with educational expansion, as well as accumulation of economic capital over the life course, thus once again demonstrate the inextricability of trajectory effects from capital composition.

Gender also operates as a specifying factor in the relationship between occupation and capital possession, even if, on the whole, the effects of gender on the first two dimensions of the space are muted – coordinates for men and women are not significant on either axis, and the distances between points are diminutive. There is the tendency, first of all, for women to be overrepresented in teaching

(they comprise 78 percent of teachers), clerical work (74 percent), socio-medical services (68 percent), social science (64 percent) and cultural production (60 percent) – i.e. occupations tending to fall on the left hand side of the space (clerks excepted) –and underrepresented in lower management (43 percent), manual work (30 percent), engineering (23 percent) and skilled trades (14 percent) – i.e. occupations falling to the right (engineering excepted). Then there are the differences *within* occupational groups or fields. These are, in fact, highly uneven, with distances between men and women in the occupational groups on the axes varying in extent and direction. Notable disparities include male senior managers being positioned 0.7 units higher in the space than female ones and female socio-medical workers and skilled workers being placed 0.4 units higher than their male counterparts (female socio-medical workers are also 0.4 units further to toward the economic pole than men). Although small numbers preclude overinterpretation, it is noteworthy that female socio-medical workers are typically much older than males in the same job (average age 52, compared to 38) and more likely to be in a partnership with someone in employment (51 percent, as opposed to 34 percent). The effects of trajectory, in the double sense of shifts in the structure of occupational opportunities and – recalling a finding from the German case and from Volume 1 – household formation over the life course, may be in play once again, therefore.

Position in the social space, and its mediation by the division of labour, is also structured by race. Black, Hispanic and native Americans are all plainly associated with lower capital – native Americans with lower cultural capital in particular – while white Americans, despite forming the majority by a large margin (64 percent), bear a highly significant coordinate above the barycentre.¹⁷ Unemployment is higher among black Americans (15 percent), Latin Americans (17 percent) and native Americans (16 percent) than white Americans (7 percent), and those who do have work are overrepresented in low-pay manual and personal service jobs. Only 6 percent of white Americans are employed in manual jobs, for example, but 12 percent of black Americans, 11 percent of Latin Americans and 18 percent of native Americans are. Similarly, while 13 percent of white Americans are employed in personal services, 22 percent of black Americans and 24 percent of Latin Americans are. Forty percent of manual workers and 34 percent of personal service workers, in fact, are from the three

dominated non-white groups, despite the latter constituting less than a quarter of the sample as a whole. Even *within* occupational groups, moreover, there is a systematic difference between white Americans and the three non-white groups. Across occupational groups the former are, on average, 0.4 units higher in the space than the latter (taken together), with the gulfs being largest for social scientists (1.0), engineers (0.8) and socio-medical workers (0.7) and still notable for personal service work (0.4) and manual work (0.4).¹⁸ The effects of ethno-racial domination in the US, then, would certainly seem to filter certain non-white minorities into certain low-pay, low-skill jobs in the division of labour, via disparities in inherited and acquired cultural capital (as well as social capital),¹⁹ but also, it seems, operates to create a gulf between majority and minority workers within the *same* broad category of work – no doubt with consequences for ethno-racial patterns of social reproduction.

Finally, there is a modest homology between the social space and geographical space. Western states are associated with higher capital and Southern states with lower capital; Northeast regions are associated with cultural capital and respondents in the Midwest with economic capital. This no doubt dovetails with the patterning of urban/rural residence in the space, the concentrations of capital and capital-accumulation affordances that go with that and, ultimately, the historical regionalisation of economic activity and associated occupational structures. Nevertheless, while the coordinates for the regions are significant on one or both axes, the distances between them are no bigger than 0.36 units, so the correspondences should be treated with caution.

Individuals and Class Fractions

The distribution of individuals within the space is more akin to that seen in Sweden than Germany, with parity of lateral spread from top to bottom and a slight tendency toward tapering at the top (Figure 6.2). A nine-category schema, bearing the same general structure as in the Swedish case, thus serves as an efficient proxy for class fractions, and characterisation of the categories reveals cross-national affinities in their socio-demographic composition. The dominant class fractions are all characterised by high capital, of course, including social capital (with little distinction in the typical

form of those connections), and those aged over 45 are overrepresented in their midst, but the difference between cultural and economic fractions is clear (Table 6.1). The former, who are disproportionately likely to be teachers, cultural producers and socio-medical workers, to be working in the education, arts or health sectors and to live in a city, are characterised most strongly by their inherited cultural capital, their acquisition of arts/humanities or sciences degrees (from universities) or professional qualifications and their middling-to-high incomes and home values. The latter, on the other hand, are marked most strongly by their high economic capital – including in the form of savings and shares – and their acquisition of business or professional degrees from university, but also middling-to-high inherited cultural capital, with parents likely to have left education after high school. Engineers, lower managers and skilled tradespeople, and those working in extractive/manufacturing industries or in finance, are overrepresented in their ranks. The balanced fraction, meanwhile, manages to combine the highest indicators of economic capital and inherited cultural capital. They are, like the economic fraction, most likely to have acquired professional or business/other degrees, though the order of prominence is reversed, and engineering, technical work and business-related professions are the most overrepresented occupations.

<FIGURE 6.2>

Figure 6.2 Analytical classes in the US social space

Notes: Space of individuals. Large markers denote mean positions of classes on the axes.

<TABLE 6.1>

Table 6.1 Overrepresented features of dominant class fractions (US)

The same chiasmic structure reappears within the intermediate class (Table 6.2). The cultural fraction is characterised by a higher than average rate of possessing sciences, arts or humanities degrees and relatively substantial inherited cultural capital, like those directly above them in the space, and are disproportionately employed in the professional or arts sectors. They are also characterised by low-to-middling economic capital, including non-ownership of domestic property in particular, and low

social capital. As in Sweden and Germany, they have a relatively youthful age profile (mean age 39) and are less likely than usual to live with a partner/spouse (37 percent versus 49 percent of the sample). The economic fraction, in contrast, is characterised by higher economic capital (home ownership, savings, incomes and shares) and lower inherited cultural capital. Skilled workers, technicians, clerks, those working in extractive/manufacturing industries and residents of rural communities are overrepresented, meaning there are some demographic overlaps with the economic fraction of the dominant class. Once again, in opposition to the cultural fraction, they are typically older in years (mean age 55). The intermediate class is, therefore, marked by trajectory effects, or the opposition between the old (and declining) and the new (and ascending): older workers less likely to have degree-educated parents or post-school qualifications of their own, working in older industries and residing in rustic communities stand opposed to young workers in public services benefitting from degree-educated parents and an expanded education system but yet to accumulate higher levels of economic capital.

<TABLE 6.2>

Table 6.2 Overrepresented features of intermediate and dominated class fractions (US)

Finally, while the dominated class as a whole is characterised by low holdings of social capital, the opposition between cultural and economic capital is, as in the Sweden case, fairly pronounced – and not just in terms of what each fraction lacks but in terms of what each possesses too. Those in the cultural fraction, for instance, are certainly characterised by low economic capital in all its forms, but are also likely to possess Associate’s degrees and to have parents with the same qualifications. The economic fraction, on the other hand, is characterised by little inherited or acquired cultural capital, and though its members seem to be relatively divested of economic capital too their distinguishing feature relative to the cultural fraction is their likelihood of possessing modest savings and homes. As in the dominant class, the balanced fraction manages to combine elements of the two fractions either side of it, but this time resulting in a menu of low-capital indicators.

Occupants of the economic fraction of the dominated class are disproportionately likely to live in rural America, like those above them and in opposition to the cultural dominant fraction, though the individuals in the cultural fraction of the dominated class are more likely to live in towns instead. Manual and personal service workers (and the unemployed) are sprinkled liberally across the class as a whole, and though the economic fraction is not characterised by any particular age group it does have an older average age (48 years) than the balanced (41 years) or cultural (35 years) fractions, signifying the entanglement of capital composition with trajectory effects again. Minority ethno-racial groups – particularly Black Americans – are also overrepresented across the cultural and balanced fractions of the dominated class, standing in opposition to the economic fraction of the intermediate class and all segments of the dominant class, which are disproportionately made up of White Americans. Almost a quarter of black Americans and a fifth of Hispanic/Latinx respondents are to be found in the balanced fraction of the dominated class, compared with just a tenth of white Americans, and another 16 percent of both are to be found in the cultural fraction. Looked at another way, while 72 percent of the dominant class as a whole are white Americans, and just 11 percent are black, Hispanic or native, only around half of the dominated class *in toto* are white Americans and a third are black, Hispanic or native Americans.

As for the distribution of men and women, it transpires that, in line with what might be expected from the association of gendered occupations with the space, the cultural fraction of the dominant class (associated with teachers and socio-medical workers) and the balanced fraction of the intermediate class (corresponding in the space with clerks) is disproportionately made up of women (Table 6.3). Within the dominated class, though, while women are overrepresented within the balanced fraction, the cultural fraction is characterised by a preponderance of men. Comparing against the figures seen previously for Sweden and Germany, the most consistent cross-national tendency is for women to be underrepresented among the economically rich – but only in the US are women substantially overrepresented among the culturally rich – and overrepresented among the balanced fraction of the intermediate class.

<TABLE 6.3>

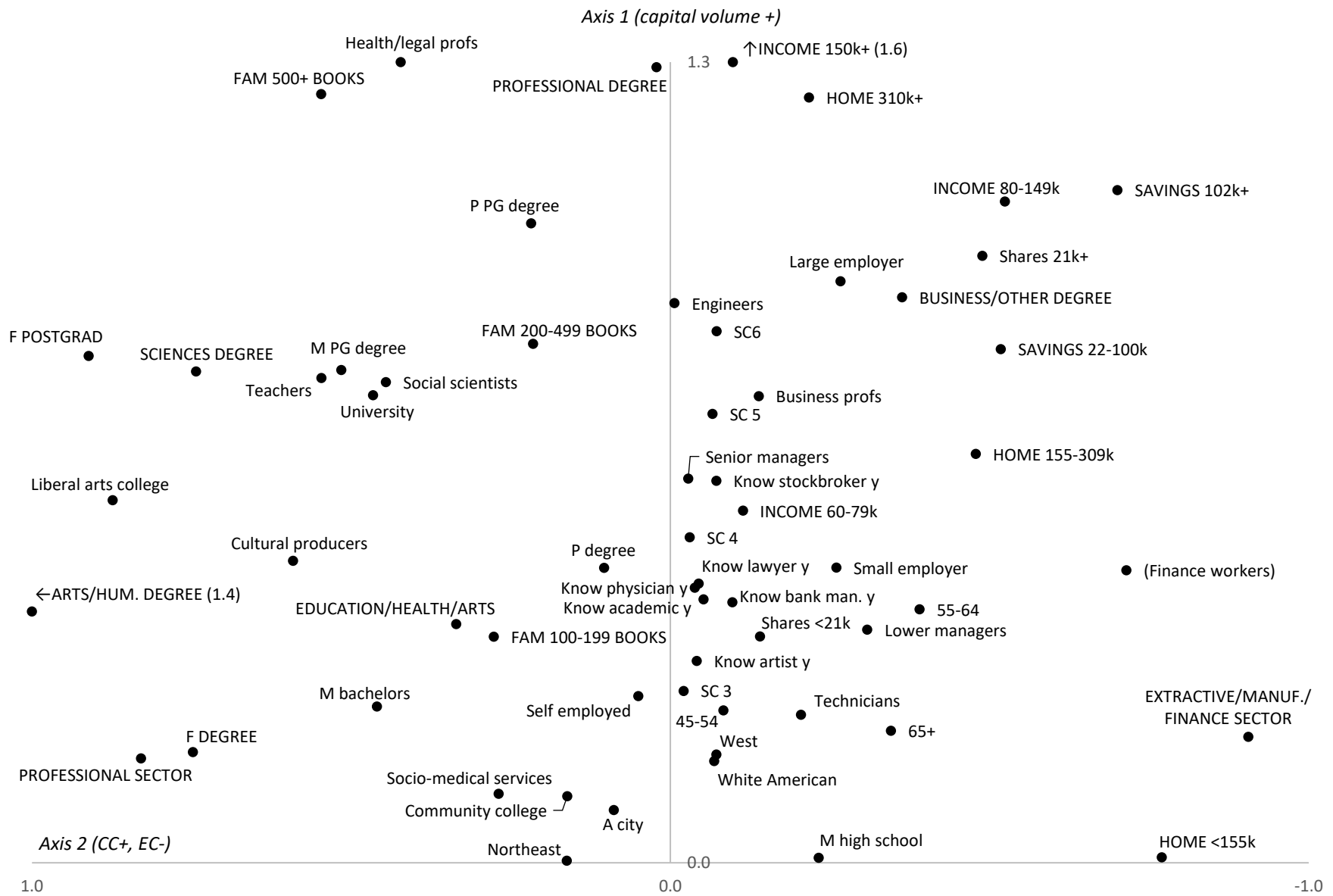
Table 6.3 The gender profile of US class fractions (row %)

Conclusion

In terms of historical development and contemporary structure, the US is certainly characterised by specificities: its colonial origins, the legacy of slavery, its history of immigration, the later focus on mass production and consumption, an expansive post-secondary education system with a large generalist element, pronounced economic inequality and so on. Some of these idiosyncrasies appear to manifest in the model of the social space. The position of Black, Hispanic and native Americans, for example, is testament to the imbrication of ethno-racial domination with probabilities of acquiring cultural and economic capital. The separation of Associate's degrees from Bachelor degrees, and community colleges from universities, moreover, represents the specifically American homology between the education system and the class system, with community colleges/Associate's degrees seemingly operating to channel growing numbers of young people, under the illusion of pursuing social mobility, into low-grade employment.

Overall, however, it would be too much to say that the US is, as many have claimed, exceptional. The relative positioning of white majority individuals and non-white minorities in the social space, after all, is homologous to the positioning of white Germans and 'guest workers' in the German space, and perhaps majority and minority ethno-racial groups across Anglo-Saxon/European social orders more generally, and the separation of educational institutions is but a version of the university/non-university opposition in Sweden and Germany. Despite the focus on mass production and consumption, moreover, occupations, industries/sectors and disciplines correspond with capital profiles, and are separated from one another, in familiar ways. The same is true of age groups. Ultimately, the fundamental *structure* of social difference is identical to that seen in Sweden and Germany, distinguishing those high, low and middling in terms of capital volume and – in contrast to the unidimensional socio-economic scales once popular in the US – those richer in economic capital and those richer in cultural capital. Just as in Sweden, this polarisation by capital composition is

pronounced from top to bottom of the social space, and just as in Sweden and Germany, capital composition is defined in good part by not only wealth and field effects but social background – i.e. inherited cultural capital – and the *form* rather than level of institutionalised cultural capital acquired. The Anglo-European roots of misrecognition in America and the shared fate of (neo)liberal deindustrialisation, it seems, outweigh any peculiarities of the path taken between Independence and World War Two. The only question remaining is whether the *symbolic translation* of the US social space – i.e. the correspondence with practices and tastes – is equally a case of national specificities being arranged according to a familiar structure.



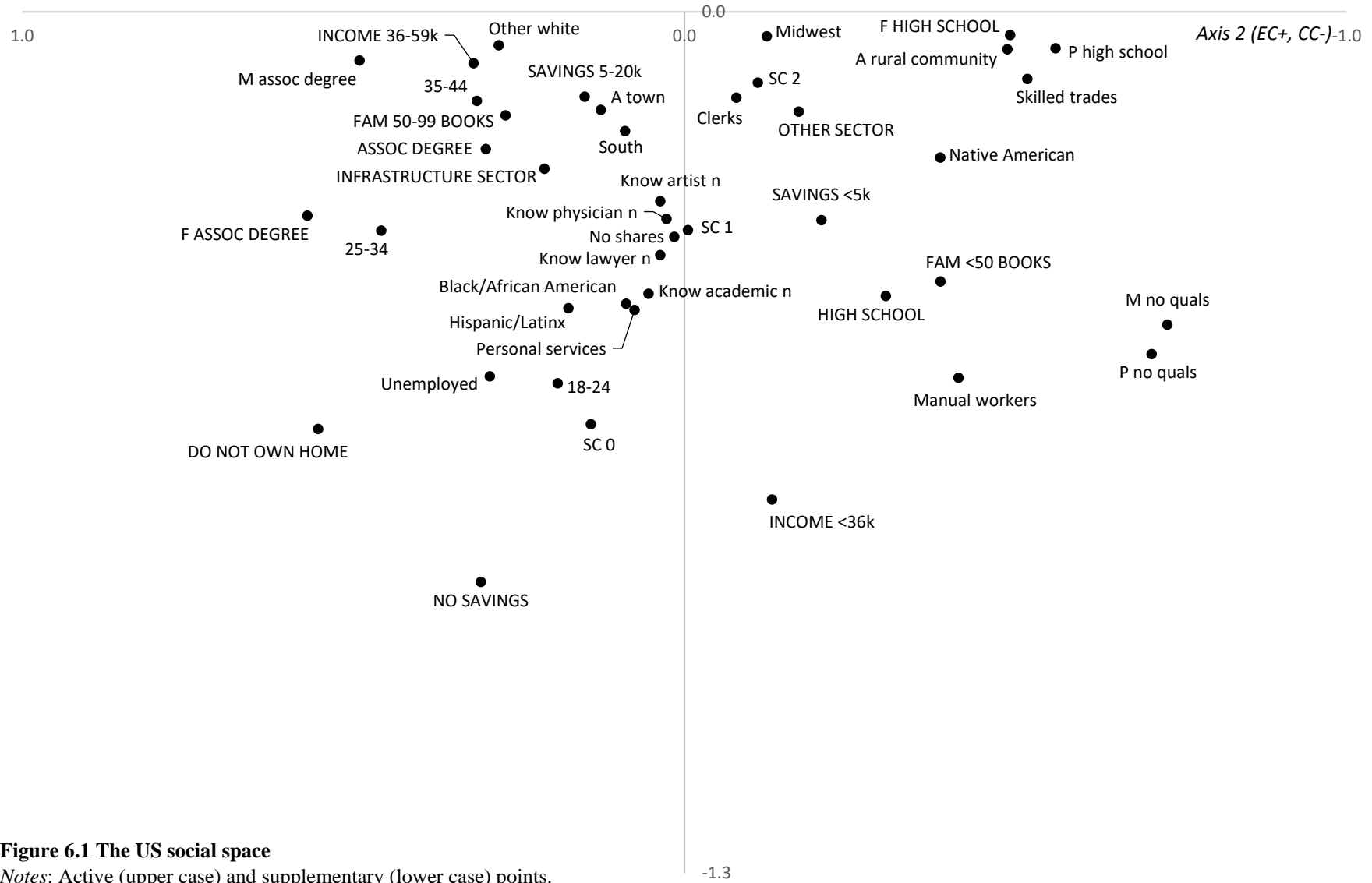


Figure 6.1 The US social space

Notes: Active (upper case) and supplementary (lower case) points.

SC = social capital; F = father; M = mother; P = partner; Fam=family. Axis 1 (capital volume -)

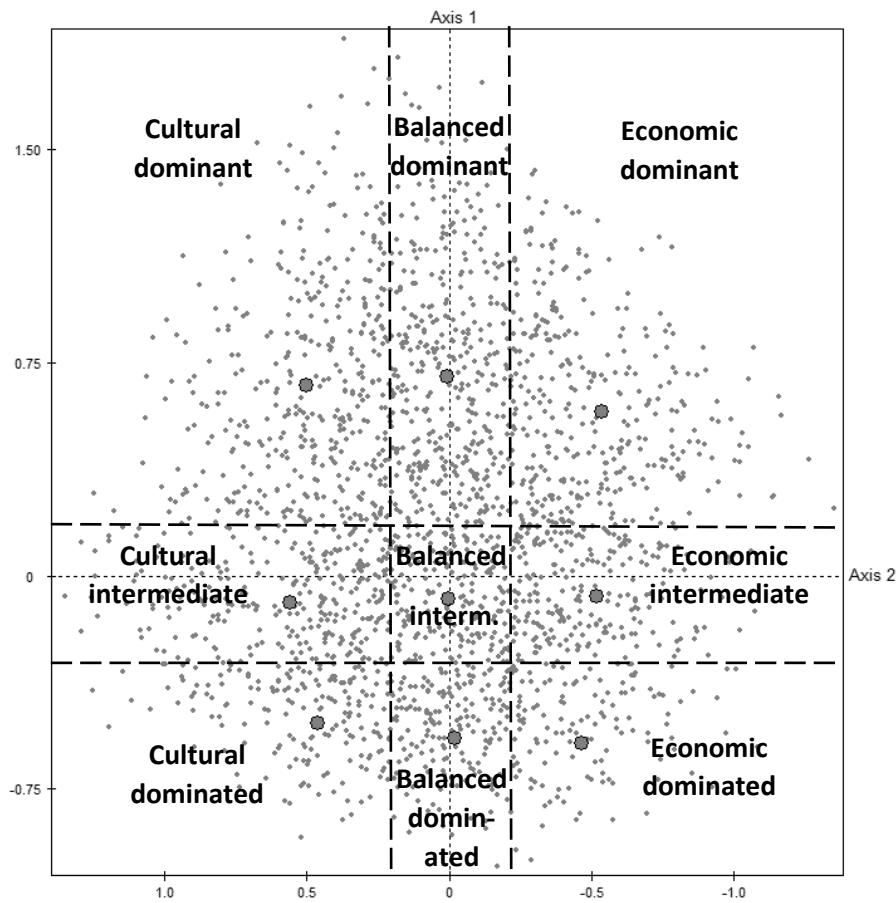


Figure 6.2 Analytical classes in the US social space

Notes: Space of individuals. Large markers denote mean positions of classes on the axes.

Table 6.1 Overrepresented features of dominant class fractions (US)

Cultural dominant		Balanced dominant		Economic dominant	
Category	%	Category	%	Category	%
<i>University</i>	72	<i>Know lawyer</i>	76	Income 80-149k	43
Father postgrad	43	Home 310k+	40	Savings 101k+	31
Arts/humanities degree	31	<i>Know academic</i>	79	Savings 22-100k	35
Sciences degree	29	Professional degree	23	Home 310k+	38
Fam 500+ books	24	<i>Know artist</i>	73	Father high school	61
<i>Know academic</i>	77	<i>Know physician</i>	67	Business/other degree	27
<i>Know lawyer</i>	73	Income 80-149k	31	Home 155-309k	34
<i>Partner postgrad</i>	29	Fam 500+ books	20	<i>Shares 21k+</i>	29
<i>Know physician</i>	66	Business/other degree	25	Income 150k+	19
<i>Education sector</i>	21	<i>Know stockbroker</i>	37	<i>Know academic</i>	72
<i>Mother postgrad</i>	19	<i>Shares 21k+</i>	26	<i>Extractive/manuf. sector</i>	29
<i>Know artist</i>	68	Savings 101k+	22	<i>55-64 years old</i>	34
<i>Teachers</i>	15	<i>SC5</i>	23	<i>Know physician</i>	60
Home 310k+	31	Home 155-309k	29	<i>Mother high school</i>	73
Fam 200-499 books	23	<i>Know bank manager</i>	41	<i>Know lawyer</i>	62
Income 150k+	16	Income 150k+	16	<i>Know stockbroker</i>	32
Income 60-79k	25	Fam 200-499 books	21	<i>SC5</i>	20
Father degree	38	Savings 22-100k	25	<i>Finance sector</i>	11
<i>City</i>	71	<i>Partner degree</i>	29	<i>Know bank manager</i>	37
<i>Liberal arts college</i>	9	<i>Partner postgrad</i>	19	<i>White American</i>	74
Professional degree	15	<i>Engineers</i>	11	<i>Know artist</i>	60
<i>Mother degree</i>	34	<i>SC6</i>	13	Professional degree	13
<i>Cultural producers</i>	9	<i>Mother degree</i>	30	Income 60-79k	22
Fam 100-199 books	27	<i>SC4</i>	21	<i>Engineers</i>	10
<i>SC6</i>	13	<i>SC3</i>	22	<i>Rural community</i>	26
<i>Arts sector</i>	12	Income 60-79k	20	<i>Partner high school</i>	16
<i>SC4</i>	23	<i>Business profs</i>	8	<i>Partner postgrad</i>	11
<i>Know stockbroker</i>	29	<i>Mother postgrad</i>	12	<i>Lower managers</i>	25
<i>Health sector</i>	19	<i>Education sector</i>	14	<i>Partner degree</i>	14
<i>White American</i>	71	<i>45-54 years old</i>	27	<i>Skilled trades</i>	27
<i>Socio-medical services</i>	14	Sciences degree	14	<i>65+ years old</i>	14
<i>Engineers</i>	9	Father degree	32	<i>Shares <21k</i>	37
<i>Partner degree</i>	25	<i>Technicians</i>	16	<i>University</i>	19
<i>SC5</i>	16	Father postgraduate	18	<i>SC4</i>	43
<i>Know bank manager</i>	32	<i>Self-employed</i>	16	<i>West</i>	16
<i>SC3</i>	20	<i>West</i>	44		
<i>45-54 years old</i>	24	<i>White American</i>	69		
		<i>Health sector</i>	16		

Notes: Percentages denote the proportion of the fraction in the category. Categories are arranged in order of strength of association as given by test statistics. All associations are significant at the 5% level and follow the rules for relative frequencies between classes and sample set out in the Methodological Appendices. Categories in italics are supplementary or passive.

Table 6.2 Overrepresented features of intermediate and dominated class fractions (US)

Cultural intermediate		Balanced intermediate		Economic intermediate		Cultural dominated		Balanced dominated		Economic dominated	
Category	%	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%
Do not own home	67	Father high school	44	Home <155k	37	Do not own home	97	High school	90	Income <36k	85
Father degree	48	Income 36-59k	27	High school	81	Father Assoc degree	29	Do not own home	70	Father no quals	52
Arts/humanities degree	22	Associate degree	15	<i>Extractive/manuf.</i>	30	No savings	42	Income <36k	66	Fam <50 books	85
Father postgrad	25	High school	65	Fam <50 books	66	<i>SC0</i>	50	No savings	41	High school	96
Income 36-59k	34	<i>Female</i>	59	Father high school	56	Income <36k	57	<i>No shares</i>	73	<i>Mother high school</i>	90
Professional sector	17	Fam 100-199 books	21	<i>Mother high school</i>	76	Father degree	42	<i>SC0</i>	45	Home <155k	36
<i>Mother degree</i>	35			Father no quals	28	<i>Unemployed</i>	27	Fam <50 books	59	Savings <5k	29
<i>25-34 years old</i>	26			<i>Partner high school</i>	29	Fam 50-99 books	41	<i>Unemployed</i>	24	<i>Manual workers</i>	22
<i>University</i>	60			Savings 21-100k	24	<i>18-24 years old</i>	29	<i>Personal services</i>	29	<i>Rural community</i>	30
Fam 50-99 books	41			Home 255-300k	27	<i>Mother Assoc degree</i>	24	<i>Black American</i>	23	<i>No shares</i>	63
<i>35-44 years old</i>	67			<i>65+ years old</i>	31	<i>25-34 years old</i>	29	Father high school	49	Other sector	43
<i>Mother Assoc degree</i>	33			<i>Skilled trades</i>	16	<i>A town</i>	43	<i>Manual workers</i>	17	<i>SC0</i>	38
Fam 100-199 books	25			<i>Rural community</i>	25	Associate degree	20	<i>18-24 years old</i>	22	<i>SC1</i>	26
<i>Arts sector</i>	19			<i>55-64 years old</i>	25	Infrastructure sector	25	<i>Mother high school</i>	64	No savings	25
Sciences degree	25			Other sector	39	<i>No shares</i>	62	<i>Hispanic</i>	14	<i>Extractive/manuf.</i>	19
<i>Hispanic</i>	10			<i>Technicians</i>	16	<i>Other white</i>	17	Infrastructure sector	20	<i>Personal services</i>	24
<i>SC0</i>	14			Savings <5k	19	<i>35-44 years old</i>	24	Other sector	36	Father high school	42
Savings 5-20k	15			Income 60-79k	19	<i>Male</i>	58	<i>Female</i>	57	<i>Partner high school</i>	21
<i>18-24 years old</i>	34			<i>Midwest</i>	28	<i>Mother degree</i>	28				
<i>South</i>	19			<i>Shares 21k+</i>	16	<i>South</i>	36				
				Income 36-59k	25	<i>Personal services</i>	23				
				<i>SC2</i>	20	<i>Black American</i>	18				
				<i>White American</i>	66	<i>SC1</i>	23				
						High school	64				

Notes: Percentages denote the proportion of the fraction in the category. Categories are arranged in order of strength of association as given by test statistics. All associations are significant at the 5% level and follow the rules for relative frequencies between classes and sample set out in the Methodological Appendices. Categories in italics are supplementary or passive.

Table 6.3 The gender profile of US class fractions (row %)

Fraction	Male	Female
Cultural dominant	42.8	57.2
Balanced dominant	48.0	52.0
Economic dominant	55.0	45.0
Cultural intermediate	47.9	52.1
Balanced intermediate	41.3	58.7
Economic intermediate	53.5	46.5
Cultural dominated	57.8	42.2
Balanced dominated	42.8	57.2
Economic dominated	46.2	53.8
<i>Total</i>	48.5	51.5

Notes

¹ The historiography of the US, like that of Germany, is immense. As well as sources directly cited, the following sketch of US history is informed by contributions to Engerman and Gallman's (1996, 2000a, 2000b) mammoth economic history of the US.

² Reed's (2020) analysis of pre-Revolutionary America goes in this direction, though with much conceptual wheel-reinventing.

³ On salutary neglect, see Henretta (1972). It was a tactic calculated to reap economic benefit for the English state indirectly.

⁴ For classic overviews of education in colonial America, see Cremin (1970), Cohen (1974) and Rudolph (1990). On colleges and universities in particular, see Geiger (2014).

⁵ There was also the ethno-national heterogeneity of European settlers, which was often bound up with sectarian differences, but the initial tendency was for linguistic and cultural homogenisation in opposition to black slaves and natives (see Gordon, 1964). This would change later on, however.

⁶ All these developments, as Collins (1979) and Urban and Wagoner (2014) show, were accompanied by significant struggle and clashing interests attached to different class positions (i.e. capital profiles).

⁷ Neal's influence also extended to visual arts.

⁸ The following account is informed principally by Fraser and Gerstle (1989), Marks (1989), Voss (1994), Lipset and Marks (2000), Fantasia and Voss (2004) and Dubofsky and McCartin (2017), many of whom still hold to the exceptionalism thesis in one form or another.

⁹ World Bank: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=US>.

¹⁰ Figures for sectorial composition, occupational distributions (of men, women and the total non-agricultural workforce) and workforce feminisation from 1900 to 1990 can be found in Goldin (2000: 557-62; see also analyses in Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1993; Wright, 1997: Chapter 3). World Bank data (based on ILO estimates) also show the share of service employment increased from 72 percent in 1991 to 79 percent in 2016, but that this was unequally distributed by gender: in 2016, 69 percent of working men were employed in the service sector, but 91 percent of women were. World Bank data also show the rate of possessing post-secondary educational qualifications rose from 21 percent in 1970 to 44 percent in 2016. That parents rich in economic and cultural capital mobilised their resources to enhance their children's chances in this new educational environment is well demonstrated (e.g. Lareau, 2000, 2003; Devine, 2004).

¹¹ Figures are from the National Centre for Education Statistics' (NCES) 2017 *Digest of Educational Statistics*, Table 321.30 (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_321.30.asp).

¹² Health professional courses show the second most notable increase, rising from three percent to 12 percent of conferred degrees in the same period (becoming the second most popular option). In contrast, education dropped from 21 percent to 5 percent of degrees and social sciences/history fell from 19 percent to 8 percent. It is perhaps also worth noting that, while it accounts for less than 3 percent of degrees, studies in leisure/recreation showed the biggest proportional increase from their starting point in 1970: they are now 31 times more popular than they were. All figures come from the NCES 2017 digest, Table 322.10 (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_322.10.asp).

¹³ Categories are combined on the basis of relative frequencies and propinquity in exploratory spaces.

¹⁴ The prominence and location of the category prompted tests of internal stability. When the modality is set as passive, however, the structure of the space remains unchanged, i.e. there is very little rotation of the axes.

¹⁵ The skewed dispersion of the categories is revealed by the large areas of their respective concentration ellipses, which represent +/- two standard deviations of a category along an axis, and their eccentricity coefficients, which run from 0 (perfect circular distribution in the plane) to 1 (perfect linear distribution). The areas for degree-educated fathers, high school graduate fathers, professional services, extractive/etc. industries and humanities graduates are as follows: 2.3, 2.2, 2.8, 2.5 and 2.0. The eccentricity coefficients, respectively, are 0.8, 0.8, 0.6, 0.7 and 0.8 – in all cases the direction of the skew being vertical.

¹⁶ Though the distances between the categories may seem small, the standard deviations on the second axis between socio-medical workers and technicians and between socio-medical workers and lower managers are both greater than 0.4, the usual threshold for being considered notable. The same is true of the distance between manual workers and personal service workers.

¹⁷ Asian Indian respondents are positioned higher and further toward the cultural pole than white Americans, but their coordinates are not significant at the 5 percent level.

¹⁸ The only exceptions to the rule, where non-white incumbents are situated higher than white ones, are health and legal professionals, but these refer to just six individuals. Differences by capital composition across all occupational categories are more modest than differences by capital volume, with white American workers being, on average, 0.2 SDs further toward the economic pole than their non-white counterparts.

¹⁹ Between 33 and 39 percent of the dominated ethno-racial categories possess none of the specified valuable contacts, as opposed to 15 percent of white Americans.