

Class and Stratification

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Survivors: 60% of 1st class, 36% of 2nd class and 24% of 3rd class.

Inequalities & Stratification

- inequalities between individuals
- inequalities between groups

Dimensions of Inequalities

- income & wealth
- power
- prestige

Nature of Inequalities

- social inequalities
- natural inequalities

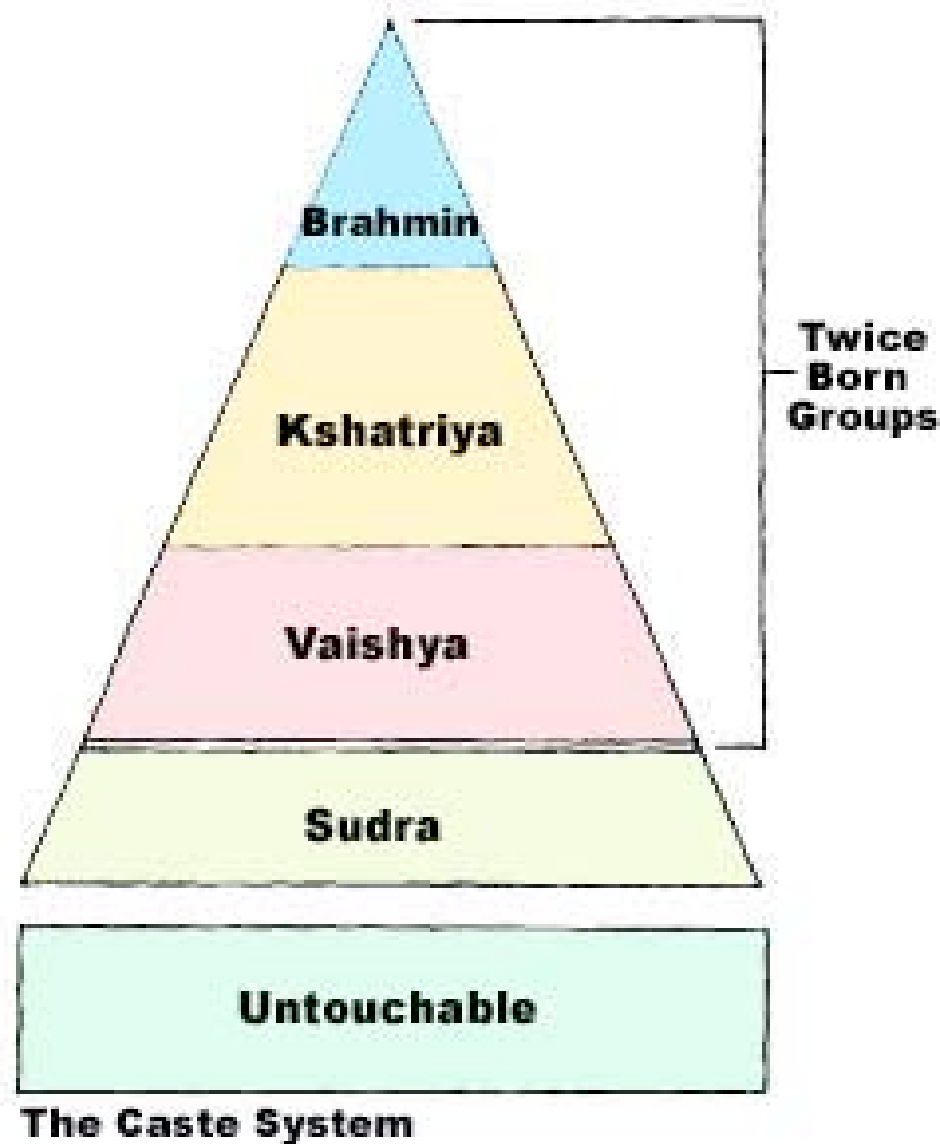
Systems of Stratification

- Social stratification describes inequalities that exist between large groups in societies
- All systems of social stratification share the following characteristics:
 - The rankings apply to social categories of people who share a common characteristic without necessarily interacting or identifying with each other
 - The ranks of different social categories tend to change very slowly over time

Types of Stratification

- **Caste:** Closed system in which social status is given for life. (India)
- **Estates:** Feudal estates were strata with differing rights and obligations towards each other. (Europe, Middle Ages)
- **Class:** Large-scale groupings who share common economic resources; these in turn shape their possible lifestyles

The Caste System



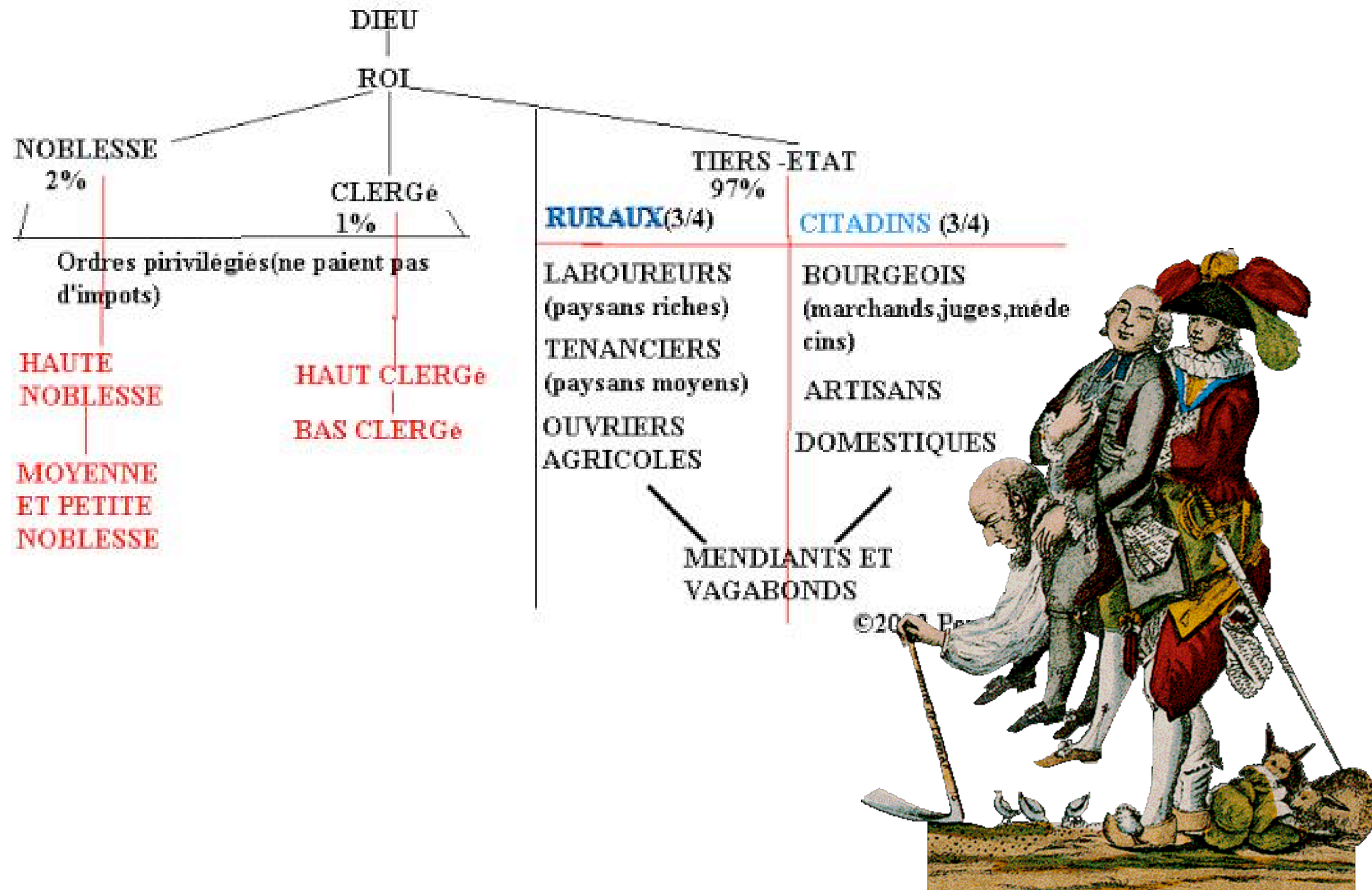
Priests and religious officials

Rulers and warriors

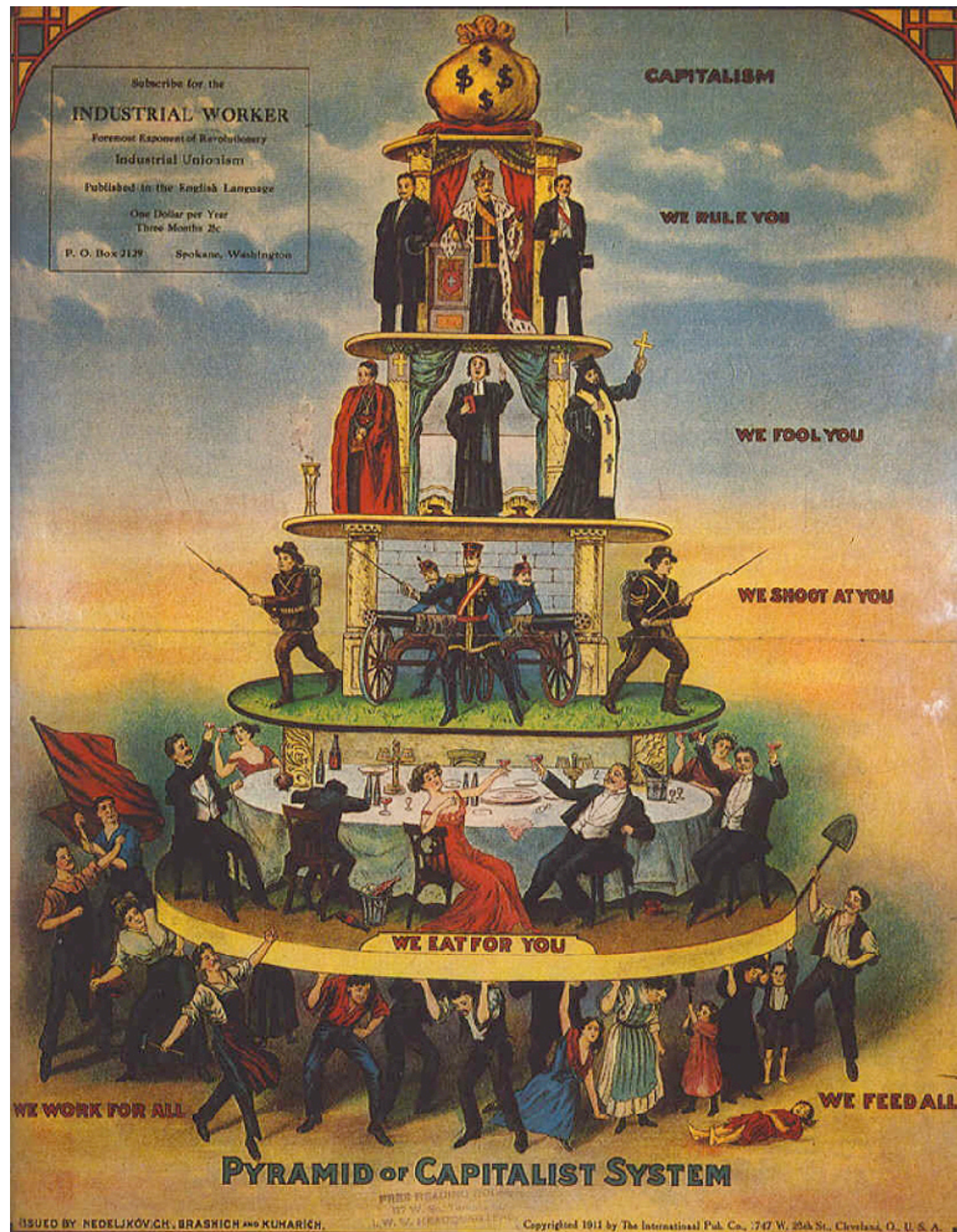
Farmers, merchants, traders and craftsmen

Servants of upper castes and peasants

The Three Estates



The Class System



What's Different about Class?

- Class systems are fluid: no legal or religious rules, no restrictions on intermarriage
- Class positions are in some part achieved: an individual's class is not simply given at birth, social mobility is a common feature
- Class is economically based: inequalities in the possession of material resources
- Class systems are large scale and impersonal: no personal relationships of duty and obligation

Theories

- functionalists
- marxists
- weberians

Functionalists

- Parsons: ranking of people according to their success in realizing shared values
- Davis & Moore: distribution of human resources
- Young: meritocracy

Davis & Moore (I)

- “Some Principles of Stratification” (1949)
- Stratification is universal, so it must be functional.
- In every society, some positions are functionally more important than others.
- In every society, the number of talented people is limited.
- The interest of every society is to put the most talented people in the most important positions.

THE FUNCTIONAL NECESSITY OF STRATIFICATION

Curiously, however, the main functional necessity explaining the universal presence of stratification is precisely the requirement faced by any society of placing and motivating individuals in the social structure. As a functioning mechanism a society must somehow distribute its members in social positions and induce them to perform the duties of these positions. It must thus con-

Davis & Moore (2)

- But talent is not enough: even talented people need years of education in order to to be able to fill an important position.
- Now, education costs a lot of time and money.
- So talented people need a lot of motivation: if we want them to learn while others make money and enjoy life, they must be rewarded in their future positions.
- Therefore the most valuable rewards (money, power, prestige) must be linked to the most important positions.

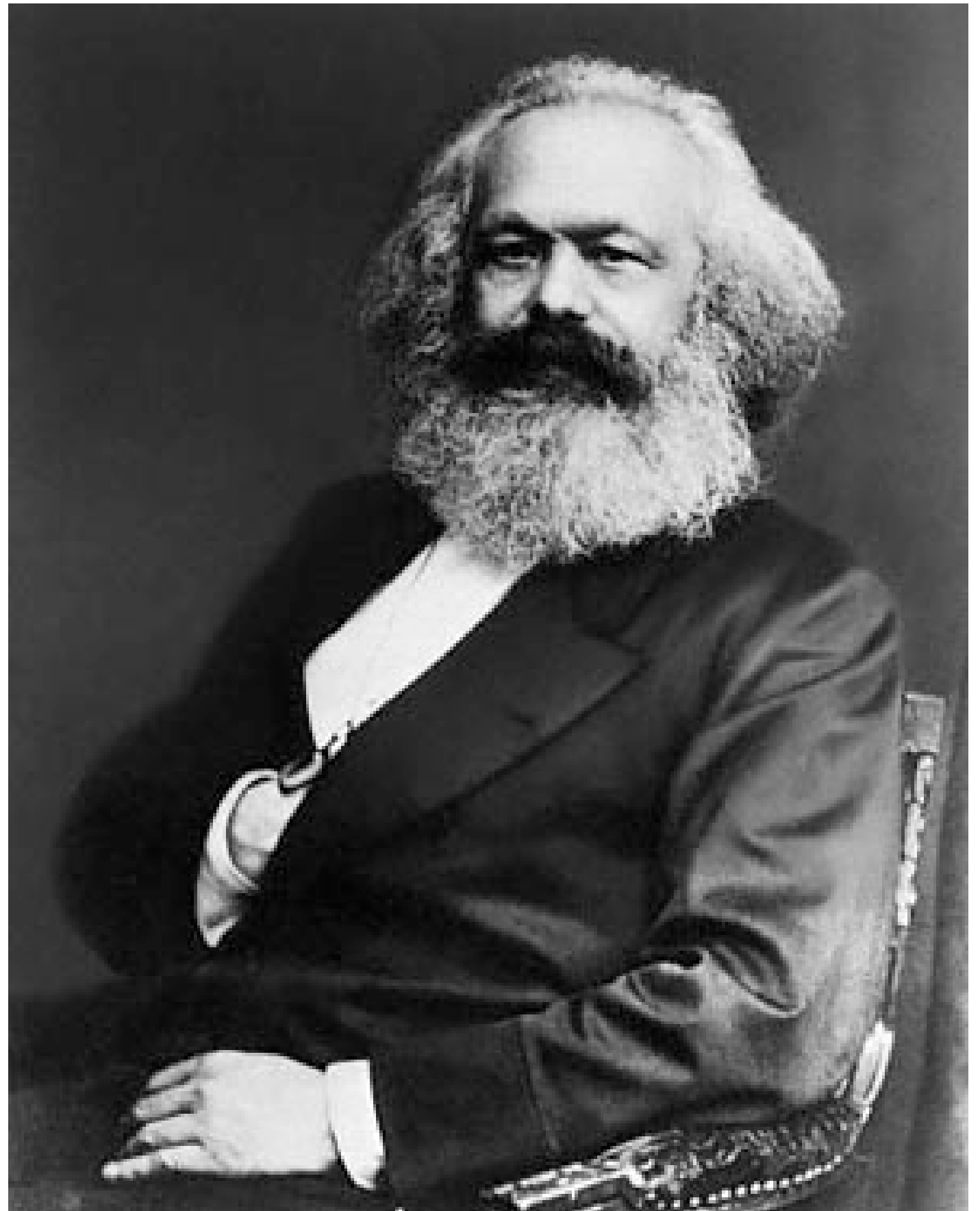
quires. Inevitably, then, a society must have, first, some kind of rewards that it can use as inducements, and, second, some way of distributing these rewards differentially according to positions. The rewards and their distribution become a part of the social order, and thus give rise to stratification.



Young

- Michael Young: *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (1958)
 - top: arrogance
 - bottom: low self-esteem
 - bottom: no leaders

Karl Marx
1818-1883

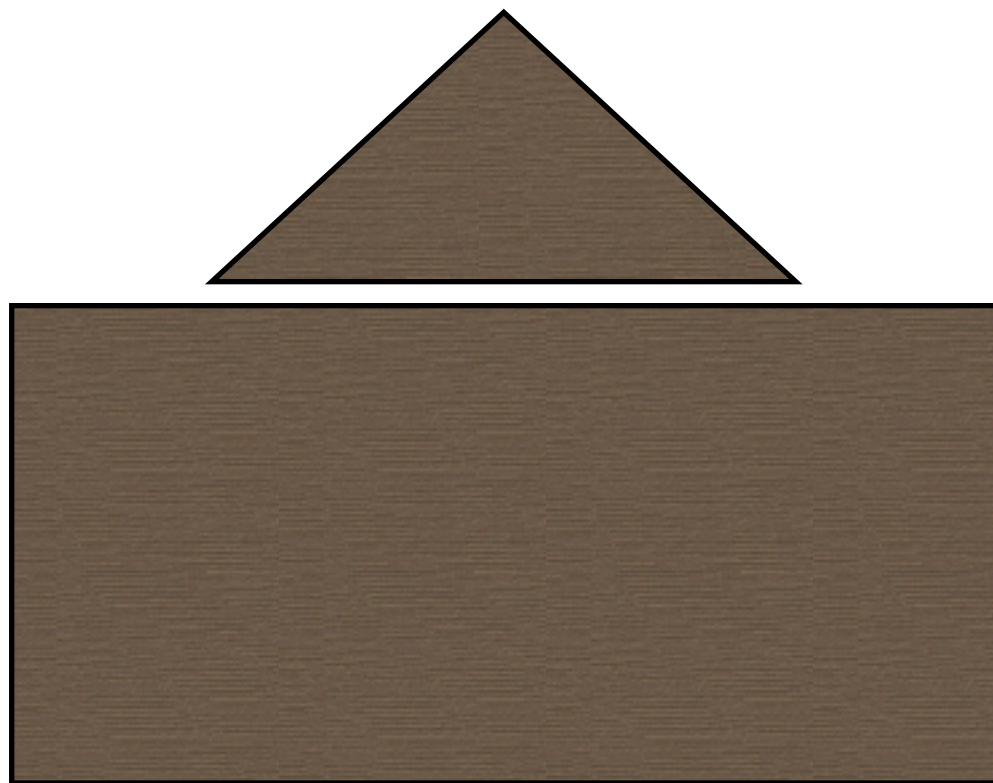


Theories of class and stratification I

Karl Marx

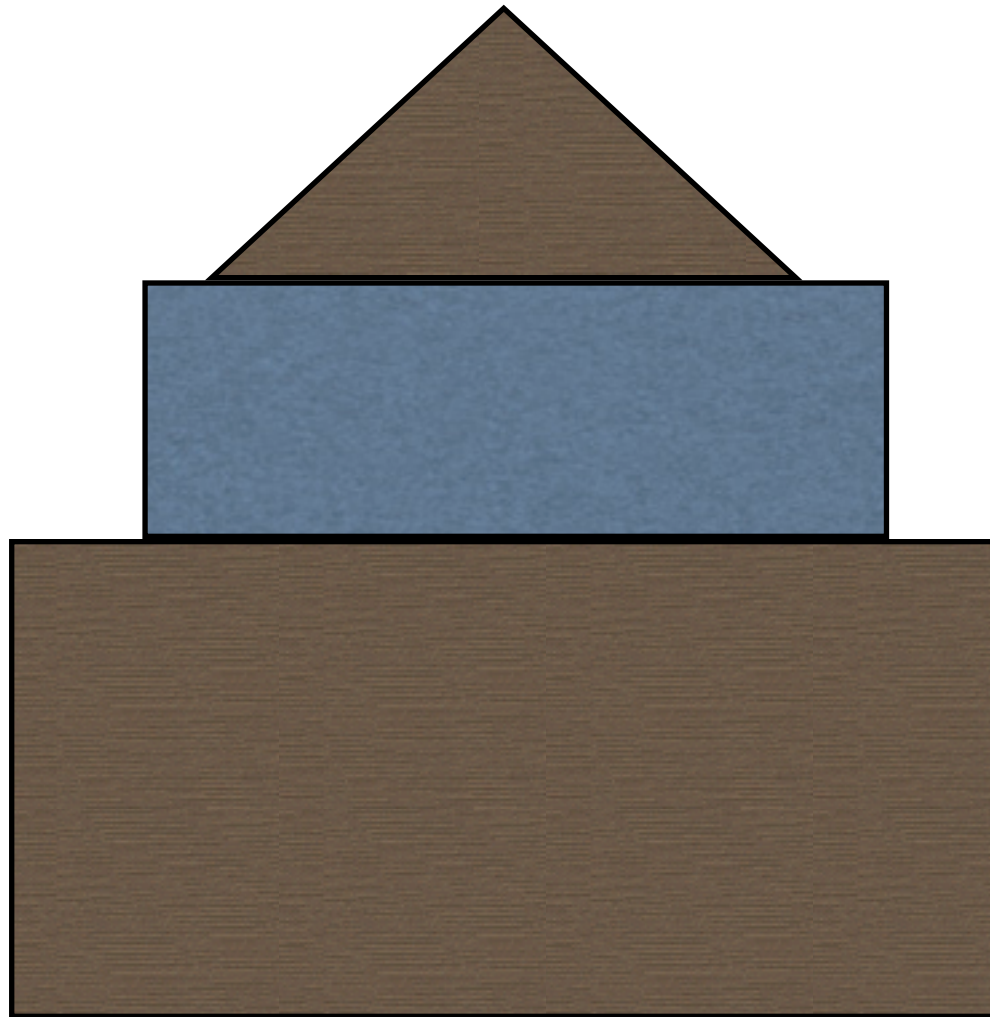
- A group of people who stand in a common relationship to the means of production
- Two main groups: those who own capital and those who own only their labour
- Exploitative relationship: 'surplus value'
- Ongoing process leading to 'pauperisation' of those at the bottom

The two class model



capitalists

working class



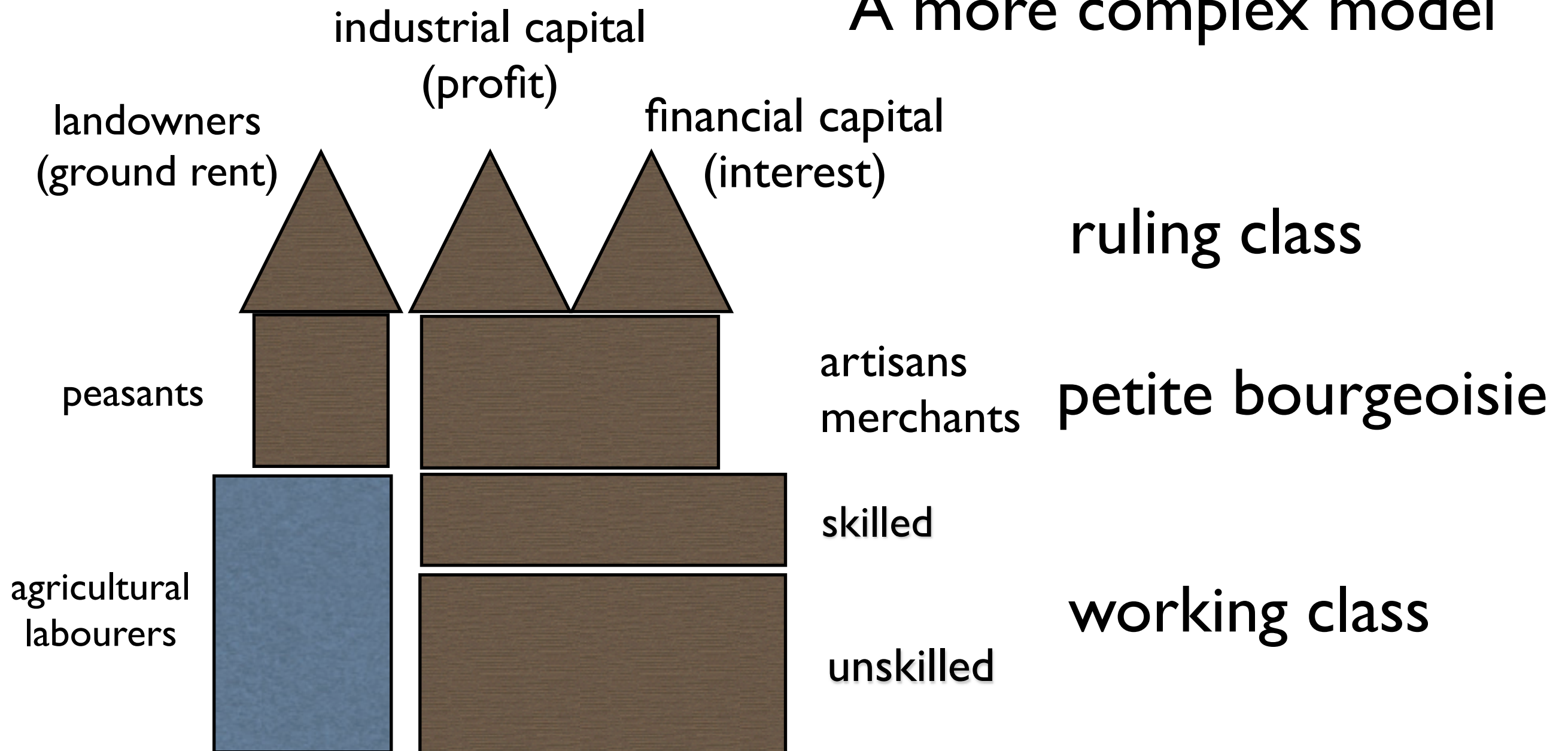
The three class model

capitalist class

petite bourgeoisie

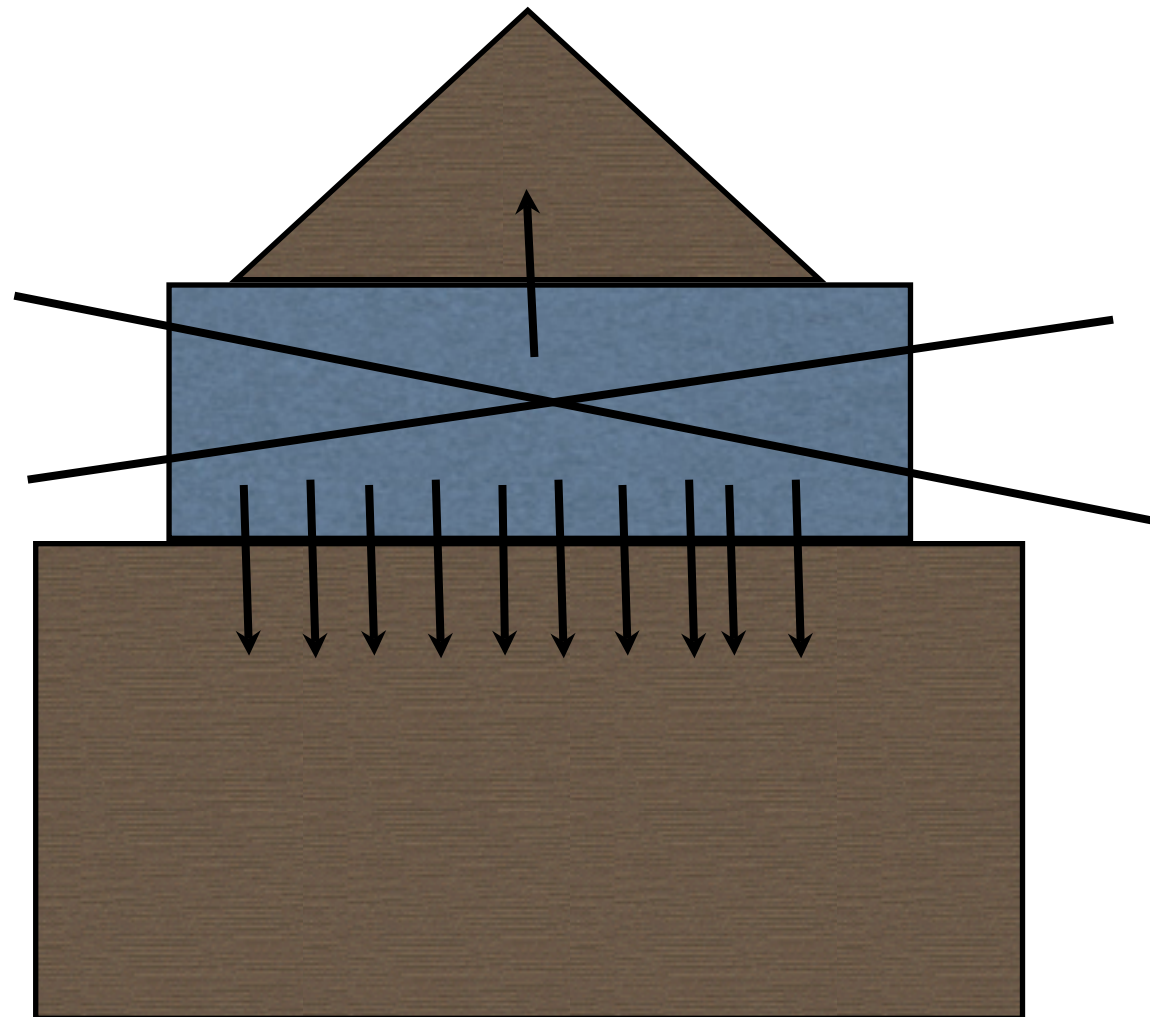
working class

A more complex model



Why the two class model?

polarization
pauperization



capitalist class

petite bourgeoisie

working class

Max Weber

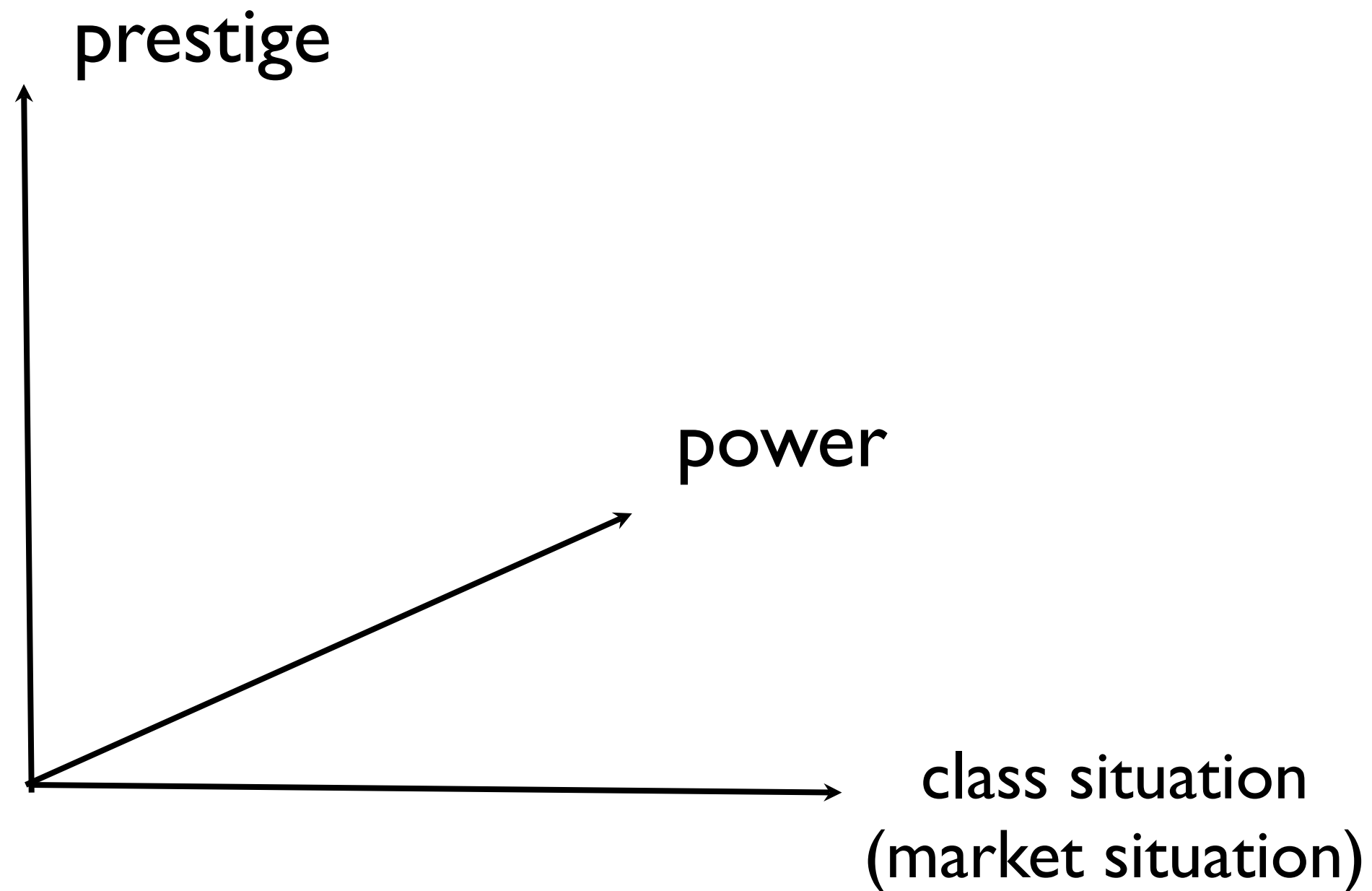
1864-1920



Max Weber

- Still based on conflicts over power and resources, but more multi-dimensional
- Class is accompanied by status and party
- Market position is a crucial concept
- Life chances depend not just on the means of production but on skills & qualifications

The weberian model I.

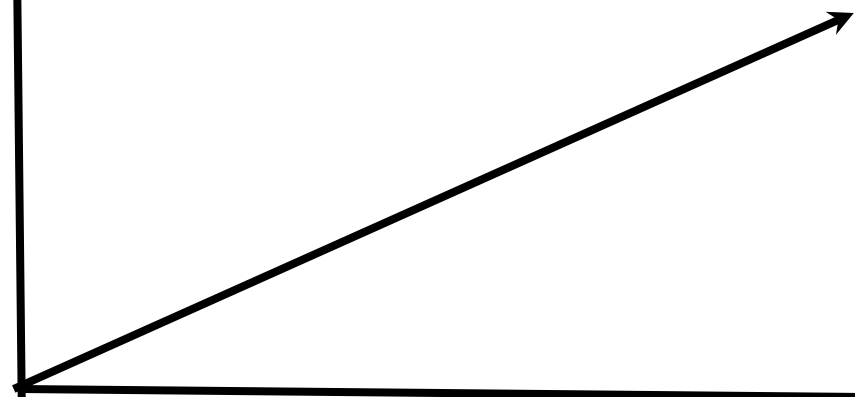


The weberian model II.

status groups



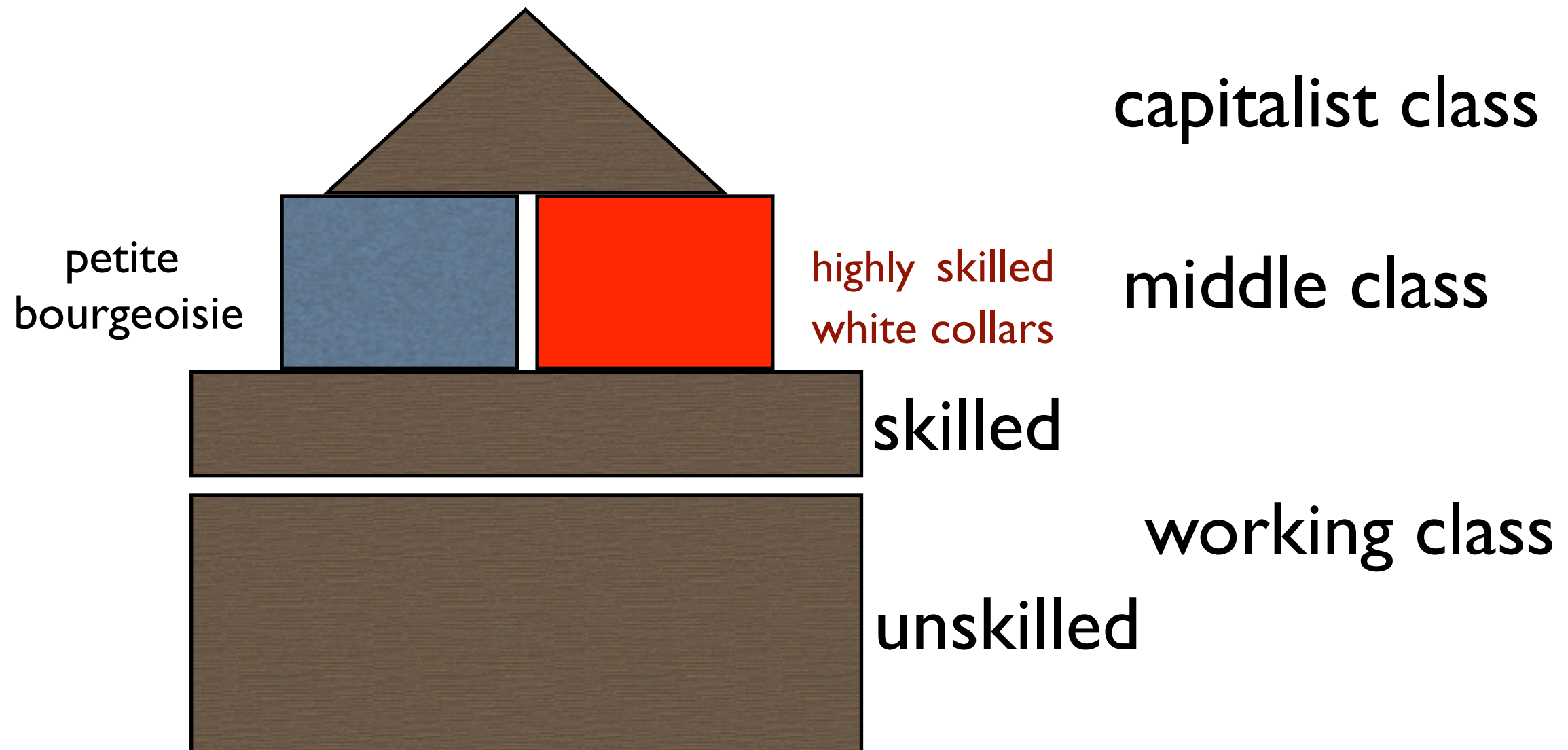
parties



classes



The weberian model I.

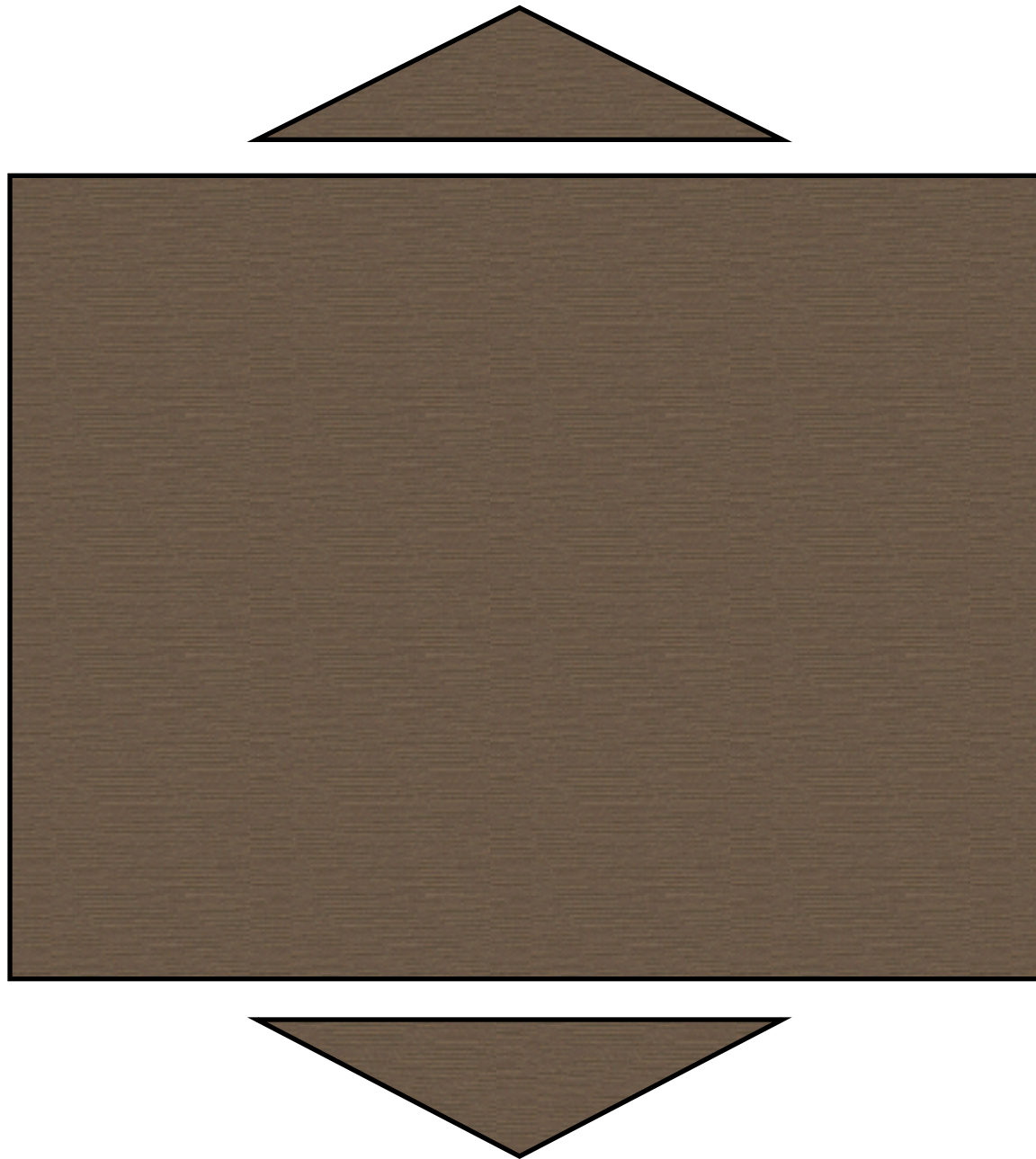


The Middle Class I.

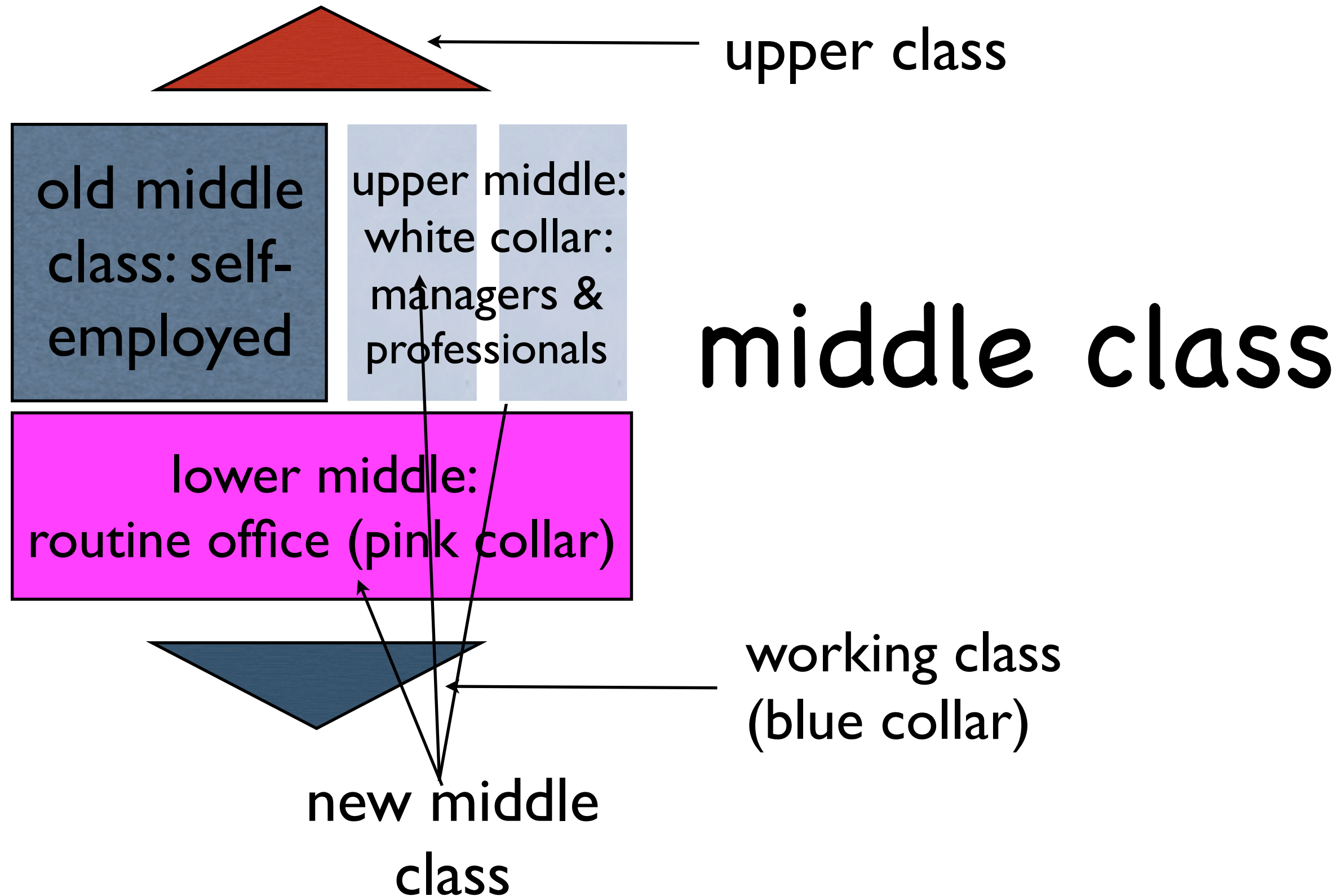
upper class

middle class

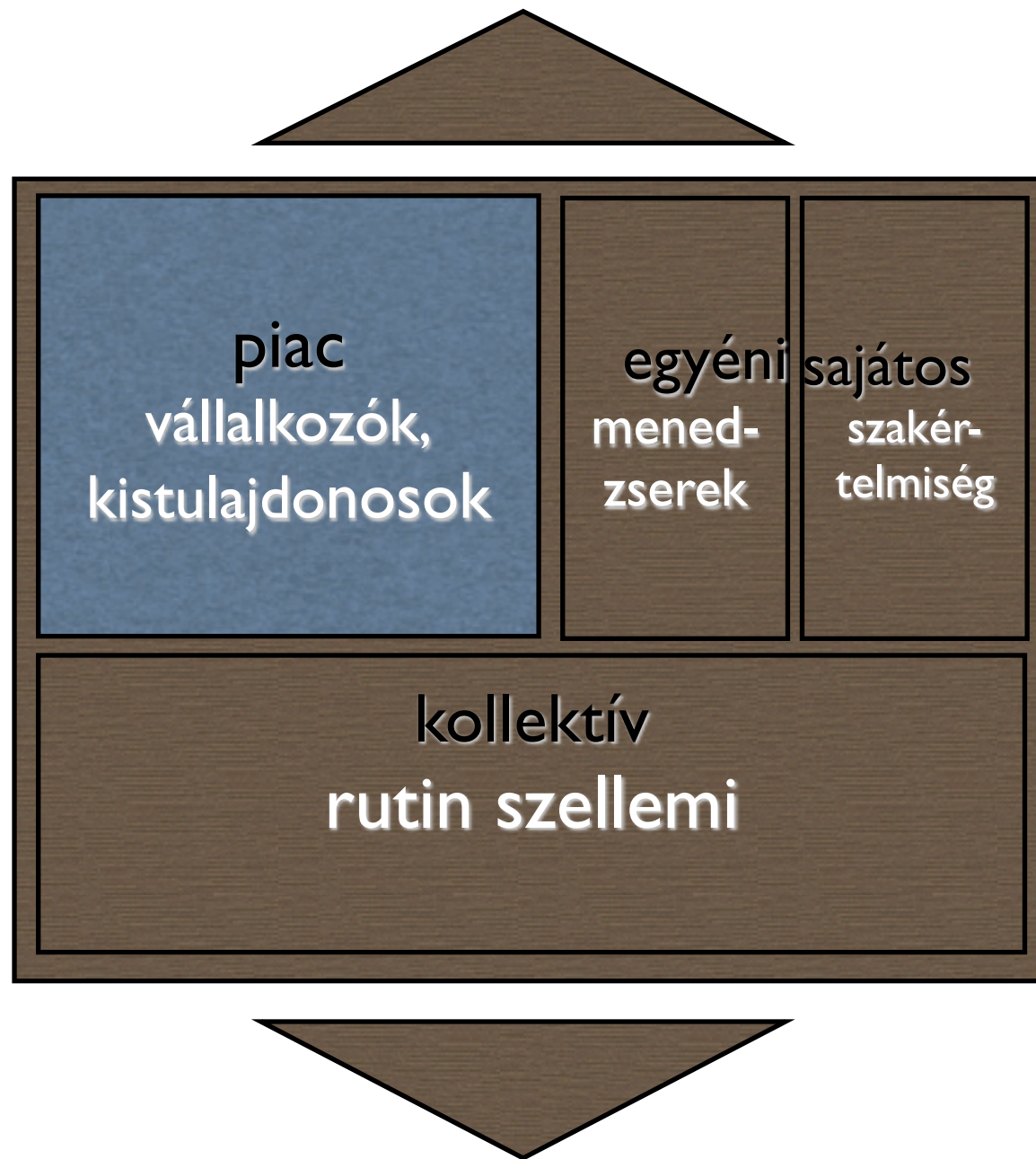
working class



The Middle Class II



Középosztályosodás III.



középosztály
érdekvérvényesítési
stratégiái

Measuring Class

- Complex concept to ‘operationalize’: usually through occupational structure
- People’s ‘slots’ within the occupational division of labour to a large degree determine their life chances and degree of material comfort
- Schemes can be descriptive hierarchies or more theoretically grounded, e.g. relational as in the Goldthorpe scheme

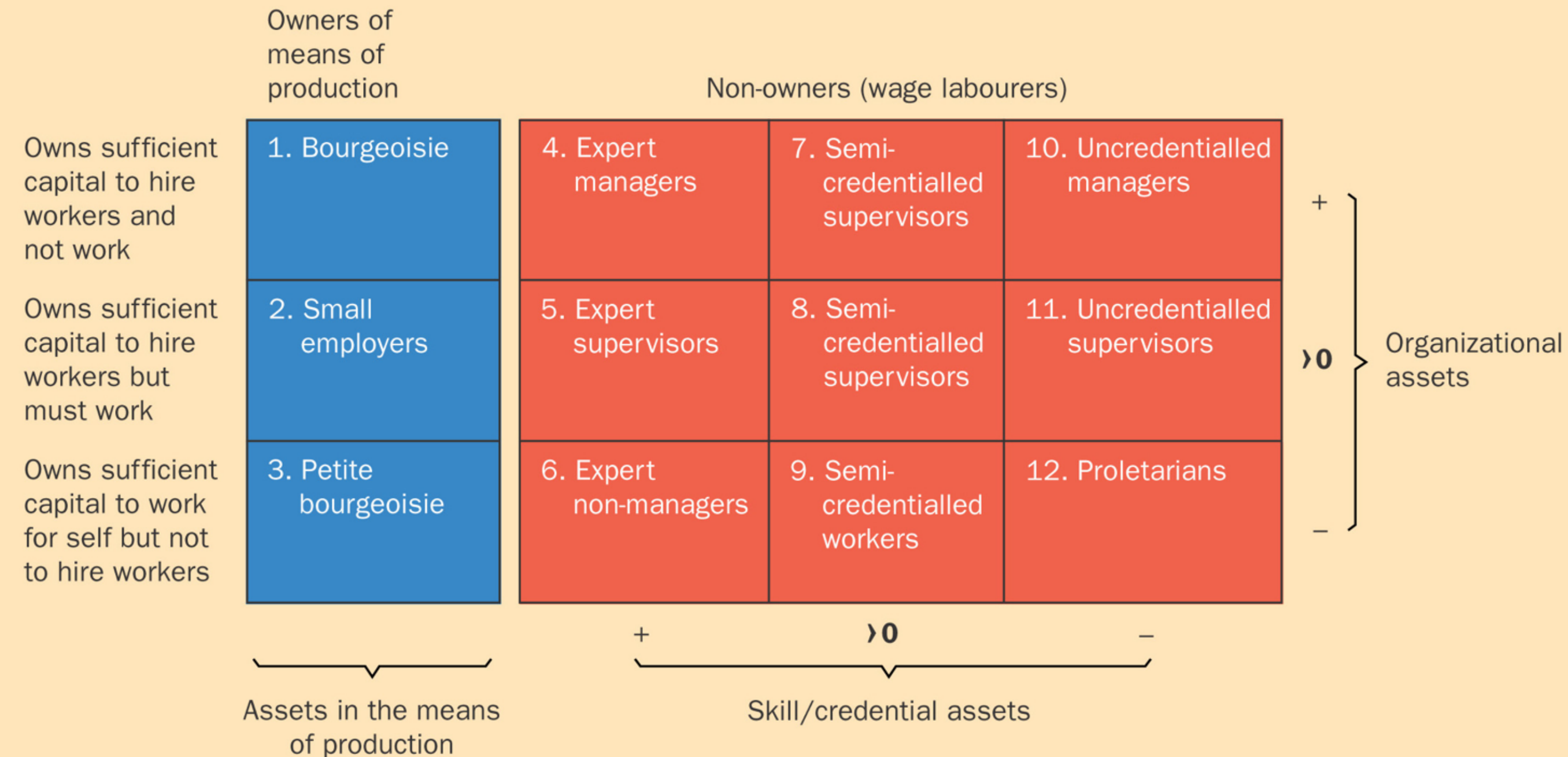
Distribution of labour-force

OCCUPATION TYPE	1911	1951	2001
Managerial/administrative	5%	8%	13%
Professional	4	7	21
Clerical	4	11	10
Sales	5	7	10
Service	8	10	18
Manufacturing	14	17	8
Transportation	6	8	8
Construction	5	6	6
Agriculture	34	16	3
Forestry/fishing/mining	5	4	1
Other occupations	10	6	2
Total	100	100	100

Simplified Goldthorpe classes

Service Class	Professionals and managers; administrators and officials	Service relationship
Intermediate Class	Routine clerical, sales and service; the self-employed	Mixed employment relationships
Working Class	Supervisors of manual workers; skilled and unskilled manual workers	Labour contracts

Classes: Eric Olin Wright's Typology



Two challenges to class analysis

- Lifestyle

- Arguments about 'the cultural turn'
- Symbols and markers based on consumption
- Bourdieu – four forms of capital

- Gender and Stratification

- Female class once driven by husbands and fathers
- Critiques: women's work can influence household's economic position,
- cross-class households,
- women could be dominant earner

Class (still) Matters

- Ongoing argument about access to various desirable goods: educational achievement, university admission etc
- Class membership continues to correlate with inequalities of life expectancy, health outcomes and lifetime income

How the wealthy dominate in Britain

All wealth

93% of wealth is owned by **50%** of the population

72% of wealth is owned by **25%** of the population

53% of wealth is owned by **10%** of the population

40% of wealth is owned by **5%** of the population

21% of wealth is owned by **1%** of the population



Stratification & Mobility

- Can mobility help?
 - ~ open vs closed societies
 - ~ ladder:
 - ~ how many strata?
 - ~ how many places in higher strata?

Social Mobility

- Fair amount of upward and downward mobility and interested in both
- Intra-generational mobility (individuals' own careers)
- Inter-generational mobility (children vs parents)
- Absolute mobility is moves from one class to another – real experience for someone!
- Relative mobility (sometimes 'fluidity') looks at comparative chances for individuals in each class of making it to a particular destination