WHAT IS CLASS?

I. ALTERNATIVE CLASS CONCEPTS: If “class” is the answer, what is the question?

1. Class as Subjective location. How do people classify themselves in the system of social stratification?
2. Class as Distributional Location. How are people located objectively in distributions of material inequality?
3. Class as Empirical Summary of Stratification To what extent do the different empirical dimensions of social inequality coincide in ways which constitute empirically distinguishable groups?
4. Class as Market-Opportunity structure What determines the basic life chances of individuals in a market society?
5. Class as the basis for economic conflict What forms of conflict are most systematically linked to the social organization of production?
6. Class as Historical Variation How should we characterize and explain the variations across history in the social organization of inequalities?
7. Class and social emancipation What sorts of transformations are needed to eliminate economic oppression and exploitation within capitalist societies?

II. THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF MARXIST CONCEPT OF CLASS: A Step-by-step guide

Step 1. Relational vs. gradational concepts.

Step 2. What kind of relations constitute “class” relations?
   Step 2a. The concept of relations of production
   Step 2b. Class relations as a form of production relations

Step 3. Variations in class relations

Step 4. Locations within class relations

Step 5. Micro- and Macro-class analysis

Step 6. The Explanatory Claims: The fundamental thesis of class analysis
   • What you have determines what you get and
   • What you have to do to get what you get determines whose interests are opposed to yours as you do what you have to do to get what you get.

Step 7. Marxist class analysis: the specificity of class mechanisms
   Exploitation
   Domination

III. CLASS AS A CRITICAL CONCEPT

Within Marxism, the analysis of the effects of class in capitalism is fundamentally from the point of view of the abolition of capitalist class relations.

IV. A REPERTOIRE OF CLASS CONCEPTS

1. Class structure.
2. Class Interests.
3. Class formation.
4. Class capacities.
5. Class practices.
6. Class struggle.
7. Class consciousness.