

OUTLINE Lecture 13. Sociology 621. October 14, 2013
THE DILEMMAS OF WORKING CLASS COLLECTIVE ACTION

I. Stating the Problem

1. Why is reformism the universal form of working class politics in developed capitalism?
2. Two rejected explanations: misleadership & false consciousness
3. Opportunism: definition
4. Associational logic of Opportunism: *Structural logic; Dynamic logic; Historical logic*

II. The structural logic: Dilemmas of Strategic Action

1. Contrast of logics of collective action of workers & capitalists: (1) Interests. (2) Capacities.
2. Inputs: what do different associations organize?
 - 2.1 The insuperable individuality of workers
 - 2.2 interest aggregation
 - *Capitalists interests → monologic process*
 - *Workers interests → dialogic process*
 - 2.3 power accumulation.
3. Organizational processes
4. Conclusion: 8 propositions
 1. Workers material interests can be collectively advanced only through association.
 2. The ability of workers associations to realize these interests depends upon the willingness of members to act
 3. The willingness of members to act depends upon the extent to which workers feel high levels of solidarity
 4. High levels of solidarity depend upon the transformation of interests and identities
 5. This transformation depends upon the existence of *dialogic*, reciprocal forms of interaction and leadership
 6. But, the ability to actually *succeed* in struggles with employers depends upon the ability of the leadership of workers association to restrain mobilization which is enhanced by monologic forms of organization.
 7. Such monologic forms of organization ultimately weakens the basis of power of working class associations.
 8. Taken together, these processes generate a contradiction between two models of class formation:
 - a dialogic model of *associational representation through struggle* and
 - a monologic model of the *dissociation of representation and struggle*.

III. The Historical Trajectory of Working Class Formation: Offe & Weisenthal's analysis

- Stage I. Initial formation
- Stage II. Consolidation
- Stage III. Opportunism
- Stage IV. Capitalist counteroffensive
- Stage V. Renewed Militancy.