

**The Old Middle Class in
Newly Industrialized Countries**
Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives

Val Burris

In Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, ed.,
East Asian Middle Classes in Comparative Perspective
pp.435-454
Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica
Taipei, Taiwan, 1999

The Old Middle Class in Newly Industrialized Countries

Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives

Val Burris

Discussions of the middle class in the newly industrialized countries (NICs) of East Asia have focused disproportionately on the "new" middle class of salaried managers, professionals, and technicians (Lo, 1990; So and Kwitko, 1990; Cheng, 1991; Koo, 1991, 1993; Rodan, 1992; Hsiao, 1993). This emphasis on the new middle class is understandable, since it is this segment of the middle class whose emergence and growth is most directly tied to the process of industrialization that is rapidly transforming these societies. Nevertheless, the middle class in each of these countries also includes a large self-employed segment, consisting of independent farmers, shopkeepers, and small business owners. This "old" middle class (or petty bourgeoisie) cannot be ignored if the goal is to develop a comprehensive analysis of the middle class in these NICs.

Scholarly preoccupation with the new middle class has been accompanied by a tendency to conceptualize the issue of middle-class politics from the standpoint of the role that this class plays in furthering democratization and its alignment with respect to various progressive movements — either traditional left-wing movements (trade unionism, socialism) or so-called "new" social movements (environmentalism, feminism, etc.). Once again, this focus is understandable in terms of the contemporary importance of these political issues and movements. Nevertheless, it ignores the equally pivotal role that the middle class has played historically in the growth of anti-democratic, right-wing, or reactionary political movements. This blind spot partly overlaps with the previously mentioned one in that reactionary tendencies within the middle class have been particularly pronounced within the old, rather than the new, middle class.

The aim of this paper is to draw greater attention to the importance of the old middle class in NICs and on their role in national political

development. The paper is organized as follows. The first section documents the relatively large size of the old middle class in NICs and discusses some of the reasons for this. The second section discusses some of the social and psychological characteristics of this class in early industrialized countries. The third section reviews the historical evidence on the role of the old middle class in the growth of right-wing movements and discusses the theories that have been proposed to explain this pattern. The final section draws together the implications of this research for analyzing processes of political conflict and social change in the NICs of East Asia.

I. The Persistence of the Old Middle Class in Newly Industrialized Countries

The old middle class in NICs of East Asia tends to be larger than its counterpart in earlier industrialized countries. This pattern is illustrated in Table 1, which presents estimates of the size of different segments of the middle class in four late industrialized countries (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) and four early industrialized countries (the United States, United Kingdom, Sweden, and Japan).¹

Particularly striking in this table is the large size of the old middle class in Korea and Taiwan. In both countries the old middle class is more than three times as large as the new middle class. By comparison, in all of the early industrialized countries the old middle class is considerably smaller than the new middle class. This difference is partly due to the persistence of small-scale agriculture in Korea and Taiwan, but even excluding the agrarian sector, the old middle class in these countries remains approximately twice the size of the new middle class (compared with less than half the size in earlier industrialized countries).² Hong Kong and Singapore are distinguished from Korea and Taiwan both by the virtual absence of an agrarian sector and by the more even balance between the old and the new middle classes within the urban economy. Nevertheless, even in these countries the old middle class remains on a par with the new middle class in terms of its overall size within the class structure.³

The persistence of the old middle class in NICs, especially in Korea and Taiwan, can be explained by several distinctive features of late industrialization. These include: (1) the strength and autonomy of the state in late industrialized countries; (2) the export orientation of late industrialization; and (3) the strict constraints that late industrialization imposes on labor costs.⁴

Table 1 Middle-Class Households in Late and Early Industrialized Countries (%)

	Late industrialized countries				Early industrialized countries			
	South Korea (1990)	Taiwan (1988)	Hong Kong (1991)	Singapore (1989)	United States (1990)	United Kingdom (1981)	Sweden (1990)	Japan (1990)
Old middle class (OMC)	34.7	33.7	13.5	18.0	9.0	12.0	8.0	15.4
Small farmers	14.3	13.7	0.5	0.3	1.7	2.1	2.8	4.8
Urban petty bourgeoisie (UPB)	20.4	20.0	13.0	17.7	7.3	9.9	5.2	10.6
New middle class (NMC)	10.0	9.9	11.5	21.6	27.1	26.5	31.1	21.8
Ratio of OMC/NMC	3.47	3.40	1.17	0.83	0.33	0.45	0.26	0.71
Ratio of UPB/NMC	2.04	2.02	1.13	0.82	0.27	0.37	0.17	0.49

Sources: Population censuses and labor force surveys of South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, United States, United Kingdom, Sweden, and Japan, as compiled by the International Labour Office (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993); census data for Taiwan taken from Sen (1991).

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of state intervention in accounting for the economic success of the East Asian NICs (Kim, 1976; Jones and Sakong, 1980; Haggard and Moon, 1983; Hamilton, 1983, 1986; Amsden, 1985, 1989; Johnson, 1987; Koo, 1987; Irwan, 1989). The existence of a strong state capable of acting independently of the wishes of particular propertied classes has also been a crucial factor in the formation and reproduction of the old middle class. In both Korea and Taiwan, for example, the state's implementation of extensive land reform following the Second World War served both to uproot the wealthy landlord class, whose power and influence might otherwise have blocked an aggressive industrialization policy, and to create an extensive class of small independent farmers, which provided a bulwark of support for the ruling party. In the interests of political stability, both states have continued to intervene in the market to protect the rural petty bourgeoisie from declining too rapidly — for example, by erecting barriers to agricultural imports and restrictions on the concentration of land ownership. Recent pressure from the United States to open Korean and Taiwanese agricultural markets to United States imports as the price for maintaining access to United States markets for manufactured exports has created a dilemma for these regimes by forcing them to choose between two of the main pillars upon which their legitimacy has been based: the continued growth of industrial exports and the protection of a conservative political base in the countryside.

A second characteristic of late industrialization is that it tends to be based on production for export. This typically results in an uneven pattern of capitalist development that leaves large sectors of the domestic economy under noncapitalist (petty commodity) relations of production (Amin, 1974). This pattern can be seen in Korea and Taiwan as well as Singapore, where the rapid expansion of industrial production for export has left intact an extensive "informal" economy of self-employed commercial and service workers who cater to the domestic market. The economic situation of many members of this urban petty bourgeoisie is scarcely better than that of the working class. According to one estimate, approximately half of the urban self-employed in Korea earn less the average household income for blue-collar workers (Koo, 1991). A study of the Taiwanese labor force in 1980 classified 35% of urban self-employed males as "marginal workers" engaged as casual laborers, street vendors, or service workers without stable sources of income (Sen, 1986). A similar pattern has also been noted in Singapore (Clammer, 1987). The existence of this marginal petty bourgeoisie serves both as a means of absorbing and disguising unemployment and as a way of keeping wage

costs down by providing cheap goods and services to the working class (Koo, 1976; Portes and Walton, 1981).

A third characteristic of late industrialization is that it imposes strict constraints on labor costs, since it is largely on the basis of cheap labor that NICs gain a foothold in the world market (Deyo, 1984, 1987; Koo, 1987; Amdsen, 1989; Bello and Rosenfeld, 1990). The persistence of the old middle class serves to reduce labor costs in several ways. In addition to providing cheap goods and services to the domestic market, many small businesses are sustained by the extensive subcontracting networks that characterize production for export in the NICs (Amdsen, 1989:187-88). Large firms, rather than hiring additional labor, often find it more profitable to subcontract work to small independent producers. Through the intensive exploitation of unpaid family labor, these small businesses are able to produce at lower costs. When demand slackens the larger enterprise can simply terminate the contract rather than having to fire workers. In this fashion, persistence of a large old middle class contributes to capitalist profits at the same time that it encourages political stability by providing (or appearing to provide) an alternative channel of upward mobility.

In some cases the old middle class also contributes to corporate profits by providing subsidized labor to capitalist employers. This is especially true in Taiwan where state policy has encouraged the location of industry in rural areas. Many of those taking factory jobs continue to live in the countryside and to work as part-time farmers. Almost 70% of Taiwan's small farmers now earn a major portion of their incomes from nonagricultural pursuits (Evans, 1987:220; Moore, 1988:134; Bello and Rosenfeld, 1990:186-187). This policy has served not only to cushion the decline of the rural petty bourgeoisie, but has also provided employers with a particularly cheap supply of labor, since wages are regularly supplemented by farm income. Employers receive an added benefit from the fact that the development of a proletarian class consciousness within this rural workforce is blunted by the temporary nature of much wage labor and by strong family ties that cut across class lines (Gates, 1979; Gold, 1986:89; Bello and Rosenfeld, 1990:218-220).

In summary, relative to the new middle class, the old middle class occupies a larger place in the class structures of NICs than it does in early industrialized countries. This persistence of the old middle class in NICs reflects the distinctive articulation of capitalist and noncapitalist production relations that has been established within the structural parameters of late industrialization. While the expansionary character of capitalist production relations can be expected to reduce the size of this class in the

future (especially the agrarian component), this is likely to be a slow and uneven process, since the persistence of the petty bourgeoisie fulfills a number of important functions for both the stability of the state and the maintenance of corporate profits.

II. The Social and Psychological Characteristics of the Old Middle Class

Like other intermediate classes, the old middle class is a heterogeneous group. There are significant differences between the social characteristics and life experiences of small farmers and those of the urban petty bourgeoisie. Within the urban economy, the old middle class spans a range of occupations and incomes from affluent professionals to small shopkeepers to impoverished street peddlers. One must be careful not to over-generalize about the social and psychological characteristics of this class. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify several common patterns or central tendencies that have characterized the old middle class in early industrialized countries.

In terms of family background, small farmers in most countries are usually children of farming families, yielding one of the highest rates of inter-generational stability of class and occupational position. The social origins of the urban petty bourgeoisie are more diverse. Compared with the new middle class, the urban petty bourgeoisie typically contains many more persons from peasant and working-class backgrounds, making the old middle class one of the main channels of class mobility, especially among those with limited educational credentials (Lipset and Bendix, 1959).

The experience of upward mobility and the prospect (however remote) of becoming part of the bourgeoisie have consequences for the belief and value system of the old middle class. The petty bourgeoisie is the strongest adherent of some of the core values and ideologies of capitalism: the ethic of possessive individualism, the praise of competition, and the belief in social advancement as a reward to hard work. These values are reinforced by the status of being self-employed and by the competitiveness that is required to survive in the marketplace.

Social mobility (and the aspiration to upward mobility) also contribute to a heightened awareness of status differences within the old middle class. Many members of the old middle class (especially the urban petty bourgeoisie) also occupy discrepant rankings on different dimensions of social status — for example, low education coupled with relatively high income. This discrepancy, according to some theorists, exacerbates status

anxiety by inhibiting such persons from establishing a secure sense of their place in the social hierarchy (Lenski, 1954; Geschwender, 1967). Status anxiety (as well as the threat of market competition) also makes the old middle class especially sensitive to changes in the relative standing of different racial and ethnic groups.

The social and cultural opportunities available to the old middle class are typically circumscribed by comparison with the new middle class. Among small farmers, shopkeepers, and small business owners, working hours are usually long and the responsibilities of managing an independent business allow for few breaks or vacations. Social networks are restricted and opportunities for cultural enrichment are limited, a pattern that is often compounded by low levels of education. As compensation, members of the old middle class often seek solace in the satisfactions of economic independence ("being one's own boss") and in family life.

Work and family life are often fused in the experience of the old middle class. Family members depend upon one another not just for emotional support, but for the labor that each contributes to the family enterprise. Economic subsistence is contingent on the preservation of the family unit. The expectation that children will carry on the family business and the common pattern of wives and children working in subordinate roles within the business serve to reinforce patriarchal authority and traditional notions of family and gender roles.

Compared with the bureaucratic routine and orderly career patterns of the new middle class, the old middle class is much more exposed to uncertainty and contingency (Bechhofer and Elliott, 1981). Small businessmen are vulnerable to market competition, the ups and downs of the business cycle, and changes in state fiscal policy. Small farmers must contend with uncertainties of weather, of market prices for their products, and of governmental trade policy. This exposure to uncertainty contributes to a desire for stability and a heightened sensitivity and caution toward social change.

For the petty bourgeoisie in early industrialized countries, the precariousness of their class position is not only a state of mind but a historical reality. In countries like the United States, the old middle class once encompassed the majority of society, but over the last century has dwindled to a small minority. This experience of historical decline is associated with a tendency to look toward the past (or a highly idealized image of the past) as a Golden Age. From this nostalgic viewpoint, the old middle class sometimes imagines itself as a symbol of the virtues of

an old order to which the country must return if economic vitality and national honor are to be restored.

III. The Politics of the Old Middle Class

The politics of the old middle class, like that of the new middle class, are complex and variable. Because of its intermediate location in the class structure, the old middle class shares interests with both the capitalist and the working classes. The necessity of working for a living, often for long hours under harsh conditions, along with the experience of subordination to the interests of big capital, establishes a basis for empathy with the working class. The fact that many members of the (urban) petty bourgeoisie come from proletarian backgrounds creates an additional basis for identification with the working class. On the other hand, the attachment to the rights of property creates obstacles to any kind of socialist politics and an ideological predisposition toward alliance with the bourgeoisie. The characteristic politics of the old middle class is therefore one of equivocation and vacillation with respect to competing interests of capital and labor, although it is typically aligned more closely with the former than the latter.

When the interests of the old middle class are severely threatened, it is capable of more radical and autonomous political mobilization. This is most common in times of severe economic downturn or periods of rapid economic concentration. Such petty bourgeois radicalism typically takes the form of "populism" — an ideology that opposes big business and the political establishment in the name the "little man" — i.e., the small farmer and business owner. While populist anti-capitalism has some affinities with working-class radicalism, efforts to sustain a progressive populist-worker alliance have usually been unsuccessful or short-lived. Geographic dispersion and intra-class competition limit the petty bourgeoisie's organizational capacity to represent its own political interests, leading them to look toward strong leaders or a strong state to secure their interests for them. Petty bourgeois radicalism has often become captive to reactionary demagogues who have directed the economic insecurities of the old middle class toward scapegoats or promised symbolic compensation through an authoritarian reaffirmation of traditional culture and national honor.

The reactionary potential of the petty bourgeoisie is a common theme in sociological theories of right-wing movements. Theories of this kind were first proposed by European scholars in the 1920s and 1930s in an attempt to grasp the historical circumstances responsible for the rise of

fascism and the reasons for the appeal of fascist ideology to particular classes (Geiger, 1930; Laswell, 1933; Guerin, 1939; Fromm, 1941; Neumann, 1951).⁵ The central claim of this literature was that fascism was primarily an expression of "status panic" among the marginal segments of the middle class in a period of economic crisis and cultural change. Fascist ideology was seen as uniquely tailored to status anxieties of the marginal middle class who resented the expanding power of big business and big government above them, feared being overtaken by an increasingly organized and powerful working class beneath them, and lamented the declining value of thrift, hard work, and patriarchal authority upon which their claims to status had traditionally rested. While fascism appealed to both the old and the new middle class, the hard core of right-wing activism was commonly located within the old middle class. This was said to reflect the precariousness and declining prestige of middle-class positions that were based on small property ownership and individual hard work in an era characterized by the rise of large-scale bureaucracies that placed a higher premium on educational credentials and skill in manipulating information. Brought to the United States by European scholars fleeing the rise of Hitler, these theories were adapted to other right-wing movements by a generation of social scientists writing in the postwar era (Mills, 1951; Lipset, 1960; Bell, 1963; Hofstadter, 1967; Lipset and Raab, 1978).

The strongest empirical evidence for the status anxiety thesis comes from studies of European fascism. A number of studies have confirmed the overrepresentation of the lower middle classes — especially the class of small business owners — among activists and supporters of German National Socialism. Analyses of Nazi membership lists showed independent proprietors to be the most overrepresented of all occupational groups (Gerth, 1940; Bracher, 1970). Other studies showed a strong correlation between electoral support for the Nazi Party and the proportion of independent proprietors in different regions (Loomis and Beegle, 1946; Pratt, 1948; Childers, 1976). Less systematic evidence is available on the social base of Italian and Japanese fascism; however, studies would seem to confirm the importance of the old middle class in these political movements as well (Salvatorelli, 1923; Tanin and Yohan, 1934).

Studies of right-wing movements in the postwar era have provided additional evidence of the reactionary potential of the old middle class. In the 1950s in the United States, small businessmen were heavily overrepresented among supporters of the reactionary demagogue, Joseph McCarthy (Wallerstein, 1954; Trow, 1957). During this same

period in France, small business owners formed the core of the right-wing Poujadist movement that contributed to the fall of the Fourth Republic (Berger, 1977). Opposition to the extension of democratic rights to American Blacks in the South during the 1960s was spearheaded by small business owners, organized into White Citizens' Councils (Bloom, 1987:102-103). Political agitation by the petty bourgeoisie was cited as a factor in precipitating the military overthrow of civilian governments in Brazil and Argentina in the 1960s and in Chile in the 1970s (Nun, 1968; Petras and Morley, 1975; Sigmund, 1977). In the 1980s and 1990s, the revival of a mass-based, far right-wing movement in the United States — the so-called "New Christian Right" — has also drawn disproportionately from the ranks of the old middle class (Burris, 1994).

IV. The Old Middle Class as a Political Force in Newly Industrialized Countries

There are several reasons why generalizations about the old middle class in early industrialized countries may not be entirely applicable to the NICs of East Asia. In terms of their place within the overall class structure, the old middle class in early industrialized countries is usually viewed as occupying a position that is "outside" the basic class antagonism between capital and labor. This is less clearly the case in NICs, where substantial segments of the old middle class may be viewed as either "disguised proletarians" (e.g., small subcontractors who, in everything but name, are effectively employees of larger firms) or "semi-proletarians" (e.g., part-time farmers who supplement farm income with wage work).⁶ The complexity and variability of relationships between petty commodity producers and the other classes in NICs suggests that it may be more fruitful to think of these small producers as occupying a variety of "contradictory class locations" rather than forming a single coherent class.⁷

The historical trajectory of the old middle class is also different in the NICs. Indeed, the old middle class in NICs is not an "old" class at all. Rather than being a declining class that has dwindled in the course of capitalist development, it is a new class that has been brought into existence either as a result of state intervention (e.g., land reform) or as an adjunct to urbanization and the growth of capitalist industry. New members of the "old" middle class, many of whom have experienced substantial upward mobility as a result of the political and economic changes of the postwar period, have little reason to view the bygone era as a Golden Age to which they wish to return.

Other aspects of petty bourgeois ideology may also differ in the East Asian context. For example, the extreme individualism of the petty bourgeoisie in Western societies is but a slightly exaggerated version of the dominant value system of those societies, from which it receives strong reinforcement. By contrast, in the East Asian NICs, petty bourgeois individualism is likely to be tempered by the stronger communal or collectivist ethic of Asian societies. At a minimum, we would expect individualism to be downplayed and other values to be accentuated in the ideologies by which the petty bourgeoisie seeks to advance its interests within civil society.

It is also important to acknowledge the important differences between different NICs in the characteristics and social situation of the old middle class. For instance, the large rural petty bourgeoisie of Korea and Taiwan has no parallel in Hong Kong or Singapore. Similarly, the importance of ethnicity for class placement and political partisanship in Taiwan and Singapore has no parallel in Korea or Hong Kong.⁸ The East Asian NICs differ among themselves in the extent of subcontracting relations between the petty and big bourgeoisie and the prevalence of semi-proletarian employment. There are also important differences among these societies in the nature of the state and the strength and political behavior of other classes — the bourgeoisie, the proletariat, and the new middle class.

With these caveats in mind, it is nevertheless possible to advance some general hypotheses about the political role of the old middle class in NICs. One useful way to frame these hypotheses is in terms of differences between the old and the new middle class, since it is the new middle class that, implicitly or explicitly, most authors emphasize when they speak of the middle class's role in national political development.

Consider first the issue of democratization. In the literature on East Asian NICs it is common to view the middle class as an advocate (or potential advocate) for the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule. The reasons for this expectation are sometimes obscure, but they usually fall into one of two categories. From the standpoint of instrumental rationality, the middle class may calculate that its social and economic interests will be better served by a change in the political rules of the game. Alternatively, the middle class may hold a value commitment to democracy as a political ideal. Whichever of these lines of argument is chosen, the grounds for attributing pro-democratic sentiments to the old middle class are much weaker than for the new middle class.

Democratic rules of the game place a premium on political resources with which the new middle class is well endowed: communication skills, management experience, technical and legal expertise, and pre-existing networks of professional and civic organizations. The old middle class is generally lacking in these crucial resources. It is true that the more affluent segments of the old middle class have monetary resources that they can contribute to political parties and causes, but such is not the case for most members of the petty bourgeoisie. If nothing else, the simple difference in the availability of free time to attend meetings and sustain voluntary organizations is likely to mean that the interests of the new middle class will be more effectively represented in a democratic political order than those of the old middle class.

The argument from value commitments also leads to the conclusion that the new middle class is a more plausible champion of democratic rule than the old middle class. The most likely sources of democratic values are the exposure to higher education and the identification (through education, travel, professional contacts, and cultural activities) with Western democracies as models of political modernization. The old middle class, with its characteristically low levels of education and restricted cultural opportunities, is less likely to develop a commitment to democracy through this mechanism.

Attitudes toward democracy are not based only, or even primarily, on abstract calculations or value judgments about alternative political principles. They are a reaction to the concrete political and economic consequences of democratization. One of the characteristics of democratic reform in the aftermath of an extended period of authoritarian rule is that it tends to unleash an outpouring of pent-up political and economic demands. This can be seen, for example, in the dramatic increase of labor unrest following the political liberalization in Taiwan and Korea in 1987 (Asia Monitor Resource Center, 1988; Ogle, 1990; Cohen, 1988; Bello and Rosenfeld, 1990; Hsiao, 1990; Lo, 1990). As Koo (1991) has argued, middle-class attitudes toward democratic reform are strongly influenced by their reaction to the increased assertiveness of the labor movement.

There are several reasons to expect a more negative attitude toward labor within the old than the new middle class. From an ideological standpoint, the class situation of the old middle class creates an aversion toward collective strategies of social and economic advancement. Economic achievement is supposed to be a reward to individual merit and hard work. Thus, members of the petty bourgeoisie tend to see workers as undeserving of the wage gains and other benefits that they

acquire as members of a collectivity. This attitude is often reinforced by comparisons with the long hours, disagreeable working conditions, and meager incomes available to many members of the old middle class. From a political standpoint, some occupations within the new middle class are themselves organized into trade unions, while other members of the new middle class are heavily represented in civic organizations (especially church and student groups) that have a sympathetic relationship to the trade union movement. Members of the old middle class are less likely to have such organizational links to the labor movement. Finally, from an economic standpoint, members of the old middle class are more likely to have a direct economic stake in the acquiescence of the working class. This is particularly true of small subcontractors, who face cutbacks and even bankruptcy due to strikes and work stoppages in the larger firms on which they depend for their business.

The old middle class is also likely to be less supportive (or more opposed) to many of the so-called "new" social movements that have begun to emerge in the East Asian NICs. One characteristic of new social movements is that they tend to generate conservative "counter-movements" on the part of groups whose interests (or values) are threatened by the movement in question (Lo, 1982). For example, the environmental movement, once it advances beyond the stage of moral exhortation, inevitably raises demands that conflict with the free exercise of property rights and the unimpeded pursuit of profit. Judging from the experience of early industrialized countries, the old middle class, with its attachment to the rights of property, provides a ready constituency for mobilization by big business interests who are threatened by the demands of environmentalists. The feminist movement is also likely to attract strong opposition from the old middle class to the extent that it poses a challenge to traditional conceptions of gender and family roles that are strongly held within the petty bourgeoisie.

The NICs of East Asia face an uncertain political and economic future. Increased competition from low-wage countries, fluctuations in the world economy, and the inherent challenge of the transition to more capital-intensive forms of manufacturing could conceivably upset the current projections of continued economic growth upon which most discussions of national political development are based. The further opening of political space through democratic reforms could easily result in a polarization of class conflicts that have been long suppressed by the strong hand of the state. Under such circumstances, segments of the middle class — and especially the old middle class — can be expected to

agitate for a return to more authoritarian rule. Even assuming a more stable and crisis-free future, the middle class is likely to be divided within itself between democratic and authoritarian, progressive and reactionary, left and right political tendencies. To understand the sources and implications of these divisions, more equal attention needs to be given to the old middle class as a potentially important actor in national political development.

Notes

1. The data upon which these figures are based were taken from the censuses and labor force surveys of each nation. For each country except Taiwan, compilations of statistics published by the International Labour Office (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993) were consulted. Data for Taiwan were taken from Sen (1991). Percentages in the table are based on the economically active male population on the assumption that the family, rather than the individual, is the appropriate unit for class analysis and that the male occupational distribution more closely approximates that of heads of household (Goldthorpe, 1983). To avoid multiple counting of members of the same family, unpaid family workers were excluded from the calculations. Class categories were operationalized in terms of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) as follows: (a) *Small farmers*. The agrarian sector of the old middle class was defined as all self-employed workers in ISCO Major Group 6 ("agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry workers, fishermen and hunters"). (b) *Urban petty bourgeoisie*. The urban sector of the old middle class was defined as all self-employed workers in ISCO Major Groups 0/1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7/8/9, less 1% as an estimate of the bourgeoisie. (c) *New middle class*. The new middle class was defined as all salaried employees and wage earners within ISCO Major Group 0/1 ("professional, technical, and related workers") and ISCO Major Group 2 ("administrative and managerial workers"). To these I have added 20% of the salaried employees and wage earners in ISCO Major Group 3 ("clerical and related workers") and ISCO Major Group 4 ("sales workers") as an estimate of the number of clerical and sales supervisors and government executive officials that are included in these categories.
2. The size of the urban petty bourgeoisie in Korea and Taiwan is large not only in comparison with early industrialized countries today, but also in comparison with early industrialized countries at an earlier stage of development. For example, the new middle class reached approximately 10% of the United States labor force during the early 1920s — a level comparable to Korea and Taiwan today (Burris, 1980a). Small farmers then made up approximately 15% of the United States labor force (similar to Korea and Taiwan today), while the urban petty bourgeoisie ac-

counted for only 11% (only half the current size of the urban petty bourgeoisie in Korea and Taiwan). The Japanese new middle class crossed the 10% threshold in 1960 (Burris, 1980b; International Labour Office, 1990). At that time, small farmers made up 17% of the labor force (slightly higher than in Korea and Taiwan today), while the urban petty bourgeoisie accounted for 13% (much less than in Korea and Taiwan today).

3. The smaller size of the urban petty bourgeoisie in Hong Kong, relative to the other East Asian NICs, is something of a mystery (assuming that the statistics are accurate and comparable). This could be a consequence of the chronic labor shortage confronted by Hong Kong capitalists, which has forced them to be more aggressive in siphoning labor from the informal sector.
4. The larger size of the old middle class relative to the new middle class can, of course, also be analyzed in terms of factors that have limited the growth of the new middle class in the East Asian NICs. For an analysis along these lines, see Burris (1992:271-272).
5. For a more critical discussion of these theories, see Burris (1986).
6. The term "disguised proletarians" is taken from Gerry and Birkbeck (1981). The term "semi-proletarian" is borrowed from Wallerstein (1983).
7. See Wright (1978) for the development of the concept of "contradictory class locations." Wright applied this concept to the new but not the old middle class. For discussion of the potential problems with treating all self-employed workers as petty bourgeois, even in early industrialized countries, see Linder and Houghton (1990).
8. Ethnic divisions intersect with class divisions in interesting ways in Taiwan. Since the old middle class is more open than the new middle class to those lacking educational credentials and political connections, upward mobility among local Taiwanese tends to be channeled mainly through the old middle class, while Mainlanders dominate within the new middle class (Gates, 1981). Because of the association between ethnic groups and political parties, old middle class opposition to the ruling *Kuomintang* (KMT) tends to be greater than the conservatism of this class would lead us to expect (Koo, 1994:23).
9. Preliminary findings from the comparative project on the middle classes in the East Asian NICs seem to confirm this hypothesis (Koo, 1994:18).

References

- Amdsen, Alice. 1985. The state and Taiwan's economic development. In *Bringing the state back in*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer and Theda Skocpol, pp. 78-106. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- . 1989. *Asia's next giant: late industrialization in Korea*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Amin, Samir. 1974. *Accumulation on a world scale*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Asia Monitor Resource Center. 1988. *Min-Ju No-Jo: South Korea's new trade unions*. Hong Kong: Asia Monitor Resource Center.
- Bechhofer, Frank, and Brian Elliott. 1981. Petty property: the survival of a moral economy. In *The petite bourgeoisie: comparative studies of the uneasy stratum*, ed. F. Bechhofer and B. Elliott, pp. 182-200. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Bell, Daniel, ed. 1963. *The radical right*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Bello, Walden, and Stephanie Rosenfeld. 1990. *Dragons in distress: Asia's miracle economies in crisis*. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy.
- Berger, Suzanne. 1977. D'une boutique à l'autre: changes in the organization of the traditional middle classes from the Fourth to Fifth Republics. *Comparative Politics* 10(1):121-136.
- Bloom, Jack. 1987. *Class, race, and the civil rights movement*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bracher, Karl Dietrich. 1970. *The German dictatorship*. New York: Praeger.
- Burris, Val. 1980a. Capital accumulation and the rise of the new middle class. *Review of Radical Political Economics* 12(1):17-34.
- . 1980b. Class formation and transformation in advanced capitalist societies: a comparative analysis. *Social Praxis* 7:147-179.
- . 1986. The discovery of the new middle class. *Theory and Society* 15:317-349.
- . 1992. Late industrialization and class formation in East Asia. *Research in Political Economy* 13:245-283.
- . 1994. Small business, status politics, and the social base of Christian right activism. Unpublished paper, Sociology Department, University of Oregon.
- Cheng, Tun-jen. 1991. Is the dog barking? the middle class and democratic movements in the East Asian NICs. *International Studies Notes* 15(1):10-16.
- Childers, Thomas. 1976. The social bases of the national socialist vote. *Journal of Contemporary History* 11:17-42.
- Clammer, John. 1987. Peripheral capitalism and urban order: informal sector theories in the light of Singapore's experience. In *Beyond the new economic anthropology*, ed. John Clammer, pp. 188-201. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Cohen, Marc. 1988. *Taiwan at the crossroads: human rights, political development, and social change on the beautiful island*. Washington, DC: Asian Resource Center.

- Deyo, Frederic. 1984. Export manufacturing and labor: the Asian case. In *Labor in the capitalist world economy*, ed. Charles Bergquist. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- . 1987. State and labor: modes of political exclusion in East Asian development. In *The political economy of the new Asian industrialism*, ed. Frederic Deyo, pp. 182-202. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Evans, Peter. 1987. Class, state, and dependence in East Asia: lessons for Latin Americanists. In *The political economy of the new Asian industrialism*, ed. Frederic Deyo, pp. 203-226. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Fromm, Erich. 1941. *Escape from freedom*. New York: Avon Books.
- Gates, Hill. 1979. Dependency and the part-time proletariat in Taiwan. *Modern China* 5(3):381-408.
- . 1981. Ethnicity and social class. In *The anthropology of Taiwanese society*, ed. Emily M. Ahern and Hill Gates, pp. 241-281. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Geiger, Theodore. 1930. Panik im Mittelstand. *Die Arbeit* 7:637-653.
- Gerry, Chris, and Chris Birkbeck. 1981. The petty commodity producer in Third World cities: petit-bourgeois or "disguised" proletarian. In *The petite bourgeoisie: comparative studies of the uneasy stratum*, ed. F. Bechhofer and B. Elliott, pp. 121-154. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Gerth, Hans. 1940. The Nazi Party: its leadership and composition. *American Journal of Sociology* 45:517-541.
- Geschwender, James. 1967. Continuities in theories of status inconsistency and cognitive dissonance. *Social Forces* 46:160-171.
- Gold, Thomas. 1986. *State and society in the Taiwan miracle*. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe.
- Goldthorpe, John H. 1983. Women and class analysis: in defence of the conventional view. *Sociology* 17(4):465-488.
- Guerin, Daniel. 1939. *Fascism and big business*. New York: Monad Press.
- Haggard, Stephan, and Chung-In Moon. 1983. The South Korean state in the international economy. In *The antinomies of interdependence*, ed. John G. Ruggie, pp. 131-189. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hamilton, Clive. 1983. Capitalist industrialization in East Asia's four little tigers. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 13(1):35-73.
- . 1986. *Capitalist industrialization in Korea*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Hofstadter, Richard. 1967. *The paranoid style in American politics*. New York: Random House.
- Hsiao, Hsin-Huang Michael. 1990. Emerging social movements and the rise of a demanding civil society in Taiwan. *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 24:163-179.
- . 1993. *The discovery of middle classes in East Asia*. Taipei: Academia Sinica.

- International Labour Office. 1990. *Yearbook of labour statistics: retrospective issue on population censuses, 1945-1989*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- . 1991. *Yearbook of labour statistics, 1991*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- . 1992. *Yearbook of labour statistics, 1992*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- . 1993. *Yearbook of labour statistics, 1993*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Irwan, Alexander. 1989. Business patronage, class struggle, and the manufacturing sector in South Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 19(4):398-434.
- Johnson, Chalmers. 1987. Political institutions and economic performance: the government-business relationship in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. In *The political economy of the new Asian industrialism*, ed. Frederic Deyo, pp. 136-164. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Jones, Leroy, and Il Sakong. 1980. *Government, business, and entrepreneurship in economic development: the Korean case*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kim, Kyong-Dong. 1976. Political factors in the formation of entrepreneurial elites in South Korea. *Asian Survey* 16(5):465-477.
- Koo, Hagen. 1976. Small entrepreneurship in a developing society: patterns of labor absorption and social mobility. *Social Forces* 54(4):776-787.
- . 1987. The interplay of state, social class, and world system in East Asian development: the cases of South Korea and Taiwan. In *The Political economy of the new Asian industrialism*, ed. Frederic Deyo, pp. 165-181. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 1991. Middle classes, democratization, and class formation: the case of South Korea. *Theory and Society* 20:485-509.
- . 1993. The state and working-class formation in South Korea. In *State and society in contemporary Korea*, ed. Hagen Koo. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 1994. The middle classes in the East Asian newly industrialized societies: issues, preliminary findings, and further questions. Unpublished manuscript, Sociology Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- Laswell, Harold. 1933. The psychology of Hitlerism. *Political Quarterly* 4:373-384.
- Lenski, Gerhard. 1954. Status crystallization: a non-vertical dimension of social status. *American Sociological Review* 19:405-413.
- Linder, Marc, and John Houghton. 1990. Self-employment and the petty bourgeoisie. *American Journal of Sociology* 96(3):727-735.
- Lipset, Seymour M. 1960. *Political man*. New York: Anchor Books.

- Lipset, Seymour M., and Reinhard Bendix. 1959. *Social mobility in industrial society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lipset, Seymour M., and Earl Raab. 1978. *The politics of unreason*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lo, Shiu Hing. 1990. Political participation in Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 20(2):239-253.
- Lo, Y. H. Clarence. 1982. Countermovements and conservative movements in the contemporary U.S. *Annual Review of Sociology* 8:107-134.
- Loomis, Charles P., and J. Allan Beegle. 1946. The spread of German Nazism in rural areas. *American Sociological Review* 11:724-734.
- Mills, C. Wright. 1951. *White collar*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, Mick. 1988. Economic growth and the rise of civil society: agriculture in Taiwan and South Korea. In *Developmental states in East Asia*, ed. Gordon White, pp. 113-152. London: Macmillan Press.
- Neumann, Franz. 1951. Introduction. In *The Nazi elite*, ed. Daniel Lerner. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Nun, Jose. 1968. A Latin American phenomenon: the middle-class military coup. In *Latin America: reform or revolution*, ed. James Petras and Maurice Zeitlin, pp. 145-185. Greenwich: Fawcett Publishers.
- Ogle, George E. 1990. *South Korea: dissent within the economic miracle*. London: ZED Press.
- Petras, James, and Morris Morley. 1975. *The United States and Chile*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Portes, Alejandro, and John Walton. 1981. *Labor, class and the international system*. New York: Academic Press.
- Pratt, Samuel. 1948. The social basis of Nazism and Communism in urban Germany. M. A. thesis, Michigan State University.
- Rodan, Garry. 1992. The growth of Singapore's middle class and its political significance. Unpublished manuscript, Asia Research Centre, Murdoch University.
- Salvatorelli, Luigi. 1923. *Nazionalfascismo*. Turin: P. Gobetti.
- Sen, Yow-Suen. 1986. A preliminary analysis of the transformation of class structure in Taiwan. Unpublished paper, Sociology Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- . 1991. Proletarianization and the composition of wage workers in Taiwan. Unpublished paper, Sociology Department, University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- Sigmund, Paul. 1977. *The overthrow of Allende*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- So, Alvin Y., and Ludmilla Kwitko. 1990. The new middle class and the democratic movement in Hong Kong. *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 20(3):384-398.

- Tanin O., and E. Yohan. 1934. *Militarism and fascism in Japan*. New York: International Publishers.
- Trow, Martin. 1957. Right-wing radicalism and political intolerance. Ph. D. thesis, Columbia University.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1954. McCarthyism and the conservative. M. A. thesis, Columbia University.
- . 1983. *Historical capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Wright, Erik Olin. 1978. *Class, crisis and the state*. London: New Left Books.