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### CLASS THEORIES AND THE BALTIC AND NORDIC SOCIETIES IN THE 90'S

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#### S u m m a r y

Many observers consider the Nordic countries as representatives of affluent and well functioning welfare states. One special feature of the Nordic models has been a certain kind of class compromise between the main social forces, or 'democratic' class conflict. During this decade economic crisis has hit all the Nordic countries. As a consequence of the crisis class character of the societies has become more visible. From the Nordic perspective classes are not dead, and there is a need for sociological class analysis. An other important feature of social change during the 1990s has been the growth of economically non-active population. Not only unemployment, but also all major groups out of work (students, housewives, pensioners) has increased. This process has set new challenges for class analysis too.

In this paper we ask how two main types of competing class theories, those of Wright and Goldthorpe, work in the Baltic and Nordic setting. The Baltic countries studied are Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Nordic countries are Finland, Sweden and Norway. The data used is comparative survey data from the middle of 1990s.

#### 1. Introduction

Many observers consider the Nordic countries as representatives of affluent and well functioning welfare states. One special feature of the Nordic models has been a certain kind of class compromise between the main social forces, or 'democratic' class conflict. Nordic countries are, for sure, class societies, but social differentiation has been moderate in comparison with many other European countries. During this decade economic crisis has hit all the Nordic countries. As a consequence of the crisis class character of the societies has become more visible. From the Nordic perspective classes are not dead, and there is a need for sociological class analysis. An other important feature of social change during the 1990s has been the growth of economically non-active population. Not only unemployment, but also all major groups out of work (students, housewives, pensioners) has increased. This process has set new challenges for class analysis too.

Baltic countries regained their independence at the beginning of 90s. Since then a rapid social change has taken place. During the Soviet period the Baltic states were the most developed part of Soviet imperium, in the 90s they became societies in transition. This meant that they became a part of poor new comers in the family of European market societies. Social transition has meant that totally new social institutions has emerged while a lot of old institutions has vanished away. One of the most important changes has been that new capitalist social relations are dominant in the production and in the labour markets.

In this paper we ask how two main types of competing class theories, those of Wright and Goldthorpe, work in the Baltic and Nordic setting. The Baltic countries studied are Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Nordic countries are Finland, Sweden and Norway. The data used is comparative survey data from the middle of 1990s<sup>1</sup>.

The main question is the relevance or adequacy of theories and the class models developed on the basis of the theories [1; 12]. In this respect there are actually two research questions at the same time:

- (1) that of comparison of the class models and
- (2) that of comparison of the concrete societies.

The first is an exercise in the class theory. The second is contextual; what we can tell about the Baltic and Nordic societies, about their similarities and differences.

Goldthorpe and Marshall [12, p. 382-383] have claimed that their "class analysis" is a research program within which the different theories can be assessed empirically. Marshall [12, p. 65-85] has also done this by comparing Wright's model and the Registrar-General's class map in the case of Britain. Similarly we have earlier compared the theories of Poulantzas, Wright and Projekt Klassenanalyse [1]. The theory comparison is not so easy task, as it seems to be at first sight. Theories can be empirically better or worse in the sense of giving of wide differences between classes and class groups. Normally this is the test of adequacy. But in final reasoning we can doubt the test. If the model exaggerates the class differences it is as big an error as not finding them if they exist. In both cases the structural picture of society is inadequate.

However we do not think that the empirical assessment of class theories is senseless, but it is a difficult and tricky task. It is sure that in the final analysis there is a lot of room for theoretical and substantial argumentation even if there has been efforts to validate the theories in complex empirical manner [7, p. 211-232]. The substantial argumentation concerns the structural basis of classes and class criteria as well as the step from theoretical criteria to measurement and variables used in empirical studies.

The results depend on the empirical phenomena analyzed. In the paper we'll focus on the following issues: incomes, class identification and political identification. In addition we use a lot of other "adequacy variables" (autonomy, authority, unemployment, instrumental work orientation and trade union membership) not reported here.

The possible phenomena to be studied run from work and reproduction situation to "social class" and consciousness and socio-political action. In the final end there are the questions of hegemony and societal projects. From the standpoint of class theory the matter is that of **scope logic** of class theory; to which problems a theory is relevant and what new theoretical concepts we need in different phases of class analysis [1].

## 2. Wright and Goldthorpe

American sociologist Erik Olin Wright is one of the most influential theorists in the field

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<sup>1</sup> 1 the comparative data was collected under the umbrella of comparative Nordic project funded by Finnish Academy. The Finnish survey was from the year 1994. The total number of respondents was 1789 (60% from the sample representing 18-65 years old population). The Swedish data is from the year 1995. There were 1607 respondents (68% from the sample representing 18-65 years old population). The Norwegian data was collected in 1996. The number of respondents in Norway was 1785 (62% from the sample representing 16-66 years old population). All the samples were nationwide representative samples. All data were collected with postal questioning.

of class theory since the classics. His theory provides us useful tools to analyze developed capitalist societies. Special attention is paid to the internal differentiation of wage-workers. Wright's theory also takes into the consideration the changes that have occurred in the capitalist labor process.

Wright represents the neo-Marxist tradition of class theory; he centers on the social relations of production. Wright attempts to define his position through a critique extending in two directions: he rejects stratification analysis and Weberian class theories on the one hand, and various traditional Marxian class concepts on the other [19]. Wright has presented his theory for the first time at the end of 1970s. After the 'original version' he has revised his theory twice [20; 21]. In the following we have used his original version. The choice is due to both theoretical and comparative reasons.

Wright sets out his theorizing from the relations of appropriation prevailing in production, which at the same time are relations of domination. He also takes into account the separation of economic ownership and possession in modern capitalism as well as the functional differentiation of complex hierarchies within capitalist enterprises. Thirdly, a central starting-point in Wright's theory is the existence of different modes of production. At the same time, in a given society, there exists capitalist commodity production and simple commodity production.

According to Wright, there are three kinds of locations within class relations:

- 1) Basic class locations
  - bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and working class
- 2) Contradictory locations within a mode of productions
  - managers and supervisors
- 3) Contradictory locations between modes of production
  - small employers and semi-autonomous employees.

Basic and contradictory class locations can be determined on the basis of the structural relations of domination and subordination prevailing in production. These, in turn, can be specified according to the matter or resource controlled (investments and capital accumulation, physical means of production, labor power).

Who are workers, managers or employers? Class positions are not only "empty boxes, but there are real human beings located into Wright's typology. According to the theory bourgeois consists of employers hiring more than 10 workers on permanent basis. They also make decisions concerning their enterprise and have authority over the labor power of their workers. Small employers are as capitalists, but they hire only from 2 to 10 employees. Petty bourgeoisie, in turn, consists of those, who own means of production (a farm, a shop), but who do not hire labor. Business is run by the owner or by she/he and the family members.

Managers are wage workers, who as a part of their job are making decisions concerning the enterprise or the work place and who have subordinates. Managers are working both in private enterprises and in the public sector. As a part of their job supervisors are supervising the work of their subordinates, but supervisors have no decision making power.

Semi-autonomous employees (experts) have no subordinates, they make no decisions, but they have autonomy over their own work. The concept of intelligentsia is usually describing this group. Wright's theory extends the scope, also those who do not have any academic degree can be semi-autonomous employees. What is important is the nature of the job, not formal education.

Working class is a residual category in Wright's theory. Those who fall out of the above mentioned groups belong to the working class. Or to put it in other words, workers are those, who do not have decision making power, subordinates or autonomy over their own job [1].

During the last 20 years Wright has not only contributed to the class theory, but he has also carried out a comparative research program. The main results are summarized in his book *Class Counts* [21]. There are almost 20 countries involved with comparative work. In the book analysis are covering USA, Canada, Japan, Sweden, Norway and United Kingdom. The main results of the comparative analysis are as follows:

- 1) Not only is the working class the largest class location in all of the countries we have

examined, among employees taken separately there is relatively little variation in class distributions across these countries [ibid. p. 73].

- 2) In contrast to the relatively small variation across countries in class distributions among employees, there is significant variation in the size of the petty bourgeoisie. Having a large state sector depresses the size of the petty bourgeoisie; having a large agricultural sector expand it.
- 3) In most countries the middle class tends to be more closely tied to large corporations and the state than is the working class [ibid. p. 72].
- 4) Main results concerning class and gender are: A) A much smaller proportion of women than of men in all six countries are in a managerial class location. B) In all countries except in Canada, men are at least twice as likely as women to be supervisors. C) In all countries except for Japan, men are much more likely to be capitalists or small employers than are women. D) There is much less gender inequality within the petty bourgeoisie than within the two employer categories of the self-employed. E) In all countries, women are much more concentrated in the working class than are men. [ibid. p. 61-64].

Class Counts is a book that is based on 20 years work. One may say that it is the final report of The Comparative Class Structure and Class-Consciousness Project. Wright's own project has also been a project of reconstruction of Marxist class analysis. "One of the main objectives in this book has been to counter this current within Marxist thought by demonstrating that quantitative methods could illuminate certain important problems in class analysis" [ibid. p. 546].

From the Baltic and Nordic perspective and sociological traditions there are several problems connected with Wright's newest book. First, there is no proper discussion concerning the relevance of his newest typology. E.g. what is the real role of education/qualifications in determining different expert positions? Secondly, the analysis of class situation and work is totally lacking. Wright's empirical data would allow a sophisticated analysis concerning these issues. Thirdly, the analysis of state is (once again) insufficient; Wright is too much involved with the American way of thinking about the state. Finally, the book is too 'sociological'. Concrete societies are lacking, Wright is moving only in his data. For example the Swedish society is a very complex matter. Comparative analysis requires more contextual material too.

John Goldthorpe is the most prominent Weberian theorist in contemporary class analysis. Goldthorpe has made several studies analyzing classes and class mobility in Western Europe. Goldthorpe's class schema includes the economically active population, not economically inactive. According to estimations this results in excluding just over 40 per cent of the adult population in Britain [4, p. 445-463], in Finland the figure would be 50 per cent. Furthermore Goldthorpe's theory is dealing with males only. This means that including only the male population in the analysis, more than half of the adult population are left outside the class schema, which can be seen as distorting the picture to a large extent.

The decision to take account of only the male population is a consequence of Goldthorpe's understanding of what should be treated as a unit in class analysis. It is the family household. He argues that the family household is the unit of allocating rewards and determining one's fate in relation to the stratification system. The position of the family members is dependent on that of the breadwinner, which Goldthorpe takes predominantly to be the man in the family. The main breadwinner's position in the class structure is determined directly by his participation in the labor market. Other family members participate in the labor market only infrequently and do not contribute independently to the family's life chances [10, p. 468; 18, p. 938].

This raises questions like what if the male in the family was economically inactive and the female was consequently the main breadwinner, or what if both of the spouses were economically inactive etc. Seemingly Goldthorpe has modified his views, taking notice of the critics to some extent. Thus he has argued for the dominance approach, which outranks the spouse or cohabit of either sex in a nuclear family in relation to the other spouse if the latter's labor market position can be evaluated as dominant [9; 16, p.382-383].

Though, in principal Goldthorpe is analyzing the males only, but in some empirical studies also female population has been included [13]. From an empirical point of view another problematic feature in Goldthorpe's model is that it is constructed on the basis of occupations (for empirical construction see 13, p. 305-309). This means that class position is given by an occupation. As we know there exists a great variation in the nature of occupations between concrete societies.

### **3. Social Structure of Nordic Societies at the end of the Millenium**

Nordic countries are small nation states at the edge of Europe. Nordic countries are among the most developed capitalist countries. Sociologists have described their special features with a concept 'Nordic model' [see 11]. This concept originates from comparative welfare state analysis, but it also presents a general description of the countries.

Nordic countries share a lot of joint structural elements. Among the most important ones are:

- 1) Open economies: export and import play an important role in the national economy.
- 2) In each of the countries 'the main export sector' has a special role in the economics. This sector varies from country to country. In Norway it is oil, in Sweden machine building and in Finland paper and pulp industries.
- 3) Social democratic parties have had a special role in the government coalitions for more than 50 years.
- 4) Trade union affiliation is at a high level (more than 60%) and unions have had an important role in the industrial relations. The concept of 'social corporatism' gives a good image of the model.
- 5) Women's labor market participation is at a very high level, 50% of all wage laborers are female.
- 6) In the welfare models the state has had an important role also as a producer of the services.
- 7) During the 90s large scale monopolization has occurred. In many cases monopolization is due to merging corporations across the Nordic countries (Eg. Stora-Enso).

The development of the class structures in the different Nordic countries has followed somewhat different paths. Norway and Sweden have been fore runners what come to the growth of wage laboring population. Both in Finland and in Denmark the share of the petty bourgeoisie have been relatively big. During the 1980s and 1990s the most important feature has been the growth of the wage laboring middle classes.

At the beginning of 1990s all Nordic countries were hit by economic crisis. The biggest difficulties in Norway were with the banking system. However Norway managed to solve the problems quite rapidly. This was mainly due to effective crisis management and oil industries. In Sweden and especially in Finland the collapse of gross national production was more severe. Unemployment increased, and in Finland about 20% of the labor force was unemployed in the year 1994. In Sweden the figure was about 10%. How ever both Finland and Sweden recovered rapidly, and to today the growth figures of the economies are high, at least in the EU context.

Economic crisis caused restructuration of the social structure. All economically non-active groups grew in numbers. Remarkable changes occurred in the distribution of wealth and incomes. One may claim that the Nordic societies became more capitalist.

In the following three tables we present the class structures of three Nordic societies according to two different class models. The first model is Erik O. Wright's original typology [19]. In the tables managers and adviser managers are put together. The second typology is a simplified version of John Goldthorpe's class schema [see 9; 13].

Table 1. **Class structure of Finland, Sweden and Norway (%)**.

A. The distribution of classes according to Wright's typology in Finland, Sweden and Norway (%).

	Finland	Sweden	Norway
Bourgeoisie	1	1	1
Small employers	2	3	4
Petty bourgeoisie	17	6	6
Managers	9	17	22
Supervisors	11	9	11
Semi-aut. employees	20	26	27
Working class	40	40	29
Total	100	100	100
N	878	1195	1315

B. The distribution of classes according to Goldthorpe's typology in Finland, Sweden and Norway (%).

	Finland	Sweden	Norway
Service class	15	16	21
Lower grade professionals	21	23	23
Routine non-manual	10	16	18
Petty bourgeoisie	6	5	5
Farmers	8	1	1
Skilled workers	17	14	13
Non skilled workers	23	25	20
Total	100	100	100

How does the class picture of the Nordic countries then vary if we adopt different theoretical approaches? Wright's and Goldthorpe's theories provide in many respects quite a similar picture of the class divisions. The most important similarity concerns the size of the working class: working class and also the petty bourgeoisie are of the same size in both typologies. The main differences in the theories are in the internal differentiation of wage laboring groups other than ordinary workers.

In every Nordic country vast majority of the economically active population are wage laborers. A joint feature is that the share of semi-autonomous employees is internationally very big, and it has increased during this decade.

The size of the entrepreneurial population is biggest in Finland, where one fifth belong to different entrepreneur groups. This is mainly due to large agricultural petty bourgeoisie, but also other entrepreneurial groups are relatively large. In the Finnish case the non-agrarian entrepreneurship has increased remarkably during late 80s and 90s.

There are clear differences between the class models. Goldthorpe's service class includes both top managers and state employees and entrepreneurs. In Marxian manner Wright makes a clear distinction between wage laborers and owners of means of production.

Norwegian class structure differs from the Finnish and Swedish structures. In Norway there is a clearly bigger managerial stratum than in Finland. In Norway the working class is on the other hand much smaller than in Sweden or in Finland.

The image of classes does change if we take into consideration the gender division. The distribution of men and women into the class structure do differ indeed. Compared to men women are more often in working class positions and workers positions in general (see appendix). In Norway this 'proletarianization' of women seem to be more visible than in Finland or in Sweden.

#### **4. The Relevance of the Class Theories**

In this section of our paper our aim is to test the relevance of the different class models. We ask that how do the models 'explain' certain social differences and social phenomena in the Nordic context? The themes we shall cover are wages, class identification and political identification.

##### **Wages**

There are significant differences in wages between the Nordic countries, and the differences have a long history, which goes back to 1900<sup>th</sup> century. In general the over all wage level is much higher in Sweden and in Norway than in Finland. On the other hand part time working is much more common in Sweden and in Norway than in Finland. In Finland also women are working in full time jobs. The share of part time jobs is only about 12 per cent of all employment in Finland.

In the Nordic countries the wage differences between different occupational groups are smaller than for example in the UK. However during the 90s the differences have increased. Especially wages of managerial groups are better than before.

Table two presents wage distribution according to different class models. It is constructed so that in every country mean incomes of the entire economically active population is given the index 100 and the mean incomes of different class groups is compared to this. This means that we can compare the results of different models at the national level and also cross nationally.

Table 2. Wage distribution according to different class models (entire population=100)\*

<b>A. Wright</b>			
	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Norway</b>
Bourgeoisie	131	175	195
Small employers	159	111	139
Petty bourgeoisie	94	92	104
Managers	155	182	159
Supervisors	112	110	106
Semi-autonomous empl.	107	101	97
Working class	78	78	73

  

<b>B. Goldthorpe</b>			
	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Norway</b>
Service class	144	154	140
Lower grade professionals	118	106	104
Routine non-manual	86	89	89
Petty bourgeoisie	95	97	103
Farmers	105	43	97
Skilled workers	80	88	89
Non skilled workers	74	77	67

\*Note: Wages are mean annual wages in Sweden and in Norway and mean monthly wages in Finland before taxes.

If we look at the national distributions, Norway differs from Sweden and Finland with bigger differences. The distribution of incomes is most even in Sweden. As expected bourgeoisie and managers have the best incomes, while non-skilled workers are at the bottom. Wright's working class and Goldthorpe's non-skilled workers are very close to each others. The situation is the same with managers and service class.

### **Class Identification**

Our analysis have shown that the Nordic countries are wage labor societies, where the working class is still the biggest class group, though it has decreased since the beginning of the 80s. Social democratic parties and trade unions are strong in every country. What can we say about the class identification on the basis of the above mentioned facts? Do people identify with the working class or how do they locate themselves?

According to the thesis about the death of classes remarkable changes have occurred in class identification. Workers do not anymore identify with the working class. It is also considered that the over all image of the society have become more blurred.

Tables dealing with class identification are not fully comparable, because the questions were not exactly identical. In the Finnish questionnaire there were more alternatives than in Sweden and in Norway. In Finland it was also possible to say 'cant say', in the Swedish and Norwegian cases the questionnaires were identical.



Table 3. Class identification\*

**A. Wright**

**Finland** (WC=working class, MC=middle class, UC=upper class, NI=no identification)  
(%)

	WC	MC	UC	NI	Can't say
Bourgeoisie	0	50	13	25	13
Small employers	0	37	5	37	21
Petty bourgeoisie	18	30	2	40	11
Managers	7	58	0	33	3
Supervisors	17	41	1	29	12
Semi-aut. Employees	21	31	2	36	10
Working class	38	18	0	31	13

**Sweden** (WC=working class, MC=middle class, UMC=upper middle class) (%)

	WC	MC	UMC	Other
Bourgeoisie	0	100	0	0
Small employers	33	67	0	0
Petty bourgeoisie	35	45	21	0
Managers	21	53	25	1
Supervisors	31	53	15	2
Semi-aut. employees	32	54	14	1
Working class	78	19	2	0

**Norway (%)**

	WC	MC	UMC	Other
Bourgeoisie	0	17	83	0
Small employers	35	41	24	0
Petty bourgeoisie	24	48	16	12
Managers	29	51	18	2
Supervisors	41	37	20	1
Semi-aut. employees	28	50	18	5
Working class	59	36	3	3

**B. Goldthorpe**

**Finland (%)**

	WC	MC	UC	NI	Can't say
Service class	7	44	3	36	11
Lower grade professionals	7	44	1	37	11
Routine non-manuals 26	40	0	30	5	
Petty bourgeoisie	22	27	5	42	5
Farmers	15	32	2	34	17
Skilled workers	38	18	0	33	11
Non skilled workers	46	10	1	29	15

**Sweden (%)**

	WC	MC	UMC	Other
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Service class	8	53	38	1
Lower grade professionals	25	62	13	0
Routine non-manuals 39	51	10	0	
Petty bourgeoisie	26	52	22	0
Farmers	50	50	0	0
Skilled workers	76	22	1	2
Non skilled workers	82	16	1	1

### Norway (%)

	WC	MC	UMC	Other
Service class	13	47	37	2
Lower grade professionals	20	62	16	3
Routine non-manuals 44	43	10	4	
Petty bourgeoisie	21	58	21	0
Farmers	25	38	0	38
Skilled workers	62	33	2	2
Non skilled workers	63	31	6	1

\*Note: Class identification was based on question "Into which social class do you belong?" In Sweden and Norway the response alternatives were: 1) working class, 2) middle class, 3) upper middle class, 4) some other class, what? In Finland the alternatives were: 1) working class, 2) middle class, 3) upper class, 4) not to any class, 5) can't say.

Wright's model produce very different results and differences according to countries what comes to identification with the working class. On the other hand Goldthorpe's model does not give any differences between the countries in the same respect.

What comes to identification with the middle class proper (excluding the upper middle class) both models are most inadequate in the case of Norway. One can ask whether also the actual class differences are really smaller in Norway than in Finland and in Sweden. It can also be noticed that in Finland, in the case of identification with the middle class, Goldthorpe's model works better than the Wright's one.

In Finland only 40% of the working class did identify them selves with the working class while the same figure in Sweden was almost twice as high. In Finland much more of the respondents said that they have no identification at all or they can't say that with which class do they identify them selves. In Sweden and in Norway the alternative 'other class' gathered only very few answers.

What is worth noting is than in Finland 58% of managers in Wright's typology identified with the middle class, this figure is higher than in Sweden or in Norway. One may conclude that class-consciousness measured with class identification is very high among Swedish workers and Finnish managers.

### Political Identification

In the Nordic countries traditional political division between left, center and right is still existing. There are political parties, which say that they are leftist, or that they belong to the center. Also people use same kind of language when they talk about political matters

What about classes and political questions? One important argument in recent debate has been that classes are death because the link between class and politics is broken. Is it?

Our results suggest that it exaggeration to say that there is no link between classes and politics. In Sweden and in Norway more than half of the working class or other worker categories do identify themselves with the left. The figure is highest among the group of Goldthorpean 'skilled workers' in Sweden. On the other hand the Finnish results are promoting more the thesis that 'class is dead'. Only one third of the working class are voting

the leftist parties.

Table 4. Political identification\*

**A. Wright (%)**

	Left			Other		
	Finland	Sweden	Norway	Finland	Sweden	Norway
Bourgeoisie	0	0	44	100	100	56
Small employers	5	30	25	95	70	75
Petty bourgeoisie	7	34	34	93	66	66
Managers	12	44	49	88	56	51
Supervisors	20	46	50	80	54	50
Semi-aut.employees	23	62	50	73	38	50
Working class	30	64	54	70	36	46

**B. Goldthorpe (%)**

	Left			Other		
	Finland	Sweden	Norway	Finland	Sweden	Norway
Service class	15	41	34	85	59	66
Lower grade professionals	14	53	47	87	47	53
Routine non-manuals	26	48	39	74	52	61
Petty bourgeoisie	14	36	32	86	64	68
Farmers	0	38	11	100	63	89
Skilled workers	29	68	39	71	32	61
Unskilled workers	34	66	45	66	34	55

\*Note: In every country the questions were dealing with political identification. The respondents were given a list of all political parties that were represented in the parliaments. In Finland they had to choose the one they would vote for. In Norway the question concerned their choice in the elections in the year 1993. In Sweden they were asked that for which party they had the biggest sympathies.

Both models are 'strongest' in the case of Finland and they are weakest in the case of Norway. In the cases of Sweden and Norway it seem that the social democratic party is a kind of 'people's party' in its class generality. Also in the case of entrepreneurial groups 33% voting the social democratic party and in the case of managers and supervisor the figure is 50%.

The image of the death of classes in Finland does change if we take into the consideration trade union affiliation. More than 75% of wage laborers are trade union members and there is a clear class division in the trade union affiliation.

More than half of the workers are members of the Finnish LO, SAK. In Goldthorpe's typology the figures are even higher. On the other hand the middle class groups are members in the middle class unions. The situation the same in Sweden. In Norway the trade union affiliation is not at the same level as it is Finland and in Sweden, also the union system is different from Finnish and Swedish model. This means that the figures concerning trade union affiliation are a bit different. In Norway there are clearly more people who are not organized.

## 5. Differences Between Class Models

We are customed to think that Wright is a representative of the Marxist tradition and Goldthorpe is a Weberian theorist. However if look at the models, they share a lot of common

features, but still they produce different results.

To what categories the differences focus? This is roughly depicted with dummy correlations where certain class-group is marked by 1 and all the others together by 0. The class-groups are arranged according to relatively corresponding categories.

Table 5. **Dummy correlations between class categories and incomes and identification variables**

	Incomes			Class ident. (middle cl)			Pol. ident. (non-left)		
	Fin	Swe	Nor	Fin	Swe	Nor	Fin	Swe	Nor
<b>Wright</b>									
Bourg	05	14	14	11	06	08	05	10	00
Small b	14	04	13	14	04	04	06	08	07
Petty b	03	-04	03	07	09	03	15	10	06
Manag	26	39	20	20	24	13	07	10	-01
<b>Goldthorpe</b>									
Service cl	29	46	34	28	35	31	07	12	06
Lower prof	15	06	03	29	18	11	10	02	-07
<b>Wright</b>									
Semi-aut	05	01	-02	07	12	10	-03	-08	-04
<b>Goldthorpe</b>									
R non-man	02	02	-07	02	02	-07	-04	06	01
<b>Wright</b>									
Working cl	-28	-34	-27	-36	-39	-26	-17	-14	00
<b>Goldthorpe</b>									
Skilled w	-06	-20	-16	-22	-19	-20	-08	-11	-02
Non-ski w	-22	-15	-13	-40	-36	-21	-17	-13	-02

The correlations above .07 are generally statistically significant (level .01). The correlations are not very high. Still they tell where the differences between models are. The correlation with incomes does not vary greatly between the class models. In Norwegian case the service class works relatively better than the Wrightian categories and the separation of skilled workers from non-skilled has value in the Finnish case.

In the case of class identification Goldthorpean model turns to be better than Wrightian. Service class gives better correlation than the corresponding Wrightian categories. The Lower professional group has significance in the case of Finland and the difference between skilled and non-skilled workers works in the Finish and Swedish but not in the Norwegian case.

The correlation with political identification (dichotomy left vs. non-left) are modest independently of the class model used. Our other analysis has shown that there are great differences in 'the mental climate' of the supporters of the two main government parties in Finland [3].

The general result from the correlation exercise is that the possible differences, depending on the analyzed matter, focus on service class vs. the differentiation inside bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie and managers. And the division between skilled and non-skilled workers vs. Wrightian working class.

A speculative interpretation in the case of class identification is that service class does correspond the general awareness about class matters, and comes therefore near the class identification. The division of skilled and non-skilled workers differentiates the class identification in Finland and Sweden, and further the level of incomes in Finland. In the case of Norway it has no significance. The result is interesting and deserves additional analysis at least in relation to qualification and education.

## 6. Excursion: Wright's model in the Baltic setting

Baltic societies are wage labour societies. Less than 10% of the gainfully employed population are entrepreneurs. In Lithuania, the share of the petty bourgeoisie is highest at 9%, most of whom are farmers. It is clearly too early at this stage to talk about the bourgeoisie in the Baltic context. There are only very few 'real' private employers. In general the group of entrepreneurs is also in the process of its formation.

In Estonia and Latvia about one-third of the economically active population falls into contradictory locations within the *capitalist mode of production*. In Lithuania the share is somewhat smaller. On all criteria, managers represent the biggest contradictory group in every country. In general, managerial groups are biggest in Latvia. There are more managers in Latvia than in the other Baltic countries. Managerial groups seem to be bigger in the Baltic countries than in Finland, where only one in four belong to managerial groups.

In each country over half of the economically active population belongs to the working class. According to Wright's criteria the working class is biggest in Lithuania (60%) and smallest in Latvia (54%). Compared with Nordic countries there are relatively, and maybe surprisingly many managers in Baltic class structure, fewer supervisors than in Nordic societies and clearly less semi-autonomous employees than in Nordic societies.

Table 6. Classes in the Baltic Countries (%) (1)

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Petty bourgeoisie	6	8	9
Managers	11	14	11
Middle management	12	13	12
Supervisors	5	5	4
Semi-autonomous employees	8	6	4
Working class	58	54	60
Total	100	100	100
N	724	791	944

(1) Operationalization of Wright's typology see Wright 1978, 61-86; Blom et al. 1992, 46.

In the Baltic-Nordic Project we analyzed also the association of class positions (Wrightian model) with consciousness (five main attitude dimensions) and reproduction level (measured by incomes). The class groups are used in analysis as dummy correlations. It occurred that the correlations with middle class positions were insignificant. The only bigger correlations were between managerial position and working class positions and the dependent variables above showing that the main class-based division line is there not between middle class groups and others [5; 17] also evaluated that in Estonian case the social mobility thus far has not brought crucial changes as regards movement into professional positions compared with times before transition. In sum we can say that the middle class project is still only under way in Baltic societies.

Class plays a crucial role in determining people's position and living conditions in any given society. Structuration of work and reproduction situation follows class lines [1]. Today, as we have seen, the Baltic countries are class societies in their making. Classes can be defined on the level of 'classes as such', but it is hard to speak about 'classes for

themselves'. Classes are not actors, there are hardly any class organizations, and class consciousness is virtually non-existent in the Baltic countries. On the other hand, ethnicity comes close to class distinctions. Ethnic origin is also an important factor in determining people's positions. social closure in the Baltic countries. The reason for this may lie in language or in culture, but together they constitute different kinds of networks which are closely connected to each other. Different kinds of mechanisms and aspects support each other.

The concept of social closure has been used in sociology to explain status, action and their consequences. It helps us to understand the uneven distribution of social opportunities. Social closure may develop around status-defined circumstances such as gender, generation, place of residence, subculture or socio-political identification. Ethnicity may also be a key factor of social closure. It can be said that in structural terms, ethnicity forms a social closure in the Baltic countries. The reason for this may lie in language or in culture, but together they constitute different kinds of networks which are closely connected to each other. Different kinds of mechanisms and aspects support each other.

### 7. Excursion: Goldthorpean model in post-socialist setting

We have not any Goldthorpean analysis of Baltic class structures in hands but we can use Peter Robert's study about five post-socialist countries applying the model of Erikson and Goldthorpe. Robert's study gives also the picture about 20 years change in the class structure of those countries.

Table 7. The EGP class distribution in five post-communist societies

Men, aged 20-64 (%)

	Bulgaria	Czech Rep.	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia
I+II	17	28	19	18	26
IIIab	3	3	4	5	5
IVab	5	7	9	11	4
IVc	2	1	2	10	1
V+VI	27	29	37	30	37
VIIa	35	27	24	22	23
VIIb	11	5	5	4	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Women, aged 20-64 (%)

	Bulgaria	Czech Rep.	Hungary	Poland	Slovakia
I+II	28	24	28	26	29
IIIab	18	27	27	28	25
IVab	3	4	6	6	3
IVc	1	1	1	13	1
V+VI	12	12	14	9	13
VIIa	26	28	24	16	22
VIIb	12	5	2	2	7
Total	100	101	100	100	100

Source: Social Stratification in Eastern Europe after 1989. International Comparative Survey, 1993. Principal investigators: Donald J. Treiman and Iván Szelényi (UCLA). [15, table 10].

In the referred monograph by Erikson and Goldthorpe, the EGP classification is applied for more developed and industrialized and less developed and industrialized market economies as well as for communist societies of the 1970s. Since that time more than 20 years has gone and this time interval has brought significant changes in the social structure of these nations. Moreover, the validity of the schema has probably increased by the system transformation in the post-communist societies [15]. In the next table we present more recent class distributions of post-communist countries from 1993.

First, comparing Hungary and Poland by changes in time in respect of class distribution of male earners, the proportion of service class (I+II) increased for Hungary from 15% to 19% over 20 years. It is not surprising that the self-employed class (IV ab) has much larger share in 1993 than in 1972/73; it used to be 2% and it has increased upto 9-11%. In 1973, skilled- and unskilled manual worker class (V+VI & VII a) had about the same size in the Hungarian occupational structure. By 1993, there is a significant difference in this respect, the proportion of skilled manual worker class is definitely larger (37%) compared to the proportion of unskilled manual worker class (24%), – due to the modernization of the Hungarian industry over 20 years. Finally, the agricultural worker class (VII b) almost disappeared from the Hungarian social structure, their rate used to be 14% in 1973, and it dropped to 5% in 1993.

Comparing the five post-communist countries in Table 10, the service class (I+II) seems to be the largest in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. There is no significant difference in this respect between Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria. The Bulgarian class structure displays the lower economic level of the country. The proportion of agricultural worker class (VII b) is still high (11%), and the rate of unskilled manual worker class is larger (35%) than that of skilled manual worker class (27%). (The unskilled manual worker class is quite large in the Czech Republic as well.) The self-employed class (IV ab) is the most extensive in Hungary and Poland where this class started to develop already in the 1980s. Self-employed farmer class is a characteristic group in the occupational structure only in Poland.

Comparing the upper and lower panel of Table 7, three significant gender differences can be observed. First, women are over represented in routine non-manual class (III ab). Second, women are under appreciated in skilled manual worker class (V+VI). This latter feature holds especially for Poland. Third, women are over represented in service class (I+II) in Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria. There is no room here to go into the details of question of gender-segregated labour market but service class occupations in professional and administrative sphere seem to be more feminized in these three societies than in Czech Republic or Slovakia.

## 8. Conclusions: Adequacy of Class Models

The class models have in the case of Nordic societies highly differentiated relevance. This concerns both the phenomena under investigation and the country in question. In the nutshell the comparative adequacy of the models according to matters and countries is the following<sup>1</sup>.

	Finland	Sweden	Norway
Incomes			(G)
Working class identification	W		G
Left political identification	W	W	

The superiority of class models seems to depend on the issue and the country. There are also differences in that how a model does fit better to one country than to another. In the case of incomes Goldthorpe's model succeeds a little bit better with Sweden than Finland and somewhat better with Norway than Sweden. Wright's model does not give any differences between countries.

In the case of the working class identification and leftist political identification Wright's model has clearly different adequacy with different countries. The ranking of the adequacy is Finland–Sweden–Norway. What comes to Goldthorpe there are not marked differences in adequacy between the countries. The only slight exception is the better fit with Finland compared with the others in the case of political identification.

The adequacy of different class models cannot be compared in the Baltic context. Still some things emerged from the short excursions of Baltic and post-socialist class structures. First, one can find the differences between Baltic and Nordic countries very well by using Wright's class model. Secondly, the longer change in five post-socialist countries can be well captured by the class model of Erikson and Goldthorpe.

Also it can be guessed that because of the small size of middle class groups in the post-socialist countries the two class models used in the paper can be overdeveloped what comes to the analyses of middle strata and underdeveloped in the case of borderline groups between middle strata and working class. The situation is maybe the same with the groups between working class proper and the underclass because of the high level of

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<sup>1</sup> The basis of this assesment is the following counting. First the means of variables are counted giving each class category the similar weight, i. e. 1. Then the mean deviations from the joint average percentage are counted. Finally, because of different scales of variation between countries, the deviation is divided by the joint means. This gives the following picture about the adequacy of models. The bigger the figure, the better the adequacy.

		Fin	Swe	Nor
Incomes	W	.18	.21	.26
	G	.19	.26	.35
Ident. with working class	W	.92	.45	.25
	G	.51	.50	.51
Pol identif: Left	W	.64	.40	.18
	G	.37	.24	.26



marginalization and poverty in post-socialist countries. More generally the analysis of post-socialist social structure needs to notice the different sources of income and the breaks in them.

In some matters the superiority of one model over the other one is trivial. Wright's model gives clearer differences in the case of work autonomy and authority because those variables are used as class criteria in Wright's model. So it is a matter of substantial argumentation whether it is a good thing or not. For our mind it is, at least in the case of authority. The main reason is that the class models based on occupations are always unclear with those kinds of matters. For example inside the occupations there are great differences in the amount of authority in every country (Eg. the differences between the private and public sectors) and especially between the countries.

The picture will be more complicated if we take the whole adult population into the consideration. Today half of the population both in the Baltic and Nordic countries are economically inactive and class theories do not fully explain the position of these groups. The analysis of these groups is a real challenge for sociological research and especially for class analysis.

Class is a dynamic concept. Class typologies tend to construct a rigid image of complex social processes. Class is not dead by any means and in the future there is a lot of work for class analysis.



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## APPENDIX

Table 1. **The distribution of classes by sexes according to different typologies in Finland, Sweden and Norway (%).**

### A. Wright

	Finland		Sweden		Norway	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Bourgeoisie	1	1	2	0	1	0
Small employers	4	1	4	2	5	3
Petty bourgeoisie	19	15	9	3	8	3
Managers	12	6	23	10	30	14
Supervisors	12	10	9	9	13	9
Semi-aut. employees	18	22	22	29	22	34
Working class	33	46	31	48	21	37
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

### B. Goldthorpe

	Finland		Sweden		Norway	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Service class	18	13	21	11	29	11
Lower grade professionals	18	23	21	24	19	26
Routine non-manual	5	15	13	20	12	23
Petty bourgeoisie	7	4	8	3	7	3
Farmers	8	8	1	0	2	1
Skilled workers	24	11	16	12	17	9
Non skilled workers	19	27	21	30	14	26
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100



### *Klasių teorijos ir Šiaurės bei Baltijos šalys 1990 metais*

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**SANTRAUKA**

*Daugelis mokslininkų Šiaurės šalis pateikia kaip išsivysčiusias ir neblogai funkcionuojančias gerovės valstybes. Sociologai, nagrinėjantys skirtingų šalių socialines-klasines struktūras, į gerovės valstybės modelį žvelgia nusakydami pagrindines socialines jėgas, o Šiaurės šalis pateikia kaip tam tikrą klasinių jėgų kompromiso arba “demokratinio” klasinio konflikto pavyzdį. Pripažįstama, kad paskutiniaisiais dešimtmečiais Šiaurės valstybės išgyveno visuotinę ekonominę krizę, kuri dar labiau atskleidė klasinę šių šalių struktūrą. Todėl būtent Šiaurės šalių sociologai nesutinka su vis labiau Vakarų mokslininkų darbuose plintančiu teiginiu, kad Vakarų visuomenėse “klasės miršta”. Kita svarbi Šiaurės šalių tendencija 1990 m. buvo vis didėjanti ekonomiškai neužimtų gyventojų dalis. Ne tik augantis bedarbių skaičius, bet ir daugėjančios kitos gyventojų grupės, kurių nariai nedalyvauja gamyboje (studentai, namų šeimininkės, pensininkai) veikė šalių klasinę struktūrą.*

*Straipsnyje yra lyginamos dvi klasikinės Vakarų sociologijos klasių teorijos – Eriko Wrighto ir Johno Goldthorpo – ir pagrindžiamas jų tinkamumas Šiaurės šalių socialinių struktūrų tyrimams bei nubrėžiamos taikymo gairės Baltijos šalių besiformuojančioms visuomenėms aprašyti. Pateikiami empiriniai Šiaurės ir Baltijos šalių socialinių klasių rodikliai gauti atlikus bendrą tyrimą.*

