

This PDF is a selection from an out-of-print volume from the National Bureau of Economic Research

Volume Title: Aspects of Labor Economics

Volume Author/Editor: Universities-National Bureau

Volume Publisher: Princeton University Press

Volume ISBN: 0-87014-305-0

Volume URL: <http://www.nber.org/books/univ62-2>

Publication Date: 1962

Chapter Title: Method and Substance in Theorizing about Worker Protest

Chapter Author: Abraham J. Siegel

Chapter URL: <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c0602>

Chapter pages in book: (p. 21 - 62)

# Method and Substance in Theorizing About Worker Protest

ABRAHAM J. SIEGEL

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

THE main purpose of this paper is to outline a unifying analytical framework for the varied probings into work and its discontents—a span of theory which, for want of a conventional label, I have called “worker protest theory.”

## *A Framework for Theorizing About Worker Protest*

The totality of theorizing about worker protest must be viewed as an interlocking structure of hypotheses and generalizations of varying scope and compass. We have no single theory of protest, for men have asked no single question nor viewed the phenomenon of protest from any one vantagepoint.

Worker protest like “the wage” is a cryptic shorthand for a generic around which our theorizing turns. It is neither necessary nor possible for an analytical framework to enumerate all the elements into which our general substantive focus may be parsed, to detail their almost limitless variability and interrelatedness, or to specify the complete array of questions (and answers when and if found) in which they may play a part. The analytical framework is more like the road map than the detailed aerial photograph of an area. The analytical mapping of the main possible routes of worker protest theory and their intersections which I outline here has served as a useful guide for my own early curiosities about this field of theory and has whetted many more.

### ELEMENTS OF WORKER PROTEST THEORY

Two major lines of inquiry have dealt with these general questions: What are the sources of worker protest? What are the consequences of worker protest? The first broad question seeks to explain and account for worker protest; the second is concerned with its effectiveness in generating change, and probes the significance of its role in affecting or explaining something else. A third general question is implicit in the first two: What is the nature of worker protest? All three questions have generally involved static and dynamic considerations, and it is

therefore appropriate to append to each the phrase, "at a given point in time and over time." In addition to this time horizon, each question involves an analytical context—a domain within which "ifs" are sought and to which "thens" apply. Finally, each question involves its *dramatis personae*—a delineation of who protests and to or against whom.

We have thus as the basic ingredients of worker protest theory: (1) the sources of protest; (2) the nature of protest; (3) the impact of protest; (4) an analytical time horizon; (5) an analytical context; and (6) the relevant parties. Before illustrating the possible diversity of scope and compass in theorizing about worker protest within this framework, I comment briefly on each of these elements and further elaborate the second.

### 1. *Sources of Protest*

Protest derives from a source. It is a response to dissatisfactions and discontents which stem (or are seen as stemming) from some tension-creating relationship or burdensome experience. Protest gives testimony to a conscious gap between the worker's view of "what is" and "what should be," for deprivation is always measured against a matrix of expectation.<sup>1</sup> The feeling that "whatever is, is right" may coexist with abject poverty, rigorous physical hardships, submission to absolute tyrannical authority, but it is incompatible with protest. Formulation and expression of a complaint is dependent upon the prerequisite cognizance of aberration from some normative mold. The deviation may be vaguely apprehended or precisely pinpointed. It may be real or imagined. The dimensional extent of the "grievance gap" may vary; its size may range from almost total to relatively trivial discrepancy vis-à-vis the normative standard of reference.<sup>2</sup> Discontent, in any case, in

<sup>1</sup> This way of thinking about sources of protest is broad enough to encompass any taxonomy of causes of conflict we may care to detail. It comprises, for example, the traditional distinction between "issues" and "problem" disputes, where the former refer to conflict over basic disagreements—about power or income sharing, over group survival, etc.—and the latter to conflict over the interpretation or minor modification of such basic agreements already negotiated or accepted.

<sup>2</sup> The immediate points of friction generating discontent may be the same in two situations. The ultimate source of the grievance, however, because the view of the source involves a prognosis as well as a diagnosis of the irritating affliction, may be seen differently in different instances. An employer's unwillingness to meet a wage demand may be consistent with several views of the source of dissatisfaction. The source may be seen as lying in the system and eradicable only with its demise in the wake of revolution; or it may be seen, in the context of an otherwise generally acceptable situation and in the light of one or another rationally articulated criterion, as an unjustified intransigence on the part of the employer but of transient

the sense of some such grievance gap constitutes the first element of protest theory. In any organization and in all industrial societies there are continuing (although not equally important) sources of irritation and potential conflict. Over time, these grievance gaps will change with variations in either the "what is" or the "what should be." Significant shifts in the yardstick of the "what should be" will reshape satisfactions and dissatisfactions; marked changes in the "what is" may disturb established norms and redefine new reference points.

## 2. *The Nature of Protest*

A description of the nature of protest involves four basic components: the manifestations of protest; the direction of protest; the structure of protest; and the magnitude of protest.

MANIFESTATIONS OF PROTEST. Protest is the communication<sup>3</sup> of discontent through some overt demonstration or expression. These manifestations of discontent are the instrumentalities which serve at one and the same time as indicators of tension and as intended generators of change. They are simultaneously the symptoms of worker discontent and the means resorted to for assuaging discontent.

The forms for expressing discontent are many. The strike, of course, is one of the most common. But there may be recourse as well to retreat from industry and return to rural ties, machine breaking, riots, petitions, absenteeism, personnel turnover, restriction of output, boycotts, grievance filing—all focused within the world of work; or in the larger society, political action, racial, religious, or ethnic antagonisms, wife beating or drunkenness. The list is far from exhaustive.<sup>4</sup> For within each of the forms listed we can find a subarray of variety. The strike, for example, may be walkout or sit-down; restriction of output on the job may involve slowdowns, rigid adherence to work rules, dilution of quality considerations or sabotage; political action may involve pressure politics and lobbying or the creation of independent parties.

---

significance and amendable by recourse to an orderly demonstration of protest pressure leveled narrowly and specifically at this limited "injustice."

<sup>3</sup> The social theorist is, of course, primarily interested in the socially communicated and socially relevant expressions of discontent, i.e., expressions which impinge in some fashion on the structure and functioning of the body social, political, or economic. Unperceived and undiscovered expressions of discontent, the isolated hurling of rocks into an empty sea from a cliff-top, for example, are difficult to incorporate in any theorizing about sources, nature, or impact of protest.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed classification, see A. Kornhauser, R. Dubin, and A. M. Ross, eds., *Industrial Conflict*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1954, p. 14.

## METHOD AND SUBSTANCE

**DIRECTION OF PROTEST.** Discontent will impart to its protest expression a directional dimension. Protest of the present may look either to the past or to the more or less immediate future as a normative guide. Backward looking protest is defensive. The "what is" is found wanting with reference to the "what has been" and is fought off. Forward looking protest is more aggressive. The "what is" is projected into the "what could be" and is fought for. The former is essentially a conservative or retrogressive response to recent violation of tradition; the latter a reformist or radical expression of the desire to depart from tradition.

To the direction of desired change there also attach a distance and a rate. There will be some greater or lesser degree of change desired which defines, so to speak, the extent of travel toward yesterday or the envisaged tomorrow. In addition, there will be a greater or lesser rate of travel which the worker may regard as minimal to escape or correct abuses of today. How much of the present is acceptable is inversely related to how far and how fast from the present the worker would depart.

**STRUCTURE OF PROTEST.** The manifestations of discontent may be expressed individually or collectively.<sup>5</sup> The structure of protest describes the character of its collectivization. It describes the institutional conformation of the organizational vessel in which discontent is coagulated and through which it is given expression. The organizational configuration of protest, too, has no fixed anatomy. Protest may be loosely organized or tightly disciplined. There may be a host of competing would-be "proprietors" and organizers of protest or we may find at another time or place, a few coordinated, centralized, and legitimized agencies of protest organization. Organizational structure may be ephemeral and short lived or highly institutionalized and firmly entrenched and, in the latter instance, may be worker-, employer- or state-designed.

**MAGNITUDE OF PROTEST.** The magnitude of protest refers to the aggregation of overt protest manifestations. Because of the varieties mentioned earlier, such aggregation confronts us with an obviously difficult problem in addition. The magnitude of overt protest manifestations, incidentally, may or may not be positively related to the aggregate of discontent, i.e., the sum total of individual grievance gaps referred to under manifestations of protest, some or many of which may remain latent or be barred from overt expression by suppression.

<sup>5</sup> For an early perceptive discussion of this distinction see Carleton H. Parker, *The Casual Laborer and Other Essays*, New York, Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1920.

### 3. *The Impact of Protest*

Protest will be aimed at effecting change in one or several rules in the highly complex web of rules<sup>6</sup> which relates worker to work process, employer, and the state. Or it may be directed at effecting small or major changes in the process or procedure of rule-making itself.<sup>7</sup> Or it may focus on a combination of these. The impact of protest refers to the effectiveness of protest, i.e., to the manner in which the relevant conflict or disagreement is resolved. The extent to which the rules or rule-making procedures are or are not revised in the desired direction of the protesting workers measures the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of their protest.

### 4. *The Analytical Time Horizon*

This refers simply to the point or span of time encompassed in our generalization. Some questions and proposed answers will be concerned with a short or intermediate span of time; others will deal with behavioral patterns and courses of evolution over much longer and, occasionally, even millennial periods.

### 5. *The Analytical Context*

The range within which we have generalized will describe the limits of transferability of our theory. The context of analysis refers to the range, within which sources are detected, and to the site of protest impact. The points at which protest manifestations are directed will vary. The site of protest may thus involve a job, a work group, a plant, a company, an industry, or a society. A theory about one or several aspects of worker protest may thus posit some proposition which is offered as valid for *one* industry in the United States, for example, or it may be wrought in broader contextual configurations, i.e., offered as valid for *all* industries in the United States, for one industry whatever the nation, for all industries whatever the nation, and so on.

<sup>6</sup> For an elaboration of this concept see John T. Dunlop, *Industrial Relations Systems*, New York, Holt, 1958, Chapter 1; or Clark Kerr, Frederick H. Harbison, John T. Dunlop and Charles A. Myers, "The Labour Problem in Economic Development," *International Labour Review*, March 1955; or Clark Kerr and Abraham Siegel, "The Structuring of the Labor Force in Industrial Society: New Dimensions and New Questions," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, January 1955, pp. 163-164.

<sup>7</sup> For a typology of rule-making procedures see Kerr and Siegel, "The Structuring of the Labor Force . . ." pp. 165-167.

## 6. *The Relevant Parties*

Since we have confined our focus to worker protest, the outside limits of permissible acting (protesting) parties is described by our conception of the labor force. Which specific components of the labor force play a central role in analysis again depends on the contextual scope of the theory we seek to evolve. Marx made the initially simple distinction of designating owner-employer and everyone else who either was or was soon to become a "worker" and spun his theory in these terms. More than a century later it is evident that theorizing about worker protest may turn on many other distinctions in our cast of characters, for the Marxian polarization is marred and mangled in the overlapping network of worker and employer, managed and managers, which has subsequently emerged in the bureaucratization of industry and the proliferation of possible dimensions of the labor force. In most theories concerning protest, worker refers to the arbitrarily delimited group of wage earners below some given level of managerial or supervisory personnel in the hierarchy of managed and managers.<sup>8</sup> But there may also be theories concerned with conflict between one group of "managers" and another (the line and staff disagreements), between one group of workers and another (skilled versus unskilled production workers), and so on.<sup>9</sup>

### *The Potential for Review and Revision of Theory Provided by the Framework*

In this conception of the boundaries of worker protest theory we are free to put many questions, to relate these to others which bear most directly upon them, to shift our glance from one level of theory to another. We try to find confirmations and reinforcements for our theorizing or, where we note contradictions and inconsistencies, we are encouraged to search for reconciliation. If we find too limited an analytical context for a hypothesis we want to explore and compare in broader horizons, we enhance transferability of generalization by unleashing a few of the variables impounded in our *ceteris paribus* pound and let them roam in a *mutatis mutandis* world. We close in on excep-

<sup>8</sup> See for example, the way in which this distinction is drawn in Frederick H. Harbison and Charles A. Myers, *Management in the Industrial World*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1959, pp. 3-20.

<sup>9</sup> A taxonomy of many such potential levels for theory is found in Wilbert E. Moore, "The Nature of Industrial Conflict," in *Industrial Conflict and Dispute Settlement*, Industrial Relations Centre, McGill University, 1955, pp. 4-9.

tions we note by seeking out alternative strategic factors or, this failing, by bringing the order of generalization down a notch or two, adding an additional level of theory thereby but perhaps gaining new insights simultaneously. There is, in brief, the prod to continual refinement and synthesis in this welter of generalization. And new or newly found experiential evidence, new curiosities, new or modified policy needs make this an ongoing perpetual process. In this section I want simply to suggest by illustration the paths we are free to pursue in this adventure of learning more about worker protest.

Three different levels of analysis were selected. Each, in turn, is part of a set of questions which deals primarily with one of the three major questions at the beginning of the preceding section.

1. The first set of questions and answers incorporates all three issues, but the formulation somehow always seems to give an added emphasis to the impact and consequences of worker protest—perhaps because many of the authors engaged in generalizing at this broad level were concerned with fashioning social tracts in the guise of social theory. I am referring, of course, to that heritage of curiously fascinating and conflicting admixture of restrained or explosive polemic, implicit or patent advocacy, muddled metaphor, mild expressions of faith, fiery depositions of dogma, and occasional flashes of brilliant insight, which make all the rest so much easier to take and which we have called “theories of the labor movement.”

2. The second set of questions involves a shorter time horizon, analysis ranges within much narrower confines, and the primary concern is a search for sources of worker unrest. “Human relations research in industry” is an awkward but communicative reference to the level of theory I have in mind here.

3. The third set of questions deals with one specific aspect of one of the components of the nature of protest and its evolution over time. I have chosen to comment on those researches which have sought to trace out “the natural history of the strike” as illustrative of the range of theory which is possible here.

*The Rise and Fall of Worker Protest in “Theories  
of the Labor Movement”*

In an earlier paper Clark Kerr and I examined the traditional theorizing about labor organization. This involved an enumeration of authors and a description of their works, which we included in our discussion of



theories of the labor movement.<sup>10</sup> Mark Perlman has still another but quite similar listing in his recent effort to examine this range of theory.<sup>11</sup> For my purposes it is not essential to get universal agreement on who gets counted as "theorist of the labor movement"; for I propose to discuss here only a sample grouping of such theories, and it is enough to say simply that I have included in my own version of what gets counted here that theorizing which encompasses much, i.e., that level of theory where time horizons are long, contexts wide, and substantive focus broad.

Theorizing about worker protest at this general level must frequently be inferred from a more inclusive range of traditional theorizing about labor organizations; and, in fact, the latter is often only implicit in what is more directly put as a theory of economic development. What we find essentially in each is some pattern of protest which reflects an underlying set of assumptions concerning the relation of the working out of the industrialization process (although most traditional theories of the labor movement focused almost entirely on development cost in a liberal capitalist mold), the concomitant development of discontent and its protest expression, and the management and manipulation of this protest. Broad theories of worker protest and of industrial development are contingent upon each other. Each protest pattern hinges upon (1) a measure of disparity between a postulated set of material and psychological needs or demands and what in fact is actually forthcoming and accrues to the worker in industrial society; and (2) a set of corollary views concerning the resultant changes in the magnitude of worker protest and of its impact. Together these assertions delineate the pathways of protest over time; they mark out the ebb and flow of protest and its attendant steady, waning or increasing potential for effecting change.

I have chosen to comment here on the similar protest patterns derived from a reading of Marx and Veblen. Other groupings of theorists of the labor movement afford modified and, in the case of Selig Perlman,<sup>12</sup> quite different protest patterns. The Marx-Veblen mappings which I outline here, however, are illustrative of the mode of theorizing about worker protests at this level and of the leeway and direction

<sup>10</sup> Kerr and Siegel, "The Structuring of the Labor Force . . .", pp. 151-159.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Perlman, *Labor Union Theories in America*, Evanston, Row, Peterson, 1958.

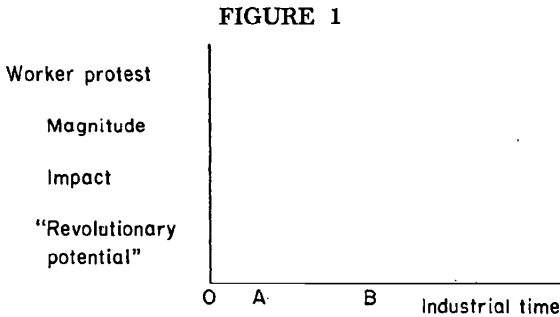
<sup>12</sup> Selig Perlman, *A Theory of the Labor Movement*, New York, Augustus M. Kelley, 1949 reprint of the 1928 edition.

IN THEORIZING ABOUT WORKER PROTEST

which our analytical framework affords, both in the evaluation of validity and contemporary relevance of theory cast in this broad context and in the formulation of alternative tentative hypotheses.

PROTEST MAPPINGS<sup>13</sup>

The simple diagrammatic format of Figure 1 was chosen to summarize the corollary views in Marx and Veblen concerning the evolution of protest magnitude and impact over time. The abscissa in this figure is a time scale in developmental or "industrial" time units. Different



points along the time axis represent different stages of industrial development. Preindustrial time lies to the left of the origin. The progress from industrially undeveloped to mature industrialization is measured by moving out to the right. At point O the society is essentially a non-industrial society. At point A it is in the incipient stages of industrial growth. At point B it is a relatively developed industrial society. For the purposes of the argument below it is not important to define any single precise unit of measurement to provide us a continuum of degree-of-industrialization gradations; my interest will focus primarily on the distinction between the society at point A in industrial time—the early phases of the industrializing society—and that at point B—the relatively developed industrial society. For this distinction, reference to a number of criteria (all interrelated) can provide us with a rough but adequate range about points A and B and permit us to discern the relatively undeveloped from the relatively developed industrial society.<sup>14</sup> It is

<sup>13</sup> The protest mapping concept and the mappings discussed here are variations on a theme outlined in an unpublished manuscript by Kerr and Siegel, "Industrialization and the Changing Nature and Impact of Worker Protest."

<sup>14</sup> I have in mind the criteria generally utilized to evaluate relative degrees of industrial development:

(1) Relative importance of different productive activities—which may be gauged

easy enough to ascertain, for example, that Britain of the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century, Japan of the late nineteenth century, Russia in the early twentieth century, and India or China today would each be situated somewhere around point A and that each of these today, with the exception of India and China, would lie at or near point B.

Along the ordinate I will plot the ordinarily sensed rather than the specifically cardinaly defined estimates of the magnitude of overt worker protest and a related mapping of the impact (or effectiveness) of worker protest. These are admittedly impressionistic plottings, but I feel that they do no severe injustice to the Marx-Veblen mapping or vision of how magnitude and consequences of worker protest vary over industrial (in their own context, capitalist industrial) time.

### *The Marx-Veblen Protest Mappings*

The Marxian and Veblenian analyses of industrial development and labor organization present essentially the same protest mappings and may be represented as in Figure 2. The first two figures plot the magnitude and impact of protest, respectively. These elements of protest have already been defined. The third figure plots what may be termed the "protest potential for massive change" and requires brief explanation. What I have in mind here is a probability estimate of the likelihood that protest *if* effective will involve severe, drastic, sharply discontinuous change in the prevailing distribution of power, income, or

---

by occupational distribution by branch of production; the proportion of gross national product deriving from agriculture, industry, etc.; the balance of development (multiple-industry development or not).

(2) Relative capitalization—which would be measured by the amount of real capital per head and reflected in the nature of the method and organization of production; the extent of division and specialization of labor and economies of scale which are related to the roundaboutness of method of production.

(3) Output, income, investment, welfare incomes—output and income per head (absolute levels and rates of increases); the proportion of expenditures on food and necessities to total expenditures; ratio of investment to GNP and direction and nature of investment; level of medical care available, standards of nutrition, housing and sanitation; amount of child labor used.

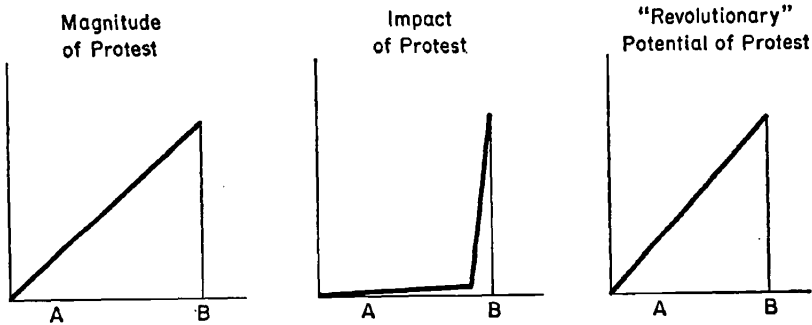
In addition, (4) degree of urbanization may serve as a partial indicator of degree of industrialization and (5) a variety of demographic estimates (e.g., rate of increase in population, fertility and mortality rates, expectation of life) will reflect changes in economic growth.

An alternative approach for arriving at similar judgments about such a classification could involve using the criteria described by Rostow in his delineation of stages of growth. Point A would correspond to his society in the process of "take-off"; point B to his "maturing society" or "high mass-consumption" stages. See "Rostow on Growth," *The Economist*, August 15 and 22, 1959, pp. 409-416 and pp. 524-531.

IN THEORIZING ABOUT WORKER PROTEST

status in the society. "Revolutionary potential" may be another way of expressing this imminence or remoteness of massive, extremely rapid, or radical change, which effective protest will imply at any point in industrial time.

FIGURE 2



MARX.<sup>15</sup> These courses charted for the magnitude, impact, and likelihood of revolutionary change summarize the following assertions in Marxian analysis:

1. With the creation of an industrial work force begins the expression and accumulation of worker discontent.

2. As the society moves from incipient to mature (capitalist) industrial development, the accumulating unrest continues to mount.

3. The increasing magnitude of protest continues to be frustrated. The impact or effectiveness of protest is at best trivial and minuscule; protest thus not only "massifies" but also intensifies and gains in combative, revolutionary, explosive potential as industrialization proceeds.

4. The revolutionary potential peaks in the neighborhood of point B, i.e., in the relatively mature stages of industrial development and culminates in swift and massive rejection of the prevailing social, political, and economic institutional arrangements.

5. The proletarian revolution reconstitutes an alternative classless

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the Marxian analysis of labor organization in capitalist industrial society, see: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" in *A Handbook of Marxism*, New York, International Publishers, 1935, pp. 30ff; Karl Marx, *Capital*, New York, Modern Library, 1936; "Wage-Labour and Capital" in *Selected Works*, Moscow, Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1956, Vol. I; V. I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done*, New York, International, 1929, pp. 31-118; and A. Lozovsky, *Marx and the Trade Unions*, New York, International, 1935.

“good society” in which the sources of worker discontent (and, as a consequence, all worker protest) are eliminated.

The Marxian assumptions and deductions which account for the particular shape these patterns assume are briefly as follows:

1. As the society develops industrially, as the use of machinery and division of labor are extended, the size of the “proletariat” expands. More and more members of the society assume a common role in the productive process. In the developed society the polarization of classes is complete. We find society comprising on the one hand, the proletariat, and on the other, the bourgeoisie.

2. With the creation of the industrial labor force its protest begins. The source of initial discontent lies in the disruption of tradition, and the direction of protest is backward looking. The protest is not unified or disciplined. It manifests itself in riots, machine breaking, and in efforts “to restore by force the vanished status of the workman” of the past.

3. Protest continues to mount, and its manifestations are expressed in increasingly unified and organized fashion.

The source of discontent as we move further from A lies more and more in the unmitigated and increasing immiseration of the proletariat in the face of increasing development. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is matched by “accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole. . . .”<sup>16</sup> Fluctuations and crises in production make his existence even more precarious.

Concomitantly, developing industrialization facilitates the emergence of a common class ideology and the capacity to organize. Not only are more and more members recruited into the ranks of the proletariat but their commonality is promoted by improved communication and transportation facilities which permit dissemination of ideas, of action programs, and hence of growing class consciousness; by political education gained in political organization in bourgeois alliances; by physical concentration of masses of workers in industries and cities. There are increasing collisions over the class distribution of the national dividend, but to little avail. The result is an “ever-expanding union of the workers.” Organization of the worker grows “stronger, firmer, mightier.”

<sup>16</sup> *Capital*, p. 709. There is in addition, the psychological immiseration found in the degradations of the Juggernaut of capital (*ibid.*, pp. 708-9) and in the ever-widening social gulf between proletariat and capitalist class.

4. The consequence of "disciplined, united, and organized" but hitherto ineffective and frustrated protest is revolution. The point in industrial time at which the series of "veiled civil wars" between the classes proceeds to the point where "that war breaks out into open revolution" and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat is a point within the B range of development. Only in the mature society have all the antecedent prerequisites for maximum protest impact and for successful revolution been met. In the stages of developed "monopoly and imperialist capitalism" the explosive peak is reached. Unrest becomes impossible to contain within the bounds of the prevailing structure of society. The massive potential of the cumulatively intensified discontent is hurled against the old order, the proletarian revolution is under way and "the expropriators are expropriated."<sup>17</sup>

5. The drastic reconstitution of society eliminates the basic sources of prior worker discontent and ushers into being a protestless order, whose internal structure harbors no "inner contradictions," no latent or overt worker unrest.

VEBLEN.<sup>18</sup> Veblen's protest mappings are essentially similar to the Marxian, but they are much more hedged about with qualifications and possible alternative routes and are premised on quite different (although not entirely disparate) grounds.

<sup>17</sup> There are some qualifications attached to these general courses predicted for protest which reflect growing apprehension about their general validity. Engels, for example, complains about the British "bourgeois proletariat" which does not behave in accord with the projected pattern. He elsewhere shifts from the formal position which accounts for the coming social revolution as resulting from the increasing pressure of the capitalist strait jacket upon the increasingly miserable proletariat to a position that social revolution will result as a consequence of increasing pressure of successful, working class movements—successful, i.e., in decreasing misery—upon the capitalist employers who "fire the first shot," take recourse to violence in the attempt to crush the proletariat's advances, and are in turn overwhelmed and expropriated. Lenin, too, is aware of deterrents in the paths of the plotted courses. Essentially, however, the formal analysis and prognosis is never rejected by either Marx, Engels, or Lenin. Not until Stalin's era do we find a rejection in practice if not in preachments of many of the assumptions of the inherited dogma.

<sup>18</sup> See Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of Business Enterprise*, New York, Scribner, 1904, Chapters II, III, IX and X, pp. 5-65, 302-400; and *Absentee Ownership and Business Enterprise in Recent Times*, New York, Huebsch, 1923. For some interesting commentaries on Veblen: Joseph Dorfman, *Thorstein Veblen and His America*, New York, Viking, 1934; J. A. Hobson, *Veblen*, New York, Wiley, 1937; Paul T. Homan, "Thorstein Veblen," in *Contemporary Economic Thought*, New York, Harper, 1928; and W. C. Mitchell, *Lecture Notes on Types of Economic Theory*, New York (Augustus M. Kelley), 1949 (mimeo), Vol. II, pp. 218-252.

Veblen's theory of the labor movement is as firmly imbedded in his analysis of a "liberal capitalist" system as is Marx's. Veblen sees the origins of modern labor organization in the hiatus between the dominant institutions of corporate capitalism and those which the prevalent technical environment "requires" for the fulfillment of communal advantage and optimal material well-being.

Veblen's analysis of modern capitalism proceeds in a pageantry of colorful, emotive contrasts and neatly demarcated dichotomies. The forces of communal "serviceability" are dramatically pitched against the contaminating and the disserviceable elements. The "savage" society, handicraft industry, the machine process, impersonal mechanistic cause-and-effect habits of thought, industrial employment, production of goods and the underlying population stand in contrast to the barbarian society, corporate capitalism, teleological and anthropomorphic metaphysics, pecuniary employment, production of profits, conspicuous waste and consumption, captains of business or of finance, absentee ownership, the vested interests. Workmanship, the parental bent, idle curiosity, industrial emulation, serviceability, and improved material welfare find expression in the first array; acquisitiveness, getting something for nothing, pecuniary emulation, waste, sabotage, and disserviceability are emphasized by the latter.

The core of the conflict in modern capitalist society arises from the *de jure* institutional incompatibility with the *de facto* technological environment. Modern society is characterized technically by the machine process, institutionally by absentee (i.e., absent from the actual productive and industrial process) ownership. The institution of absentee ownership finds its rationale and sanction in the contemporaneously anachronistic structure of legal and political ideologies of the handicraft era. The institution of natural property rights is buttressed and perpetuated by those vested business and financial interests whose habituation is primarily a pecuniary one, and who live by seeking and getting something (profit) for nothing (no productive activity). The captain of business or of finance is essentially concerned with the production of profits. The *de facto* existence, however, of the modern machine technology and its productive potential for eliminating material want render obsolescent the *de jure* institutional prescriptions and pecuniary habituations. The machine process imparts to all engaged in the industrial employments a matter-of-fact, cause-effect orientation. Removed from any connection with direct pecuniary motivations,

imbued with the sense of workmanship, skeptical of the conventional received doctrines of natural property rights, resentful of the inequalities which arise in the environment dominated by business ideology, propelled by growing recognition of the waste and sabotage of production (restriction of output) perpetuated by business pecuniary proclivities, the "underlying population" (Veblen's industrial labor force) finds its entire habits of thought recast and diverging from those of the business interests. The discipline of the mechanically standardized industrial system tends toward dissent from now archaic and disserviceable received principles. The polarization of society into business versus industry crystallizes into an intolerable impasse. The "labor movement" in Veblen is the consequence of this growing disposition to dissent from received tradition and a reflection of the drift away from the habituation to outgrown capitalist institutions. The fountainhead of organized dissent is the technician and the skilled worker but the "underlying population" joins in the revolt given direction by this corps of leaders. The general strike, "a conscientious withdrawal of efficiency . . . for such time as may be required to enforce their argument," is the weapon which can abolish absentee ownership and free the productive forces of society from the restrictions of pecuniary vested interests in the subsequent guild socialist organization of a collective, cooperative, "Soviet of technicians" order. That order marks the victory of social habits of thought and action in touch with the "generically human" and creative propensities of man—the propensities to construct and to seek out knowledge guided by the concern for the survival and enhanced satisfaction of humanity's material wants.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This very brief summary of the generalized protest pattern is an extreme oversimplification of the Veblen argument. As mentioned earlier, Veblen is rarely specific in his description of a unilinear trend and almost always qualifies his assertions with possible alternatives. In his later writings, especially, Veblen emphasized more and more the possibility that the "obsolescent" institutions, the "imbecile" institutions, i.e., outmoded sanctions and habitual arrangements, would resist "reasonable" adjustment, persist because they have become rationalized, and assert a coercive prescription upon behavior which the "veiled interests" seek to preserve, and lead ultimately to the suicidal decay of civilization because of their essential disserviceability to society. Thus he is ever skeptical, for example, of the revolt of the "underlying population" and castigates the behavior of the American AFL trade unions insofar as they fail to go beyond the effort to "adapt, construe, recast earlier working arrangements with as little lesion to received preconceptions as the new exigencies and habits of thought held by them will permit." He emphasizes the role of militarism, nationalism, and of patriotism in effectuating the persistence of the imbecile institutions. "Imperialistic nationalism" and "habituation to warlike ideals" can lead to the "sterilization of revolutionary socialism." Veblen mentions the increasing misery (both in degree and volume) which is the outcome of the



*Alternative Protest Mappings*

Marx and Veblen were concerned with generalization of the most widely transferable sort. Each had what he felt to be a model of the industrial world. In 1960, extrapolation of British or American experience no longer suffices as the relevant context for analysis of comparable scope and generality. The roads to industrialism are many, and general assertions about patterns of protest over industrial time must encompass a vastly wider range of experience and history.<sup>20</sup> We know in advance that any generalization encompassing industrial and industrializing society will be hazardous at best. Gerschenkron has made the point that the Marxian generalization which suggested that the "industrially more developed country presents to the less developed country a picture of the latter's future" could be valid only as a half-truth, because it tends to conceal differences in the industrial development of backward countries as compared with the industrialization process which already advanced countries have undergone. The shift from industrial backwardness to industrial maturity will, in the course of its evolution, present to the developing society different challenges dependent upon a variety of possible differences in its character. And the late-comers in industrial development, he maintains, faced with different problems, may apply institutional instrumentalities and provide ideological incentives for which no counterpart may be found in the history of the established industrial societies.<sup>21</sup>

In view of the heterogeneous nature of the industrialization process, Gerschenkron's assertion is indisputable. The heart of his thesis, as I see it, is however only a caution against seeing in the detail of any one country the detail of the entire world at a comparable point in industrial time. And it is a caution which the contemporary disciples even more than the original theorists of the labor movement have too often tended to neglect. It is not, I think, a prohibition of "thinking big." For there remains that half of the generalization which is truth (or an approximation to it) which we must seek out for clues to similarities

---

capitalist system of ownership but minimizes the role of increasing misery as a factor making for reasoned class consciousness and the replacement of the present scheme with one more advantageous to the majority. The disposition for dissent of Veblen is less "rational" and more "cause-effect" in tenor than that of Marx.

<sup>20</sup> For a development of this theme, see Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison, and Myers, *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, Harvard University Press, 1960.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander Gerschenkron, "Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective," in *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, Bert F. Hoselitz, ed., University of Chicago Press, 1952.

in general drifts and evolutionary patterns, if we are to retain even a shred of faith in the potential usefulness of theory for action. The Gerschenkron assertion does not per se suggest a futility in comparative analysis or the impossibility of the relevance of the same basic forces in shaping the histories of similar (not identical) and, therefore, comparable contextual units. This is, after all, the essence of generalizing at any level, however narrow or limited its range. The essence of his warning is, rather, a justification of conceptualizing a framework for analysis such as this. Both make us cognizant of levels of theory, of multilinearities interwoven in the similarities, and of the multiple tactical procedures we may employ in coming to grips with—and hence continually revising—the future as history.

What general protest mappings, then, do the histories of industrialization viewed from a contemporary vantage point suggest? I have used as a springboard for grasping at such theoretical straws the rather crude technique of comparative statics. Two “snapshots” of worker protest, each separated from the other by a substantial lapse of industrial time, are first outlined and then compared for whatever suggestions they may contain to permit us to arrive at some tentative chartings of the course of worker protest over industrial time. The first view is a composite of worker protest in the society at point A in our protest charts. It is a portrait whose general features reflect the character of worker protest in a large number of countries still in this incipient stage of industrial time and the character of past protest configurations in countries now industrialized but that, at one point of chronological time in the past, occupied a comparable position in industrial time. The second view is a description of worker protest in the society which is relatively mature industrially—a composite characterization of worker protest seen in the contemporary developed societies (stage B in Figure 1).<sup>22</sup>

1. WORKER PROTEST IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF INDUSTRIALIZATION. The transition to industrialism involves social as well as technical revolution.<sup>23</sup> Incipient industrialization generally precipitates an initially

<sup>22</sup> I have avoided extensive footnote documentation in these bits of portraiture simply to avoid cluttering up the next pages with a large number of citations culled from a perusal of histories of both industrialized and industrializing nations and commentaries on them. References bearing on general aspects of worker protest which I regard as basic pegs on which to hang speculation have already been noted in the first section above.

<sup>23</sup> For an interesting conjecture about the consequences of a conceivable “fully automatic factory” type of industrialization of the future which might sever this

amorphous, volatile protest whose source derives in part from the disruption of tradition inherent in the creation of a nonagricultural work force. It is nothing new to point out that the recruitment of an industrial work force frequently entails the destruction and recreation of institutional arrangements—changes in economic goals and incentives, decay of old skills and retraining for new, disintegration of traditional patterns of reward and punishment, urbanization and the concentration of population in the new industrial centers, disruption of the traditional mode of work and reorientation to novel methods of production and conditions of work discipline. All involve adjustments which are more or less coercively, more or less smoothly, more or less rapidly effected in the transition from preindustrial to industrial society, from the traditional to the newly emergent cultural arrangements. The disruptive impact of the transition to industrialism will depend upon the specific rate and character of the industrialization process and upon the sociopolitical and ideological milieu in which it is initiated and which restrains or exaggerates its excesses, protects or neglects the welfare of the newly created nonagricultural work force. Industrialization, however, irrespective of the soothing or irritating additives which may be administered in the process, is generally sufficient per se to constitute a “great transformation” which arouses a host of protest reactions as the traditional patterns give way to the disruptive force of encroaching industrialization.<sup>24</sup>

---

initial tie between social and technical changes, see the discussion by David Riesman, “Some Relationships between Technical Progress and Social Progress,” *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, Vol. IV, 1953-54, pp. 131-146. The complete automaticity of production, it is argued, by not involving human beings who must be “reformed,” does not involve the disruption of old values and modes of life of the populace (*vis-à-vis* production), and therefore no initial protest obstacles which industrialization efforts of the past and present confronted or still confront in the transitional stage.

<sup>24</sup> Karl Polanyi finds the root source of subsequent worker protest not in the industrialization process per se but in the specific organizing principle which sparked its development in capitalist England, i.e., the all-encompassing self-regulating market mechanism of the economic liberal philosophy. To be sure, the transitional hardships may have been aggravated by the “satanic mills” pinpointed by Polanyi. Yet the industrial revolution initiated by the first five-year plan in the socialist ethos of twentieth-century Russia did not manage to escape the protest consequences of the significant social transformation which the industrialization process per se evoked. The forms of protest differed as did the forms of labor organization which sought to control and channel this protest, but the essence of the protest was clearly a reaction to the transition to industrial society. There are few historical exceptions to this generalization. See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, New York, Farrar & Rinehart, 1944.

The break with traditional society patterns is difficult to absorb under the smoothest of transitions. The shock is frequently compounded by the harsh circumstances encountered in the incipient stages of industrialization. The initial shift from the agricultural to the non-agricultural sector will be effected under the aegis of recruitment practices involving both push and pull factors. Where recruiting techniques involve either open and forceful coercion (enclosures, compulsory labor drafts, etc.) or indirect coercion (tax levies, e.g.), and where the village economy has not completely collapsed, i.e., where lack of immediate subsistence is not the most compelling push factor, the compulsory disturbance of family life and of village ties will weigh heavily in the subsequent accretion of hardships which may accumulate to create personal disorganization, frustration, and discontent in the new industrial worker. Where the recruitment procedure uses the lure of high wages, the anticipation of the high wage may be cut into quite deeply by the labor jobber's share of the contractual remuneration. Even where the ties to the old are negligible—and there is increasing evidence that urban-rural ties have been overstressed—the expectational gloss will be marred by the harsh realities of industrial employment and of urban living. Housing conditions are generally deplorable, sanitation measures at a minimum, recreational, educational, associational or leisure facilities nonexistent. In earlier industrialization processes, the relentless, routinized discipline, the long hours, the impersonality of the factory mark a drastic reversal of the work pattern of the countryside left behind. The search for guaranteed employment (if that was the motivation for leaving the rural area) may be disappointed by a glutted labor market, by temporarily arrested investment of the vagaries of an autonomous market mechanism. The early transitional rootlessness of those separated from close familial or extended familial association, of the only partially committed industrial workers, may be emphasized by the presence of ethnic discrimination or by the absence of civil or political rights.

The direction of discontent vacillates. The old rhythm is disrupted and commitment to the new is only partial; or, if complete, only partially digested. The accumulation of mass frustrations, of hardships, and tensions vents itself in "chaotic stirrings of misery"; this is the period of amorphous, inchoate, and volatile restlessness, the period of experimentation, the "seeding time" of ideas and organization. It is the period of vacillation between nostalgia for the old halcyon days

and of vigorous assertion to rights and privileges, to improvements in material welfare and status in the new industrial society.<sup>25</sup> To this "defensive-offensive" wavering, there may be added a flavor of resentment which may be either internally or externally directed in the quest for rapid economic development and improvement.<sup>26</sup>

It is the period of competing radical appeals, and there are expectations that the totality of society can be sharply transformed by the elimination of one or another root evil which is specified as responsible for prevailing discontent and hardship. The envisaged change, whatever the direction aimed for, is big rather than partial; and its attainment is seen as imminent with the successful demolition of the offending practice of institution. The distressing effects of the present are erased and what is left is either unmarred tradition or the glorious new world of the future.

The structure of organization collectivizing the discontent in this early period is often as fluid and as uncoordinated as the directional aspirations of discontent are still ill-defined or inarticulate. The very inarticulateness of the new industrial worker (often completely illiterate) tends to encourage agitational arousing of latent subsurface dissatisfactions and restlessness, which remain unexpressed, or redefinition, articulation, and interpretation of the unrest that is expressed.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> In an unpublished manuscript Reinhard Bendix points up this admixture of traditionalist and radical worker ideology in the transition from agricultural to industrial society in England. "Much of the complexity [of his preceding survey] derives from the juxtaposition of traditionalism and radicalism. Every harking back to the 'good old days' contained an element of radical protest against industry and its spokesmen. And every assertion of political rights and every violent outburst was made legitimate, in the eyes of the workers, by reference to the ancient rights of Englishmen under the Constitution." The phenomenon is discernible, with varying degrees of emphasis on the traditionalist and radical or revolutionary aspects, in virtually all such transitions. The impact and the role of early agitational direction, the rate and tangible returns of industrial development, the social and political background of the nation, the degree of the new worker's alienation from the traditional background will help determine the direction in which the balance may be thrown.

<sup>26</sup> The nationalisms of Italy, Germany, and Japan, of Russia and China, of the Middle East and Southeast Asia, of Africa and Latin America are all members of the same family to the extent that nationalist sentiment is aroused and harnessed in the emulatory appeal for industrial development.

<sup>27</sup> This articulation of protest on behalf of the worker may come from middle-class intellectuals within the country, and in currently developing areas may derive as well from international sources (e.g., international labor organizations, the Communist party, other already structured labor movements, etc.). Another indirect but significant form of pressure may stem from the leaders of the traditional society on behalf of the tribesmen in the industrial sector.

Many competing "leaders" are likely to be seeking proprietorship of the workers' malcontent; and it is not uncommon to find in this phase an uncoordinated multitude of competing organizations, "localized, atomized, factionalized," springing up simultaneously in the attempt to channel and direct the expression of discontent. Even where there are general unions, they are weak and unstable. The tactics of these organizations are still groping and experimental. Goals may be limited to eliminating momentary, local, specific grievances; or they may emphasize grandiose schemes and social miracles, "hit-and-run," once-for-all solutions which promise unlimited revolutionary consequences in the vision of the self-regulating utopia persisting eternally after the elimination of the designated root of the evils of society. The organizational ties and the sites at which redress of discontent is sought are as frequently political as they are industrial. There will be vehicles as varied as the goals or tactics but the organizational nuclei do not persist. They are temporary, short lived, loose, and ephemeral. They disintegrate in the wake of failure and re-form in the next wave of enthusiasm or frustration. Poorly financed, they rarely concentrate on the perpetuation of the organization or the association.

The concomitant manifestations of this initial unrest and loosely structured protests are virtually everywhere similar in nature. There will be retreats from the present to the past.<sup>28</sup> There will be machine breaking, "wildcat," "lightning," "unofficial" strikes, spontaneous demonstrations, sporadic riots, violence, mass petitions and manifestos, nihilistic striking out, blind revolt—"desperate reaction to intolerable distress"<sup>29</sup>—all mingling in contemporary underdeveloped societies with the repeated urgings to get on with development in a hurry—which flare up, spread rapidly, explode, and fade only to make way for renewed uprising.

<sup>28</sup> The earlier literature on economic development is replete with illustrations of the oft-encountered hurdle to successful industrialization which urban-rural migration constitutes. There are situations, to be sure, where such retreat is completely cut off and others, where it is not, in which the retreat may be tentative rather than permanent because the rootless worker may be caught between the upper and nether millstones of privation and hardships of the new society and the inability of a disintegrating village economy to reabsorb such workers in large numbers. As we indicated earlier, more recent studies seem to minimize this uncommittedness and, in fact, stress the problems of overcommitment in contexts of vast under- and unemployment.

<sup>29</sup> G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement*, London, Allen and Unwin, 1948, p. 58.

## 2. WORKER PROTEST IN THE RELATIVELY DEVELOPED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY.

Sources of discontent and of industrial conflict do not disappear in the industrially developed society. The nature and extent of the grievances, however, are different from those of the early transitional period. Many of the earlier dissatisfactions have been eliminated or mitigated. The transitional flux of the initial shift from agriculture to factory with all of its concomitant social disruption is in good part removed from the scene. Shifts are no longer "from one way of life to another but from process to process within one way of living."<sup>30</sup> The usufructs of industrial developments have generally permitted some improvement in hygienic and housing conditions, a diminution of initial physical hardships and deprivations, a variety of concessions yielded to or wrested by the industrial worker. Important changes in the political rules of the game may be an achievement of the past and permit more effective and therefore less frustrating action in the sphere of economic and social reforms. Or where civil and political rights have not been achieved by the worker (either in society at large or in the sphere of production), an autocratic welfare policy may have succeeded in reducing the explosive potential of accumulated dissatisfaction by paternalistically bestowing some economic and social reforms, or both. There will still remain the inevitable sources of discontent arising from (1) the opposition of interest between managers and managed, from (2) the remaining gap between limited means of want-satisfaction on the one hand and desires on the other, and from (3) the need to adapt distribution of income or power in some fashion to changed conditions within the dynamic and complex industrial society.<sup>31</sup> The translation of these discontents into action, however, differs in the developed society in contrast to the expression of discontent in the transitional society.

The direction of protest in the developed society has also changed. The nostalgic and the traditionalist, directing protest backward where they existed, are of greatly diminished consequence. Within the new society, the successor generations of workers are attuned from the start

<sup>30</sup> This would apply to the transitional consequences of twentieth-century "automation," heralded by so many as the second Industrial Revolution. The technical aspects of automation may well involve "revolutionary" changes, insofar as "control" is added to "power." The social consequences, however, are likely to be not sharply discontinuous.

<sup>31</sup> See Kerr, "Industrial Conflict and Its Mediation," *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1954, pp. 230-234; and Moore, "The Nature of Industrial Conflict," pp. 1-15.

to the new patterns of reward and punishment, of mode of work, methods of production, conditions of work discipline. The sought-for change from the total situation of the present is generally pragmatically partial rather than total. Concomitantly, although the degree of urgency and immediacy may remain high in attempts to effect limited, specific change, such urgency with respect to massive and fundamental institutional leaps into the past or the future is greatly attenuated. The protest of the developed industrial society appears in and of the framework of that society to a far greater extent than did the protest of the incipient industrialization stage. And most of this is a consequence of intermediate improvement and of mitigated and changed discontents which the successful maturation of economic growth has permitted, albeit only after earlier conflicts over the distribution of its attendant benefits; in lesser part it is attributable to the significant change which has taken place with the passage of industrial time in the structure of protest.

The organizational structure of worker protest in the developed society has become centralized, formalized, legitimized, and viable. It is cohesive, and there are far fewer overlapping and competing organizations asserting jurisdictional privileges in identical protest terrain. Organization is well financed, there is paid and often self-perpetuating leadership, there is concern with the survival and continuity of organization per se. Functions are more clearly established and recognized, tactics and ends more closely considered. It should be made explicit that when I speak of organization I do not refer exclusively to the traditional trade union or labor movement-labor organization of, for, and by the worker. In the "open" societies, this is, more or less, the case. But labor organization, in the sense of structuring a web of rule whereby the role of the labor force vis-à-vis the work process and society at large is defined, does not always result in a relationship in which the worker via his own organization participates effectively in industrial rule making, rule changing, or rule enforcement. The organizational forms which claim the proprietorship and control of worker protest may be cast in alternative molds. The state may organize trade unions or monolithic political parties in the name of the workers; but these in fact are essentially agencies of the state. It may devise a corporative order which comprises a state-organized or -controlled labor front. It may capture worker-initiated organizations. Similarly, employers may build a variety of paternalist forms of organization or, in combination with the state, join in fashioning official government "harmony" organi-



zations. The role of the worker implicit in each of the various forms of labor organization is, of course, significantly different. In any event, however, in the developed industrial society, we find some mode of structured labor organization (whether worker-, employer-, or state-designed) which has succeeded in assuming some direction or control over worker protest or in suppressing it. Organization has become institutionalized, bureaucratized, and stabilized. A legitimized vehicle for protest expression or containment has been fashioned.

The change in the organizational structure of protest is accompanied by a revision in the overt manifestations and expressions of discontent. In the developed industrial society, protest expressions are stripped of many of the inchoate and volatile characteristics of earlier protest. They tend to become more rational, predictable, and stylized. Sporadic riots, violence, explosive outbursts are replaced by more peaceful varieties of collective bargaining, joint consultations, or political bargaining. Strikes may take place, but if so, they are different from those of the past. "Yesterday they were battles; today few of them are more than protest demonstrations."<sup>32</sup> Sporadic and spontaneous strikes give way to the new-fashioned strike which has become "enlightened, orderly, bureaucratic"—almost chivalrous in its tactics and cold-blooded in its calculatedness. It is the tool of rationalized rather than desperate revolt, of disciplined rather than impulsive dissatisfaction. Structured organization has evolved bounds and constraints upon the characteristic choice or availability of protest expression. In the case of bona fide worker-initiated organization which has matured with the passage of industrial time, we find a greater willingness to discuss, to bargain, to compromise, to proceed more cautiously and gradually. The organization is no longer an illegal conspiracy but an accepted social institution. There has been successful moderation of some earlier dissatisfactions, and real reform. Leaders are concerned with survival and perpetuation of the organization, with its finances, with its internal discipline and stability. The characteristic choice of protest expression will be molded, in addition, by the state's intervention and elimination from the realm of the legitimate certain modes of protest. Where parliamentary reins of government have been assumed by a labor party, there may be further constraints which worker organization imposes upon the choice of protest manifestation. Even the

<sup>32</sup> K. G. J. C. Knowles, *Strikes—A Study in Industrial Conflict*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1952, p. 4.

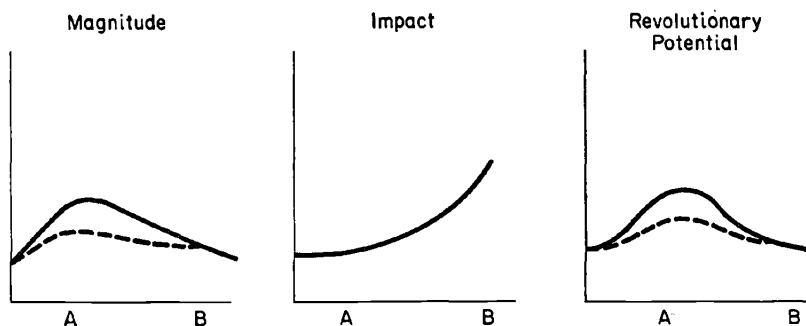
“enlightened” strike may be frowned upon as a legitimate protest technique. In the case of employer or state-designed organizational vehicles—because the essence of their strategic function has been from the beginning the calculated harnessing of worker protest—we find that, whatever the mode of organization legitimized via a combination of coercion and concession, the magnitude and revolutionary potential of worker protest in the society are both held in tow. Protest manifestations that are allowed are directed through channels provided by the state or employer. The specific channels developed for expression of discontent serve as legitimized safety valves, which direct and manipulate worker discontent toward minimizing explosiveness and serious social disruption—an achievement made feasible only in the permissiveness of economic growth. There will be some discontent remaining unresolved and uncontrolled and finding expression in manifestations other than the directed and legitimized: absenteeism; personnel turnover or “striking with the feet,” where the ordinary strike is unavailable; restriction of output, when the latter alternatives may be removed by compulsory labor direction; rank and file rebellions via unsanctioned strikes, and so on. But, in contrast to the early stages of the transition to industrialism where most protest expression was of this illegitimate-in-the-eyes-of-the-society variety, in the developed industrial society only a relatively small portion of discontent finds outlet in such manifestation.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> These composites of worker protest, because they are conglomerate sketches, are types rather than replicas, and a by-product is the inevitable presence of individual exceptions. (See Howard Becker, “Constructive Typology in the Social Sciences,” *Through Values to Social Interpretation*, Duke University Press, 1950, pp. 93-127.) If we scan the universe from which the “typical” views were sketched, we find, however, that we need not ransack the historical evidence to provide illustrative instances of the types. It is rather for the exceptions that we must dig deep. Two atypical instances, for example, of the view of unstructured protest coinciding with early industrial development are the Danish and the Japanese experiences. In Denmark, where the rate of development was slow enough to minimize the rigors of a more rapid rate of industrialization (but not too protracted to create frustrations of expectations concerning the benefits of industrialization), where the industrial labor force was recruited in part from skilled artisans already accustomed to urban dwelling and inured to the discipline of industrial workshops, and where the survival of the guild system beyond the middle of the nineteenth century left an extremely significant legacy of organizational propensity, the lag between the beginnings of industrialization and the structuring (in this case via worker initiated trade unions) of protest was minimized. In Japan, the structuring of organization and of protest was assumed from the very start by the employer and the state. Independent worker-initiated organization was repressed, and paternalist organization of the dependent worker’s protest was simply the traditional vehicle which was ensconced in the new industrial context. And France and Italy come to mind as exceptions

What inferences about the dynamics of worker protest magnitude, impact, and revolutionary potential are to be drawn from these static composites of protest?

I suggest a general mapping, which is significantly different from the Marx-Veblen generalizations, shown in Figure 3. The dashed line represents the "Russian model" variant of the generally similar patterns sketched.

FIGURE 3



The alternative mappings assert that: (1) the magnitude of protest manifestations will rise in the earlier stages of industrial development but will have peaked and begun to diminish at a point in industrial time before the mature industrial society, point B; (2) the effectiveness of worker protest will have proceeded along a generally upward trajectory throughout industrial time (which is tantamount to the assertion that many of the sources of discontent will be gradually alleviated over industrial time); and (3) the revolutionary potential of protest will, in light of the paths described for (1) and (2), have peaked similarly at some point before the mature stage of industrialism and will be declining.

Marx (and to a lesser extent, Veblen) saw increasing misery unrelieved by industrial growth as a significant source of accumulating worker discontent and of mounting revolutionary ardor. The revised mappings take account of the recorded capacity to improve absolute levels of living with increasing industrial development. Marx (and again to a lesser extent, Veblen) saw an inflexibility in the rule-making relationship involving workers, employers, and state, and in turn projected a

---

to many of the features of worker protest described as typical of the relatively developed industrial society.

protracted period of completely ineffective or only trivial protest impact. In the face of sheer, intolerable distress and frustration, that minimal impact finally vented itself in an explosive revolutionary outpouring when finally, in the mature stages of growth, workers had garnered the organizational might to undertake the expropriation of the expropriators successfully. The revised mappings take account of the recorded flexibilities and of the concessions seized or ceded throughout the process of industrialization and growth and of the conservatizing effects of contemporary "unified and disciplined" worker organization. Structured organization in the face of visible gains already achieved and of continuing gains to be shared in the future has served in the mature industrial society more often as a threat *to* rather than *of* revolution and massive change.

The historical record is clear on the potential and the actual benefits of economic growth—so clear, in fact, that most of the two-thirds of the unindustrialized world is now clamoring for industrialization. In the early stages, incipient industrialization has yet to pay off. It is not surprising to find that, with no alternative purchase price for the proprietorship of early protest, those early organizers of protest with no responsibility for either the initiation or the direction of industrialization can only promise jackpot gains, which lie at the end of a quick once-for-all fundamental change in the organization of society. At the same stage, those early organizers of protest, who happen also to be the responsible initiators and directors of development, will try to devise various suppressing devices to keep it from upsetting the developmental apple cart too soon and will have been substantially, although not completely, successful in these attempts if "take-off" is followed by maturation of growth. The more advanced industrial society will have permitted gradual reform and improvement. In the cases where industrialization has advanced or will have advanced in the Russian model of centralized-state initiation, direction, and coordination of growth, the labor organizational arms of the state will have been permitted to put increasing emphasis on consumption as against production activities. They may have been accorded increasing degrees of latitude in adjusting local grievances, etc., as the need for restraining such proclivities diminishes with succeeding industrialization. And in the democratic advanced industrial society with free labor movements, the earlier and cumulative reforms and improvements will have altered similarly the appeal required for the successful "merchant of

discontent." Cole's description, drawn from late nineteenth-century Britain but generally applicable to mature industrial societies, provides a clear picture of this revised appeal:

The appeals which had roused the workers in the thirties and forties would have made no impression on their successors in the latter part of the century. . . . In the great industries, the workers had ceased to be a ragged and starveling mob, easily aroused, either by a Feargus O'Connor or a James Rayner Stephens, or by some one of the many "Messiahs" who sprang up in the early years of the century. They had acquired a status, and in many cases a little "stake in the country," if only to the extent of a few pounds in the "Co-op" or a house in process of being bought through a Building Society.

No longer were mass uprisings, huge sudden revolts bred of despair and spreading like wildfire none knew how, likely or even possible. Strikes had become, for the most part, orderly movements, prepared for in advance and conducted by organised bodies and under duly constituted leadership. The orators of the Social Democratic Federation had thundered revolution in vain; the evolutionary Socialism of the I.L.P. made a far greater appeal. But even this did not rouse the mass; the I.L.P. set itself to win over the individuals one by one. Socialist propaganda had become far less an appeal to the emotions and instincts, and far more an appeal to reason. O'Connor had been hot as hell; Sidney Webb was always cool as a cucumber.<sup>34</sup>

I should stress that these alternative mappings are not intended as predictions but only as projections in relevant contexts. They do not assert that all societies will attain mature industrialization and that these protest mappings will have come to prevail everywhere, but only that, in those societies that have or will have reached the stage of relatively mature industrialization, we shall find that these mappings have generally prevailed. And perhaps the key explanation in the end will be attributed to Marx and his dire predictions after all. "Managerial elites" the world over, whatever their character and in whatever industrializing societies, will have been forewarned by Marx of the possible consequences of too protracted and rigid an inflexibility in the initially autocratic rule-making processes in industry. In the knowledge also that the message has not escaped the worker's eye either they will have, on this account, dramatically revised the Marxian projections for

<sup>34</sup> Cole, *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement*, pp. 269-270.

## IN THEORIZING ABOUT WORKER PROTEST

the magnitude, impact, and revolutionary potential of worker protest in industrial society by demonstrating a "coerced preference" to share rather than lose *in toto* income, power, or status.

Let me conclude this section with a much briefer set of comments on each of the two other levels of theory I have chosen to illustrate the leeways and guideposts afforded by the analytical framework.

### SOURCES OF WORKER PROTEST IN HUMAN RELATIONS RESEARCH IN INDUSTRY

I have elsewhere described the features of this range of theory concerned with worker protest:

. . . human relations research in industry is generally confined to the "social system" of the factory—or even more narrowly, the small group—and [focuses on] the relations existing among its parts. . . . Explanations to account for industrial unrest are sought *within* the organizations in which men work. Finally, human relations policy proposals aiming at the amelioration of conflict are similarly directed almost exclusively within the establishment and emphasize the strategic significance of leadership styles, communication patterns, work flows, participation, etc., in effecting cooperative industrial relations.<sup>35</sup>

The point may simply be noted here.

If we compare these human relations researches with the analysis of the traditional theorist of the labor movement we get a striking contrast in tone, temper, and context of research. The traditional theorist of the labor movement imparts a flavor to his work which is big and lusty; we are always confronted with wide-ranging strategic factors within immense social contours. The human relationist's concerns look almost weak and wispy if we put them alongside these millenarian tales of manifest destiny and triumphs of the "good society." His gaze rarely wanders beyond the narrow confines of his plant or work group, and what he sees are little troubles in little places amendable by little treatments. No images of the broad reconstruction of societies here; only the concern with restoration of the internal collaborative environment of the plant. No references to big or even little economic and political pressures which churn up mounting frustrations; in almost complete oblivion to the larger world of industry and society, the

<sup>35</sup> Abraham J. Siegel, "The Economic Environment in Human Relations Research," *Research in Industrial Human Relations: A Critical Appraisal*, Conrad M. Arensberg *et al.*, eds., New York, Harper, 1957, pp. 86-87.

human relationist roots out unrest in faulty face-to-face relations or communications patterns in the plant.

Our framework of worker protest permits and encourages all levels of analysis. Moreover, it stresses the need to relate one unit of analysis to another. It suggests that broad generalization of the "theory of the labor movement" type will be only vaguely suggestive of strategic factors and will have to be broken down, so to speak, to take account of exceptions in less sweeping levels of generalization to round out and close in on valid analytical perception. What it calls into question concerning the minuscule context of the human relationist's level of analysis, in which he seeks to discover and explain sources of unrest, is whether he can put his finger on any or enough strategic factors to permit theorizing at all. The environmentalist critique of human relations research grows out of a unified perception of worker protest theory and has turned basically on the appeal to open the analytical door a bit wider to take account of more than proximate, internal variables in explaining worker motivations, attitudes, and behavioral patterns. It has asserted that findings adduced within the plant will have extremely limited, if any, transferability. The criticisms may have been extreme and harshly put but have spurred among human relationists increasing recognition of the need to post no impermeable barriers in the search for strategic explanatory variables.<sup>36</sup>

To this extent, the usefulness of human relations research in having called attention to and rectifying the earlier disregard by others of internal work-group relations and in advancing our knowledge in the areas of learning theory, social perception, and role theory is even further enhanced.

#### NATURAL HISTORY OF THE STRIKE

Concern with sources and consequences of worker unrest has been supplemented by a variety of studies concerning one or another aspect of the nature of unrest. Manifestations of protest have been widely studied, and perhaps the most carefully and exhaustively reviewed is the strike. Studies focused on the nature of the strike have included precisely the same kind of separating into components carried out in this study for the more inclusive phenomenon, worker protest, in an

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, the recent reconsiderations of appropriate analytical levels in human relations research in William F. Whyte, *Man and Organization*, Homewood, Illinois, Irwin, 1959; and in Leonard R. Sayles, *Behavior of Industrial Work Groups*, New York, Wiley, 1958.

effort to get at more knowledge of the strike. Strike theory is again illustrative of the accretions to knowledge permitted by thinking in terms of interlocking webs and strands of theory.

Numerous authors have sought to describe and explain the changing patterns of frequency, magnitude, and duration of the strike over time.<sup>87</sup> Most of them have dealt with annual strike data for a country or several countries and attempted to find and interpret patterns of aggregate strike activity over time in industrial society. There have been few disputes over the facts concerning the withering away of the strike and, even surprisingly and quite unlike the debates over human relations theories, few basic disagreements over interpretation to explain the facts. Explanations have been carefully conceived and generally valid but have been supplemented and modified by related notches of theory and thereby enriched.

In noting exceptions to the natural history of the strike at different industry levels, for example, Kerr and I proposed what is, in effect, a supplementary strand of theory where the strategic variables seemed to be something quite different from those pointed to in dealing with aggregate strike data.<sup>88</sup> And pulling the reins just a bit tighter on relevant analytical context and confining it solely to the coal mining industry, Gaston Rimlinger has further refined our knowledge and sharpened our thinking about strike theory.<sup>89</sup>

### *Concluding Comments: Problems and Prospects in Worker Protest Theory*

This paper has been neither an effort to enumerate all possible levels of generalization about worker protest, nor to review and evaluate in careful detail any one or several levels of theory, nor to innovate or

<sup>87</sup> See for example, K. Forchheimer, "Some International Aspects of the Strike Movement," *Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics*, January 1948, pp. 9-24, and September 1948, pp. 294-304; and *idem*, "Some International Aspects of Strikes," *Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics*, September 1949, pp. 279-286; Alvin H. Hansen, "Cycles of Strikes," *American Economic Review*, December 1921, pp. 616-621; Arthur M. Ross and Donald Irwin, "Strike Experience in Five Countries, 1927-1947: An Interpretation," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, April 1951, pp. 323-342; Knowles, *Strikes—A Study in Industrial Conflict*; and Arthur M. Ross and Paul T. Hartman, *Changing Patterns of Industrial Conflict*, Harvard University Press, 1960.

<sup>88</sup> Kerr and Siegel, "The Interindustry Propensity to Strike—An International Comparison," *Industrial Conflict*, pp. 189-212.

<sup>89</sup> Gaston V. Rimlinger, "International Differences in the Strike Propensity of Coal Miners: Experience in Four Countries," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, April 1959, pp. 389-405.



propose with all the proper credentials any new theorizing about worker protest. I have sought rather to stress a way of looking at the relation of method and substance in theorizing about any substantive area. This is an approach that points up the innumerable problems which beset those who would venture into the future (or for that matter, into an interpretive accounting of the past), but that points up as well the progress made and the enormity of the still unmined veins in this range of theory.

I had indicated at the outset that the conception of a framework is a matter of taste. Perhaps the choice here can be explained by two reasons:

1. The framework has the chastening effect of urging caution in claiming universality for generalizations and serves as a continuing reminder that the answers we propound are vitally shaped by the questions we have asked and the limits we have imposed on where we look for them.

2. Equally important, however, it permits free-swinging, wide-ranging speculation which, though recognized in advance as undoubtedly half-truth, still provides guides and clues for further exploration or follow-up theoretical refinement.

In this breadth of permissible peregrination and in the concomitant recognition of diversities in theoretical compass, we are spared from smashing against the Scylla of speculating for eternities and ubiquities, unaware of the many smaller worlds for theory to be reconciled and related to the broad-brush generalizations, and at the same time, may avoid foundering on the Charybdis of the comfortable case study or its near equivalent, the spuriously precise and completely manageable but not always relevant unit for analysis.

## COMMENTS

ELLIOT J. BERG, Harvard University

In this very suggestive paper Abraham Siegel sets down some ways of looking at worker protest—how and why it arises, the factors determining its intensity and form, how it develops over time. I should like to focus my comments on one aspect of Siegel's analysis—that pertaining to the sources of worker protest. Why does worker protest arise

in industrial society? Discussion of this question will involve some consideration of (1) the analytic framework of the paper and (2) the substance of the analysis.

1. Why should the social theorist interested in protest movements single out one particular group for theoretical treatment? Workers, however defined, are a highly significant social and economic group, and this is one reason for moving them to the center of the theoretical stage. It is, furthermore, necessary to demarcate the scope of analysis somehow; as Siegel shows, there is a sufficiently vast range of questions pertaining to workers as a group. But aside from this, do industrial workers have some special role in society, some peculiar status which justifies special analytic attention? Or are workers—defined, let us say, as wage earners below some given point in the hierarchy of skill, income, and authority—simply one of a number of groups to whom no special theories of social protest apply?

Most theorizing about worker protest does in fact assign to workers a special status in industrial society. For most labor theorists, it is this special status that justifies inquiry into labor protest rather than into social protest in general. Worker protest is a useful and appropriate subject of analysis, not only because relations between managers and the managed are of basic importance in industrial society, but also because there is something unique in the worker's situation.

This is of course clear in Marx and Veblen, as Siegel shows so well. For Marx, labor protest is the inevitable consequence of the development of capitalist society. The worker rises up because he is caught in increasing misery and insecurity, trampled under the capitalist *Juggernaut*. For Veblen, similarly, the worker is special—but in his view for psychological rather than for economic reasons. Exposure to the discipline of the machine process encourages in industrial wage earners the development of matter-of-fact, that is, rational, thinking. They begin to glimpse the possibilities of what science, the machine, and an efficient ordering of society might bring. They become ripe for change.

More recent attempts to use the concept of worker protest have followed in this tradition; they too make workers particularly prone to protest by virtue of their position in industrial society. In some of the joint writing of Clark Kerr, John Dunlop, Frederick Harbison, and Charles Myers, for example, it is argued that wage earners in industrial society live in a state of perennial latent protest arising from

the frustrations implicit in being governed by a web of rules they usually have little to do with making.<sup>1</sup>

All of these theories of protest are open to a common criticism: in all of them social protest originates and evolves differently for workers than for other groups in society. For Marx and Marxists there was, until the Maoist revisionism of recent times, little consideration of the potentials of peasant protest. For Veblen, it is habitual exposure to the machine process that separates industrial workers (and engineers) from other men. Kerr and his associates make the implicit assumption that industrial workers suffer frustrations which are qualitatively different from those suffered by other groups.

Furthermore, all three of these theories rest on empirical propositions—the Marxian on increasing misery, the Veblenian on psychological transformation, the Kerr *et al.* analysis on a definition of the industrial worker as in perpetual semi-revolt. The first two, as Siegel shows, are simply not in accord with the facts now, in most parts of the world. For the last, there is no convincing evidence that industrial wage earners are, per se, subject to greater frustrations than other social groups.

2. What are the causes or sources of worker protest in Siegel's analysis? First, he defines one general source: the existence of a grievance gap, a gap between what is and what might be. But he then treats two general cases in which sources of discontent are discussed in rather different terms. In early industrialization, discontent and protest arise from the disruptive effects of the recruitment process—the process, that is, of securing the transfer of labor from traditional subsistence-production oriented villages to industrial employment. The shocks and hurts of the recruitment process in its early stages are apparently—though not made altogether definite—a source per se of labor protest. In mature industrial society also there is worker discontent, though it arises not from entanglement of the wage earner in a web of rules, but from the clash of interests between managers and the managed and from the continuing gap between the wants of wage earners and their incomes.

Questions arise from this formulation. With respect to the sources

<sup>1</sup> See their article, "The Labour Problem in Economic Development," *International Labour Review*, March 1955. It should be noted that the views on worker protest expressed in this article have been considerably revised in later writings of the Inter-University group. Cf. their *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960.

of protest during early industrialization, it is hard to accept the view that the disturbances arising from the recruitment process are sources per se of protest, at least if protest is to be used in any meaningful way. Early industrialization may tend to create stresses which give rise to discontent on the part of new wage earners. But this discontent need be significantly intense, as Siegel implies elsewhere in the paper, only if a relatively large "grievance gap" develops. And there is no a priori reason why such a gap should develop.

It does appear to be true that in some of the now industrialized countries worker discontent "peaked" during the period of early industrial development. The process of recruiting the initial labor forces in many countries was characterized by the existence of strong "push" factors—overpopulation, rural misery, radical changes in land tenure. Entry into industrial employment presented many disadvantages. Aside from submission to unaccustomed discipline, wage differentials in many cases did not make industrial employment particularly inviting; in late eighteenth-century England the money income of the agricultural laborer who retained some rights on common land in his village was probably not much lower than the average wage income obtainable in the new mills and factories. While it is not certain that even in these conditions the recruitment of early labor forces was as difficult as the received doctrine on this matter would have us believe,<sup>2</sup> sources of discontent were real and widespread.

For the currently industrializing parts of the world—as Siegel notes—recruitment into paid employment is less clearly a source of protest. In much of the underdeveloped world, entry into industrial employment presents tremendous advantages in comparison with village life. The climate of managerial and government opinion everywhere now tends to soften the transition for new workers. Governments everywhere borrow—usually with the help of the I.L.O. and visiting experts—factory acts and labor codes based on those existing in the industrial countries.

More important, income distribution tends, in most of the underdeveloped world, to shift in favor of industrial wage earners. In most poor countries with large subsistence sectors the wage earning labor force is, as a group, a kind of aristocracy. The average annual per

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Morris D. Morris, "The Recruitment of an Industrial Labor Force in India, with British and American Comparison," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, April 1960, pp. 305-328.

capita income of an unskilled wage earner in those countries is almost always far in excess of the average money income of peasant farmers in the subsistence sector.

It is, of course, difficult to compare relative living levels of the peasant in subsistence sectors with those of the wage earner in town, because great differences in styles of life are involved. But there can be little doubt that the trading of village life for industrial wage earning is by no means repugnant to rural people in the poor countries even where, as in most of Africa and parts of Latin America and Asia, there is little rural overpopulation squeezing men from the villages.

A final factor mentioned by Siegel should be underlined. In much of the currently industrializing world the entry into paid employment need not and frequently does not involve a permanent commitment to paid employment. Many wage earners retain ties with their villages throughout the period of early development. In some cases, particularly in Africa, widespread use of migrant labor permits men to have the best of both worlds (though some critics argue it is the worst of both worlds). While at some stage in development migrancy must give way to permanent or semipermanent commitment, it provides an easy road over the difficult period of early industrialization.

All of this suggests that there is no necessary reason to expect a large grievance gap among the wage workers of countries currently beginning their industrialization. Early industrialization in the modern world of itself is not a cause of worker protest. And if worker protest on a significant scale is not a necessary feature of the process of early industrialization, there is even less reason for it to appear in mature industrial societies. Siegel seems to be saying this when he describes the sources of protest in mature industrial economies, for here he emphasizes conflicts of interest and income distribution problems. In this sense, he puts worker protest theory back into the context of a general theory of social protest. In the advanced economy the sources of protest are no longer essentially specific to labor; protest arises because of gaps between income and desires, and because the national income cannot be divided to every group's satisfaction.

Once the source of social protest is located in grievance gaps and clashes of economic interest, then the elaboration of a theory of worker protest must necessarily be part of a general theory of social protest. For the same factors that explain worker protest should explain peasant revolts and movements of lower middle-class anger like Poujadism. The

way is open, too, for consideration of one set of factors omitted by Siegel—the role of short-run cyclical factors in protest movements. In the short run, economic historians have shown us, the price of bread is probably the greatest single influence on the curve of worker protest. These are matters on which the economist with a penchant for social theory can say a great deal.

GASTON V. RIMLINGER, Rice University

The paper states its objective to be the provision of a “unifying analytical framework for the varied probings into work and its discontents. . . .” I shall begin by directing my comments to two interrelated aspects of this objective: first, I shall consider the kind of unification the paper achieves; and second, I shall examine the structure of the analytical framework it presents. A third question on which I shall comment briefly is the usefulness of the framework presented.

1. My first questions are: What does Siegel want to unify analytically and how does he do it?

The framework he presents is intended to unify for purposes of analysis a fairly broad area of study, an area designated by the label worker protest. It covers a wide sector of what is usually treated in the context of labor history, labor theory, industrial relations, or just plain labor problems. The worker protest area, as Siegel points out, covers a great variety of individual and collective patterns of behavior. Worker protest has many different causes, a multiplicity of fairly vague dimensions, and a host of possible consequences. The paper implies that, as an area of analysis, worker protest is essentially similar to other more familiar areas, such as, for instance, the area of wages. We might agree that a concept like wages is not free from ambiguities, but it does not appear to be nearly so elusive as the concept of worker protest.

However, the fact that worker protest is a bit elusive and the fact that it covers a great variety of behavior patterns merely emphasize the necessity for some framework that provides *analytical unity*. The provision of such a framework, in addition to the designation of an area susceptible to analytical integration, would be an important contribution not only to the study of labor problems but to social science. Although in my estimation the present paper does not meet the qualifications of an ideal analytical framework, it does provide helpful guidance for steps in that direction. In the brief space allocated to my discussion, I shall not dwell on some of the valuable insights of the paper

but will concentrate mainly on its shortcomings in achieving the difficult task of constructing an over-all framework to serve effectively as a step toward generalized theoretical formulations of labor protest.

As I see it, analytical unity requires at least two conditions: first, the major aspects of a problem have to be classified into a manageable number of variables; and second, the variables chosen for this purpose must conceivably be relevant for some common, general, theoretical formulation of the problem. If the variables chosen are not conceivable components of a general theoretical explanation, they almost necessarily will fail to show the interrelationships between various aspects of the problem studied. If one cannot readily conceive how the variables may be theoretically interrelated, I do not see how one can speak of an effective analytically unifying framework.

Does Siegel's approach fulfill the two conditions just mentioned? It seems to fulfill the first condition, that is, he divides the general phenomenon into a reasonable number of variables. I am referring here to variables which Siegel treats under "elements of worker protest theory." More specifically, I have in mind the following: the sources, nature, and direction of protest; and also the structure, magnitude, impact, and the parties to protest. I am not sure that this approach meets the second condition. No effort is made to show in what way these variables are visualized as essential and interrelated parts of some general theoretical formulation. They seem to be mainly labels put on certain categories of empirical phenomena without any attempt to explain their potential significance in a network of causal interrelations. The unity they impart to the study of protest is mainly descriptive. It is an external rather than an analytical kind of unity. I have the feeling that these categories were chosen for a description of specific aspects of protest, rather than for their direct relevance from an analytical point of view.

2. I want to shift now to my second area; the structure of the analytical framework presented in the paper. This deals mainly with the question of how the various parts of the framework do in fact relate to each other. What is Siegel's "framework for theorizing about worker protest"? So far as I can tell, it is a generalized description of the phenomenon of worker protest in terms of his elements of worker protest theory.

My first observation on this framework is that these ingredients are a rather mixed bag. Some of them as, for instance, the magnitude or

impact of protest, are elements which a protest theory ought to explain. Other ingredients, like the "analytical time horizon," are arbitrarily chosen by the investigator. Moreover, this particular ingredient does not describe the protest phenomenon but the framework.

My second observation is that although this framework provides us with certain descriptive categories, all of these categories are essentially static. In Siegel's words: "The analytical framework is more like the road map than the detailed aerial photograph of an area." But protest is a dynamic phenomenon. It is influenced very decisively by historical legacies acting as lags and by new ideas acting as leads. The framework fails to stress these dynamic aspects.

My third observation on the framework concerns the absence of some mechanism relating the variables to each other. It seems to me that the major purpose of an analytical framework is to orient us toward cause and effect relationships. It ought to suggest how the variables may interact with each other. Or, a framework should show at least the degree to which different variables are compatible with each other. Siegel assumes that there are significant relationships between his elements. But he does not spell them out in his framework. The relationships between protest ingredients and other factors are presumably not to be introduced until the framework is applied to particular situations. They are not part of the framework.

This brings me to my fourth observation on the framework, which relates to the relevance of the chosen ingredients. I indicated a moment ago that from the point of view of analytical unity one should be able to view the selected ingredients as parts of some general theory. At this point, with reference to the framework, my concern is whether the ingredients presented are necessary and sufficient for analyzing the protest phenomenon. To put it more directly: How do we know that these are the elements we really want to stress for analytical purposes. We may intuitively sense that Siegel's elements of worker protest theory are meaningful for analysis, but unless we have in mind at least some theory of protest, we cannot determine their relevance. Nor do we know what other important variables have been left out of the framework.

3. I turn now to the third area of my comments: the usefulness of the framework presented. Regardless of what I have said up to now about the internal structure of the framework, what really matters is its usefulness as a tool of analysis. This usefulness is best tested by examining how the author himself applies his framework to a given problem.



Siegel translates the views of Marx and Veblen into the terms of his framework. His main concern is with their explanation of protest and with the development of the protest movement in the course of industrialization. Marx clearly furnishes the better case for the application of the protest framework, because, I think, he has an analytically unified and dynamic system. In other words, Marx provides a mechanism for relating Siegel's protest ingredients to each other. In Marx the elements of protest are interacting with each other and with a system of authority represented by capitalist-dominated industrial society. Marx has a system which makes it possible for Siegel to relate to each other such "protest elements" as the magnitude, the impact, and the revolutionary potential of protest. And these ingredients in turn are related to structural changes in the organization of protest.

Having examined the Marxian system in the light of the analytical framework, Siegel finds the Marxian model inadequate as an explanation of the development of protest during industrialization. He then proceeds to give us another explanation in the form of "alternative protest mappings." These alternative protest mappings depict the evolution of protest during industrialization, described in the vocabulary of Siegel's analytical framework. But the explanation of this evolution, it seems to me, draws at least as much on Marx's analysis as it does on Siegel's framework. The protest mappings introduce dynamic relationships into the framework. This is done by way of reinterpreting the Marxian model in the light of more recent historical experience. With Siegel as with Marx, the stage of industrial development becomes an important factor in determining various elements of protest. Other important variables introduced at this point are the amount or rate of change taking place, and the sociopolitical structure of the industrializing society.

The whole section of the paper dealing with protest during industrialization is quite interesting. We might agree or disagree in varying degrees with some of its generalizations, or we might point to factors that were not adequately considered. But that is not the heart of the matter. The important question is: To what extent does the analysis depend on the framework provided earlier? Or, more generally, how much does an acquaintance with this framework assist us in understanding and explaining protest during industrialization, or in any other period? I should say that the framework furnishes a set of questions which help us organize our data. We can apply these questions to

different times and places for purposes of comparative analysis. In this respect, such a framework holds its greatest promise. All this is certainly very useful for purposes of exploration. Beyond that, however, the framework is useful only if we have some reason for organizing our data into the particular empirical categories it provides. And that depends, as I argued earlier, on our general theoretical preconception of the protest phenomenon. Thus, the very least that must be said for Siegel's framework is that it constitutes a systematic approach to a complex phenomenon. Apparently, this is what Siegel tried to achieve in his paper. He states that he is chiefly interested in developing a "way of looking" at the question. Further development and refinement of the framework are possible and are desirable in order to enhance the value of the framework as an analytical tool.

